"YOU WHORE; YOU ARE SO DIRTY, BITCH": THE JUSTIFICATION OF AND RESISTANCE TO VIOLENCE IN THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to examine discourses of gender and dimensions of social difference implicated in female sex workers' (FSWs) justifications of, and resistances to, intimate partner violence (IPV). Individual narrative interviews were conducted with FSWs (n=11) who were affiliated with the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT). The participants were mostly women of colour (n=10), with a low socio-economic status, and between 31 and 51 years of age. Intersectionality and features of Foucauldian discourse analysis, as described by Parker (1992), informed the analysis of the interview data.

In personal interviews, participants interrogated aspects of their own and their partners' lives that they viewed as playing a significant role in the aetiology and experience of IPV. They drew on a discourse of violent black masculinity, developmental discourses, and patriarchal ideology to justify and resist their partners' violent behaviour. They also positioned themselves and their 'spoiled' identities as playing a role in the experience of violence. Participants pointed to the construction of sex work as 'dirty work' and the role that this played in legitimising the violence that was directed at them by intimate partners. In relation to this positioning and its consequences in terms of justifications for violence, my analysis highlights occasions in which gender ideology is re-appropriated for the purpose of challenging the legitimacy of these interpretative frames. While gender politics is central to my analytic observations, my analysis demonstrates how intersections with race and class shape the specificities of FSWs experiences of IPV. In doing so, this study aims to broaden current insights into the phenomenon of IPV, as it does not only focus on gender discrimination, but on the complex interaction between various systems of oppression.

DEFINITIONS

It is important to note that the following concepts have been variedly defined. In this report, a particular definition of the phenomenon is ascribed to when these terms are used.

Dimensions of social difference

The various subjectivities and social groupings that people belong to, usually organised along racial group, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, ability status, profession and level of education (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008).

Female Sex Workers (FSW)

Women who sell sex in exchange for money or material reward (Arnold & Barling, 2003).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

A subcategory of domestic violence; abuse committed within the context of an intimate relationship by previous or current intimate partners (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002).

Women of colour

Belonging to a population grouping made up of women of mixed racial and non-white descent (Donnelly, Cook, Van Ausdale & Foley, 2005).

Race

A socially constructed phenomenon based on the false assumption that differences in skin colour, hair and facial characteristics have a bearing on intellectual ability, morality and/or cultural superiority or inferiority (Henry & Tator, 2006). The lived experiences of many South Africans are partly shaped by the racial categories they had been assigned to by a racially

segregated political system under apartheid (Leach, Akhurst & Basson, 2003), and most South Africans still ascribe to the membership of a race group.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about female sex workers (FSWs) working in a South African setting and acknowledgement has been given to their heightened exposure to violence. These studies on FSWs tend to focus mostly on this population group's HIV status (Dunkle et al., 2005; Karim, Karim, Soldan & Zondi, 1995), substance misuse (Wechsberg, Luseno & Lam, 2005), sexual decision-making and condom-use (Campbell, 2000; Varga, 1997), and the violence that they experience from clients and police (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). There is a need to go beyond such studies, to specifically focus on the violence that heterosexual FSWs experience from their stable intimate partners – boyfriends and husbands. This study is an attempt to address this gap in the literature and examines discourses of gender (intersected with dimensions of social difference) that FSWs use to make sense of the violence they are exposed to in this context.

1.1 MOTIVATION

This research project is a continuation of research initiated in 2014 during my Honours degree in Psychology. It extends the original study which focused on heterosexual FSWs' lived experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) to discursively analyse observations that were previously largely descriptive. This was accomplished by using an intersectional and discourse analytic approach to analyse how IPV is justified and resisted in FSWs' talk. Discourse analysis enabled me to take a critical stance towards culturally-embedded constructions of the world (Burr, 1995) and to reflect on the possible functions of the discourses that FSWs draw on

(Potter & Wetherell, 1987). It further enabled me to explore the social context in which these ideas were created and to consider how these ideas might be challenged (Parker, 1992).

The idea for this study developed after being introduced to the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT) at the beginning of 2014. SWEAT is a non-profit organisation situated in Cape Town that advocates for the human rights mobilisation and active political participation of sex workers (Arnott, 2006). The core objective of SWEAT is to work towards the decriminalisation of sex work in South Africa. Through my involvement with the women who make use of SWEAT's services, my awareness was raised to the multitude of challenges that characterise their lives. I was mindful of how intersecting forces of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class and work play out in the women's lives. This understanding motivated my decision to focus on IPV in the lives of heterosexual women who are burdened by dimensions of social difference that go beyond gender.

This study is grounded in the awareness that IPV plays out differently in different social contexts and that some groups of women are more exposed to violence (Bryant-Davis, 2010; Hong, Zhang, Li, Liu & Zhou, 2013; Moreno, 2007; Wechsberg et al., 2005). FSWs are one example of a group who experience particularly high levels of violence from intimate male partners. Patriarchal ideologies, sex work stigma, racial discrimination and socio-economic inequalities all contribute to FSWs' heightened exposure to violence (Gorven, 2014). I ascribe to the argument put forward by some feminist scholars that the criminalisation of sex work makes FSWs more vulnerable to violence (Arnott, 2006; Bates & Berg, 2014).

In this report I use the term 'people/women/men of colour' when I refer to people of mixed racial and non-white decent (Donnelly et al., 2005). Although race is a social construction, the South African history has been marked by discrimination on the basis of skin colour towards

people of colour (Leach et al., 2003). For this reason, many South Africans still ascribe to membership of a race group and race has continued to affect the lives of many citizens (Leach et al., 2003).

There is debate within the literature about whether all people from mixed racial and non-white decent should be grouped under the same category (Dhruvarajan, 2000). Some authors argue that this mode of signification lacks conceptual clarity due to large variety within this grouping. However, this mode of signification has political significance (Dhruvarajan, 2000; Schaefer, 2008). The term 'people/women/men of colour' represents a challenge against the stigmatisation of racial minorities, and people belonging to this grouping are unified on the basis of their shared experience of racial oppression (Dhruvarajan, 2000; Schaefer, 2008).

For this reason, I have decided to adopt the term 'people/women/men of colour' when appropriate to do so. Exceptions to the use of this mode of signification are when the participants use the labels 'black' and 'coloured' to identify themselves and their partners with. This is demonstrated in the demographic details of the participants and when I use the label 'violent black masculinity' to describe the participants' perception that men of colour, and more specifically black men, have a natural tendency towards violence.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to critically explore discourses of gender (intersected with dimensions of social difference) that are presented to FSWs in trying to understand, justify and resist the manifestation of IPV in their intimate relationships. More specifically, this study

focuses on how FSWs justify and resist dominant explanatory frames for IPV and make sense of the characteristics that increased their vulnerability to experiences of IPV.

It is important to gain a better understanding of how IPV is justified and resisted in FSWs' talk, how patriarchal ideology and dimensions of social difference are drawn upon to make sense of their heightened exposure to violence and how their experiences of IPV are influenced by these dimensions. Specific focus has been placed on how gender intersects with dimensions of race and class. This study aims to foreground the voices of FSWs by exploring these ideas from their own perspectives. Although there is awareness that FSWs are exposed to high levels of violence and discrimination, their understanding of and perspectives on IPV have generally not been well documented in research focusing on the South African context.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question framing this study is: Which discourses of gender, as intersected with dimensions of social difference, are implicated in FSWs' justifications of and resistances to IPV? And, related to this: How are these discourses implicated in FSWs' justifications of and resistances to IPV?

Answers to these questions enable a better understanding of the way in which FSWs understand how and why the violence in their intimate relationships came about, and reveal the current discourses about violence and heterosexual relationships that are made available to FSWs.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study forms part of limited research that examines how IPV is justified and resisted in the talk of FSWs working in a South African context. It contributes to our theoretical understanding of the various social issues and unequal power structures that contribute to FSWs' vulnerability to IPV, and provides a clearer understanding of the social context in which IPV manifests. This research project aims to broaden our understanding of gender-based violence, as it does not only focus on gender discrimination, but on the complex interaction between gender inequality and dimensions of social difference. I am especially interested to know how dimensions of race and class intersect with gender inequality and shape FSWs' understandings of their experiences. This study could potentially inform the work done by advocacy organisations in providing assistance to FSWs who have experienced IPV.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will focus on the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) within the South African context and histories of power inequalities within this setting. I will also discuss the health implications of IPV and population groups who are most exposed to IPV. In particular, I will look into female sex workers' (FSWs) vulnerability to IPV and the additional burdens that characterise their lives.

2.1 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Although IPV is a universal problem affecting many women around the world, South Africa is known to be a violent country (Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 2002) with particularly high levels of IPV (Vetten, 1995; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). According to the Gender-Based Violence Indicators Project conducted in the Western Cape (Chipatiso, Nyambo, Machisa & Chiramba, 2014), 44% of women living in the Western Cape have experienced IPV in their lifetime. Emotional abuse has been found to be the most prevalent form of IPV, followed by physical, economic and sexual abuse (Chipatiso et al., 2014). The current female mortality rate related to IPV is 8.8 per 100 000 women in South Africa (Abrahams et al., 2009).

Apart from gender inequities which affect all or most women living in South Africa, women of colour in South Africa face additional burdens, which are related to poverty and racial discrimination (Gorven, 2014). Currently in South Africa, race and socio-economic status still remain inextricably linked where the majority of poor people in South Africa are people of colour (Leach et al., 2003). People of colour in South Africa bear the brunt of the legacy of

apartheid, a socio-political system that institutionalised racial discrimination during the second half of the 20th century (Jewkes, 2009; Leach et al., 2003).

Worldwide, there is a long history of the subordination of women in relation to men. However, gender disparities in urban areas reserved for people of colour, intensified with the application of apartheid laws and with the emerging capitalist system, where women were mainly financially dependent on men (Hunter, 2002; Walker, 1990). As many people of colour in South Africa weren't allowed to live permanently in the same areas in which they found work, migrant labour became increasingly common during the apartheid era. Fathers of colour became increasingly absent which placed an enormous child-rearing strain on women of colour (Jewkes, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Women of colour who were able to find work in urban settings were compelled to leave their children behind to be raised by extended family members, most frequently by grandmothers. Thus, the migrant labour system created ruptures in the family system on different levels; from absent fathers to the additional burden of care placed on women of colour.

During the apartheid era, women of colour faced significant barriers to gaining formal employment. They were subjected to 'Bantu' education, a racially segregated education system during the apartheid era where people of colour were purposely undereducated, and faced restraints in admission to tertiary education (Jewkes, 2009). In 1995, the year after the onset of democracy in South Africa, only 39% of workers were women and they were generally less well paid for the same work as their male colleagues (Casale & Posel, 2005).

The limitations that were placed on women of colour to enter the labour market, together with the phenomenon of persistent absent fathers, created strenuous socio-economic situations for these women which sometimes led them into relationships of financial dependence on working

men (Hunter, 2002; Walker, 1990). Poverty has forced many women in South Africa to rely on romantic attachments to men who enact a 'provider masculinity'. 'Provider masculinity' is a characteristic of 'traditional'/hegemonic masculinity (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) in which men are positioned in the role of 'providing' for women and children who are dependent on them for this support. In exchange for their male partners' financial support, women are often expected to be sexually available and to fulfil domestic and reproductive duties (Bhana & Pattman, 2011).

