DIVINE INTERVENTION? UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS BELIEF SYSTEMS IN INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR MEN WHO ABUSE THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS

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DECLARATION

I declare that Divine Interventions? Understanding the role of Christian religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: Elizabeth Petersen **Date:** 28 February 2021

Signed: 

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ABSTRACT

South Africans live in one of the most religious yet most violent societies the world over, with gender-based violence (GBV) against women in intimate relationships flagged as a national priority. Traditionally, and rightfully so, intervention programmes focused on women victim-survivors of intimate partner abuse (IPA). While intervention programmes for men who perpetrate IPA emerged more recently and signify an important paradigm shift in conceptualizing solutions to IPA, the literature reveals a gap in research about the role and influence of religiously pervasive contexts in communities where some of these programmes operate. South Africa claims to be a secular state; however, around 90% of its population are religious and close to 74% are affiliated with the Christian faith. Literature indicates that men who perpetrate IPA often use easily misinterpreted scriptures and religious teachings to justify their abusive behaviour. Whereas programmes may identify as secular and claim not to engage issues of faith, it is questionable whether programme designers and implementers can truly ignore their own religious beliefs whilst constructing and implementing programmes. The study explored how Christian beliefs about key signifiers of IPA, namely male supremacy and female submission, manifest and are addressed in three purposefully selected Cape Town-based intervention programmes for men who abuse women in intimate relationships. Drawing on Afrocentricity and African feminism, to frame the methodology and analyse the emergent data, this study established that while organizations claim to be secular, their origins were religiously based and that Christian religious beliefs permeated practices in intervention programmes. Programme designers and implementers were found to navigate complex religious-secular dichotomous organizational contexts in the quest to cultivate comprehensive life-sustaining transformation resources with the men in their programmes. Furthermore, their caution and reluctance to formally engage the faith dimensions of IPA was hardly possible because their own experiences of church and family life, together with their religious orientations and beliefs, explicitly and implicitly informed their perceptions of their male clients and the strategies and approaches that they employed in their theories of change. The study suggests that programme designers and implementers tended to embody an intrinsic religious-spiritual orientation in their practice, resembling Afrocentric values that resonated with Ubuntu feminism (an offshoot of African feminism). These qualities enabled them to uncover, confront, and challenge some male clients' extrinsic use of religion that threatens their dignity and, by implication, the women they are partnered with. The practice of Ubuntu feminist values through an Afrocentric worldview confronted the dehumanizing outcomes of white-supremacist patriarchal practices evident in some organizations where these intervention programmes emanated from. This study concludes that disregarding the Divine and its life-affirming quality in the humanity of men who abuse their intimate partners is not only implausible in African communities, but it also does a grave disservice to both victim-survivors and perpetrators.

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study explores how Christian beliefs about key signifiers of intimate partner abuse (IPA) manifest and are addressed in three Cape Town-based intervention programmes for men who abuse women in intimate relationships. While IPA also occurs in same-sex intimate relationships, this study solely investigated religious beliefs related to heterosexual intimate partner abuse. The key signifiers of IPA referred to in this study is male supremacy and female submission. Calls for the interrogation of the key signifiers of IPA (Boonzaier & Van Niekerk 2019; Pillay 2015; Nadar, 2012; Nadar & Potgieter, 2010), are met with a dearth in scholarly inquiry about the influence of Christian beliefs in models of change in intervention programmes for male perpetrators of IPA. One of the few South African studies available on this topic indicates that some men who abuse their intimate partners often draw on their religious beliefs and bring them into whatever interventions that may be embarked on (Partab 2012). Similarly, programme implementers also bring their beliefs – also known as their "theoretical orientation" – about the causes of IPA into the intervention programmes they work in, which in turn influences their approach to changing the behaviour of the men in their programmes (Rothman et al 2003:13). Research for this project indicates that the few existing intervention programmes are reluctant to formally engage the faith dimensions of IPA, or they are cautious about doing so. This ambivalence in practice and the gap in scholarship about the prevalence and influence of Christian beliefs in intervention programmes can have dire consequences for women who are afflicted by men who participate in these intervention programmes. Drawing from scholarship on the subject, this investigation presupposes the prevalence of religious beliefs in African contexts such as South Africa (Leatt 2017; Abbink 2014; Mbiti 1969). It therefore, argues that the religious beliefs of programme designers and implementers also play a role in the IPA theories, strategies and approaches used during intervention programme activities. The present inquiry offers critical insights into pervasive Christian beliefs present in intervention programmes and their influence in transforming asymmetrical power gender relations, which undergird IPA.

1.2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.2.1. Background and Context

Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA) is flagged as the most prevalent form of violence against women irrespective of country, culture, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Abrahams et al, 2006; Slater, 2013). Though not reliable because of underreporting, it is estimated that one in four women experience abuse at the hands of their male intimate partners in South Africa (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002); and that a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six hours (Mathews et al, 2004). Given that 90% of the South African population adhere to religious beliefs and practices (Leatt, 2017; WIN/Gallup international, 2015), it is imperative to explore the intersections between religion and IPA. As a social worker and practitioner in the IPA sector since the 1990s, I have observed that interventions that were in place did not pay attention to the influence of religion and faith dimensions of IPA. And whilst many women reported that their abusive male partners often blame the woman for being insubordinate and thus not complying with 'what the Bible says' or with 'what God requires', intervention programmes primarily addressed the legal aspects and safety concerns for women.

My experience in the IPA sector also revealed that intervention programme implementers felt conflicted about the lack of culturally informed IPA intervention strategies and programmes, especially in religiously pervasive communities where Christian beliefs, for example, play an important role in people's lives. Many colleagues often lamented that help-seekers often bring their religious beliefs and faith into counselling and intervention programmes, yet they often feel that their training and organizations forbid them from engaging in matters of faith. Chidester (2012:24) argues that "…religion refers to ways of being human, to the symbolic resources and strategies deployed in negotiating a human identity…" so too, about IPA, I contend that the centrality of religion and spirituality in human identity and lived experience, requires that it be taken seriously in exploring roots and cures of IPA.

1.2.2. Rationale for the study

The study is based on the premise that the South African context may be described as "religiously pervasive" (Leatt, 2017:67), and those Christian beliefs (in particular) inescapably influence the language, expressions, metaphors and practices that people use to express themselves and their

beliefs about various aspects of their lives, including their intimate and public relationships (Schoeman, 2017; Lugo & Cooperman, 2010). Mbiti has pointed out that for Africans religion permeates every aspect of life and that "there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life." (1969:2). Abbink (2014:99) also points to the prevalence of religion and religious culture as lived experiences, "embodied practices" and "behavioural routines" in African societies. Based on these observations, my study seeks to understand how programme designers' and programme implementers' values/ beliefs (albeit 'forbidden' by the programmes, and not necessarily explicitly articulated) mediate in the process of interventions with male perpetrators of IPA.

This study concurs with scholars who assert, "the world's religions contain some easily diagnosed – and some not so easily diagnosed – inducements to violence against women" and that "…religion is uniquely powerful and not to address it when it is at the core of a problem is analytically and sociologically naïve" (Maguire & Shaikh, 2007:1). Particularly powerful, is the religiously infused idea of male supremacy and female submission, which feminist scholars such as Dobash & Dobash (1979), Nadar (2009), Pillay (2013) highlight as key signifiers of IPA and the foundation of patriarchy, which is at the root of IPA. De la Harpe and Boonzaaier (2011) revealed that women afflicted by IPA called for further research on the effectiveness of intervention programmes for male perpetrators. This echoes the World Health Organization's (2001) call for research into programmes that could be effective in dealing with male perpetrators of IPA.

Extensive research has been conducted and continues to be conducted on the rapidly growing intervention programmes field in the USA, Australia, Europe (Heward-Belle 2016; Ferraro 2017; Gondolf, Bennett & Mankowski 2018), and recently on the handful of programmes in South Africa (Londt 2004; Padayachee 2011; Partab 2012; Maphosa 2015; Boonzaier & Van Niekerk 2018). While the need for cultural competence in intervention programmes are advocated (Williams 1999, Aldarondo & Mederos 2002, Emezue et al 2019), little is known about the influence of religious beliefs in secular intervention programmes based in South Africa. By exploring how Christian belief systems influence and shape intervention programmes' theories, strategies, and approaches in dealing with (or ignoring) the key signifiers of IPA, the study contributes to current scholarly knowledge about IPA interventions in general and more

specifically to African knowledge about the phenomenon. More specifically, this study contributes to new knowledge about intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

From a trans-disciplinary view, this study adds value to the various disciplines that continue to research the phenomenon of IPA. It provides critical information in the ongoing quest for more culturally informed IPA intervention strategies (Williams & Becker, 1994, Ezemue et al, 2019;). Based on my lived experience as a black South African woman (coloured according to the Apartheid classifications), and as an IPA counsellor and intervention programme implementer for more than twenty years, I am mindful that, although South Africans live in a constitutional democracy and many (if not all) of these programmes identify as non-religious, programme users often use biblical metaphors, religious language and/or texts to express themselves and their standpoints. Whilst programme designers and implementers may not have been trained to identify and address the faith dimensions of IPA, they do have faith perspectives or beliefs that accompany them during interventions. This study was interested in exploring what the Christian beliefs are that are present in intervention programmes, and what their role is in deterring or entrenching the key signifiers of IPA, namely male supremacy and female submission, and why Christian beliefs influence programme interventions in the ways that it does.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Agbiji and Swart (2015), religion, culture and violence inevitably intersect in many African societies. Although religious beliefs play a key role in the establishment of some IPA intervention programmes for women (Johnson, 2015; Slaght & Hamilton, 2005:58), research focusing on the role of religion in the few intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in South Africa is scant. In South Africa it is reported that 85.7% of its population claimed affiliation to the Christian faith (StatisticsSA, 2015:33); and that men's violence against women in intimate relationships is on the increase and results in fatality (Mathews et al 2004); yet little is known about the influence of Christian beliefs in intervention programmes for male perpetrators of IPA. Intervention programmes for male perpetrators of IPA, even if not explicitly Christian, may nevertheless exhibit Christian beliefs in their content and implementation. Where such religious beliefs are present, they may either be potentially harmful, albeit unintentionally, or be a resource for cultivating sustained positive transformation in the lives of the men in these programmes.

Whilst many South African feminist scholars, practitioners and activists criticize the patriarchy present in Christian beliefs and its role in men's violence against women (VAW), there is a need also to interrogate the faith dimensions of the programmes, not just of the perpetrations. Ignorance about the influence of prevalent Christian beliefs about gender power relations in a religiously pervasive post-apartheid secular South African context, can entrench IPA. A case in point is the report that magistrates' personal religious views and beliefs about "tearing families apart" prevented them from granting protection orders (Special Rapporteur on VAW, its causes and consequences in South Africa, 14 June 2016). On the other hand, liberation theologians claim that Christian beliefs can also hold liberating potential (as is evident from their role in the struggle against apartheid), specifically for gender relations in the case of intervention programmes. This study explores how Christian beliefs manifest in intervention programmes, and to what extent they maintain, interrupt, or deter key signifiers of IPA.

1.4. RESEARCH AIMS AND CENTRAL QUESTIONS

The main aim of the investigation is to understand how Christian beliefs about gender power-relations deter or entrench key signifiers of intimate partner abuse (IPA) in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

Sub-questions:

1. What Christian beliefs are present in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for perpetrators of IPA?

2. How do Christian beliefs about gender power relations shape the construction and implementation of intervention programmes?

3. Why do Christian beliefs about gender relations shape the intervention programmes in the ways they do?

Objectives:

1. To identify Christian beliefs, present in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for perpetrators of IPA.
2. To establish how Christian beliefs about gender power relations shape the construction and implementation of intervention programmes.

3. To understand why Christian beliefs about gender relations shape the intervention programmes in the ways they do.

1.5. CENTRAL RESEARCH CONCEPTS

1.5.1. Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA)

Most definitions of intimate partner abuse identify the "abuse of power, the domination, coercion, intimidation and victimization of one person by another through physical, sexual or emotional means within an intimate relationship" (Londt & Roman, 2014:550). In this study, the abuse categorized as "intimate" describes the character of the relationship between the abuser and the victim-survivor, or the nature of the act, as suggested by West (1999:4). The term IPA as used in this study encompasses the multiple forms of abuse as described in the South African Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998) (DVA), as well as the use of religious and cultural justification for such abuse. Scholarly research and practitioners have characterized IPA as a recurrent pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, or the credible threat of force used to ridicule, induce fear, dominate, humiliate, gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner (Edleson & Williams, 2007; Murphy, 2007; Stark, 2007; Londt, 2004, Pence & Paymar, 1993).

1.5.2. Key signifiers of IPA: male supremacy and female submission

The key signifiers of IPA that the study seeks to address are male supremacy and female submission. Research confirms that IPA of wives is directly linked to "the abuse of power" and it is "much more common in homes where power is concentrated in the hands of the husband" and least likely to occur in democratic homes (Alsdurf & Alsdurf, 1989:93). Nadar (2009:22) asserts that "Male headship and the submission of women to men in most religions and cultures are directly linked to gender violence and, more alarmingly, to women's decisions to stay in abusive partnerships." Biblical beliefs endorsing female submission were identified, as a key reason that wives in abusive relationships felt that they had to stay with their abusive husbands (Phiri, 2000). More recently, a Cape Town-based study confirmed that notions of female subjugation evident in IPA is foregrounded by beliefs and practices that represent men as protectors and dominators of women and their families (Van Niekerk & Boonzaaier, 2015). It is further argued that female subjugation profoundly restricts women's potential (Mahomva, Bredenkamp & Schoeman, 2020). Similarly, I contend that female submission and male

supremacy dehumanizes women and men. Maluleke (2009) maintains that male supremacy, rooted in patriarchy, is more than just an attitude. Patriarchy is "...a comprehensive, systematic ideology; a thoroughgoing theology which is at once physical and spiritual structural and personal, individualist and communal; human and extra-human." (Maluleke, 2009:31). It is the sanctification of the key signifiers of IPA (Pillay, 2013) in Christian pervasive contexts such as South Africa that demands that religious belief systems, not only of help-seekers but also intervention programmes, be interrogated for possible roots or cures.

1.5.3. Lived Christian beliefs and Secular Intervention Programmes

Religion plays a very important role in shaping perceptions and informing behaviour (Walker 1979). Christian beliefs regarding gender power relations have direct implications on the nature of human flourishing and thriving or not, in intimate relationships. Links between women victim-surviving help seekers as well as male perpetrators in intervention programmes and their Christian beliefs in the context of intimate partner abuse is prevalent in scholarship (Fortune 1991; Phiri 2002; Rasool et al 2002; Partab 2012). The term "victim-survivor", inspired by Traci West's book, Wounds of the Spirit, is used in this inquiry to acknowledge and "rhetorically remind us of the dual status of women who have been both victimized by violent assault and survived it." (West, 1999:5). While intervention programmes in this study claim secularity, the Christian pervasive context within which it seeks to bring about change in the men, provide an important gateway into the influence of Christian beliefs (albeit subtle) in their models of change pertaining to the key signifiers of IPA. In agreement with assertions of scholars like Mbiti (1969) and Selvam (2012, 2013) that religion permeates all aspects of life in African society, and that Christianity in some way influence many people's moral vision and convictions (Lafolette 2007), I contend that Christianity does have some influence in the shaping of their perceptions and practices of programme designers and implementers even though they may not explicitly identify as Christian. Of interest to me are how embedded Christian beliefs influence intervention programmes' perceptions and practices about the key signifiers of IPA when they intervene with the men in their programmes. Insights about the influence of these Christian beliefs about male supremacy and female submission in these programmes provide important insights into their contribution to reinforcing or deterring patriarchy in IPA.

1.6. THEORIES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FRAMING THE STUDY

1.6.1. Theoretical Framing of Study

Afrocentricity and African Feminism provided the theoretical framework for this study. Afrocentricity has become a growing and persistent influence in the social sciences in providing an alternative perspective to Eurocentric ideology on the study of Africans and African phenomena (Chiwane, 2016). Afrocentricity (1998) provides a specific framework that places African people in the centre and prioritizes their location, their context, and their history. Afrocentricity rejects all forms of oppression including IPA that dehumanizes women and men. Furthermore, it regards the notion of Ubuntu as a spiritual concept that remains the most authoritative philosophy of modern times (Asante, 2019) that guides the quest of becoming fully human in and through the multiple relationships that a person has with others. Afrocentricity "does not call for the replacement but correction of existing Eurocentric perspectives that seek to exclude or downplay the contributions made by Africans in the development of the world." (Chawane, 2016:99). This is particularly useful in the context of this study since some of the IPA intervention programmes have been strongly influenced and based on Eurocentric models. This study focused on the specific contributions South African based intervention programmes are making to the body of knowledge about the influence of Christian beliefs in these programmes. Afrocentricity advances mutual respect for everyone's culture (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2014). Afrocentricity (1998) proposes that black researchers such as me, study African phenomena from an African perspective. Such studies contribute to the growing African-centred production of knowledge as it relates to the study of African phenomena such as the influence of Christian beliefs in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. It advances an African perspective on human experience and allows for the study and criticism of Africans by Africans.

African feminism takes seriously African people's perspectives and agency as it relates to the multi-layered complex phenomena such as IPA as experienced in religiously pervasive contexts such as South Africa. African feminist research advances the importance for Africans (and more specifically African women) "to theorize from their cultures and lived experiences to produce knowledge that is contextually relevant…" (Chilisa & Ntseane 2010:619). In this regard, the influence of Christian beliefs about gender power relations as studied within the context of intervention programmes in South Africa contributes to the quest of growing the persistent

influence of Afrocentric knowledge production in the social sciences, as advanced by scholars including Chawane (2016).

1.6.2. Methodological Framing of Study

A qualitative case study methodology was most suited because of the study's deliberate focus on exploring the influence of Christian contextual conditions in intervention programmes strategies and approaches to addressing the key signifiers of IPA in their male clients. The qualitative case study strategy is the most appropriate methodology because my study seeks to "explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies" (Yin. 2017:15) and "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2017:13). From the small population of known intervention programmes that exist, the sample of three Cape Town-based intervention programmes was purposively chosen because of their suitability and willingness to participate in the study. The main data production methods employed are participant observation, informal semi-structured interviews, and organization documents.

1.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the study. It described the background, rationale for and context of the study. I then presented and discussed the research problem, central research questions and aims of the study. Thereafter the central research concepts were presented and discussed namely, intervention programmes, the key signifiers of intimate partner abuse and the notions of religion and Christian beliefs. Finally, a brief overview of the theories that frame the study and the research methodology was introduced. I will now present relevant literature about the history and evolution of intervention programmes, the theories that informed its methodologies and how it's been studied. I will also focus on the role and influence of religion and Christianity in the study of intervention programmes.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

A large and growing body of literature has investigated intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners (hereafter referred to as intervention programmes).

This chapter discusses five broad aspects relating to the literature that was reviewed for this investigation. First, it provides an overview of the history/context of the study of religious beliefs in intervention programmes for male perpetrators of IPA. Secondly, it reviews the theoretical lenses through which such programmes have been studied and the conceptual explanations that have been offered regarding the role of religion in these intervention programmes. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the methodologies which have been used to study these programmes. Fourth, the chapter focuses on how this study addresses the gaps in the literature. The fifth and last section of this chapter reviews the themes including Religion and Christian Religious beliefs in SA, the role of Christian beliefs in Patriarchy and Masculinities studies and studies on gender power relations. Although important studies in this area have been done in the US, in Europe and elsewhere, our review of the existing scholarship will focus on South Africa.

2.2. INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES FOR MEN WHO ABUSE INTIMATE PARTNERS

2.2.1. Intervention Programmes: Its features and its purpose

In recent decades various models of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners, have been developed to stop IPA (Nason-Clark & Fisher Townsend, 2015; McGinn et al, 2017). Nason-Clark & Fisher Townsend posit that intervention programmes have become one aspect of a broader intervention process that seeks to confront men who use "power to coerce, control and engender fear in their female intimate partners" (2015:9). Nason-Clark & Fisher Townsend describe the purpose of intervention programmes as focusing on "ending the violence" and moving men "to the point of feeling empathy for the victims and accepting responsibility, in addition to becoming accountable, for their thoughts and actions" (2015:9). Such interventions may include individual, couples and group counselling and may focus on criminal justice risk factors while others have a mediation focus (Renzetti & Edleson, 2008; Maphosa & Rasool,

2017; McLaren, 2002.). Intervention Programmes usually consists of educational classes and group treatment with the aim of victim safety and perpetrator accountability (Bennett & Williams, 2001; Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017; Ferraro, 2017).

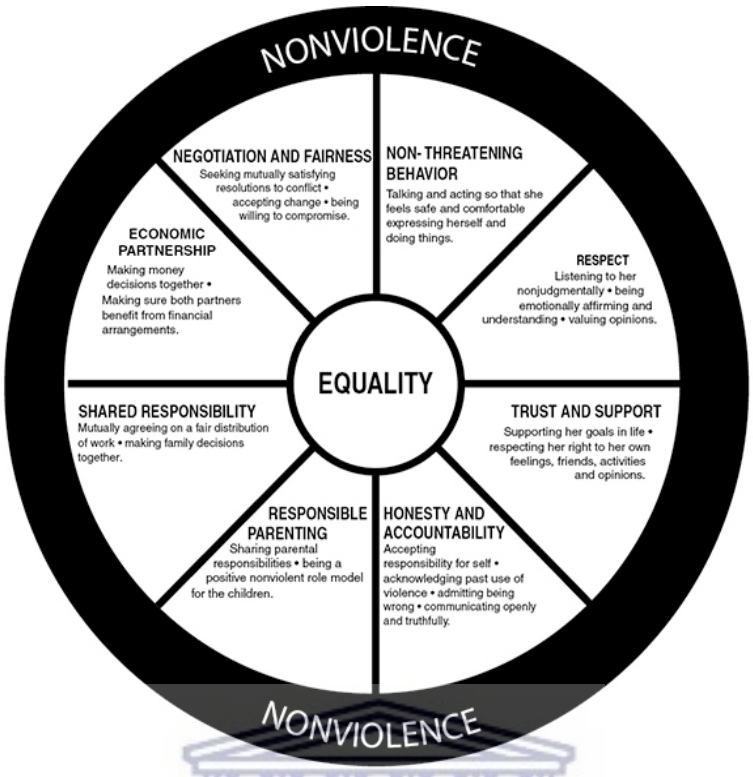
South African intervention programmes have mainly been informed by North American and 'western' contexts (Boonzaaier & Van Niekerk, 2016 & 2018). These programmes focus on personal change in the man and "employ individual and/or group intervention models incorporating educational and cognitive behavioural approaches" (Boonzaaier & Van Niekerk, 2018:3) as informed by the world-renowned Duluth Model (Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2016). Some South African programmes incorporate the Duluth Model as well as Restorative Justice models (Maphosa, 2015) in their interventions with men who abuse their intimate partners. We will now briefly discuss the main features of the Duluth and the Restorative Justice models.

