YOUTH AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS: INSIGHTS FROM THE MID-SOUTH COAST OF KWAZULU NATAL

by

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Exodus 14:14

"The Lord Will Fight for You; You Need Only To Be Still."

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the community of Chief Luthuli of uMnini and Chief Hlengwa of Kwa Thoyana.

ABSTRACT

Intimate partner violence is an ominous societal issue that requires urgent attention in South Africa. According to research provided by Statistics South Africa (2021), 21% of women experienced physical abuse from an intimate partner during the survey period. The current study, which employed qualitative research methods, explored the role of traditional leaders in addressing the intimate partner violence (IPV) phenomenon in a rural area. A key purpose was to determine whether their influence and interventions might offer solutions to the uMnini and Kwa Thoyana communities regarding the phenomenon of IPV. Data were also generated by eliciting the perspectives of the youth as it has been argued that young people (age 18 – 35) are most affected by the IPV phenomenon. In the African culture, traditional leaders' power and responsibilities are rarely questioned, and rural communities are greatly influenced by the role that these leaders play in the lives of individuals and in the community as a whole. Theoretically, traditional leaders' responsibilities and influence are quite wide and they are mandated to maintain the peace and ensure the well-being of all their people. Their role also extends to the diplomatic sphere as they need to liaise with their subjects and neighbouring leaders in matters of safety, security, and social harmony. The manner in which traditional leaders in the study area addressed intimate partner violence was explored by assessing the perceptions of the youth and traditional leaders themselves. The study further sought to determine if traditional leaders' intervention could contain and resolve incidents of IPV. To this end, the impact of the disciplinary measures they had taken or proposed to ensure justice for victims of IPV, the nature of the support they offered these victims, and the manner in which offenders were reintegrated into society were explored. The study found that traditional leaders' perceptions of intimate partner abuse digressed significantly from those of the younger generation. This dichotomy was attributed to the conflict between traditional beliefs and customs and a drastically evolving and more democratically-minded younger generation. The traditional leaders focused on restitution and healing for married couples, while unmarried couples would be left to their own devices. Holding conservative beliefs, the traditional leaders supported the traditional court system which relies on dialogue and may even excuse acts of violence against an intimate partner as long as the marriage remains intact. In their view, their attitude of forgiveness and their focus on restitution were demanded by the traditional process of restorative justice. However, this attitude did not seem to imbue young community members with hope and trust in them, as they argued that they would rather approach the SAPS than a traditional leader for assistance in the event of IPV. The youth in Kwa Thoyana and uMnini

admittedly struggled, or perceived that they might struggle, to access support in cases of intimate partner abuse. This perception stemmed from their view of traditional leaders' roles as specific to land division and restitution issues. Additionally, many argued that they would never approach their parents for support due to the time-honoured tradition of respecting one's elders. Lastly, the use of traditional medicines and the practice of inflicting curses on targeted victims were identified as factors that contribute to IPV, indicating the need for further research to determine effective intervention strategies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
KZN	Kwa Zulu-Natal
MEC	Member of The Executive Committee
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as "any behaviour (including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviours) by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm" (Breiding, Chen and Black, 2015:15). While IPV is deemed as gender neutral, research continues to sustain and validate violence as a problem inside heterosexual relationships where it is mostly females who are at the receiving end of this crime (Pathak and Kumar, 2023). Half of all women slain in South Africa were killed by intimate partners, and the country has the highest rate of such homicides in the world (Mathew, 2010). However, the catastrophic physical, emotional, and social implications of this condition are mostly disguised since abused women are nearly twice as likely as non-abused women to disclose physical and mental health problems (McCloskey, Williams, Lichter, Gerber, Ganz, and Sege, 2007). Women in abusive relationships are forced to seek health and other associated services on a regular basis, which is costly.

IPV can be traced back to a variety of causes, including biosocial, psychological, and sociological abuse of one partner by the other. Children reared in violent environments are more likely to utilize violence in their own relationships, creating a vicious cycle (Murphy, 2011). Some studies have labelled IPV as 'patriarchal terrorism', claiming that it is the product of a worldwide model of power and control (Johnson, 2017). Other studies have recognized IPV from a situational viewpoint, citing a person's inability to effectively handle conflict (Tidwell, 2001). Several writers have stated that the true prevalence of IPV is unknown due to under-reporting due to fear of stigma and the threat of secondary victimization by law enforcement personnel and reprisal by the accused spouse (Taccini and Mannarini, 2023).

This study acknowledges sources that have reported on this issue at global and national levels and particularly in urban contexts, hence the current researcher investigated this issue in a rural setting where traditional leaders hold sway.

1.2 The Nature of Sexual Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence

According to the findings of a study by (Straus, Cerulli, McNutt, Rhodes, Conner, Kemball, Kaslow, and Houry, 2009). The victims of IPV and sexual abuse may experience numerous physical, sexual, psychological, behavioural, and even fatal consequences. The victims also often make a number of visits to emergency health facilities, and they are prone to an increased risk of gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, gynaecological, and psychiatric disorders. Many of these victims suffer from depression, engage in substance abuse, and experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Women who refuse to have sex without a condom are increasingly likely to become IPV victims, and if forced to succumb to sexual demands many face the additional risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and unplanned pregnancies. Although acts of IPV may be closely linked to domestic violence as it may be synonymous with this crime through its violent and violative nature, IPV is not exclusive to close household settings (as is domestic violence), as it can occur between couples who do not live within the same household.

Various legal definitions acknowledge the crime of intimate partner violence. For instance, the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) clearly defines this as a crime that is punishable by law. The South African definition of intimate partner violence acknowledges it a crime using terms such as physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, and economic intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, entry into the complainant's property without consent, or any other controlling behaviours towards the complainant that may cause damage or imminent harm and threaten the safety, health, and protection of the complainant (Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk, 2011).

Recent guidelines developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for health care workers acknowledge that women experience more sexual violence, more severe physical violence, and more coercive control from male partners (WHO, 2013) than vice versa. An earlier multi-country study on women's health and intimate partner violence showed that the lifetime prevalence of physical or sexual partner violence, or both, varied between 15% and 71% in ten countries (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). Many researchers concur that women are expected to be submissive and sexually available to their intimate partners at all times (Breiding et al., 2014; Hancox, 2012). It is often considered both a right and an obligation for men to use violence in order to "correct" or chastise women for perceived transgressions (Hogue, Hogue and Kader, 2009). Such a transgression may be a woman's reluctance to engage in sexual

activities with her partner. Perpetrators may also sexually assault their victims by subjecting them to pornographic images or material against their wishes, or the use of verbal degradation during sex (Ardovini-Brooker and Caringella-MacDonald, 2002). Some perpetrators use sexual violence as a primary choice to intimidate and harm their victims, and many are also battered. Sexual battering may include pressured sex when the victim does not want to have sex, coerced sex by manipulation or threat, as well as physically forced sex. Hogue, Hogue and Kadar (2009) confirm that there are some health facility-based studies in South Africa that show that more than half (55%) of pregnant women experience physical/sexual violence in their lifetime.

1.3 Key Focus of the Study

The use of authority and influence by traditional leaders to deter crime within their domain was one of the key focus of this study, whereas IPV was the other. The study set out to determine the efficacy of indigenous knowledge as a tool to contain and eradicate IPV. Conflict resolution skills, adherence to the ubuntu values, and restorative justice are skills that should be employed to eradicate the scourge of IPV. The research objectives of this study were devised against this background to explore intimate partner violence in the Kwa Thoyane and Umnini areas in KwaZulu-Natal and to determine if the influence of traditional leaders is significant in curbing and possibly eradiating this crime. This study derives new knowledge in terms of understanding intimate partner violence within rural area perspectives.

1.4 Background

While intimate partner violence occurs in various settings, it is crucial to understand its specific dynamics in rural areas. This background explores the role of traditional leaders in ensuring peace and safety in their areas of influence and particularly in terms of their support for the potential and actual victims of IPV.

Research findings have affirmed that IPV is not uncommon in rural areas. Compared to their urban counterparts, women in rural areas experience different forms of violence, such as higher rates of stalking and symbolic violence (Lanier and Maume, 2009). Kaur and Garg (2010) discovered that gender disparity significantly contributes to intimate partner violence in rural areas. This contribution is a consequence of the exclusion and marginalization of women, preventing them from participating in and influencing decision-making processes within their society. According to Magford (2014), there is evidence of a tolerance for abuse in some rural

communities. This tolerance limits the capacity of women at the village level to utilize their status and social capital to protect themselves. Research has also indicated that IPV rates in rural regions might be as high as or higher than those in urban areas. It is also estimated that over 30% of women in southern Africa have suffered intimate partner violence at some point in their lives (García-Moreno, Pallitto,Devries, Stöckl, Watts, and Abrahams, 2013). According to data from the 2017 Statistics South Africa report, one in five adult women in South Africa reported having been the victim of domestic abuse at some point in their lives (Bolarinwa, 2023). Such high incidences of this crime have resulted in the need for joint involvement of community-based stakeholders such as traditional leaders, health care workers, and educationists to assist in curbing this societal problem.

Traditional African leaders, who are predominantly male, have consistently held a significant position of power in the lives of the majority of African people, particularly those residing in rural regions. The Department of Provincial and Local Government in South Africa developed a White Paper in 2000 to establish a uniform government policy on the position and authority of traditional leaders. This White Paper (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000) was developed based on the tenets of the Constitution. According to Hagg and Kanyane (2013) this Paper delineates the roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders as follows:

> "…[they have] the authority to make restricted laws and exercise specific executive and administrative responsibilities; exercising jurisdiction over traditional legal tribunals and contributing to the preservation of legal norms and social stability; providing support to community people in their interactions with the government; providing counsel to the government about matters related to traditional affairs."

Following the end of the colonial period in various African countries that regained their independence, the position of chiefs remained mostly unchanged. They continued to fulfil various traditional roles, including local administration, acting as intermediaries between the people and the government, presiding over tribal courts, assuming symbolic or religious responsibilities and, in some instances, being the voice to deliver peace and unity amongst communities. According to The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework No. 41 of 2003, a traditional leader refers to an individual who, in accordance with the customary law of the specific traditional community, holds a position as a leader as a traditional leader which is acknowledged the Traditional leadership and governance framework (Rugege, 2003).

In terms of maintaining law and order, community-based engagement is crucial in rural areas to ensure that crime prevention efforts are targeting specific issues that threaten the safety of people in such neighbourhoods. Traditional leaders have thus been vested with the responsibility to ensure community safety in their own territories where law and order should be ensured to maintain peace and stability (Koenane, 2018). Women and children, who are vulnerable groups in any population, generally experience a great sense of security within rural societies due to the well-established opposition of traditional leaders against all forms of violence. Thus, it can be inferred that traditional leaders have made substantial contributions to community policing and have positively influenced the curbing of crime through the implementation of diverse crime prevention strategies and tasking community members and other stakeholders with this duty (Zikhali, 2019). However, according to Buthelezi (2021), traditional leadership is not effectively contributing to the security of all members of their communities. In fact, many rely solely on the SAPS to provide crime prevention services, which are poorly performed due to manpower and resource limitations (Buthelezi, 2021). Scholars have thus argued that the leadership of traditional leaders has been weakened in terms of community safety and that the influence of many of these leaders has become questionable. The argument is that traditional leaders cannot completely delegate their power to others without taking any action themselves; therefore, in incidences of violence and crime, they hold those to whom they have delegated authority responsible (Chigwata, 2016). It has also been posited that the government neglects its responsibility to supervise the implementation of laws, particularly in rural areas where the establishment of the necessary legal and law enforcement structures has been flimsy and where processes to ensure the efficient implementation of laws are fragmented at best. It is in this context that Buthelezi (2021) questions the utilisation of public funds in support of sustainable and fair legislative procedures.

1.5 Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

This study aimed to understand African conflict resolution as practised by Zulu chiefs, commonly referred to as traditional leaders or headmen.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the perceptions of the youth and traditional leaders regarding the issue of intimate partner violence;

- Understand traditional leaders' and the youth's views on the effects of intimate partner violence on victims and the community;
- Determine if and how traditional leaders' intervention can curb the prevalence of intimate partner violence; and
- Explore the impact of the reintegration process practised by traditional unions on those who offended and those who were the victims of the offence.

To achieve these objectives, the following key research questions were posed to give direction to the study:

- What leadership techniques do traditional leaders use to address intimate partner violence in the areas under their control?
- What are young people's and traditional leaders' perceptions of the impact of intimate partner violence on the community?
- Can the intervention strategies of traditional leaders, if any, curb the prevalence and severity of intimate partner violence in the study area?
- What is the impact of the integration process of offenders on their victims and the community?

1.6 Problem Statement

1.6.1 Intimate partner violence

Kumar (2022) argues, that IPV is the consequence of domestic violence by a current or former spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner. IPV can take several forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, economic, and sexual abuse. IPV is highly prevalent in South Africa as cases have evolved from physical abuse to femicide (Jewkes, 2002), and reports on intimate partner killings have flooded the news media. According to *IOL News* (2016) South Africa is notorious globally for having the highest number of women killed by their partners annually. It is further stated that a woman died every eight hours in South Africa over a survey period, and of those who were murdered, 50% had been killed by their intimate partners. Recently, a Statistics South Africa (2021) report revealed that one in five women (21%) had experienced physical violence by a partner in the survey period. To illustrate the prevalence of intimate partner killings, here are some of the most harrowing reports that have been cited:

- “A 30-year-old man was arrested in connection with the brutal murder of Zinhle Muthwa, police confirmed on Sunday. The man is believed to [have been] in a relationship with the deceased. The man was arrested following ‘intensive investigations’ after Muthwa was found dead on New Year’s Day at Ndaya Reserve in Umbumbulu, south of Durban. Her body was discovered on the side of a road. She had head injuries and bruises all over her body as well as a gunshot wound (Njilo, 2020).”
- “An Umlazi woman had just completed an electrical engineering course and was set to be the first person in her family to graduate. Twenty-six-year-old Anele Hadebe’s future looked bright as she had secured a job, but her charred body was found in the bushes about 20m from her boyfriend’s house in uMlazi” (Masuku,2020).

Numerous similar reports support the aggressive prevalence and nature of intimate partner violence. The City of Durban and its environments seems to be a hotspot for such incidences. Unfortunately, the SAPS as the only formal government law enforcement structure, is not trusted by most South Africans who hold the belief that it abuses institutional processes, perpetuates patriarchal standards, acts on a lack of information about what to do, has a lack of empathy for and knowledge about the communities it serves, and many may also fear potential consequences should they approach the police. The presumption also exists that public services do not adequately assist victims of violence, which encourages increased acts of violence and deters victims from coming forward (Jones, 2021). Mason (2022) asserts that research results have exposed the worrisome rate of case withdrawals by victims, escalating crimes rates associated with extreme poverty, and remote locations of courts and police stations, arguing that these are some of the barriers that prevent victims from accessing justice. In section 12(1)(c) the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states that "everyone has the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources”. Therefore, the state must safeguard all citizens by abstaining from criminal offenses itself and by taking proactive measures to stop acts of crime committed by perpetrators. The state is mandated by this subsection and section 7(2) of the Constitution to actively safeguard the public from all crimes, particularly violent ones. Additionally, section 12 (1) (c) of the Constitution further implicates and imposes a mandate on all SAPS officials to protect individuals from others that wish to deprive them of their security, and they should ensure the security of those who are unable to provide it for themselves. Moreover, the police must refrain from eliminating anyone's security.

According to Business Tech (2015), most victims of domestic violence that do not report the crime give the following explanations: "The police won't do anything about it" and "The police could do nothing". It is concerning to note that victims of sexual offenses often refused to disclose the crime to the authorities on the grounds that it was "not serious enough". This indicates a serious level of mistrust in the justice system by vulnerable members of society and the perceived unfulfillment of law enforcement agents' constitutional mandate. Furthermore, The Human Science Research Council of South Africa (2022) found that trust in the SAPS has been relatively low within South Africa over the past 20 years since apartheid. This clearly identifies a deep loss in the faith of how police services have been received amongst South Africans.

1.6.2 The role of traditional leaders

By virtue of the background elucidated above, the researcher envisaged the need to research this topic in a rural setting.

The authority of and role played by traditional leaders are hardly recognised in everyday society, particularly in urban settings. However, traditional leaders play an impactful role in the way rural communities are shaped and behave. Theoretically, traditional leaders are the catalyst to ensure the peace within the wellbeing of rural communities. They ensure that the environment is safe and negotiate various community interactions in a diplomatic manner. Previous studies have studied traditional councils and their indigenous court system. For instance, Tshehla (2005) investigated a study on the court systems of traditional authorities in the Limpopo province. The study attempted to understand how traditional courts work in general and to determine if issues relating to all platforms of criminal justice and the prevention of crime were effectively addressed. In 2004, Palmary also conducted a study in the eThekwini Municipality to explore crime prevention and safety promotion through traditional unions. With the findings being focused on traditional leaders and their engagement on issues relating to theft. The current study focused on providing answers to the issue of IPV, and the researcher addressed the roles that traditional unions play in the uMnini and Kwa Thoyana rural areas, with specific focus on traditional leaders' ability and willingness to curb IPV.

1.7 Defining Key Terms

Umkhandlu: council (traditional)

Inkosi: A traditional leader or chief is referred to as a ‘nkosi’ in several southern African countries, including South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. The phrase derives from the isiZulu language in which ‘inkosi’ means ‘king’ or ‘ruler’. An inkosi is the traditional leader of a tribe or group and he has tremendous authority and influence over his people. The position was traditionally and is currently exclusively filled by male leaders (Houston, and Mbele, 2011).

Induna: In southern African countries such as South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, an ‘induna’ is a senior traditional leader or a chief's advisor or counsellor. The phrase derives from isiZulu, where ‘induna’ means ‘headman’ or ‘leader’. An induna is a person of authority who assists the chief in the administration of the village and area. They are critical in decision-making, offer advice, and carry out the chief's directives. Indunas frequently serve as liaison officers between the chief and the people by relaying messages and mediating disagreements.

Intimate partner violence: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health and criminal issue. It comprises of such as: physical violence, sexual assault, stalking, and psychological aggression (including coercive methods) by a current or previous intimate partner (Breiding, Chen and Black, 2015).

Isintu: Isintu is a Nguni term that signifies ‘culture’ or ‘tradition’ in a number of southern African languages, including isiZulu and isXhosa. It refers to the traditions, customs, beliefs, and values passed down from generation to generation within a specific community or society. Isintu embraces many aspects of life, including language, music, dancing, food, art, spirituality, and social standards. It represents a group's collective identity and legacy and impacts their behaviour, relationships, and worldview. Isintu is critical in maintaining and promoting the cultural diversity and heritage of communities in southern Africa (Cakata, 2023).

Umuthi: The term is isiZulu and means medicine (Ogana, 2009).

Idliso: A love potion, or sorcery (Neely, 2019)

Isichitho: This is a condition in which the afflicted person becomes unpleasant to others and endures a type of rejection associated with witchcraft (Ogana, 2009). 'Isichitho' is a curse created by a person to destroy another's skin or to end a love relationship.

Ukubekezela emendweni: This phrase is used in the isiZulu language in South Africa. It means 'endurance in difficult times' or 'perseverance in the face of adversity' when translated into English. In many instances it refers to the endurance of difficulties in a marriage (Chisale, 2016).

Umkhongi: A marriage advisor. The umkhongi's' role is to impart wisdom to the couple on the premise that the union should remain intact and that all differences should be resolved (Ndlovu, and Ndlovu, 2012).

Lobola: The dowry a man pays the parents of his intended wife. Traditionally, it was paid in the form of cattle, but nowadays a large sum of money may be paid in the transaction (Van Dijk, 2017).

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One: This chapter introduces the topic of intimate partner abuse and includes a brief summary of the remaining chapters of the thesis. It also outlines the research objectives and questions, and presents definitions of key terms used in the study.

Chapter Two: This chapter presents a review of the literature on intimate partner violence and explores its many manifestations. The chapter opens with an overview of literature on traditional authority and Zulu traditional customary ideas that have shaped and now underscore traditional authority in KwaZulu-Natal. It also discusses how Zulu customary beliefs have been depicted and whether these depictions have any relation to patriarchal norms which have been relevant in shaping issues like IPV.

Chapter Three: This chapter presents a thorough examination of the theories that served as the foundation for this study, specifically the social learning theory and the trauma bonds theory. These theories aided the researcher in contextualizing the many instances of intimate

partner assault and in confirming the protocols used by conventional authorities when dealing with such issues.

Chapter Four: This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study. It details the scientific research methods used to achieve the study's objectives and aims, ensuring the process was valid and reliable for answering the research questions.

Chapter Five: The data are presented and analysed in this chapter. This chapter explores the demographic characteristics of traditional leaders and presents a critical analysis of the data and the findings that emerged.

Chapter Six: The data presentation and analysis processes are continued as the demographic characteristics of the participating young people are provided, and the data that emanated from their interviews are analysed and critically discussed.

Chapter Seven: The chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations. This chapter expands on the key findings and highlights the study's scholarly contribution to the existing pool of knowledge. The study's limitations and contributions are examined, and the chapter is concluded with relevant recommendations.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provides an outline of the study, focusing on the fundamentals of the dissertation, including the introduction, background, aim, and study objectives. The following chapter consists of a literature review, which discusses novel elements that build on the subject of study and offers a comprehensive discussion of the study's focus.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the literature captured regarding IPV and present some background information on traditional leadership authority in KwaZulu-Natal. As the study setting was in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the researcher also explores traditional Zulu leadership and societal customs to determine their relevant to the issue of IPV.

2.2 Purpose of the Literature Review

The literature review provides a succinct examination and discussion of evidence on the topic under investigation. When presenting an overview of a topic, published peer-reviewed articles, amongst other sources, are referred to as these provide thoroughness and comprehensiveness of information and insights that are usually integrated with the research findings to lend validity to the study (Ramdhani, Ramdhani and Amin, 2014). A literature review is a useful, necessary, and enlightening summary of the chosen topic. It can identify what is known and unknown about the topic and offers insightful debates and poses unanswered questions (Kuper, Lingard and Levinson, 2008). A literature review is essential in understanding the scholarly context of the subject matter and guides the researcher to formulate logical and intellectual conclusions while presenting a backdrop for addressing the objectives and achieving the aim of the study.

2.4 Contextualising Traditional Leadership within the South African Legal Framework

To contextualise the traditional leadership as a pivotal theme of this study, the following pertinent information is presented and discussed.

2.4.1 Empowering Local Governance: Dispute Resolution in Traditional Houses

This is a key legal document that guides the functions and activities of Local Assembly House meetings. Such meetings must be arranged by the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), who must also announce it in the Gazette. Until the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson have been elected by the members of that House, the first meeting of a Local House must be presided over by a person designated by the MEC. Meetings of the Local House must be announced in writing to every member at least four days in advance of the scheduled date.

The duties and responsibilities of a Local House are subject to the provisions of section 17(3) of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 (Bennett and Murray, 2005). Members of a Local House may provide advice to another member if they have cause to believe that the member is not carrying out his/her traditional duties or responsibilities; however, this is only possible if the member is not subject to disciplinary action (Du Plessis and Scheepers, 2000). When a dispute arises on a matter pertaining to the implementation of this Act or otherwise, members of such communities or institutions, along with traditional leaders within the community or traditional institution in question, must endeavour to settle disputes within their own communities and according to customary law and tradition.

In such cases, the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders will make an effort within 30 days to settle any disagreement covered by paragraph (1) of the document in adherence to its policies and guidelines. If the disagreement cannot be settled, it may be reported to the MEC for COGTA, who may act in accordance with the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework's clauses 21(1)(b) and 25. If the MEC is unable to resolve the issue after meeting with them regarding COGTA, the Premier must address it within 30 days. The key parties in any conflict resolution are the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders, the MEC, and the parties in dispute (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020).

2.4.2 The Ngonyama Mutual Trust

Schedule 3A Public Entity status was granted to the Board of the Ingonyama Trust by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). This Act is definitive in the running of the operations of the Ingonyama Trust. The KwaZulu Ingonyama Trust Act No. 3KZ of 1994, which established the Ingonyama Trust, gave the former KwaZulu Government ownership and possession of all land within its jurisdiction. All of this land is held by the Trust for the "benefit, material welfare, and social well-being of the members of the tribes and communities" that inhabit it, according to the Trust's mandate (Manona, and Kepe, 2023). The Ingonyama Trust's only trustee is currently His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini, or his successor. The Ingonyama Trust Board works in partnership with AmaKhosi throughout KwaZulu-Natal to manage the Trust's operations and guarantee the land's long-term development. Among its responsibilities, in partnership with AmaKhosi, is to manage the land and make sure it stays in the Trust's ownership (Ingonyama Trust , 2023)

2.4.3 The Victim Empowerment Program

The primary goal of the Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) is to facilitate the formation and integration of interdepartmental/intersectoral programs and policies for the support, protection, and empowerment of victims of crime and violence (Nel, 2009). Building on this, the overall development goal of the Programme is to contribute to the establishment of safe and peaceful communities by enhancing the human rights culture and delivering more effective, multisectoral, coordinated responses to victims of crime and trauma (Russell, and Light, 2006). An Inter-Sectoral VEP in South Africa that includes the South African Police Service (SAPS), the National Prosecuting Authority, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, primary healthcare, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, community policing forums, traditional leaders, and local authorities are all involved in the implementation of the Victim Empowerment Programme (White, and Sienkiewicz, 2018).

2.4.4 The Domestic Violence Amendment Bill

This is a legal instrument that addresses IPV. The Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2021 came into effect on 14 April 2023 as per Proc R117 GG48419/14-4-2023. The original Act had a section called ‘definitions’, while the new Act now calls it ‘definitions and interpretations’. There were no subsections in the old Act, whereas there are in this Act for clarity of interpretation and implementation.

2.4.5 The Domestic Abuse Amendment Act No. 116 of 1998

In South Africa, the primary purpose of the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998 is to specifically target intimate partner abuse. Its primary objective is to safeguard individuals from abusive relationships and to offer assistance to victims. Intimate partner violence encompasses any type of mistreatment or aggression that takes place inside a romantic or domestic partnership or relationship. However, in order to address this particular problem more effectively, the South African government implemented the Domestic Violence Amendment Act in 2003 to enhance the current framework (Thannhauser, 2001).

The amended legislation broadens the scope of domestic violence by specifically including intimate partner abuse within its definition. It acknowledges that violence may happen between persons who are or have been in a domestic relationship, irrespective of their marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity (Usdin, Christofides, Malepe, and Maker, 2000). This

guarantees that assistance and aid are accessible to every individual affected, regardless of their particular condition. According to the revised legislation, intimate relationship violence encompasses more than just physical assault. It includes a variety of harmful actions, such as emotional, sexual, psychological, and economic mistreatment. This inclusive definition recognises that abuse can manifest in diverse ways and assists in tackling the intricacies of intimate partner violence. One of the primary aspects of the amended legislation is the implementation of protection orders (Douglas, 2015). These court orders are designed to protect victims by forbidding the abuser from communicating with or coming near the victim, their children, or any other individual specified in the order. Protection orders may also have stipulations about the interim assignment of child custody, ownership of a jointly owned dwelling, and financial assistance (Bessant,2015). The amended statute also underscores the need for preventive measures and support services. The legislation requires the creation of dedicated divisions within the South African Police Service (SAPS) to address incidents of domestic abuse, guaranteeing that victims are provided with suitable and empathetic support (Stone, and Lopes, 2018).

Furthermore, the legislation promotes the availability of counselling, medical assistance, and shelter amenities for victims, thereby acknowledging the necessity for holistic assistance. Moreover, the amended legislation specifically deals with the problem of failure to comply with protective orders. The legislation makes it a crime to violate a protection order, thus emphasizing the gravity with which the South African legal system views the infringement of these court mandates. The objective of this provision is to augment the efficacy of protection orders and bolster the security of victims.

Although the Domestic Abuse Amendment Act represents a notable advancement in tackling intimate partner abuse in South Africa, there are still obstacles that need to be overcome. The implementation and enforcement of legislation can be intricate, and sometimes there are constraints on resources (Cools, and Kotsadam, 2017). Nevertheless, the continuous endeavours undertaken by the government, civil society groups, and various concerned people are crucial in enhancing public consciousness, delivering assistance, and promoting other enhancements in tackling intimate partner violence.

Ultimately, the Domestic Abuse Amendment Act serves a vital function in addressing intimate partner abuse through its enhancement of the legal structure, the provision of protection orders,

and the promotion of support services. Despite ongoing problems, the Act demonstrates a dedication to tackling this widespread problem and safeguarding the security and welfare of persons impacted by intimate partner abuse (Goodman, and Epstein, 2005).

2.4.6 The Department of Social Development

The Department of Social Development in South Africa is responsible for creating and implementing social welfare policies and initiatives to tackle poverty, inequality, and social challenges in the country (Devereux, and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). The department aims to offer social assistance, encourage social progress, and safeguard vulnerable groups, especially victims of many types of victimization. High rates of crime, violence, and socioeconomic challenges in South Africa make victimization a serious issue, highlighting the crucial role of the Department of socioeconomic Development in addressing this problem. The Department endorses **victim empowerment programs** that provide physical assistance, counselling, and rehabilitative services to victims of crime, abuse, and violence. The programs aim to empower victims, help them recover from trauma, and reintegrate them into society (Phaswana-Mafuya, Peltzer, Mlambo, Mkhonto, and Tabane, 2012). It is responsible for overseeing **child protection services**, such as preventing and addressing child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They collaborate with many government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders to guarantee the protection and welfare of children (Campbell and Holtzhausen, 2020). The Department works to address **gender-based violence** (GBV) through public awareness campaigns, support services, and programs focused on preventing GBV, helping survivors, and ensuring offenders are held responsible. The Department also deals with **substance usage** through prevention programs and therapy. To combat victimization related to substance abuse, prevention programs, rehabilitation facilities, and treatment services are implemented for those struggling with addiction. The Department offers a range of **social programs** to alleviate poverty and assist vulnerable groups, including child support grants, disability awards, and grants for the elderly. The funds let victims and their families get financial aid and essential items (Campbell and Holtzhausen, 2020).