A related, albeit dissimilar, concept is transactional relationships – defined as relationships (usually non-marital) characterised by strong expectations of material rewards in exchange for sex (Chatterji, Murray, London & Anglewicz, 2004). It may be difficult to distinguish largely transactional relationships from those formed for other reasons, as most sexual relationships are motivated by numerous factors and thus lie on a spectrum between pure transaction and love (Dunkle et al., 2004). Transactional relationships are often understood to differ from sexual relationships in sex work, as men and women within these relationships are positioned as "girlfriends" and "boyfriends" and not as "sex workers" and "clients". Furthermore, transactional relationships may not include a predetermined fee (Hunter, 2002).

Many authors have found transactional relationships to be increasingly prevalent in present-day South Africa (Chatterji et al., 2004; Dunkle et al., 2007; Hunter, 2002) due to the privileged economic status of men and hegemonic masculine norms that afford respect to men with multiple sexual partners (Hunter, 2002). Given the high rate of youth unemployment, transactional relationships are frequently established between young women and older men – often termed "sugar daddies" and "blessers" (Hunter, 2002). Women within these types of heterosexual relationships have limited scope to influence sexual decision-making (Jewkes, 2009), are more vulnerable to IPV, and have limited opportunities to leave partners on whom

they may rely for basic survival (Watson, 2011). The unequal access to and control over financial resources within these relationships, often create a power imbalance and may produce a sense of sexual entitlement in male partners. In the next section I discuss the health implications caused by the power inequality produced by these relationships.

2.2 HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

IPV has a detrimental impact on all spheres of society (Usdin, Christofides, Malepe & Maker, 2000) and is often associated with an increase in mental health problems. Studies in the field of IPV have found female victims of abuse to be particularly susceptible to depression, substance abuse, suicidality, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other anxiety disorders (Campbell et al., 2002; Dutton et al., 2006; Fleming, Newton, Fernandez-Botran, Miller & Burns, 2013; Golder, Connell & Sullivan, 2012). Abused women report higher rates of health problems compared to non-abused women, which include high blood pressure, insomnia, gastrointestinal symptoms and chronic pain syndromes (Dutton et al., 2006). Trauma symptoms, including sleep disturbances, chronic distress and sexual dysfunction are also very common among victims of IPV (Campbell et al., 2002).

Furthermore, in South Africa IPV has often been associated with elevated rates of HIV/AIDS (Fox et al., 2007). Poor pregnancy outcomes and birth complications are also common among women experiencing IPV during pregnancy (Campbell et al., 2002). IPV places pressure on mental health institutions and negatively affect the emotional, physical and psychological functioning of victims. However, not all women are equally exposed to IPV. Dimensions of social difference shape people's vulnerability to and perception of such experiences, as well as

their ability to extricate themselves from violent relationships. This will be elaborated upon in the next section dealing with vulnerable populations.

2.3 VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Extensive research has highlighted specific groups of women to be at an increased risk for extensive and recurrent episodes of IPV. These groups of women include, but are not restricted to, the following: FSWs (Oprea, 2014), pregnant women and women who are HIV-positive (Bryant-Davis, 2010), migrant women (Ogunsiji, Wilkes, Jackson & Peters, 2010), women of colour (White, Yuan, Cook & Abbey, 2013) and women who experience educational and economic disadvantages (Wechsberg et al., 2005). Poor women's access to basic resources such as adequate shelter, food and health care is limited, placing them in a particularly vulnerable position. Furthermore, leaving an abusive partner is more difficult for poor women who have limited social capital and are thus especially dependent on their male partners (Boonzaier & Van Schalkwyk, 2011).

Poverty remains a key risk factor for IPV due to increases in conflict about limited financial resources (Jewkes, 2002). It has been argued that violence towards intimate female partners is a strategy that men resort to, in order to dominate female partners when poverty makes a provider identity unattainable (Bourgois, 1996; Gelles, 1974). On the other end of the spectrum, women with a high degree of educational, financial and social resources are somewhat less likely to experience IPV in their intimate relationships and have more opportunities to extricate themselves from violent relationships (Jewkes, 2002). It is thus apparent that all women are not equally exposed to partner abuse and that contextual factors shape an individual's

susceptibility to the experience of IPV and diminishes the possibility of extricating oneself from the relationship when it occurs.

Traditional ideas about marriage, gender roles and male power have often been associated with elevated levels of IPV (Boonzaier, 2008; Caldwell, Swan & Woodbrown, 2012). Within traditional heterosexual relationships, gender roles and expectations tend to be less flexible and more stable across time (Shefer et al., 2008). Men are often placed at the head of the household and given the primary responsibility of financial provision (Boonzaier, 2005; Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004). Femininity is sometimes understood as the complement of masculinity (Shefer et al., 2008), and women are often expected to uphold the image of masculine authority (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Towns & Adams, 2000).

It has been argued within the literature that culturally embedded constructions of hetero-intimacies, built on patriarchal ideologies, serve to justify male violence and make it difficult for women in abusive relationships to access the help they need (Boonzaier, 2008; Towns & Adams, 2000). Under patriarchal ideology there is an expectation of women to be nurturing and to obey and be submissive to their male partners (Shefer et al., 2008; Towns & Adams, 2000). Indeed, violence is frequently used as a disciplinary strategy towards women who do not adhere to their male partners' authority (Boonzaier, 2008). However, a singular focus on gender may be limiting as different social dimensions, including race, class and work intersect to influence an individual's experience of abuse (Nash, 2008). The context in which IPV manifests, needs to be given ample consideration.

2.3.1 VULNERABILITY AMONG FEMALE SEX WORKERS

Due to the nature of their work, FSWs are often described as a population group who are particularly vulnerable to IPV. It is well documented that as a group FSWs experience very high levels of abuse from a diversity of individuals (Raphael & Shapiro, 2004; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). Violence in the everyday lives of FSWs is very common and has, in many settings, become normalised (Dalla, 2002; Miller, 2002). Violence towards FSWs is connected to their low status, lack of power and limited social and financial capital (Ratinthorn, Meleis & Sindhu, 2009). Perpetrators of violence towards FSWs are less likely to be reported to police and other authorities, as a result of the illegal status of sex work in South Africa (Fick, 2005).

It is all too common for FSWs to be physically assaulted and raped by clients, policemen, pimps and partners (Elmore-Meegan, Conroy & Agala, 2004; Kistner, 2003). Many FSWs report physical injuries including stab wounds, concussions, broken bones and bruises. Studies have found FSWs to perceive these forms of abuse as an intrinsic part of the job (Dalla, 2002; Farley, Lynne & Cotton, 2005; Miller, 2002; Raphael & Shapiro, 2004). Some clients become violent unexpectedly, while other clients become violent when the women refuse to perform certain sexual acts, request money for services provided, or ask clients to use condoms (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001).

Sex work in itself is often stigmatised and judged to be an immoral and 'dirty' profession (Arnold & Barling, 2003; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Koken, 2011). Due to the stigma attached to sex work, some people believe that sex workers "get what they deserve" when they are maltreated and exposed to violence (Pack, L'Engle, Mwarogo & Kingola, 2014). A study focusing on the lived experiences of street-based sex workers in the United Kingdom found violence, the misuse of substances and housing problems to be common factors in the lives of FSWs, and that the combination of these factors increased their chances of experiencing social

exclusion and stigmatisation (Mellor & Lovell, 2011). Due to factors such as limited social and financial capital and perceptions of sex work as dirty and sinful, street-based FSWs are often afforded very little value in most societies. In the next section special attention will be given to the role that violence plays in FSWs' intimate relationships with stable partners.

2.4 EXPERIENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG FEMALE SEX WORKERS

Although current literature acknowledges that FSWs are exposed to much violence and discrimination, few studies focus on the abuse that they endure from their stable partners. This study aims to address this gap in the literature by specifically focusing on the violence that FSWs endure within these relationships.

A South African study that did focus on violence directed at FSWs of colour in Pretoria, found that 63% of the sample (n=93) reported partner violence in the previous year. Of these, 61% were physically attacked and 19% were raped by their stable intimate partners during this period. The majority of the participants reported that sex work was their main source of income and that other family members relied on them financially. Many of the women also reported histories of childhood abuse (Wechsberg et al., 2005).

A study focusing on IPV among FSWs in three western Canadian provinces found that most of the participants reported childhood sexual abuse, frequently by a family member or foster parent (Nixon, Tutty, Downe, Gorkoff & Ursel, 2002). The participants were subjected to such frequent violent experiences as sex workers, that violence almost seemed like a normal part of the job to them.

The following risk factors for IPV among FSWs working in Mombasa, Kenya were identified: supporting at least one other person, being a victim of child abuse, witnessing abuse of their mother by their father, and excessive alcohol consumption (Pack et al., 2014). 78.7% of the sample (n=619) reported IPV as experienced in the previous month (Pack et al., 2014).

However, caution needs to be taken when interpreting the above statistics, as they depend on the way that IPV had been defined within these studies, as well as the participants' perceptions of what constitutes violence. Furthermore, the popular belief that statistics represent a true and unbiased account of IPV is a discursive idea that privileges certain kinds of knowledge over others. For example, statistics provided through quantitative studies might be understood as providing a truer account of IPV than an in-depth qualitative analysis. These ideas depend on the types of knowledge that is given more legitimacy within modern-day science.

2.4.1 ADDITIONAL BURDENS FACED BY FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Previous sections looked into FSWs' vulnerability to violence in general and more specifically their experiences of IPV. This section explores the additional challenges faced by FSWs related to poverty and racial inequalities.

Research reveals that women's entry into sex work is often a result of financial constraints (Halland, 2010). The majority of FSWs in South Africa are poor women of colour with limited education (Gould, 2008). The majority of the women who were interviewed for this study, are women of colour with very little educational and career opportunities at their disposal. The women face major financial difficulties and received limited schooling under the apartheid regime (see Table 1). They are confronted with ideologies and social structures disempowering to all women, but more specifically to certain groups of women based on various dimensions

of social difference (Gorven, 2014). Thus, FSWs working in South Africa are negatively affected by various social forces, including the legacy of an unequal education system under apartheid, patriarchal gender norms, racism and socio-economic class constraints (Gorven, 2014). As a result of these factors, sex workers' experiences of IPV must be understood in relation to these dimensions of social difference.

However, there is the danger of only focusing on FSWs from a constraints perspective and positioning them primarily as victims of oppression. This ignores the agency and control (Koken, 2010; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001) that FSWs are able to perform in the context of their work and intimate relationships. A study focusing on the sexual decision-making and experiences of violence as reported by FSWs of colour in Hillbrow, Berea and Joubert Park in Johannesburg, found that a focus on victimisation and helplessness reinforced the stigma associated with FSWs (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). The authors cautioned against simplistic and static understandings of power differences between men and women, where men are often constructed as powerful and women as powerless (Wojcicki & Malala, 2001).

Similarly, disagreement exists among various feminist scholars on whether sex work should be viewed from a perspective of constraint or autonomy (Farley, 2006; Halland, 2010; Miller, 2002; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). The ways in which sex workers are being spoken about have important implications for the protection and rights that are being afforded to them.

2.5 CONCLUSION

IPV is considered to be a pervasive social problem in South Africa and studies have found FSWs to be particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon. In this study, I am to explore

discourses of gender (intersected with dimensions of social difference) that FSWs use, in an attempt to understand the development of IPV within their intimate relationships and their own vulnerability to experiences of IPV. For that reason, this literature review has provided an overview of the role that IPV plays within the South African context by focusing on the history of racial inequality within this setting and by focusing on factors related to race and socio-economic status that might contribute to FSWs' vulnerability to violence in the context of their intimate relationships. Not only do these dimensions of social difference contribute to FSWs' vulnerability to IPV, but they also shape their understanding of the aetiology and progression of IPV.