2.2.1.1.The Duluth Model

Informed by feminist and sociological frameworks, the Duluth model based in Duluth Minnesota, USA has become a central feature in literature for its power-control philosophy in working with men who abuse their female intimate partners and its pre-eminence internationally (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Paymar & Barnes, 2007). Pence & Paymar (2011) posit that the Duluth Model is founded on the feminist tenet that a patriarchal society confers the privilege to men that are based on the belief that men are entitled to exert power and control over a woman to maintain that privilege. The Duluth model is developed on an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which on a macro level focuses on social factors, patriarchal cultural norms, and how they influence abusive men's behaviour at the family and individual levels. The curriculum *Creating a Process of Change for Men Who Batter* which was developed by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) introduced the Power and Control wheel (see Figure 1.1.). This wheel points out the behaviours that men use to enforce their privilege in society concerning the unequal, subservient position that they believe women should maintain which results in controlling and abusive relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The Equality Wheel (Figure 1.2.) of the Duluth Model curriculum forms the basis for egalitarian relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993). A central assumption in the curriculum states that "men are cultural beings who can change the way they use violence in relationships because beliefs about male dominance and the use of violence to control are cultural, not innate. Facilitators engage men who batter in a dialogue about their beliefs. Through curriculum exercises, group participants are immersed in

critical thinking and self-reflection." (Paymar & Barnes, 2007:15). Whilst IPA also affects same-sex unions and marriages the world over including South Africa, the Duluth Model in its original form inherently addresses heterosexual IPA which is evident in he/she pronouns in the power and control wheels (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Figure 1.1 (Pence & Paymar 1993:3)



Source: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, ©2011 Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, 202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802.

Figure 1.2 (Pence & Paymar , 1993:8)

While the Duluth Model has influenced the field of intervention programmes for men who abuse their partners significantly, it has been criticized and "pejoratively referred to as the 'one size fits all' approach" (Ferraro, 2017:1). Critics also argue that the Duluth model's confrontational approach must be replaced and adapted to the diverse needs of men in these programmes (Ferraro, 2017).

The intervention programme field has produced a great variety in terms of "theoretical orientation, duration of program, number and structure of sessions, counsellors' training experiences, sponsoring agencies or agencies, referral sources, and sources of funding" among the intervention programmes (Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002:3-8). I will now reflect on some of the main theoretical orientations of intervention programmes and related debates.

2.3. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Intervention programme designers and implementers' theoretical framings of IPA are directly associated with the beliefs that they hold about what causes IPA, and these beliefs "heavily influence[s] how they approach changing the behaviours of abusers" (Rothman et al, 2003:11).

2.3.1. Theories informing intervention programmes globally

The four main theories that inform the type of intervention programmes described in the literature are categorized as pro-feminist approach, psycho-dynamic approach, cognitive-behavioural approach (Scourfield & Dobash, 1999; Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002; Ferraro, 2017) and cultural approaches (Williams and Becker, 1994; Hand, Hankes & House, 2012; Emezue et al., 2019). Many intervention programmes prefer a combination of different theoretical models and as such these classifications are not rigid nor exhaustive (Ferraro, 2017).

Different theories have been used to describe the phenomenon of domestic violence, including social learning, the cycle of violence, patriarchy, and feminist theory. Pro-feminist programmes employ a psycho-educational approach "to raise awareness about how men use various tactics of power and control in their intimate relationships." (Scourfield & Dobash, 1999:136). Proponents of the psychodynamic approach believe that the source of the man's violence is his distressed childhood, and call for a "psychotherapeutic intervention, sometimes informed by the work of Sigmund Freud." (Scourfield & Dobash, 1999:136). Proponents of the Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) approach argue that the man's violent/abusive behaviour is directly linked to and preceded by his thoughts and beliefs (Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017). Cognitive-behavioural therapy helps men identify distorted beliefs and thoughts "which in turn will change emotions and therefore behaviour" (Scourfield & Dobash, 1999:136).

Contemporary programmes follow a combination of "elements of traditional psychological treatment with discussions of negative thought patterns, gender and power." (Ferraro, 2017:3). Some programmes focus more on rehabilitation while others focus on accountability (Gondolf, 2012, 2007, 2004).

2.3.2. Theories informing South African Intervention Programmes

The two causal theories that have heavily influenced IPA research in South Africa, are social learning theory which is the idea that violence may be learned and repeated by children who are witnessing it in their families of origin (Londt, 2004:87), and feminist theory which is "the idea that male dominance in society affects interpersonal relationships" (Rothman et al., 2003:13). South African scholars, Boonzaier & Van Niekerk (2018) have highlighted concerns that South African intervention programmes that seem to have adopted a radical feminist approach are largely void of the socio-political context because they "rely heavily on a one-dimensional feminist approach." (Boonzaier & Van Niekerk, 2018:3).

Despite the challenges and barriers, South Africa was one of the first countries outside of the USA in the 1990s "to develop marital violence treatment programs within a marriage and counselling model of intervention known as Families South Africa (FAMSA)" posit McCloskey et al (2016:293).

A persistent concern raised by some South African scholars relates to the lack of cultural appropriateness of South African intervention programmes that have largely been "imported from Euro-American contexts" (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2018:1). They recommend an intersectional approach to understand marginalized men's violence against women in post-apartheid South Africa. Boonzaier & van Niekerk (2018:1) believe that the 'gendered power' paradigm is ineffective "particularly for marginalized men who have little stake in the 'patriarchal dividend'". South African scholars have pointed to the complexities of the distinct 'gendered and racialized particularities' created by the long history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa that informs men's violence against women (Boonzaier & Van Niekerk, 2018:3). Deeply engrained in the colonial and apartheid legacy are the role and influence of Christianity and how it has contributed to entrenched racial and gender identities.

Research has shown that while domestic violence / IPA seems to exist on a continuum (Daly 2002) the dynamics of power and control "occur in increasing presence and complexity as one moves along the continuum." (Hargovan, 2010:37). While cautious, Hargovan recommends that "depending on the type and frequency of abuse, it is recommended that restorative processes, together with appropriate sanctions (perpetrator programmes, community service), be negotiated in cases of domestic violence." (2010:37). While it is argued that the pro-feminist Duluth Model

have elements of restorative justice such as it being centred on victim safety and that many of its interventions often result in being restorative, it discourages restorative justice as a response to IPA because of the risks it places on women in abusive relationships (Paymar & Barnes, 2007).

Evidently, from the above discussion, the field of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners is expanding. The debate about the effectiveness and success of intervention programmes including contestations about IPA causal theories and intervention approaches are indicative of the complex nature of IPA. The effectiveness of intervention programmes is usually based on the "complete and permanent cessation of violence used by the perpetrator" (Debonaire, 2013:1). Debonaire (2013) argues for a wider more nuanced concept of intervention programme success/effectiveness such as "improved rate of victim safety due to improved risk assessment and safety management, or improved parenting by former perpetrators" (2013:1). Little is known from literature about how Christian religious belief systems operative (albeit hidden) in "secular" South African-based intervention programmes might influence the perceptions about the men and the programme approaches in transforming their male clients.

2.4. THE STUDY OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Despite various innovations since the first intervention programmes were established in the 1970s and its subsequent proliferation, studies about its effectiveness remain inconclusive and controversial with only minimal IPA reduction (Maphosa, 2015; Babcock et al., 2004; McCloskey et al., 2016; Boonzaier & Van Niekerk, 2018; Emezue et al., 2019). Most international studies focus on the efficacy of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Aldarondo & Mederos, 2002; Babcock et al., 2004; Maxwell et al., 2010; Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017; Nicholas, Ovenden & Vlais 2020).

Potter-Efron (2015) summarizes that curriculum-based primary prevention programs aimed at teenage dating appear to be modestly effective in lessening future acts of domestic violence, Cognitive-behavioural therapy has been relatively well documented to diminish IPA and advance improved emotional functioning, Readiness to change and motivation-enhancing programs receive tentative support. While no single therapeutic modality has emerged as definitively superior to others, including the Power and Control model, "it is equally inaccurate to state that the Power and Control model is less effective than other programs" (Potter-Efron, 2015:105).

The Duluth power and control model is used as a central intervention tool in the few South African intervention programmes.

Scant literature about the study of religious belief systems and their role in intervention programmes are available. The section below confines itself to debates in the literature on the study of South African intervention programmes with a particular interest in the study about the role and influence of religion in these programmes.

2.4.1. Studies on Intervention Programmes in South Africa

There is a steady growth in research on the few South African intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners (Boonzaier & Niekerk, 2018; Maphosa, 2015; Partab, 2012; Padayachee, 2011; Londt, 2004). Most of these studies have been conducted within a multi-disciplinary framework of psychology, clinical social work, mental-health and criminal justice disciplines. Boonzaier and her colleagues have conducted numerous studies in differing contexts employing intersectional perspectives. However, there is negligible focus on the intersectionality of culture and religion. Drawing on qualitative interviews with counsellors Boonzaier & Gordon (2015) demonstrated how "the intervention context as a social encounter" where social identifications such as age, gender, race, and class intersect in ways that implicate both perpetrators and counsellors. Partab's (2012) study also pointed to the disconnect between the South African criminal justice system as it relates to the religious underpinnings in the ways that the men in her study narrated interpretations of their abusive behaviour towards their partners. Apart from drawing attention to shifting the lens from measuring the effectiveness of programmes to "the complex issue of the identifications of men who are mandated to attend" intervention programmes, Boonzaier & Gordon (2015:4) attest to another critical and complicated factor namely "the location and identifications of those who are tasked with delivering the intervention programmes". Here the study draws attention to religious orientations and their related dynamics about the beliefs about the key signifiers of IPA that intervention programme designers and implementers bring to these programmes; and the ways that it informs their strategies to transform the men.

A few studies focused on the religious orientation of men who abuse their intimate partners who access intervention programmes (Partab, 2012; Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2015). Whilst many programmes abroad and in South Africa aim at transforming the perpetrators' abusive

behaviour, there is a need to know more about the role and influence of pervasive Christian beliefs, which are embedded in communities where these programmes exist. Partab's (2012) critical feminist explorative study on challenging violent masculinities, focused on the intersections of religion and domestic violence in the narratives of male research participants. Partab (2012) confirmed that notions of male headship embedded in religious and cultural belief systems were internalized by the men who participated in her study. While Partab's study focused on the men, this study focuses on the intervention programmes and the influence of Christian religious belief systems in their intervention strategies. Although the greater focus has been on researching the development of more comprehensive and coordinated responses to domestic violence (Maphosa, 2015; Londt, 2004; Padayachee, 2011), few studies concentrate on the impact of Christian religiously pervasive contexts within which some of these programmes operate and how programme implementers' strategies and approaches informed by such beliefs address the key signifiers of IPA.

In addition, little is known about how programme implementers' constructions of gender, masculinities, and gender-power relations embedded in Christian religious beliefs, are addressed in practice. Some scholars have raised concerns about South African intervention programmes that have largely "been imported from Euro-American contexts" (Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2018:1). This concern about Eurocentric influences in African society is also raised in the emerging field of the study of religion and masculinities where "the methods and approaches adopted in the study of religion in Africa has largely been derived from 'outside'" (Chitando, 2013:133). Regarding the fact that Africa is a continent that has waged liberation struggles, Chitando poses the question believed to be relevant for researchers and practitioners in the field of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners too. "How can African scholars be subservient to the theories and methods of their erstwhile colonizers?" (Chitando, 2013:133) and makes the point that since the study of religion and masculinities is an emerging field, it "provides a valuable opportunity for scholars to be creative and illustrate the possibility of doing religious studies with an African flavour". Scholars in the study of intervention programmes are concerned about the incompatibility of Northern American models to treat IPA in sub-Saharan Africa not only because of the differing contexts but also due to the "lack of legal and criminal infrastructure to enforce" IPA laws (McCloskey et al., 2016:292). In line with discourses about the multi-layered complex nature of IPA in the South African context, some suggest that coordinated multi-agency and/or coordinated community-based responses to IPA

interventions should be adopted. There have been some evaluations of community-based prevention or intervention programmes.

A study by Padayachee (2011) using qualitative designs on a sample of 18 participants from 5 courts and 2 intervention programmes for men namely Families South Africa (FAMSA) and National Society for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) in the Western Cape, South Africa revealed several prospects and challenges threatening current collaborative efforts underway in court-mandated programs. Her study points out that courts play a fundamental role in victim safety and in legal measures to hold perpetrators accountable. However, courts are unable to address the psycho-social interventions required, thus motivating the need for partnership between courts and agencies working with victims and perpetrators. Intervention programmes focus on ending abusive patterns of behaviour, safeguarding victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. Padayachee's (2011) study succeeded in underscoring that coordination between criminal justice practitioners and other participating agencies can advance efforts to manage IPA intervention and prevention. Key findings (relevant to my research) from Padayachee's (2011) study show that South African legal interventions with IPA perpetrators are more likely to punish as opposed to rehabilitating, yet punitive measures (e.g. arrests, prosecution, conviction and sentencing) and the use of protection orders are by themselves insufficient for protecting victims-survivors of IPA. The dynamics of IPA, stemming from the complexities of human relationships, require that legal interventions be complimented with psycho-social interventions and religiously informed gender underpinnings of the problem and potential cures. It is also argued that the complex nature of working with men who abuse their intimate partners requires a recognition of the intervention activity's "unconscious dynamics and how the broader social context as well as the subjectivities of both counsellors and clients are implicated in the work" (Boonzaier & Gordon, 2015:16). Consistent with an intersectional approach, these scholars argue "that the subjectivities of client and counsellor need to be written into the work with men and violence against women" (Boonzaier & Gordon, 2015:16).

As in the case with the counsellors in Boonzaier & Gordon's study, attention is drawn to the complex intersections between Christian religious pervasive social context and implementers' personal Christian religious beliefs as conscious or unconscious dynamics, and how these dynamics inform the programme implementers' strategies and approaches to addressing the key signifiers of IPA. Although programmes are identified as "secular" attention must be drawn to

how programme implementers associate or disassociate with their personal perspectives about Christian religious beliefs and their embeddedness in addressing the key signifiers of IPA. The programme implementers' strategies and approaches towards changing the men in their programmes provide important insights about the role and influence of Christian religious beliefs as potentially re-inscribing or deterring notions of male supremacy/headship and female submission.

According to international research promising practice treatment interventions with men who abuse their intimate partners are based on psycho-educational and cognitive behavioural principles and provided in community-based settings (Padayachee, 2011). In this continued quest for finding lasting cures for IPA, I concur with scholarship that emphasizes the importance of investigating the role and influence of religion and spirituality for roots and cures (Maguire & Shaikh, 2007). More specifically, I concur with scholars such as Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend (2015) who point to the importance of understanding lived religion within the context of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

2.5.THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Literature about the study of religious beliefs in "secular" intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in South Africa is scant. While intervention programmes – embedded in a Christian religiously pervasive South African context may identify as secular, of interest is how programme designers' and implementers' religiousness or religiosity influence their models of change as they work to address men's violence against women. Hogg, Adelman & Blagg characterize religiosity "as the extent to which a person identifies with a religion, subscribes to its ideology or worldview, and conforms to its normative practices." (2010:72).

What follows are two studies of intervention programmes that were conducted in faith-based contexts. While the focus of this study is on IPA, and not substance abuse intervention programmes, studies about the influence of faith in the latter can provide helpful insights in our exploration of the former. I will therefore briefly present recent literature about the role of religion and spirituality in the context of substance abuse intervention programmes. Finally, I will present developing debates about engaging religion and spirituality in IPA interventions.

2.5.1. Faith-based Intervention Programmes

- **A Church initiated programme - The Men's Group' (TMG)**

A recent study by Davis, Jonson-Reid, Dahm, Fernandez, Stoop & Sabri (2020:1) has found that more than 100 non-court mandated Latino men have sought help for having abused their intimate partners from "'The Men's Group' (TMG) at St. Pius V parish in Chicago, IL (US) and remained engaged for extended periods" with promising results. These scholars have found that TMG was spiritually based and culturally sensitive. The three main reasons for remaining in the TMG were cited as men feeling respected by the facilitators, men experiencing TMG as a "family", and gaining benefits from the experience. The study offered several considerations for working with immigrant men who perpetrate IPA (Davis et al, 2020:16). While their study did not examine how the voluntary spirituality-based intervention programme addressed the key signifiers of IPA, it pointed to some of the elements that appeared to enrol and retain men in treatment. It also pointed to achieving goals of peaceful living in the men.

- **A Non-government faith-based initiated programme - STOP**

Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend (2015) conducted one of the few studies about religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners on a faith-based, state-certified intervention programme called STOP. Nason-Clark, Murphy & Fisher-Townsend (2003) found that contrary to men enrolled in secular programmes, men who sought help from a faith-based agency appeared to be more stable as they reported being married, older, having higher education and employed, yet they were as likely as their counterparts in secular programmes to abuse alcohol or drugs.

Nason-Clark & Townsend observed that during the five years of collecting data at two different intervals each year, they observed many groups and an even larger number of interactions between staff and clients. They were struck with "how consistent the delivery of service was, how well the men and the staff members treated one another, and yet how often men were called to account for themselves or how often they chose to call out one another" (Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2015:143).

The study by Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend (2015) provides important insights into how STOP as a faith-based programme works. Their study, however, did not show the ways in which STOP's Christian religious orientation engages notions of male supremacy and female submission.

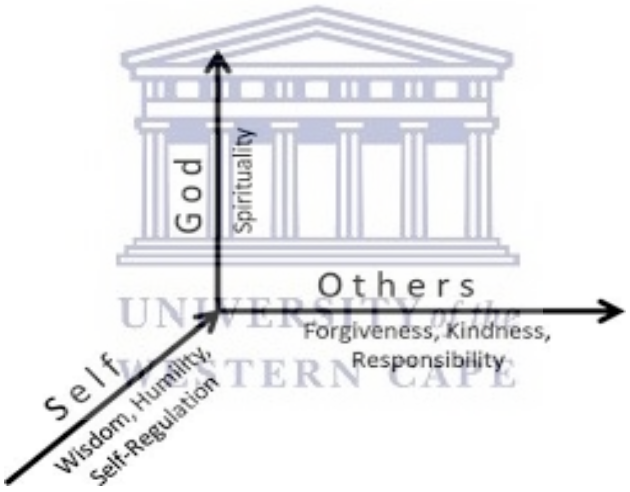
2.5.2. Studies on the role of faith in Substance Abuse Treatment/Intervention Programmes

The role and influence of religion and spirituality have received particular attention in the study of addiction treatment programmes. Grim & Grim (2019:1713) has found that a spirituality-based element which included a "reliance on God or a Higher Power" was present in 73% of substance abuse treatment programmes and played a significant role in helping help seekers stay sober. These scholars report that even negative experiences with religion have been cited as a causative factor to substance abuse, "more than 84% of scientific studies show that faith is a positive factor in addiction prevention and recovery and a risk in less than 2% of studies reviewed." Grim & Grim (2019:1713). These scholars agree with others who have raised concerns about disregarding the role of religion in people's lives which have dire health consequences including addictions and mental health problems (Grim & Grim, 2019; Koenig, Koenig, King & Carson, 2012).

According to Grim & Grim (2019), the benefits of faith to people's health has been evident in monotheistic and nontheistic religious contexts and a study by Hodge (2011) has found that 84% of clients in addiction treatment programmes expressed a desire for greater focus on spirituality. Ammerman adds that "research into spirituality and health in various disciplines including psychology, sociology, behavioural medicine, and social epidemiology" are confirming the links between the role of patients' spiritual beliefs and how spirituality impacts health outcomes (2013:338). Koenig, Koenig, King & Carson (2012) report that 86% of the 278 quantitative studies about the relationship between religion and alcohol abuse found that faith risks are associated with alcohol use, its abuse, and its dependency. Among the several publications and books by Koenig and colleagues, the Handbook of Religion and Health that was published by Koenig, McCullough and Larson (2001) in which 1200 research studies and 400 reviews were covered found that results were overwhelmingly pointing to the benefits of religious belief and practice and that it far outweighs the risk. Among the various benefits recorded reference is made

to the correlation between religious belief and practice, and greater stability and satisfaction in marital relationships (Koenig et al 2001).

Studies that advocate for religion and spirituality to be practiced during interventions and treatments suggest that it facilitates better cognitive appraisal, and it enables better coping behaviour in clients (Ammerman, 2013; Koenig et al., 2001). Kenyan scholar, Selvam advocates "that the Christian contemplative practice has the potential to reduce alcohol misuse while facilitating the emergence of a three-dimensional religious-spirituality model involving the character strengths of self-awareness, self-regulation, humility, and leading to forgiveness, social responsibility, and social intelligence." (2015:190). Selvam's (2015:208) three-dimensional religious-spirituality model represents three movements: an inward movement to the self, an upward movement to the transcendent (God), and outward movement to others as reflected in the figure below:



Selvam's three-dimensional religious-spiritual model is recommended as an "outcome of the practice of Christian contemplation" from his research from an intervention study pertaining reduction of alcohol misuse that was conducted in Nairobi, Kenya (2015:208).

Of interest in South Africa is the role that Christian belief systems have played to create and sustain oppressive systems such as colonialism and apartheid with IPA as one of the worst outcomes, and its role in the liberation struggle and subsequent healing and transformation agenda. IPA is recognized as a national priority in post-apartheid South Africa with it being considered by the country's president Cyril Ramaphosa "as a second pandemic in the country – as serious as the coronavirus" (Ellis, 2020). Little is known about the role and influence of

Christian belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in South Africa.