While the Department of Social Development is important in combating sexual abuse and victimisation in South Africa, it is important to note that more comprehensive efforts involving multiple sectors, such as law enforcement, education, and health, are needed to effectively combat victimisation and create a safer society for all.

2.4.7 The Thuthtuzela Program

Thuthuzela is a program that was launched by the Department of Social Development in partnership with other stakeholders such as the Department of Health and the National Prosecuting Authority. Thuthuzela's mission is to give victims of sexual violence and abuse comprehensive support. It is run at Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs), which are specialised centres situated throughout the country. These TCCs are one-stop facilities that provide survivors of sexual violence with a variety of services such as medical care, forensic examinations, counselling, and legal assistance (Bougard, and Booyens, 2015). Thuthuzela works to ensure that survivors receive the required care and assistance in a humane and efficient manner, while simultaneously aiming to increase sexual offense conviction rates. While the Department of Social Development and Thuthuzela have distinct functions and responsibilities, they frequently collaborate to provide comprehensive help to those experiencing social issues and victimisation, particularly in cases of sexual violence (Vetten, 2019). The Department may provide financing and assistance to Thuthuzela in order to assure the availability and effectiveness of the services it renders. These organisations work together to improve the well-being and social development of South African communities by providing a variety of services and support systems that address the needs of vulnerable individuals, promote social justice, and provide assistance in times of crisis, particularly in cases of sexual violence (Gould,2020).

2.4.8 LifeLine

LifeLine is a non-profit organisation that offers crisis assistance and counselling to people in need. It runs a helpline where people can get emotional support, advice, and referrals to other social services. LifeLine's services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are designed to treat mental health difficulties, suicide prevention, trauma, abuse, and other crisis circumstances. While the Department of Social Development and LifeLine have distinct functions and responsibilities, they frequently collaborate to provide comprehensive support to those dealing with social obstacles, victimisation, and mental health issues (Hieber, 2001). LifeLine may get funds and support from the Department to ensure the provision of hotline services and crisis intervention initiatives. These organisations work together to improve the well-being and social development of South African communities by delivering a variety of services.

2.5 Historical Overview of IPV Victimisation in the South African Context

The role and position of women in South Africa have been hotly disputed in the post-apartheid period and new laws have been enacted to reform pre-existing structures in order to deconstruct South Africa's long history of domestic violence and high rate of victimisation. Here is a timeline and context for IPV victims in South Africa:

The apartheid era was characterised by systemic racial discrimination and social inequality that were strongly entrenched in this period (1948-1994). The authoritarian regime and its policies shattered families and communities, fuelling a culture of violence and suffering. This, in turn, had far-reaching consequences for IPV dynamics (Gupta, Silverman, Hemenway, Acevedo-Garcia, Stein, and Williams, 2008).

The post-apartheid period in South Africa witnessed tremendous social and political transformations following the end of apartheid. However, the legacy of violence and inequality persisted, and the democratic transition did not instantly address the root causes of IPV (Matthew and Agnes, 2022). Statistics published after apartheid indicated that South Africa had one of the world's highest rates of IPV, with particularly high rates of violence against women. Gender inequality, patriarchal predominance, economic disparities, and a violent culture all contribute to this unwanted dynamic (Abrahams, 2010).

IPV has had a major impact on marginalised communities as it is more prevalent in communities involving women of colour, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those living in poverty than in other community groups. The former communities are frequently subjected to intersecting kinds of discrimination and structural violence, which are factors that exacerbate their vulnerability (Stockman, Hayashi, and Campbell, 2015).

The **femicide problem** in South Africa is also escalating as the country experiences a major femicide crisis, with frightening percentages of women in intimate relationships being murdered. This issue has sparked extensive action, campaigning, and legislative improvements to combat gender-based violence and protect potential and actual victims (Nothling-Slabbert, 2006).

Legal and policy responses to combat IPV in South Africa have resulted in the development of a number of legal and regulatory measures. The Domestic Violence Act of 1998, which

provides victims with protection orders, and the Sexual Offences Act of 2007, which criminalises all forms of sexual violence, are two examples.

Activism and social movements have also become a feature of the South African society. Various social movements, grassroots organisations, and advocacy groups have been formed in South Africa to combat IPV and promote gender equality. These movements have been crucial in increasing awareness, questioning social conventions, and campaigning for policy reforms. While progress has been made, tackling IPV in South Africa will require ongoing work on a variety of fronts, including education, prevention, intervention, legal reforms, and support services (Isaacs, 2016).

Violence has become a normative practice in the South African context and no group is excluded from this scourge. Normatively, society has created hegemonic ideologies of patriarchal standing where certain behaviours are accepted or deemed normal due to acceptable societal constructs within time, place, and society (Hunt, van der Merwe, Swartz, Xakayi, Chideya, Hartmann, Botha, and Hamilton, 2023). The culture of expected normalised violence perpetrated by men is a pressing issue to be raised based on three points of concern:

- Men are violent and more prone to inflict violence than women;
- Although men can fall victim to violence, it is usually perpetrated by another man;
- Men are unlikely to fall victim to violence perpetrated by a person of the opposite sex, although such incidences have become more common.

Violence can be considered a normative practice in South Africa due to various historical, societal, and cultural factors. Here are some key reasons why violence has become normalised in certain contexts: First is the historical legacy of life in apartheid South Africa (Langa, and Kiguwa, 2016). South Africa's history of apartheid, colonisation, and racial inequality have left a legacy of violence and trauma. This history has deeply impacted communities and individuals, leading to the normalisation of violence as a means of expressing power, control, and resolving conflict. Social inequality is a further contributing factor. It is a fact that South Africa has one of the highest levels of income inequality globally (Pillay, 2008). Economic disparities, along with persistent poverty and unemployment, contribute to social tensions and frustrations. In such contexts, violence may be seen as a way to assert dominance over another or to alleviate frustration (Agnew, 2015). **Gender inequality and patriarchy** in South Africa, like in many societies globally, also cause people to grapple with deep-rooted gender inequality

and patriarchal norms. These norms perpetuate the belief in male dominance and control and contribute to the acceptance and normalisation of violence against women as partners in intimate relationships.

Certain communities in South Africa experience high levels of patriarchal constraints, gang-related violence, and criminal activities. The normalisation of violence that is perpetuated by the gang culture in particular can spill over into other aspects of community life, manifesting in a cycle of violence and acceptance of violent behaviour (Taheri-Keramati, 2011). This allows negative socialisation and the adoption of harmful cultures that may inadvertently reinforce the normalisation of violence. The traditional notion that celebrates masculinity and equates strength and power with aggression also contributes to the acceptance of violence as a normative practice (Green, Satyen and Toumbourou, 2024). In violence-ridden areas, weak law enforcement action and a lack of the accountability of perpetrators of violence contribute to a culture of impunity. When individuals perceive that there are no consequences for their or others' violent acts, it naturally normalises and perpetuates such behaviour. Addressing the normalisation of violence in South Africa requires a comprehensive approach that includes education, awareness campaigns, legal reforms, and efforts to address underlying social inequalities (Graaff, and Heinecken, 2017). It is crucial to challenge societal norms and promote alternative non-violent strategies for conflict resolution and gender equality.

In exploring and evaluating instances of intimate partner violence, research has made much of the socialisation of normative standards of violence within society. Cultural and social norms have a strong influence on violent behaviour. As a result, efforts to prevent violence must take into account how social pressures and expectations influence individual behaviour (WHO, 2009). It is undeniable that different forms of violence are encouraged by various cultural and social norms. For example, the traditional belief that men are entitled to control or discipline women physically makes women susceptible to violence by their intimate partners while girls are vulnerable to sexual abuse (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junius, 2005). Likewise, the cultural notion that domestic violence, including sexual violence, is a private matter impedes outside intervention and prevents affected victims from speaking out and obtaining support (Hussain and Khan, 2008). South Africa exists as a gendered society as its positioning has been highly influenced by various issues associated with colonialism, apartheid, and traditional African beliefs that have endorsed the patriarchal ideology, of which the male attribute of masculinity is a core factor. 'Hegemonic masculinity' describes traits of 'successful

masculinity', or what makes a man a 'real man'. These expectations about what it means to be a man or what constitutes manly conduct are frequently influenced by or constrained by culture (Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger, 2012), and the African culture is no exception, as will be explained in the next section. Such notions have impacted norms for boys to a great extent. Some boys put pressure on their peers to live up to these standards or ideals, while some boys and young men put pressure on themselves to do the same (Lindegger and Maxwell 2007). Sometimes, the terms 'conventional' and 'stereotypical' masculinity are used to characterise 'hegemonic masculinity'. The findings of various studies have revealed that the stereotypical normalisation of 'real man' behaviours have affirmed that IPV against women is one of the most widespread kinds of male aggression as a consequence of hegemonic masculinity traits which have been normalised through societal standards (Wang, Fang and Li, 2019).

2.6 Gender-based Violence: Navigating African Customs and Cultural Dynamics

2.6.1 Isintu

'Isintu' refers to the Nguni African groups' customs and cultures and thus refers to the social norms that exist within different tribes belonging to the Bantu people of Africa. The discussion on social norms, culture and values, i.e., isintu, is a significant point of debate in this thesis. Much of traditional leadership still adheres to the principles of 'isintu'; thus, it is pertinent to narrate literature that moulds a picture relating to this concept (Cakata, 2023).

People learn about their roles, duties, and societal expectations through the cultural practices that prevail in their particular society (Harry, Rueda and Kalyanpur, 1999). Social norms can be an informal body of rules that govern people's behaviours in certain groups or societal settings to ensure and sustain social order and societal co-ordination (de Sardan, 2015). Because norms are primarily viewed as restricting behaviour, a few of the critical differences between moral, social, and legal norms, as well as distinctions between norms and convention, are relatively obscure (Bicchieri, Muldon and Santuso, 2011). Persons follow social normative behaviour when they understand that: (1) a sufficient number of others follow the rule; (2) that there is an expectation for the rule to be followed; and (3) there are recognised rewards for following the rule or social consequences for being perceived as deviating from the rule. The rule becomes validated by the normative standard responding to that community (Bicchieri, Muldon and Santuso, 2011). Of course, social expectations differ drastically from one's personal beliefs and this creates misalignment to what one individually perceives to want for

oneself. Moreover, the community accepts certain standards that drive and determine the outcomes of decision-making. Thus, within a gradually growing contemporary society, ‘isintu’ is a principle that should not remain linear without alteration.

According to Jacobson, Mortensen, and Cialdini, (2011) one’s adherence to social normative customs is also affected by one’s perception of expected behaviour. Research has divided social normative behaviours into two basic categories: descriptive norms and injunctive norms. Descriptive norms are beliefs of what members of social groups should do based on what is perceived as accepted behaviour in certain communities, such as accepted practices and behaviours of husbands towards their wives, and vice versa. Injunctive norms, on the other hand, is a term that refers to community consensus on a prescribed or banned behaviour; for instance, it is appropriate in a certain community for men to beat their wives when they are deemed to have done wrong, while it is abhorred in others (Linos et al., 2013; Lilleston Goldmann and McCleary-Sills, 2017; Clark et al., 2018).

2.6.2 Ukudodiswa

Hunter (2015) describes Zulu boy camps, known as 'ukusoka' or 'ukudodiswa', as traditional rituals that target young Zulu guys. The purpose of these camps is to teach boys about their cultural heritage, traditional values, and community responsibilities as future dads. During Zulu boy camps, boys are often initiated and trained under the supervision of elder guys in the society. In addition to lectures on gender roles and masculinity, local practices and norms, and physical activity, camps typically teach traditional skills like as building buildings, herding animals, and hunting. These camps try to educate young Zulu boys for adulthood and future responsibilities by instilling in them a sense of identity, discipline, and pride.

2.6.3 Ukuhlolwa kwezintombi

These are camps for Zulu and Xhosa maidens that are held in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape respectively. Here the participants customarily engage in ‘ukuhlolwa kwezintombi’. This is when young girls’ genitalia are examined to ascertain their virginity status (Ndebele, 2020; Zayed et al., 2022). According to Waiganjo (2022), the ethnic communities that engage in ‘ukuhlolwa’ maintain the testing practice because they view virginity as a cultural heritage and are proud of their cultural history. The practice of ‘ukuhlolwa kwezintombi’ in KwaZulu-Natal serves as an example of the community's focus on health and cleanliness. In the past, it was customary for women to abstain from having sex before marriage; they were expected to arrive

at their wedding as virgins (today this is represented by their wearing of a white gown) and to surrender their virginity to the spouse during the marriage-confirmation ritual (Mokoboto-Zwane, 2016).

2.6.4 Ukubekezela

'Ukubekezela emendweni' is a term that is still used by the Zulu people in South Africa. It means 'endurance in difficult times' or 'perseverance in the face of adversity' when translated into English. The term generally refers to the endurance of difficulty in marriage (Chisale, 2016).

2.7 The Hegemony of Culture

Studying cultural hegemony has assisted social historians in understanding the clash between the cultural independence of oppressed groups and the influence of dominant groups. It has also helped intellectual historians see how ideas can reinforce or weaken existing social frameworks (Lears, 1985). Langman (2003) argues that individual subjectivity, together with the voluntary empathy towards the dominant worldviews and values supporting authority, is essential for the cultural continuity of hegemony. Desire, consciousness, and identity are commonly linked to many socialization-related aspects in most societies. Those that promote these notions are parents, teachers, religious leaders, and the media. Social rituals enable individuals to enjoy several emotional rewards, including forming connections with others, receiving recognition, expressing appreciation, and feeling empowered. They offer opportunities for socialization to develop identities that support unity and ensure the continuation of society. Domination-based structures promote resistance.

Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant form of masculinity often seen as the ideal in society. Hegemonic masculine characteristics are seen in the Zulu notion of masculinity. Hadebe's (2010) study emphasizes that respect and dignity are crucial for Zulu men and require specific behavioural traits and demeanour. A Zulu man need residence, partner, offspring, employment, and cattle. Unmarried men are perceived as juveniles and are not regarded with seriousness. An unmarried guy is not permitted to govern his own household. To demonstrate his authority, a male is responsible for the societal duties that distinguish between genders. Men are designated by ancestors to manage family affairs, while women are restricted from conducting specific rituals.

The Zulu nation, mostly located in KwaZulu-Natal, has long been linked to the traditions of a patriarchal society. Zulu culture defines the roles of males as the home leaders and women as subordinates. In the past, women in rural communities were often expected to fulfill their main duties of providing sexual satisfaction to their husbands, cooking, and giving birth to children. Male and female responsibilities were distinctly outlined (Sathiparsad, Taylor, and Dlamini, 2008, as quoted in Koenig et al., 2004; Leclerc-Madlala, 2003). Hanretta (1998) states that another important assertion in anthropological theories regarding women is that they are considered 'outsiders'. Zulu civilization traditionally practiced exogamy, meaning potential women belonged to social, economic, and religious groups apart from their husbands. In Zulu society, women became part of a household as wives through the exchange of daughters as wives and cattle as bride-wealth, known as lobola. This transaction was considered crucial by anthropologists and involved the male heads of the households. Women's marginalized position within the household impacted the power dynamics with their husbands and sometimes with the wider family in several ways. The Zulu traditional view of marriage is still based on the 'ilobolo' system. In the past, the marriage between a Zulu man and his future bride was formalized according on customary law, which often included the practice of lobolo. The practice is currently regulated under the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act No. 120 of 1998 (RCMA). In Zulu culture, exchanging cattle for a woman was a necessary part of lobolo negotiations. In some contexts today, the monetary worth of each cow may be considered an appropriate form of transaction. At times, certain households have been deemed to want an excessive amount (Curran & Bonthuys, 2005). Current negotiations involve establishing a price for one cow and then adding the perceived value of the new bride in terms of cows to the agreed-upon price. The negotiated price plays a crucial role in determining whether a couple will marry, influenced by factors such as the cost of living, socio-economic conditions, and work opportunities affecting their ability to afford marriage (Nkosi, 2011).

2.8 Justice in Africa: Embracing Indigenous Approaches and Restorative Principles

Africa has the highest rate of violent conflicts in the world. For years, the treatment of conflicts involving national armies in Africa has revolved around conventional mechanisms that have excluded traditional approaches that are now in great demand in the contemporary world, particularly in Africa (Brock-Utne, 2001). The definition of conflict resolution might vary depending on the specific demographic area it pertains to. According to the law, settling a conflict may involve a court judgment based on legal principles and arguments. In certain situations, the death sentence may be considered as a means of resolution (Jenks, 1953). In the

context of industrial negotiations, resolution often involves the attainment of a compromise via the process of negotiation, even if this implies the unfortunate consequence of job loss. In traditional mediation, this may involve advocating for a rational resolution, even if weaker parties perceive it as unfair (Burton, 1991).

2.8.1 Dispute resolution

Indigenous cultures globally possess a rich heritage of employing inventive and efficient methods for resolving conflict, especially when addressing instances of victimisation inside their own communities (Gellman, 2007.). These strategies focus on stressing healing, restoration, and community participation above punitive measures. These conflict resolution methods can successfully deal with trauma by recognizing and respecting the cultural customs and principles of indigenous communities in a thorough and transformative way (Bueno, 2014). Wall and Callister (1995) define conflict as a scenario in which one party perceives that its interests are being threatened or damaged by another party. Community involvement and participation are crucial aspects of indigenous conflict resolution, especially in situations of victimization. In many indigenous cultures, the community is seen as a crucial source for the healing and reconciliation process. This approach acknowledges that addressing victimization is a community-wide responsibility, not limited to the persons immediately affected (Apipalakul, Jaimooka, and Ngang, 2017). This perspective encourages transparent communication, collaborative decision-making, and the involvement of all affected parties, such as the victim, the offender, and their families.

Various concepts propelled the development of conflict resolution in pre-colonial African societies. Individuals seeking resolution for their conflicts had to trust the tribunal responsible for resolving the issues, which might include elders, chiefs, priests, priestesses, and leaders of secretive groups (Ajayi and Buhari, 2014). The disputants had great confidence in the traditional leadership's authority and advice, believing it embodied restorative justice.

2.8.2 Restorative justice

Restorative justice is still seen as a global social movement, with several internal variants. Its main purpose is to alter how modern cultures view and react to crime and other types of disruptive behavior. More particular, it aims to replace our current highly professionalized punitive justice and control systems (and their equivalents in other situations) with community-based reparative justice and moralizing social control (Marshall, 2020). It has been claimed that by implementing such practices, we can not only control crime more effectively, but also

achieve a slew of other desirable outcomes, including: a meaningful experience of justice for victims of crime and the healing of trauma that they frequently suffer; genuine accountability for offenders and their reintegration into law-abiding society; and the recovery of social capital that is frequently lost (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2013). Restorative justice concepts are often employed in indigenous conflict settlement. Rather of punishing the perpetrator, these strategies are aimed at repairing the hurt caused by the act and rebuilding relationships. Restorative justice aims to heal the victim, hold the offender accountable, and provide opportunity for personal growth and reconciliation for all parties involved (Bohmert, Duwe, and Hipple, 2018). It typically includes moderated conversations, circles, or rituals in which all parties may express their feelings, share their experiences, and work toward a resolution that fits the needs of everyone involved. Cultural traditions, rites, and conventions are often employed to resolve conflicts among indigenous people. These traditions differ by country, but they often involve spiritual elements such as prayer, smudging, or the use of sacred artifacts.

According to Johnstone and Van Ness (2013), the term 'restorative justice' does not appear to have a single clear and established definition; rather, it is employed in a variety of ways. Some who have sought to define restorative justice have come to the conclusion, frequently with a sense of sorrow, that it implies 'all things to all'. This phrase is often used narrowly to refer to initiatives that bring impacted parties together to create a consensus on how to respond to crime. Another explanation for its usage is its reparative nature and ability to deter crime. It is most commonly used to refer to the notion that the preferred approach to all conflicts is peacebuilding via communication and agreement among parties who share the transformational vision(Doly,2017).

Restorative justice is commonly employed in South Africa's formal criminal court system, particularly in child and domestic abuse situations. At the informal level, it is seldom utilized to facilitate alternative community-based initiatives. It is proposed that restorative justice ideas be taught in a larger framework to resuscitate a 'ubuntu' worldview in Africa, hence encouraging societal transformation and conflict resolution (Schoeman, 2012). Restorative justice ideas and a 'ubuntu' worldview are inextricably linked, making them a perfect medium for bridging the gap between traditional culture and modern life (Schoeman, 2012). Furthermore, restorative justice prioritizes addressing the victim's needs and opinions. The goal is to acknowledge the victim's injuries, provide him or her a platform to express themselves,

and promote rehabilitation and self-empowerment. According to Louw (2016), victims' needs are crucial in restorative justice. The technique aims to lessen the negative impact on victims by providing opportunities for healing, self-empowerment, and a sense of revenge. Throughout the process, victims are empowered and given the chance to make decisions, which helps to restore their sense of control and agency (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). They may express their needs, concerns, and goals for restoration and actively participate in the development of a substantial settlement. Victims' safety and well-being are prioritized to make them feel comfortable and supported during the restorative process. This can be accomplished by offering emotional support, providing access to counselling services, or implementing safety measures to address concerns that may have mitigated the perpetrator's impact on the victim (Bolitho, 2015).

According to Daly and Proietti-Scifoni (2011), restorative justice requires offenders to own their wrongdoing, actively participate in the restitution process, and be held accountable for the harm they create. In recent years, there has been a substantial growth in recognition and implementation of the idea that criminals should be held accountable for their conduct in all areas of criminal justice, including law, policy, practice, and debates (Braithwaite, 2006). Anyone knowledgeable with criminology, or simply general culture, is aware of the commonly accepted view that offenders should be held accountable. In addition to being more commonly incorporated in statutes, there has been a greater emphasis on criminal culpability in various criminal justice outcomes (Richards, 2017). Restorative justice also recognizes the impact of the harm done on the larger community and seeks to actively involve community members in the process of resolving and minimizing the harm. This participation might include offering support, providing direction, engaging in discourse, and promoting reconciliation.

Restorative justice promotes transparent and sincere conversation among all parties implicated in the injury or dispute. This is achieved by the implementation of circles, conferences, or mediation, all of which provide a secure environment for individuals to articulate their emotions, exchange personal narratives, and attain mutual comprehension of the harm caused and the possible resolution of the conflict (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). The purpose of restorative justice is to provide assistance to victims in the process of facilitating their recovery. Opportunities for discourse, comprehension, and resolution contribute to a sense of conclusion for individuals who have been harmed. Such opportunities also allow people to express their thoughts, inquire about matters, obtain responses, and discover a way to recover and

reconstruct their lives. In essence, restorative justice acknowledges the distinct needs and experiences of victims and endeavours to prioritise those needs by placing the victim at the core of the process (Shapland, Atkinson, Atkinson, Chapman, Dignan, Howes, Johnstone, Robinson, and Sorsby, 2007). Restorative justice aims to address the needs of victims, who are frequently overlooked by traditional punitive methods, via opportunities for recognition, empowerment, assistance, and resolution.

Restorative justice prioritises the restoration of the harm inflicted by the offense. This may entail restitution, when the wrongdoer rectifies the situation by providing compensation to the victim or the community, or by undertaking additional measures to meet the particular needs and concerns of the victim. This ensures that the abuser remains accountable to the victim. The punishment of restitution and repair is implemented with the aim of promoting the long-term healing of the parties involved (Hewitt, 2016).

Typically, victims and offenders have the option to voluntarily participate in restorative justice proceedings. This guarantees that all participants are both willing and capable of participating in the procedure and that the results are determined by their respective requirements and preferences (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). Restorative justice seeks to tackle the underlying causes of injury and conflict and deter similar incidents. The objective is to cultivate a feeling of community, diminish repeat offenses, and encourage enduring healing and transformation by advocating for comprehension, empathy, and accountability (Sherman, Strang, Barnes, Woods, Bennett, Inkpen, Newbury-Birch, Rossner, Angel, Mearns, and Slothower, 2015.). Restorative justice may be implemented in many contexts such as in the criminal justice environment, in educational institutions, in professional environments, and within communities (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). It presents an alternative methodology to conventional punitive measures for addressing injury and conflict.

2.8.3 Ubuntu

The concept of ubuntu is a counter-philosophy to the Western philosophies of individualism and utilitarianism. It is a Zulu/Xhosa word with parallels in many other African languages, and it is most directly translated into English as 'humanity'. Perhaps the Nguni expression *'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'*, which means 'a person is a person through other people', best expresses its meaning (Gade, 2011).

Although the philosophy of ubuntu can be traced back to the Bantu peoples of southern Africa, it is now applied as a philosophy throughout the continent. It is perhaps best understood as a social philosophy founded on the principles of care and community, harmony and hospitality, respect, and responsiveness, as the idea encapsulates the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence (Eliastam, 2015). It has been described as a philosophy of peace, and it is perhaps best known as a guiding concept of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation efforts and the 'African Renaissance' which is a movement that encourages Africans to re-engage with African values. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa, led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, repositioned the motto of ubuntu as central to African conflict resolution discourse and reignited this African worldview (Müller, Eliastam, and Trahar, 2018). This indigenous peace-making process has also been used to address a wide range of issues, including family and marriage disputes, theft, property damage, murder, and war (Murithi, 2009). Akinola and Uzodike (2018) contend that it contradicts the majority of the components of a modern state: the rule of law, the judicial system, and constitutionalism, all of which are based on punitive rather than forgiving measures. When society was homogeneous, ubuntu worked well; however, the concepts of plurality, individual sovereignty, democratisation, and cultural globalisation impede its resurgence and adoption in contemporary political discourse (Poovan, Du Toit, and Engelbrecht, 2006). Ubuntu is a conflict prevention and peace building philosophy that is based on the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity, and a sense of shared destiny among peoples and communities. In practice, the ubuntu tradition is about reconciliation and peacebuilding in divided societies as well as in democratic participation (Mengesha, Yesuf and Gebre, 2015). Ubuntu is a guiding light in making peace and establishing harmony. The Xhosa community in South Africa, especially in rural areas, has remained steadfastly rooted in its customs and peace making based on the ubuntu principle, especially in relation to marital and family conflicts, theft, property damage, murder, and hostilities (Muruthi, 2008). Rather than seeing conflict resolution and reconciliation as distinct processes, ubuntu methods highlight the connection between the two.

African societies have access to well-established conflict management, peace-making, peace education, peace building, conflict monitoring, and conflict prevention mechanisms by virtue of ubuntu and restorative justice practices. Mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, arbitration, and negotiation are time-honoured methods of conflict resolution in Africa, according to Ajayi and Buhari (2014). Ubuntu has thus been a more restorative foundation for harmonious coexistence among African people than what is currently offered by modern courts. Families perform an essential function in conflict resolution in traditional societies because they are

central to establishing mechanisms for resolving disputes that affect the entire community (Mkhize, 2003).

2.9 Social Norms and Customs among the Zulu People

The saying, *'Ukwenda wukuzilahla'* (to marry is to cast oneself away), emphasizes the unpredictable nature of married life. A woman enters '*emzini'* (to her in-laws' house) with no idea what is expected of her, and in most circumstances, she has significant obstacles in adjusting to her in-laws' norms and lifestyle. The *'umamezala*' (mother-in-law) occasionally maintains a careful check on her since, in Zulu tradition, '*omakoti'* (brides) are seen to bring unneeded friction inside the in-laws' family and hence must be kept on a short leash (Zungu, 2020). '*Omamezala'* (mothers-in-law) have a tendency to force their will on their sons even after marriage, hence 'omakoti' frequently end up having nothing to say to their husbands (Hlophe 2005). This adage also suggests that in Zulu tradition, once married, a lady cannot readily return to her birth parents, even if the marriage fails. The *'ilobolo'*, whether paid in full or not, serves as a seal that assures her complete surrender to her husband and the in-laws' norms. According to Masuku (2005, p. 81), "[this custom] actually suggests to the girl that she [has passed] the point of no return and her destiny cannot be altered". These practices represent the true essence of a patriarchal Zulu culture. The lack of a tradition or language that addresses men in a comparable manner, informing them of what is expected of them after marriage, demonstrates how firmly patriarchal Zulu culture is. This culturally established attitude towards women allows men to do anything they want in a marriage since they believe they are not answerable to anyone, least of all their wives. As a result, when it comes to situations of adultery, males are not given the same scrutiny as women, who risk being sent back to their parents' homes in disgrace. Unfortunately, such cultural and social standards might foster many types of violence. The conventional belief that men having the authority to control or chastise women exposes women to abuse in intimate relationships (WHO, 2009).

2.10 Dynamics that Impact Intimate Partner Violence

IPV features can vary in degree, frequency, and type of abuse. Physical violence or injury committed against the victim can be actions such as striking, slapping, kicking, choking, or the use of weapons. Emotional abuse includes verbal insults, constant criticism, threats, and controlling actions that manipulate, degrade, humiliate, or dehumanise the victim. Sexual abuse can be any non-consensual sexual activity or compulsion, including forced or unwanted sexual acts, sexual harassment, and sexual identity manipulation" (Tur-Prats, 2019). Financial

violence can also occur and is considered a dynamic of intimate partner violence. Controlling the victim's financial resources, limiting their access to money, withholding financial support, or stopping them from working or making financial decisions are all examples of financial abuse (Tur-Prats, 2019). Psychological abuse includes methods that undermine the victim's self-worth, assurance, and psychological well-being. Isolation, surveillance, coercion, and threats of self-harm or harm to others are a few examples. IPV often has a cyclical nature, as it is characterised by alternating phases of escalating tension, a violent incident, and subsequent times of remorse or reconciliation (Wangmann, 2011). This pattern has the potential to persist eternally, as the abusive conduct progressively escalates in frequency and intensity. The core of IRV is the perpetrator's need for dominance and authority over their spouse or partner. Abusive individuals may utilise a range of tactics to exert dominance, including physical aggression, psychological coercion, seclusion, and intimidation. It is imperative to comprehend that IPV may transpire in any relationship, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, or financial status. This issue is a substantial concern that requires attention, support, and resources to safeguard the safety and welfare of current and potential victims (Wangmann, 2011).