The role that apartheid played in contributing to various social issues currently faced by many people of colour in South Africans was considered, particularly social ills that relate to inequality within heterosexual relationships. The transactional element that characterises many heterosexual relationships within the South African context, has been shaped by educational and economic constraints.

It has been argued that IPV has a detrimental impact on the physical and mental health of victims. For that reason IPV is of concern to medical doctors and mental health practitioners. The literature review has found certain groups of women to be more susceptible to the experience of IPV. Factors that contribute to a heightened exposure to IPV include limited social and financial resources, lack of educational opportunities, racial discrimination and traditional ideas about gender roles of both parties within an intimate relationship. Similarly, street-based FSWs' vulnerability to IPV is connected to their limited social and financial resources. Furthermore, the normalisation of violence towards FSWs, sex work stigma and the ways in which sex work is being spoken about, also contributes to FSWs' heightened exposure to IPV.

The way in which FSWs talk about and understand IPV has important consequences for their ability to extricate themselves from abusive relationships and access the necessary resources. This study will thus explore the way in which FSWs understand and talk about their experiences of IPV, and more specifically the dimensions of social difference they draw on to make sense of these experiences. Due to the wide range of social dimensions that shape FSWs' experience and understanding of IPV, this research study draws on an intersectional feminist framework, in an attempt to move beyond 'traditional' feminist approaches to gender-based violence.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the previous chapter I argued that while South African women experience high rates of intimate partner violence (IPV), that some women are more vulnerable to IPV. I also argued that female sex workers (FSWs) are a particularly vulnerable population who are at greater risk for experiencing IPV. For these reasons I view IPV as a phenomenon that needs to be understood in relation to various dimensions of social difference. In this chapter I present a short discussion of the motivations for taking an intersectional approach, and position intersectionality in relation to feminist and critical modes of inquiry.

Early feminist work on IPV had often been written from a 'traditional' feminist perspective that focused on women's marginalisation within the context of heterosexual relationships (e.g. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Smith, 1990; Walker, 1979). A central critique of these works is that women's experiences are diverse and that it is not possible to make generalisations about it. Not all women are exposed to the same structures of power and gender inequality (Kiguwa, 2004; Nash, 2008).

'Traditional' feminist scholarship has often been criticised by intersectional and black feminists for focusing predominantly on the gendered experiences of white, middle class, heterosexual women (Nash, 2008; Staunaes, 2010). In doing so, this scholarship has silenced the varied forms of discrimination experienced by multi-burdened women, including women of colour, women with a low socio-economic status, and women who are members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Ironically, 'traditional' feminist research has excluded women who are most exposed to forces of power and gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989; Yllo & Straus, 1990). This served the function of reinforcing the hierarchy

that exists between different groups of women due to factors such as socio-economic status and race (Crenshaw, 1989).

In feminist scholarship, the exclusion of women who are marginalised by factors other than gender, is particularly problematic with regard to its application in the South African context. As previously argued, many women in South Africa are burdened by the legacy of apartheid and racial and systemic discrimination. Although gender was an important index of inequality to consider within the study, it was essential to consider a number of additional social factors that intersect with this category (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2008). It seems that these dimensions of social difference also play a substantial role in shaping women's understandings of IPV.

3.1 INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST THEORY

The concept of intersectionality is used by some feminist scholars to consider the impact of multiple dimensions of social difference on people's experiences of identity and oppression (Nash, 2008). It is an analytic tool that helps to identify how different dimensions of social difference are intertwined and implicated in each other (Cole, 2009). This enables a more nuanced and contextual account of the complex social dimensions implicated in various social ills, including the phenomenon of IPV (Nash, 2008).

Intersectional feminist research is alert to the shortcomings of gender as a single analytic category and has welcomed the complex interaction between various dimensions of social identities and subject positions (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). An intersectional feminist approach is particularly useful to this study, as the emphasis is on marginalised groups who are burdened by factors over and above

gender. The majority of the women who were interviewed for this study are women of colour, who work in a stigmatised profession and who chose and were compelled to do sex work out of financial desperation.

Feminist research on IPV tends to position gender as the predominant lens through which women's and men's attempts to justify and challenge IPV are understood. Although other social dimensions are often taken into account, the significance of their role in shaping women's experience and understanding is often discounted in relation to the importance afforded to gender inequality (Collins, 2000; Nash, 2008). This limits our understanding of IPV and limits the efficacy of the interventions we design, as significant assumptions are left unchallenged.

3.2 DISCOURSE AND THE TURN TO LANGUAGE

Social constructionism is concerned with the social processes by which people create experiences, ideas and knowledge which are experienced as objective truths and facts (Burr, 1995). These ideas and constructions are produced in speech and language and transmitted through social interactions (Burr, 1995; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The basic assumption of social constructionism is that there is no one objective reality, but a multiplicity of perspectives that are created through language (Burr, 1995; Parker, 1992). For this reason, social constructionist scholars do not question what is real, but focus on the process by which an idea becomes accepted as real (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Discourse analysis is embedded in social constructionist thought, and focuses on talk and texts as social practices (Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language is seen as the channel

through which meaning, realities and subject positions are produced (Baxter, 2003). Discourse analysis is concerned with the way in which language functions within conversation (Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The functions served by various discourses drawn on in speech, were important considerations within this study. More specifically, I considered how various discourses are used as a way of legitimising violence, as a way of blaming certain groups of people for their own oppression and as a way of justifying and resisting dominant explanatory frames for IPV.

I believe that an intersectional feminist approach to research can be integrated with a social constructionist approach in which discourses are viewed not as a true reflection of reality, but as a medium through which humans come to talk and practise reality into being (Gergen, 1985). From a social constructionist perspective, dimensions of social difference such as gender, race and socio-economic status do not exist in and of themselves; they are constructed. However, these constructs have real effects and implications for human beliefs and behaviour, as people come to talk these constructs into being and come to believe that they exist. Furthermore, they shape how we view the world around us and our understanding of our place in it.

In this study I explore discourses of gender, as intersected with dimensions of social difference, and how FSWs use these discourses to construct their understanding of and provide justifications for IPV. I do not propose that IPV and inequality on the basis of dimensions of social difference do not exist beyond our constructions of it, or that our constructions of IPV bear no resemblance to reality. Instead, I propose that our understanding of IPV is shaped by the language we use to construct it (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Victims and perpetrators of IPV are frequently constructed in relation to various dimensions of social difference, which are not only gendered but also raced and classed.

In this study I adopt a Foucauldian approach to discourse as described by Parker (1992). This approach focuses on how relations of power are reproduced through discourse, and how oppressive discourses are often accompanied by resistance (Parker, 1992). Discourses enable certain subject positions to come to the fore (Parker, 1992) and may limit what could be said or done by both the speaker and receiver of the message. The power dynamics embedded in discursive practices reveal structures of power that legitimise and perpetuate violence towards certain groups of people, and were thus important factors to consider within this study. Parker (1992) describes discourse as recurrent, culturally available ways of understanding that inform people's perception of reality. Parker's construction of discourse will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, under the heading 'method of analysis'.

This chapter considered intersectional feminist theory and critical modes of inquiry as theoretical approaches to research on IPV. It was argued that dimensions of social difference shape people's understanding of IPV and that research on IPV should take these dimensions into consideration. In this study, critical modes of inquiry are used to consider how the participants construct IPV and victims and perpetrators. It has been argued that, although dimensions of social difference inform our construction of both victims and perpetrators of IPV, these dimensions do not exist in and of themselves, but are constructed through language. Relying on a Foucauldian approach to research, this study focuses on how discourse reproduce relations of power between people on the basis of various dimensions of social difference. Details of the methodology and the decisions regarding methodology will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the research process. This includes a discussion of the sampling strategy, methods of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Reasons for using a particular sampling procedure are given. I provide more information about the context in which research participants were recruited and the demographic characteristics of the participants. I substantiate the use of open-ended, individual interviews as means to gather data by elaborating on the benefits of less structured interviews. I explain the features of a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis that I focused on during the phase of analysis and explain the ethical guidelines that were followed throughout the study. I also give consideration to the limitations of the study and the importance of thinking critically about my own role in shaping this research.

4.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Research participants (n=11) were recruited in collaboration with the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), by means of purposive sampling (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). Certain defining criteria were used to guide the selection of suitable participants. Participants were female, involved in sex work, and involved in a heterosexual relationship (or had been in the past five years) and had experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of that relationship. Only a small number of participants were recruited to participate in this study, as the aim of this study was to provide an in-depth understanding of female sex workers' (FSWs) experiences of IPV. The study was advertised both by word-of-mouth and in written form (see Appendix A) at one of SWEAT's Creative Space workshops.

The aims of these workshops are to provide FSWs with social support, a means to self-expression and legal information regarding their rights and the resources available to them. Furthermore, discussions around gender politics, sexual violence and issues around sexuality are facilitated. The aims of these discussions are to facilitate understanding of the power dynamics involved in gender identity and sexual orientation and to challenge stereotypes around social identity categories. These discussions are largely informed by a feminist perspective.

The women who volunteered to participate in this study varied in terms of their age, the amount of time they have been involved in sex work, their current relationship status, the number of children they have, their level of education, and their race group membership. Below is a summary table of participant characteristics.

Table 1: Summary of participant characteristics

Participant[1]	Age	Years in sex work	Current relationship status	Number of children	Level of education	Race[2] group
Jowidene	36	6 years	Single	4	Grade 12	Coloured[3]
Meryl	35	4 years	Single	3	Grade 12	Coloured
Shandry	33	8 years	Dating	1	Grade 11	Coloured
Lu-Juan	35	16 years	Dating	5	Grade 11	Coloured

[1] These names are pseudonyms and are intended to protect the participants' true identities.

[2] Race is included in the demographic details of the participants because it is relevant to analytic observation and analysis. Although problematic, race group membership is still used in South Africa and most South Africans ascribe to the membership of a race group.

[3]Coloured is the racial category used for people with mixed-racial heritage in South Africa.

Participant	Age	Years in sex work	Current relationship status	Number of children	Level of education	Race group
Mbulee	35	16 years	Dating	2	Grade 11	Coloured
Thato	31	2 years	Single	4	Grade 11	Black
Nicole	49	18 years	Single	1	Grade 12	White
Kimberly	51	20 years	Single	1	Grade 11	Coloured
Clarissa	46	23 years	Dating	1	Grade 9	Coloured
Boitumelo	48	25 years	Dating	3 (1 deceased)	Grade 9	Black
Joslin	45	15 years	Dating	3	Grade 9	Coloured

4.2 DATA COLLECTION: METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The research upon which this report is based was conducted in 2014 for the purposes of a Psychology Honours project. The data was collected in June and July 2014 by means of semi-structured, individual interviews with FSWs (n=11). Open-ended and less structured interviews are an effective way of gaining access to research participants' insights into certain events, where the focus is primarily on the participants' own perceptions of the events being studied (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). It allowed the participants to communicate their ideas and viewpoints in ways that were meaningful to them. Conducting less structured interviews is also an effective way to empower research participants who have previously been disempowered or silenced, as it enables participants to take charge in narrating accounts of experiences impacting their lives (Corbin & Morse, 2003). In comparison to highly structured methods of data collection, semi-

structured interviews can give participants more control over the level of self-disclosure and the direction of the discussion (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

This method of data collection integrates well with discourse analysis, as the focus is on depth, nuance, meaning and language-use in its natural and everyday form (Holt, 2011). In the individual interview a participant makes sense of her interpretation of certain events by drawing on various discourses that are made available to her within her social context (Willig, 2008). The in-depth interview allows for details, significant inconsistencies and contradictions in participants' accounts to emerge and be elaborated upon. These contradictions and nuances make it possible to identify discourses of gender (intersected with dimensions of social difference) that can be of analytic value and significance (Holt, 2011).