While the notion of religion and culture is referred to in some studies, with a particular focus on its indisputable relevance in IPA, little is known from current literature about its influence in intervention programmes' strategies to address the key signifiers of IPA. The current research project suggests that drawing attention to the influence of Christian religious beliefs operating (albeit unarticulated) in the intervention programmes will go a long way in contextualizing IPA interventions with abusive men and hidden in it may lie potential resources in addressing the key signifiers of intimate partner abuse.

According to Koenig (2009:284) religion can be defined as comprising of "beliefs, practices and rituals that are related to the sacred, to God, to the mystical or to the supernatural". In western cultures religion is defined as "a system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, the Divine, God…" (Koenig, 2008:11). Schuurman (2011:273) on the other hand argues that religion, "constitutes the root from which the different branches of life sprout, grow and flourish" and that "religion is of integral importance: it concerns the deepest root of human existence and integrates human life into a coherent whole. According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, ''religion or belief' is defined as 'theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief.'' (United Nations 1993). This UN definition seems to be inclusive of everyone and everything. While western scholarship at times makes distinctions between religion and spirituality, Selvam (2012, 2013) offers that a multidimensional matrix of religion and spirituality provides a more comprehensive hermeneutical paradigm for studies such as the current project that is undertaken in an African context where such distinctions are not always clear. Selvam's model (which will be discussed later) cautions against the "internal superiority-inferiority hierarchy" inclinations or exaggerations that distinctions between "religion and spirituality", and "sacred and secular" which "sometimes begin to carry a negative-positive valence." (2012:28).

2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to provide an overview on the various concepts relevant to this study including definitions and causal theories of intimate partner abuse; theoretical orientations and

the evolution of the study of intervention programmes with a particular focus on the influence of Christian religious beliefs in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. Literature reveals that secular identifying intervention programmes operating in a Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid South African context are faced with a range of complex racialized gender power dynamics in the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid. Evident also from the literature review on the study of intervention programmes in South Africa is the Eurocentric influence that is highlighted as a concern for some scholars. Literature reveals a gap in the current studies on the few intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners when it comes to understanding the role and influence of Christian religious beliefs present (albeit hidden) in intervention programmes on the key signifiers of IPA namely male supremacy and female submission. Studies on the role and influence of religion and spirituality in substance abuse intervention programmes offered helpful guidance to inform this research project. By employing an Afrocentric approach this study contributes to the growing African centred body of knowledge on the study of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter briefly discusses the central theoretical framework for the research project - Feminism and African Feminism including feminism in South Africa and draws attention to the notion of Ubuntu feminism. The chapter also discusses pertinent concepts including male headship and female submission, integrating religious and cultural beliefs/ideologies as it relates to the study.

3.2. FEMINISM

- **Definitions**

The diverse nature of feminism makes it difficult to settle on one standard definition. Feminism is about the study of power differentials and the study of hierarchy (Stimpson, 2015). Ramazanoglu posits that different feminist theorists are loosely grouped based on "the assumptions they make about human nature, the relative importance of biology, ideology and material conditions in determining social practices, and based on their strategies for change." (2003:10). Feminist scholars have supported this notion of the dehumanizing effect of patriarchal oppression on women and men. I concur with Wolkski-Conn's articulation of feminism as

> a coordinated set of ideas and a practical plan of action rooted in women's critical awareness of how a culture controlled, in meaning and action, by men for their own perceived advantage oppresses women and dehumanizes men. (1991:70).

Although a wide range of dissenting feminist scholarship has developed over decades, they undoubtedly agree on ending men's violence, abuse, and oppression of women in private and public spaces.

- **Features**

Central to feminist belief is that women are not inherently inferior, submissive, or less intelligent than men. Feminism rejects the idea of natural hierarchy and strives for egalitarian, relational and an integrated "society in which there is the unity of body and spirit" where justice for the

marginalized in society is advanced, and "that real virtues be cultivated in each of the sexes." (Nicolaides, 2015:193).

While feminist theory holds the belief that all men are capable of IPA, it has been argued that "feminist theory is unable to explain which men will perpetrate such abuse since all men populate a patriarchal society but not all men abuse their intimate partners." (Renzetti & Edleson, 2008:64). This contention noted in the work of Biddulph argues for the need to address the "inner situation of men" and posits, "You can't liberate only half the human race." (2002:23). Although contentious, Partab has found Biddulph's views laudable in her in-depth critical feminist examination of South African Indian "men's reflective accounts of their violence" and its intersection with religion (2012:v). Since religion permeates every aspect of life, it influences the interior world (values and beliefs) for many male clients in intervention programmes, the influence of its (non) integration holds significant consequences for the women who are partnered with the men in these intervention programmes. Therefore, a critical review of such Christian religiously informed worldviews as it interacts in intervention programmes for men becomes crucial for understanding how the key signifiers of IPA are reified or deterred.

Theories

Feminist theories have the most significant influence in theorizing the key signifiers of men's violence against women in intimate relationships (Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2015; Pillay, 2015; Nadar, 2009). Early feminists have flagged patriarchy and the institutions that maintain it as a focal point in dismantling male-dominated cultures that subordinate women (Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2015).

- **Liberal, Radical and Intersectional Feminism:**

Liberal feminism posits that women and men have the same capacity for moral (ethical) reasoning and agency, but patriarchal socialization keeps men in positions of power and discriminates against women in private and public life. They maintain that substantive changes through social and legal reform can bring about equal opportunities for women and men in private and public spaces (Jackson, 2007:322).

Radical feminism postulates that patriarchy is universal, present in all cultures; and oppresses all women across race, class, and ethnicity. Radical feminists hold that women's biological ability

to bear children, and the family institution are the primary sources of women's systematic oppression by men in society. Radical feminists regard IPA and all forms of gender-based violence as part of men's systematic oppression of women (Nyawo Sonene, 2014:67).

While liberal and radical feminism have placed sex and gender inequality as the central if not the main cause of the structural domination of women in society, its generalizable and universal persuasions have rendered the unique experiences of women of colour and lesbians invisible. Dissatisfied with the narrow and essentialized notions of racial and gender identities as practiced in the legal and feminist worlds, Crenshaw (1994) introduced the concept, of intersectionality. The intellectual history of the concept of intersectionality has been used and developed to describe and respond to problems of inequality in academia and praxis across various disciplines for more than two decades. Scholars have argued that "the social contexts in which race, class, gender, nationality, age, sexuality and other social-political classifications combine to create institutions of domination are not merely additive in nature to feminism, but uniquely structured as an amalgam of power, supremacy and social control" (Renzetti & Edleson, 2008:369).

Intersectional feminism was introduced by Crenshaw (1994) and developed by second-wave feminists including Collins (2010) who sought to critique white feminists' generalizations that all women experience patriarchal oppression in the same way. Keller & Ruether (2006) posit that "in the 1980s a small group of the middle class, white Christian Western women had described their experience as 'women's experience', failing to recognize that they were universalizing their way of life by applying it inappropriately to women in general" (2006:xxvii). Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to illustrate black women's marginalization in the western feminist interpretation of women's experiences because race and gender are inextricably bound to black women's experiences. Intersectionality in particular, according to Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim & Mdlongwa (2017) refers to the numerous dimensions of diversity (e.g. race and gender) that intersect and interact to give rise to distinct forms of injustice and discrimination that shape people's social and material lives. "It raises questions about the complex ways inequality is systematized in structures, institutions, ideologies, and practices such that there are hierarchical arrangements of power relations between groups. These power relations are used to privilege some groups and subordinate and exclude others." (Jaga et al, 2017:4).

Keller & Ruether make the point that feminist studies have since developed across races and religions demonstrating that "within each tradition a belief that there is no liberty for women

unless there is liberation for oppressed groups" (2006:xxvii). In this regard, women's liberation is about understanding the influence of Christian religious belief systems of unequal power relations in bringing about social change.

South African scholars such as Boonzaier & Van Niekerk (2018), Moolman (2013), Ratele (2016, 2013) and others have contributed to the growing scholarship on intersectional feminist approaches to investigating interventions with men who abuse their intimate partners in post-apartheid South Africa. Intersectionality is preferable in theorizing IPA interventions with men in the Christian religiously pervasive secular South African context that acknowledges the legacy of apartheid and colonialism.

3.3. AFRICAN FEMINISM

In Africa, there are diverse reactions to feminism. In some African societies feminism is seen as imported from the West (Lenser, 2019; Chisale, 2017; Cornell & Van Marle, 2015) and it is "accused of hating men, promoting lesbian love and rejecting motherhood" (Arndt, 2002:54). Much of the resentment against feminism is related to Western-centered generalizations about women globally negating cultural differences and associated hierarchies. According to Arndt (2002), Western-centred feminism has also been accused by Africans for lumping Africa with the 'third world' and its accompanying paternalistic attitude towards Africans whilst failing to address racist traditions in their western societies and movements. Western feminism is criticized for destroying African homes and being insensitive to African women's cultures and traditions (Nyokabi, 2018; Oyewumi, 2002). Chisale notes that

> African women do not view men as enemies and do not see their oppression as solely rooted in patriarchal structures; rather they view men as partners in their struggle against colonial systems that undermine women and elevate men (2017:4).

I agree with the argument by Chisale (2017) and offer that addressing only patriarchy without white supremacy and the influence of religion (especially Christianity) in colonized contexts such as South Africa is pointless, and it perpetuates a Eurocentric agenda. The vision of the coexistence of women and men in all African societies with differing degrees of influence and impact provide a critical framework for the potential recovery of their common humanity through an Afrocentric commitment. While some argue that feminism is un-African, many scholars argue

that feminist principles originated from Africa (Oyewilmi, 2004).

- **Definition and Principles**

The Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists (2006) note that African feminism is focused on African gender relations and the problems that African women experience by illuminating and criticizing its causes, and consequences. It aims to undo patriarchy in all its expressions but is acutely aware "that patriarchy varies in time and space according to class, race, ethnic, religious, and global imperial relationships, and structures" (Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists, 2006:5). Some of the key features of African feminism as delineated by Chilisa & Ntseane (2010) include:

> that it critiques and rejects dominant narratives that generalise and essentialise the condition of African women, men and children and seek awareness of specific contexts, cultures and peoples. African feminism emphasizes the power and agency of African women, in particular, to theorise from their cultures and lived experiences to produce contextually relevant knowledge, build relationships, heal the self, the community and the larger socio-cultural context (2010:619).

- **Criteria for African Feminism**

Arndt (2002) lists down obligatory criteria for African feminism as follows:

> the idea of cooperation or complementarity with men, the affirmation of motherhood and the family; the concern to criticise patriarchal manifestations in African societies in a differentiated way; aims at discussing gender roles in the context of other oppressive mechanisms such as racism, neocolonialism, (cultural) imperialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation, gerontocracy, religious fundamentalism as well as dictatorial and/or corrupt systems; and many African feminists do not leave it at criticism of patriarchal structures, but also attempt to identify both traditionally established and entirely new scopes and alternatives for women that would be tantamount to overcoming their oppression. (Arndt, 2002:32).

The abovementioned criteria for African feminism provide pertinent guidelines that frame the study in the context of intervention programmes' efforts to transform the key signifiers of IPA

in a Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid South Africa where women and men seek to flourish in intimate relationships that are threatened by IPA.

3.3.1. Feminism in South Africa

It is impossible to settle on a definition of feminism to try and describe the "different types of behaviour and activisms exhibited by women" because South Africa as a country "straddles the divide between the first and third worlds, a country heavily defined by its binaries – black/white, rich/poor, developed/developing (Lenser, 2019:32). Ahikire (2014) describes feminism in contexts such as South Africa as follows:

> Feminism is a myriad of various theoretical perspectives emanating from the complexities and specifics of the different material conditions and identities of women and informed by the many diverse and creative ways in which we contest power in our private and public lives. In African contexts, feminism is at once philosophical, experiential, and practical... As a movement, feminism in Africa is made up of multiple currents and undercurrents that defy simple, homogenizing descriptions. (2014:8-9).

Ahikire's description of feminism finds resonance in South Africa, with pro-feminist activists who often refer to it as a social movement/women's movement to reflect the multiple and diverse nature of women's activisms historically and contemporarily. In South Africa, feminism is frequently expressed through race and class divides (Moolman, 2013). Salo has noted that racial classifications coupled with historical events such as forced removals and "legally enforced physical, social and linguistic separation from South Africans who were differently classified" characterized the diverse experiences that women in South Africa have in common (2010:97). It was not until 1987 that the first outwardly black feminist group, Women Against Repression, was "founded by coloured activist Rozena Maart with the sole purpose of combating gender-based inequality in the country" (Lenser, 2019:11).

- **Contextualizing Feminism in South Africa**

Colonialism and the apartheid system had immediate implications for black (African, Coloured and Indian) women, men and their families. Under Apartheid, the Populations Registration Act categorized and classified people in South Africa into different racial groups, namely White (primarily from European ancestry), Indian (primarily from India), African (primarily from

African ancestry), and Coloured (multi-racial or mixed race). Black women (referring to non-whites) were subjected to further discrimination. Steyn (1998) provides a glimpse into some of the inherent differences between the lives of women from different racial backgrounds:

> During colonial and apartheid years, white women fell under the jurisprudence of Roman-Dutch law, while African and Muslim women were subsumed under a greatly discredited system of customary law. Because of the systematic privileging of whites within the economy, white women belong predominantly to the middle and upper class; whereas black women tend to belong to the working class…The poverty experienced by black women has been greatly exacerbated by discrimination (1998:42).

The gaping wound of inequality is haunting the post-apartheid South African society as Ramphele (2020) pointed out: "The legacy of the systematic undermining of African family life at the altar of an exploitative, extractive, socio-economic system introduced by colonial conquerors continues to reverberate as trauma across multiple generations." (Daily Maverick, 29 July 2020). Ramphele paints a picture of the complexity of life for the black majority in post-apartheid South Africa as the country battles the Covid19 pandemic.

> "The failure of post-apartheid governments to transform human settlements in urban areas so they provide dignified access to urban resources and basic needs continues the betrayal of the majority of citizens… Psychologists and family counsellors have identified factors that make it difficult for parents to unconditionally love and support their children: among these are poor self-image, immaturity, unresolved trauma and fear of intimacy, and a lack of experience of being loved and protected as children. Overlaying substance abuse and domestic and gender-based violence on the circumstances of vulnerable children creates explosive situations that undermine their development, leaving them highly stressed and at risk of repeating these social pathologies in their own adult lives" (Ramphele, 2020).

Ramphele's laments point to the multi-layered complex socio-political and socio-economic realities and the burden it places on ensuring that people live dignified lives in their intimate relationships, families and society in general.

- **Feminist politics in South Africa**

Evident from the discussion above is the intersecting complexities of activism and its direct implications for feminism in South Africa. Hassim (2006) offers the following guidance that suggests should accompany any reflection on feminism in South Africa. Feminist politics should be understood not as a separate form of politics…Feminism is the struggle for the equality of women. Nevertheless, this [feminism] should not be understood as a struggle for realizing the equality of a definable empirical group with a common essence of identity, women, but rather as a struggle against the multiple forms in which the category "woman" is constructed insubordination. (Hassim, 2006:3).

Lenser (2019) notes that irrespective of race, feminism was viewed by many women in South Africa as a hyper-liberal concept from the West. In this regard, Lenser points out that:

> Many black and coloured South African women rejected the notion of feminism, casting it as being a white woman's luxury, but not a privilege that they could afford while fighting the broader independence struggle to liberate themselves from racist oppression. (2019:11)

It has been observed that the struggle against the apartheid system was the feminist priority that informed and shaped black South African women's struggle for emancipation which involved the confrontation of racial and gender oppression (Moolman, 2013). As such, South Africa as a society in transition is by definition a negotiated space (Moolman, 2013). Moolman asserts,

> Post - 1994, as a collaboration between women, who set up the structures dealing with violence against women (mainly white women), and the elected parliamentarians (mainly black women) have resulted in significant legislative and policy changes such as the Domestic Violence Act (1998), the Termination of Pregnancy Act (1996), the Customary Unions Act, and the most recent Sexual Offences Act (2007). (2013:102).

In terms of the intersections of the racial and class dynamics in South African feminism, Van Der Spuy & Clowes (2007) observed that

> from feminist critiques of androcentric historiography, the spotlight shifted to the limitations of white women with secure academic jobs under apartheid who challenged

> racism and sexism theoretically and historically (within western feminist paradigms) but at no apparent personal sacrifice or risk. They [white women] had been writing feminist histories of African women (many returning from exile) who had not had their privileges, who had been denied access to the South African academy. (2007:213).

Besides, Lenser provides the following vital insights into the role of white women to black women within the context of colonialism and apartheid as;

> Firstly, white women were expected to emigrate to act as literal mothers within the colony, to produce with white men in colonial society and to create a desirable class of respectable and virtuous British-derive whites, as well as figurative mothers for the lost and childlike nonwhite populations in the colony (Lenser, 2019:21-22). Secondly, white women who emigrated in the later years of the nineteenth century and ended up in domestic servitude were simultaneously thought of requiring protection from the "inferior races" with whom they worked, as well as being needed as "moral surveillance" to their fellow servants of said, "inferior races" (Lenser, 2019:22). Thirdly, moral surveillance involved the actions and guidance of white women being used to civilize and Europeanize the supposedly morally lacking labourers on nonwhite heritage. This widespread idea of white female morality, purity, and virtue helped to reinforce the notion of the otherness of black domestic labourers, and black women in general (Lenser, 2019:22).

These insightful contributions by Van Der Spuy & Clowes (2007) and Lenser (2019) about white women's role in institutionalizing oppression become essential in understanding the nature of relationship dynamics between white and black women in addressing IPA in South Africa. Jaga et al. (2017) write about how black South African women negotiate race, gender, family and work daily. While there has been much talk about women's rights, equal opportunities and affirmative action in the new South Africa, Jaga et al. have found that "white and male-dominated workplaces have not delivered on the racial and gender equality project of the newly democratic state" (2017:2). In the context of the various complex dynamics involved in feminism in South Africa, I have found the notion of Ubuntu Feminism (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015) most helpful for this study.

3.3.2. Ubuntu Feminism

* **Definition and Guiding Principles**

The idea of Ubuntu Feminism was suggested by Cornell & Van Marle (2015) as ethical feminism. As coined by the women in the Ubuntu Project based in Khayamandi, Stellenbosch the notion of Ubuntu Feminism addresses the tensions and contradictions in feminism, and it refuses "the demands of patriarchy, as well as the confines of liberal feminism." (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015:1). In an online report titled Exploring Ubuntu - Tentative Reflections by Drucilla Cornell, she quotes a young black South African woman in the Ubuntu Project that Cornell convened in 2003 as saying "African feminism is about Ubuntu. And Ubuntu is what makes our feminism African" (Cornell 2003 available on http://www.fehe.org).

Founded in the African philosophy of Ubuntu, Ubuntu Feminism advances that "human beings are intertwined in a world of ethical relations from the moment they are born" and that human beings are mutually obligated to support each other "on our respective paths to becoming unique and singular persons" (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015:2). In the context of this study, Ubuntu Feminism offers the supportive ethical mechanisms that confront the dehumanizing quality of gender inequality whilst asserting the personhood of all human beings.

In this study, Ubuntu Feminism is defined as feminism that defies the evil of patriarchy in all its forms by asserting and cultivating the humanity and agency that women and men are divinely endowed with to flourish in intimate relationships.

The guiding principles of Ubuntu feminism, are presented by Du Plessis as follows:

> Linked to a deep sense of belonging and interconnectedness that emphasizes mutual responsibility of care between people and communities; It emphasizes the conjoined, mutually obligated nature of human existence thus making it a compelling vehicle for transformation; It regards justice as equality. Ubuntu is not just an ethical philosophy, it includes an ontology, epistemology, axiology, spatiality, and a socio-political call for action; It enables a call to social action. In other words, the values espoused call for accountable, relational, respectful transformation. Its radical feminist ethic encourages a normative to justice and healing; It avoids the homogenisation of all women and focuses on the spiritual self. Individual uniqueness is enabled only by its social embeddedness

and relatedness. (2019:44-45).

- **Notions of Ubuntu Feminism and Human Agency**

Ubuntu feminism offers an African feminist lens that recognizes that human beings are infinitely obligated to each other in their very existence, their agency and resourcefulness as being human. South African Intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners hold enormous transformational promise when addressing the key signifiers of IPA. This study locates the intervention programmes, not as abstract institutions, but it recognizes the dynamic humanity of the persons who construct and implement these programmes by giving voice to / or centring their humanity in their quest to address the key signifiers of IPA. This study together with scholars such as Cornell & Van Marle (2015) and others who argue that the notion of Ubuntu in Ubuntu Feminism defends itself. Zibani states that the philosophy of Ubuntu means that human beings have

> the inner corrective-ness that makes one at peace with oneself and everything around one's environment …bears the fruit of caring, sharing, forgiveness and reconciliation… requires that a person should have a conscience and a nerve not to disappoint one's parents and the Creator who teaches respect for humans, plant and animal life (2002: 49 - 50).

Intimate partner abuse is understood to be a profoundly dehumanizing experience for the perpetrator and victim-survivor of IPA. In framing "the power relations between men and women in terms of the "colonizer-colonized' metaphor," Nkulu-N'Sengha asserts "that every behaviour that humiliates another human being also dehumanizes its perpetrator." (2001:94). Nkulu-N'Sengha believes that the notion "*Bumuntu* (humanness, personhood, harmony, and wholeness) is the golden rule and key to gender justice" (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2001:98). Similarly, during South Africa's TRC process, Archbishop Desmond Tutu pointed out that "In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, inexorably the perpetrator was being dehumanized as well." (Tutu, 2000:80).

Tutu (2000) was advocating that the philosophy of Ubuntu holds within itself that which can assist the dehumanized perpetrator to become human again. Nkulu-N'Sengha notes that *Bumuntu* is a variant of Ubuntu – "as Bishop Desmond Tutu puts it is the feeling that 'my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours,'" (2011:306). In the African context, a

genuine authentic human being is referred to as a person with Ubuntu or "a person of Bumuntu" (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2011:306).