Michael Johnson, a renowned authority in the domain of IPV, devised various typologies to elucidate the dynamics and patterns of violent relationships. These typologies, that are briefly discussed below, facilitate the classification of different forms of abusive behaviours and provide insight into the intricacies of intimate partner abuse.

2.10.1 Domestic violence

An individual in a household will commit acts of violence or use violence alongside other forms of coercive control to exert complete dominance over the other in the relationship. Males are the predominant instigators of interpersonal terrorism in heterosexual relationships. Violent resistance often occurs when the partner/spouse is victimised in acts of intimate terrorism. These two forms of intimate relationship abuse are prevalent in agency samples due to clear and evident causes (Johnson, Leone and Xu, 2014). ‘Intimate terrorism’ refers to a consistent pattern of abuse and manipulative control that is anticipated to occur. This form of violence also refers to a consistent and continuous cycle of violence and manipulative control that is highly likely to instil fear in victims and leads them to seek assistance from law enforcement, obtain a protection order, find refuge in a shelter, or initiate divorce proceedings. This form of abuse often results in physical injuries that necessitate medical intervention. They also tend to draw the attention of bystanders or neighbours who then report the incident to the authorities

(Johnson, 2005).

2.10.2 Victim support and help seeking

Women who are unknowingly subjected to any sort of abuse by their spouse often require treatment tailored to the specific trauma they have endured. Gondolf and Fisher's (1988) survivor theory and Merritt-Gray and Wuest's (1995) reclaiming-self theory are popular theories that strive to clarify why victims seek help. Gondolf and Fisher (1988) found that victims are more likely to seek help when the level of physical violence against them has increased. This notion suggests that victims of domestic abuse should seek help. Studies indicate that women actively resist partner abuse and that breaking free from violence is a gradual process rather than a one-time occurrence. Many women exit their abusive relationships several times before finally departing for good, as demonstrated by Leone, Johnson, and Cohan in 2007. The study's estimates indicate that victims of interpersonal violence are quite likely to report the incident to the authorities. Medical aid data indicates that those who experience intimate violence are four times more inclined to seek medical treatment compared to those involved in situational relationship violence (Leone, Johnson, and Cohan, 2007).

Research on intimate partner violence (IPV) in rural Australia and the United States found that older women aged 40 to 60 had challenges in seeking assistance due to factors such as geographic isolation, financial difficulties, and limited social support. Due to the tiny and isolated nature of these communities, women residing there may refrain from revealing abusive relationships due to concerns about tarnishing their reputation and breaching confidentiality. In these countries, traditional patriarchal norms often dictate that women are required to handle challenges independently (Pathak, Dhairyawan, and Tariq, 2019).

According to Sylaska and Edwards (2013), victim support can be offered in the form of formal and informal support structures. The majority of IPV victims report to at least one informal support person, for example a friend, a family member (more likely a female), a classmate, a co-worker, or a neighbour. Family and parental involvement is also an important support mechanism for victims. Parents can provide guidance and support by vetting their child's romantic partners, identifying potential red flags or warning signs, and offering insights based on their own knowledge and observations of human nature.

Parents have a responsibility to protect and guide their children, particularly when they enter into romantic relationships. Vetting their child's partner is often deemed part of this responsibility as it may ensure the young person's well-being. However, it is crucial to respect young people's autonomy; moreover, there is a fine line between acknowledging their right to making their own choices and making decisions for them or requesting them to reverse an inappropriate decision (Manseau, Fernet, Hébert, Collin-Vézina, and Blais, 2008).

2.10.3 The impact of IPV on household members

The effects of gender-based violence vary just like the nature of the violence and the time when it happens do. According to a WHO (2018) report, the effects of domestic abuse and IPV could lead to physical trauma and/or psychological trauma or stress and will leave victims in a state of fear and feeling out of control. The report revealed that, in terms of physical trauma, 42% of the women who had suffered sexual or physical violence at the hands of their partners had been left with injuries, while some had even been disabled. Such violence also compromised some victims' mental health as they tended to suffer from depression, alcohol abuse disorders, sexual activities resulting in communicable diseases, as well as hypertension and cardiovascular diseases and even disability. Victims admitted to feeling deprived of autonomy and they feared leaving the relationship, which led to further abusive sexual victimisation, reproductive control (or lack thereof), lack of family planning, and unprotected sex. Many of these women considered or had an abortion and contracted sexually transmitted diseases and/or HIV. Studies Tenkorang, (2018) also found that factors such as lack of autonomy in the relationship and difficulties in seeking care and other services, along with psychological trauma/stress, contributed to 16% of women giving birth to low birth-weight babies. Also, 28% of female murders were committed by their partners, and women are 4.5 times more likely to commit suicide than those in more stable relationships. Also, it was found that guns were often used in the commission of violence against women (Habumuremyi, and HABAMENSHI, 2019). Even though Abrahams et al. (2010) argue that men are most commonly the victims of firearm injuries and attacks, they state that guns are used at home to threaten, control, and even murder women partners and spouses. Data from various sources Sorenson, and Schut, (2018) have shown that guns are more likely to be used against a family member than to protect the family in times of danger, such as in the case of an intruder entering a home.

It is noteworthy that the cited data do not by any margin truly reflect the true scope and magnitude of the problem as not all cases of gender-based violence and/or child abuse have

been cited in this report for obvious reasons. However, the cited data affirm that violence leads to various health complications that threaten the livelihood and well-being of victims. It also leads to victims fearing for their lives, while in the case of IPV many fear their partners/spouses and are terrified of leaving the relationship due to the probability of retaliation (Scheffer Lindgren, and Renck, 2008).

Many homes are run by women as their male partners/spouses work full-time. For instance, in 2019 Statistics South Africa (2019) reported that black African women had an unemployment rate of over 30%. The survey also revealed that one out of five (21%) women in relationships had experienced physical violence by a spouse or intimate partner in the survey period. Also, statistics showed that less educated women were more likely to fall victim to physical violence compared to those with secondary or higher education qualifications. Moreover, the prevalence of physical and sexual violence seemingly decreased with the wealth quantile, which suggests that low wealth quantile areas had more incidences of physical and sexual violence that wealth quantile areas where the numbers were significantly lower. The Eastern Cape had the highest rate of survivors of physical violence (31.6%), while the Northwest had the highest rate of sexual violence (11.8%). In ESwatini, it is documented that one of the inadvertent effects of violence in the home is that it creates a rather disruptive or chaotic environment, which exposes many young children to sexual violence at some point in their lives (Breiding et al., 2010).

Moylan et al. (2010) state that children witness multiple forms of violence in homes, and children themselves have been victims of child abuse. These occurrences of violence that occur either as direct or indirect abuse can lead to induced levels of anxiety, depression, and an unhealthy relationship with peers in social settings. Furthermore, these complications are also visible even at times when the victim is separated from the abuser. Galántai, Ligeti, and Wirth, (2019), whose study was conducted in Hungrary, argue that in situations where people are divorcing, anxiety levels tend to rise in children and the mothers because they believe that the man will be abusive again instead of letting them go. Galántai et al. (2019) also state that in such instances, the abuser will keep abusing the mother and child through nonviolent forms, like stalking, demanding to see the child under false pretences (i.e., acting like they care, when they really want to control and continue the abusive relationship). But this latter argument is from a developed country's perspective; in developing countries, such instances of divorce are not condoned as they go against social norms and beliefs. In developing countries such as South Africa, women seem less likely to leave an abusive relationship because of reasons related to

psychological distress and financial dependence (Peterman, Potts, O'Donnell, Thompson, Shah, Oertelt-Prigione, and Van Gelder, N. 2020). Alangea et al. (2018) also found a positive correlation between violence and increasing severity of depression. According to their study on gender-based violence in Ghana, IPV had a negative mental health impact on both the victims and the children observing the abuse. A major risk identified by Alangea et al. (2018) is that acts of violence damage and threaten the mental health of victims, and this manifests in how they respond, manage, cope, and function in a violent environment, which further prolongs their experience of IPV.

2.10.4 Intimate partner violence realities in rural African areas

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region of the African continent located south of the Sahara. IPV in sub-Saharan Africa affects 36% of the population, and several African countries rank among the highest with this challenge globally (McCloskey, Boonzaier, Steinbrenner and Hunter, 2016). Health-related issues are one of the most concerning issues that manifest because of IPV, thus research has focused much on this phenomenon. Women in sub-Saharan Africa exhibit a variety of psychological disorders in response to IPV, although both men and women exhibit psychological symptoms following a physical altercation (Jankey, Próspero and Fawson, 2011). For female victims, such altercations can be detrimental to their physical and mental health. For instance, IPV and negative pregnancy outcomes have been linked in a study by Pallitto et al. (2013). Women who reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by their spouses/partners had a higher risk of unintended or unwanted pregnancies than their less threatened counterparts. A lifetime exposure to IPV has also been linked to an increased risk of having a non-live birth, and in many such cases it was IPV that resulted in a pregnancy ending in a miscarriage, induced abortion, or termination (Stöckl, Filippi, Watts and Mbwambo, 2012).

A study that was conducted in the sub-Saharan region of Africa and that looked into variables of empowering recourses for women, such as employment, discovered that women who lived in more gender unequal areas were slightly more likely to be abused. Female employment increased the risk of abuse, particularly in settings where wife-beating used to be an acceptable norm and part of the value system. This finding was affirmed by the observation that a violent retaliation was more likely in a context that encouraged the husband's violent response. The study concluded that the association between abuse and employment was twice as strong in areas where wife-beating was widely accepted (Cools and Kotsadam, 2017).

Research has also found that people in patriarchal-oriented societies are more likely to justify wife-beating. Furthermore, widespread acceptance of patriarchy is also a strong predictor of widespread IPV prevalence. Macro-level inequalities also seem to be a predictor of a dangerous environment where IPV is likely to occur (Ackerson, and Subramanian,2008), which is apparent in rural settings. IPV and other forms of gendered physical violence are also common in countries where men control the wealth, as evidenced by large gender disparities in earnings, land ownership, and legal rights in such areas. Such forms of violence are passed down through generations as sons of abused mothers are highly likely to beat their wives while their sisters are also highly likely to be abused (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2020). Clearly, violence breeds more violence.

The study by Tandrayen-Ragoobur (2020) has also found that IPV decreases as the GDP of a country increases. This scholar argues that, with increasing levels of education, employment, urbanisation, state capacity, democratisation, and feminist activism, entire countries have tended to become less abusive. Even if a woman only has a primary education, she is much less likely to be physically or sexually assaulted if she lives in a country with a high proportion of female graduates. These findings suggest that IPV can be predicted by a low GDP, a lack of cyber access, and a lack of education, which are features that are particularly prevalent in countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Tandrayen-Ragoobur, 2020).

2.11 A South African Perspective on IPV

Perceptions of violence vary significantly among cultures and within civilisations where various definition, effects, and underlying factors define the prevalence and severity of this phenomenon (Fiske & Rai, 2015; Rodgers & Jones, 2009). However, in research examining moral reasoning regarding violent behaviour, these differences are often disregarded as exceptional cases. The moral disengagement framework is a widely accepted model used to elucidate the causes of violent conduct. It argues that hazardous behaviours result from the absence of regulating self-sanctions, and these behaviours are referred to as moral disengagement strategies (Dedios Sanguineti and Jovchelovitch, 2021; Bandura, 2002; Bandura et al., 1996).

The enduring and significant level of gender-based violence in South Africa may be seen as a result of our historical inheritance. South Africa has a long history of violence but, despite the abolition of apartheid, violence (and particularly violence against women and children) continues to be a significant concern. According to Postmes, Haslam,and Swaab, (2005)

cultural and social standards exert a significant influence on the formation of behavioural patterns within partnerships. In this regard, norms can either serve as a safeguard against violence or promote and endorse its utilisation. Therefore, despite the decline in politically motivated violence after South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, there has been a subsequent rise in the overall level of violence in this country (Barbarin, Richter, and DeWet, 2001). Patterns of violence in South African societal systems remain discernible. Amidst the prevalence of violence in our communities, a significant number of individuals are being shot each year in instances of conflict. The aggression portrayed by taxi proprietors is a case in point. Following the abolishment of apartheid, studies on violence have mostly focused on four categories: homicide, sexual and gender-based violence, violence among adolescents and against children, and public violence associated with protests (Brankovic, 2019). The proliferation of a society that is characterised by violence has become widely accepted and critiqued. Collectively, acts of violence in South Africa have seen a substantial surge of 155% from 2004 to 2015. Research suggests that vigilantism has a high likelihood of becoming violent during public protests at a rate of 97%. Similarly, border disputes have an 87% likelihood of occurring, xenophobic events have an 84% likelihood, housing issues have a 70% likelihood, water-related conflicts have a 72% likelihood, elections have a 71% likelihood, and conflicts among political parties have a 65% likelihood of turning violent during public protests (Brankovic, 2019). South Africa has experienced a significant rise in incidents of police torture, as evidenced by a recorded increase from 50 instances in 2012/2013 to 145 cases in 2014/2015. This surge may be attributed to the public's endorsement of any strategy by the police that has the potential to decrease violent crime (Brankovic, 2019). These statistics serve as evidence that South Africans have embraced violence as a prevailing standard.

Currently, IPV is assumed to be predominantly committed by males, with murder being the most severe outcome of IPV (Stöckl, Devries, Rotstein, Abrahams, Campbell, Watts, and Moreno, 2013). Numerous scholars have examined IPV in South Africa as an acquired social conduct that is perpetrated by both males and females. Several ideas have been suggested to elucidate the prevalence and enduring nature of IPV. Dutton (1995, cited in Sandra et al., 2004), proposes a layered ecological model for wife assault. This model operates at a comprehensive theoretical level and considers that violence in relationships is influenced by several factors that occur at different levels. Dutton argues that attitudes and beliefs are shaped by cultural and sub-cultural norms and values that are part of the macrosystem. Thus, social isolation and stress are influential elements at the community and social network levels whereas, within the family

unit, there are variables that might impact dynamics such as conflict between the couple and patterns of communication. These variables are part of the microsystem of the family. According to Makhubele, Shika and Malesa (2018), a person's personal qualities and experiences, including abilities, emotional reactions, attributions, and acquired habits, have an influence on their subconscious minds.

According to Hou, Yu, Fang, and Epstein, (2016) the phenomenon of intergenerational violence perpetuation has been extensively documented in many contexts. Offspring of women who experience domestic violence are at a high risk of perpetrating IPV and, in some contexts, a high likelihood of having been victims of violence during their childhood. Offspring of mothers who experience domestic violence are also at a heightened risk of enduring abuse in their adult lives and they tend to remain in such partnerships. This creates a perpetual loop that becomes hard to break, necessitating profound self-reflection and mental fortitude from the individual involved (Kabir and Khan, 2019). Women who experience childhood physical abuse from their parents are also at a higher risk of experiencing intimate partner violence in adulthood (Whitfield, Anda, Dube, and Felitti, 2003). This means that childhood exposure to domestic abuse normalises violence within specific contexts, while males acquire the knowledge of employing violence while women develop the capacity to endure it, or at the very least, endure aggressive conduct. Research comparing different cultures has found that intimate partner violence is likely to be prevalent in communities where violence is common during conflicts and political disputes (Asay, DeFrain, Metzger, and Moyer, 2016.). South Africa serves as an illustration of this correlation as research in this country has indicated that women who experienced partner violence tended to have elevated levels of sadness, anxiety, and phobias compared to women who did not experience abuse (Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna, and Shai, 2010). IPV has also been associated with alcohol and substance misuse, disordered food and sleep patterns, a sedentary lifestyle, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress disorder, smoking, self-inflicted damage, and risky sexual behaviour (Tarzia, Forsdike, Feder and Hegarty, 2020).

South Africa has recorded the most elevated rates of female homicides globally, while it has also been revealed that 50% of female homicides in this country were perpetrated by domestic partners (Matzopoulos, Prinsloo, Mhlongo, Marineau, Cornell, Bowman, Mamashela, Gwebushe, Ketelo, Martin, and Dekel, 2023). Nevertheless, the profound medical, psychological, and societal ramifications of this issue remain largely concealed. Women who

have experienced abuse are twice as prone as women who have not experienced violence to report physical and mental health issues. This issue is expensive due to the fact that women in abusive relationships tend to utilise health and other services to a large extent. Coker, Davis, Arias, Desai, Sanderson, Brandt, and Smith, (2002). examined the association between intimate partner violence (IPV) and the emergence of long-lasting health issues, and both men and women with a history of a chronic condition were shown to have a correlation with IPV. An association was found between a long-standing mental illness and physical intimate partner violence (IPV) in women, as well as a correlation between males who engaged in abuse of power and authority as well as IPV. According to Cilliers (2014), any form of abuse in a close personal connection might result in the killing of a spouse. However, the impact of abuse varies based on factors such as the frequency, kind, and the victim's reaction to and interpretation of the abuse. Long-term emotional abuse inflicted on an individual may have a greater detrimental impact than physical violence (Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans, and Herbison,1996). Frequently, women who are subjected to abuse tend to disregard obvious indications of potential mistreatment within their romantic relationships. Cilliers (2014) states that the signs of an abusive relationship include consistent humiliation, sudden bursts of anger, aggressive behaviour, mood swings, sexual problems, emotional dependence, manipulation, a history of troubled intimate relationships, shifting blame for past break-ups, control and power issues in various aspects of life, social and financial isolation, an inability to accept the partner's true personality, and threatening behaviour towards the partner, her loved ones, property, or pets.

Explanations for the origins of IPV are based on numerous factors, including biosocial, psychological, and sociocultural component (Kerrison, Bachman, and Alvarez, 2015). Children who are brought up in households where violence is prevalent will acquire the tendency to employ violence in their own relationships, thereby perpetuating a cycle of violence (Murphy, Fanslow, Gulliver, and Paton, 2013.). IPV has been characterised in several studies as a manifestation of patriarchal terrorism, attributing it to a pervasive framework of power and dominance. Previous research has approached IPV from a situational standpoint and recognised it as a result of an individual's inability to effectively handle conflict. The true prevalence of violence is uncertain due to under-reporting caused by the fear of social disgrace and the potential for further mistreatment by law enforcement authorities.

Straus et al. (2009) argue that victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) are particularly susceptible to various physical, sexual, psychological, behavioural, and potentially deadly

repercussions based on the type of abuse experienced. These factors are associated with a rise in emergency department visits and a heightened susceptibility to gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, gynaecological, and mental ailments, such as depression, substance misuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Women who decline to engage in sexual intercourse without the use of a condom are more likely to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) than those who agree. Furthermore, if they are coerced into having unprotected sex, they face an elevated risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV, as well as unintended pregnancies (Thompson, Bonomi, Anderson, Reid, Dimer, Carrell, and Rivara, 2006). While acts of intimate partner violence (IPV) are often associated with domestic violence due to a partner's aggressive and violent character, IPV is not limited to home settings as domestic violence typically implies, as it can also occur between couples who do not reside together. South Africa is notorious as one of the countries with the most elevated rates of intimate partner or domestic violence globally.

There is consensus among academics that women are often expected to display submissiveness and be consistently sexually accessible to their intimate partners (Breiding et al., 2014; Hancox, 2012). According to Hogue, Hogue and Kader (2009), it is often believed that males have the right and responsibility to use violence as a means of 'correcting' or disciplining women for perceived wrongdoings. These offenses may involve a hesitancy among women to participate in sexual activities with their spouses/partners. Perpetrators may engage in sexual assault by exposing their victims to pornographic pictures or material without their consent, or by using verbal degradation during sexual acts. Hogue and Kader (2009) validate the existence of health facility-based research conducted in South Africa, indicating that a majority (55%) of pregnant women endure physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.

Research indicates that the likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence is greatest in countries where violence is perceived as an accepted and endorsed societal norm (Jewkes, 2002). According to a study undertaken by the Medical Research Council, it was found that 25% of women in the South African population had encountered physical abuse at some stage in their lives (Jewkes, 2002). Annually, around one million South African women experience non-lethal mistreatment by their intimate partners (Kaukinen, 2004). Prior to the enactment of the Physical Abuse Act of 1998 in 1999, women who were victims of abuse were required to initiate legal proceedings against the offender for offenses including assault, attack with the

intention to cause serious bodily injury, abduction, rape, indecent assault, or attempted assault. No statute explicitly included a specific kind of offense referred to as 'IPV' or ‘wife abuse’ (Kaukinen, 2004, in Makhubele, Shika and Malesa, 2018). A separate study carried out in rural areas of South Africa focused on Xhosa women. The study found that various factors, such as the cultural practice of lobola payment, their disadvantaged family background, lack of education leading to unemployment, and their remote geographical location contributed to their susceptibility to intimate partner violence (IPV) and hindered their ability to leave abusive relationships (Mesatywa, 2014).

2.12 A Global Perspective on Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is a global issue which has been given great attention in recent years due to the severe rates of incidences. The problem has been acknowledged as the primary factor contributing to female homicides on a global scale. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021), 30% of the surveyed women had been subjected to physical and/or sexual assault from either an intimate relationship, non-partner sexual violence, or both. Intimate partners account for around 38% of all female homicides globally.

Kaukinen, Gover and Hartman (2012), along with other researchers (Cercone et al., 2005; Foshee, Bauman, Linder, Rice and Wilcher, 2007), have shown that college dating violence involves both young men and women as both victims and perpetrators. This violence often occurs within relationships where both partners are violent towards each other. Herrera, Wierserma and Cleveland (2008) assert that women's engagement in violent behaviours is shaped by their prior experiences as victims. Research has indicated that women who are involved in a relationship with a violent male partner are considerably more prone to manifesting their own violent and aggressive inclinations that those who are in stable relationships (Rode, Rode, and Januszek, 2015.). It was notably found that women exhibiting violent inclinations, although having non-violent spouses, refrained from acting upon these inclinations. The analysis suggests that the utilisation of violence by young women is influenced by their association with a partner who engages in aggressive behaviour (Simons, Burt, and Simons, 2008). In Harned's (2001) study, distinct variations were identified in the kind and consequences of violence encountered by adolescent males and females. She found that women were disproportionately subjected to sexual violence while, conversely, men were more prone to being subjected to psychological abuse than women. Her research demonstrates similarities in the likelihood of physical violence.

A study that was conducted in China argues that intimate partner and sexual violence is a significant factor in the development of many physical, mental, and sexual health issues, both in the short and long term (Honda et al., 2018). Another study suggests that incidents of interpersonal violence are seldom solitary occurrences of violence, but rather tend to involve a combination of physical and sexual assault (Lysova, Dim and Dutton, 2019). This notion is reinforced by Gage and Thomas (2017), who found that 15-71% of women suffered physical and/or sexual assault by an intimate partner over the course of their lives. The WHO reported that, in a region in South Asia, the prevalence of intimate partner violence was 37.7%, which was much higher than in other regions (WHO, 2017). The latter survey revealed that, within the surveyed population in South Korea, 71.7% of the surveyed women reported instances of "being controlled" by their intimate male partners, 36.6% experienced psychological/emotional abuse, 22.4% had been exposed to physical violence, and 37.9% had encountered sexual harassment (Hong, Yeon and Ju, 2015).

A research study that was conducted in Turkey by Yavuzer (2013) included 34 female participants. The study revealed that every single woman had encountered physical violence at some stage in their personal relationships with partners. Merely 3% reported experiencing economic violence; however, a significant 59% reported experiencing psychological abuse. Of the 34 women who were questioned, 53% expressed the belief that they had been unable to prevent the abuse, whereas 29% reported seeking assistance from their relatives. According to 12% of the respondents, they had felt the need to weep, while 3% had thoughts of self-harm.

2.13 Honour and Shame as Intrinsic Components of Masculinity and Femininity

Anthropologists initially examined the concept of honour in societies from the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean region. Subsequent social psychological studies conducted in Western regions of the world argue that honour is a fundamental concept that is deeply ingrained in Western culture and exerts a significant influence on human psychology (Gregg, 2007). Nevertheless, there exist substantial disparities in the connotation and significance of honour among these two distinct cultural realms. Honour, as often understood in Western cultural contexts, refers to possessing a robust moral character and demonstrating unwavering commitment to ethical values. This definition places exclusive emphasis on the individual as the origin of honour and primarily defines honour as a personal attribute (Uskul et al., 2012).

The social conceptions of honour and shame are intricately connected to the ideas of femininity and masculinity as well as the concept of social standing. Honour is a social position that is granted to people and social groupings and families, regardless of their size. The societal conceptions of honour and shame, which are intrinsically linked to the notions of femininity and masculinity, exhibit a dualistic norm. This dichotomy is readily apparent in the patriarchal and patrilineal society of the Middle East (Uskul et al., 2012). In order to elucidate the duality inherent in the societal concept of honour and shame, it is necessary to explicate the social constructions of femininity and masculinity and social standing (Awwad, 2011). The concepts of honour and shame, when applied to women, influence the mechanisms of societal control that aim to oppress women, hence justifying acts of violence based on gender (Feldman, 2010).

2.14 Femicide

2.14.1 Femicide as a phenomenon in South Africa

The term ‘femicide’ was first used to refer to the killing of a woman (Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 2015). Diana Russell, a feminist pioneer, expert, and activist on violence against women, was the first to publicly introduce this concept (Widyono, 2008). While testifying about female murders at the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Brussels in 1976, she coined the term ‘femicide’, but she did not define it at the time. According to Widyono (2008), in 1998 Jacquelyn Campbell and Carol Runyan redefined femicide as "all killing of women, regardless of motive or perpetrator status”. This definition eliminates the need for researchers to clarify the perpetrator's motive or relationship with the victim before classifying the murder as femicide; instead, much of their work focuses on intimate or non-intimate femicide. In 2001, Russell expanded her definition of femicide to include "the killing of women by males because they are females" (Widyono, 2008). Shifting from the initial definition of femicide as the "misogynistic killings of women by men”, Russell and Caputi (1990) postulate that femicide is the murder of women by men motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership over women. Femicide has been identified as the leading cause of the premature death of women worldwide, but little to no research on femicide has been conducted in South Africa. According to the Women's Aid website, a global study conducted in 2011 revealed that, despite a decrease in the number of homicides worldwide, the number of femicides has increased.

Violence against women can take many forms, ranging from verbal harassment and other forms of emotional abuse to daily physical or sexual abuse, and all of these forms of violence

contribute to the causes of femicide (WHO, 2012). According to research, most femicides are committed by men who are family members or friends of the victim. A close relationship between the perpetrator and the victim can sometimes help in identifying the perpetrator. In some cases, the perpetrator is the alleged victim's current or former intimate partner (Nowak, 2012). In many societies, women are viewed as weaker and more fragile than men, and also inferior to them. This viewpoint contributes to gender inequality, which weakens women's position in society and makes them vulnerable to any type of violence. Personal bias also contributes in many ways to female killings, as some cultural norms regard women as objects that can be controlled in a variety of ways (Padayachee, 2020). New forms of femicide have more recently emerged worldwide as people's values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours have changed. For instance, as technology advances to create diverse, easy, and fast ways of accessing information via the Internet, social media, and other means, more criminals are taking advantage of this space to mastermind their acts through various methods and means. In South Africa, the most common type of femicide is intimate femicide, followed by other forms of the abuse and killing of women. Women are far more likely than men to be assaulted, raped, or killed by a current or former partner anywhere globally, and it is most common in relationships with a history of domestic violence. Non-intimate femicide refers to the killing of women by someone with whom they did not have an intimate partner relationship. It encompasses several femicide subtypes, including familial femicide, femicide by an 'other known perpetrator', and stranger femicide (CFOJA, 2015).

The way women are portrayed in society contributes to the abuse and murder of many. Men who murder women may be motivated by a socially constructed right to do so as they feel superior to females and kill them to demonstrate their dominance. Femicide can be motivated by pleasure or sadistic desires for women, or it can be motivated by the assumption of ownership over women (Baker et al., 2015). Furthermore, the complexities and causes of femicide are rooted in deeply entrenched societal structures such as gender inequality, sexism, and power imbalances, all of which contribute to the problem going unnoticed. For example, some females are afraid to report cases of abuse, and when there is no pattern of abuse, proving that the homicide was intentional can be difficult, which is why some cases of female homicide are not classified as femicide (Baker et al., 2015).

The radial increase of femicide has become a problem in society and the country; there is no brother-and-sister and relationship in societies as there used to be; women are not safe even at

home and they now prefer to limit their daily activities out of fear, or they avoid going out alone because a woman is killed any time of day and no one is held accountable for this scourge. According to Crabtree (2020), the current South African President, Ramaphosa, stated that legislative amendments on 'minimum sentencing' in cases of gender-based violence, bail conditions for suspects, and more excellent protection for women who are victims of intimate partner violence are in the works.

2.14.2 Intimate Femicide

Intimate femicide is the killing of women by their current or former partners and, in some cases, family members (Stockl, 2010). When there is a high level of ongoing violence in a relationship, intimate femicide is more likely to occur. Studies on intimate partner violence have revealed that acts of violence rarely occur independently but rather coexist with other forms of violence (Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2010). According to Mathews (2010), the WHO multi-country study confirms that 30 to 56% of women who reported intimate partner violence also described partner sexual violence. In addition to the gender imbalance in the number of women killed by their partners, evidence suggests that women who kill their male intimate partners act in self-defence after ongoing violence and intimidation (Daly and Wilson, 2016). This corresponds with South African statistics that show that women are more likely to murder their partners while they are still in the relationship, whereas men are more likely to murder an estranged partner, and that women are more likely to murder their partners as a result of arguments or quarrels, whereas men are more likely to kill for jealousy (Hotton, 2011).

Intimate femicide has been consistently linked to a history of intimate partner violence. Given that intimate femicide is the most extreme form of intimate partner violence, Brodie (2012) believes it is critical to investigate the gendered nature of this act. According to Brodie (2021), murdering a female partner does not happen 'out of nowhere', but occurs after a long history of violence which could have been both physical and psychological. In feminist discourse, men's use of violence is interpreted as a result of gendered power differentials, with violence construed as a means of control or used when striving for control, which may or may not be realised and may or may not be a conscious motivation. As a result, intimate femicide is regarded as a drastic measure. According to Brodie (2021), intimate femicide is frequently portrayed in popular media as "losing self-control" when it is, in many ways, an attempt to gain control when there is the fear of losing a partner, whether that fear is real or not. Furthermore, the act of murdering an intimate partner may be associated with other emotions, such as

extreme anger at the woman for violating her perceived role, whether real or imagined, or suspicion of having an extramarital affair. Violence is justified as retaliation for her "betrayal" in some cultural contexts, as a man defending his honour with violence is acceptable (Mathews, 2010).