In the interviews I asked participants to tell me the story about the relationships in which they experienced IPV and how they made sense of that experience. One broad question was asked during the individual interviews: "I would like you to tell me the story of your intimate relationship – how you met, how the relationship progressed, the challenges you experienced in the relationships, that sort of thing. I would like you to tell me as much detail as you can remember about your relationship." Additional questions were asked for clarification at the end of each individual narrative, such as: "What role do you play within this story?" and "What connections can you draw between your experiences within the relationship and the work you do?" Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. A digital voice recorder was used to record each interview and the recordings were transcribed by the interviewer herself.

After each individual interview, I reflected on my own thoughts and feelings about the narrative account and considered how my presence might have influenced the interaction and the story that had been told. This formed part of a process of reflexivity.

4.3 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Features of a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis were used to examine how FSWs employ dimensions of social difference to explain how and why the violence in their intimate relationships came about. As previously discussed, discourse analysis is situated within a social constructionist paradigm that challenges the belief in an absolute reality.

Aspects of Parker's (1992) approach to discourse analysis, which aligns itself with a Foucauldian approach, were followed. Parker stipulates seven criteria for distinguishing discourses, namely a discourse "is realised in texts" (1992, p.6), "is about objects" (1992, p.8), "contains subjects" (1992, p.9), "is a coherent system of meanings" (1992, p.10), "refers to other discourses" (1992, p.12), "reflects on its own way of speaking" (1992, p.14) and "is historically located" (1992, p.15).

Five main aspects of this approach were emphasised during the analysis of the interview data: the construction of objects and subjects, the reproduction of relations of power, the resistance of power, the contradictions between discourses and the historical location of discourses (Parker, 1992).

I examined and described the way certain constructs, such as race, gender and socio-economic class, are constructed as objects in participants' talk about their relationships. At the same time I kept in mind that there are multiple ways of talking about an object (Parker, 1992). I identified the types of person talked about in a discourse, and analysed the subject positions and ways of being that were made available to them (Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Special emphasis was placed on the way participants, both explicitly and implicitly, constructed victims and perpetrators of IPV.

I analysed how relations of power were reproduced through discourse by looking at how certain discourses gave and took away rights to speak, and limit what could be said by the participants (Parker, 1992). Similarly, I reflected on the implications of certain discourses by looking at those who benefit from, and those who are oppressed by certain understandings (Parker, 1992).

Oppressive discourses are often accompanied by discourses that challenge power. Attention was given to the intricate relationship between power and resistance, where the latter is seen as "a refusal of dominant meanings" (Parker, 1992, p.18). In this study I was particularly interested in how the participants challenged dominant explanatory frames for IPV and dominant constructions of their own and their partners' identities.

Furthermore, I focused on occasions when participants' justifications of IPV were in contradiction, and interrogated conflicting ideas about various social issues and people. The contradictions embedded in participants' talk enabled clarification on other discourses that might be implicated (Gorven, 2014).

I considered the historical origins (Parker, 1992) of some of the discourses that the participants drew on, by discussing literature that explores when and where these ideas came into existence. Throughout the process of analysis, I was considerate of my own way of speaking and the language I use (Parker, 1992).

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A key ethical issue that was dealt with during the collection of data was the avoidance of causing emotional harm to participants (Strydom, 2005). Due to the sensitive nature of the interview topic, there was the risk of causing emotional distress to participants. This aspect was

minimised by fully informing the participants prior to the interview about the exact nature of the study, including the purpose, procedures to be followed, and the consequences of participating in the study (Piper & Simons, 2005). This information was also presented in a consent form (see Appendix B) that all the participants signed. After being informed about the above information, the participants could voluntarily decide whether or not to participate in the study (Lewis, 2003). As a qualified social worker, the researcher provided debriefing sessions (Strydom, 2005) after each individual interview and participants who required referrals were provided with such (see Appendix C).

The privacy of the participants was protected by conducting each individual interview in a safe, private room on SWEAT's premises, and by allowing the participants to control the level of disclosure during the interviews (Strydom, 2005). In the final research report, pseudonyms were used in order to safeguard the identity of the research participants. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process and the researcher and her supervisor(s) were the only people who had access to the data gathered during the research process (Strydom, 2005). Data was stored on password protected computers. The participants were informed about the researcher's legal responsibility to comply with confidentiality (Piper & Simons, 2005). This further examination of the data was ethically approved by the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 13 May 2015 (see Appendix D).

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted over a short time period using a relatively small sample. The homogenous characteristics of the sample could be seen as another potential shortcoming. The

sample consisted of street-based sex workers in Cape Town who were in affiliation with SWEAT. Thus, the experiences of sex workers on a broad range of contexts were not explored. The women who were interviewed for this study received guidance and empowerment through SWEAT and may have had different experiences and viewpoints to FSWs who did not receive such helpful interventions. Despite this shortcoming, the purpose of this study is to explore the ideas of a select group of FSWs and not to generalise to broader populations.

This study focuses on FSWs' understandings of violence in the context of intimate heterosexual relationships. Only FSWs were interviewed and the views of their partners were not sought. There is a need to do research on male perpetrators of violence against FSWs in order to explore their interpretations and understandings of IPV. A primary focus on FSWs might maintain the problematic stereotype that they should be held accountable for the violence directed at them. There is also a need to do research on a much neglected group of sex workers: those who belong to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community who may face additional discrimination.

4.6. REFLEXIVITY

The process of reflexivity forms an important function in social constructionist research, as the researcher impacts the type of knowledge that is being produced (Banister, 2011). Discourses are constructed within a wider social context and the presence of other people influences the types of discourses that people rely on in telling their stories (Murray, 2008). It was thus important for me to reflect on my own role in the co-creation of knowledge. My own presence during the interviews influenced the types of ideas that the research participants shared with me.

Due to the fact that I purposefully selected participants who had been subjected to IPV, the women might have been motivated to focus mainly on the abusive elements of their relationships, causing alternative narratives of their relationships to remain unexplored. My analysis of the data was also influenced by my own subjective viewpoint. I approached this work from an understanding that IPV and sex work are a result of intersecting systems of power, and thus viewed the participants as being multi-burdened individuals.

As a white, middle-class, university student, I occupied a more powerful social position than the participants and could be seen by the participants as being an outsider to sex work and IPV. The power imbalance between the participants and myself and the lack of shared experience might have limited what could have been said and understood during the interaction (Kelly, 2011). At the same time, my lack of 'lived knowledge' about sex work and IPV might have placed the participants in a position of being more knowledgeable in this regard, enabling them to share and 'teach' me. Likewise, I relied on the participants agreeing to participate in this study in order to do this research, hence I was also at their mercy to some degree. In my reflections with the participants I found that the participants gained something from the process of sharing, and felt safe and respected.

Furthermore, SWEAT positions itself within a feminist framework and has prioritised issues in relation to gender-based violence and sex work stigma (Arnott, 2006). This might provide one explanation for the participants' substantial awareness of the patriarchal ideology and sex work stigma. There is the possibility that some other dimensions of social difference are addressed to a slightly lesser extent than gender inequality, which might have influenced the types of discourses drawn upon by the participants.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the methodology that was employed to conduct this study. This was achieved by discussing the sampling procedure, data collection tools and the method of analysis. I explained the basis on which sampling choices were made, considered the value of in-depth individual interviews as tools for collecting data and described Parker's (1992) approach to discourse analysis. Next, I discussed ethical issues that were taken into consideration, and to conclude I reflected on how I might have been implicated in this research. In the following chapter I present a comprehensive account of the analysis of the data and of the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the interview data revealed that the participants made sense of violence in their relationships with stable intimate partners by interrogating aspects of their own and their partners' identities. 'Broken men' and 'spoiled women' are analytic themes dealing with the ways in which participants constructed their own and their partners' identities. 'Broken men' is the title of an analytic theme dealing with participants' talk about their intimate partners, and aspects of their partners' lives that they viewed as playing a significant role in the aetiology of violence. 'Spoiled women' is the title of a second analytic theme. This theme deals with participants' talk about their lives and how aspects of their lived experiences have shaped their understanding of experiences of violence. Participants drew on a range of discourses to construct 'broken men' and 'spoiled women'. Each of these analytic themes and the discourses supporting them are presented in this chapter. Verbatim extracts from the transcribed interviews are presented in this chapter in order to support the analytic observations.

5.1 BROKEN MEN

I use the term 'broken men' to describe the ways in which the women in this study spoke about their male partners. I begin discussion of the 'broken men' with participants' accounts of their first experiences of witnessing their partners' brokenness. I have termed these accounts 'transitions'. For some participants the transition was permanent (i.e. he became bad), while for others it was transient (he could be good one minute, and bad the next). In this talk, the participants positioned their partners within a psychological frame.

5.1.1 TRANSITIONS

A common explanation that participants provided for experiencing violence in the context of their relationships with stable intimate partners was that something had gone wrong with the men that they were involved with. Interestingly, the women described this as something that happened, either in terms of permanent transition from a person who was good and then became bad, or that being good and bad were transient states. These descriptions are illustrated in the two extracts below.

Extract 1: He's not the person that I knew

Jowidene He's got another personality. He's a whole other being. He's not the person that I knew. *Die persoon wie ek saam was sou nie sy hande só gelig het vir 'n vroumens nie* [The person that I was with would not have lifted his hands to a woman like that]. Um, *hy't 'n vrou op die hande gedra en alles* [he carried a woman on the hands and everything].

In Extract 1, Jowidene argues that her partner "got another personality", became a "whole other being" and that this was "not the person that I knew". She describes the man whom she met and fell in love with as a man who "*sou nie sy hande so gelig het vir 'n vroumens*" [would not have lifted his hands to a woman like that]. In this extract, IPV is believed to be a phenomenon resulting from internal, personality flaws of the individual perpetrator. In this way violence is spoken about as personality features that people carry internally, rather than being a consequence of contextual factors and problems within the environment.

Extract 2: He had a terrible split personality

Nicole He had a terrible split personality. Sometimes he would be the most wonderful person; giving and kind. And he would just change, in a matter of a minute, to this horrible devil.

In Extract 2, Nicole describes her partner as both a "wonderful person" and a "horrible devil". It is possible that this duality serves a purpose. In particular, that it allows participants to attribute abuse to their male partners' 'bad side', while also explaining and justifying love for

their partners' 'good side'. Boonzaier and Van Schalkwyk (2011) have argued that it provides women with an interpretative frame for the contradictory coexistence of love and violence in intimate relationships. The good-bad duality occasions a degree of ambivalence in their attitudes towards their partners and the relationship. Arguably, this is likely to impact on decisions to remain in, or to extricate themselves from these relationships. After all, while their partners are not completely good, they are also not completely bad. If the 'nature' of these men were more definite, their decisions to remain or leave would have been easier.