Nkulu-N'Sengha's notion of Bumuntu and Tutu's notion of Ubuntu encompass God in that they argue that God's existence is intertwined with the humanity of people. Tutu asserts that

> extraordinarily, God, the omnipotent One depends on us, puny, fragile, and vulnerable as we may be, to accomplish God's purposes for good, for justice, for forgiveness and healing and wholeness. God has no one but us. St. Augustine of Hippo has said, 'God without us will not as we without God cannot.' (2000:124).

Nkulu-N'Sengha notes, "Creation myths indicate that *Bumuntu* derives from the transcendent origin of human beings…" and that "all human beings are children of God, no one is a child of the earth" (2011:307). It is further argued that *Bumuntu* "defines sainthood, holiness and gentleness" and that the notion *Kintu* refers to things or persons who have lost their dignity / human-ness (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2011:307). In African understanding, men who abuse their intimate partners or perpetrators, have lost their dignity / humane-ness and since "every human being exists as a pendulum that swings between two categories of being", bumuntu or ubuntu enables a person to move from *kintu* (someone who does not deserve respect) to *muntu* (good respectable person) state of being (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2011:308).

Through an Ubuntu feminist lens, the study explored the influence of Christian beliefs in the strategies and approaches that intervention programmes employ to facilitate transformation in their male clients. As Cornell & Van Marle argue, that Ubuntu feminism encompasses categories that are often referred to as epistemology and ontology, that entails "a social bond…that is always in the course of being shaped and reshaped by the heavy ethical demands it puts on all its participants." (2015:3). It has been argued that for Africans a person is "not human simply by birth but through a progressive process of integration into society". (Ng'weshemi, 2002:15). In this understanding, a person's humanity is shaped and reshaped in communion with one another. Ubuntu feminism is thus dynamic in that it opens and unsettles rather than confines and unites assert Cornell & Van Marle (2015), an assertion that is supported in citations by Sanders (2007). According to Sanders, "Ubuntu continually marks and remarks a loss of humanity and human dignity" and that in the context of restoration, Ubuntu never accepts finality because it "resides in a perpetual remarking of default." (2007:12)

3.3.3. Critique of African Feminism

African feminism has often been criticized for merely providing alternatives to Western feminism with the flawed goal of exoneration of the African world. It is also critiqued for its tendency for providing explanations to safeguard the threatened African community. Furthermore, African feminism is criticized for failing "to give a robust image of the African woman that the African man is bound to respect." (Eze 2008:106). On the contrary, it is argued that African feminism goes beyond just acknowledging the autonomy and agency of women; it recognizes that it is uniquely African in its nature and it respects the complex realities of women in their varied identities and specific contexts. In this regard, Salo (2010) has cautioned African and South African states for their tendencies to focus on satisfying international audiences in the global arena by registering support for universalized human rights instead of adopting an inner view. According to Salo, views of "African societies as homogeneous and Pan-African solidarity as unproblematic, have silenced the rich, textured internal debates about diversity, the fluid, multiply situated nature of local identities and human rights within African societies." (Salo, 2010:102).

This call for self-reflection by Eze and Salo coincides with an understanding that while the profound devastating impact of colonialism and apartheid cannot be minimized, this inner view will enable African feminists to reach into the untapped resources available in African sources such as Ubuntu to radically transform what it means to be human in contemporary Africa. Despite the shortcoming of African feminism, Ubuntu is a philosophy that can theoretically assist feminism in transforming and reconstructing gender power relations. In the context of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners, programmes' strategies and approaches to shift and transform harmful beliefs about gender power relations in men require uncovering their own beliefs and motivations. The quality of Ubuntu among other African values in African feminism provides for the recognition of individuals and the community's shared responsibility and agency in bringing about the transformation that would cause affirmation and flourishing of human dignity in intimate relationships.

3.3.4. Relevance of African Feminism

The question about the role and influence of religion and culture relating to the key signifiers of IPA (male supremacy and female submission) in the study calls for theoretical lenses that interrogate the intersecting complexities in advancing healing and transforming gender power relations. African feminism provides such depth as it acknowledges and respects the varied experiences of struggle and yearnings for and expressions of liberation by African women that is inclusive and critical of men. Not only does African feminism allow for criticizing patriarchal manifestations in intimate relationships, but it is also cognizant of other oppressive mechanisms including racism and the role of religion and culture. African feminism is critical and insists on cultivating helpful resources within religion and culture. African feminism defies unhelpful dehumanizing western conclusions about cultural and religious reservoirs in search for not-yet-discovered solutions to complex interlocking oppressive systems that breed IPA. African feminists are committed to uncovering and dismantling all forms of oppression that dehumanize women and men. It also acknowledges that its existence is intricately linked to the West, but it is committed to African agency where "the voices and experiences of African people are central to discourse and praxis aesthetics." (Buntu, 2019:66).

Furthermore, unlike feminism in general, African feminism resonates more closely with Africana womanism – a term coined in 1987 by Hudson-Weems - it recognizes the complex realities including race, class and sex that African women in Africa and the diaspora experience (Clenora Hudson-Weems, 1993). According to Hudson-Weems, "Africana womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of Africana women." (1993:49). It prioritizes family and offers these features of the Africana womanist: self-namer, self-definer, family-centred, genuine in sisterhood, strong, in concert with the male in the liberation struggle, whole, authentic, flexible role player, respected, recognized, spiritual, male compatible, respectful of elders, adaptable, ambitious, mothering, nurturing (Hudson-Weems, 2020). Consistent with Afrocentricity and African feminism, Hudson-Weems asserts that "the survival and well-being of African people as a whole" are dependent on "the cooperation of African men and women against white supremacy" (Asante & Mazama, 2004:58).

Moreover, African feminism acknowledges the multi-layered complex nature of various systems of oppression as well as the multiple dynamics of power at play in phenomena such as

interventions with men who abuse their intimate partners in a Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid South African context. African Feminism engages and works to dismantle and transform these complexities in search of women and men's full humanity and agency.

African Feminism embraces the messiness involved in the mission of change and allows for the creation of avenues not yet explored in the context of dismantling oppressive systems towards transformation and harmony in intimate relationships between women and men. As pointed out by Mbugua & Njoroge "the theory of change requires the use of complexity to understanding the process of change." (2018:6). The view that "feminism has been one continuous wave with the political, spiritual, personal/sexual, and cultural currents intermingling in proportions right from the beginning" (Diamond, 2009:214) positions fourth-wave feminism in the 21st century. It also acknowledges the importance of religion and spirituality for women in African contexts. Secular feminists and feminists of religion agree that women's struggles in society and religion are intertwined (Diamond, 2009). Writing from the religiously pervasive contextual experiences of African women, the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians has been the leading persistent critical voice confronting "African patriarchal cultures that keep women oppressed" (Dube 2016:3). The Circle is renowned for consistently exposing the patriarchal culture of the Bible and the need for the re-reading and re-interpretation of the Bible "towards the liberation of humanity from all forms of oppression." (Dube, 2016:4).

It is in the understanding of how complex Christian belief systems about gender power relations in a post-apartheid South African context, inform intervention programmes' theories and processes of change to address notions of male supremacy and female submission that this study seeks to amplify in search for the advancement of dismantling oppressive systems toward human flourishing in intimate relationships.

3.4. MALE HEADSHIP AND FEMALE SUBMISSION

The notions of female submission and male headship are commonly linked to the terms 'submit' and 'head', which according to Maisiri (2015), are not the only possible interpretations of Ephesians 5:22-24 where these terms are extracted from (2015:40). Stevenson explains that the concept of submission is indicative of notions of subjugation which refers to "bring under domination or control, especially by conquest" (2010:1773). Male headship and female submission have been identified as foundational to patriarchy and men's violence and oppression

of women. Images of God in patriarchal terms reduce "God's functions to male power roles of which the males act as his representatives on earth", informs Owino (2010:62). It is further understood that "…early Christianity was already taken over by men and made to serve patriarchy" (Tappa, 1986:101). Nkulu-N'Sengha argues that since

> patriarchy draws its imagined potency from the symbolic power of religious discourse, it is necessary to engage in an 'archaeology of religious rhetoric and practices' to get behind the mask of the sacred and unveil the process by which men create God in their image and manipulate the *Kishila-kya-Bankambo* (the will of the ancestors) to preserve their social privileges and power. In this context, the anguish of African women becomes an important hermeneutical device for questioning the meaning of African native religious traditions. (2001:70).

African woman theologian Dube (2007) opines, "naming is a very gendered practice" (2007:347). She urges women of the Christian belief to name the Christ for themselves as Jesus prompted his disciples to do in Matthew 8:27-30 when He asked them "And whom do you say that I am?" Gender-critical scholars in the study of religion and theology have problematized the notion of a Christian male God because of its implications in situations of IPA and its linkages with notions of male headship and female submission (Chitando & Kilonzo, 2018; Berman, 2012).

- **Conceptualizing Male Headship**

Central to what it means to be a man in society is his role and status as a man (Connell, 1995). From Christian biblical readings, power relations based on hierarchy can be construed as ordained by God. In this hierarchy, men are assigned the role of headship. While a wide variety of views about gender is prevalent in scholarship, discourses on gender complementarianism and egalitarianism remain central. Drawing on Genesis 1:26-27, they argue that God created women and men "equal in dignity, value, essence and human nature, but also distinct in role whereby the male was given the responsibility of loving authority over the female, and the female was to offer willing, glad-hearted and submissive assistance to the man" (Ware, 2007). Ware further argues that Genesis 2:22-24 is indicative of the full equality and oneness of woman and man "for they are one flesh or the same flesh" (Ware, 2007). Complementarians argue that this ontological

equality was disrupted/corrupted by the Fall which according to Genesis 3:15-16 in their view "the male/female relationship would now, because of sin, be affected by mutual enmity." (Ware, 2007). According to complementarians, role differentiation –male headship and female submission, through redemption in Christ restores creation to its original order. Egalitarians reason that God created women and men for shared partnership and collaboration. Ware explains that for egalitarians,

> the word "helper" (ezer) used to designate woman in Genesis 2:18…conveys no implication whatsoever of female submission or inferiority…The Bible teaches that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was therefore not a part of the original created order…The Bible teaches that husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life and are bound together in a relationship of mutual submission and responsibility. (Ware, 2007).

In summary, egalitarians promote God's desire for shared leadership to be exercised between women and men, while complementarians advocate that God desires that male headship and female submission be restored (Ware, 2007).

The cultural and religious concept of male headship accords "men to be the head in the marital relationship and family life" and fits well into a "patriarchal gender ideology" which qualifies gender difference in terms of unequal relationships "headship (male) and submission (female)" (Van Klinken 2011:291). This idea of headship is associated with the man being responsible for the family's spiritual and moral wellbeing. Being the head also means "roles such as being the breadwinner, providing for the material needs of the family, showing leadership in the home and providing guidance to the family, and leading the family in prayer" (Van Klinken, 2011:108). Apostle Paul is cited as one of the most influential in shaping Christian theological understandings about gender roles with exhortations about male headship and female submission (Wendt & Zannettino, 2014). For example, in 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul writes that: "the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."

The centrality of religious belief systems embedded in sacred texts such as the above legitimizes patriarchy (Raines, 2007) and is potentially fatal in the context of men's violence against women

in intimate relationships. The patriarchal nature of sacred texts, according to Raines, lies herein that "the author and the intended audience are male" and that "when women listen to such texts, they almost always are listening *off-stage* to an intra-male discourse, to a male 'we' talking about a female 'them' (2007:91). What follows is a discussion about differing discourses about male headship.

- **Differing Discourses on Male Headship**

According to Ewusha (2012) headship in the Bible is not about authority; instead, it is about service. In Ewusha's writing about men's role in reducing the HIV & AIDS pandemic in Africa, she contends that calling men to be heads of their families is about accountability and responsibility and has little to do with exploitation or oppression. The attributes of headship she continues involve their highly valued roles "as protector of and for the household" (2012:90).

Van Klinken (2011) and Chitando (2007) are among the scholars who have analyzed how some Pentecostal communities have interpreted the notion of male headship with potentially promising results. Van Klinken's analysis revealed that some Pentecostal communities have maintained and reinterpreted traditional notions of male headship to "define a more constructive ideal manhood" (2011:119). In these communities, according to Chitando, women are encouraged to become economically empowered and men are challenged "to live up to their status of heads of households…to provide for their families" (2007:120). Chitando is hopeful yet concerned about how Pentecostal men are mobilized against gender-based violence and urged to "shun the trend of having multiple sex partners" while remaining "pre-occupied with possession and power" (2007:124).

Since Kenyan women are increasingly becoming economically empowered, some Kenyan Pentecostal preachers have recognized the need to encourage men to support their partners (Chitando & Kilonzo, 2018). These preachers encourage men to become "a 'Proverbs 31 man' who subscribes to the notion of 'equal complementarity' where both men and women take on any role that ensures the flourishing of the family and the community" (2018:74). The 'Proverbs 31 man' is characterized by several values. He is hard-working, "extremely devoted to the progress of his family", "disciplined and measured in everything he does", and "he is secure and is not in competition with his partner" (2018:74). In other words, he does not subscribe to societal projections of "the 'real man' as one who dominates, always insists on having his way and makes

all the decisions", instead 'the 'Proverbs 31 man' works in close collaboration with his Proverbs 31 woman." Chitando & Kilonzo (2018:74).

Berman (2012) differs and concedes that male headship encourages men's abuse of women. In this regard, Berman draws on a reading from Hosea 2:3,10 that relates to Hosea threatening "to strip his wife naked, drag her before her lovers and slay her with thirst" (2012:205). Berman (2012) argues that Scripture readings such as this Hosea passage contributes to women's oppression. Berman (2012) suggests that instead of arguing about the headship of men while women are dying, texts such as Acts 2:17-18 should be emphasized to promote gender equality. The Acts reading refers to words spoken by the Prophet Joel about God pouring out the Holy Spirit indiscriminately on women and men, thus qualifying and authorizing them to be servants of God equally. Berman's argument resonates with Nadar's insistence that "a theology of headship and submission is simply yet another way of promoting violence (in its varied forms) through the insidious myth that men as the stronger sex need to protect women or to 'defend the weak'" (2012:360).

Nadar (2012), one of the leading critics on the theology of headship reiterates that several studies indicate that in most religions and cultures the principles of headship and submission are responsible for men's violence against women, and women feeling trapped in such abusive relationships. Nadar presents the values of belonging and enterprise in the following table:

VALUES OF BELONGING	VALUES OF ENTERPRISE
Connection with land	Control and Ownership of Land
Empathic relation to animals	Control and ownership of animals
Balance	Momentum and High Risk
Expressiveness	Secretiveness
Generosity	Acquisitiveness
Egalitarianism	Hierarchy
Mutuality	Competitiveness
Alternative Modes of Knowing	Rationality
Playfulness	Business like Sobriety
Nonviolent Conflict Resolution	Aggressiveness and Violence
Spirituality	Materialism [Religion]

Table sourced from (Nadar 2012:371)

The values summarized and presented in the table above together with supporting arguments for its cultivation by Flinders (2003) and Nadar (2012) resonate with a feminist orientation as these values are human values and not "functions of our gender" (Nadar, 2012:371). Values such as partnership, harmony and balance also resonate with the study's Afrocentric theoretical framing. Of interest will be to locate any synergies or alternative values that might emerge from the study to contribute to male headship and female submission.

To understand what happens in secular intervention programmes where abusive men tend to bring sacred text and religious expressions into the counselling process, the following section reflects on some debates about integrating religion and spirituality in psycho-social interventions.

3.5. INTEGRATING RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN SECULAR INTERVENTION CONTEXTS?

Religion and spirituality are integral to life. It assists many people in finding meaning in life and the human experience. Foshaugen asserts, "Christianity is a religion where values are demanding to be actualised" (2004:186). Integrating religion and spirituality in social work and secular psycho-social interventions (such as intervention programmes for male perpetrators of IPA) has been a contentious issue (Frame, 2003; Brown, Elkonin & Naicker, 2013). Historically "social work theory and its practice are deeply rooted in religion and spirituality" (Allick, 2012:4). Over time it has adopted more secular approaches "to fit in with the science-based professions of psychology and psychiatry, which state that spiritual beliefs are not by nature empirical." (Allick, 2012:4). More recent debates have expanded to be more inclusive of religion and spirituality in psycho-social intervention approaches (Tan, 2013). While the issue of inclusion remains controversial, Brown et al. (2013) utilizing the biopsychosocial-spiritual theoretical framework of health care, confirmed that psychologists in their study do utilize explicit and implicit religious approaches during counselling; and they reiterate that "ethnicity, culture and religion and spirituality are inexplicably intertwined" (2013:15) in people's lived experience.

Whilst most world religions, including Christianity, accentuates the sanctity of interpersonal relationships, African women theologians lament that religion, embedded in cultural justifications, points to an explanation for the aetiology of IPA and requires particular attention in research and praxis.

There is a scarcity of scholarship about the influence of integrating religion and spirituality in addressing IPA in secular intervention programmes for men who abuse their female intimate partners. This dearth in research can be ascribed to the historical relationship of mistrust between psychology and religion (Fortune, 1991). Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend (2015:17) lament the dire implications of "the fragile relationship between feminism and conservative religious traditions" for religious women who look to intervention programmes for comprehensive, lasting positive change in their abusive partners. Van Hook, Hugen and Aguilar (2002) add that although the social work profession has roots in the Judeo-Christian worldview, it has primarily been developed as a secular profession. The "secularization of the social work profession has left many social workers being trained to think that their own and their clients' religious involvement or faith has little or no relevance for everyday professional practice" (2002:1).

Frame cautions that "the disregard or deliberate refusal by psychotherapists to engage their own relationship with religion and spirituality in practice, can have limiting if not harmful consequences for the growth process of clients." (2003:2). In support of the abovementioned arguments, I contend that integrating religious factors into psycho-social interventions can yield important insights into the potential reversibility of IPA in contexts, like South Africa, where religion and spirituality form an integral part of people's belief systems and lived experience.

According to Frame, social constructionist theory - an assertion that people do not discover reality, they invent it - offers a perspective that opens "multiple frames of reference" to integrate clients' religious and spiritual beliefs into counselling (2003:158). Frame argues that counsellors can apply the model from a social construction perspective, by interrogating their own beliefs and thinking about their clients' religious orientations. This perspective enables counsellors to be open to their clients' religious interpretations and co-create and construct new meanings by working with their clients' religious language. Secondly, social constructionist theory suggests that counsellors take on a "not knowing/ability to learn" disposition "towards their clients' perspectives" (Frame 2003:158). By demonstrating openness to learn from their clients, counsellors can cultivate "hope for change and renewal." (Frame 2003:159).

Frame differentiates the constructs of religion and spirituality and argues, "Spirituality includes one's values, beliefs, mission, awareness, subjectivity, experience, sense of purpose and direction, and a kind of striving toward something greater than oneself. It may or may not include a deity." (2003:3). Koenig et al. (2001) unpack that spirituality is "a personal quest for

understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may or may not lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community" (2001:18). While religion is regarded as a form of spirituality, and though it shares some characteristics of spirituality, there are particular distinctions. According to Frame, religion can be characterized "as a set of beliefs and practices of an organized religious institution" (2003:3). Frame makes the point that although these two constructs are related in numerous ways, they can work out differently in individual lives (2003:4).

Whilst not negating the possibility of distinction or the need for separating religion and spirituality at times, the need for a less polarized and academically more helpful construction of religion and spirituality exists. Selvam posits that "instead of using the concept of the sacred as the connecting link between religion and spirituality, if we used existentiality (search for the meaning of life) then spirituality could be a generic construct and religion would be one particular way of seeking meaning of human existence in relation to the sacred" (2013:136). Selvam (2013:141) uses the construct religious-spirituality, which summarizes his argument that "'religiousness is an external tool through which individuals can access their spirituality and relationship to the divine'". Selvam's (2013) use of religious-spirituality resembles Allport & Ross's (1967) concept of extrinsic/intrinsic religiosity to theorize and operationalize a person / entity's religiousness / devoutness. To diminish an overestimation of the distinction between religion and spirituality, Selvam (2013) proposes a comprehensive multidimensional model - a multidimensional matrix of religious-spirituality: (see Selvam's quadrant below).

	Low Religiosity	High Religiosity
High Spirituality	3 • Spiritual-but-not-religious • *Spirituality of Quest* • Sacred or secular search for significance	4 • Religious-spirituality • *Intrinsic Religion* • Sacred and secular search for significance
Low Spirituality	2 • Neither religious nor spiritual • *'Secular' worldview* • Searching or no search for significance	1 • 'Empty' Religion • *Extrinsic Religion* • No serious search for significance

Selvam explains that religiosity (columns in the quadrant) and spirituality (rows in the quadrant) "are two possible ways of searching for significance and/or the sacred. Religiosity here could be

described as being open to the creed, code and cult that encapsulate the experiences and expressions of a community of people in their search for the transcendent." (2013:138). Spirituality, according to Selvam's quadrant, is "marked by a search for significance or meaning in terms of the sacred, or part from the sacred that could be understood as a personal deity." (2013:138).

These models, among others, provide counsellors with frameworks for making sense of their religious and faith journeys and ideologies. It is presupposed in this investigation that intervention programme designers' and implementers' relationship with their religious-spiritual development hold essential insights for how they make meaning of and address the key signifiers of IPA in these programmes.

3.6. IDEOLOGY, MODES OF OPERATION AND RELIGION:

Ideologies communicate meaning. Freeden informs that "ambiguity, as well as certainty, are two necessary features of any ideology" (2003:57); and that logical and cultural constraints "set limits on the conscious and unconscious meanings that ideologies communicate" (2003:55). Religious ideologies are profoundly effective in anchoring people especially when it comes to addressing questions of "existence, ultimate causality, and absolute morality" assert Hogg et al. (2010:76). These scholars further argue that "the authority structure of many religions, including postulation of divine entities and orthodox scriptures, can encourage relatively unquestioning obedience and failure to recognize moral contradictions" (2010:79). The religiously pervasive context within which intervention programmes seek to transform men who abuse their intimate partners requires special attention to the influence of ideologies - specifically religiously informed ideologies in these programmes.