Scholars such as Mathews (2013) have proposed dowry-related femicide as another type of intimate femicide. A dowry is a custom according to which the bride's family gives cattle, money, or property to the groom's family. When the bride and groom's families seek a more considerable dowry after their marriage, or when the groom's family is dissatisfied with the dowry received, the woman is referred to as an ‘unsuitable wife’. The groom's family then tortures and harasses the woman, often forcing her to commit suicide (Etherington and Baker, 2015). Dowry is a commercial transaction that strengthens women's financial dependence on their husbands. The custom of paying a dowry was and still is practised by Hindus in India, which is where it originated. However, as time passed, it gained popularity among other religions and cultures, including Muslims and Christians (Roa and Codeiro 2018). The justification for the dowry phenomenon is typically that it allows a wealthy woman to marry into a higher scale, thereby increasing the groom's wealth and status, while also giving a less talented, plain-looking, or less educated woman the opportunity to marry, which she would otherwise have been denied (Banerjee, 2014).

According to Chapman (2014), one of the many causes of dowry femicide is misogyny, which manifests in a variety of ways. The acceptance of misogyny encourages men to believe that they can dominate their wives after marriage. Misogyny takes the form of what is referred to as ‘mental abuse’. For instance, a husband may intentionally separate his wife from their children, leaving her without water or food. According to research conducted in India, the family is the most common location where violence against women occurs, and it is most notable in the form of dowry-related deaths and suicides (Saravanan, 2000). In 2013, approximately 8 038 women were murdered in India as a result of dowry-related assaults (Karp, Marwah and Manchanda, 2015).

According to Kouta, Boira, Nudelman and Gill (2018), attempts have been made to explain femicide using various positions, paradigms, and theoretical perspectives. Among these, the ecological model and the multicausal approach proposed by Corradi et al. (2016) are appropriate because they allow for the incorporation of cultural elements into explanations of

the complex phenomenon of femicide. Cultural factors have been known to contribute to femicide in several European countries, according to Kouta et al. (2017). In many cultures, a person's identity is inseparably linked to their family unit. In such a culture, family honour is viewed as a personal reflection on each family member. As a result, family members may react strongly to the actions of other family members that appear to bring dishonour to the family. As seen in the practice of honour killings, these intense reactions can sometimes result in extreme violence. 'Honour killing' is a phenomenon that occurs when a female family member is suspected of bringing the family dishonour. Extramarital sex and premarital sex are two forms of sexual dishonour. A woman can also be murdered for seemingly minor offences like socializing with men, seeking a divorce, or even failing to serve a meal on time. The act may not have even occurred with the female's consent, as men have killed women simply because they were rape victims or because their husbands had a nightmare that their wife had betrayed him. It is also unnecessary to verify the behaviour, as many women were also killed solely based on rumours and speculation within the community. As a result, the most common reasons for honour killings are pretty varied. Similarly, the circumstances surrounding each murder varied greatly (Plant, 2005).

2.14.3 The impact of femicide

The effects of violence on women differ according to the severity of the violent acts committed against them. As men become increasingly aggressive, they cause more serious physical harm. Victims of femicide invariably to suffer severe consequences due to the nature of this type of violence. When a victim survives, the severe violence she experienced worsens her mental and physical condition, but it is her family members who suffer when she dies. Depression also worsens when the violence is sexual and severe (Hernanez, 2021). Not only is intimate partner femicide the most heinous form of femicide, but femicide has a long-term and robust impact on women's surroundings as well. The surviving children of women murdered by intimate partners, for example, suffer long-term consequences because they lose one parent to the murder and the other to prison, and they are frequently forced to leave their parental home and adjust to a new life (WHO, 2012).

2.14.4 Current legislation on femicide

According to Jeffery (2019), on 25 November 2015, a report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences to the General Assembly (document A/71/398) considered data collection and analysis on femicide a global

challenge and requested all state parties to establish a Femicide Watch. In response to the UN call, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development established the African continent's first Femicide Watch in 2018 (Jeffery, 2019). The Femicide Watch is a repository for all cases of femicide in participating countries. It was established to assist in capturing and tracking down every femicide case; to carefully analyse data to determine trends and profiles of offenders and victims; to develop responsive and impactful policies, laws, programs, and initiatives; to channel resources for intervention to areas in need; and to publish the Femicide Watch regularly to raise awareness of femicide and keep countries informed (Spies, 2020).

The South African government approved the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan in March 2020, according to Okech (2021). The National Strategic Plan aims to provide a multi-sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to strengthen the government of South Africa's overall coordinated national response to the crisis of gender-based violence and femicide (Okech, 2021). According to Spies (2020), the strategy aims to address the needs and challenges faced by all, particularly those across age, sexual orientation, sexual and gender identities, and specific groups such as older women, women with disabilities, migrant women, and transgender women affected by South Africa's gender-based violence scourge. Spies (2020) discusses three existing laws that were amended in early 2020 and that are now under review in the National Parliament to finalise the Bills to enact them as laws. Domestic Violence Amendment Bill [B20-2020], the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill [B17-2020], and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses) Bill [B16-2020] are the three bills under revision (Spies, 2020). The country is also investigating the possibility of online protection orders for victims, particularly in light of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the scourge of violence in confined spaces (Okech, 2021). According to Chelin and Mboyisa (2020), the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill broadens the definition of domestic violence to include those in engagement, established relationships, and romantic, intimate, or sexual relationships of any duration. The broadening of this definition is significant because it impacts the lives of those who suffer the most severe effects of domestic violence, such as rural women who are frequently in traditional relationships. Previously, these women were exempt from the Act, which made it challenging to obtain remedies such as protection orders (Chelin and Mboyisa, 2020).

According to studies on intimate partner violence, acts of violence rarely occur independently; rather, they coexist with other forms of violence (Mathews, 2010). Chelin and Mboyisa (2020)

agree with this statement, arguing that a WHO multi-country study found that 30 to 56% of women who reported intimate partner violence also described partner sexual violence.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act was introduced in 2007 to help with sexual offences and other related issues. The South African Constitution endeavours to combat sexual crimes against all people, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, and people with mental illnesses (Jeffery, 2019). The Criminal Law (Sexual Offenses and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 32 of 2007 was enacted to review and amend all aspects of sexual offence laws and their implementation, and to deal with all legal aspects of sexual offences in a single comprehensive and extensive state law.

Although the 2007 Amendment Act was implemented, was not effectively implemented as gender-based violence was officially declared a national crisis in South Africa in 2019. Nomakhosazana Xaba, a woman in her late twenties, aptly said that "the violence now resembles a country at war with its women" (Khumalo, 2019). According to the latter author, this was stated by a woman who declared that she had had enough of femicide and gender-based violence during a march in 2019. The Department of Police released statistics in 2019 that revealed the severity of the crisis, with nearly 3 000 women murdered between April 2018 and March 2019, equating to 7 women per day (Jeffery, 2019). The murder rate for men was also high at the time at 50 per day; however, many female victims were brutally assaulted and raped before being murdered, and their bodies were frequently buried under bushes, in shallow graves, or burned beyond recognition (Khumalo, 2019).

President Cyril Ramaphosa called a joint emergency session of Parliament in 2019 to address gender-based violence, and he presented an action plan that included creating a R 1 312 794 400 fund to strengthen the criminal justice system, improve the legal and policy framework surrounding sexual offences and other forms of gender-based violence, and to economically empower women (Khumalo, 2019). However, Maphosa (2020) lamented the government's failure by claiming that it had taken nearly a year for the state to review the legislation designed to combat GBV as promised in its response to nationwide anti-femicide protests in 2019. According to Maphosa (2020), GBV cases had increased dramatically in South Africa and worldwide during and since the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the South African Police Department received 2 300 GBV-related calls during the first week of the lockdown. Moreover, even though an increase in domestic violence cases was expected due to

victims being confined with their abusers, the state took no significant measures to protect women during the pandemic, and this oversight increasing femicide rates (Maphosa, 2020).

2.14.5 Factors contributing to the high rates of femicide.

Research has revealed that there is no single cause of violence in South Africa. Instead, depending on the context, several risk factors interact in various ways to facilitate violence. Among the most significant risk factors are lawlessness, alcohol use/abuse, illegal firearms, and the prevalence of a patriarchal culture and all it entails. Everyone has the right to life under the Constitution; however, the mass killing of women by males demonstrates the inadequacy of the state's apparatus in ensuring that this valuable human right that is women's and girls' due is protected in South Africa. The dynamic underlying intimate partner homicides, like that of other types of domestic homicides, can be better understood if motives are differentiated (Liam and Koenraad, 2018). According to Liam, Geen and Koenraad (2007), earlier studies identified categories such as jealousy, fear of abandonment, battered women, and severe mental illness as the causes of femicide. The majority of male perpetrators frequently had ongoing disputes with their partners and had subjected them to violence prior to the murder. Additionally, perpetrators tended to present themselves as victims of their intimate partners, implying that the homicide was a result of the abuse to which they had been subjected (Dobash and Dobash, 2015).

Numerous factors contribute to the high rate of femicide. According to Times Lives (2018), one of the reasons why intimate partners kill their 'loved' ones at such a shocking rate in South Africa is lawlessness. Women and girls, for example, are denied the right to life as a result of a wide range of gross violations of human rights committed through physical, emotional, political, mental, and economic violence. Campbell, cited in Kayir and Kalav (2015), expresses concern over the reality that women's lives are not safe in South Africa. As a result of the many instances of feminicide in the country, one may conclude that women's right to life does not receive the attention it deserves from the state. This is supported by the fact that the current administration has been in power since 1994, and that the situation has exacerbated since then. Therefore, the primary duties of government, which are to provide for and honour the security of persons and the right to life for women and girls, have fallen short of the expectations of a democratic and constitutional Republic.

The abuse of alcohol and firearms in combination is a primary driver of both fatal and non-fatal violence (Brankovic, 2019). According to Brankovic (2019), it is a trend that more than half of homicide victims test positive for alcohol, and femicide studies have affirmed that most victims and perpetrators had alcohol in their systems at the time of the crime. According to Matzopoulos (2014), high levels of unemployment combined with population density result in a high demand for alcohol, and the prevalence of informal trading and criminal supply networks in the country makes alcohol production and distribution challenging to regulate. Furthermore, in South Africa's patriarchal context, combining alcohol and firearms with idealised masculinity increases the likelihood of various types of violence significantly (Langa and Bowman, 2017). According to Ademiluka (2018), patriarchal culture is one of the underlying causes of violence against women and girls. This is because women's dignity and fundamental human rights are violated due to the artificial patriarchal system, which relegates women to a subservient role as they are required to serve the narrow interests of men. It seems undeniable that the oppression that women face daily is rooted in patriarchy and that the oppression of women and girls is one of patriarchy's most extreme manifestations. Because its architecture is centred on men's needs, it is male-identified, male-regulated, male-centric, and prioritises toxic masculinity over feminine personae (Ademiluka 2018).

Bandura (1977) and other social learning scholars (Shteynberg, and Apfelbaum, (2013) argue that humans learn and acquire various behaviours by observing and internalizing the behaviours of others. Aggression and gender-based violence, which frequently result in brutal femicide, are also perceived as social behaviours shaped and reinforced by the social learning process. This implies that male-on-female violence persists in human society because it is modelled in various institutions such as the family and society as a whole (Sithomola, 2020). Experiences of witnessing a mother's abuse and being beaten as a child, according to Mathews (2010), have been linked to an increased risk of being both a victim and perpetrator of intimate partner violence. Such experiences complicate individuals' lives because they can normalise violence and may also affect self-esteem (Mathews, 2010). Sex before the age of 16 has also been identified as a risk factor, particularly in intimate femicide; however, this is complicated because early sexual debut is frequently coercive, and thus such women are more vulnerable in their relationships than those who are more mature when they are introduced to sexual activities (Mathews, 2010).

2.15 Staying in a Relationship Characterised by IPV

Victims who stay in an intimate partner violence relationship face complex and multifaceted challenges that are influenced by various factors such as fear, economic dependence, psychological manipulation, and societal barriers. These experiences then hinder their ability to leave the abusive relationship. However, Western and African constructs of IPV and sustained toxic relationship can have different causes and consequences. The African context thus exposes intricate aspects of the experiences of women who choose to remain in abusive relationships, and these experiences often distinguish them from the narratives of victims in Western societies. For instance, Timor-Leste, Khan and Hyati (2012) argue that ancestral rules and ordinances have a significant negative impact on African women. Female individuals who experience domestic violence and wish to address the issues openly may feel disheartened due to the potential risk of being held accountable according to African customary regulations (Khan and Hyati, 2012). The issue is that traditional custom does not acknowledge any misconduct or aggression on the side of husbands towards their wives. Consequently, women who reported abusive crimes often face penalties for falsely reporting a crime and wasting police resources, and such reports are often not considered significant or reflective of criminal behaviour (Klaas-Makolomakwe, 2019; Khan and Hyati, 2012).

According to Whiting's (2016) study, certain victims experienced cognitive distortions because persistent experiences of emotional and psychological harm and manipulation caused extreme distress that led to confusion, uncertainty, and self-criticism. The findings of the latter study also indicated that perpetrators engaged in harassing and accusing their victims, leading to their emotional exhaustion and inducing emotions of shame and despair. According to the participants, episodes of verbal abuse also caused intense harm although spoken statements did not leave visible marks. Moreover, some victims were left with a sense of a damaged self-worth due to the degrading treatment they had to become accustomed to. Many women felt beaten down and assumed they were of no value and deserved the abuse. Fear was also a factor that abused victims stated they had to become accustomed to, according to Nicholson and Lutz (2017). The latter study found that the threat of bodily and emotional harm was a powerful device used by abusers to control and keep women feeling trapped. Many victims described a desire to help or love their partners in the hope that they would change them. Others abided by internal values or commitments to the marriage or partner, thinking they would be the strong one who would never leave. They would show their partner loyalty, and many admitted to holding on to the desire 'to teach' their partners to love them. Others pitifully put their partners'

needs consistently above their own. These women also put their children first, thus sacrificing their own safety. One participant claimed that she and her husband had stayed together for 20 years even while the children were also abused. Some mentioned staying on behalf of the children as they wanted their children to have a father. Many described how their experiences of violence watching their parents as young kids had distorted their sense of self and eroded their healthy relationships as adults. Some mentioned family and religious pressures that compelled them to never abandon a marriage due to the oath made to God.

The above and similar studies agree that women are usually vulnerable if they are dependent on their abusive partners. Participants in various studies (Hetling, Stylianou, and Postmus, 2015) referred to financial limitations, and many argued that caring for their children was a priority, especially when there were more than one child. They felt that leaving the partnership would leave their children vulnerable to poverty. Others were unable to keep their jobs because of the abusers' control and their injuries, and some were even used to support their abusers financially. A common tactic of manipulative partners is seemingly to separate their victim from family and friends, thus causing emotional harm and stress due to isolation.

Women who stay in abusive relationships occupy morally ambiguous positions. They are at one point pitied for their victimhood while many are also blamed and shamed for their perceived 'participation' in the abuse (Davis and Love, 2017, cited in Erikson, 1962). As highlighted by Whiting (2016), women who stay in abusive relationships have a variety of reasons for doing so. One reason is usually that 'circumstances' are blamed for their condition. For instance, when the perpetrator is of good financial standing and the woman stays with him, the implied moral accusation is that she does it out of greed, which is a gendered assumption that such a woman depends financially on her partner and makes family decisions based on her financial dependence. Another moral issue is that the victim is intellectuality weak and defends the perpetrator to shield him from being viewed outside the home as abusive. Such behaviour is referred to as 'enabling' as it instils normalisation patterns by allowing the man to get away with the abusive behaviour with impunity (Davis and Love, 2018).

2.16 The Effects of Childhood Exposure to IPV

Most behaviours, that later in life influence an individual's attitudes, are learned and moulded in the family of origin. According to the social learning theory, exposure to violence influences a child and normalises similar behaviour in later intimate relationships as they have been learnt

through observation (Powers, Cochran, Maskaly and Sellers, 2017). According to Henke and Hsu (2017), witnessing interparental violence increases the likelihood of children imitating or accepting that type of behaviour well into adulthood. Child exposure occurs in various circumstance and to various degrees, as they can be exposed to violence prenatally, during the event, in the aftermath of an event, when listening to an event or hearing about it afterwards, when attempting to break up an abusive episode, or being abused after the event has occurred. It is estimated that over 30% of women actually experienced IPV in their lives, and that 3 – 9% of all individuals will experience perinatal IPV (i.e., violence or abuse occurring 12 months prior to pregnancy, during pregnancy, and up to one year postpartum) (Hahn et al., 2018). Siggala et al. (2017), whose study released statistics of violence in Africa, found that the prevalence of IPV during pregnancy was 2 – 57% among women of all communities. They reported that, in Tanzania, the overall prevalence of IPV was 41 – 56%, while 27% of pregnant women had reportedly experienced physical and/or sexual violence during pregnancy in the period prior to study.

The emphasis that the current study places on child exposure to intimate partner violence and domestic violence is important because, in comparison with the general population, families with documented incidences of domestic violence have a significantly high number of children in the home, particularly children under the age of five (Fantuzzo et al., 1997). Children aged five and under are more likely than older children to be exposed to multiple incidents of domestic violence and parental substance abuse over a six-month period (Fantuzzo, and Mohr, 1999). Other research has indicated that physical violence is most prevalent early in a marriage when children are likely to be young (O'Leary et al., 1989).

Parents are the primary source of nourishment and protection for their children, but many are incapable of heeding this mandate if they are exposed to or are victims of violence. The impact of domestic violence on children at various developmental stages is related to their immediate reactions, the support that they require to help them cope with exposure to violence, and their ability to deal with the consequences that may have an effect on them in the long- or short-term process of development (Osofsky, 2003).

Children exposed to IPV, or domestic violence often struggle to adjust to life in general. Kimball (2016) notes that the negative effects of domestic violence on children can be divided into two categories: (1) behavioural and emotional functioning; and (2) cognitive functioning

and attitudes. Behavioural and emotional functioning is associated with the manner of conduct. The affected child thus exhibits aggressive behaviour such as fighting at school and being rude and ill disciplined. Impaired cognitive functioning predominantly affects the child's emotional and mental health as a result of being submerged in a hostile environment. According to Edleson (1999), children who are regularly exposed to domestic violence exhibit externalised effects such as aggression and anger issues, while internalised effects are exhibited along the lines of fear and inhibition. Children who are exposed to domestic abuse thus tend to be unnaturally aggressive and to demonstrate behavioural problems at school and in the community ranging from temper tantrums to fighting. Internalised behavioural issues include depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, worries, phobias, insomnia, bed wetting, and a low self-esteem (Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999). Edleson (1999) further argues that some children's proclivity for the use of violence may have been prompted by their exposure to domestic violence. For instance, the study found that boys who had been exposed to family violence had a more positive attitude towards violence than girls and boys who had never been exposed to domestic violence. Bonnet and Whittaker (2015, cited in Gelles, 1985) also affirm that a person who was the victim of childhood violence is highly likely to be the victim of IPV, while it also increases the likelihood that they will remain in a violent relationship.

2.17 Male Victims' Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence

A key scholarly perspective on intimate partner violence is that males can also experience intimate partner violence as victims rather than as perpetrators. Despite the fact that research has shown that both men and women are exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV) by their partners, little research has been conducted on men's experiences in this regard. When the phrases 'intimate partner violence' and 'domestic violence' are mentioned, the image that comes to mind is of a bullying, domineering man who is overly sensitive to jealousy and has a drinking problem. He threatens, assaults, and verbally intimidates the victim, who is not violent (Dutton and White, 2013).

However, as stated above, research on male victimisation is lacking, particularly in rural areas. A large portion of the literature on the subject is derived from investigations conducted in urban areas. It is believed that victimisation of males is not as prevalent as that of women, but it is equally severe (Edwards, 2015.). It is also a highly under-reported issue as men customarily do not talk easily about such encounters. Data could be accessed in cases of hospitalisation and treatment, but law enforcement data are notoriously limited as bias tends to be displayed by

law enforcement officials and mental health professionals, and this influences report rates (Woodyard, 2019). Therefore, due to a lack of resources, inaccessibility to services, and the fear of being rejected, mistrusted, and held accountable by medical experts and law enforcement agents, males are discouraged from seeking professional therapy. It also appears that male victims are not interested in seeking informal assistance from friends, family members, co-workers, or in-laws in cases of abuse or IPV (Kgatle and Mafa, 2021).

In light of the above, it seems imperative to encourage the proponents of criminal justice as well as experts and practitioners in the field to adopt a more equality-based and gender-neutral stance when it comes to IPV. Law enforcement officials need to be more aware of the existence of male victims of intimate partner violence and their experiences. A more transparent and honest legal redress method must be implemented in order for male victims of intimate partner abuse to feel at ease in the legal system and to be more likely to disclose their abuse to the authorities (Thobejane and Luthada, 2019).

Straus (2005) argues that male victims have been subjected to a wide range of abusive behaviours from their intimate partners such as physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, coercive control, dominance, and manipulation. Numerous studies on ‘male perpetrators’ and ‘female victims’ drawn from court-mandated treatment groups have consistently reinforced this gender paradigm. Females who perpetrate violence against their partners often share the same motivations as those of their male counterparts. Anger and a desire to resolve disagreements are examples of motivating factors, as is a desire to exert power and control.

According to Muellemen and Burgess (1998), the data of murders in the United States indicate a higher female perpetration rate in spousal murders than in any other Western country. In the emergency department, surveys have revealed that 6 - 28% of men have a history of being hit by their intimate partners. Because of the apparent bidirectional nature of intimate violence, some claim that the abuse of husbands is common yet largely ignored, while others warn against overinterpreting data to conclude that men suffer abuse as frequently as females simply because they are hit as frequently. Some authorities have combined elements of both perspectives by speculating on two types of couple violence: patriarchal terrorism, which has been the focus of most domestic violence studies, and occasional outbursts of bidirectional violence, as suggested in survey research (Johnson, 2017).

In essence, the prevalence and perpetuity of male hegemonic is greatly influenced by cultural and customary constructions. Consequently, there seems to be an impregnable barrier that prevents male victims from getting treatment, and this barrier can be easily traced back to the patriarchal phenomenon.

2.18 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter illustrated aspects of intimate partner violence and various societal enablers within communities such as culture and social normative practices. Some of the key findings indicated the effects of intimate partner violence victimization on women. Furthermore, the literature presented methods of conflict resolution which may be similarly identified within rural settings to which the study made its focal point. Restorative justice remains a key topic of note as it maintains the mandate of traditional leadership in ensuring unity and peace for rural civilians. Therefore, the literature was able to highlight the imperative nature that stakeholders (Traditional Leadership, NGOs and the Criminal Justice System) play in the endorsement of alleviating IPV within rural communities.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework offers an analytical and conceptual foundation for comprehending a specific topic or situation (Labaree, 2021). Such a framework aids with the organisation of ideas, the definition of important terms, and gives direction to data analysis and interpretation for academics and researchers (Lederman and Lederman, 2015). To best comprehend the complicated matter of trauma bonding and why victims stay with an abusive partner, several theoretical frameworks can be applied to the situation. It is in this context that this chapter explores the social learning theory and the traumatic bonds theory as theoretical indicators associated with the topic under investigation. These theories provide relevance to the emergence of IPV in rural communities, and particularly those under investigation. Each concept creates a cohesive link to IPV as a core unit of analysis of the phenomenon being studied.

Underpinning intimate partner violence with the two selected theories was essential for several reasons. Firstly, this approach assisted in providing explanations for the root causes of violence. Secondly it enabled the identification of effective prevention and intervention strategies that may be employed to curb this phenomenon. Thirdly, it also helped the researcher to predict patterns of violence and to identify risk factors and their potential outcomes. Theory-based interventions can be designed to target these threats, thus promoting healthier relationships. Moreover, prevention efforts can target specific populations or contexts to address societal challenges and lack of resources. Policy development can also be based on the theoretical framework by assisting the identification of systemic issues and gaps in service delivery. If this holistic approach is adopted, it will help to prevent violence, support survivors, and create safer communities.

IPV does not occur as isolated events as the phenomenon is widespread and manifests in patterns associated with values (or the lack thereof), attitudes, and behaviours. According to Knblock (2018), any gender-based violence incident is viewed as a private issue between the couple; however, every incident has potentially harmful consequences and will impact the sense of self-worth of the targeted victim. Regrettably, it is evident that some African customs

in sub-Saharan Africa have the propensity for perpetuating IPV, which is arguably due to the fact that issues related to abuse are often deemed private and then swept under the carpet. This avoidance tactic of the reality is also evident within Zulu customary and social normative practices. The Zulu people unstintingly believe that some things should be left unspoken, especially in situations involving IPV as they are deemed private. It is believed that reporting or discussing acts of violence will put the perpetrator and his or her family to shame *ihlazo*, which is deemed disrespectful in the Zulu culture regardless of the harm and pain such incidences inflict on the victim.

3.2 The Social Learning Theory

The origin of the social leaning theory is rooted in links between elements of Edwin Sutherland's differential association with more general principles of psychology. Initially, the social learning theory was a psychology theory that explained human behaviour. However, it has evolved and is now also employed in sociology and criminology. Banduras' (1977) social learning theory explains the learning process and social behaviour, and it essentially proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others.

The theory posits that social learning occurs by means of deliberative processes involving sustained interaction between individuals and the sharing of knowledge and perspectives in a trusting environment (Reed, Evely, Cundill, Fazey, Glass, Laing, Newig, Parrish, Prell, Raymond, and Stringer, 2010). In the 1970s, Albert Bandura's social learning theory emphasised the necessity of observing, modelling, and mimicking the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Allan, 2017). More recently, Greer (2020) has sported this stand point stating that observation is a significant component that assists in analysing behaviour through social learning. Through observing the activities and results of these activities by others in a particular social context, people learn new information, adopt attitudes, and acquire abilities. Numerous individuals are involved in this observational learning process, including parents, friends, instructors, the media, and role models. Observation is significant in analysing behaviour through social learning. Bandura posits three primary observational learning models: (1) A live model is a real person exhibiting or acting out a behaviour; (2) a symbolic model comprises actual or fictitious people who act out actions in novels, films, television shows, or Internet media; and (3) a verbal educational model involves behavioural descriptions and explanations. Observational learning is not limited to seeing a person physically doing an activity (Heyes, 2012). For instance, listening to a podcast or hearing vocal

instructions can lead to learning. We can also learn through reading about, listening to, or observing the activities of characters in books and movies. Additionally, a few steps and prerequisites need to be followed, as posited by Çelen, Schotter and Kariv, 2010). These are the following:

- Modelling is the process of copying or emulating the conduct of others. People are more prone to copy actions that they see as rewarding or resulting in positive reinforcement. When people relate to and feel like the model they are watching, observational learning is made easier (Rumjaun, and Narod,2020).
- The theory of social learning also recognises the role that reinforcement plays in modifying behaviour. Positive (rewarding) or negative (punishing) reinforcement are both possible. People are more inclined to mimic actions that are praised or encouraged than they are to mimic actions that are not praised or encouraged (Bandura, 1969).
- According to the social learning theory, people can also learn through vicarious reinforcement in addition to direct reinforcement. People experience vicarious reinforcement when they see the results of another person's actions and they then modify their own behaviour accordingly. They are more inclined to copy a behaviour if they witness someone else getting rewarded for it (Bandura, Ross, and Ross, 1963).

The social learning theory places strong emphasis on how cognitive functions play a part in learning. People actively analyse, evaluate, and integrate the information they see into their pre-existing knowledge and worldviews. People learn about their roles, duties, and societal expectations through cultural practices (Harry, Rueda and Kalyanpur, 1999). In order for observational learning to occur, cognitive elements such as motivation, memory, and attention are essential. From observation of headmen in rural societies they believe through culture and practice that they abused is frowned upon.

Several believe that physical punishment was an effective means of controlling conduct, promoting adherence to school regulations, and establishing the teacher's authority as a source of information. Teachers' impressions and experiences of physical punishment solidify the belief that it is an effective method for establishing a teacher's authority as a purveyor of information and enforcer of discipline.

In terms of cognitive learning, Bandura's social learning theory takes mental health into account as he argues that it is a crucial component of learning and knowledge acquisition. Bandura's social learning theory views mental health as a crucial component of learning and knowledge acquisition. According to Bandura, there are other factors besides external environmental reinforcement that affect behaviour and learning, and he discovered that it is not always necessary to get support from others (Nabavi, 2012), as one's personal mental state and drive are crucial factors in deciding whether or not a behaviour is learnt. The notion is thus supported that humans learn through observation while one's internal mental state is an essential part of the observation process. However, that something that is learned does not guarantee changed behaviour, such as when the behaviour learned might exert negative human characteristics, and it is then discarded (Laskey, Bates,and Taylor,2019.). It is believed that, during childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and significant others behave in intimate relationships prompt initial learning of behavioural alternatives that are deemed 'appropriate' inrelationships.

Furthermore, Barak (2003) asserts that the intergenerational transmission of family violence t heory is widely recognized as one of the most familiar social learning theories. This theory su ggests that individuals who have witnessed or experienced physical family violence during th eir upbringing are more likely to find themselves in violent domestic situations later in life (ShunkandZimmerman,2008)

He also states that there are correlations between those who have experienced sexual abuse, p articularly boys, and their subsequent development into sexually abusive adolescents and adul ts. (Mkhize. 2021). During understanding social learning, social normative behaviour can be an integral part of understanding the socialisation of society. Scholars in the social sciences have conducted substantial research on social norms, which are the conventional standards that regulate behaviour in groups and civilisations.