Further examination of participants' accounts of their male partners' 'good' and 'bad' sides, evidenced significant concern on the part of the participants to make sense of these transitions. I identified three strategies that participants drew on to explain their male partners' 'bad side' – that aspect of their partners that they viewed as being at the root of their violent behaviour. I have labelled these explanatory strategies: 'black violence', 'childhood trauma' and 'patriarchal ideology'. Each of these explanatory strategies is discussed in the sections that follow.

5.1.2 DRAWING ON A DISCOURSE OF VIOLENT BLACK MASCULINITY

One strategy that was used to explain a male partner's 'bad side' (i.e. his violent behaviour), was to make recourse to a discourse of violent black masculinity. The women who participated in this study explicitly constructed men of colour as perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) and used race as a motivating factor to violence, rather than other factors as a result of someone's race. In the following extract, Boitumelo does not explain what about men of colour might influence them to become perpetrators of IPV, but makes it seem as if men of colour have an inherent tendency towards violence.

Extract 3: This one who stabbed me like this, he was Xhosa

Boitumelo It's very seldom you're gonna see me make business with a coloured man, because I did see a lot of things, you see. This one who stabbed me like this, he was a Xhosa. That's why I don't like Xhosas. He was a Xhosa man. He promised me the world [but] in the end I got nothing.

In Extract 3, Boitumelo could articulate that men of colour are naturally violent, without there being the risk of offending me as a white researcher. She might have been more hesitant to state this in such an explicit way if I had been a man of colour. Nonetheless, this explanatory frame does not originate with Boitumelo, but is a dominant frame for understanding black masculinity in our society. Many authors argue that the violent black masculinity construct emulates a longstanding racist discourse (Buiten, 2016; Hughey, 2012; Moffett, 2006; Ratele, 2005) which positions men of colour as essentially different to white men who, are consequently positioned as non-violent (Hughey, 2012).

Interestingly, Boitumeto (see Extract 3) does not explain or defend why she believes men of colour to be violent, other than to draw on a single personal experience. It is possible that this discourse is so pervasive in the South African context, that some people might not see a need to explain it or to question its assumptions. The idea that men of colour are naturally more violent, serves as 'taken for granted knowledge' and the assumption is that most people accept it as being true.

Ratele (2005) argues that black masculinity has historically been framed as violent; as being out of control and primitive. These colonial attitudes were perpetuated by apartheid state authorities (Dosekun, 2013; Du Toit, 2005; Moffett, 2006). The fear that men of colour might sexually violate white women was used by colonial and apartheid authorities to justify white men's control over white women's bodies, white men's violence towards men of colour and forced racial segregation (Moffett, 2006; Ratele, 2005; Scully, 1995). This served to render

invisible long histories of sexual violence of women of colour perpetrated by white men (Buiten, 2016) and facilitated by patriarchal and racist state policies. Apartheid produced a social condition where people made sense of themselves and others on the basis of race. Within the literature, it has been argued that South Africa continues to sustain the social identities, fears and relationships cultivated by apartheid authorities (Moffett, 2006; Ratele, 2009).

One implication of this interpretative frame is that it implies that, because violence is an innate characteristic, it is both natural (and therefore justified) and inevitable. The assumption is that men of colour will always be violent and that little could be done to change this. Constructing violence as a problem of the self also diverts attention away from contextual factors such as unequal and unjust social, political and economic conditions (Graham, 2013).

Childhood trauma is another explanatory frame that participants drew on to explain their partners' violent behaviour and it is discussed in the next section. The extent to which certain human behaviours can be explained by either inherited (i.e. genetic) or acquired (i.e. learned) factors has been contested within the psychological literature – a dispute known as the nature/nurture debate within psychology (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2009). In the next section, participants argue that their partners are the products of environmental influences and learned behaviour. These interpretative frames are derived from psychological theories of causality.

5.1.3 CHILDHOOD TRAUMA: DRAWING ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISCOURSE

Participants constructed their partners' childhood experiences of abandonment and the witnessing of violence as significant factors contributing to their partners' violent behaviour. This is not surprising in light of the fact that IPV has become a topic for public debate and, in this debate (and in the psychological literature), IPV is increasingly viewed as a phenomenon

with multiple causal pathways. Among these, absent parents and witnessing violence in the family of origin loom large.

Some authors (Brock, 2006; Thomson, 2006) use the term 'psychologization' to describe the process whereby ordinary people are provided with a psychological language to make sense of social phenomena such as IPV. Psychological explanations for social problems are frequently provided (Brock, 2006), for example by focusing on the role that past experiences play in shaping current behaviour. The problem with a psychological discourse (although valid) is that alternative and equally valid explanations might be overlooked.

5.1.3.1 ABANDONMENT

Abandonment refers to the act whereby a parent or guardian neglects a child by being absent from his/her life, or by failing to provide the necessary physical and emotional care (De Bruin, 2016). The women who participated in this study argued that their partners' early experiences of abandonment in childhood were harmful and had caused them to become violent and aggressive later in life. Participants drew on the idea that emotional care from parents in childhood, functions as a buffer against anger and psychological issues later in life.

Extract 4: He didn't actually know where he came from

Lu-Juan He told me [that] when he was five years old he didn't actually know where he came from and that [it] was eating him up and so he became abusive and aggressive.

In Extract 4, Lu-Juan argues that her partner's early childhood experience of being abandoned by his biological parents "was eating him up" and that this was what caused him to become "abusive and aggressive". In this instance IPV is framed as a response to emotional pain. Sympathetic reasons are provided for why people commit IPV and the receiver of the communication is left feeling sorry for the perpetrator.

Although the abandonment discourse might act as an excuse for IPV, it is still important to acknowledge the harmful effects of child maltreatment on adult pathology. Psychological research indicates a link between child maltreatment, which includes child neglect and abandonment, and violence in adulthood (Fang & Corso, 2007; White & Widom, 2003; Widom, 1992).

As a result of apartheid policy and practice, the link between abandonment and adult pathology assumes dimensions of race and class (class was race based during apartheid). The raced dimension of IPV does not mean that men of colour are naturally violent (as per previous section on violent black masculinity), but signifies that men of colour were victims of a racist system. Studies indicate that many children of colour who grew up during apartheid in South Africa, experienced some form of abandonment from their primary caregivers (most frequently their fathers) who were forced to leave the home to find work (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008; Ross, 1996). Work was scarce and people of colour were not allowed to live in the same areas in which they most often found work (Groenmeyer, 2011; Madhavan, 2004; Richter & Morrell, 2006). As a result, children were frequently left with extended family and community members (Ramphele, 1993). For this reason, the issue of abandonment in South Africa is not just the result of individual factors, but rooted in systems of racial and economic inequality (Ross, 1996; Spiegel, 1987).

Although there is a link between abandonment and IPV, and although it must be acknowledged that in South Africa this phenomenon is linked to the apartheid ideology of separate development which resulted in children being abandoned (a point not mentioned by the participants), in the context of the interviews this narrative is employed as an explanatory frame that absolves the male partner of responsibility. The implication is that blame is transferred

away from the perpetrator who is positioned as the victim. Parents are held accountable for IPV, for failing to provide emotional care to their children.

This explanatory frame does not just absolve the partner of responsibility, but also forecloses on thinking through possibilities for changing the narrative. The nature/nurture debate is a debate about causality that positions the male partners as victims and IPV as an inevitable symptom of the damage that was done to them. However much this might be true, it is also disempowering. If an outcome is inevitable, then there is nothing to be done about it.

5.1.3.2 MODELLING

Modelling is a familiar concept in social learning theory that describes how children learn particular behaviours by observing the behaviours of significant others (Papalia et al., 2009). Similar to the abandonment narrative, the modelling narrative draws on 'nurture' explanations to IPV by focusing on IPV as a learned behaviour. In this study participants argued that their partners learned to be violent because they had witnessed it in their homes when they were children.

Extract 5: The father was just the same, very abusive

Nicole: He's a very angry person, angry with himself [and] angry with his childhood. His mother left them and his father brought them up. His father was also the same type of person, from what I gather. The father was just the same, very abusive. So it seems like, you know, like a sort of a cycle.

In Extract 5, Nicole describes the intergenerational transmission of violence as "a sort of cycle". Indeed, it has been argued that children who witness violence perpetrated by their parents learn, through observation, that violence is a valid strategy for resolving interpersonal conflict (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher & Hoffman, 2006). Children may also receive the

message that it is men's intrinsic right to use violence against women to gain dominance in heterosexual relationships and to discipline their female partners (Abrahams et al., 2006).

Many studies have indeed found a significant relationship between exposure to domestic violence in childhood and the perpetration of violence towards intimate partners later in life (Abrahams, 2002; Abrahams & Jewkes, 2005; Kalmus, 1984; Skuja & Halford, 2004). Although the participants used this discourse within the context of the family, it might be applicable to a broader community context where children who grow up in violent communities learn, through observation, that violence is a normal and acceptable part of life.

The problem with this developmental interpretative frame (however valid) is that, in the context of these interviews, it did not occasion critique or challenge. As a researcher within the field of Psychology, the participants might have believed that it is a discourse that I would recognise, understand and be accepting of. The only interpretative frame for 'broken men' that occasioned critique and challenge was patriarchal ideology; which is discussed in the next section.

5.1.4 PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF A VICTIM DISCOURSE

Patriarchal ideology is the title given to the interpretative frame most frequently drawn upon in participants' accounts of IPV. Patriarchal ideology is used here to refer to an ideology that enforces traditional gender roles in which men are dominant and women are subservient (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004). While there is plenty of feminist critique of the patriarchy (Fox et al., 2007; Kiguwa, 2004; Lazar & Kramarae, 2006), it is an ideology that continues to be pervasive in South African society (Gqola, 2007; Moffett, 2006).

In participants' talk about their experiences of IPV, attempts were made to account for why women are considered to be appropriate targets for male aggression. After all, while the

developmental explanations discussed in the preceding sections might account for why their male partners behaved aggressively, these causal explanations do not account for why that violence is directed at women in particular. Interestingly, it was this talk that prompted participants to ascribe male violence toward women to a society that normalises hierarchal relations of power between men and women.

These hierarchical structures between men and women have frequently been maintained through a patriarchal ideology that appeals to natural differences between men and women to justify unequal relations of power. In the context of the interviews, participants drew on the idea that there are natural differences between men and women. However, these 'nature' arguments did not seem to close down critique of male hegemony. As will be discussed later, participants used their partners' non-adherence to what is 'naturally' expected of them as men to challenge his power and domination over them. This allowed participants to resist male domination within the terms of patriarchy.

In the literature, strong links are drawn between IPV and male control (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Shefer et al., 2008; Towns & Scott, 2013) – where violence and the micromanagement of women are seen as strategies that abusive partners employ as a way of establishing authority in intimate relationships (Lau & Stevens, 2012). As depicted in the following extract, it is clear that the participants were aware of the patriarchal ideology and the role it plays in shaping unequal relations of power in their intimate relationships.

Extract 6: "I'm the boss!"

Clarissa That is what those men want. They want to break women down, because they don't have any respect for a woman. And they don't believe in a 50-50 relationship. "I'm the boss!" – that is patriarchy, plain patriarchy. How can that be a partnership? Partnership means 50-50; and you are equal in the relationship.

In Extract 6, Clarissa describes men who demand to be in charge ("the boss") in the context of their intimate relationships with women. While Clarissa rightly argues that this is incompatible with egalitarian values, it is a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity – which is legitimised by the patriarchy (Luyt, 2012; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012).