Thompson (1990) provides and describes five modes of operation of ideology for analyzing how meaning can "serve to establish and sustain relations of domination" and its potential "links with strategies of symbolic construction" (1990:59). Since the intervention programmes are contextually located in a Christian religiously pervasive South Africa, the need to interrogate the (religious) ideologies that inform their theories of change that address oppressive gender relations at the root of IPA. Ideologically speaking "the truth is revealed and hidden at the same time" (Foshaugen, 2004:186). Thompson's modes of operation of ideology and depth hermeneutics as hermeneutical tools provide guidance to establish the existence of an ideology,

and it helps to "determine its symbolic form and construction" (Foshaugen, 2004:186). While not ideological in itself, these modes and strategies point at how they serve to "sustain or subvert, to establish or undermine relations of domination" (Thompson 1990:61).

Table of Thompson's Five Modes of Operation of Ideology (1990:60-66):

Modes	Typical Strategies
Legitimation - a claim to legitimacy	**RATIONALIZATION** – the construction of a chain of reasoning/thinking to defend or justify a set of social rules / social relations and institutions **UNIVERSALIZATION -** institutional arrangements which serve some individual interests represented as serving interests of all **NARRATIVIZATION –** claims are embedded in stories that recount the past and treat the present as part of a timeless and treasured tradition. Traditions are sometimes invented.
Dissimilation – established and sustained by being concealed, denied, or obscured or deflects/glosses over relations or processes	**DISPLACEMENT –** when positive/negative connotations of one object/individual/symbol are displaced or transferred to the other object/individual/symbols associated with it **EUPHAMISM** – actions, institutions or social relations are described or redescribed in terms that elicit a positive valuation. **TROPE** – the figurative use of language; most common forms of trope include synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor, all used to dissimulate relations of domination.
Unification – a form of unity that embraces individuals in a collective identity, irrespective of the differences and divisions that may separate them	**STANDARDIZATION -** symbolic forms adapted to standard framework promoted as the shared and acceptable basis of symbolic exchange **SYMBOLIZATION OF UNITY** – construction of collective identity which overrides differences and divisions
Fragmentation – relations of domination are maintained by fragmenting individuals/groups	**DIFFERENTIATION -** emphasizing differences, fragmenting gaps that might unite and mount a challenge **EXPURGATION OF THE 'OTHER' -** construction of an enemy within or without, which is evil, harmful or threatening, which individuals need collectively to expel or expurgate
Reification – relations of domination are established and maintained by the reestablishment of the dimension of society 'without history' at the very heart of historical society	**NATURALIZATION** – treating a social/historical creation as a natural event/state of affairs presented as natural **ETERNALIZATION -** social/historical phenomena portrayed as permanent and unchanging, ever-recurring customs, traditions, institutions **NOMINALIZATION / PASSIVIZATION** – verbs are rendered in passive form; and focus the attention of the hearer/reader on certain themes at the expense of others.

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology, provide a framework for excavating and deconstructing underlying religious ideologies embedded in the beliefs and practices of the intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in this study. The deconstruction of religious ideologies about gender power relations as practiced in intervention programmes may offer important insights about the perpetuation or deterrence of male headship and female submission in the context of IPA.

3.7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I engaged in a discussion of Afrocentric and African feminist theories and concepts, which are pertinent to this study, to explore how intervention programmes negotiate/utilize Christian religious belief systems about gender power relations to address the key signifiers of IPA. I also briefly discussed debates about the integration of religion and spirituality and provided a brief overview of Thompson's modes of ideology.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the methodological approach utilised in the study is presented. The chapter outlines the research design, data collection process (including the development of data collection tools, sampling, fieldwork preparations and implementation). Furthermore, the chapter presents the data analysis process. It finally discusses the ethical considerations, trustworthiness, reflexivity, limitations, and conclusions of the study.

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study research methodology. Qualitative researchers choose a case study design as "a 'bounded system' (bounded by time, context and/or place) to immerse themselves into the activities of a single person or a small number of people to obtain an intimate familiarity with their social worlds and to look for patterns in the research participants' lives, words, and actions in the context of the case." (De Vos et al, 2011:320).

This was achieved by way of immersing myself, as a researcher, into the activities of intervention programmes to learn about their perceptions of the men, and the strategies and approaches they use to transform men who abuse their intimate partners that participate in their programmes. Yin (2003) posits that "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident" (Yin, 2003:13). Although intervention programmes claim secularity, the study concurs with existing scholarship that religion cannot be separated from everyday lived experience in African society (Selvam, 2013). In this regard, it is the deep-rooted, almost invisible influence of Christian religious beliefs embedded in the intervention programme strategies and approaches when addressing the key signifiers of intimate partner abuse (IPA) namely male supremacy and female submission, which this study sought to excavate.

The case study strategy is the most appropriate methodology because my study sought "to explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for a survey or experimental strategies" (Yin, 2003:15). The unique advantage of the case study approach to research is that it "takes place through detailed, in-depth data-collection methods, involving

multiple sources of information that are rich in context" (De Vos et al, 2011:321). Consistent with qualitative case study research design, informal semi-structured interviews, participant observation and organization documents were utilized as the main data production methods. Bell & Taylor confirm that such methods are crucial "to understand the language and practices of contemporary spirituality." (2001:A3).

Given that a case study design provides for an in-depth study of a situation that ensures rich data through thick descriptions, the volumes of data that it produces can become overwhelming. To mitigate this challenge Hays posits that "the purpose in case study research is not to study everything going on in the site, but to focus on specific issues, problems, or programs" through the use of "research questions" which help the researcher to focus throughout the study. (Hays, 2004:226). I have found the research questions to provide the much-needed focus whenever I became overwhelmed by the volumes of data that was being produced.

4.2.2 Research Approach

Boonzaier & Van Niekerk posit that: "Critical qualitative methods provide the necessary tools to ask questions about responses to IPV, allowing this violence to be understood within the social, cultural, and historical context in which it occurs" (2019:30).

The principle of intersectionality as a core political tool in African feminist research enabled the much-needed critical analysis involved in understanding the multiple experiences and worldviews about race, class, gender, religion, and culture as participants seek to end IPA. The study considered the socio-political and religious-cultural "networks of power that exist within social structures and between social beings" and how participants negotiate these in their personal and professional work of transforming the men in their programmes (Kiguwa, 2019:223).

Another core principle that guided the study is the fact that feminist research is political and therefore impossible to be objective and neutral. It "seeks to be reflexive in nature and practice" (Kiguwa, 2019:226). The combination of various religious denominations, the interfaith and multi-religious personal experience, professional expertise as a programme implementer, and listening to the participants' experiences and insights, made me appreciate the amount of work needed to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon from an Afrocentric perspective which

holds enormous potential for amplifying unique approaches that Africans in religiously pervasive secular contexts have been applying to address the key signifiers of IPA. The choice of qualitative research inquiry was relevantly appropriate because it took into consideration participants' cultural experiences and perspectives that are in line with Afrocentric methodology.

As a researcher, I was mindful of my own work experience as a programme implementer, my racial, religious and gender orientations in the research project; and sought to use myself as a tool in the research process as recommended by Reviere (2001).

My past position as programme implementer and current position as founder of the South African Faith and Family Institute (a multi-faith organization that works to address the faith dimensions of IPA); together with being a black (racially classified as coloured by Apartheid designations) woman social worker, afforded me the needed access to, and rapport with, the research participants. This position enabled me to understand the various constraints and challenges under which intervention programmes do their work, which allowed for flexibility in terms of time schedules yet focused and meaningful fieldwork engagements. Interviews were conversational, and participant observation together with organization documents allowed the opportunity to learn about how intervention programmes seek to transform the men who abuse their intimate partners in a Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid secular South African context.

As the principal researcher, I followed Afrocentric research principles to ground the research process, which comprises five canons as offered by Reviere (2001) in an African language, Kiswahili, namely: *Ukweli*: refers to truth, honesty or fairness in contextualizing or grounding research in the lived experiences of communities (2001:713); *Kujitua*: researcher considers how knowledge is structured and as such being mindful of one's own beliefs and biases; and therefore researcher engages in continuous self-reflection (2001:716); *Utulivu*: Requires the researcher to focus on a procedure and application process that ensures harmony within communities (2001:717); *Ujamaa*: Requires that the researcher prioritizes and be informed by community experiences as the ultimate authority in knowledge production (2001:219); *Uhaki*: Requires that the research procedure is fair and mindful of the wellbeing of all participants whilst advancing harmonious relationships between groups (2001:720).

These principles guided me during interviews, participant observation, intervention programme activities, and the reviews of organization documentation. The research approach and process

allowed participants to reflect on, engage with and share their experiences and insights about their lived experiences on Christian religious beliefs and how they engage them during intervention programme activities. A safe space was provided for participants to explore and express their perceptions and feelings about the role of Christian beliefs regarding the key signifiers of IPA and why they address it in the ways that they do. Furthermore, participants (often for the first time in their professional work experience) gave voice to their religious and cultural beliefs which inform their perceptions of the men, and how they incorporate their beliefs to transform their male clients. In this way, participants were able to explore context-specific meanings and insights that were cultivated through their interventions to address the key signifiers of IPA. African feminism provided the lenses through which such exploration occurred.

The notion of power is central in conducting research. This is especially poignant in contexts where both the researcher and research participants share histories and experiences of colonialism and apartheid such as in this study. Keikelame & Swart (2019) point out the importance of examining issues of power throughout the research process. They report that in feminist research "the researcher is not the sole producer of knowledge – but both the researcher and the researched make equitable and valuable contributions to the research process" Keikelame & Swart (2019:3). In the study, issues of power emerged throughout the research process. Mindful of my outsider-insider position, I was particularly sensitive to facilitate a research experience of "power with" rather than "power over" approach (Wilson & Neville, 2009:76) in selecting intervention programmes and negotiating their participation in the study, access to programme designers and programme implementers for interviews, fieldwork timetables for participant observation including access to documents for the study.

I found "the feminist strand of the moral theory called 'the feminist ethics of care' and the indigenous African strand of the moral principle called 'Ubuntu'" (Hall, Du Toit & Louw, 2013:29) not only compatible but also helpful in regulating/healing my issues with power. Shutte defines that,

> Ubuntu embodies an understanding of what it is to be human and what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment. It is an ethical concept and expresses a vision of what is valuable and worthwhile in life. This vision is rooted in the history of Africa and it is at the centre of the culture of most South Africans.' (2001:2).

At the heart of the principle of Ubuntu is human dignity which is "inherently possessed by all humans, but it can be enhanced or diminished according to what the individual does or does not do within the community." (Dolamo, 2013:4).

As a researcher, drawing on the principles of Ubuntu feminism, I sought to contribute to correcting entrenched Eurocentric/western interpretations of the study of the influence of Christian beliefs about gender power relations in intervention programmes in a post-apartheid secular South African context.

Through Afrocentric and African feminist lenses, the focus was on learning and understanding how participants engaged notions of justice and care through the intervention strategies and approaches that they use to bring about transformation in the men. In other words, I was sensitive to potentially new angles from which participants sought to displace patriarchy in their context. Throughout the research process, guided by Afrocentric and feminist moral thinking, I paid attention to the various negotiations of power as expressed by research participants through their multiple identities as they related their experiences and insights on Christian beliefs, gender power relations and their intervention strategies and approaches. In this context, although challenging at times because of my insider-outsider position, I was mindful of my politics and was intentional about learning from diverse interpretations of participants' worldviews and experiences relating to the influence of Christian religious beliefs in gender power relations.

4.3. SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The study employed purposive sampling for the selection of participants, which allows researchers to use their judgement thus ensuring that selected participants best meet the aim of the study (Van Niekerk, Prenter & Fouche, 2019). The sample was purposively drawn from a small, concentrated population of Cape Town-based intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. Yin posits that purposive sampling is deliberate in selecting units that, "will yield the most relevant and plentiful data." (2011:88). Although I approached the intervention programme where I once practiced as a programme implementer for several years, that programme was not included in the study for two reasons. One reason related to my conflicting feelings about my bias since I have been co-facilitating the men's group for several years. Secondly, it felt more like I was subtly held from gaining access to the organization and programme as a researcher. The white programme manager also alluded to research fatigue on the part of their organization and the impression was created that they have quite a process going

before researchers can conduct research in the programme as the programme was going through some changes. I sensed that there was some resistance to having me, a black and former implementer coming into the organization as a researcher with a particular interest in exploring the role and influence of Christian beliefs in the programme. This did not deter me as I was particularly interested to learn more about the experiences and insights from the other three known intervention programmes. The selection of these specific intervention programmes offered different domestic violence intervention services, which included individual and couple counselling, group treatment programmes and mixed-gender community group activities.

Once potential participating intervention programmes were identified, I gained entry by initially telephonically contacting the person with whom I have had a meaningful relationship through years of working as colleagues in the field. The telephone call was to reconnect and to establish whether their organization would be open and willing to participate in the study. Telephone calls were followed up with an email to this same colleague (depending on her seniority in the organization) and/or directly the Director or Chief Executive Officer whilst copying her in the email communication. The email introduced me as the principal researcher, provided important information about the focus and purpose of the study, and formally requested permission from the organization to have its intervention programme for men who abuse their intimate partners to be participants in the study. Once each organization confirmed their willingness to participate in the study, they were asked to provide me with a letter permitting me to have their intervention programme participate in the study. Each organization provided a letter on an organizational letterhead permitting me to research with them.

Once the ethical clearance was obtained from the university authorities - around a year since the original permission was granted, plans were immediately made to start the fieldwork. As a researcher, I always kept in constant contact maintaining rapport with the identified organisations; and the receipt of the ethical clearance did not require reintroduction as I was always kept in the loop regarding the staff changes in these programmes.

The next step after receipt of the ethical clearance was to obtain face-to-face meetings with the Intervention Programme Manager or the relevant persons as directed by the manager and served the purpose of planning and the final touches on the outstanding details regarding the fieldwork. Bearing in mind that each of the three programmes had their unique programme activities happening at different timings, the meetings with the programme managers served an important

purpose of confirming which of the programme designers and implementers would participate in the study as well as how and when they would be contacted. At these meetings, we also established when certain programme activities would take place where I was invited to engage in participant observation. As a researcher, I was introduced to assigned staff who would be contact persons for data collection.

The original plan was to interview one programme designer and one programme implementer per programme. However, when I arrived at the organizations, I met a lot of changes including staff changes, new managers and so the original plans on programme activity schedules had to be reworked. As a researcher, I then redistributed the original documentation regarding the organizational permission that was granted for the research to be done. In some instances, I had more information about the history of the intervention programmes than some staff. The new changes required a lot of flexibility on my part to start the data collection process. Faced with internal challenges, I had to adapt to the reality of rescheduling fieldwork.

My awareness of the internal challenges of the concentrated intervention programmes field in recent years helped determine which programmes to select for participation in the study. Each participant was selected based on their interest to explore together with me as the researcher the role and influence of religion and culture (Christian beliefs) in intervention programmes. I was particularly sensitive on how to navigate the limitations and time constraints that accompanied the study. The data collection process was scheduled for four months and was completed with the set timelines. The interviews were conducted at participants' preferred venues, and I also attended programme activities in the communities.

4.4. METHODS OF DATA PRODUCTION

The unique benefit of the qualitative case study method to research is that it "deals with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews and observations" (Yin, 2003:8). The use of participant observation, informal semi-structured interviews together with organizational documents provided for triangulation which enhanced the rigour and credibility of the study. According to Hayes (2004:228) "The use of multiple methods and multiple sources makes case study findings not only more comprehensive but also more complicated because so many perspectives are represented." These multiple sources of data ensured that data was available to answer each research question, which is consistent with Hayes's assertion that "Not all of these sources of data were used to answer each research question, but each research question did have

multiple sources of information, as well as different methods to obtain the data." (2004:228). Baxter and Jack (2008:554), further assert that these multiple sources of data add to the credibility and rigour of the research, as the findings are strengthened because "the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case".

The value of a case study exploration strategy relates to the fact that it provides the opportunity to mitigate unexpected challenges. For example, due to unforeseen funding issues, some intervention programmes experienced strain in their ability to implement their services to their clients. Two of the three intervention programmes had experienced challenges pertaining to funding and funder expectations that directly influenced the offering of services and the strategies programmes employed; as well as the frequency with which such services could be offered. In both cases, how intervention services for men were provided, had completely changed since consent was originally obtained for their participation in the study. Yin calls this a "systems" change. Yin posits that the "systems change the aspect of the intervention…may mean that the organizations or entities administering the intervention may not necessarily remain stable over time" (2003:9). The benefits of the various sources of data methods in the qualitative case study methodology embedded in Afrocentric feminist principles and approach to the research process ensured that the objectives of the study were adequately met. This is consistent with assertions that "a good case study will want to use as many sources as possible" because "the various sources are highly complementary". (Yin, 2003:85). What follows is a discussion on the data sources that were utilized in the study.

4.4.1. Interviews

Interviews are one of the most important sources of data in case study research (Yin 2003). Interviews within Afrocentric research allow for conversation and mutual discovery between researcher and participants (Mabvurira & Makhubele, 2018). According to Yin, throughout the case study interview process, the researcher follows her "own line of inquiry" and asks "actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner" that serves the needs of the line of inquiry with key respondents (2003:90).

I interviewed three programme designers, had informal semi-structured conversational interviews with three programme managers and seven programme implementers at their respective offices at mutually agreed times during office/working hours. One of the programme designers' interviews was held at her mom's home in Stellenbosch.

At the first encounter with each participant, we first went through the research information sheet making sure that the participant fully understood the focus and objectives of the study. We then proceeded to go through the consent form to ensure that participants were fully comfortable and clear about expectations and their right to end the interview at any time. Participants were reassured about confidentiality and if they needed debriefing or counselling that such services are available to them. They were also reminded that they could direct any grievances to my supervisors and or the university authorities and the contact details on the information sheet and consent forms were pointed out to them before each interview started.

The choice of engaging in informal semi-structured interviews, was suitable because it invited participants to share their experiences, beliefs and perceptions about a phenomenon that is still regarded as controversial and complex in nature, i.e. reflecting on the role of religious belief systems during interventions with men in their programmes. Researchers make use of "informal semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic" (De Vos et al, 2011:351). The informal semi-structured interviews were conducted in person by me in the English language as agreed by participants. The conversational open-ended nature of case study interviews enables the researcher to put forward "friendly and non-threatening questions" to ascertain "facts of a matter", respondents' "opinions about events", and for their "own insights into a matter" advances Yin (2003:90).

The interviews were narrative, biographical, informal, and semi-structured in nature, which allowed me and participants to find rapport with each other, and it allowed for an easy flow of conversation guided by the interview schedule. Open-ended questions were followed by probing questions to gain deeper meaning and understanding of how research participants spoke about their identifications and experiences of the phenomenon being studied. For example, during one of the interviews, a participant offered a short response to the question relating to her upbringing and relationship with religion. The use of a probing question such as: "Would you like to say more about that?" supported the participant in going deeper which provided important insights and texture to her initial response.

The study took Afrocentric and African feminist ideas of agency during research processes seriously, as well as making the interview context a safe and relational one rather than a threatening and hierarchical interviewer-interviewee one.

The interview schedule explored the following broad themes: Introductory question themes about participant's background including religious experiences/exposure; Exploring understandings and perceptions about IPA; Explored participants' experiences of when men have drawn on Christian beliefs during programme activities; Opportunities for drawing on Christian religious beliefs as a potential resource to bring about change. Each of these themes was guided with open-ended questions which were followed up by further probing in a conversational style.

4.4.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation was one of the methods of data production in this study. Participant observation refers to "a procedure of recording and observing conditions, events, feelings, physical settings and activities through looking rather than asking" (De Vos et al, 2011). Feminist researchers use participant observation methods to "develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method" (Kawulich, 2005:3). As a researcher, I observed the activities of three Cape Town-based intervention programmes in their natural settings. Participant observation gives access to the thick detailed description and provides opportunities for the researcher to view unscheduled events (Cozby, 2009).

Jensen (2014:50) posits that a common challenge in religious traditions (and their study) relates to epistemology concerns about "knowledge of matters that are 'hidden', 'invisible', transcendent and thus 'unobservable'". As such, I observed "concepts, their use and their meanings in forms of language" and in participants' practices (Jensen, 2014:50). Jensen further notes that "unobservable 'things', such as ideas, beliefs and convictions, come to life by being translated into perceptible forms" (2014:50). Guided in this way by feminist tools, the study looked for 'thick descriptions' (Jensen, 2014) of intentions and meanings that participants give to their ideas, concepts, convictions and actions relating to notions of power and the key signifiers of IPA during the research data production process. I was particularly interested in how power dynamics are performed, navigated, and negotiated in the spaces where activities are taking place and their meanings about reifying ideas of headship and submission. I was mindful of my presence and how it influences the power dynamics throughout the research process.

4.4.3. Documents

This study made use of relevant organization documents as one of the sources for data production. Some of these documents included the review of training manuals, research reports, client files, intervention reports, annual reports, newspaper articles and audio-visual documentaries. I have found these sources useful to "collaborate or elaborate data from other sources" such as interviews and participant observation and versa vice (Hays, 2004:229).

4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

There is no fixed data analysis process, it is custom-built, revised and "choreographed" as it evolves (Cresswell, 1998:142). Furthermore, it is an ongoing process throughout data collection and research report writing process in Qualitative studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Making sense of large volumes of data can be an overwhelming experience for qualitative case study researchers. Hays posits that the research questions is the qualitative case study researcher's guide. Hays points out that "all of the data need to be taken apart while the researcher is looking for relationships" after which it must be "reassembled to tell the story of the case." (Hays, 2004:232). Furthermore, the "process requires data reduction as the data is analyzed with the purpose being to sort out, focus, and reorganize data that allows for concluding." (Hays, 2004:232).

Consistent with feminism, "Afrocentric analysis is a critique of hierarchy and patriarchy because the analysis stems from all forms of oppression" (Asante, 2013:106).