The ideology that humans learn through observation with the internal mental state being an essential part of the observation process and the recognition that something learned does not guarantee changed behaviour. More especially, when the behaviour that is observed may exert negative human characteristics, it may not be adopted (Cherry, 2012).

In the midst of understanding social learning, social normative behaviour can be an integral part of understanding the socialisation processes that occur in society. Scholars in the social sciences have conducted substantial research on social norms, which are the conventional

standards that regulate behaviour in groups and civilisations (Dose, 1997). People actively form and impact their environment through their actions, in addition to taking in knowledge from it. A key idea in social learning theory is self-efficacy, which is the conviction that one can carry out a certain action or activity successfully (Reed, Evely, Cundill, Fazey, Glass, Laing, Newig, Parrish, Prell, Raymond, and Stringer, 2010). According to Bandura (1969), motivation and learning are significantly influenced by self-efficacy. People who have high self-efficacy are therefore more inclined to take on difficult jobs and stick with them through setbacks, and they have a better chance of succeeding than those who do not possess this characteristic.

Social learning is frequently characterised in reference to the vast array of additional potential outcomes it may have, even though it can be both an outcome—the learning that results from these social interactions—and a process—people learning from one another (Reed et al., 2010). Better management of socio-ecological systems, increased trust, adaptive ability, behavioural and attitude changes, stakeholder empowerment, social network building, and so on are a few examples of these (Reed et al., 2010). In governance of society, organisations are only able to govern themselves throughout times of change if they have the ability to continuously learn about their objectives and the methods by which they will be met. This is accomplished by utilizing the skills and knowledge that engaged individuals possess to help them come up with solutions to the problems they face (Paquet, 1999). In general, the social learning theory highlights how crucial social interaction, imitation, and observation are to the learning process. It draws attention to how self-efficacy, cognitive processes, and reinforcement all influence behaviour. This hypothesis has been used to study how people learn and acquire new abilities and behaviours in a variety of fields, such as psychology, education, and social behaviour (Okita, Bailenson, and Schwartz, 2007).

In this study, the social learning theory was employed to explore the socialisation of society in the Kwa Thoyana and uMnini. Thus, inferences were made regarding the dynamics of social learning behaviours amongst the rural communities under study. However, socially learned behaviour is not limited to violence as the issue of intimate partner violence might suggest to the reader. In fact, the researcher also heeded its relation to the customs and traditional cultural beliefs that are entrenched in the mindset of people in the uMnini and KwaThoyana areas. The predominant customary belief that people adhere to in these communities is '*isintu'*, which is a belief system that underpins various traditions and values in which the residents' behavioural patterns are embedded. Zulu households are proud of their culture and values which is reflected

in their everyday lifestyles. This is deemed a positive quality because it means they are able to place value on their beliefs without undue interference of the ever-evolving value systems of modern-day society. However, on a deeper level, observation and informal discussions with the community prior to the study revealed that the subtle impact of gender roles as adhered to by these isiZulu-speaking people persistently underscored the masculinity-femininity narrative.

The social learning theory was therefore adopted to assist the researcher in identifying how and why perceptions and teachings regarding certain behavioural traits persistently permeated this society. It was thus envisaged that the selected participants' perceptions would assist in determining whether background traits and the prevailing cultural belief system impacted how these two rural communities perceived intimate relationships, and particularly IPV, in relation to their worldviews.

3.3 The Traumatic Bonds Theory

The trauma bonds theory illuminates a complicated psychological phenomenon that is often evident in abusive relationships or situations. It is often referred to as the 'Stockholm syndrome', or traumatic bonding (Egu, 2018). This term refers to the close emotional link or attachment that develops between an abuser and the victim, frequently as a result of intense and recurring cycles of control, manipulation, and abuse (Riggs, 2019). Trauma bonds can form in a variety of settings, such as in child abuse instances, cults, hostage situations, and violent relationships. It can be perplexing and challenging for the victim and people around them to comprehend the impact of the combination of terror, dependency, and loyalty towards the abuser that characterise their attachment to the perpetrator. This theory explains family violence in terms of the unique relationship and interaction that develops between a victim and the abuser. This theory has been used to explain and treat intimate partner abuse as well as incest. (Simonič, and Osewska, 2019).

Dutton and Painter (1981) state that trauma bonding can be a strong emotional ties that develop between two persons where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses or intimidates the other. Dutton and Painter (1993) argue that victims may become unaware of their entrapment in a relationship because they are too excited to notice warning indications of abuse at first. According to this theory, the trauma the abused experiences creates a strong emotional tie that is characterised by cognitive distortions and behavioural strategies that ultimately and unintentionally perpetuate the abuse and strengthen the abuser-abused bond

(Lahousen, Unterrainer, and Kapfhammer,2019). This tie is distinguished by mutual emotional dependency between the abuser and the victim. This emotional dependency, or traumatic bond, develops because the abuse is characterised by intermittent reinforcement (Shnabel,and Nadler,2008). Intermittent reinforcement involves the alternating occurrence of highly intense positive-negative abuser-victim interactions. For example, a husband may be very abusive for a time and then replaces that behaviour with intense affection and regret. This behaviour not only strengthens the bond but also leaves the self-esteem of the victim at the mercy of the abuser (Owen, Thompson, Mitchell, Kennebrew, Paranjape.Reddick, Hargrove, and Kaslow, 2008).

According to Effiong, Ibeagha and Iorfa (2022), the empathetic response of the victim towards the abuser is key in the trauma bond that develops. This can involve a range of experiences, such as the victim and perpetrator beginning to empathise with each other, showing concern for the other, and being emotionally impacted by the other's feelings and experiences without necessarily feeling the same emotions. It involves putting oneself in the other person's shoes or assuming the other's mental state.

This theory maintains that both the abuser and the victim suffer cognitive distortions that involve blame, responsibility, power, and trust (Schwartz, and Masters, 1994.). For example, a child who has been a victim of incest may blame him/herself for the abuse, but the adult may also blame the child. This means that the behavioural strategies of both parties often place the victim at the risk of re-victimization and the abuser at risk of revictimizing. In the case of intimate partner abuse, a victim, to relieve the anxiety of impending abuse, may actually create a situation that escalates the abuse. The abuser, on the other hand, would do the same to relieve his or her own tension, desire, frustration, and anxiety (Owen, 2008).

IPV and trauma bonds can be characterised by particular dynamics in rural and cultural settings. The unique features of rural areas may provoke the emergence and maintenance of trauma bonding regardless of the impacts of IPV. For instance, the isolation of tight-knit communities is one of the key elements to peruse when exploring the phenomena of trauma bonding and IPV in rural communities. In such close-knit communities, most people know one another; therefore, a victim may worry about criticism or reprisals from community members if they report their abuser (Krishnan, Hilbert, and VanLeeuwen, 2001).

3.4 Conclusion

IPV is a phenomenon that persists within intimate relationships. In some instances, a bond develops between the abuser and the victim, particular as the victim strives to be stronger emotionally, physically, financially, and intimately. Such a relationships is difficult to escape, especially once a strong bond has been formed and when the victim feels responsible for the abuse and abuser. The traumatic bond theory was thus applicable to this study as it elucidates how human emotions can create ties even in toxic relationships. Therefore, when a victim is persistently harmed or violated by the perpetrator, they begin to share an intimate bond and a relationship develops form which is its difficult for the victim to escape. The victim also often believes that it is her/his duty to help the abuser to change.

The social learning theory was also applicable as it assisted the researcher in exploring how customary beliefs could perpetuate socially learned understandings among members of the rural communities under study. The researcher engaged with participants to determine if she could explore their perceptions and identify any traits from their backgrounds that might or might not have had an impact on their perceptions of intimate relationships in the communities under study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHOLODY

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four explicates the research design and methodologies of choice that were needed to align the study process with the desired outcomes. Research methodology is a systematic approach used to conduct research as it guides the research process in terms of sampling, data collection, and data analysis (Igwenagu, 2016). An appropriate scholarly technique must be adopted to enable the analysis of data and to facilitate the critical assessment of the emerging information. Research methodologies are influenced by philosophical beliefs and assumptions that inform the collection, organisation, and analysis of the generated data (Pandey and Pandey, 2021). A key approach to methodically address the research challenge is to adopt an appropriate research design. This design usually consists of various techniques that the researcher typically employs to collect and analyse data and to reason logically based on the findings.

To obtain and analyse the perspectives of traditional leaders, specifically headmen (*izinduna*) and the youth in the rural communities on the mid-South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal under study, an appropriate research design had to be employed. Semi-structured interviews were thus conducted with selected participants.

In this chapter, the research paradigm and design that guided the study are elucidated, followed by an explanation of the qualitative methodology that was employed to gain a deep understanding of the participants' perspectives. The researcher offers a thorough clarification of and justification for the sampling and data analysis methods that were used to generate the findings.

4.2 Geographical Demarcation of the Study

The study focused on two rural areas (Kwa Thoyana and uMnini) in the Umbumbulu District that is located south of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal.

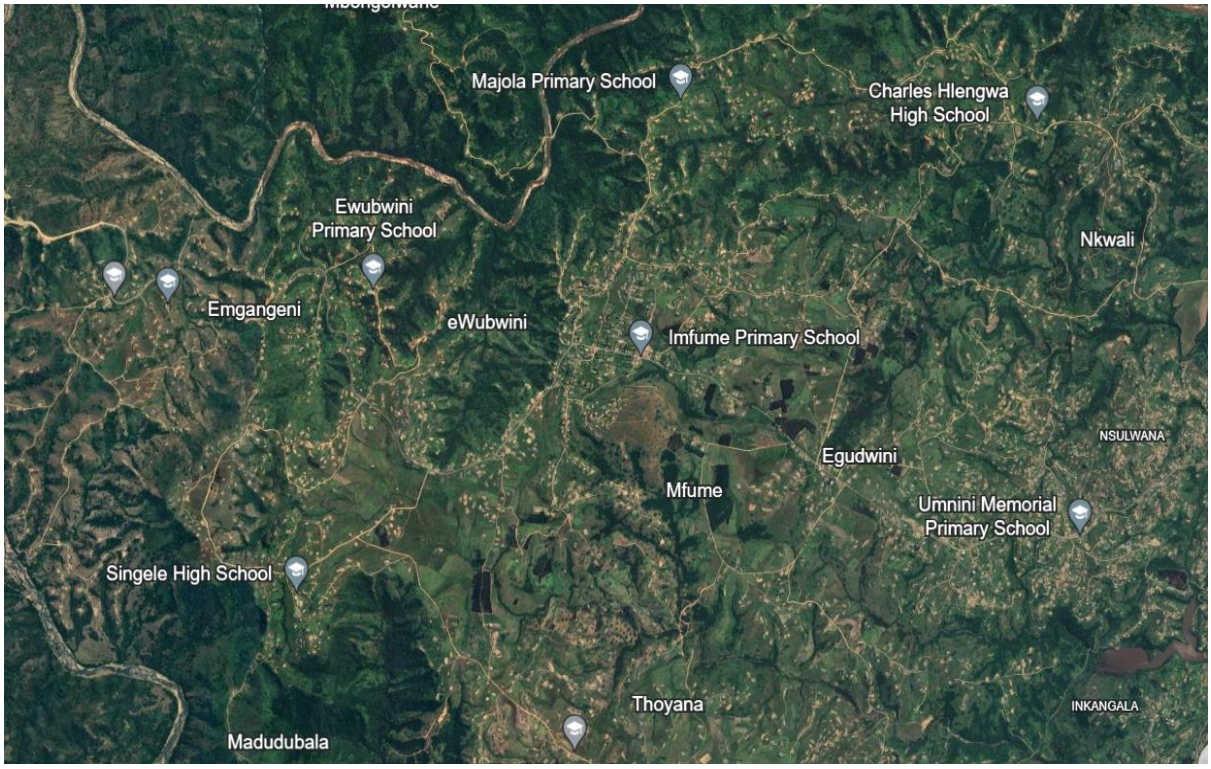

Figure 4.1: Aerial view of the KwaThoyana Traditional Authority area (Google Maps,2024)

Figure 4.2: Aerial view of the uMnini Trust Traditional Council area (Google Maps,2024)

The Ingonyama Trust Board in the Durban eThekwini Municipality is in charge of overseeing the UMnini Traditional Council under the traditional leadership of Chief Luthuli. uMnini is situated in Wards 98 and 99 some 40 kilometres to the southwest of the Durban Central

Business District. The 400-hectare region is bounded to the east by the Indian Ocean and to the west by Mfume (the Kwa Thoyana Traditional Authority).

Mfume was the second location of the study and, like uMnini Traditional Authority, it is overseen by the Ingonyama Trust Board in the Durban eThekwini Municipality. The Mfume community is led by Chief Hlengwa. Both areas are infamous for a high rate of youth unemployment and their resultant engagement in criminal activities. Because most adult males work in areas in and around the city of Durban, most households in the area are headed by single parents, mostly mothers, grandmothers, and even child siblings. The majority of the population adheres to traditional patriarchal Zulu cultural customs and the people speak the isiZulu language with some also somewhat proficient in English. As a sign of their virtue and womanhood, young women are urged to participate in cultural rituals such as 'ukuhlolwa kwezintombi' (virginity testing). The predominant religions in the region are Shembe and Christianity.

4.3 Research Approach

Qualitative research is inductive in nature as it generally guides the researcher to explore meanings of and insights about a certain phenomenon. Adopting a particular research approach is an effective model that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from a position of high involvement in the actual experiences of people in their natural setting (Sandstrom, and Boothby, 2021). In this study, a qualitative approach was adopted as it was suitable to explore the topic under investigation using suitable methods that delivered scientific justification for the outcomes of the study (Heynik and Tymstra, 1993). Qualitative research is used to determine what things exist rather than how many such things exist. Social science precisely tries to find diverse ways to understand the transforming nature of lived social realities. In attempting to grapple with the meaning that human beings attach to life or the lives they live, social scientists believe there is a systematic method of capturing critical aspects to address problems that confront our social world (Jackson, Drummond and Camara, 2007). Therefore, the researcher focused on traditional leaders and the youth in the Thoyana and uMnini areas to explore their perceptions of IPV as a social phenomenon within their respective societies. This investigation sought to achieve in-depth understanding of the prevalence of IPV in the study area and to determine if it could be addressed as a societal ill that affected individual and/or the community in the area.

Therefore, to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives and aim of the study, the investigation was embedded in the interpretivist paradigm and design while the qualitative research approach was adopted. The researcher wished to unfold and interpret meanings of IPV based on the views and experiences of headmen (izinduna) and the youth in the study area.

4.4 Research Paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm, which is in line with qualitative research, was employed in this study. Hermeneutics, which is the study of human behaviour and the interpretation of behaviours, is the foundation of interpretivism. Interpretivism holds the view that people's vision of the world is shaped by their interpretation of it and that they do not have direct access to objective reality (Gichuru, 2017). This viewpoint highlights how crucial it is to comprehend and evaluate distinct historical and cultural settings that surround social phenomena. In this study's context, the interpretivist paradigm enabled the researcher to closely investigate the customs surrounding young Zulu people's dating relationships. The paradigm recognises that customs change over time and are impacted by historical events as well as cultural contexts. Therefore, by adopting this paradigm, the researcher was able to learn more about past and current social realities and the cultural quirks of Zulu traditional practices. The interpretivist paradigm also lends credence to the notion that social phenomena can neither be generalised nor have a universal truth. Rather, it acknowledges the significance of context-specific comprehension and interpretation (Thorne,2014). The study's qualitative approach was consistent with this notion as it aimed to investigate and analyse the various viewpoints and experiences that people adhering to the Zulu culture had. Overall, the interpretivist paradigm provided a viable framework for this study, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the Zulu traditional practices of courting couples in light of the cultural and historical settings in which they live.

A paradigm is defined as a structural model or frame for organizing one's observations and thinking. It provides a pattern of ideas and knowledge from which the theories and practices proposed by a study will work (Thahn and Thahn, 2015), and the study thus echoes the benefits of the interpretivist paradigm that was utilised within the qualitative study approach. The paradigm closely identifies with qualitative research as it asserts that culture and historical contexts differ and are unique; thus, analyses of uniquely defined contexts are required through scholarly investigation (Willis, 2007). As the researcher intended to explore the practice of dating among young couples, it was assumed that modern-day practices might differ vastly from what they were traditionally. The researcher thus used interpretivism to look closely into

Zulu traditional practices in comparison with the modern-day context. Interpretivists take into account differences such as cultural circumstances and times that lead to the development of social realities (Creswell, 2009). According to Rihman (2016), the goal of the interpretivist researcher is to look at a social phenomenon in its context, and hence data are generated inductively.

4.5 Research Design

A research design encompasses the structure, strategy, and detailed overall plan that researchers use when investigating a research problem. The design generally includes detailed ideas on the participants that need to be selected, the way data will be collected and analysed, as well as the methods and procedures that will be applied in the research process (Cresswell, 2007; Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014). The design is essentially the blueprint that is used to conduct the research (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014).

As the researcher set out to understand people's lived experiences and the issues pertaining to sexuality and violence that they had to contend with in the communities where they resided, a phenomenological research design was best suited for this study. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences within a particular context (Bailey, 2013). The latter scholar states that phenomenologists seek to understand social and psychological phenomena from the perspective of people who are involved in a particular context and who hold a particular worldview. Therefore, by exploring the lived experiences and insights of headmen belonging to traditional unions and youths from the communities under study, the researcher was able to deduce their perceptions of and insights into IPV.

4.6 Study Population

The group of individuals, occasions, objects, or other phenomena in which the researcher is most interested constitute the population of a study in social scientific research (Hammarberg, Kirkman, and de Lace, 2016). At the conclusion of the investigation, the scholar needs to say something about the 'who' and the 'what' of the research topic. To do this, it is generally impossible to obtain the views of every member of a population, hence "a portion of the target population known as the study population is [from] where the sample is drawn" (Stratton, 2021). When conducting qualitative research, the population is important as it will assist in eliciting findings that are rich and that substantiate the research title. The sample is a small part

of the whole (i.e., the population) from which information, facts or ideas about the whole are generated (Olofinbiyi and Steyn, 2018).

For this study, the population was deemed all the members of the traditional unions as well as the people who reside within the communities governed by these leaders. Eliciting traditional leaders' views was a significant focus of this study as it was envisaged that they would provide in-depth data regarding the IPV issue as their duties commonly include arbitrating domestic and community issues as a mandate of their pledge for peace. Moreover, as traditional leaders are exclusively male, the data they would provide on the role and position of traditional African Zulu men in the context of the 21st century were deemed pivotal in this investigation. Moreover, young community members' inputs were also obtained to assist in scaling the issue of IPV in these traditional communities and to enhance reflection on the experiences and understandings of IPV as a phenomenon in the communities under study.

According to Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017), researchers collect data or information from people in their efforts to advance academic discussion and knowledge. Thus, research participants who were integral components of the research population were selected as they shared one or more pertinent traits. Headmen who are generally aged between 40-80 years deal with a variety of community complaints and issues first-hand. Their involvement in this study was based on the idea that their understanding of IPV and conflict resolution would encapsulate ideologies of the Zulu culture and its relevance to modern standards of living. Moreover, the views of the youth (aged 21-35) as members of the study population were also interrogated as it was understood that they would be most impacted by IPV. This interrogation was premised on the assumption that Zulu custom frowns upon romantic relationships out of wedlock. Young people are broadly defined as everyone between the ages of 14 and 35 by the National Child Policy (1996), and this description covers a wide range of young people who have been exposed to different historical and socio-political influences. For instance, while a 14-year-old child is currently growing up in an environment where many political and social reforms and victories have been accomplished in South Africa, a 35-year-old youth attended school during a time when increased political tensions permeated the South African society. The researcher thus believed that it would be important to include this population group as they are statistically also the most predominant group in rural contexts.

4.7 The Recruitment of Participants

According to Blanton et al. (2006), the recruitment process in research consists of a number of distinct steps:

- Identify the subject populations who are eligible for the study;
- Fully explain the study;
- Recruit an adequate, representative sample;
- Obtain informed consent;
- Adhere to ethical standards;
- Retaining participants in an ethical manner until the field work has been completed; and
- Minimise the cost-benefit ratio.

Each of the above directives was taken into consideration in the process of recruiting and involving participants for this study.

Recruiting the headmen occurred well in advance of the field work. An appointment was made with each to present the purpose and nature of the study and to obtain consent to proceed. The researcher then scheduled dates and times when the interviews would be conducted. Youth recruitment was pioneered by the headmen and chiefs who called their youth to the community hall. This assisted in properly informing the participants about the study. After being briefed about the study, potential participants were asked to send a WhatsApp message stating their name and area to the researcher and indicating if they wanted to participate. Potential volunteers were contacted again and informed of the project. Once the potential participants were aware of what the study would entail, the researcher scheduled a meeting with them to go over the consent form. Following the opportunity for inquiries from potential participants, the consenting procedure was carried out with those who had expressed interest in taking part. Some interviews took place the day after the participants had given their consent, while the rest were arranged based on their availability.

The participant recruitment process required meticulous consideration and execution as urged by Namageyo-Funa, Rimando, Brace, Christiana, Fowles, Davis, Martinez, and Sealy, (2014), who identify a few issues of concern such as obtaining informed consent and addressing any sense of animosity and reluctance as major issues of concern among participants. In the current research the issue under study was of an extremely sensitive and delicate nature and had to be

approached with caution (Namageyo-Funa et al., 2014). It was anticipated that potential participants might be reluctant to speak about the subject and that they might be unaccustomed to expressing their feelings and discussing such delicate experiences with an outsider. As a result, the researcher highlighted the point during the consenting brief that the participants could retract their participation at any given point and that the researcher-interviewer would not at any point require that they should discuss their own experiences of intimate partner violence. The study sought to understand their *perceptions* and *observed realities* rather than graphic data of their personal experiences of IPV, and all the participants eventually understood this approach and felt comfortable during the interview sessions. Participants were recruited through their headmen who hosted various GBV *imbizo* and presented om the topic my work. From see my as part of people noticed and made commination with me. This is where I then took down their contact details got further commination and arrangement to where we would meet. Meetings for the interview dialogue took place the participants home as I believed it may be easier or the homestead of one of the chiefs in the are.

4.7.1 Sampling methods

A sample is a collection of people, things, or things used in a study that are taken for analysis from a wider population. To enable the researcher to extrapolate the research sample's findings to the entire population, the sample that was selected was representative of the population, as was discussed earlier (Bhardwaj, 2019).

Social science researchers can make use of probability sampling, which is a process in which the required estimates are known, or non-probability sampling which is a process in which the estimates are not known (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013). The current researcher utilised the non-probability sampling process to allow a wide inclusion of sampling units that could be accessed to elicit information about the research problem. This called for a process of purposive sampling, which is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Yadav, Singh, Gupta, Yadav, Singh, and Gupta, 2019). The headmen were selected by approaching the chief in each area who agreed to assist in the selection of headmen. Each headman’s location was identified by the chief according to a subgroup of villages which are macro governed by the headmen, and the purposive sampling strategy was then used to approach and recruit headmen for the study. This group of participants was exclusively male, as alluded to earlier.

Selecting the youth participants relied on convenience sampling. Both males and females between the ages of 21 and 35 were recruited for this investigation. Non-probability sampling, or convenience sampling, is frequently employed in clinical and qualitative research (Setia, 2016). This sampling method frequently chooses clinical cases or participants from a locality (like a hospital), a database of medical records, an online resource, or a customer-membership list (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, and Nigam, 2013). The motivation of participants who agree to take part in the research affects convenience sampling in qualitative research as the decision to participate may be influenced by their interest in the research issue, their desire to voice a point of dissatisfaction, or a desire to support a certain belief. The researcher was therefore cognisant of this possibility and explained the nature and purpose of the study in detail prior to the final recruitment of suitable youth participants.

4.7.2 Sample size

Experts in qualitative research have argued that there is no straight-forward answer to the question of sample size and number as sample size is contingent on a number of factors which may relate to the epistemology, methodology, and other practical issues that influence a study (Vasilou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young, 2018). Sandelowski (1996) recommends that qualitative sample sizes remain substantial enough to allow the recitation of novel and richly textured understanding of what is being studied, but small enough to ensure that the breakdown of manageable qualitative data is not compromised.

The appropriate number of subjects for participation in qualitative research has been debated by scholars as there are different understandings of a suitable sample size. Dworkin (2012) suggests that a sample of 5 to 50 is adequate for a qualitative study. With this directive in mind, the researcher initially had a large number of participants in mind, but logic and sound advice prevailed and eventually 10 headmen and 20 young people were recruited to participate in the study. The researcher approached two tribal unions in the Umbumbulu area and the two identified traditional leaders (*inkosi)* each selected five villages that they deemed appropriate for the study. Each village was represented by a headman which resulted in a total of 10 headman representing the two areas. The headmen (*izinduna*) referred the researcher to young community members who they believed would be suitable for participation. A summary of the initial sample composition is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Composition of the study sample

Village (isigodi)	Headmen	Youth Members	Total
eMfume Kwa Thoyane Tribal Authority	5	10	15
uMnini Tribal Authority	5	10	15
Total	**10**	**20**	**30**

4.7.3 Saturation

Although the original idea was to involve a larger sample, the table reflects the actual sample that was recruited. This sample was sufficient as saturation could be reached without the involvement of more participants. Therefore, as accuracy and the integrity in the study findings had been attained, this sample size was deemed adequate for the purposes of this study. Lowe, Norris, Farris, and Babbage, (2018) argues that, when data collection has reached a point where fresh findings or insights are no longer being discovered, a point of data saturation has occurred. Adding more participants after the point of saturation could lead to redundant data and will have no discernible impact on the overall results. Moreover, it was argued that reducing the number of participants that was initially envisaged allowed the researcher to concentrate on thoroughly evaluating and understanding the available data and it made it possible to meticulously examine the correlations, themes, and patterns found in the data. A smaller sample size also allowed the researcher to focus time and resources more intently on dissecting each response and to reveal more subtle patterns. Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young, (2018) agrees, arguing that a relatively small number of participants does not invalidate a well-designed study's conclusions; rather, it guarantees a close analysis of the available data and offers a complete comprehension of the study issue or purpose. The idea that data quality matters more than quantity was thus embraced, and this prompted the decision to restrict participation after considerable thought and consultation with research consultants and the study's supervisor. The sample composition was thus deemed sufficient at 10 headmen and 20 young people.

4.8 Data Collection

Data collection is a systematic process throughout which both secondary and empirical information is obtained from various sources (Leedy and Ormrod, 2014). In qualitative research, the goal of data gathering is to give evidence pertaining to the experience being studied (Yates, and Leggett, 2016). Primary qualitative data were captured during one-on-one interviews with each of the headmen and youth participants. In qualitative study, conducting interviews is an important tool as it facilitates the identification of the components needed for qualitative study. The researcher ensured that each interview was effectively facilitated so that the participants felt safe and unrestrained. The process of data collection is not sufficient in itself but is a means to finally resolve the research problem and attain the aim of the study. The researcher thus engaged in an intensive review of related literature and conducted individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews to generate relevant information in order to adequately explore the perceptions on IPV as held by the headmen (izinduna) and the youth.

The researcher served as the only data collector. The interviews with the headmen and young people were guided by an interview schedule that gave structure and direction to the interview process. An interview guide is merely a list of the topics a researcher intends to discuss in an interview together with the inquiries that must be addressed under each topic (Mensah, 2020). Questions for the interview guide were created after carefully reviewing a plethora of relevant literature, closely scrutinising the research topic, and considering the research questions and the study objectives.

4.8.1 Secondary Data

Any scholarly author should engage in a literature review and demonstrate understanding of the subject area with reference to appropriate vocabulary, theories, important variables, suitable techniques, and the relevant history of the issue under investigation. The researcher thus engaged in a critical and integrative review of the literature prior to the larger study (Torraco, 2016). An integrative review typically has a different goal than a semi-structured review as it aims to evaluate, critique, and synthesise the literature relevant to a study so that new theoretical frameworks and viewpoints can emerge (Snyder, 2019).

The literature review that preceded the field work of this study was conducted using multiple sources such as academic textbooks, scholarly journal articles, published dissertations/theses, as well as research papers presented at accredited conferences. The reviewed literature was of

much value to the researcher in so far as it enlightened her on the current developments concerning IPV and cultural governance. This review provided information on the most current perspectives and some retrospective ideologies regarding IPV and traditional African beliefs and customs, while a deep understanding of the framework guiding the required legal response to IPV was also elicited.

4.8.2 Interviews

One of the most popular methods for gathering qualitative data is conducting interviews. Two or more persons may participate in an interview, with one being the interviewer who asks the questions while the interviewees respond to those questions as best they can (Gillham, 2001). The various qualitative interviewing techniques currently in use evolved from various disciplinary perspectives; hence, structured, semi structured, and in-depth interviews are commonly used.

The interview style this study employed was semi-structured in nature. Semi-structured interviews follow a loose framework of open-ended questions that, at least initially, outline the topic to be covered and from which the interviewer or subject may veer in order to delve deeper into an issue (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). When discussing perceptions, the researcher is able to delve into the thoughts and mindset of the participant, and therefore the conversation may flow from one topic to the next as the interviewer directs further discussion to unearth deeper information.

Most face-to-face interviews are semi structured, meaning that the questions posed may be previously created with the opportunity for further restructuring and probing during the interview session (Bowden, and Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). According to Roulston and Choi (2018), a semi-structured interview is a significant tool as it has the potential to provide detail of issues that the researcher may not have identified prior to the interview. Deep probing to distinguish different dimensions of the existing issue is therefore possible. Most authors advise individual face-to-face interviews as such dialogues allow the participants to speak freely without any influence from other participants (Moser and Korstjens, 2018). The researcher thus conducted individual face-to-face interviews to ensure that the participants would communicate openly without feeling intimidated and that they would be able to respond at their own discretion.

The following topics were covered during the semi-structured interviews:

- The causes of men's violence against women;
- The impact of IPV on the communities under study;
- How the participants understood the problem of IPV;
- How the participants perceived the role of traditional leaders in curbing IPV; and
- Whether there was room for traditional leaders to be better prepared and included in handling such cases.