The problem with relations of power is that they are contingent on their reiteration. In other words, dominant masculinity and submissive femininity must be perpetually reproduced in our everyday behaviour or they would cease to exist (Butler, 1988, 1999). A good account of this everyday re-enactment is illustrated in Extract 7.

Extract 7: You must keep quiet when he argues with you

Boitumelo You must keep quiet, and when he argue with you, you can't say "no." You must keep your mouth. You must just calm him down and you must never answer him back. The moment you answer, it's going to go out of proportion, the hitting are going to start. I just keep quiet, [I] don't even look at him even. You must look to the ground. Me, I never looked at him. I always look on the ground, because the moment you look – you know, you get some good men, and you get a bad, bad, bad man.

In the extract above, Boitumelo describes a situation in which there is a risk of things going "out of proportion" which, she explains, is when "the hitting are going to start". Boitomelo goes on to describe what she does to manage this risk. She "keep[s] quiet", she "calm[s] him down", she "don't even look at him" and "always look[s] on the ground". These are characteristically submissive practices that Boitomelo engages in to prevent being beaten. The implication is that Boitumelo's risk of being beaten can be significantly reduced by bolstering her partner's sense of authority and power over her.

What is ironic about this account, is that it implies that Boitomelo is in control ("the boss") of the situation. After all, the power that her partner derives in this situation is entirely a consequence of her submissiveness, and the only thing keeping him from "going out of

proportion" is her ability to self-regulate. Sadly, this irony has a perverse logic. It means that when things do go "out of proportion", it will be Boitumelo's fault. These gender roles and behavioural scripts set the scene for victim blaming.

Within the parameters of a victim blaming discourse, victims of IPV are perceived as having become victims because of something they did or failed to do (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1993; Esqueda & Harrison, 2005). It is assumed that there are ways in which women could behave to avoid putting themselves at risk to violence (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1993). The narrative of victim blaming could be linked to the participants' work identities. In many societies, there is a shared belief that female sex workers (FSWs) could have prevented becoming victims of violence by 'choosing' not enter a 'dirty' profession (Stadler & Delaney, 2006). The assumption is that FSWs brought violence upon themselves based on their choice of career. This will be elaborated upon in later sections dealing with participants' talk about themselves. Victim blaming transfers blame away from perpetrators of IPV and onto victims (Saul, 1972). This has the effect of causing victims to feel accountable for their own victimisation (Peters, 2008; Saul, 1972).

5.1.4.1 CHALLENGING THE PATRIARCHY

Interestingly, of the various explanatory frames, patriarchal ideology offered the only occasions in which participants' talk about their experiences of IPV provided space to critique and challenge male hegemony. Almost all of the participants described their partners as possessive and described men who sought to lay claim to them. While this is characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Mooney, 1998; Morrell et al., 2012), it has also been argued that sex work presents a challenge to this notion of ownership. This is because FSWs have sexual relationships with people over and above their stable male partners, earn an income independent of their partners, and exercise some control over sex within the context of

their work (Bates & Berg, 2014; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001). FSWs' access to capital opens up possibilities for challenging the patriarchy, as they do not conform to patriarchal notions of female dependency.

It is noteworthy that the women participating in this study argued that they viewed their involvement in sex work as the reason for their partners' concern to make their claim on them known to others outside of the sex work environment. Accordingly, the participants in this study viewed their partners' possessive and controlling behaviour as a direct consequence of their involvement in sex work. This possessiveness is presented in the following extract where "man" is conflated with "owner".

Extract 8: Be the man, the owner

Meryl When other guys, like friends from school visit; he would wanna be the man, the owner. When I hang out with other people, you know, he's now macho man. "Yes, we are together", he'd be like that.

Interestingly, while the participants' partners were threatened by their involvement in sex work and the challenge that this presented to their claim to ownership over their female partners, the participants themselves had a slightly different view of these claims.

In the extract below, the participant's utterances suggest that the legitimacy of her partner's possessiveness is questionable in the light of the fact that they were not married.

Extract 9: Although we weren't married

Clarissa But he was also very possessive. Another man couldn't even look at me. He would tell the man, "Don't you have somewhere else to look? She's with me, she's mine," although we weren't married.

In Extract 9, Clarissa's last remark "although we weren't married", has the effect of bringing into question the legitimacy of her partner's claim. Historically, marriage functioned as a

(heteronormative) legal contract between a man and a woman in which a woman's legal rights were transferred from her father to her husband (Dryden, 1999). Some authors argue that this social practice allowed women to be positioned as the property of their husbands and legitimised the domination of women by men (Hagan, 1993; Jackson, 1996). Traditionally, men were granted authority over their female partners' sexuality and decisions with regard to family matters (Jaggar, 1994), which ensured the regulation of women by men. Even if the conceptualisation of marriage has changed with time and more egalitarian marriages have emerged (DeHardt, 1993; Spender, 1994), these alternative forms of marriage seem to be less dominant in rural South Africa (Van der Vliet, 1991).

Participants' descriptions of discussions with their intimate partners in which they drew on the institution of marriage to question the legitimacy of their partners' claims of ownership and control, are significant because it evidences a mode of critique and challenge that is made possible by the very system that subordinates them.

Another opportunity for critique and challenge that is occasioned within the terms of patriarchal ideology, and which participants in this study drew upon, is the notion of men as providers. Participants in this study held strongly to the view that men should provide for their families. This is in line with the general attitude in the South African population (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter, 2002; Thomas, 2009). Thus, despite the emergence of less rigid gender norms and a gradual increase in economic opportunities for women, men are still expected to be the main breadwinners. As illustrated in the following extract, one participant considered her partner's inability to support her as a form of abuse.

Extract 10: They should be prepared to take care of you

Thato There's economic abuse, where your husband is not taking care of you. When you're with someone, they should be prepared to take care of you. I'd sleep with him, he wouldn't give me money, but I was in love. Love does not pay bills.

Although Thato claims that her partner was abusive as a result of his inability to support her, it is worth keeping in mind that the male partners described in this study tended to also adhere to very traditional gender norms in order to evaluate and admonish their female partners. However, and more significantly for the women in this study, a lack of financial support coupled with the burden to care for a family, was almost always cited as the primary reason for entering sex work. Discussion of this issue is taken up in the second part of the analysis that deals with the participants' talk about themselves.

5.2 SPOILED WOMEN

I use the term 'spoiled women' to narrate the way in which the participants spoke about themselves, and aspects of their own identities that they viewed as contributing to the experience of IPV. In this section I describe the discursive resources that participants drew on to describe themselves. What is interesting about the participants' use of these discursive resources, is that while the women drew on them to describe subjectivities undeserving of kindness, compassion and respect, it was apparent that these practices of signification do not originate with the participants themselves, or even with their partners; they are ways of talking about women that are already in circulation. Furthermore, while the construction of 'spoiled women' was often linked to the women's involvement in sex work, it was also linked to ideas around race.

5.2.1 PRACTICES OF SIGNIFICATION

Participants reiterated conversations with their intimate partners where ideas about them as 'spoiled women' were retained. In these conversations they are positioned as inferior due to their racial identity and involvement in sex work.

In the following extract, Lu-Juan is recounting a comment that her partner made about treating her like a 'whore' (as something that is worthless). Her response is a challenge – she asks why he didn't just pass the 'whore'. This challenge troubles his position as much as it does hers. While this challenge is interesting in and of itself, another interesting aspect to this extract is her conflation of 'whore' with 'prostitute' and 'hotnot'.

Extract 11: Why didn't you just pass this *hotnot*?

Lu-Juan [He asked me] "Why couldn't he just treat me as the whore [I am]?" I told him "Why didn't you just pass this whore, or this prostitute, or this hotnot, as you say?"

In Extract 11, Lu-Juan positions her race as being as worthless as a whore/prostitute. 'Hotnot' is a derogatory term used to refer to a coloured person in the Western Cape in South Africa, who may have Khoisan ethnic facial features. It originates from the word 'hottentot', which is used to refer to the Khoisan and Khoikhoi people of South Africa (Wicomb, 1998).

Many oppressive stereotypes are encapsulated in the term 'hotnot' with reminiscence of the historical exploitation of Sara Baartman, also called the Hottentot Venus (Maseko, 2007; Sharpley-Whiting, 1999). Sara Baartman was a Khoikhoi woman who was brought to Europe in the 19th century and whose body was exhibited at freak show attractions (Maseko, 2007). The European society had a bizarre fascination with Baartman's genital anatomy and depicted her as a 'hypersexual freak' and an 'untamed sexual beast' (Hobson, 2005; Maseko, 2007). Her body was investigated by naturalists and scientists of the time who equated her body to that of

an ape and differentiated her body from the 'standard' (i.e. white, European) female form (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999).

Some authors argue that this preoccupation with the sexuality of women of colour is still relevant in the behaviours and cultural products of the modern society (Gordon-Chipembere, 2011; Hobson, 2005; Jackson, 2013; Sharpley-Whiting, 1999). These devalued bodies often act as excuses for the discrimination and violence committed against them (Hobson, 2003). Lu-Juan (see Extract 11) is aware that she is devalued not just because of her involvement in sex work, but also because she is a sex worker of colour. In other words, she is devalued not just for her gender and sexuality, but also for her racial identity.

Practices of signification employed by the participants' intimate partners illustrate the problematic ways in which they are identified and positioned by significant others. The words 'whore', 'dirty' and 'bitch' came out in most of the messages participants received from their partners. In this way, they are constructed as people who cause disgust and revolt in others.

Extract 12: You whore; you are so dirty, bitch

Clarissa He said, "You whore; you are so dirty, bitch, but you think you are better than other women? How can a whore like you think you are better? Because you sleep with other men?"

In Extract 12, Clarissa's partner uses practices of signification deliberately intended to shame her. Her partner's lack of respect for her is linked to her work. Within the broader society it is generally expected of 'decent' women to abstain from having multiple sexual relations and sexual intercourse outside of the context of marriage (Bremridge, 2000; Shefer, 1999; Weiss, Whelan & Gupta, 1996). Although some of these gendered expectations have lessened with time, women who sell sex for money are still harshly judged (Campbell, 2000) by most others for not living up to what is expected of 'good' women. This plays out in a cultural context that

both celebrates and shames female sexuality (Koken, 2011; Macdonald, 1995). As a result of FSWs' inferior positioning (see Extract 12), they may feel accountable for the violence directed at them. Through a discourse of worthlessness and stigma, blame is transferred from perpetrators of IPV onto victims.

Participants' talk about their own lives demonstrated investment on their part to make sense of sex work stigma implicated in practices of signification. I identified one main strategy that participants drew on to examine their own spoiled identities and to make sense of their vulnerability to experiences of IPV. I have labelled this explanatory framework 'dirty work'. The construction of sex work as dirty work has in some ways been resisted by the participants, which gave rise to two additional discursive frames. I have labelled these discursive frames: 'the good mother' and 'sex work choice'. Each of these strategies – one explanatory strategy and two resisting strategies – is discussed in the following sections.

5.2.2 "DIRTY WORK": THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF SEX WORK

Dirty work is the title given to the explanatory frame most often used by participants to construct their spoiled identities and to make sense of their heightened exposure to violence. Sex work stigma is a familiar concept that has been explored within academic studies (Burnes, Long & Schept, 2012; Cornish, 2006; Fick, 2005; Hallgrimsdottir, Benoit & Benoit, 2005). This stigma serves to justify and perpetuate violence against FSWs. Many societies legitimise violence directed at FSWs by making recourse to a discourse of sin and by framing sex work as morally bankrupt, sinful and shameful and thus positioning the women within this profession as depraved and 'deserving of punishment' (Fick, 2005; Moane, 2003). All of the participants in this study were aware of the stigma associated with sex work and acknowledged that it has a negative impact on how they are treated by others.