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The thematic data analysis process involved a systematic process of data immersion which involved reading and re-reading through all the transcriptions of the interviews, observational notes, and documents as well as listening to audio recordings several times throughout the process. The coding process involved colour labelling of similar emerging patterns of statements, ideas and experiences that emerged from the data. This was followed by the development of themes, defining, and naming of themes as suggested by Hess-Biber and Leavy (2010), and Braun & Clarke (2006). As the main themes and categories were developed, it was consistently checked against the research questions for relevance to address the feeling of being overwhelmed by the large volume of data that emerged. Refinement of themes involved a process of member checking. The process of member checking was done through follow up conversations telephonically or in-person based on times convenient for

selected participants, and through the assistance of an independent qualified researcher who critically read through developing themes. This process helped with re-grouping common themes to come up with the main themes.

The identifying and naming of themes culminated in the development of a thematic map. Since the study was conducted through Afrocentric and feminist principles, it was important to align the definition and naming of themes with these theoretical frameworks. This was done by re-visiting the main principles of these theories and identifying how it relates to the main themes and vice versa.

4.6. REFLEXIVITY

The role and influence of the researcher on the research must be considered and addressed to mitigate ethical dilemmas. Reflexivity is a fundamental strategy in qualitative research. Finefter-Rosenbluh offers the following three methodological steps to be considered "within reflexivity: (a) activating the mental process of perspective taking, (b) anchoring own perspective and dissecting the perspective of others, and (c) equilibrium—negotiating different understandings without imposing commonly shared meanings." (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017:9).

From the onset of this study, I was aware of my positionality as an insider and the accompanying perspectives that I bring as a colleague to the study. For example, I was mindful that throughout the journey since the early 1990s of working at the nexus of religion and gender-based violence (GBV) in our context where there's been not only ambivalence but resistance about formally engaging the faith dimensions of GBV and working with men who abuse women in intimate relationships. As part of a search for deeper understanding, I had the opportunity to complete the Duluth training in the USA in 2001 and subsequently helped to facilitate a conversation between colleagues in the USA and SA about intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners as an important strategy in our common commitment to eradicate violence against women. I then had the opportunity to work as a programme implementer in one of the oldest intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in Cape Town, South Africa for about 7 years. Another consideration during the conceptualization and planning of the research project was the awareness that I was a founding member of one of the few organizations that work with religious leaders and faith communities on addressing the faith dimensions and root causes of men's violence against women.

What this all meant was that the intervention programmes that participated in this study, would be organizations that I have worked within one form or another over the years. I would have worked with them either through my earlier work in a shelter for women and children who became destitute because of GBV/IPA or through direct collaboration on various projects or campaigns to raise awareness and/or address advocacy concerns pertaining to legislative reform through the few robust networks on violence against women in the Western Cape and South Africa. It is important though to note that my direct involvement as programme implementer in one of the programmes ended sometime around 2007, but I kept in contact with the few programmes through meetings conferences, etc.

In recent years there has been growing calls by civil society for interventions with men who perpetrate GBV/IPA. There has also been a growing interest in the studying of the few intervention programmes and as such, I was aware of the potential research fatigue that would be a result of navigation into the few and usually under-resourced intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

Although there was an opportunity to include the intervention programme where I worked as a programme implementer, I decided against it for two main reasons: Firstly, I wanted to engage in the study from a reasonably fresh perspective and learn from the intervention programmes that I have not worked in as implementer. Secondly, as a researcher, I wanted to minimize potential ethical dilemmas that would have accompanied my own experiences, knowledge and biases about the programme based on my work experience in it. This concern was sensed during my initial exploration about their potential participation in the study with this programme in that the programme manager alluded to them experiencing research fatigue. Mindful of the principles of African feminism as embodied practice, I made every effort not to use coercion during the recruitment and sampling process of the study. The choice to not have this programme participate in the study, strengthened my relationship with them as it felt more appropriate to retain the relationship as it was. In this way, as a researcher, I tried "to minimize the extent by which my insiderness would undermine my research" and the very small field of intervention programmes in Cape Town (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017:5).

4.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For researchers such as myself to conduct research "in parts of the world with histories of colonial entanglements…within which we are enmeshed", the politics of ethical considerations in research must be understood within the context that "these spaces have been historically constructed through notions of one 'Truth', the universality of Euro-American-centric thought, religious fundamentalism, colonialism and nationalism." (Millora, Maimunah & Still, 2020:26). Afrocentric and feminist values guided the complex navigations involved in ethical decision-making as insider-outsider throughout the research process. This was done through regular consultations with my supervisors, my participation in a cohort of research students and academics, 'critical' conversations with colleagues, member checking and journaling.

Millora et al. point out that as researchers "we come to the field with multiple, intersecting 'identities'" and that the concept of insider-outsider is fluid. They suggest that it might be more helpful "to think of the hyphen that separates and connects the two concepts" as a "'dwelling place for people'" (Millora et al, 2020:15). While this insider-outsider dwelling place left me as a researcher in a continuous state of uncertainty, Afrocentric and Feminist values of care, compassion and respect for the agency and humanity of the participants and researcher, provided the much-needed holding space for co-production of knowledge. As Mabvurira and Makhubele posit, "for a very long time, Africans have been researched from a Western standpoint using Western methodologies, some of which do not recognise beliefs, values, traditions, mores, and taboos that are central in African life." (2018:12)

The negotiation of informed consent formed an essential part of the research process. For example, in some instances programme implementers felt obliged yet uncomfortable to participate in the study; and others felt that the sensitive nature of their interventions with their male clients did not allow for me to conduct participant observation. Since ethical consideration requires that consent must be informed and participation must be voluntary, these potential participants' desires were respected and as such their agency and humanity were affirmed.

In the first example, the "coloured" woman programme implementer agreed that I could attend as a participant-observer of her programme activity, but that she was not available to be interviewed. In the second scenario, the "black" woman programme implementer agreed to an interview but did not agree to me observing her programme activities. In both these scenarios, awareness of my insider-outsider situatedness kept me mindful of the sensitive nature of working

with men who abuse their intimate partners, and the sensitivity of discussing the role that participants' religious orientations have on their work as programme implementers in a post-apartheid secular South African context.

Negotiating access through securing appointments and obtaining some organizational documents were at times a challenge. Although I was able to negotiate successfully for the research process to be conducted as agreed, it did not always come easy as intervention programmes were handling their internal challenges and could at times not stick to scheduled appointments; and some staff members did not always provide the documentation such as reports as agreed. At times awareness of cancelled appointments only came to my attention because I wanted to confirm logistics.

As a researcher, I was mindful of the relational ethics (between us as colleagues) long after the completion of the research project and wanted to ensure that research decision making strengthened our relationships. In this regard, the Afrocentric and ubuntu feminist values of accountability and care enabled me to consider what Millora et al describe as "relational ethics in research that acknowledges and negotiates reciprocity within research relationships; and confronts uncomfortable positionalities that while always fluid, must also be understood as being part of broader and historically (re)produced power dynamics." (2020:12). A key issue in working with men who abuse their intimate partners is to embody in practical terms ways of transforming coercive power and control dynamics into a more ubuntu-based egalitarian dynamic where accountability, care and compassion are emphasized. I had the opportunity for the cultivation of mutual respect and agency between researcher and participants.

4.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter described the methodological approach that was taken in this study. It reflected on the various aspects of the research project and process, which included how I applied qualitative case study in Afrocentric and African feminist theoretical paradigms. Furthermore, the data collection process, analysis and ethical considerations were outlined.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS - 1

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is one of three that present the emerging themes from the data about how secular identifying intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners navigate Christian contexts in addressing the key signifiers of IPA. While a detailed overview of the research design and methods are provided in the Methodology chapter, this chapter includes the profile of the three research participants and their intervention programmes; and it presents themes that relate to the first research objective: To identify Christian beliefs present in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for perpetrators of IPA.

5.2. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Two of the three participating intervention programmes form part of a range of other services offered by the organizations that house them. The following table is an overview of the profiles of the organizations, the intervention programmes including the programme designers and programme implementers that participated in the study.

Profile of Organization and Intervention Programme: **(Organization 1)**
A Community-based Private Practice treatment programme working with domestic violence and sex offenders since 1988. Based in a Psychiatric Facility, the private practice is one of the leading treatment programmes that specializes in male sex offenders and regards it as a crucial aspect of Intimate partner abuse and domestic violence. Its founder is a clinical social worker. She is a leading specialist and nationally and internationally acclaimed sex crime expert and has been instrumental in the development of the small but growing field of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in South Africa. The private practice offers forensic evaluation and risk-based assessments of men who have been convicted for child sexual molestation. The practice developed and facilitates community-based sex offender programmes in prisons for low – medium risk sex offenders as well as treatment to court-mandated sex offenders in a private community-based program. The intervention/treatment programme adopts an eclectic approach that includes cognitive behavioural aspects, skills development, and lifestyle intervention. (Londt & Roman 2014:2). Men who participate in the bi-weekly treatment group are referred as part of their parole obligations, others are court-mandated as part of their sexual offence sentence, with a few who attend voluntarily. Men participate in a screening process to assess suitability and openness towards the programme. Once successfully screened, an agreement of compliance is signed between the participant, the programme, and the court.

The treatment becomes part of the participant's sentence. Men who are considered not suited for the treatment programme are normally incarcerated. The programme is conducted for approximately 36 months to 5 years and even beyond, depending on the court mandate (a research report by Nilsson, 2009).

Programme A

Profiles of Programme Designers and Implementers

Role in Programme & Identifying details	Formal Education & Training in Interventions on intimate partner abusive men	Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men	Religious Exposure & Orientation	Current Religious Stance/Status	Pseudonym
Programme Designer & Implementer **Intimate Relationship Status** Married **Gender Identifications:** Female **Old SA Racial Classifications** "Coloured" or "Mixed" Parents were among the *de-classified whites* Parents had multiple identity documents – 6 between the two of them. Mother initially classified as European and reclassified as mixed "*because there were too many dark skinned Europeans." "Father came from a white background and in order for him to get married he had to change his identity*	PhD in Social Work As a novice social worker: Self-taught in working with men who abuse their intimate partners and child sex offenders; developed programme material, conducted own research and participated in training in SA, USA & Australia	Since 1982 - present First exposed to domestic violence & child sex offences whilst working at her first job as a social worker at a Christian-based Children's Home	As a child she was passionately involved in and governed by her own sense of God and her own expression of Faith; Very involved in church activities as a young person; wayside Sunday school teacher; Contemplated becoming ordained in the church Exposure to Anglican, Methodist, Brethren Her defiance of strict church rules resulted in her and her husband *being kicked out of the Brethren Church*	"*Not Religion but Spirituality informs my work"* *I would like to think my personal and professional beliefs around spirituality, spiritual growth are not mechanically separated. You cannot be one and not the other.* *Does not entertain religion and issues of faith in treatment programmes*	PD-1

or else it would have been a contravention at that time. So he got white, he got non-European and then he got mixed. And all of those documents were linked to getting married to my mother and in buying property"					
Role in Programme & Identifying details	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions on intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudonym**
Programme Implementer **Intimate Relationship** **Status** Married **Gender Identifications:** Male **Old SA Racial Classifications** Coloured	Matric Became a Prison warder	Since 1979 (40 years) – Gang Expert After apartheid – in 1995 at Correctional Services, PI-1 was instrumental in establishing a Sex Offences Programme for prisoners	Identify as a staunch Lutheran throughout childhood & adult life	*I would not officially bring religion into therapy because I don't want to become blurred* Boundaries are crucial thus preferably keep personal faith & work separately	PI-1

Profile of Organization and Intervention Programme:

(Organization 2)

The intervention programme is one of a range of services provided by the only national crime prevention and intervention non-profit organization in South Africa. The organization was established in 1910 "in search for effective and lasting solutions to combating crime and the creation of a safe, healthy and crime-free South Africa" (Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:5). Its founder(s) have their roots in the criminal justice system and reference is made to its link with Salvation Army during its inception phase. The organization regards crime as a social problem that threatens democracy, good governance and individual rights (Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:5). The organization was instrumental in introducing the concept of Restorative Justice (RS) as an alternative approach to sentencing in South Africa. The organization subscribes to the United Nation's definition of Restorative Justice as "Restorative Justice is a problem-solving approach to crime which involves the parties themselves and the community generally in an active relationship with statutory agencies" (Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:10). The organization's RJ manual affirms that:

> *In a restorative justice framework, concepts like authority, responsibility and accountability become concrete applications involving all who are affected by crime, rather than abstract and unrealistic expectations externally imposed upon offenders. Restorative justice refocuses efforts on repairing and mending harm caused by offending, rather than mere punishment. Inclusion is an underlying value that brings and keeps those most affected by crime at the forefront of decision-making processes.* (Restorative Group Conferencing – Putting the wrong right: Implementing Manual)

The organization's Restorative Group Conferencing – Putting the wrong right: Implementing Manual further states that "restorative and community-oriented processes present potential for increased responsiveness to victims and communities, while creating environments that motivate offenders to understand the harmful impact of their behaviour and take responsibility for repairing the harm they cause." Furthermore "communities are invited to and encouraged to actively participate in partnership with the justice system, to promote community safety and vitality, and the restoration of broken relationships caused by crime" (Restorative Group Conferencing: Putting the wrong right – Implementation Manual:5). An information brochure details that the organization offers four service streams – crime prevention, diversion (diverting people from the criminal justice system offering them an alternative to a conviction and criminal record), non-custodial sentencing (an alternative to prison) and offender reintegration. These comprehensively focus on raising awareness, changing behaviour and assisting offenders.

According to the Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit (2010) which describes the organization's service, its philosophy and theories, all the organization's programmes are grounded in the principles of Restorative Justice which include:

> *Do no further harm*
> *Respect and listen to the voice of the victim*
> *Repair the harm/damage caused*
> *Clear the path to change*
> *Take responsibility for actions*
> *Allow human connections to take place* (Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:10)

Furthermore, all interventions offered by the organization are aimed at:

> *Encouraging and promoting community participation and community building,*
> *Offering people-centred development opportunities,*
> *Making the offender aware of the harm caused to the victim(s),*
> *Holding the offender accountable for his/her behaviour and actions,*
> *Assisting offenders to take responsibility on an individual level,*
> *Involving all those affected in the criminal justice process,*
> *Considering and addressing the needs of victims, and*
> *Nurturing a culture that values personal morality and encourages accountability and responsibility* (Non-Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:7).

The Intervention Programme (Programme B):

The terms offender and perpetrator in the programme is used interchangeably with men who abuse their intimate partners. The Intervention Programme is adapted from and informed by the USA-based Duluth Model of power and control, and the educational aspects of the South African Victim Empowerment Programme manual. The programme is based on the belief that perpetrators use violence to control their partners. The ethos of the programme suggests that violence exists due to socialization and gender stereotyping. The pro-feminist-oriented intervention programme in existence for over 20 years in sync with the belief that people who display violent behaviour lack social and

interpersonal skills and that such people suffer from poor emotional and impulse control; the programme focuses on teaching perpetrators, for example, anger management and conflict resolution skills. Initially, the programme was conducted over 16 weeks and was subsequently adapted to include topics in greater depth over a 21-week period. At the time of my study, the closed group programme was offered once or twice per week over 8 weeks depending on the availability of the men and the organization's ability to secure a suitably accessible venue. Whilst male-female co-facilitation was preferred it was not always possible because of funding constraints and difficulty in securing male co-facilitators (Padayachee 2011:74).

Programme Objectives:

To reduce the incidence and break the cycle of intimate partner violence (IPV) through the implementation of effective, innovative therapeutic programmes for perpetrators and the provision of support services for their victims and children. The programme holds perpetrators systematically accountable for their violent and abusive behaviour. It is focused on contextually understanding the root causes of violence and ultimately, bringing about sustained, lasting behavioural change (Custodial Sentencing Stakeholder Toolkit 2010:14).

Programme B:

Profiles of Programme Designers and Implementers

Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men	Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men	Religious Exposure & Orientation	Current Religious Stance	Pseudonym
Programme Designer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single **Old SA Racial Classifications:** Indian	Social Work Degree Human Resource management Masters in Criminology *on perpetrator work* *We brought like Marcel came in to do some training with us. Sexual offence but it was also perpetrators of intimate partner violence. We have other training, international trainers that came I went to do it, visit Duluth and other domestic Violence programs in the U.S. So, basically I cannot say that I have a certificate. Ok, then my Masters in on that, but that's how I learnt and then*	Witnessed childhood violence of dad abusing mom - *I was born into a family where there was domestic violence and I think that's the heart of where the motivation comes from.* Since 1995 i.e. 24 years' work experience in organization. Occupied the following positions: National Manager: advocacy & lobbying, National Coordinator: programme Design, National Community Victim Support Specialist	Exposed to and participated in Hindu (dad's faith) and mom's Catholic faith traditions during childhood; Exposed to: Charismatic Christian faith in adulthood. Identify as a born-again Christian *Now I am following the Holy Spirit…so I'm a Believer – a Disciple of Jesus, I don't truly believe in denomination I like being in a Pentecostal environment, but I am believing in the Holy Spirit. I am a Spirit Believer*	Charismatic *I love God So, faith is very important to me and ja it's the lense through which I view the world*	PD-2

	obviously relating it to my own experience and another very critical gap that is children that are exposed to domestic violence.		*I think religion has rules and laws that is very dangerous*		
Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single Mother **Old SA Racial Classifications:** Coloured	Matric, Management Accounting; Dental assistance Social Work degree: obtained in 2009	Since 2014 (5 years)	Exposed to various Christian traditions including mom's Anglican, dad's African Faith Mission (AFM); family thereafter embraced the Pentecostal church Both parents were ordained as pastors in the Thessalonian Missionary Church. PI-2 left the church because since they were unsupportive of her interest in studying theology to follow ordination	Committing to the boundaries of Social Work training and "*not to overstep the boundaries when it comes to clients and their faith""* *Will engage it only if the client brings it up*	PI-2
Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudo nym**
Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Male **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single	Social Worker (2013) Adhoc Domestic Violence training workshops; and Trained in the organization's Intervention Manual	Since 2014 (5years)	Raised in a Christian family and grew up with my mom's Zion Church values, norms and teachings of respect and discipline. At university became born again and joined the charismatic church	Charismatic / Pentecostal Christian Adhere to social work boundaries; only address religion when a client brings it up	PI-3

Old SA Racial Classifications: Black / African / Xhosa					
Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudo nym**
Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single **Old SA Racial Classifications:** Black / African / Xhosa	Social Work (2014) Adhoc Domestic Violence training workshops; and Trained in the organization's Intervention Manual	Since 2016 (3years) Focused on community work contextually in South Africa	Exposed to dad's Presbyterian Church of Africa and mom's Ethiopian Church; attended Anglican Church with an aunt, and at varsity attended church periodically not for religious purposes but occupy herself	Adhoc visits to the Anglican church *Won't go to church if I don't have to*	PI-4
Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudo nym**

Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single **Old SA Racial Classifications:** Coloured	Social Work No Domestic Violence training except Orientation on the Manual	Since 2018. No exposure to group facilitation Conducted assessments and counselling with men who were referred to the Programme Her volunteering with children became the catalyst to registering for a Social Work degree. She was motivated by people who experienced childhood trauma. This is based on her own experience as her aunt was killed by her husband, and thereafter he killed himself. The family chose to be silent about the incident.	Childhood exposure to Anglican Church but she stopped upon death of her grandfather. Mother belongs to the Dutch Reformed Church. Has no interest in Church but visits different churches when invited by friends.	*Don't need to go to church to be religious*	PI-5

Profile of Intervention Programme C and its Organization (Organization 3)

Organization 3 was established in 1993 and is an organization with an in-depth understanding of and expertise in violence against women, domestic & sexual violence advocacy, and sexual reproductive health. It is a community based, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a specific **focus on preventing and reducing abuse and domestic violence, particularly for women and youth living in disadvantaged communities**. The organization's main objectives include increased availability and accessibility to high quality, integrated services for survivors of abuse and domestic violence. (Annual Report 2013/2014).

Organization 3 started with its training in July 1995 with "grassroots" women who were mostly survivors of abuse and domestic violence from targeted areas. Most of them remain Social Auxiliary Workers and Court Workers in those same areas while representing the vision and mission of Organization 3. A year later the second group of women were trained as the need for services increased. Its founder noted: "Organization 3 was the only organization that I know of that trained all its staff members in a specifically designed one-year training programme and then only allowed those who reached the required standard of excellence to be part of the organization and work with clients." (2013/2014:5).

One of the female clients/staff members said: "I came to Organization 3 a month after my divorce – which came after 13 years of abuse. At 27 years old and with three children, I was broken and directionless. I had no education; I had never worked, and I had literally lost my voice. I spent my first years here studying to be a community worker, then served at the Mitchells Plain court for seven years. Through all this time our founding director was like a mother to me and all my sisters at Organization 3. She taught us how to set and enforce boundaries. Thanks to the tough love I learned here, I was able to succeed as a single mom…Surely it was God's greater plan and purpose that I found Organization 3. At first, it was just a job, but it became a place of healing. I found my voice, my strength

and my courage here. I have become an agent of change, a fighter for women's rights, an encourager and a healer." (Annual Report 2013/2014:2).

Organization 3's Values are *Respect • Confidentiality and Commitment • Social integration • Gender equality • People-centred • Accountability, Integrity and Honesty • Caring and supporting the dignity of all • Positive outlook and enjoy life and work, and balance it • Diversity, non-judgemental and non-discrimination • Servicing the needs of abused people • Building of the strength of the Family* (Annual Report 2013/2014:3).

The Intervention Programme is one of several services that this community-based non-government organization offers to prevent and reduce abuse and domestic violence, particularly for women and youth living in disadvantaged communities. The organization was established in 1993, is unique in that it was the first organization in the Western Cape to start working with domestic violence complainants directly at the Courts. According to a funder's report, **the organization accepts that abuse and VAW are deeply rooted and is at the core of rights violation against women and girls in South Africa**. **It is systemic in communities, institutions, and cultures.** The organization's vision is to create a society in which gender-based violence is eradicated (May 2019, Funder Report). The organization strives **to change attitudes about gender norms, create a culture in which women and girls are respected as full human beings through training and advocacy**.