As the culture and customs of Zulu-speaking people are wide, the discussions were open to evolving ideas and customs in relation to democratic notions and what IPV means in a traditional society and for young people today. It was a constant occurrence across the groups that viewpoints were frequently transmitted in the form of personal experiences and narratives of their observations, even if the intention of the question did not necessarily invite such stories.

The venues where the interviews were conducted varied to accommodate the participants' needs and availability. Most interviews were conducted in the participants' homes or at the chief's home/office. Upon arrival at the participants' respective homes, the researcher was welcomed. She introduced herself to the participant, read and explained the consent form using English and/or isiZulu, while the participant followed the words in a copy of the form. The interview guide, that had been created specifically for this study in order to elicit the required data, was used to guide the open-ended questions. These questions were translated into isiZulu as they were generally posed in this language during the interviews to respect the dignity of the participants and to ensure that they would express themselves freely without struggling for words. Each interview was recorded with the participant's full agreement and the recordings were later translated and transcribed into English by the researcher who is proficient in both languages. The interviews lasted at least 45 minutes to accommodate the vast knowledge the participants enthusiastically shared.

4.9 Data Analysis

Data are analysed from the first moment that data information is received (Babbie, 2015). In this process, thematic content analysis was employed to arrange and analyse the data according to patterns and themes. This process revealed the data in clear detail and unambiguous interpretations were avoided (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis seeks to discover in-depth

interpretations as it is systematic and allows the researcher to associate the analysis of one theme with the entire body of data (Alhojailan and Ibrahim, 2012).

By closely reviewing, scrutinising, and coding the collected data, the researcher created themes that established patterns relevant to the topic. Obtaining primary interview data was a valuable source of information as the data could be compared to already existing secondary data by means of a process of triangulation that facilitated the integration that contributed to the overall trustworthiness of the study findings. The participants' responses were captured and scrutinised to determine whether they answered the key questions and addressed the objectives of the study.

4.9.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised as it facilitated the identification of patterns and themes that emerged from the data. Thematic analysis does not stick to specified epistemologies or theoretical perspectives, thus making it flexible to work with in the spectrum of teaching and learning (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017), but also in qualitative research. According to Christou, (2022). The thematic analysis process involved five phases as follows:

Familiarisation: In this phase, the researcher immersed herself in the data to become more familiar with the content of the data that had been collected (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). The researcher thus engaged with the data in an analytic and inquiring manner. Familiarisation with the data occurred after each interview. The researcher set aside sufficient time to listen to the recorded interviews of the day and to make sound reflections on the dialogue as well as the nature of the interview process. This assisted the researcher in ensuring that, by the time of transcription, she was fully familiar with the data set. The recordings were also transcribed and translated into English and these texts were read and re-read a number of times. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the researcher should ask certain questions, such as why the participants held a certain view or why their experiences had been shaped in a particular way. This rigorous process was then followed by coding.

Coding: This is the grouping together of meaningful pieces of data under a code heading with the aim of clustering them under a theme. This process began by marking related sections of data and putting them under a relevant code. These pieces of meaningful data were further analysed alone and in relation to other clusters (Joffe, 2011). The coding process became

smoother as familiarisation was applied thoroughly as meaning emerged from the data. The data were coded by the researcher using labels and a colour-coding filing system.

Theme Development: According to Braun, Clarke and Weate (2016), when developing a theme, it involves the clustering of codes in order to identify higher level patterns. When doing so, the researcher highlighted meanings that were broader than codes and captured more detailed ideas than just specific ones. This revealed a layered effect within the themes the researcher created. Theme development thus involved the organising of codes and coded data into candidate themes. Once candidate themes had been identified, they were reviewed and revised to develop rich analysis of the data represented by the finalised themes (Braun, Clarke and Weate, 2016). This ensured that the answers that emerged were robust, detailed, and nuanced, as proposed by the latter authors. The identification of themes and sub-themes was guided by the major research questions.

Reviewing the themes: This process of analysis was conducted in two phases. The researcher first looked at the coded data under each preliminary theme to ensure they fitted properly. All relevant data codes and data extracted were then reviewed again by posing questions to determine whether a theme had adequate supporting data and whether the themes might be too larger or diverse (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). The researcher ensured that the data within each theme were common and coherent and that each theme was distinct enough to merit separation.

The last phase was questioning the themes within the data set. This process determined if the individual themes fitted meaningfully within the data set and whether the thematic map accurately and adequately represented the questions of interest. The researcher then re-read and recoded the entire data set in order to re-examine the themes that had been newly created or modified during this phase, and then the thematic map was revised accordingly (Kiger & Vapiro, 2020).

Defining and naming the themes: It was determined what aspect of the data each theme captured and what was of interest about each and why. The researcher then recorded a detailed analysis of the data by identifying the story that was narrated under each of the themes (Nowell et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that each name should be punchy and tell the reader what the theme is all about. The authors further suggest that solo researchers can be debriefed by peers and colleagues who may have an idea of the topic in question as a technique

to understand whether the themes are clear and comprehensive. If so, a stop can be called to any further modification. The themes selected for this thesis were therefore discussed with the supervisor prior to their finalisation to ensure that they cohesively corresponded with the research questions and objectives.

4.9.2 Study limitations

Any procedural task is marred by diverse challenges that usually delay the process. In the researcher's view, solving these challenges strengthened the research process and engendered insights that enhanced the overall research experience. Some challenges that had to be endured were the delays caused by COVID-19 and the floods in Durban that caused much devastation in some parts of the study area. A particularly challenging issue was conforming to customary Nguni standards of reverence and respect for royalty and their representatives.

COVID-19 caused an erratic field work process as most participants could often not meet appointments on time or at all. Some participants made last-minute cancellations without proper communication and, in some instances, would just not show up for a scheduled appointment. The interview process at some point stagnated as some interviews did not proceed at all while it was uncertain whether others would because of the various COVID-19 restriction levels. Fortunately, some interviews proceeded, albeit a lot later than planned, and data saturation could be attained.

Adhering to '*isintu'* protocol standards was another barrier. As the researcher is female, young, and a sophisticated and modern African woman who interviewed relatively middle-aged Zulu men of high standing, her position came with various challenges. She had to conform to cultural practices and Zulu etiquette when the interviews were conducted with the headmen. At first, it was quite intimidating to discuss such a sensitive topic with staunch Zulu men. However, that had been expected and perseverance was required as the purpose was to obtain the views of traditional Zulu males as well as those of more modern young people of both genders regarding the Zulu culture and customs to diversify the data and enrich the findings. In many instances, the researcher felt tested by the headmen; however, the discussions progressed as these wise men started understanding the relevance of the inquiry and soon opened up and frankly expressed their views about the issue of IPV in the community.

4.10 Ethical Guidelines and Considerations

Ethical guideline development began in the 1970s when the US Congress created a commission to articulate the philosophical and ethical foundations that should underlie and guide any rules to protect human subjects of research. The document that resulted from the initial deliberations is known as the Belmont Report. It has since influenced all research work and continues to do so to this day (Ketefian, 2015). The concept research ethics refers to a complex set of values, principles, standards, and institutional schemes that help constitute and regulate scientific activity (Cook, and Leininger, 2017).

Due to the sensitive nature of the inquiry this study initiated; the researcher needed to be conscious of various ethical considerations. She respectfully issued her application to conduct the study to the chiefs of the study locations, Chief Hlengwa of the Kwa Thoyana Traditional Authority and Chief Luthuli of the uMnini Tribal Union, before the study began. She was granted access. The study was also authorised by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Research Ethics Committee. Gatekeepers' permission guided the researcher in terms of the conditions that were attached to the data collection process.

The recruited participants were unambiguously informed of the aim of the study and the credentials of the researcher, and they were assured that their anonymity was guaranteed. Also, there would be no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and they were free to withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms were allocated to the participants to protect their identities. The participants were also assured that the data that would be collected would be stored in a safe location and kept confidential and used for the purpose of this study only.

4.11 Trustworthiness

Because their conceptions of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work, positivists frequently dispute the reliability of qualitative research in general (Shenton, 2004). A study is only considered reliable if the research report's reader believes it to be so. The particular aspects of trustworthiness that were considered in this study were: *credibility*, which approximately corresponds to the positivist idea of internal validity; *dependability*, which is connected to reliability; *transferability*, which is a type of external validity; and *confirmability*, which is mostly a presentation issue (Gunawan, 2015). These are briefly discussed.

Credibility: The objective is to show that the study was carried out in a way that made sure participants were correctly identified and characterised (Anney, 2014). The researcher established and maintained clear selection criteria to recruit participants, and these were adhered to. This process ensured the elicitation of satisfactory results as appropriate participants had been selected for the study.

Transferability: On this point, it should be clarified that a qualitative study's transferability, which is comparable to generalising research findings, may be challenging to accomplish due to its tiny sample, which is frequently not representative of its population. By correlating the findings, however, the utilisation of several data sources can improve the study's generalisability and increase its applicability in other contexts (Anney, 2014). The researcher applied different data collection techniques and this provided verifiable descriptive data. The researcher also took notes of all pertinent details which contributed to the data collection process. The setting was earlier described in detail while the challenges that had been faced and overcome were frankly acknowledged.

Reliability: It is essential for researchers to make sure their work is reliable. Meticulous planning is essential as it helps to define the research objectives, questions and methodologies. A well-designed research plan also assists focus and minimises potential biases (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers, 2002). The researcher relied on reputable and peer reviewed sources such as academic journals, books, and official reports. The sources that were consulted had been critically evaluated by experts in the field and the comparison of these expert and credibly scholarly findings with those of the current research thus rendered the study reliable.

Confirmability: The researcher made a concerted effort to ensure objectivity during this study. Confirmability is the steps to ensure that the data and findings are not due to participant and/or researcher bias (Anney, 2014). They argue that confirmability of qualitative data is assured when data are checked and rechecked throughout the data collection and analysis processes to ensure that the results may likely be repeated by others. This was achieved by documenting the data according to a clear coding schema that identified codes and patterns based on a rigorous data analysis process. Should this process be emulated, other researchers may thus arrive at similar findings.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided concise and detailed explanations of the research design and methodologies that were employed to execute the study. The paradigm and the chosen research approach were described. It was asserted that the qualitative research approach was the most appropriate for the study. The study population was discussed while the participant sampling procedures were explained. Furthermore, the researcher discussed the logical procedures that were used to analyse the data. The researcher acknowledge that certain challenges were experienced and explained how the trustworthiness of the study was achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: TRADITIONAL LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the research strategy and methodologies that were employed. In this chapter, the data that were elicited from the headmen by means of semi-structured interviews are presented and analysed. Two key sample groups were involved in the study, namely 10 headmen (izinduna) and 20 youth participants (young people of both genders) from the communities in the study area. However, this chapter will present only the data collected from the izinduna while the data collected from the youth will be presented and analysed in the next chapter.

The data are presented under sub-themes. Each sub-theme begins with the participants' verbatim narratives that are interspersed with evaluative comments pertaining to that particular theme. Pseudonyms are used to avoid recognition of the respondents. The participants' comments and narratives are presented in italics. The reader should note that the comments are presented either verbatim in their English translated form, or in the reported speech mode. They may thus not always be idiomatically or linguistically perfect.

5.2 Themes that Emerged from the Data

The following themes emerged after the thematic analysis process:[1]

- Perceptions of the influence of izinduna on the community
- Understanding IPV
- The prevalence of IPV in the study area
- Customary steps in dealing with IPV
- Relationship with the South African Police Service (SAPS) when dealing with IPV cases
- Suggestions for curbing IPV
- The challenges izinduna experience in dealing with IPV.

[1] Intimate partner violence is referred as IPV throughout

5.2.1 Perceptions of the influence of the izinduna on the community

As this was her first encounter with the recruited headmen, the researcher wished to ascertain how they perceived their leadership position and influence in the community, especially in a modern-day democratic society. The headmen responded as follows:

Induna 10: *I do not think we still hold power in the manner in which we used to. But we are still very bright and knowledgeable when it comes to 'usiko mpilo' [i.e., culture and custom].*

Induna 3: He showed the same enthusiasm in his response, also citing wisdom and referring to how rich and bold his people were.

Induna 5: *There are spaces that do not require much of our knowledge, yet we still are able to lead and influence 'kusiko mpilo lwabantu bethu' [i.e., the culture and customs of our nation].*

Induna 4: *We may not be the biggest authority but when dealing with matters such as IPV which have been brought forward it becomes our duty to implore and teach through 'usiko lwethu' [i.e., culture and custom] when dealing with such problems. And because of the influence we still have within households we can try being a part of the resolution.*

In essence, the data revealed that the izinduna were acutely aware of the power they held within their communities, especially when dealing with custom, culture, and value systems.

5.2.2 Understanding IPV

At the onset the researcher faced the challenge of finding a suitable translation for 'intimate partner violence' as the concept seemed to be one that required detailed description in the vernacular to elicit appropriate dialogue. The izinduna eventually seemed well-informed and understood the IPV concept and its prevalence within the South African and community contexts:

Induna 1: *IPV is an unfortunate incident which can be in the form of physical violence, verbal violence, or even sometimes financial. It is no longer something we can say only happens to women but can also happen to men as well.*

Induna 2: *IPV is a big problem within the country because a lot of it has led to murder. I can say that women are the most vulnerable. You are able to hear about a new victim who is a woman on the news.*

Induna 4: *IPV is wrong and many of our young ones are falling into that trap. I think as a country and a society that believe in marriage unions intimate partner violence plays a big threat to that.*

Induna 5: *Within society IPV is a big problem. We are losing many of our youth to intimate partner violence. However, in this area the problem of IPV exists at a smaller scale.*

Induna 7: *Intimate partner violence is a big problem within the country. It is not something you can avoid. It's there in the rural areas, it's there in the locations, suburbs. As South Africans we have a big problem.*

The majority of the izinduna identified the problem of IPV at national scale and most noted that its existence was a big threat for society and women in particular. They argued that women were members of a vulnerable group and at risk of IPV. Their rendition of IPV can be closely linked to the definition by Breiding, Chen and Black (2014**,** p.15)**,** who define it as "a major public health issue which comprises of acts which may be physical violence, sexual assault, stalking, and psychological aggression (including coercive methods) by a current or previous intimate partner".

5.2.3 The prevalence of IPV in the study area

The discussion proceeded from their understanding of IPV to its prevalence in the community under study. The izinduna affirmed that IPV occurred in their communities in various forms and among various age groups.

Induna 1: *Yes, we do have issues where IPV has happened within the area. The way I have seen it, the most common cases have been physical violence and in many of the cases it's been motivated by alcohol abuse. In most cases that I have observed they occur after one or both the parties have come from the tavern.*

Induna 6: *Yes, we do have issues of IPV which occur in the area.*

Induna 8: *Yes, intimate partner violence has occurred in this area*.

Induna10: *Yes, there have been cases of intimate partner violence in the area.*

Induna 7: *The way I have seen it, the most common cases have been physical violence and in many of the cases it's been motivated by alcohol abuse.*

Induna 2: *From what I have observed, the most common occurrences of IPV are verbal assault and physical assault which stemmed from alcohol or drug abuse. I am not sure whether this is because alcohol and drugs make people less respectful of each other or what the issue is.*

Induna 3: *Intimate partner violence is a problem, but I can say that it is not such a big problem in my area here in eGobhozini. The area I am heading is small and it's very rare to come across such an issue.*

Of all the participants, Induna 3 was the only one who argued that IPV was not a major problem in the community he headed. The induna suggested that this could be because the location was still very rural and underdeveloped.

5.2.4 Types of IPV noted by the izinduna

Induna 4: *The violence happening in this area is more severe with noticeable bruises.*

Induna 6: *Children of today are more violent. Where I have witnessed or observed abuse it starts off verbally and physically with very harsh physical abuse. In many instances, you are unable to find how or what the cause of the disagreement was.*

Induna 3: *I have noted one or two issues related to IPV where the female victim was murdered. Of course, seeing the magnitude of the problem, it wasn't something where I could intervene, but I had knowledge of it.*

Induna 7*: I have seen various types of IPV between adults and children. Amongst elder couples the violence has been more based on arguments and then escalated to violence, but the matters are usually resolved. With the younger groups, the violence has been more physical than verbal.*

Induna 2: *I have noted cases where intimate partner violence was verbal.*

Induna 5: *I have observed cases where the violence was verbal.*

The sentiments shared by the headmen corroborated the findings of earlier studies. For instance, a WHO survey found that 30% of women, or one in three, either suffered non-partner sexual assault, intimate partner sexual violence, or both (WHO, 2021). The same source cites that up to 38% of all female murders globally are committed by intimate partners. Apart from violence against intimate partners, 6% of women globally reported experiencing sexual assault at the hands of someone other than their spouse; nonetheless, information regarding non-partner sexual violence is rather slim. According to WHO (2021), men are more prone to abusing their intimate partners and to commit sexual assault than women.

This poses the question why physical violence and not murder was mentioned as the most common form of IPV by the headmen. Upon reflection, it might be attributed to the fact that physical violence has become a normative attribute related to male behaviour. Earlier studies have argued that IPV against women is one of the most widespread form of male aggression and that it occurs as a consequence of hegemonic masculinity traits which have been normalised due to prevailing societal standards that adhere to patriarchy (Wang, Fang and Li, 2019). The data of the current study suggested that the forms of physical violence in the study area were more intimidating rather than murderous in nature as the perpetrators would try to dominate or punish the victims rather than eliminate them.

The respondents argued that alcohol and drug abuse was a factor that contributed significantly to the prevalence of IPV in their areas of responsibility. This phenomenon has also been strongly affirmed over the years in research on domestic violence and intimate partner violence. According to a study of police visits to domestic violence scenes, 92% of perpetrators had consumed alcohol or other drugs on the day of the incident (Brookoff, O'Brien, Cook, Thompson and Williams, 1997).

Alcohol and drug abuse thus seems one of the biggest concerns regarding IPV, as the investigation affirmed its prevalence in the rural areas under study. The izinduna noted that drugs and alcohol abuse was a problem that was particularly prevalent among young people. When a person's judgment is impaired by substance abuse, intoxication seems to become a more socially acceptable excuse for violence than admission of hostility (Lennings, Copeland and Howard, 2003). Clearly, alcohol or drug abuse is a primary risk factor for IPV, and the habitual abuse of such substances exacerbates the likelihood of toxic relationships and persistent IPV, even in rural areas.

It is a known fact that the harmful use of alcohol and drugs contributes significantly to violence and a variety of other problems. Individuals' excessive drinking habit interacts with the social and environmental aspects of the communities in which they reside, as posited by social ecology models and the community systems theory (Jones et al., 2019).

5.2.5 Incidences of IPV within the community

Induna 1: *There has been a variety of incidents witnessed; some with elder couples and others with younger couples.*

Induna 2: *I have witnessed IPV by younger couples that aren't married and some that are married.*

Induna 3: *I have witnessed IPV with unmarried young couples where I was unable to intervene. In an instance where the couple is young, I usually get hold of the police and allow them to proceed with the matter. For married couples I give them the option to discuss with family through 'umkandlu wenkosi' [the traditional council] or visit the SAPS. In many cases; the married couples do not choose SAPS based on the following reasons*: *One: the SAPS is far and doing so in that route would further involve other family members because of the manner the proceeds take place. Two: To go to the traditional council court will be more private and will help or encourage a solution which will keep them together.*

Induna 6: *The African context of marriages encourages that our wedded couples stay together. The aim is to unite. Therefore, the need for a mediator is there for the married couple to have the presence of someone who was there from the start of the relationship. Whereas, if we call*

the entire family, we may be in a position which causes issues of anger from other family members over something that could easily be resolved. Therefore, most incidents encountered and resolved have been between married couples.

What emerged from this theme was that 'isintu' prioritised married and unmarried couples differently. The izinduna revealed that they would be most likely to intervene in an IPV matter between married couples, regardless of their age, while they might not become involved in IPV between unmarried couples. Thus, married couples' problems may be addressed in a traditional fashion, while unmarried couples will be left to their own devices as they are regarded as 'children'.

Induna 10: *According to customary considerations, I have some obligation to try intervening on a matter that is between a married couple.*

Induna 6: *I will intervene on a matter between married couples. Unmarried couples I am unable to because through customary understanding the couple is recognised as children and I am not at capacity to deal with such matters.*

Induna 4: *There are instances where cohabiting couples may come forward with such an issue but in that instance, I use my discretion because in most cases I would be aware of this couple from my village and can therefore help mediate the matter and further encourage marriage.*

Induna 6: *According to 'isintu', I cannot become involved to speak on matters of unmarried couples.*

In contemporary South Africa, the urgency of marriage has lost much significance, and marriage is far from ubiquitous among Africans today. In fact, it is not the norm among African adults (people 18 years and older). This is supported by demographic micro-data from a variety of nationally representative household surveys in South Africa that have indicated that Africans are less likely to be (or have been) married than to have never been married. In fact, increased opportunities for cohabitation may also be related to decreasing marriage rates (Posel and Rudwick, 2011).

Furthermore, the Zulu customary perspective of marriage involves 'ilobolo'. The union of two African people was previously concluded in terms of customary law in South Africa where the custom of lobolo was widely practised, but it is now governed by the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act No. 120 of 1998 (RCMA). Within the Zulu tradition, it is widely acknowledged that cows are required at a minimum as lobolo, while different customs in different places may contribute to calculating the financial value of each cow and this amount is then required to be paid as lobolo. In recent years, there has been significant debate about the amount requested in particular households, which many believe is excessive. Negotiations nowadays entail fixing a price for a single cow and then increasing the agreed-upon price by the number of cows the new bride is thought to be worth. The price that is asked has a significant implication on whether couples wed or not, as the cost of living and other issues of socioeconomic standard, such as employability, may affect that decision. Many people regard contemporary South Africans' unwillingness to form marriage unions and the inability of izinduna to mediate in matters of IPV as causes of concern.

The African context adds intricate aspects to the experiences of women who choose to remain in abusive relationships, which distinguishes them from the narratives of victims in Western societies. In a study by Timor-Leste, Khan and Hyati (2012), they found that the ancestral rules or ordinances had a significant negative impact on women as they often resulted in unfair outcomes. Female individuals who experienced domestic violence and wished to use these principles for addressing their issues felt disheartened due to the potential risk of being held accountable according to these regulations (Khan and Hyati, 2012). This was because these guidelines did not acknowledge any misconduct or aggression on the side of the husbands or male partners. Consequently, women who reported such crimes often faced a penalty for 'falsely' reporting a crime and wasting police resources if the incident was not considered significant or criminal (Klaas-Makolomakwe, 2019; Khan and Hyati, 2012). The views expressed by the izinduna on marriage and their obvious mission to encourage such a union as customary and socially desirable depict agreement and their belief to keep these unions intact regardless of conflict issues. Moreover, their demeanour and the reverence attributed to their position as headmen in rural communities may also be a reason why women inevitably stay in relationships where IPV occurs.

5.2.6 Customary steps in dealing with IPV cases

Induna1: *When a wife marries her husband, the husband usually picks from their neighbourhood a trusted man that he believes could be helpful during their union. This man is who we call 'umkhongi' [negotiator]. The job of the 'umkhongi' varies, but it is to mediate the couple's transgressions and the avoid any situation where the wedded couple leaves the marriage.*

Induna 2: '*Umkhongi' would call a meeting with an induna and the king's policeman to explain the issue of the wedded couple. From there they are then invited into 'inkantolo yenkhosi' [traditional court] where the discussion is had.*

Induna 7: *I have had a case of intimate partner violence where the offence was physical. In my capacity I suggested SAPS to the lady who complained, but she felt more comfortable that we should deal with it ourselves. Her husband had physically assaulted her and she wanted to leave the marriage. I then took the matter to the tribal court as I felt I wouldn't be able to deal with the matter with the best courtesy and sensitivity. During the court hearing, the alleged perpetrator was questioned as to his awareness of why he had been called. From there the victim then explained their complaint. From there we ask the husband [perpetrator] to affirm whether this was in fact true, and should he agree. We asked our secretary to assess any visible wounds should there be any. This was done in a separate room. To our luck, our secretary was female therefore it was easier for her to deal with the matter. She then confirmed the wounds.*

Council tries to assess the root cause of the problem; whether it be alcohol abuse etc., and advise on that. Once that is established, the Council then advises on the consequences of their actions. We do not encourage abuse in any form, but our culture prides itself in keeping families united, thus I can never encourage the end of a marriage. 'Inhalwulo' is known as a hefty fine imposed to compensate the victim as an apology. It can be in the form of a goat or other monetary payments for restitution. As chiefs and headmen, we ought to pride ourselves in wedded couples and we ensure to keep them together as 'isintu' doesn't recognise divorce. We also affirm for unity amongst our people.

Induna 7: He indicated traces of restorative justice aligned with conflict resolution: *Restorative justice is a philosophy and technique to address harm and conflict and focuses on healing a*

victim's pain, holding criminals accountable, and restoring community ties. The dialogue exchange, it emphasises the victim's needs, the offender's responsibilities, and the community's involvement in the settlement process. Through addressing and prioritizing the victim's needs, we promote healing.

The traditional court offers restitution and makes the offender accountable for his/her actions. A penalty is associated with restitution and repair and comes into effect along with the vision to see long-term healing and restitution between the parties (Hewitt, 2016). Although this may be a very distinct tool to how traditional leaders resolve matters, the researcher identified a minor gap in its application. This is that a resolution is only offered if the parties are married, while unmarried and younger groups are not supported due to customary beliefs and the view that they are 'children' who do not warrant support if they experience trouble in romantic relationships. In fact, unmarried young people should not, by traditional standards, engage in physical relationships at all.

To better understand the focus on healing support for the victim and the perpetrator's restoration, the researcher probed deeper as the advice offered appeared to mainly encourage the couple to fix the union. The responses then focused of the role of 'umkhandlu', or government entities:

Induna 4: *We do have structures within the community such as NPOs to help in the process of encouraging the [victim] to feel better.*

Induna 7: *I have never thought that far to suggest assistance after [the event] besides calling other elderly women or the victim's family if they wished so. In many cases they didn't.*

Induna 2: *As I have stated, we do not see many issues of this nature so my address of the matter would be usually based on what I have observed in the past. So, I do not really make suggestions, I usually ask what the better solution would be.*

Induna 6: *My teachings on such matters have been observed and informed culturally as a leader. From the discussion I suggest what can be done further to assist.*

The responses in relation to support structures offered revealed that the decision was based on the discernment of the traditional leader rather than access to a readily available structure. It was intriguing to find that, for such a sensitive issue, there did not seem to be any support structures within the traditional court to attend the harm a victim might suffer. Induna 1 stated the following:

Induna1*: If there is a, need we involve 'umkhongi' and the wife's family to help support them. However, in that instance we are careful because we do not wish to create tension among both families.*

Induna 3: *Much of what we do is to unite families; so, some matters may disrupt this due to how sensitive they are*.

This premise confirmed that socially learned perspectives relate to how people respond to IPV. Culture, which is defined as a group's common values, customs, and practices, has a substantial impact on social learning. It provides a framework in which people learn how to behave, engage, and make sense of their surroundings. People learn about their roles, duties, and societal expectations through cultural practices (Harry, Rueda and Kalyanpur, 1999). The traditional leaders' insistence on keep the matter private or to contain it just among other family members indicates an ongoing lineage of secrecy of certain issues and decisions that are socially bonded despite the infliction of pain and harm. Although understood why as was explained, this attitude will place victims at risk of isolation from other willing support structures. The leaders seemed to rely on previously observed and understood knowledge rather than complying to what restorative justice encompasses and what the matter may require in today's circumstances. According to Greer (2020), the social learning theory posits that learning can occur through observation. Observation is a significant component when analysing behaviour through social learning. Bandura, who established the observational learning model as a live model, notes that learning occurs through what has been exhibited by a real person in one's life and then putting it to practice. In 1995, Adams and Hickson conducted research in South Africa to investigate the mistreatment of women and the influence of abuse on the marriage relationship in a Coloured (mixed race) community. Adams and Hickson (1995) argue that in South Africa, there exists a cultural inclination towards the mistreatment of and violence against women, which is acquired as a coping mechanism for stress and thus heightens the likelihood of violence towards women. The study revealed that abused women

in unhappy marriages experienced elevated levels of conflict in their relationships with their spouses compared to non-abused women in happy marriages (Adams and Hickson, 1995).

In the researcher's view, this assessment reveals an unspoken truth about our understanding of marriage unions at customary institutional level. The headmen mentioned the non-recognition of divorce under customary marriage. From the perspective of the researcher, this compromises the victim's ability and Constitutional right to safety and the right to detach herself from an abusive relationship. In such a relationship she will perpetually be the victim as the perpetrator, who abuses her with impunity, will never unlearn this behaviour. The reality of this situation is also posited by the trauma bonding theory which reveals that, in most instances, the victim will lack the healthy discernment ability to stay in or leave a relationship which is abusive based on certain attachments that will have developed during the union. Without encouragement to discern abuse and motivation to re-evaluate the marriage, it also places the victim in a position where she will be further entrenched in the bonds of the marriage as she will be disgraced for abandoning it. The lack of support for her plight will also exacerbate her situation as she will have nowhere safe to turn. In the words of one of the headmen, not even her own family members may be willing to lend a helping hand due to the unspoken but obvious notion that they are also bonded by the cultural belief that the husband is the head of the family and his actions and behaviour are unquestionable.