Therefore, it is not surprising that research focusing on the coping strategies that FSWs employ to manage stigma, found that participants often chose to conceal their sex worker identities (Koken, 2011). However, it was also discovered that FSWs who concealed their sex worker identities experienced greater levels of social isolation compared to FSWs who engaged in strategies of selective disclosure (Koken, 2011). In this study, participants argue that disclosure of their involvement in sex work to their intimate partners has negative effects as it allows their partners to legitimise treating them badly and having little respect for them. This is illustrated in the extract below.

Extract 13: Because your partner knows you're a prostitute, he treats you worse

Shandry If you have a partner and you stand on the road, at the end of the day he doesn't have respect for you 'cos he knows you're selling your body. And because your partner knows you're a prostitute, he treats you worse.

In Extract 13, Shandry argues that sex workers' partners do not have respect for them because "he knows you're selling your body" and as a result of this knowledge, "treats you worse".

The concept 'dirty work' was first introduced by Hughes (1951) to refer to work that society views as disgusting and humiliating. This concept was expanded on by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) whose conceptualisation of 'dirty work' refers to occupational tasks that are stigmatised, morally questionable, performed under harmful circumstances, and which require contact with stigmatised people. Thus, sex work can potentially impact on sex workers' self-esteem.

In the next extract, Thato acknowledges that she used to think of sex workers as "dirty", "disgusting" and "immoral" because they "sleep around". She mentions that "this whole notion of being married and faithful" is "engraved in you", perhaps indicating that these expectations have been "engraved" through social practices and social expectations, which can be disrupted.

Extract 14: Ag, it's dirty! Disgusting!

Thato And I think this whole notion of being married and being faithful to your partner is engraved in you. Thinking, "Ag, there's prostitutes! They sleep around. Ag, it's dirty! Disgusting! It's immoral." So you always feel you need to be with that one partner who's supposed to fulfil all your needs.

Many participants internalised the negative stigmas associated with their work and viewed themselves as 'dirty' and 'deserving of punishment'. However, a few participants disrupted the construction of sex work as 'dirty work'. They did this by redefining the elements of their work in new and creative ways. The 'good mother' discourse is one strategy of resistance that participants drew on to disrupt the construction of sex work as 'dirty work' and is discussed in the next section.

5.2.3 DRAWING ON THE 'GOOD MOTHER' DISCOURSE

It has been argued in the literature that people's self-concepts are shaped by the social groups to which they belong, and that people from stigmatised social groups engage in compensatory strategies to enhance their self-image (Finchilescu, 2006; Grandy, 2008). A key compensatory strategy has been identified within this study, namely: redefining the elements of sex work and constructing new dimensions of comparison (Finchilescu, 2006). One way in which this was achieved, was through the glorification of motherhood and the rephrasing of sex work as a means to provide for children. This strategy is illustrated in the following extract.

Extract 15: It's a fucking dirty job

Mbulee I don't fucking think anybody respects fucking sex workers. I don't know, they just see it as a dirty work. Must I go to bed hungry? How must I feed my kids? I don't have a job. If I go steal, I go to jail. What about my kids? I don't go and knock at anybody's door for a piece of bread for my kids. So fuck them! I'm a mother alone in my house. Who the fuck are they to judge? ... This is already dirty work, it's a fucking dirty job.

Extract 15 is loaded with contradictions. Understandably, Mbulee is angry about the stigma of sex work and ascribes it to the social construction of sex work as "dirty work". Despite resisting, to some degree, the stigma attached to her work, she accepts this discursive construction by communicating that sex work is "a fucking dirty job". She further makes use of reframing strategies by framing her work as providing an income to feed her children. Mbulee implies that doing 'dirty work' to feed her children positions her as a martyr of sorts. Through this positioning, Mbulee attempts to portray herself as a moral subject who sacrifices herself for her children. In light of dominant portrayals of sex workers as 'dirty' and immoral (Grandy, 2008), this strategy of resistance is significant. Mbulee argues that seen from another perspective, what she does is actually moral because it feeds her children.

In the next extract, Thato redefines her sex worker identity (similarly to Mbulee in Extract 15) by positioning sex workers as moral beings and 'good mothers'. In this way she is able to redefine herself and her work and resist hegemonic discourses that marginalise her. FSWs are thus able to draw on alternate discursive frames (Philaretou, 2006).

Extract 16: Your children are like the core of everything you do

Thato As much as people think you like to party and that, your children are like the core of everything that you do. I'm doing it for my children regardless of what society might think. I'm not here for hand-outs; I'm here to make the money myself. Your children play a big role. You want a better life for them. You want them to be educated and to have better choices.

The glorification of motherhood is central to the ideology of 'motherism' (Hassim & Gouws, 2000) which is sometimes seen as an African alternative to mainstream feminism. Within this ideology, male domination and patriarchal oppression are rejected through women's primal identities as mothers (Hassim & Gouws, 2000). The problem with the 'good mother' discourse is that it frames motherhood as the most important social identity women could aspire to and excludes women who are not mothers. Furthermore, research within critical psychology

indicates how the notion of the self-sacrificing mother has been sustained through early psychological research that mostly focused on the instrumental value of mothering in society, while ignoring the women who do the mothering (DiQuinzio, 1999; Hays, 1996; Riley, 1983; Thurer, 1994). Early psychological research generated an idealised image of motherhood and reinforced the idea that women should be primarily responsible for childcare (Grossman, Eichler & Winickoff, 1980).

Another way in which the participants disrupted the discursive construction of sex work as 'dirty work', was through the framing of sex work as choice. A discussion will follow in the next section on whether the participants view themselves as having a choice within the context of their work. This discussion reflects the debate within the literature of viewing sex work either from a constraint or choice perspective.

5.2.4 AGENCY AND THE DISCURSIVE FRAMING OF SEX WORK AS CHOICE

In feminist literature, considerable debate exists on whether sex work should be viewed as legitimate work or as a system of oppression that perpetuates violence against women (Farley, 2006; Halland, 2010; Miller, 2002; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). Similarly, the participants within this study have also been somewhat divided on this issue. Most participants stated that they had been limited in their career choices by circumstances outside of their control, had no other options available, and experienced their work as degrading. However, one participant reported enjoying her work and even considered it as empowering. The following extract is an example of a participant who did not freely decide to do sex work, but was limited by social forces of poverty and limited education.

Extract 17: I don't think anyone wants to sleep in a bin or do sex work

Meryl I don't think anyone wants to sleep in a bin or do sex work. It always starts somewhere, which you didn't create for yourself.

By stating that no-one "wants to sleep in a bin or do sex work", Meryl compares sex workers to vagrants – people whom society has discarded like trash. She situates sex work beyond the individual level by arguing that doing sex work is not the result of an individual choice, but the result of broader social phenomena – "which you didn't create for yourself." In this way sex work is constructed as not being a viable career choice, but the result of adverse life experiences. This is in line with research that found poverty to be a key factor influencing many women to enter the sex industry (Bucardo, 2004; Dalla, 2002; Fick, 2005; Halland, 2010; Wojcicki & Malala, 2001).

Although the majority of participants experienced their work as degrading and oppressive, Thato is an example of a participant who had a different experience in comparison to the others. This might be due to the fact that she had slightly more economic and social capital compared to the other participants and received better payment for her work. As illustrated next, Thato reports satisfaction from her work and constructs herself as having a choice.

Extract 19: It's what I choose to do

Thato It's a totally different life. But it's a life you feel yourself worth living. We get that gratification, that satisfaction that I am still not begging. I have a choice. It's what I choose to do. It's somehow empowering... You get to understand that people have different choices regardless of what you might think about them. But can you respect other people's choices? They're just human. They're trying to find their way as hard as it might be for you to comprehend.

In extract 19, Thato frames her work within an empowerment discourse by emphasising the control and choice she is able to exercise within her current work context. Again, she challenges the stigma attached to her work and sounds a loud call that different choices should be

respected, regardless of personal and moral judgements. Thato attempts to portray FSWs in a less stigmatising light by implying that sex workers are just trying to survive and make a living.

It appears that the experiences of sex workers are diverse and that simplistic understandings of sex workers as either "victimised" or "empowered", might be limiting. Constructing sex work purely from a constraints perspective, might position sex workers as victims and reinforce a sense of powerlessness (Koken, 2010; Pheterson, 1990; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001). It might also prevent legal efforts in decriminalisation (Gardner, 2009) and perpetuate the stigma attached to the profession. On the other hand, constructing sex work purely from a choice perspective might ignore the harmful circumstances many sex workers are exposed to, and ignore social and economic forces that limit people's choices in entering the profession.

Sex workers operate within a variety of contexts and the experiences of street-based sex workers are apt to differ from those in settings of higher economic resources (Bates & Berg, 2014). Within this study it is believed that sex work should be viewed as work and that people may choose to enter this profession, while simultaneously acknowledging that choice might be limited and determined by social forces of poverty and limited education (Scoular, 2004; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001).

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I summarise the findings of the study and discuss their significance. I consider the consequences of the discourses that participants draw on to justify and resist violence in the context of their intimate relationships. Next I discuss the unique contributions made by this study. Finally, I make recommendations in terms of practice and future research.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This particular group of FSWs made sense of violence in the context of their intimate relationships by investigating aspects of their partners' lives that led to their resorting to violence, and by exploring aspects of their own identities that increased their vulnerability to such experiences. In the previous chapter I started the discussion with participants' talk about their partners. In the second phase I discussed participants' talk about their own identities.

Participants drew on three main strategies to explain the root of their partners' violent behaviour. They drew on a discourse of violent black masculinity, developmental discourses and patriarchal ideology. These explanatory frameworks resemble dominant explanations for IPV that are circulating in public debate and in the psychological literature.

Through a discourse of violent black masculinity, men of colour are constructed as being inherently violent, and thus essential perpetrators of IPV. This discourse represents a longstanding colonial construction (Ratele, 2005) that had been perpetually reproduced by apartheid state policies and practices (Dosekun, 2013; Du Toit, 2005; Moffett, 2006). It is

noteworthy that the women participating in this study did not challenge this discourse, but accepted it as 'fact'. Through this discourse violence is constructed as a natural and inevitable consequence of black masculinity, implying that little can be done to change it.

Developmental discourses were used to argue that their partners' violence was a result of their (their partners') unsuitable upbringing, in particular due to parental abandonment and the witnessing of violence during childhood. These discourses have been informed by psychological theories of causality and resemble aspects of the nature/nurture debate within the psychological literature (Papalia et al., 2009). Even though the participants did not explicitly refer to contextual factors, the phenomenon of child abandonment in South Africa has been influenced by apartheid policies and practices (Ross, 1996; Spiegel, 1987) and thus, assumes dimensions of race and class.

Even though a link exists between IPV and abandonment (Fang & Corso, 2007; White & Widom, 2003; Widom, 1992), and between IPV and apartheid ideology, in the context of this study the participants used this discourse to excuse their partners' violence and to exempt him from blame. The implication is that perpetrators of IPV cannot be held accountable for their violent behaviour and that there is not much that could be done to change this phenomenon. This leads to a fatalistic view of IPV. In the context of this study, developmental discourses did not allow space to challenge male violence, and did not occasion alternative explanations for IPV.