As noted from the organization's website, services are conducted in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa and a service in French with the main focus areas as follows:

> *Healing people by supporting them and empowering them to make their own decisions*
>
> *Restoring self-confidence, pride and self-respect;*
>
> *Operating within a strict code of conduct with moral and humanitarian principles;*
>
> *Recognising the important role of faith in the healing process while accepting all religious beliefs without bias; and*
>
> *Maintaining strong support systems within the organisation and within communities.*

All support services are designed according to clients' needs and are culturally appropriate. Its community-based approach facilitates accessibility for clients. The organization's Court Workers operate in 16 Domestic Violence Courts in the Cape Metropole and surrounding rural towns. The organization's head office houses a Skills Training kitchen, a Training Centre and a Sexual Reproductive Health Clinic. The male counselling and prevention programme includes services to men and supports men as partners in the healing process.

The Intervention Programme – Programme C

In 2007 the organization in partnership with a donor in/from the Netherlands and a domestic violence service organization in Indonesia developed an intervention programme for men who abuse their intimate partners: the Male Counselling programme together with the Toolkit for Men: **Male Counselling in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence**. The Toolkit for Men consists of a Counsellor's Workbook, a Counselling Guide, a Facilitator's Guide, and a Trainer's Guide that was launched in South Africa by Organization 3 in 2011. It offers a structured programme of **12 individual counselling sessions**, and it is available to organizations that aim to offer counselling services to men who use violence (organization's website). According to the organization's 2008/2009 annual report, the Male Counselling Programme is rooted in the belief that:

> *Many men experience an inner conflict between forsaking the traditional role of being a real man (masculinity) – defined by domination and aggression – and a new, still to be defined male identity. Abusive men can be perceived as products of a system that emphasises male domination and aggressiveness and does not allow men to be vulnerable and weak* (2008/2009:11).

To mitigate the inner conflict experienced by targeted men**, the programme uses the neutral term male clients rather than abusers or perpetrators**. The Male Counselling programme is also based on the ethos that "women won't be able to radically transform their situation as long as their intimate partners won't change. Involvement of the abusive male partner is seen as crucial to save relationships and stop intimate partner violence. The Counselling Programme is targeted at men who have [sic] a desire to become respectful partners as opposed to being abusive

and violent towards their female intimate partners." Since its launch and implementation, the Male Counselling Programme has experienced various financial challenges and has since been offered less frequently.

The Male Counselling Programme aims to help men who are violent in their intimate relationships to change their behaviour so that they become respectful partners. The men who participate in this programme work towards the following outcomes:

- Exercising control over their violent behaviour;
- Personal growth in understanding of themselves, their self-esteem, confidence and self-control;
- An improved relationship with their partners;
- Better relationships with their children;
- Avoidance of more drastic punitive interventions such as protection orders and incarceration (Toolkit for Men: Guidelines, Adaptation and Implementation 2012:9)

In January 2013 the organization revised the men's programme in the form of workshops that focused on gender-based violence education. These workshops were directed at participants in targeted areas of the City of Cape Town where high levels of violence were evident. These targeted communities included Philippi, Mitchells' Plain, Delft, Langa and Lavender Hill. These one / two-day workshops culminate into a graduation ceremony to acknowledge the men who completed the programme. The men who complete the workshops, receive certificates and they share their experiences and the impact of the programme on their lives (July 2019 Funder Report). The domestic violence awareness workshops directed at men include the following themes:

- *Engaging participants on their understanding of abuse, violence and attitudes about violence in general.*
- *Value Clarification*
- *empathy building process*
- *Safety Planning*
- *The graduation* (July 2019 Funder Report).

At the time of research, the organization was in the process of implementing the men's programme in various communities and I had the opportunity to observe one such workshop and one graduation ceremony.

Programme C

Profiles of Programme Designers and Implementers

Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men	Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men	Religious Exposure & Orientation	Current Religious Stance	Pseudonym
Programme Designer: **Gender Identifications:** Female	Social Work & Psychological Therapist Addiction Recovery and Stress Release Self-Taught and through own research in working with men who abuse	Did not realize that she was in an abusive relationship until her first job as a Social Worker in a shelter for women.	Mother converted to Catholicism for dad and they were regular attendees. Dad was very emotionally abusive. Also exposed to	Spiritually orientated "*There is truth in all these faiths that point to real transformation"* "*Working with Christian men, I would use their religious beliefs and their quotes from their bible"*	PD-3

Intimate Relationship **Status:** Divorced twice **Old SA Racial Classifications:** White (English)	their intimate partners		Anglican Church As a teenager while at boarding school, became a born-again Christian Married at 21 and joined husband at Assemblies of God – a Charismatic Church. The husband was abusive, but the Church offered no assistance. She finally left the Church and got divorced. The second marriage was also abusive. Turned to a Quest for Spirituality after 2nd marriage		
Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudonym**

Programme Implementer (she's implementer as well as Programme Manager) **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Single **Old SA Racial Classifications:** Coloured	Social Work and Programme Manager	No specific personal motivation. It came with being a social worker in this organization	Childhood: an inclusive Christian environment. *Not one of submission and possessiveness and one of oppression*	"*I believe in God. I believe in Jesus Christ"* "*There is a place for Christian Beliefs… because people still see spirituality, Christianity, religion as a source of hope"* Will include only if the Client brings it up in session.	PI-6
Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	**Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men**	**Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men**	**Religious Exposure & Orientation**	**Current Religious Stance**	**Pseudonym**
Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Widow **Old SA Racial Classifications** Black / African / Xhosa	Social Auxiliary Work Intensive and ongoing training by the organization including the various manuals	Since 1995 (24 years)	"Pentecostal but I believe that Everyone is the same. And even the traditional healer believe in God" She is a Pastor in her church.	Respect clients' beliefs Clear Boundaries and Sensitive to other people's religion/Faith *But when I sense there's an evil spirit, I will ask the client about their church life and whether they pray or believe in the ancestors* Include prayer into counselling sessions Uses indigenous religious resources during counselling – sometimes initiated by the counsellor and occasionally by the client	PI-7

Role in Programme & Identifying Particulars	Formal Education & Training in Interventions with intimate partner abusive men	Background / Motivation & Experience in Working with intimate partner abusive men	Religious Exposure & Orientation	Current Religious Stance	Pseudonym
Programme Implementer **Gender Identifications:** Female **Intimate Relationship** **Status:** Married **Old SA Racial Classifications** Black / African / Xhosa	Social Auxiliary Work Counsellor Intensive & ongoing training by the organization including the various manuals	Since 1995 (24 years)	Childhood: Anglican (my father's church) Adulthood: moved to St John's Apostolic Church and "*There was this calling by the ancestors"* *I have a calling to be a traditional healer* Present: Transkei Zion Christian Church "*Whilst there's a calling on my life – in our beliefs as Africans, a woman cannot be a pastor"*	Struggling with her calling as a Pastor and revelations from her ancestors during counselling sessions Excuse self from the counselling session – "*Then while I'm having water I'm praying to God that no, this is not the time. And then I talk to the ancestors, wena please stop it now*" "*Only when the client brings it up, I will go there*	PI-8

Discussion of Participant Profile Table

- **Demographics**

Questions about participants' civil status revealed that three participants were married in contexts where they flourished, one divorced twice as a result of IPA, one was widowed while five were

never married and one was a single mother. Both programme designer and implementer in Programme A were found to be married with a long history of working with men who abuse their intimate partners. The programme designer who was divorced twice was also born into a family where her father was abusive towards her mother. She reported that her work with male clients related to her search for meaning-making and possibly healing her relationships with her father and abusive ex-husbands. The programme designer who was never married but grew up in a home where her father abused her mother tended to have strong compassion for men who abuse their intimate partners. She stressed the importance of recognizing that all human beings including male perpetrators of IPA were created in the image of God and that they also possessed innate worth and dignity. She believed that through the employment of faith resources male clients have a chance of being transformed.

Furthermore, from the eleven participants, only two men were found to be programme implementers. The one revealed that he landed in this role because it came with his responsibility as a social worker while the PI-1 reported that he was approached by PD-1 because of his extensive experience of working with men in the prison system. The latter seemed more committed to the cause while the former saw his role as programme implementer as one of his tasks. While all the programme designers indicated the importance of co-ed facilitation as a preferred strategy in working with men who abuse their intimate partners, programme managers reported that it was a challenge to recruit suitable male programme implementers. Further research is needed to understand this phenomenon. Of further interest is the fact that the male-led gender-justice organization, Sonke who partnered with Programme C did have male programme implementers. Of further interest is that when the Sonke male workshop facilitators worked with the female programme implementers, they asked their female colleagues to not see themselves as women but as men because the workshop attendees were all male. Even though the female programme implementers humorously complied for the sake of advancing gender equality, this can also be seen as a missed opportunity on the part of the male gender-justice workshop facilitators to interrupt the patriarchal dehumanization of women in the context of the work. This scenario will be analyzed further later in this report.

- **Christian Roots:**

Evident from the profile table is that all participants were trained within the social work profession either as social workers or social auxiliary workers, and that Christianity played a

defining role in their lives personally and professionally. I did not set out to look for participants with Christian experience but found that all the participants grew up in Christian homes. They represented a variety of religious experiences and perspectives ranging from Protestantism (including Charismatics and Pentecostals), African Traditional Religions, and Hinduism to those identifying as spiritual and not religious. Participants' Christian experiences and perspectives were found to have influenced their lives both professionally and personally which is consistent with an Afrocentric understanding of being human. This finding confirms what scholars have said about the prevalence of the Christian faith in South Africa (Leatt, 2017), the profound influence of religion in the lives of people in general (Lafolette, 2007) and Africans in particular (Mbiti, 1969). Moreover, the intersection of Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam (and other religions) are also of particular relevance in the South African lived experience (Oden, 2007).

- **Social Work**

The social work profession was found to be foundational for most participants. Programme designers were all trained social workers. One holds a master's degree in social work, another a master's degree in criminology and the other one holds a Doctoral degree in Clinical Social Work. Five programme implementers hold social work degrees, two are trained social auxiliary workers and the other has matric plus over 40 years' experience of working as a correctional service official and Counsellor. In most instances, participants indicated that social work was not necessarily their first choice, but they believe that it found them:

I never thought of social work… I wanted to help bring about change and help people cope with everyday challenges in life…so social work chose me (PI-3).

Another participant reported: *Social work was my third choice. It's amazing how one's life is guided. Now I don't want to be anything else. I am thankful for my social work journey. Social Work provides the ability to look at things from a systems perspective.* (PD-2)

In other instances, some participants such as PD-1 and PI-2 felt drawn to ministry in the church, but they ended up in the social work profession. While PI-2 held some resentment for not being allowed to follow her desire of studying theology and become ordained, PD-1 felt that being kicked out of the church was a blessing in disguise. Being classified 'coloured' prevented PD-1 from following her first choice of becoming a vet and alienation from the church significantly contributed to her becoming a social worker. She believes that it is not by chance that she ended

up in the social work profession and working with male sex offenders and men who abuse their intimate partners:

My work was predetermined. I was always reaching out and helping those who were struggling. I was 9/10 years old and always drawn to helping children and people in need of care (PD-1).

Most participants believed that having ended up in the social work profession and doing the work that they do, were divinely orchestrated. From the discussion above it is not surprizing to find the link between participants' Christian roots and their being in the social work profession. As Van Hook et al point out that religion is often "a primary motivating force behind many social workers' commitment to serve people." (2002:4). In this regard according to Van Hook et al "Social work has become a means for expressing fundamental moral imperatives that arise from one's spiritual experiences and convictions." (2002:4). During the colonial and apartheid era in South Africa, "social work activities" were closely linked to religion as a form of social control (Smith, 2014:313). Mindful of the controversy around religion in that its authority has been used as a powerful force in social control and oppression, its liberating quality continues to be a central reality in the lives of many people the world over. The word *authority*, according to Webster's dictionary, is defined as "the power to influence or command thought, opinion or behaviour." (1987:117). From the profile table, it is evident that participants – based on their personal experiences with religion and spirituality, have different views about its usefulness during treatment/intervention. The authority that participants carry to decide whether to integrate religion into intervention programmes or not have far-reaching implications for their male clients and their women intimate partners and families that look to these programmes to find lasting solutions for IPA in religiously pervasive South Africa.

The organizations' origins, objectives, and values about the approaches employed in intervention programmes offer important insights into the beliefs that they hold about their clients. These intervention approaches coupled with the beliefs that programme designers and implementers hold about integrating religion provide important insights into the programmes' contribution to entrenching or deterring the key signifiers of intimate partner abuse (IPA).

The following central themes emanated from the transcripts, organization documents and participant observation that guides the presentation of the data analysis:

5.3. CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Although the organizations and the intervention programmes they emanate from, mainly identified as secular / non-religious, the Christian religiously pervasive South African context in which they exist, spilt over and made traces of explicit and/or implicit religion impossible to ignore. According to Bailey, religion "continues to provide the frame for living secularly" and that "both religion and the secular are means to ends, even in contemporary society" (1997:6). Of interest was to ascertain the influence of the Christian religiously pervasive context within which intervention programmes seek to end IPA.

To mitigate the understating or overstating of the role and influence of religion in these intervention programmes and the organizations that they emanate from, I have used Sider & Unruh's (2004) inductively derived sixfold typology framework of social service and educational organizations and programmes based on their religious characteristics. Their framework "focuses on the tangible expressive ways that religion may manifest in a non-profit entity." (Sider & Unruh, 2004:109). The sixfold typologies and their features are described by Sider & Unruh (2004:119 - 120) in the following table:

Typology of Organization	**Features of religious characteristics**
Faith permeated	faith is evident at all levels
Faith centred	founded for religious purpose, *and* programs incorporate explicitly religious messages and activities
Faith-affiliated	retain some of the influence of their religious founders, but do not require staff to affirm religious beliefs, programs are intentional about conveying religious messages through nonverbal acts of compassion and care
Faith-background	organizations tend to look and act secular, although they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition, and programs have no

	explicitly religious content aside from their possible location in a religious setting
Faith-secular	a secular (or faith-background) entity joins with one or more congregations or other explicitly religious organizations, typically secular in its administration but relies on the religious partners, and programming typically has no explicitly religious content
Secular	no reference to religion in their mission or founding history, secular programs include no religious content

All three organizations were found to have some religious heritage links that reflected implicitly in some of their mission, vision and/or value statements. Organizations in this study use religious language implicitly in the form of "values such as justice or mercy that may be based on religious heritage." (Sider & Unruh, 2004:121). Organizations 1 and 2 have their roots linked to the Christian faith and Organization 3 is rooted in the Jewish tradition, yet none of them identifies explicitly with their religious heritage. The use of implicit religious language in organizations' values and mission statements "can act as a screen to attract or filter out personnel and funders based on their identification with the expressed religious values" suggest Sider & Unruh (2004:121). A significant finding is that all the programme designers and programme managers that were interviewed or engaged during research fieldwork planning have Christian religious roots. One of the programme designers, PD-2 noted that she was drawn to the organization's values which resonated with her Christian values. This finding confirms Lafollette's assertion that most people were reared in religious environments and most religions promulgate moral beliefs. It is for this reason, Fafollette argues that "we should be astonished if religion played no role in the origins and contours of most people's moral views" (2007:103).

According to Sider & Unruh "In faith-affiliated organizations, senior management often does share in the faith tradition of the agency, but this may not be an explicit requirement." (2004:122). Another significant finding is that programme implementers of these organizations were all found to identify as Christian. Six of the eight implementers explained that their faith played a significant role in their lives both personally and professionally.

In some instances, participants were explicit about their faith being the driving force behind their theories of change as one participant narrated: *My belief is that God would not put me on earth as a bad person. Nobody was born bad. On a recent radio show, I was asked whether I believe there is redemption for everyone, and I said: Yes because if I don't believe it I cannot do this work. For me, we are not born a criminal or sexual offender – so that is my religious belief that God did not put me here as a criminal* (PI-1).

Also linking religion and his theory of change in male clients, another participant said: *All religions have meaning and it must be respected for its meaning and that it was created to modify behaviour. We must promote that all the founders of these religions focused on good behaviour. There's no religion that says the man must beat the woman to death.* (PI-3).

Evidently from the profile table and the above discussion, all three participating organizations in this study were found to have in their employ programme implementers that were rooted in the Christian faith. In this regard Sider & Unruh confirm that faith-affiliated and faith-background organizations' religious heritage "may have many staff members for whom faith [is] an important factor in their decision to apply to work for the agency" even if faith was "not in the agency's decision to hire them." (2004:122).

Even though all three organizations prohibited religion in the counselling environment, religious practices among staff in the form of prayers, singing and sharing of scriptures were found to be a regular occurrence. Sider & Unruh argue that such religious activities among staff "may play a significant role in how the organization make decisions" and it "cultivates staff unity and morale" (2004:123). This was especially evident in Organizations 2 and 3 where programme managers, supervisors and implementers spoke about the sense of belonging to a family which were often brought on as a result of religious practices such as prayers and singing, and in some instances the sharing of words of encouragement through scripture readings. Typical of faith-affiliated organizations these "corporate religious practices may occur, but they are not as integrated into organizational routines" (Sider & Unruh, 2004:123).

In the case of Organization 3, prayers and singing of Christian songs were found to be a normal practice during staff meetings, community workshops and organizational activities. God-talk was also found to be often expressed in speech and writing of annual reports by the organization's founder. One participant narrated:

It's part of the organization's culture. Singing and prayer are very much entrenched. You immediately feel a sense of togetherness it's very much entrenched and make you feel that you are part of a family. (PI-6).

This programme manager reiterated:

It is reflective of the organization's culture. Sitting in a circle, singing a Christian song, praying - there are definitely Christian roots. Even though we don't mention it, clients can feel it that religion or spirituality finds its way into our interventions. (PI-6).

Sider and Unruh suggest that "[r]eligious program elements fall into nine categories: self-descriptions, sacred objects, invitations to religious activities, prayer, use of sacred texts, worship, sharing of personal testimonies, religious teachings, and invitations to a personal faith commitment." (2004:111).

5.3.1. Christian Origins and Motivation of some Organizations / Intervention Programmes

In the case of Programme B, the programme designer who has been employed with the organization for 24 years suggested:

It was started by a Christian group of people. It was an Afrikaans organization. There were poor people in prison, they couldn't pay bail, so we worked with the judiciary to free them from jail. So, it all came from the heart to work with people in prison. (PD-2)

Evident from the narrative above, Organization 2 was established by Christians who responded to the need that existed within the prison community, with its emphasis on the notions of *mercy* and *justice.* Its founder(s) have their roots in the criminal justice system and reference is also made to its link with Salvation Army during Organization 2's inception phase in 1910. Conversations with programme supervisors, senior management staff including a board member confirmed the organization's Christian roots; and although all of them indicated that this history is somewhere in the organization's records none of them had access to or felt that they were able to share tangible / written confirmation. The organization is known for being instrumental in introducing the concept of Restorative Justice (RJ) as an alternative approach to offender sentencing in South Africa (see profile table). The Restorative Justice Program and its comprehensive Non-Custodial Sentencing and Diversions Programmes are indicative of the organization's commitment to work on reconciliation and restoration. It is not unusual for civil society organizations such as Organization 2 that were established in the early 1900s in South

Africa, to have some links to Christianity (Harms Smith, 2013). As is also evident from the profile table, it is not unusual that Social Workers are the implementers of such organizations' services to their clients. In South African history the relationship between social work and Christianity is symbiotic and cannot be separated from the ways in which colonialization and the apartheid regime used it to institutionalize racialized gender oppression. According to Harms-Smith "Social workers were [also] interpellated into these contradictory ideologies, necessitating a 'splitting off' of their professional, personal and political selves to maintain cognitive integrity." (2013:198).

When Sider-Unruh's sixfold typology framework is applied to ascertain the religious characteristics of Organization 2, features of two of the typologies are evident from the data. Examples of its faith-background are evident in its implicit references to religion in its vision and values; and the fact that it has historic ties to a religious alliance, but the connection is no longer clear. From its website and all organizational reports and materials, the organization *believes in reconciliation and healing.* Its annual report notes *Compassion, community, dignity, respect, safety, hope. These six words reflect what Organization 2 stands for, what we care deeply about and how we connect with the individuals and families we work with*. (Annual Report, 2020:2). The organization is also reflected as faith-affiliated in the sense that it was started by a Christian group (PD-2).

In the case of Programme A, PD-1 explained that for her, everything started when she was in her first job as a social worker at a Christian Children's Home in 1982. She explained how she initially reached out to the parents of the children to try and rekindle and restore the parent-child relationship and help them find solutions to complex problems that these families were experiencing:

> *And then I discovered that in some of those families, child prostitution, incest, child abuse, neglect were problems across three, four generations. And that's how I got into, running the first sex offenders' group, in the children's home with parents. Five parents said: 'we need help'. At that point, we didn't know much, except this - that it's a Christian organization. So in my head, it was a ministry to injured people. A Ministry you know? And I think that's where the whole idea started…*

PD-1's experience of not knowing much or being uncertain about an appropriate response to sex offending parents' request for help, caused her to draw on her personal Christian orientation and

commitment to ministering to injured people. Religion, according to Hogg et al, "provide ideological and behavioural guidance" (2010:72). In the absence of training on how to intervene with sex offenders at that time, the participant relied on guidance from her religious orientation. Hogg et al. confirm that "Uncertainty drives people to identify with entitative groups that are structurally, ideologically, and normatively equipped to best resolve uncertainty. Religions fit this bill." (2010:78). While the feeling of uncertainty can be overwhelming in potentially dangerous situations as faced by PD-1 in the scenario above, the participant's religious orientation and being situated in a Christian organization where she practiced as a young inexperienced social worker, enabled her to translate her uncertainty into an opportunity for *ministry*. PD-1 draws on her religious knowledge and ideology to make sense of the situation she is confronted with and responds from her Christian understanding of ministering to the needs of people. This encounter is what birthed the first sex offender intervention programme that PD-1 established. She indicates that when she realized that there *there was no help/intervention / no support and only judgement* toward sex offenders, she - *trading off and trading on and being rooted in Christian principles of a ministry of restoration,* started the first intervention programme. From the above discussion, Organization 1 resembles features of a faith-background organization (Sider & Unruh, 2004). While the founder overtly distance herself and the programme from religion and physically locate the organization in a secular psychiatric institution, she chose to partner with PI-1 who describes himself as a staunch Lutheran and gnostic. In this way, Organization 1 reflects Sider & Unruh's (2004) description of a faith-secular partnership.