5.2.7 The relationship between 'amakhosi' and the criminal justice system

Induna 1: *As 'izinduna namakhosi' [headmen and traditional leaders] we create our own relationships with the SAPS or NPOs in the community. There is not much of a relationship formed if we don't proactively approach these state holders. However, I am not to fault government completely as they do hold programs for the community from time to time which allows for this.*

Induna 5: *For this area the police station is much of a distant. This is because our closest SAPS closed their operations here in the year 2013. From then our civilians have relied on Umkomaas police station which I as induna and other leaders within the community call out for help in instances where there is a need.*

Induna 2: *I think that our people, especially young ones, still believe in the SAPS. However, I am not sure how far they stand in terms of hope and faith in their power.*

Induna 3: *As induna I placed myself in a position to have a good relationship with the police. I believe that, to a certain extent, I need to have access and a healthy relationship with the police force in order to provide the right assistance for my community.*

Induna 4: *I believe that my community trusts the services of the SAPS. However, my observation has shown me that people get tired of the costs associated with reporting a case then further having to attend a case. From what I have seen, nobody wants to be open about being a victim, and sometimes they can fear the process of being known for their victimisation or exposing their partner as a perpetrator.*

Despite the existence of indigenous remedies such as a tribal authority and court, some victims seek GBV redress through the criminal court system by first contacting the South African Police Service (SAPS). This means that victims of GBV prefer to report their cases to the SAPS to file a criminal complaint against the perpetrator; as a result, SAPS officers are the first responders to a GBV incident. It is vital that the public is made aware of the services that the SAPS may provide to victims of GBV so that people know what to expect when they call the SAPS. According to the Rural Police Strategy (South African Police Service, 2019), rural police stations are frequently isolated and mandated to patrol unmanageable large areas due to limited manpower (Van der Berg, and Burger,2002). The high levels of poverty and unemployment in rural communities pose a unique challenge to law enforcement, as poor socioeconomic variables tend to raise crime levels, and this poses severe challenges to community leaders and law enforcement units alike. The communities in the study area were compelled to rely on the members at Umkomaas police station which is responsible for a vast area and population. For many civilians in this community, this police station was as far a 12.5 km away. For residents who rely on public transport, this is a daunting distance to travel in a state of distress. In some cases, commuters have to use two modes of transportation to reach the police station.

5.2.8 Suggestions by the izinduna for curbing IPV

Induna 5: *I think education about the issue would be the best start. We need to be able to teach them young on how to socialise in relationships.*

Induna 3: *We focus far too much on teaching girls on how to grow into women but not much education is being made on the boy child.*

Induna 1*: Growing up we had boy boot camps which ran throughout to raise and teach boy children. These were known as 'ukudodiswa kwabafana' [teaching young boys] and it helped in sharing, learning, and unlearning of certain behaviours amongst boy children to better equip them for the phase when they later become men. At camps boys and girls are taught a variety of things outside sexual education. In previous years camps taught boys the importance of treating a girl like an egg. It taught them how to be soft and smart in how you spoke to a girl. This fell into teachings of 'ukukhuzela' [court praises]. It taught them the importance of a woman as a human being; not just the object that we see today being glorified through the media. These teachings helped shape the boy into a man so that even where they faced challenged, they had a system of older men to advise them. The problem today is that boys are learning from the street rather than from reputable role models.*

Maiden camps have also been a long-standing practice amongst the Zulu 'isintu' where the focus is primarily on the girl child. In the past, it was customary for women to abstain from having sex before marriage, to arrive at their wedding as virgins wearing a white gown, and to 'give-up' their virginity to their spouse during the marriage-confirmation ritual (Mokoboto-Zwane, 2016). This emphasised the manner in which she had to behave and be protected and certain teachings and expectations would be emphasised to the girl child. The headmen noted that, traditionally, boys and girls attended camps that were specific towards their upbringing and character as they grew and developed in society and among their peers. The izinduna suggested the reintroduction of '*ukudodiswa*', which were ongoing camps to teach the boy child values and how to engage with others in society. Their reasoning was based on the premise of a cycle of social learning of a boy child as he develops into a man. The suggestion was that being taken under the wings of older, wiser men who taught boys their cultural values meant they would have direct access to role models who would expose them to and teach them customary values away from Western influences.

Hunter (2015) agrees that Zulu boy and girl camps, or '*ukusoka'* and *'ukudodiswa'* respectively, is a cultural custom that targets the Zulu youth. The goal of these camps is to teach boys and girls about their cultural background, traditional values, and community obligations as future fathers and wives. Boys usually go through an initiation and training period under the supervision of older males in the community during Zulu boy camps. In addition to lectures on gender roles and masculinity, cultural customs and norms, and physical activities, the camps frequently include instruction in traditional skills like constructing structures, herding animals, and hunting. The aim of these camps is to prepare Zulu young people for maturity and their future duties by instilling in them a feeling of identity, discipline, and pride. Girls in particular are exposed to teachings that will make them understand the importance of women as key players in village and social cultural life that is imbued with rich customs.

Induna 2: He commented specifically on the concept of masculinity, saying the Western understanding of being a man has influenced how the Zulu people now view masculinity. *I cannot say word for word and describe everything but for the sake of what we are discussing, masculinity is to lead with wisdom of a woman. What we hear today is it is seen as violence and dominance, etc. It is not how we were brough up. When you look at society today, we must be able to identify that male and female are both able to be bad people or dominate incorrectly. And that is what male circumcision camps could teach if the platform was provided*.

Induna 4: He concurred that a boy child would be taught the correct manner to treat and approach women. These include the customary behaviour of '*ukukhuzela intombi'* [i.e., court praises to a lady]. The camps for boys would be run by elderly men known as '*izinqgwele'* [elder mentors]. They lead by illustrating proper behaviour. The mentor would also be able to observe a child's behaviour at an early stage of its life.

5.2.9 Challenges identified by the izinduna in dealing with IPV

It was evident that the participants were well aware that there were some challenges in the management of the issue of domestic and sexual abuse.

Induna 10: *We need more structured policies that will help even us understand the problem more so that we can deal with it better as a structure.*

Induna 5: *We need soft skills in mediating issues of IPV. Some issues such as land arbitration are not as challenging, but GBV and IPV need us to have more suitable skills because they are more sensitive topics.*

Induna 7: *Some of the realities we need to be true to is the fact that there are many families without male leadership figures. Thus, that creates a gap for children to find their own ways [and they] learn on the streets which unravels new issues such as your drug and alcohol use.*

Induna 2: *Therefore, I can say that we sometimes do not have the courage needed to mediate correctly.*

Induna 2 acknowledged that the challenge was that this issue affected women in most cases, and he thus implied that the cultural system often failed them. The high rates of IPV and GBV have shown that more need to be done at ground level where these issues should be addressed more assertively by all stakeholders, and particularly by traditional leaders who have a vast influence in their rural communities. To merely rely on custom and tradition means that African rural societies are not taken forward into the 21st century where our young people have to cope with the realty of a multi-cultural, democratised society and where they will be required to be 'street wise' as they enter the place of work or tertiary education. If they are not prepared for this demanding world, the traditional system will fail our young people who have to survive in a developing, expanding society and not merely in a rural village. For instance, traditional leaders may adopt a more humanitarian role by addressing the issue of IPV through instilling customary teachings, but they should also establish active support structures for victims; structures that should go beyond talking and discussions. Their role in the legitimatising of the tenets of ubuntu and advancing restorative justice where the perpetrator is tried and released is invaluable, but the question is whether habitual abusers and women batterers are put back in the community or whether they are truly 'restored' and healed. In traditional African society, the ubuntu ideology was utilised to maintain law and order (Schoeman, 2016). However, there does seem to be a gap in the manner of engagement of the issue as this scourge has not been eradicated from the rural society under investigation.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical findings that emerged from the interviews with traditional healers by way of thematic analysis where seven core themes were explored. These themes exposed key topics that addressed the objective of reviewing the perceptions of traditional leaders on IPV and the restorative justice discourse related to the *'isintu'* conflict resolution stance when dealing with IPV. It was discovered that intimate partner violence was a well-known phenomenon among the traditional leaders and they dealt with it in certain instances. However, they seemed to be guided by traditional teachings and Zulu customs rather than by the realities of a modern, demanding society in which our young people have to find their way. For instance, their reliance on and belief in *'isintu'* seemed to favour the man (or perpetrator) in a married relationship, while the lack of support for the abused wife by her reluctant family was condoned ("it was a private matter") and she was thus left to her own devices. Her escape through divorce was also not approved or supported. Moreover, the plight of unmarried couples was ignored, thus denying such victims even a hint of restorative justice or the opportunity to seek help to resolve the issue. When the abstinence from marriage due to an unaffordable bride price and the wide acceptance of the co-habitation of couples in modern-day society are considered, this exposes a dire situation for unmarried abused victims whose plight will not be addressed though traditional channels, simply as she is viewed as 'a child' and therefore not eligible for restorative justice. However, on the other side of the coin, the traditional leaders referred to and condoned indigenous ways of raising children, believing that this approach would be a steppingstone towards moulding children's behaviours at an early stage and identifying certain character traits that could be enhanced if possible or remedied if necessary. The pivotal role of wise and experienced elders in this process was highlighted, while the role of parents was not referred to, possibly as the interview questions did not open this avenue for discussion. The recommendations that emerged from this data set will be presented in the final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: YOUTHS' PERCEPTIONS

6.1 Introduction

The interviews with young people (21 to 35 years old) were conducted in the two study areas (Kwa Thoyane and uMnini) in safe locations. The participant sample comprised 20 young

people who were recruited with the assistance of the headmen. Each sub-theme begins with the youth participants' verbatim narratives and comments. According to the national Youth Policy, the term ‘youth’ refers to anyone between the ages of 14 and 35. It encompasses several types of young people who have been exposed to various socio-political and historical events. For instance, a 35-year-old youth lived in South Africa during a period of heightened political tensions as school learners, whereas a 14-year-old youth is currently growing up in an atmosphere where many new reforms have been introduced into a more democratic and modern society (National Youth Policy, 1996). The study sample comprised both male and female participants between the ages of 18 to 35. The researcher deemed the involvement of this age group imperative as their ideas and views would be invaluable in understanding IPV from a youthful and mixed-gender perspective. The discourse that intersperses the quotes connects comparable or differing comments related to the theme under discussion. Pseudonyms are used to protect the respondents' real identities. The interviews were generally conducted in isiZulu (the participants’ home language) and were recorded with their permission. The quotes were translated from the isiZulu vernacular and may not reflect customary idiomatic English. The data were categorised after several in-depth readings of the transcripts. The following themes emerged after this process:

- Understanding IPV
- The victims of IPV
- Victim support at home
- Staying in an IPV relationship
- IPV and African traditional medicine
- Seeking support from traditional councils
- SAPS support.

6.2 Themes that Emerged from the Data

6.2.1 Understanding IPV

The young people effortlessly understood and interpreted IPV and they jumped straight into addressing the questions. They were knowledgeable and expressed their views assertively and clearly. This were some of the views shared:

Liya: *IPV is a bad thing and affects our youth more especially today. It can be physical violence, emotional violence, verbal or financial violence. Within my neighbourhood and at home I have witnessed IPV in many forms.*

Sane: *Intimate partner violence we see almost a lot within our community; it's just that you try to report it but the parties involved never seem to move away from the situation. Therefore, after a certain time of events we all grow disinterested into that notion of 'eyababili ayingenwa".*

Khosi: *It is so common amongst our age groups. I am under the impression that we aren't only talking about physical abuse? We also making inclusion of emotional, etc? Ehh? Then I can say that amongst each other we see the verbal and emotional [abuse] more often.*

Nqobile: *It is a huge problem faced globally and even within our small community. I can confirm that it's a problem and it happens silently because what I have noticed is that abused people go through it silently, maybe out of embarrassment.*

Nqobile notes an element of "embarrassment" to report issues of intimate partner violence this can be clearly identified to link to socially learned experiences of stigma. This stigma can manifest as victim blaming thus discouraging the individuals from reporting. The stigma noticeable may emanate from feelings of facing judgement and ridicule from family or the community itself. As theorised, social norms stem from behaviour that is socially learned within community constructs thus further relearned.

Sthenjwa: *As I have grown older, I have understood that intimate partner violence is a big problem that can also be found or seen amongst the youth. Eish, my peers get into violent fights with each other as couples. I see acts like intimate partner violence a lot when I am in Magabheni. However, when I am at my dad's home in Emakhaya [a rural area] I don't see it as much.*

Sihle: *Intimate partner violence is any abuse that can be done to one person by someone they are dating. The abuse can be [physical] violence or verbal. Within my small community I believe that it does exist as a problem and the awareness made on it is needed but needs a different approach.*

Simphiwe: *I am aware of the issue of GBV and intimate partner violence in South Africa. It's a big problem that I believe can affect men and women. In Ilfracombe you will often see it after certain events or a night out.*

Amahle: *It's a very common problem in general with adults and the youth. I have noticed that abuse isn't only an issue faced by adults but can be faced by any dating partners.*

In exploring the young people's perceptions of intimate partner violence (IPV), various aspects emerged. Key ideas were elicited regarding its causes, the patterns in which it occurs, the impact it may have, and most importantly, how well they would be able to identify its occurrence. The participants identified IPV as a prevalent and noticeable phenomenon in the uMnini and Kwa Thoyana areas. The participants argued that the nature of IPV was both verbal and physical, while some indicated a pattern as they argued it might start as a verbal altercation and later progress to physical violence. While IPV is defined as gender-neutral in the literature, research continues to sustain and validate this form of violence as a problem inside a heterosexual relationship (Kumar, 2022). The data confirmed Kumar's (2022) arguments and further indicated that it was also evident that IPV occurred not only amongst older/adult groups, but also amongst young people in the rural areas under study.

6.2.2 The victims of IPV

Sifiso: *Today IPV perpetration is genderless. Most times now men or boys are victims silently because they try to avoid being in a position to need or have to talk of the issues they face.*

Sihle: *Men are able to be victims of IPV but what I have also been able to notice amongst us is that IPV is used against men as a weapon. Women now know that they have the backing required by the law and government on the issue, so they use it against men.*

Ntando: *In some of the instances where IPV was observed the woman instigated it/provoked their partner with the knowledge that if or when they report the matter, they would get the upper hand.*

Khosi: *The common understanding of the issue of IPV states the man as the perpetrator; yet, in our society we are sometimes able to observe IPV inflicted by a woman.*

Amanda: *In many cases women and children are seen to be the victims of intimate partner violence and that usually doesn't allow the male victim to be able to open up on their victimisation because men are stigmatised for such. As a girl child I think that the society we stay in wouldn't encourage a man to be open on their victimisation as it would affect 'ubudoda babo' [their masculinity].*

Amahle: *Victims can be both male and female. I have seen both male and females as victims where they both perpetrated [it] through violence or verbal abuse.*

Sifiso: *From my understanding, I cannot fall victim to a woman; or, if I do, I cannot speak to other people about it. Within the community the notion would be 'uyindoda enteke teke' [a weak man]. M y manliness is a very definitive part of who I am.*

Noxolo: *Growing up the idea of a victim was always the woman, but through what I have seen a man or woman can be a victim of intimate partner violence.*

Snothando*: Being a victim can happen or be done by both parties in a relationship. Maybe sometimes it can happen as defensive behaviour. Sometimes a person could fight or be abusive because they are trying to fight back.*

Ntokozo: *The victims of IPV are known as a woman because they are known to be weaker and more prone or accessible to victimisation.*

Lungelo: *I think both men and women can be victims of IPV. It's just that women are more likely to be the victim rather than the perpetrator. Or the woman can be a perpetrator, but it's usually through emotional aspect of abuse which is not really given as much attention because it's not visible. Women can speak with their words whereas men keep quiet.*

The participants generally argued that both men and women can fall victim to IPV and they spoke strongly against the notion that only women can be the victims of this crime. They argued that if a man fell victim to IPV, he would normally not disclose it. This notion is confirmed by the literature (Stephenson, Sharma, Mimiaga, Garofalo, Brown, Bratcher, Wimbly, Hidalgo, Hoehnle, Thai, and Sullivan, 2019) that argues that men are known not to report or seek help in instances of IPV. This is attributed to the stereotypical idea that men are typically larger and

stronger than their female partners and are ashamed to admit being a victim of abuse as he would be perceived as 'too weak to stand up to a woman'. However, refraining from talking about abuse does not mean that men are less likely to sustain injuries during domestic abuse incidences; they are just less likely to seek help than their female counterparts (Basile, 2005). This translates to hegemonic masculine traits that can be observed in the Zulu culture which reveres the masculinity concept. According to a study by Hadebe (2010), the respect and dignity a Zulu man demands are entrenched in their culture and manifests in certain behavioural attributes that are linked to a Zulu man's demeanour in society. Thus, seeking help or disclosing IPV would be tantamount to degradation as the overall image of the man's masculinity would be debunked in society.

A noteworthy comment by some participants was that some women might use their knowledge of the law and their stereotypical 'weak' state as a weapon to retaliate against a man if the relationship has collapsed. This suggests the prevalence of 'false accusations' of IPV in the areas under study for the benefit of women's gratification and need for revenge.

6.2.3 Victim Support at home

Victim support is a key aspect of healing when dealing with the issue of IPV. Victim support should offer immediate and ongoing assistance to survivors so that they may rebuild their lives. They may require safe housing, employment, financial stability, and healthcare as primary concerns associated with the aftermath of IPV. They should be helped to regain independence, self-esteem, and to establish a life free from violence and build a future that is free from abuse. Victim support emerged as an important theme during the interviews with the young participants.

Ntombenhle: *I don't feel that there is much support on such matters when you come from a community such as mine.*

Lulama: *There isn't support. I think that can stem from the fear and stigma that other people might judge you once you say that you have been abused or are a victim. Even as the abuser, there won't be support for you needing help, but rather judgement.*

Nokwanda: *I have never been able to discuss any dating relationships with my parents. I have never seen this with my friends either, unless those I went to urban schools with. However, even*

then, the mom might know the guy's name but no further details. In our culture, there [is no] expectation to ever reveal where my boyfriend is from if he ever impregnates me.

Stheh: *My mother has supported me through an instance where I was a victim. Our relationship has always been open since my teenage years*.

Lungile: *For me, keeping my boyfriend as a secret is more of a manner to stay or remain respectful as a child under your parent's household no matter how old or independent you may be. So, revealing myself as a victim would be even more difficult.*

Ntobeko: *Age and time play an important factor and role in the manner in which you are able to discuss your dating life with your parents, more specifically your mother. I grew up in the 90s. My mother is still very bent on communicating dating at a stage where the potential man is ready to marry. I lived with just my mom and brother. My mother was strict and believed rigorously in doing things according to proper methods, especially under 'isintu' Zulu traditional customs. The customs affirm that a girl child may not introduce dating partners to their parents; this being done is a form of respect for the elders. Therefore, you date secretively with the aim to maintain respect for the customs and your family. Furthermore, I think parents discourage dating to avoid issues such as IPV because they have a sense of awareness of issues like that occurring in relationships.*

Amahle: *It is not easy to open up your vulnerably as a subject of intimate partner victimisation when the floor is not open to discuss dating. I believe it will be more difficult to introduce your partner as your violator than your romantic partner.*

Sane: *I had support from my aunt when I was in a situation like intimate partner violence. Although she supported me, it came with a lot of chastising and warnings to stay away from dating. This gave me the impression to not go to her again if ever a similar issue occurs.*

Noxolo: *I was always caught dating and my mom would hit me claiming that she would never support me dating. Because of that I have always known that I can never come out to an elder about dating. I think reporting to her that I am a victim would be even more difficult because I don't know what response I would get from her. With friends, I try to limit how much I involve them in my relationships.*

Siya: *I have never tried to disclose any issue of conflict with anyone. I keep it to myself because I do not see how it may help. Instead, I think because I am a guy I would be spoken about or ridiculed.*

Sthenjwa: *I did not seek help from family but rather I consulted with a traditional healer. Mainly because I wanted to resolve the issue I was facing as it was more spiritual. Otherwise, I did not seek any other support.*

Sihle: *Although it is understood that my baby or even big sister may not share [information] with the family [about] a partner they are dating based on the issue of respect, my opinion differs. As a guy I tend to understand how other guys behave and as guys we do see our friends misbehave along the lines of IPV; therefore, I think me being introduced to my sister's partner may sometimes help her.*

Sbo: *I would want to be introduced to my daughter's partner. Not to be his friend but rather to protect her in case she ever needed me. We live in a different time where femicide is largely apparent; therefore, as a male figure I need to be in a position to assist. I am also aware that guys…eh…not all, tend to behave better when they are aware that the girl has some kind of support.*

The African custom of respect for one's elders and family has, over many years, been socially learned. This custom entails many 'don'ts' and taboos, especially as far as romantic dating and child-parent relationships are concerned. Secrecy or keeping the topic of dating private has always been associated as a sign of respect, and the participants from these rural areas affirmed this stance. According to Sylaska and Edwards (2013), the majority of IPV victims reported at least one informal support person such as a friend, a family member (likely a female), a classmate, a co-worker or a neighbour, but the female participants generally referred to complete secrecy, excluding the knowledge of a friend or friends, should they engage in a relationship.

Thus, keeping one's romantic life, a secret was deemed a sign of respect for the elders. Only two participants revealed that they had an open relationship with a parent (their mothers) about their dating status. One participant referred to the traditional teaching that one should remain

obedient in one's parents' household regardless of one's age and level of independence. This participant alluded that it would even be difficult to divulge an issue of IPV to one's parents should the platform be created even at a more mature age. Some participants pointed out that revealing oneself as a victim of IPV would be almost impossible as they feared being confronted with a lecture and rejection rather than support. One participant also affirmed that the only time it was deemed permissible to speak of one's intimate partner was when sexual intercourse had occurred and the whereabouts of the partner had to be traced (possibly in the case of a pregnancy).

It was obvious that the male participants introduced a different direction in their narratives, as most stated that they understood the custom of abstaining from a romantic relationship at a young age, but they opposed the narrative of dating secretly. They were acutely aware of the nature of IPV as they had observed such incidences among their peers and other groups. However, as fathers/brother they would prefer their daughters/siblings to approach them for support.

It was evident in the narratives that the young participants' notions had been entrenched by tradition and customs, whether they agreed with them or not. In contrast to the findings of Sylaska and Edwards (2013), the current study found the existence of a gap within the African demographic in terms of support for IPV victims. Furthermore, the male participants supported the females' notion of a barrier of silence as they admitted that they would not consider disclosure at any stage as they feared rejection and mockery. The feminine-masculine divide associated with IPV was therefore evident in the narratives of these rural young people.

6.2.4 Staying in an IPV relationship

All the participants of this group argued that staying in a relationship that involves IPV would be difficult and complicated. The literature discusses many reasons why a victim will stay in such a relationship; therefore, it was pertinent to address this topic in this study to determine the views of young people in rural settings. It was also critical to understand their perceptions of the risks and challenges of continuing an abusive relationship. Having discussed victim support with the participants, the discussion then explored the issue of staying in abusive relationships.

Ntobeko: *We sometimes go back to our partners and have hope that the relationship can still improve. In my own understanding, the length of the relationship can determine if I do stay. Sometimes me staying will be determined by the idea that I have hope for the relationship and still do think that he will one day marry me.*

Sane: *I ended up cohabiting with my abusive partner because I couldn't go home and felt ashamed to reveal such to my parents. The story of my abuse was well known within my community.*

Noxolo: *Growing up I was taught that the key goal of dating was marriage and that 'umendo uyantshontshwa' [to show up as your best self to win over the marriage as the best suitor amongst the rest]. Therefore, I think in my mind this meant that I would have to endure many different challenges in order to be chosen for marriage so I would stay in the relationship because of that. I would also stay because there is some hope that I build in my man that he will change or that at that moment he is still faced with challenges maybe at work.*

Stehnjwa: *As a guy, I think girls stay because some still have the goal of marriage in mind. Especially as they get older or become mothers, women become more active in thinking towards marriage, so sometimes from what I have seen they stay in these relationships because of that goal.*

Nokwanda: *I have seen close relatives stay in abusive relationships. Most times I think it's because of the fear to leave the relationship they are already used to. I also think this places an incorrect outlook on younger generations because we all become accustomed to the idea 'yokubekezela' [especially as young women]. The pressure to 'ukubekezela' in relaltionships is always communicated. Now that I am a bit older and have access to different forms of media, I have had the opportunity to relook at teaching 'yokubekezela'.*

Ntombenhle: *In an abusive relationship you find yourself staying. I think I would stay in the relationship hoping that my partner would later change. There is also much pride and accomplishment in knowing that you stayed in the same relationship rather than changing partners all the time. Changing partners can sometimes also bring the fear of sexually transmitted diseases.*

Liya: *From how I have been taught there's an understanding that abuse should be a deal breaker in a relationship, but there also comes teachings from elders (depending on the household) that indicates the dangers of always changing partners in terms of spiritual cleanliness and spiritual connections made when changing partners. Thus, the encouragement as a girl is you try being with as few partners as possible with marriage being the end goal. Therefore, you don't really ever enter a relationship to leave; you enter to try to see how to make it work.*

Sphiwe: *I stayed in my abusive relationship because I could not go back home. As girls we are often encouraged to want to hope or see this development of the relationship. There is much encouragement to marry over dating and when speaking to your parent the conversation steers more in that direction.*

Lulama: *There have not been many cases where a friend of mine may have been victim of intimate partner violence, but what I have noted is that men/boys are much quicker to leave a relationship where they are not respected. Respect for men is an important aspect in relationships.*

The phrase 'ukubekezela emendweni' is commonly used in the isiZulu language in South Africa. It means 'endurance in difficult times' or 'perseverance in the face of adversity' when translated into English. In the Zulu culture it often refers to the endurance of difficulty in marriage (Chisale, 2016). This phrase or teaching has branched out as a teaching for young women by their families in order to be able to secure marriage. However, the danger noted by the researcher is its ability to be misinterpreted as there are grey areas such as abuse. This is not a verbally communicated threat so nobody looks out for you. In this context, this notion could indirectly enable the traumatic bonding of the victim as *'ukubekezela'* will be the identified triumph without acknowledging the underlying but severely dangerous presence of victimisation.

Some participants obviously spoke of personal experience. Most indicated that they were/would be unable to leave their abusive partners because of fear of going back home and facing stigma and embarrassment as they would be deemed a failure. Many female participants were of the notion that they would induce the abusive partner to change as the behaviour was temporary due to external stress. It was observed that many participants were of the mindset

that marriage was the end goal in any relationship. They would therefore stay and count the time invested into the relationship as important. Many also feared starting over. These notions reflected behaviours of trauma bonding in that the participants held on in the hope that they would grow increasingly stronger bonds as the victims with their perpetrators. Few alluded to children who might impact the relationship and assist it in becoming more positive over time.

In response to probing questions, one participant stated that "*there is much encouragement to marry over dating and when speaking to your parent the conversation steers more in that direction*". The traditional focus on marriage was thus clearly understood. The persistent encouragement for marriage might be perceived as a positive driver as it instils the principle of commitment; however, in a setting where IPV is a factor this suggestion is negative in light of its inference to the trauma bonds theory. This theory postulates that the victim becomes sympathetic or even affectionate towards the abusive partner through emotional ties. According to Dutton and Painter (1993), women may ignore early signs of abuse from the onset of the relationship due to excitement; thus, they become entrapped within the relationship unknowingly.

6.2.5 IPV and African traditional medicine

As a result of the need for secrecy in sexual adversity and bearing the brunt of fear of shame and loss of respect, most victims or *'emakhaya*' [not all], seek spaces that will dissipate feelings of pain and shame and escalate healing. Some of the participants stated that African spiritual solutions would be an option as they are private compared clinics, a church, or friends. The first aspect of African spirituality that emerged was the issue of *'isichitho'*.

'Isichitho' is a condition in which the afflicted person becomes unpleasant to others and endures a type of rejection associated with witchcraft (Ogana, 2009). '*Isichitho'* is also believed to be a curse inflicted on a person to destroy the skin or to end love. *'Abathakathi'* [witch doctors or traditional healers in a positive sense] and females primarily employ this remedy and it is extremely common in African communities. People who are inflicted with *'isichitho'* become upset when they look at or think about you (Matic Society, 2018). *'Isichitho'* manifests as a curse or spell that affects the face, neck, and upper back. Witch doctors 'implant' this sickness in a person with the intention of destroying the affected person's face, and acne is often perceived to be the result. *Acne vulgaris* is a skin disorder that can be caused by shifting hormones throughout adolescence, but it is also believed that it can be caused by witch doctors

who want to destroy your skin and image in society. The kind of *Acne vulgaris* that is caused by witch doctors is referred to as *'isichitho'. 'Isichitho'* [to remove from a place] is inflicted by implanting this skin illness in a person. The person responsible for this 'curse' does so with the intent of removing or separating the affected individual from their spouse, or just to destroy their face due to jealously. *'Isichitho'* was surprisingly referred to as a form of IPV within the indigenous African context.

Liya: *When I experienced abuse from my partner, I felt that I could find a solution from 'inyanga'. I had experienced the signs related to having 'isichitho' and later felt the need to visit 'inyanga'. My interaction with 'inyanga' revealed that my boyfriend had another girlfriend who used 'umuthi' [medicine/curse] such as 'isichitho'. 'Isichitho' can manifest in the following ways: feeling as if you have ant-size insects crawling on your skin but when you look nothing appears to be there; financial problems; being unable to prolong the money you get paid at work; destruction of my property; and losing or no longer excelling as you would at work for no reason amongst various other signals or signs which I could observe within myself because I had already known of this through other experiences. This then took me into a process where I needed to follow certain cleanses alone without making disclosure to him. From the advice given by 'inyanga', he disclosed that while I was under the spell of 'isichitho' I would push him further away.*

Khosi: *I started visiting 'izinyanga' in my early 20s after an instance when I experienced 'isichitho'. I got 'isichitho' as a result of my ex-partner's lover. When consulting with 'imyanga', it was revealed to me that 'isichitho' was done to me as a means for my partner and I to break up. The symptoms I had were acne on my face and upper chest and my partner would always fight verbally with my ex; sometimes it would become physical.*

Amahle: *I have been a victim of 'isichitho' by my boyfriend's girlified. 'Isichitho' works in various ways and affects you in various ways as you might know. The effects for me were not acne but rather feeling isolated from group settings. It made going to work a big challenge as I would end up in arguments with colleagues out of nowhere.*

Sane: *'Isichitho' is an African spell that can be inflicted on you by your partner's current partner or your partner's ex. It is usually practised with the intention to break apart your relationship whilst also placing you in agony. I have experienced this and it's usually the reason*

why I feel anxious to change partners a lot because I fear being confronted with this issue repeatedly. I think it's my pride that entered the relationship with this guy before her so I cannot just give in. Solutions offered by a traditional leader may be the better solution.