Participants drew on patriarchal ideology to analyse IPV on a systemic level. They considered the power imbalance between men and women in heterosexual relationships to explain why women are the appropriate targets for male aggression. Within the context of the interviews,

patriarchal ideology was the only explanatory frame that occasioned critique and challenge of male hegemony.

It was significant that the women participating in this study challenged male hegemony within the terms of patriarchy. They did not question the institution of marriage or patriarchal notions that men should provide financially. However, in light of the fact that participants' partners adhered to traditional gender roles to reprimand their female partners, it is understandable that participants confronted their partners for not fulfilling traditional roles that are expected of them as men. Furthermore, as poor women the participants relied on men as their primary access to the economy. Although patriarchy has been critiqued by many feminist scholars and activists, it is an ideology that remains pervasive in the South African context (Gqola, 2007; Moffett, 2006), which feeds into victim blaming narratives.

In discussions about aspects of their own lives that increased their vulnerability to the experience of IPV, participants positioned themselves as devalued citizens. Participants are devalued not just for their involvement in sex work, but also for their race. Their inferior status serves to justify violence directed at them. As discussed in the literature review chapter, violence towards FSWs of colour is linked to their stigmatised position in society (Ratinthorn et al., 2009). Within the context of this study, it became clear that ideas about sex workers being dirty and immoral, did not originate with the participants or their partners, but are dominant ideas circulating in our society. These ideas make it possible for the partners of FSWs to justify treating them badly and, as a result, FSWs are made to feel accountable for their own victimisation.

Participants drew on two main strategies to disrupt the discursive construction of sex work as 'dirty work'. Firstly, this was achieved by positioning themselves as moral agents who do sex

work to provide for their children. Secondly, this was achieved by engaging in ideas around sex work as choice. One participant, in particular, challenged the stigma attached to her work by framing sex work within an empowerment framework.

Participants' attempts to portray themselves as moral subjects are remarkable, particularly because FSWs have largely been framed within a framework of sin and illegality (Fick, 2005; Moane, 2003). The reframing of FSWs as moral beings enabled participants to take up less stigmatised social positions.

This study reiterated the debate within feminist literature where sex work is viewed as a system that either supports violence against women, or that facilitates the sexual and financial liberation of women (Bates & Berg, 2014; Halland, 2010; Farley, 2006). While most participants argued that they are confined by social and economic factors, one participant emphasised the autonomy she is able to exert within the context of her work. Reframing sex work as choice, might facilitate efforts to challenge the stigma of sex work (Bates & Berg, 2014). However, it might also discount the harmful circumstances many FSWs are exposed to. It has been argued that sex work should be understood as legitimate work and that some women might choose to enter this profession, while simultaneously bearing in mind that choice might be restricted and determined by socio-economic and other factors (Vanwesenbeeck, 2001).

6.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

In this study I explored the discourses of gender and dimensions of social difference implicated in FSWs' justifications of and resistances to IPV, as well as the ways in which they had been implicated in FSWs' talk. Although gender politics remained central to the discussion, this

study found that dimensions of race and class influenced participants' experiences and understandings of IPV. For example, participants' understandings of IPV were influenced by perceptions that men of colour are naturally violent. Although racial and economic inequality, as a result of the legacy of apartheid, contributed to people of colour's exposure to harm and violence, participants did not mention these contextual factors in their talk.

Furthermore, participants have been placed in a position of inferiority as a result of their racial identity and involvement in sex work. The inferiority connected to FSWs of colour enabled their partners to justify bad treatment of them. Even though participants resisted negative constructions of sex workers, their race group membership remained largely unchallenged. This sense of inferiority might cause FSWs to feel responsible for their own victimisation, causing them to absolve their partners from blame. It seems that the legacy of apartheid has important consequences for the way FSWs position themselves and others.

Participants' experiences of IPV have been coloured by poverty and limited education. Due to these socio-economic constraints, participants blamed their partners for not performing a provider masculinity. As women with limited economic and educational opportunities at their disposal, access to the economy is gained mainly through men – stable partners and male clients. Furthermore, poverty was most frequently given as a reason for entering the profession (Halland, 2010). Questions about whether people 'choose' to enter the sex industry or haven been forced to enter it due to socio-economic factors were debated in this study, and might be further explored in future research. This will be discussed in the recommendations section.

This study attempted to broaden understandings of gender-based violence, and focused on how gender intersects with dimensions of race and class. It is clear that the women participating in

this study have been burdened by unequal power structures that go beyond a narrow focus on gender.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Potentially, advocacy organisations who work with FSWs could create spaces where FSWs could critically engage with and collectively challenge dominant discourses that affect their experiences of IPV. In these group interactions, FSWs' awareness could be raised to dimensions of race and class that influence their experiences of IPV. FSWs could be enabled to engage in reflexive dialogue (Rothman, 1996; Tomm, 1987) to explore the functions of the discourses they draw on and the institutions that inform their dominant ways of understanding (Parker, 1992). Implications of these discourses in terms of the subject positions that are afforded to them (Parker, 2002), might be explored in more depth. The aim of these group-based interactions could be to expose FSWs to a variety of interpretive frames (Nelson, Onwuegbuzie, Wines & Frels, 2013; Pennell & Ristock, 1999) and to raise their awareness to a systemic and contextual understanding of IPV. Studies have found these types of reflexive interactions to have therapeutic value and the potential for transformation (Freire, 1970; Nelson et al., 2013; Rothman, 1996).

This study only focused on street-based FSWs. It has been argued that the experiences of street-based FSWs are apt to differ from those working in contexts of greater economic resources. Future research may contribute to the feminist debate of viewing sex work either from a perspective of empowerment or constraint (Farley, 2006; Halland, 2010; Miller, 2002; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001), by comparing the experiences of street-based FSWs to those working in other contexts. Ideas around choice, agency and victimisation might be further explored in

this research. Future research may also focus on the stable partners of FSWs who have perpetrated IPV, to explore the discourses they draw on to justify violence in the context of their intimate relationships. This type of research might enable a better understanding of problematic discourses that underlie abusive heterosexual relationships.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STUDY ADVERTISEMENT

Violence in your intimate relationships?

Are you a female sex worker who experiences violence from your partner?
Would you like to share your story of intimate partner violence?
I am doing a study focusing on female sex workers' personal stories
of partner violence. If you would like to participate in this study,
I will interview you once on your experiences. During the interview
you are free to discuss whatever you are comfortable with. The information
you share will be treated respectfully. The interview is private and your
story will not be shared with anyone.

If you are interested, please call:
Elretha 079 826 0706

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The Subjective Experience of IPV among Female Sex Workers

1. **Invitation and Purpose**

You are invited to take part in this study which explores women's personal experiences of intimate partner violence. I am a research student from the Psychology Department at the University of Cape Town.

2. **Procedures**

- If you decide to take part in this study, I will interview you about your experiences of violence in your intimate relationships, asking you to share the story of your relationship. By interviewing you, I hope to find out what it is like to be in a violent relationship and talk about the impact that these experiences have had on your identity.
- The interview should take about 60 minutes; however, you are free to speak to me for a shorter or longer period.
- The interview will be recorded with a digital recorder.
- Participating in this study is voluntary. You are free to end the interview at any time with no negative consequences. If you decide not to participate in the study, it will not affect your relationship with SWEAT.

3. **Risks, Discomforts and Inconveniences**

- This study poses a low risk of harm to you.
- Speaking about your experiences of violence could bring up sensitive issues and could potentially be emotionally distressing. However, you will decide what you would like to discuss in the interview and you will not be obligated to speak about anything you do not feel comfortable speaking about.
- You might be inconvenienced by having to give up an hour of your time.
- If you would like to contact a counsellor to further discuss your experiences, you can contact one of the organisations: Rape Crisis (021 447 9762), Life Line (021 461 1113), Famsa (021 447 0174).

4. **Benefits**

This project gives you an opportunity to share your personal story of your experiences of violence, thus raising people's awareness to the issue of intimate partner violence among sex workers.

5. **Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Interviews will take place in a private room.
- Any information you share is strictly confidential. You will remain anonymous throughout the research process. You have the right to request that any information you have shared be removed from the study.

6. **Contact details**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, please contact:

- Elretha Bartlett (student researcher) on 079 826 0706.
- Dr Floretta Boonzaier (my supervisor) at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT) 021 650 3429.
- Rosalind Adams (admin assistant for the UCT Department of Psychology) 021 650 3417 and for access to the Ethics Committee Chair in Psychology.

7. **Signatures**

{Participant's name}_____ has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above, including any risks involved in its performance. She has been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability. A signed copy of this consent form will be made available to the participant.

_____
Investigator's signature
Date

I have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and discomforts. I agree to take part in this research. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time, and that doing so will not cause me any penalty or loss of benefits that I would otherwise be entitled to enjoy.

_____
Participant's signature
Date

Hereby, I give permission for the interview to be recorded.

_____
Participant's signature
Date

APPENDIX C: REFERRAL LIST

If you feel that you need counselling or support, a list of organisations for you to contact follows:

LIFE LINE
Services:
24-hour crisis intervention service – telephonic counselling for rape, trauma or relationship issues.
Payment
This is a toll-free helpline.
Contact:
National counselling line: 0861 322 322

STOP GENDER ABUSE
Services:
Crisis counselling for women who have been raped, or abused and advice and support for people wanting to help others.
Payment
This is a toll-free helpline.
Contact:
Helpline: 0800 150 150

THE TRAUMA CENTRE
Services:
Trauma counselling is available for domestic violence (mental, physical, emotional and sexual abuse), sexual offences (rape, forcible fondling, and pornography) and secondary traumatic stress.
Payment:
To be confirmed.
Contact:
Office line: 021 465 7373
Emergency line: 082 444 4191
Email: info@trauma.org.za
Address: Cowley House 126, Chapel Street,
Woodstock, Cape Town 7925

FAMSA
Services:
FAMSA works to build good family relationships through offering counselling to people in relationships which are in crises. Domestic violence is a common issue that they deal with.
Payment:
FAMSA charges for professional counselling using a sliding scale according to the level of income, but will never turn anybody away from counselling. There are also lay counselling and community workshops, which are free services.
Contact:
Telephone: 021 447 7951
Email: national@famsa.org.za
Address: 9 Bowden Road, Observatory, Cape Town
7925 Western Cape
South Africa

APPENDIX D: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
Tel: +27 (0)46 603 8500 • Fax: +27 (0)46 622 4032 • Website: http://www.rhodes.ac.za/academic/department/psychology

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

13 May 2015

Elretha Barlett
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Elretha

ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF PROJECT PSY2015/11

This letter confirms your research proposal with tracking number PSY2015/11 and title, '"You whore; you are so dirty bitch": The justification and resistance of violence in the intimate relationships of female sex workers', served at the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 13 May 2015. The project has been given ethics clearance.

Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jacqui Marx
CHAIRPERSON OF THE RPERC

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

I Italics indicate Afrikaans speech.

[ ] Brackets indicate speech that has been translated from Afrikaans into English; or additional words for clarification purposes.

_ Underlining indicates vocal emphasis made by the participant.

… Ellipsis points indicate that parts of the participant's original speech have been omitted from the quotation.

“ ” Quotation marks are used to indicate the participant's reference to the direct words of other people or their own direct words in conversations with other people.

gonna: The modified spelling of the word 'going to' indicates the variation in pronunciation spoken by participants.

wanna: The modified spelling of the word 'want to' indicates the variation in pronunciation spoken by participants.

'cos: The modified spelling of the word 'because' indicates the variation in pronunciation spoken by the participants.