Sifiso*: I have used 'idliso'*[2] *on a girl to keep her closer to me.*

Ntando: *I have used 'idliso' on a girl I was dating.*

Sphiwe: *I have used 'umuthi' on the premise of ensuring that she stays with me and does not leave the relationship. At the time I had been dating three other women with the intention to see which would be the best choice to wed at a later stage.*

Xolo: *I once used 'idliso' on a guy not knowing that it can have bad side effects when used incorrectly. 'Idliso' comes in the form of 'umuthi' that you may add or mix to your boyfrind's food as a love potion. When doing this I was not aware of the dangers that could be associated with it. 'Idliso' can make your partner extremely obsessed with you and once they are they can develop behaviours of violence. My boyfriend would hit me in front of his family. Eventually I desperately needed support and reported to my mother about what I had done because his obsession had led to him leaving his job. This then got us in the process of having him cleansed of the spell caused by the potion.*

Over the years, *'ukudlisa indoda'* has been cited as one of the contributing factors to GBV, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence. Ntokozo confirmed that, according to *'izinyanga'* [traditional doctors] and street hearsay, there is a correlation between IPV and 'ukudlisa indoda'. A lot of what we believe and see as black people is not easy to prove because most of it is spiritual, but I can say that *'ukudliswa'* and ' exist.

Sthenjwa: *My ex-wife used a love potion on me then later on my family when she had moved in with us. When I learned of the possibility, I quickly visited 'inyanga' who advised that the 'iddliso' hadn't gotten too violent within me. Sthenjwa explained that 'idliso' has the ability to later make the individual violent and monstrous as it wears off the body. Upon realising that I*

[2] 'Idliso' is a love potion that is mixed into the food of the targeted person to make him/her fall in love with the instigator.

had 'idliso', I underwent a variety of body and spiritual cleansings just so that I could regain myself again.

Noxolo: *I have used 'idliso' on my partner. At a later stage he ended up being very abusive and controlling towards me.*

The male participants revealed that they had used *'idlsio'* to instigate love and court the ladies of their affection. Most of them belonged to the older demographic group between 29 to 35 years. These discussions raised the prevalence of using '*umuthi'/'idliso'* as a love potion to gain someone's affection. Previous studies on *'idliso'* and love potions in the Zulu culture indicated that it would likely promote risky sexual behaviours, which we know raises the risk of contracting HIV if direct sexual contact is advised when using it (Kunene, 2010). However, in the current study the participants noted that *'idliso'* could encourage IPV as it may entice obsessive behaviours which may escalate to other dangerous behaviours if not managed.

The discussions proceeded to the possibility of IPV being investigated within the African context with particular reference to the use of *'idliso'* and its dangers. The discussions revealed the perception existed that IPV might not be limited to physical, verbal, or financial abuse as proposed by the literature review, but that it might also be spiritual. The spiritual aspect of abuse could be inflicted by a partner or even a third party in a relationship using African *'muthi'* [medicine]. The response by the last participant can be explained by the theory of victim precipitation. According to this theory, certain victim behaviours, characteristics, or interactions can play a role in initiating or escalating criminal acts. One participant alluded that they would rather stay in a relationship than leaving it in fear of mockery and then being subjected to metaphysical or spiritual abuse.

This was the first reference the researcher encountered where IPV was attributed to African spiritualism. The discussions entered a supernatural dimension with refences to *'umuthi weidliso'* [love potions] as a 'weapon' that could exacerbate or instigate IPV in the rural areas of uMnnini and Kwa Thoyana.

In African the tradition, the ancestors are revered figures who demand respect and dread from their descendants since they can either bless or harm them, depending on their relationship (Magezi and Magezi, 2017). *'Umuthi', 'idliso' and 'isichitho'* have shared properties and are

linked to some form of African spiritualism. *'Isichitho'* in particular is a condition in which the afflicted person becomes unpleasant to others and endures a type of rejection associated with witchcraft (Ogana, 2009), while *'umuthi' and 'idliso'* are secret concoctions that have a spiritual connotation as they are believed to 'magically' alter certain behaviours of persons who ingest them.

6.2.6 Seeking the support of the Traditional Council

When conceptualising the study, it was envisaged that the rural Traditional Council would be revered as the mediator of conflict and the custodian of wisdom, yet it appeared that the participants did not recognise their role outside The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 in terms of land issues. The youth understood their role as only dealing with the distribution of land and other land-related conflicts rather than as a body that has holistic oversight over the livelihoods of people in their communities.

Nkosi: *Izinduna have a responsibility to issues that relate to land distribution and peace in relation to such issues, more especially where a family is involved. Therefore, I am not too certain if they would be well equipped to deal with my grievance of IPV. I even doubt that I would be free to open up. However, maybe at a later stage as a married man I could approach them for their wisdom on the matter.*

Xolo: *I wouldn't approach traditional authority for an IPV issue. From my knowledge, they deal with land-related issues or family disputes based on land issues.*

Nqobile: *I would not go to traditional leaders for IPV issues. I think the environment wouldn't be practical to discuss matters around my dating with older adults. Eh, the embarrassment! No!*

Sphiwe: *I would not go to traditional leaders with my issue of IPV.*

Ntokozo: *Traditional leaders are usually much older, and I see them as father figures. I would not go to them if I had an issue of intimate partner violence.*

Sthenjwa: *I have been married and when something similar to IPV happened to me I didn't approach a traditional court. It was not the first line for support; rather I sought my own*

solutions. Then got support from my family; my uncles who referred me to a trusted traditional healer.

Sane: *Personally, I wouldn't seek guidance or assistance from traditional leaders but would rather approach the SAPS. The SAPS does try to intervene but there has never been anything solid to come out of the situation in terms of maybe splitting the couple up etc. Couples always end up getting back together and drop any charges if any are opened.*

Liya: *I think elders are more likely to approach traditional leaders with their issues. I wouldn't, more because to them I am a child. There isn't much I would be able to discuss about my relationship with elders.*

Sane: *I wouldn't approach traditional leaders. Instead, I would seek help from the police or not report it at all. Although traditional leaders may be wise and I think their opinion may be of value, I don't think they would relate. Also, because I am unmarried, I doubt my issue will get that much attention.*

Khosi: *I guess I understand that traditional leaders have a role to play regarding conflict mediation, but I am not certain if they would be able to assist in discussing my issues appropriately. I don't think I would be honest and open enough with them on my IPV issue.*

Nqobile: *I would approach the police for assistance rather than an induna. What I prefer with indunas that there is always a solution to bring us together in an event that we would be in a quarrel and thus our issue might be soon resolved as opposed to [going to] the SAPS. Furthermore, from what I have seen, it's more private than the hearings headed by the SAPS. However, traditional councils do not hear cases between unmarried couples, therefore we may not take advantage of this. I would be embarrassed to report my issue to an elder.*

The participants' responses indicated that it was quite unlikely that anyone would seek guidance or help from traditional leaders in cases of IPV. The responses showed that these young people were misinformed about the essence and depth of the work traditional leaders do apart from resolving land distribution and land disputes. These young people seemed to perceive that traditional council members lacked the capacity to understand relationships

outside marriage and, as a result, they felt that they would not be welcome in the environment of a traditional court should they wish to resolve a case of IPV. Clearly, there seemed to be a wide divide between the elderly traditional leaders and the young people of the rural areas under study, which was quite surprising considering the practice of boy and girl camps where African traditions and the role of traditional leaders might have been shared in detail. It may thus be assumed that not all young people attend such camps.

6.2.7 SAPS support

Sihle: *Yes, the police often do show up in an incident of intimate partner violence.*

Sfiso: *In many cases the SAPS did come to intervene in matters. I would rather seek assistance from the SAPS in the event I have a case to report.*

Amahle: *My neighbour often has issues of abuse. We have often called the police and each time they showed up. However, most neighbours do not care anymore; they rather intervene to be updated on why the couple is arguing and gossip about it.*

Ntando: *The SAPS often do come when there are issues of abuse in the area. I would trust them for help in a situation where I am a victim because I have seen them show up for some people within the community.*

The youth of these two rural areas seemed apprehensive and even apathetic when they were asked if they would seek help from traditional leaders, but it was clear that they would rely without hesitation on the SAPS in cases of conflict. This was another surprising finding as it contrasted significantly with many reports that South Africans have lost confidence in the SAPS, particularly in rural areas where there are limited manpower and resources. For instance, according to Business Tech (2015), most people that did not report a crime offered explanations such as the following: "The police won't do anything about it" and "The police could do nothing". In the latter instance it was concerning to note that victims of sexual offenses refused to disclose the crime to the authorities on the grounds that it was "not serious enough". Often in issues relating to GBV, citizens have indicated depleted trust in the criminal justice system in fear of victim blaming. Questions like, "Why were you alone?" and "Why were you dressed that way?" were used by law enforcement officers who seemed to blame the victim rather than

the offender . This attitude that seems prevalent among a significant portion of police officers inevitably puts victims who are weak and survivors of horrible crimes in a tough situation when they truly need assistance (Govender, 2023). However, the findings of the current study affirmed the opposite as support from the SAPS seemed the best solution for quite a large number of the participants.

6.3 Chapter Summary

The empirical results of the interview responses with the youth sample were presented in this chapter. Seven themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the youth participants' responses. Important topics related to the study's goal of examining young people's perspectives on IPV in the Kwa Thoyana and uMnini communities were discussed. It was found that young people were aware of the phenomenon of intimate partner violence in the area and they discussed ways in which their communities dealt with it. In summary, issues pertaining to IPV such as a lack of household support, the challenges of establishing common ground at home when one is a child, and ways to avoid becoming a victim of intimate partner abuse were mentioned. The results also suggested that the prevalence of IPV in the study area might be significantly influenced by traditional beliefs in medications such as love potions and even the effect of curses. In this context, the young participants were far more aware of the importance of witch doctors, traditional healers, and the SAPS in their lives than of the roles that traditional leaders might play in resolving health and family issues as well as conflict situations. Following the discussion of these themes, various recommendations emerged that will be presented in Chapter seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews that were conducted with 30 participants (10 headmen and 20 young people 18-35 years old) in the uMnini and Kwa Thoyana rural communities in mid-South Coast in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. After a thorough analysis of the data, distinct findings emerged that addressed the critical questions presented in the introductory chapter. With reference to the secondary data that were discussed in Chapter two and the results outlined in Chapter five and Chapter six, the discourse in this chapter presents an overview of the study, discusses the key findings and the conclusions that were reached, and offers pertinent recommendations. The conclusions are arranged in accordance with relevant factors that contributed to certain findings and suggestions that might direct interested parties and upcoming scholars in resolving the issues that the study revealed.

For the investigation of the topic, the four objectives that had to be achieved were to:

- Explore the perceptions of the youth and traditional leaders regarding the issue of intimate partner violence;
- Understand traditional leaders' and the youth's views on the effects of intimate partner violence on victims and the community;
- Determine if and how traditional leaders' intervention can curb the prevalence of intimate partner violence; and
- Explore the impact of the reintegration process practised by traditional unions on those who offended and those who were the victims of the offence.

7.2 Key Findings

In the quest to achieve the objectives of the study, a number of key findings emerged.

7.2.1 Perceptions regarding IPV

The traditional leaders were aware of the prevalence of IPV in the community although they were at first not familiar with the term. The wisdom and kindness of these leaders were evident in their responses as they spoke compassionately of incidences of strife between married

couples. They argued that IPV was mostly verbal but admitted that it could also become physical at times, while most attributed such eruptions to excessive alcohol consumption. None of the traditional leaders referred to any homicides associated with IPV, or they were too polite to raise such a sensitive issue.

The younger people immediately grasped the concept and admitted that IPV was a phenomenon well known to them, while a few even admitted to being victims and survivors themselves. They agreed with the elders that this problem was associated with drug and alcohol abuse, and explained that many cases occurred in taverns or at social events where alcohol was used. The youth also agreed that IPV occurred both verbally and physically, yet argued more strongly than the elders that it had been normalised even in this rural community, and noted that most victims were women. They admitted that men could also fall victim to IPV and that they felt insecure to speak about the violation. The literature (Cools and Kotsadam, 2017) also affirms that male IPV victims in rural locations encounter considerable obstacles when trying to disclose their abuse, leading to underreporting due to stigma and mockery. Men are frequently discouraged from acknowledging or seeking treatment for their experiences of partner violence due to societal conventions and gender stereotypes. Male victims of abuse thus tend not to reveal their abuse because they fear judgment, ridicule, or lack of acceptance (Woodyard,2019).

A surprising finding was that the young people of this community placed their trust more readily the SAPS than in their traditional leaders in matters of violence and conflict. It may be argued that the police was more visible and a platform for redress that they were more informed about. This finding is in contrast with earlier studies that argue that society has lost all its trust in the SAPS. For instance, the Human Science Research Council of South Africa (2022) found that trust in the SAPS has been relatively low within South Africa over the past 20 years since apartheid. This clearly identifies a deep loss in the faith of how police services has been received amongst South Africans.

Furthermore, the younger participants' views oscillated between respect for their elders and prioritising their safety needs should they fall victim to IPV. They were aware of the fact that certain behaviours were required in adherence to time-honoured customs. As a result of this entrenched consciousness, affected young female participants highlighted that they would be (and some were) unable to approach their older family members for assistance should they fall victim to IPV. This discussion stemmed from the customary ideology that a girl will only

introduce a partner to her parents should he want to marry her, or if he needs to pay damages should she have fallen pregnant out of wedlock. Therefore, introducing a violator to the family who should be forgiven in terms of the restorative justice ideology was an alien concept to the young generation. The tension that such a situation would create between the family and the perpetrator was highlighted and the young participants underscored the view that the police and not the traditional leaders would be approached should they fall victim to IPV.

The traumatic bonds theory was applicable to the responses where the participants highlighted the view that they would (or should) stay with the perpetrator in the quest to change his behaviour from a wife batterer to a loving partner. When first dating such partners, victims of IPV are ignorant of the abusive nature of this person; but once he has her in his clutches, she has to become accustomed to abusive behaviour and overlook such transgressions as a means of self-protection. Customary beliefs reinforce her staunch commitment to the relationship as she has been indoctrinated with the expectation of marriage as the end goal with proverbs such as 'ukubekezela' ('endurance in difficult times' or 'perseverance in the face of adversity') The participants suggested that marriage was idolised; thus, leaving an abusive partner could never be an option once one was married in the context of traditional African beliefs and societal expectations.

7.2.2 The effects of intimate partner violence on the community

In order to address the effects of intimate partner violence on the rural communities under study, a thorough examination of the fundamental problems encountered at grassroots level was necessary. The results showed that the young participants had encountered, or envisaged that they would encounter, difficulties in obtaining support from traditional councils and their families. It was suggested that, in these rural communities where people knew one another, close-knit social networks could be a contributing factor to the stigma and culture of silence that seemed to surrounds IPV. The literature corroborates this finding, as various authors have argued that, when survivors/victims seek treatment and their circumstances are made public, they tend to be judged, marginalised and even ostracised. Some young participants admitted that they shared, or had shared, a home with an abuser and some had returned to the family home in fear and dread after failing to maintain a connection with the abusive partner. This reality was in direct contrast to the idealistic goal of the headmen who hoped to keep such relationships alive through customary dialogue and traditional demands. The headmen believed irrevocably in a unified community based on traditional values and customs, which is

confirmed by the mandates of peace and unity in existing policies and the findings of this study. The headmen's stance was to ensure that families would remain united and they believed that peace and forgiveness would prevail among the citizens through the intervention of a traditional court. However, they would support married couples whereas their lack of support and compassion for unmarried couples was evident, and the absence of support for such a large and growing group even in rural communities will arguably exacerbate the separation among family members as victims/survivors may become increasingly prone to trauma bonding with their violators instead of trusting in their families and friends.

The findings thus underscore the real possibility of the strengthening of the phenomenon of trauma bonding in the rural community under study. One of the key purposes of abusers in their quest to maintain control over their victims is to separate them from their families and other sources of support. This is known as co-dependency. As the victim grows more emotionally and physically dependent on the offender, their seclusion is key to strengthening the trauma bond (Simonič, and Osewska, 2019). The absence of social networks and outside perspectives may make it more difficult for the victim to identify the abusive nature of their relationship and to seek assistance.

The findings also suggest that, in addition to IPV being physical, verbal, and emotional, it also has traditional spiritual repercussions when the perpetrator has taken advantage of those channels. The employment of the traditional curse of *'isichitho'*, which is intended to split couples apart by third parties, and the use of the *'idliso'* potion, which intends to force one party to remain in a relationship with a partner against their will, were both prevalent. According to participants, these could also be related to the slow emergence of compulsive behaviours that could eventually turn violent. According to Ogana (2009), *'isichitho'* is a disorder in which the affected individual becomes disagreeable to others and thus experiences rejection, and this phenomenon is attributed to witchcraft. *'Isichitho'* is a curse that can be attributed by a witch doctor by request. It is attributed with the premise to ruin their skin or break up a couple. *'Isichitho'* can manifest as a face, neck, and upper-back infection which is seen as a curse or a spell. This disease is purported to be intentionally implanted in patients by witch doctors with the goal of disfiguring the patient's face. The skin condition known as *Acne vulgaris* can be brought on by changing hormones during puberty, but in the African tradition it is believed that it is inflicted by witch doctors who wish to ruin a targeted victim's skin and social standing. The meaning of *'isichitho'* is 'to remove from a place'. When witch doctors

or others responsible inflict this disease, they do it with the intention of removing or severing the sick person from their spouse, or to destroy their looks by causing a skin infection. The findings revealed that removal or separation of spouses/partners could lead to the targeted victim being verbally/physically abusive, thus causing the intended separation. The use of such potions thus has a spiritual and emotional effect on the well-being the community members, as using love potions has been noted to have a detrimental effect not only on couples' relationship, but on their health as well.

7.2.3 The impact of traditional leaders' intervention strategies on IPV

'To shape' means the way that an occurrence, object, entity, or environment may be changed or reformed and the fact that certain processes, events, or phenomena may be altered in some way or another. The act of shaping or altering is fundamental to how humans survive in their world, whether it is in the natural world, in man-made buildings, according to statistical distributions, or in creative expressions. In this discourse the term 'to shape' is used to identify the manner in which the traditional leaders' interventions (or lack thereof) influenced or altered the IPV phenomenon within their respective communities.

Customary or statutory law defines the role of traditional leaders as mediators who use restorative justice processes as a primary mediation strategy, particularly in rural communities. According to the United Nations (2006), restorative mediation entails programs for restorative justice that are predicated on the idea that all parties associated with a dispute should actively participate in finding a solution and minimizing any unfavourable effects as a result of conflict. In certain cases, they are also motivated by a desire to revert to local community development and decision-making, which are strategies that were evident in the study area. However, although it is acknowledged that restorative justice is a reliable method to solve community issues (Schoeman, 2012), it did not seem to work particularly well in the process of meditating IPV in the rural study area. The conflict resolution/mediation process employed by the headmen involved *'umkhongi'* (a marriage negotiator). According to Ndlovu, and Ndlovu (2012), the *'umkhongi's'* role is to impart wisdom to the couple on the premise that the union should remain intact and that all differences should be resolved. Moreover, the *'umkhongi'* is tasked to approach the headman on behalf of the couple and to create an environment for negotiation that will be comfortable and acceptable for all the parties involved. The accused culprit is asked if he knows why he has been called during the mediation hearing. The victim—usually the wife of the offender as unmarried couples are not supported in this manner—is then asked to explain the complaint. If the husband (perpetrator) agrees, he is then asked to confirm

whether he was guilty of the complaint. If there are any apparent wounds, a secretary is asked to check any physical sign of injury. This examination is conducted in a different room. Fortunately, in one case that a headman related, the secretary was a woman, which eased the situation for the victim. His use of the word 'fortunately' in this instance suggested that, in other cases, the examiner might have been a male, which might have exacerbated the victim's shame and suffering, leading to secondary victimisation. In the referred case, the examiner verified the victim's claim of injury and physical harm.

The protocol followed by traditional leaders can be linked to restorative justice which is a victim-centred approach that focuses on the needs and perspectives of the victim, aims to address the harm caused, and promotes healing and empowerment. Various authors have described this process (Marshall, 2020), but it commonly involves victims in the decision-making process and allows them to express their needs and desires for repair. Restorative justice also holds offenders accountable for their actions by requiring them to take responsibility for the harm caused and actively participating in making amends. Community involvement is also a key aspect of restorative justice as affected members are asked for their support and guidance and to contribute to facilitating dialogue and reconciliation. Open communication involving all stakeholders is encouraged, and the focus is on repairing the harm caused by the offense. Participation in the restorative justice processes is typically voluntary for both victims and offenders, and the facilitators aim to ensure that the outcomes are based on the needs and preferences of both the victim and the offender. Restorative justice also aims to address the root causes of harm and conflict and to foster a sense of community, to reduce recidivism, and to promote lasting healing and transformation (Bohmert, Duwe, and Hipple, 2018).

However, although the mediation processes that were discussed by the headmen were in line with the tenets and practices of restorative justice, the manner in which they offered their support seemed somewhat inappropriate as they did not have the proper resources to ensure restitution for all the victims of IPV in the study area, particularly as the mediation process was admittedly only accessible to married couples. This implied that younger couples in relationships or cohabiting would not be afforded the chance to request the involvement of a traditional council in this area.

The fact that traditional leaders in the study area only addressed IPV cases involving married couples and that divorce and separation would not be recognised seemed a drawback that might contribute to escalating IPV problems. The investigation focused on the customary practices of traditional leaders and their and young people's perceptions of how they would approach IPV and its consequences, and the findings demonstrated that this tribal society had not changed in line with changing times and the need to honour the democratic rights of all people regardless of their gender or marital status. The potential that single victims would be excluded or marginalised in the healing and restorative justice process was thus a matter of concern as a large number of potential victims might be left to their own devices, which is contrary to the tenets of ubuntu. In the researcher's considered opinion, the issue of the impact of traditional love potions could be resolved through traditional council mediation if it is provided with the essential facts of the case and if the headmen take the stance of unmitigated neutrality; thus, they should shed the shackles of customary law and not favour gender or marital status.

7.2.4 The reintegration of offenders and their victims into society

Reintegration goes hand-in-hand with restorative justice in the processes of healing and restoring. Reintegration occurs when an offender is released from prison and returns to the community where it is necessary to acclimatise again to society and to lead a law-abiding life (Laub and Sampson, 2003). In the context of IPV, reintegration is the process of assisting victims of abuse to safely return to their communities and to assist them to start over after being abused. IPV has many negative physical, psychological, social, and financial consequences for victims. Reintegrating survivors thus requires helping them to regain their independence and self-respect. Reintegration acknowledges that leaving an abusive relationship is not the end of the journey, but the beginning to a worthy life. It recognises that survivors may encounter obstacles and difficulties when trying to start over, and that some challenges may be the need to re-establish connections with earlier support systems, to come to terms with emotional trauma, to stabilise unstable finances, and to find secure housing.

Upon approaching the interviews with the headmen, the researcher expected that the traditional leaders would refer to the guilt of perpetrators and the censure issued to the perpetrators by the council and community in cases of IPV. However, the discussions revealed the confidential manner in which these councils handled such proceedings. In fact, the izinduna informed the community of the solution rather than the details of the abuse to safeguard the victim and the perpetrator. The izinduna were clearly well versed in assuring the confidentiality of all parties

in the case of IPV, and it may be argued that such an approach makes the reintegration process much easier as it gives direction to the victim and the perpetrator with the support of the traditional council.

The focus of reintegration as practised by the traditional leaders was to reconcile the perpetrator and the victim in the quest to keep the marriage unified, as demanded by traditional beliefs. It was evident that the traditional leaders prided themselves in their understanding of marriage as not only a customary but also a time-honoured traditional institution. Their demeanour and advice were therefore focused on reintegration rather than punishment. Their overall strategy was to unite families and to ensure that they did not fall apart. However, their rejection of the plight of unmarried couples and their potential offspring remains a matter of deep concern as marriages have become increasingly difficult to be formalised due to the persistent custom and unaffordability of lobola for many young people in love.

7.3 Recommendations

The conclusions that were reached highlighted the following key considerations.

7.3.1 Acknowledging the rights of both parties involved in IPV.

Customary practices allow only married couples to be recognised as legitimate and eligible to seek assistance from a traditional council in times of need. However, modern society has long since discarded marriage as the only institution that recognises and gives credibility to the love between two people. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that the IPV phenomenon exists at all levels of romantic relationships. Therefore, in light of the prevalence of this scourge, assistance is required at all spheres. Traditional councils should thus review their approach to less traditional demographic groups who require assistance, while they should sustain their teachings of traditional values that may remain important to them. The fact that so many of the young participants associated the role and functions of a traditional council only to land disputes and restitution raises the question of the visibility and impact of such councils on modern young people. Their focus could thus be shifted from girl/boy camps only to their exposure to learners in schools and other youth facilities for improved awareness and the education of all young people in rural areas on a continuous basis.

The Department of Traditional Affairs, KZN COGTA, and Ingonyama Trust should review existing policies to ensure that all groups and victims are supported, with particular focus on

the youth and unmarried victims of IPV. It is an undeniable fact that love affairs and dating are social realities that occur regardless of age and marital status and that IPV is not exclusive to married couples. As traditional councils so obviously distance themselves from the plight of unmarried young people who are caught in the net of IPV, there is a dire need to create platforms that are able to support such victims. Youth leaders should be identified in affected communities to create awareness of the dangers of toxic relationships, while leaders that run virginity camps should accept the reality of physical attraction and educate attendees regarding the trap they will fall into when believing that they could 'cure' an abuser of this habit. The researcher believes in the value and importance of traditional customs as the wisdom and compassion of the headmen so clearly illustrated, but these customs should be aligned with modern-day behaviours and perspectives to cultivate compassion for all victims of IPV and to allow all role-players to play their part in working in unison to address intimate partner victimisation.

7.3.2 Parents' awareness of and response to IPV

Cultivating awareness among parents of IPV-affected children and educating them to understand the dangers their children face when confronted with this phenomenon should be a focus of all those who wish to protect the victims. The findings revealed that IPV is a prevalent issue in the rural area under study, yet most victims seemed to endure it in silence as both societal and parental support would be withheld due to time-honoured traditional beliefs and customs. Parents need to be made aware of how common IPV is and how their support can make a difference in its prevalence and their affected children's healing. If they are aware of this threat, parents could read the signs early and effectively protect their children against further harm.

7.3.3 Soft skills arbitration and mediation

Arbitration is very important in the process of resolving conflict. Intimate partner violence is a sensitive issue that requires appropriate knowledge and skills to resolve. Therefore, even the izinduna require skills to address this issue as it may not be assumed that leadership and conflict resolution abilities go hand-in-hand. In fact, conflict resolution is not an innate skill that is inherited with the position of headman; rather, it needs to be acquired through training to understand the nature of the support the victim and perpetrator require. Perhaps traditional affairs structures such as KZN COGTA and Ingonyama Trust should establish procedures that can be adopted in rural areas to ensure victim assistance and healing. One solution is increasing the resources available to traditional houses such as the accessibility of trained social and health

care workers that victims can be referred to without hesitation and overly long discussions. Traditional councils are therefore advised to ensure that enough needs-specific services, such as counselling, shelters, and legal aid, are available to rural citizens in trauma.

7.3.4 Promoting cultural sensitivity

Creating interventions and initiatives that both respect and acknowledge the cultural norms and values of the rural community while also challenging negative beliefs and behaviours is important. It was noted that some participants argued that there was an over-emphasis on the African customary belief system in their area regardless of the change of dynamics in customary values and behaviours. However, it was also clear that the youth adhered to sound traditions and customs such as respect for their elders. This affirms the notion that African customs should still be given a platform to thrive and to ensure that these beliefs are not diluted or forgotten. However, in the same breath, it is clear that there is a need for some staunch traditionalists to unlearn some beliefs and customs and even preverbal norms as they have the potential to sustain harmful theoretical ideologies such as trauma bonds and familial ostracization.

7.7.4 The role of African medicine in IPV

The findings revealed that some traditional medicines, such as ‘love potions’, exacerbate the potential for IPV. Future studies could therefore focus on the properties and administration of herbs by traditional African healers to confirm if and how these herbs impact spirituality and contribute to intimate partner violence. Such studies should explore the possible harmful effects of administering these potions to create wide awareness of their potential impact on IPV.

7.4 Conclusion

The findings depicted that the cultural setting and personal beliefs of individuals and those of traditional leaders differed significantly in terms of IPV. Traditional leaders generally exert a significant influence on the norms and values that are adhered to by members in their communities. It was therefore assumed that their views on violence against intimate partners would significantly influence how younger people in the communities under study would view and handle this issue. However, it was evident that the traditional leaders held conservative beliefs that supported or even excused violence against intimate partners based on their customary inclinations, and many approached this issue from a traditional perspective as demanded by cultural norms. The study thus found that socially learned customary beliefs were

rigidly adhered to by the traditional leaders and that these norms drove the manner in which restorative justice procedures were handled. It was found that all the headmen used customary principles as a guide to decide which cases of IPV they would discuss and which they would ignore. For instance, IPV that occurred between couples that lived out of wedlock would simply not be addressed as they regarded unmarried young people as 'children' that should not even be in a romantic relationship. Adherence to these rigid customs did not signal any hope or refuge for unmarried single victims who might also not have access to the SAPS due to transport challenges. Only their families might offer support, but even some families would give the victims of IPV the cold should as they lived out of wedlock and revealing the abuse might shame them as well.

The youth argued that young people in the Kwa Thoyana and uMnini areas would have trouble finding a safe haven when traumatised due to IPV. Most agreed that it would be impossible to obtain support from their family members at home, while their traditional leaders would also be inaccessible due to the staunch cultural belief that unmarried young people are children that do not deserve their support as sexual matters are exclusive to married adults. Thus, against contrary belief, these young people admitted that they would rather approach the SAPS for help than their families or traditional elders. The youth also highlighted the significant prevalence of traditional medicines and curses, arguing that the use and application of these potions contributed to IPV. This revelation urges further inquiry into the use and possible abuse of such herbal remedies.

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