In Organization 3, it was found that while not explicitly Christian in its articulation, its founder is Jewish, and she links her motivation and commitment for doing the work to her love for God and compassion for the women from the townships who had no access to quality counselling services (see annual reports and the book that she authored). One of the objectives of Organization 3 references that faith plays an important role in the healing process: *Recognizing the important role of faith in the healing process while accepting all religious beliefs without bias* (Organization 3's website). No further written clarity is provided on this objective, but all participants that were interviewed in this programme have internalized the understanding that they are prohibited from initiating faith resources during interventions with their male clients.

One of the participants in Programme C suggested:

I think as much as the organization is not a faith-based organization, there is some foundation that is interlinked with Christianity. (PI-6)

PI-6's suspicions about the Christian undertones become pronounced in her colleagues, PI-7 and PI-8 articulation of their experiences which will be discussed later. Organization 3 exhibits features of a faith-background organization in that its mission refers to notions of *healing* and *justice* (website). It also resembles a faith-secular partnership in that no reference to the founder's Jewish religious identity is found on the organization's website but her regular public speeches, annual reports, and the book authored by her and published at the organization's 21st anniversary, captures her religious orientation and motivation. A more direct reference to the founder's religious identity and her faith affiliation was published on 16 Aug 2021, the Jewish Board of Deputies Facebook page entitled: *Spotlighting Jewish Women of Valour*, where she was quoted as saying: *that as a white Jewish woman, she wanted to repay the privileges she had experienced under the Apartheid system and saw gender abuse as a crisis…she started Organization 3 to educate grassroots community women about gender-based violence, training them to connect with and help abused women*.

Lord points out that the setting for implicit religion is most evident in secular contexts where "religion is not merely absent (allegedly), but not expected to be present." (2007:208). Findings from the discussion above confirm that Christian beliefs are present in the origins and motivations for establishing intervention programmes that claim to be secular in this study. These albeit hidden or personal Christian / religious values and worldviews of organizations and/or programme designers, served a catalytic purpose in the construction of these programmes. Hogg et al., argue that "Although religious worldviews may feel personal, in reality, they are shared belief systems grounded in consensus circumscribed by group membership – it is this group consensus that lends an ideology its comforting sense of infallibility and absolute correctness." (2010:76). By "universalizing" and "rationalizing" (Thompson, 1990) the use of words and narratives that hold religious ideological undertones - as evident in the extracts from interviews, annual reports, and websites, a sense of belonging to a community which resonates with designers' and implementers' personal values and beliefs that the male clients can change for the better, is created by these organizations.

Albeit ambiguously so, all three programmes tended to have in some of their objectives and values some form of implicit religious ideology. The objectives and values of intervention programmes point to their commitment to and belief in humanity, and the human being's potential for goodness – which, if cultivated, can bring about positive change and balance in society. This commitment to the human or the self is described by Bailey (1997) as religious; and "the nearest possible approach to a definition of the self may be its categorization as personal, and … a 'confession' (admission) of belief in it." (1997:80). Bailey explains that "the 'humanity' of the self is mainly moral, and yet is ambiguous." Bailey expounds that the self must be "considered in conjunction with its paradoxical contrary: its sacredness. Whether the self is seen as human and nevertheless sacred, or as human and therefore sacred, it is certainly seen as both human and sacred." (1997:80). It is in this regard that intervention programmes' commitment to, and belief in the human resembles implicit religious ideology. Bailey sees beliefs as "more than merely meta-physical", it is regarded as "objects of commitments" (1997:116). Bailey purports that they [beliefs] may likewise be expressions of commitment, and hence themselves simultaneously ontological and evaluative." (1997:116). From this perspective, links can be made between the beliefs and belief systems embedded in the organizations' / intervention programmes' objectives, values and practices, and their theories of change for their male clients and its implications for the key signifiers of IPA.

5.4. SOCIAL WORK AND ITS CHRISTIAN ROOTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of social work with its Christian roots in South Africa is said to have started in 1900 with social work activities focusing specifically on juvenile reform and colonial capitalism (Smith, 2014). One of the participants recalled: *Social work stems from the Church. I vaguely remember ACVV started in the Church and that's how social work started many moons ago*. (PI-2). PI-2's recollection is confirmed in scholarship that Afrikaans organizations such as "Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereeniging (ACVV), is described in formal discourses as being the first welfare organization in South Africa arising from racialized 'white' philanthropism with a commitment to build 'Taal en Volk' (Language and the People)" (Smith, 2014:312). Comments about Organization 2's establishment being linked to Christian roots, having started as an Afrikaans organization, and working with prisoners and their families when it started in 1910, make sense when understood in this historical context. The same can be said about the origins of Programme A regarding its linkages with the founder's Christian orientation and mission of

the ministry of care to the broken. The Christian Children's Home director where PD-1 started her social work career, reported that staff at the children's home were *praying for a social worker with a heart…that is how I ended up working in the Christian Children's Home* (PD-1). The children's home was one of the programmes of an organization that was established in 1902 and its website states that its *core values are built on the foundations of Christianity and Bible-based living* (www.citymission.org).

According to Smith the origins in the early 1900s of social work and its Christian roots in South Africa, and subsequent developments were "not just a matter of choices" made by its founders, nor was it "a natural progression of theories and praxis" (Smith, 2014:305). It was overlapped with the philanthropic movement as was noticeable in colonies such as India and South Africa, "with its liberal-utilitarian projects around reform and incarceration of "deviants" in colonial prisons, asylums, and hospitals" (Smith, 2013:34). In South Africa, "social work activities focused on juvenile reform and colonial capitalism." (Smith, 2014:309-310). In this historical context, Smith informs that social work activities during the colonial era, "remained in the religious, philanthropic, "welfare" realm of social control, rehabilitation and work with the indigent" (Smith, 2014:313). Some of the participants – PD-1, PD-2, PI-2, have recollections of the historical connections between Christianity and social work, and its (albeit hidden) lingering influence in their programmes currently.

Of further interest are the complex interplays of race, class, and religion in the construction of these intervention programmes. For example, decades later in 1993, a white Jewish social worker launched into impoverished townships in Cape Town and founded Organization 3 with the main purpose to empower women from disadvantaged communities (mainly coloured and black communities) to stand up for themselves. It is only when gazing beyond the face level that traces of racialized 'white' philanthropism and its intersections with Christian beliefs and practices become evident. Once the founder obtained her social work degree, she registered Organization 3 as a non-profit, recruited black and coloured women survivors of IPA and trained them until they obtained social auxiliary work qualifications. All these women come from disadvantaged communities and through employment with Organization 3 they access their liberation and go out and educate other black and coloured women about their human rights, sexual reproductive health & rights, how to access protection orders and free themselves from domestic violence and how to become economically self-reliant.

According to PI-7 and PI-8, Organization 3's founder who is a Jewish woman has used prayers and singing Christian songs that appealed to them as can be seen from the narratives to follow. Furthermore, Organization 3's founder is consistently found to talk publicly about God and God's love as the motivating core of the organization's interventions and services as reflected in the Organization's annual reports (Annual Report 2013/2014:7; Annual Report 2016/2017:3; Annual Report 2017/2018:3) and on the cover of the book which was launched in 2018 at the organization's 25th anniversary. From a Jewish perspective, it is not unusual for the organization's founder to constantly refer to God because the notion of God represents a unifying concept that brings diversity in the community together (Friedman, 2002). According to Friedman, "A Jewish person functions in a universalism that is built on the oneness of the universe (one God) …" (2002:98). When Thompson's (1990) critical conceptions of ideology is applied, it becomes evident that the Jewish founder uses God, prayers and singing of Christian songs as the unifying symbols as she constructs a sense that she and the women coming from poverty-stricken township communities belong to the same community of women that needs to be liberated from patriarchy. In this way, the founder uses unification (Thompson, 1990). Furthermore, the founder employs strategies of dissimulation and reification (Thompson, 1990) because by offering training and employment opportunities to some of the disadvantaged women, she gains entry and rapport with them whilst systemically asymmetrical relations of power are sustained.

From my observations of the workshops and organization events, the embeddedness of Christianity in singing and opening with prayer was evident, yet all participants that were interviewed from this organization indicated that they are not allowed to bring faith into the counselling sessions with their clients. Reasons are not provided except that religion is implied to be personal and that its use in public might not be used appropriately and thus it can be potentially harmful to people from other religions or people of no religion. Scholars including Smith (2014) and Cavanaugh (2009) have written about the dichotomous use and practice of religion in South Africa.

Whilst interestingly confusing, it appears that the role players in Organization 3 have managed to work with this model of ambiguous/cryptic use of Christian resources for all its 25 years of existence. It appears odd that with all the highly technical and meticulously crafted skills involved in training counsellors in working with men who abuse their intimate partners, nothing

as sophisticated is available to programme implementers in guiding their use of Christian resources in the Christian religiously pervasive communities that they are working in. Evidently varied strategies of ideological dissimulation (Thompson, 1990) including displacement and euphemization are employed to obscure the ways in which Christianity is used to create a sense of belonging which legitimates relations of domination and thus reify the social and historical unequal status quo. With reference to "different understandings of the past, perceptions of the present and scenarios for the future" in the workplace, Kretzschmar points out that "The South African workplace is complex. It consists of a mixture of good and evil motives and actions that need to be discerned." (2014:2). The "conflict-ridden racial past in this country" (Kretzschmar, 2014:2) endorsed by a distorted use of certain Christian teachings to oppress, decentre and silence most South Africans cannot be ignored in attempts to work together across races to address social justice issues such as IPA.

Cavanaugh (2009) cautions that religion-and-violence arguments serve a particular need for their western consumers. Cavanaugh posits that

> These arguments are part of a broader Enlightenment narrative that has invented a dichotomy between the religious and the secular and constructed the former as an irrational and dangerous impulse that must give way in public to rational, secular forms of power. (Cavanaugh, 2009:4)

When considering what Smith (2014) writes about the navigations of social control of the indigent, and Cavanaugh's (2009) alerts as stated above, there might be more to be understood about how and to what end, Organization 3 uses God-talk, Christian language, songs and symbolism. These very deliberate yet subtle strategies resemble Allport & Ross's description of an extrinsic religious orientation. Borrowing from axiology, Allport & Ross use the term extrinsic orientation as a reference to persons who "are disposed to use religion for their own ends" (1967:434). Furthermore, Organization 3's strategies are made clearer by Roelofs (2007) who argues that any system is maintained in two ways, namely, the political realm (the state) and the private realm (civil society). The state controls through force and laws are complemented by subtle but essential system-maintenance performed by civil society, which produces consent without the threat of force (Roelofs, 2007:479). In post-apartheid South Africa, the state identifies as secular, yet Christian articulations are often made in public by political and certain religious authorities to appeal to the masses' obedience to enforce and maintain social order and

control of those profiled as unruly (usually poor disadvantaged black, coloured and Indian people). From the discussions above it appears that Programme C also employs religious ideological strategies to gain traction with its programme implementers and clients. Cavanaugh reiterates the points made by Smith (2014) and Roelofs (2007) by stating "…religion is not a neutral scientific tool but is applied under circumstances in which configurations of power are relevant." (2009:100). This has been seen most starkly evident in circumstances of direct colonial control in countries such as South Africa and India, reinforced Cavanaugh (2009).

Considering the above-mentioned scholarly arguments, the subtle forms of power and control exerted in Organization 3 become evident. Examples of these meticulously orchestrated manoeuvres are reflected with only a brief reference being made to the role of faith in the organization's work; juxtaposing the detailed descriptions of how implementers must think and follow the step-by-step guidelines as they implement the organization's Counselling services to male clients.

In exploring the role of Christian beliefs in Organization 3, participants PI-7 & PI-8 (both having 24 years of work experience with 25-year-old Organization 3) shared the following during a semi-structured interview:

We start everything with prayer. Even our first Executive Director, the founder of Organization 3, did. She's an old friend of ours. She's Jewish but she also believes in prayer. Whatever she's doing, she will ask for someone to sing. She even sings herself the Xhosa hymns that we have. And she will sing 'There's no one like Jesus'. That is her song. She likes that song very much.

Yes. And she always said when you are coming out of your house, going to work wherever you go, you must ask God to protect you with a white light. The white light is coming from her (participants laughing) … If you still remember the picture of Maria with the baby Jesus? They're surrounded by light...That means it's a protection from God. And we understand that. If you can go to churches, there are mosaic windows. And in some Catholic churches there's Maria with a baby with something like light around them. That means it's a protection from God. She [Founder] even said 'even if you are going out and there was a shooting, then just close your eyes and ask for the white light.' You see with the Founder; she was like that. So, we also

adopt that. And it's working. So that's why we start with prayer. And then we even close with prayer sometimes. And to the clients now we must respect their beliefs.

How Organization 3's founder uses Christian prayers and singing of Christian choruses in isiXhosa, songs such as *'There's no one like Jesus',* seem to have secured rapport with the isiXhosa-speaking Christian implementers as they describe her as *cute* and *their friend*. By employing the standard use of prayer and singing of Christian choruses in isiXhosa, the founder constructs a practice whereby individuals are embraced in a collective identity irrespective of the stark racial and class differences - ideological unification (Thompson, 1990). The founder goes beyond using language, prayer, and Christian songs when she gets the participants to understand that she is the *white light* that God has provided as protection for them. She uses displacement (Thompson, 1990) as an ideological strategy to construct her whiteness as a positive symbol of God's provision of protection. In this way, she denies and obscures the true meaning of her whiteness in the socio-political context of her relationship with the implementers. By deflecting attention away from the true meaning of her whiteness concerning the black implementers, she reinscribes relations of domination. Serote has written that "race is the strongest carrier of power" (1992:24) and thus cannot be ignored in contexts like South Africa.

The implementers are made to understand that the founder is like the *mosaic windows* in the Catholic Church and that she is like *Mary* in the painting of *Mary with the baby Jesus*, protecting them (the women) with her *white light.* Significantly, the founder describes herself to be representing the white light because the colour white is understood to refer to "the colours of the veld (flat open rural spaces), the sky, and water, and of purity and trust respectively" clarifies Bompani (2010:312). So, participants PI-7 and PI-8 understand and resonate with the deeper meaning of the symbolisms that the founder uses to express herself to them. From a feminist perspective, it appears that the founder is completely oblivious to the need to interrogate power relations embedded in racial and class dynamics between her and the implementers. The founder's practice resembles Allport & Ross's (1967) description of persons with an extrinsic religious orientation – "an interest that is held because it serves other, more ultimate interests." (Allport & Ross, 1967:434). From the scenario above, the founder's extrinsic religious orientation disposes her to use Christian expressions of religion "to provide security and solace, sociability and distraction" whilst she reinscribes "status and self-justification" (Allport & Ross, 1967:434).

The implementers seem to suggest that they have *adopted* what the founder presented, and it is for this reason that they pray and sing because these are things that the founder likes and as they say: *it's working.* Evidently, the participants internalize the founder's naturalization of domination – an expression of reification (Thompson, 1990) to advance harmony. The participants' ability to adopt these practices resemble Allport & Ross's (1967) description of persons with an intrinsic religious orientation. Persons with intrinsic religious orientation "find their master motive in religion. Other needs, strong as they might be, are regarded as less of ultimate significance, and they are, so far as possible brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions" (Allport & Ross, 1967:434). From the respectful way these participants reflected on their experiences with the founder, it was evident that they had no problem in responding favourably to the founder's need to institutionalize prayer and the isiXhosa singing of Christian choruses. The behaviour and attitude embodied by PI-7 and PI-8 are consistent with Allport & Ross's reiterations of persons with an intrinsic religious orientation. People with an intrinsic orientation live their faith because they have "embraced a creed" which they aim to internalize and follow fully (Allport & Ross, 1967:434). This case exemplifies the complex dynamics of race, class, and religious language and symbolism in the context of addressing black men's violence against women in intimate relationships through this programme. The impact of racist and colonialist subjectivity as exemplified above calls for an Afrocentric reevaluation.

5.5. INTRICACIES OF APARTHEID, CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL WORK AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

As evident from the participant profile table, all the 11 participants (3 programme designers and 8 programme implementers) have been exposed to Christianity from their families of origin. Two of the three programme designers, PD-1 & PD-3 were harshly treated by the church and identified themselves as Spiritual but not Religious (SBNR) in their adult and professional lives. According to Mercadante, people who identify as SBNR do so, "not simply to move away from religion but to find some way to blend, combine, merge or transcend organized religion" (Mercadante, 2017:11). Mercadante (2017:12) identifies five types of SBNRs namely "dissenter", "casual", "spiritual explorer", "seeker", and "immigrant". Based on interviews, participant observation including her strong stance against integrating religion into Programme A, PD-1 can be described as a dissenter type SBNR person. According to Mercadante a dissenter rejects "a particular religion for theological or personal reasons" (2017:12). Her dissenter type SBNR religiosity can be linked to her life-long experiences of misappropriation of the Christian

faith. PD-3 seems to straddle between "seeker" and "casual" SBNR types. She explains that *After the 2nd divorce I went on a spiritual quest cause I wanted to know the truth.* She started as SBNR "seeker" in that she was "actually looking for the right fit in a spiritual home" (Mercadante, 2017:12). PD-3 seemed to have found her spiritual home which resembles somewhat to the description of "casual" SBNR type which according to Mercadante is "trying on aspects of alternative and traditional spiritualities on an 'as-needed' basis." (2017:12). She narrates: *My approach is transpersonal. We are more than human. You are part of a bigger Being - God…there's so much in the different faiths that points to real transformation. The transpersonal-spiritual approach cannot be taught…it is a deeper search… and you recognize it when it happens.* (PD-3)

Programme designer, PD-2 was reared in a Christian-Hindu family setting and converted to Charismatic Christianity in her adult life. PD-2 finds the Pentecostal environment helpful. She uses several expressions to try and identify her Christian religious orientation. She uses identifications such as being a believer, a disciple of Jesus - following the Holy Spirit, and not believing in denominations. She believes that religion has rules and laws that are dangerous. She furthermore *believes radically in salvation, and that the sinful nature is in need of redemption*. She explains: *People need to learn more about God. It is not about religion...it is about relationship. God uses grace to transform our hearts. So we need the Spirit of God to lead us in our healing. God came to redeem that which was wrong …restoring the design in the way that it was meant to be.*

What is evident from the above discussion is that all three programme designers have strong roots in Christianity and that over their lifespans their faith has taken various forms and shapes; and that they have straddled in and out of various forms of expressing their relationships with religion and spirituality. None of them appears to fall neatly into either one of these constructs – a finding that is consistent with scholarship that criticizes the "exaggeration of the distinction between religion and spirituality" (Selvam, 2013:129). This exaggerated distinction has given rise to a "superiority-inferiority hierarchy…value judgement between spirituality and religion" which signifies the persistent "Western hegemony in the study of religion". (Selvam, 2013:129).

Consistent with Selvam's multidimensional matrix it was difficult to confine or bracket the programme designers' faith journeys into either purely religion or spirituality as they "constantly relocate themselves during their life-span development." (2013:138). Evidently from the

programme designers' complex faith experiences and navigations throughout their lifespan, it was found that "it is possible to consider spirituality as being related to mature religious sentiment" (Selvam, 2013:141). In Allport's initial work, he presented the notion of mature and immature religion. The mature religious sentiment according to Allport (1950) includes attributes such as differentiation, dynamism, consistent morality, comprehensive, integral, and fundamentally heuristic (Allport, 1950:64-83).

Two programme designers, PD-2 and PD-3 were born into families where they have witnessed their fathers' abuse of their mothers. For both the work with men who abuse their intimate partners are also personal as they seek to make sense of their fathers' abusive behaviour.

Growing up during apartheid and having been de-classified whites, PD-1 relates some of her and her parents' experiences. From this extract, it is evident that even as a child, PD-1 was acutely aware of what was right and wrong. In navigating her own struggles (as a child) with the apartheid imposed racial identities and the communities for coloured people where they had to live, PD-1 had chosen the church as a place where she could find expression for the meaning of life. She narrated her experience as follows:

I imagine that my father was very angry about the whole Apartheid thing and so he cut ties with the church. So, the Anglican Church was only something that we visited when there was a wedding or a funeral. My mother's family was very religious, but it was a very narrow kind. My father and mother became socialites. At the age of five, I decided nah, I don't wanna be the only fair skin child with the scheme children and so I found myself a church - the Methodist church. I stayed with the Methodist church until before I went to school... and then my parents became born again Christians which meant that they had a huge problem with the doctrine of the Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, everybody is going to hell except for the Brethren. Then they took me out of the Methodist church and then all hell broke loose. I went on a rampage, because I had to go to the Brethren church and I would protest.

From the above narrative, PD-1 used her personal agency (as a child) in defiance of injustice and imposed religious doctrine during her interaction with the missionary. In African understanding, it is not unusual for a child to be confident in their spiritual beliefs as the African proverb goes: "No one has to point God out to a child" (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2011:331). The experience of being forced by her parents to join a church that she struggled to find a spiritual connection with, unleashed her defiance and her protest. At great cost, she embarked on a spiritual journey that

enabled her to stay true to her integrity but that would often leave her out in the cold on the periphery in the church and the IPA sector. Perrin (2007) posited that authentic spirituality is developed from critical reflection on people's lived experiences.

In the narrative above, PD-1 points to several moral contradictions that she was not prepared to accept. In this regard the participant not only challenged the authority of her parents and the missionary but through her defiance, she also questioned the Christian doctrine that they represented and tried to force her to accept.

So, in the context of her own struggle with racial and religious identities during the 1980s on the Cape Flats in South Africa, PD-1 as a young social worker defied existing child welfare protocols and used her Christian religious identity and agency to start the first intervention programme for parents in the context of IPA and sex offences. Motivated by her intrinsic religious orientation (Allport & Ross, 1967) PD-1 resisted the use of religion to oppress and dominate people. In other words, male clients are forbidden from using Christianity as justification for their abusive behaviours and attitudes toward the victim-survivors.

The following narrative explains another dimension to the intricacies of apartheid, social work and Christianity as used by a white Jewish woman (founder of Organization 3) to access and sustain her work on the Cape Flats and townships among black and coloured women populations. The following extract is taken from the website promoting a book that she authored and published in 2019 about her work on IPA through the organization that she established:

The formal establishment of (Organization 3) as an NGO in 1993 coincided with the end of Apartheid in South Africa, a timing the founder felt to be symbolically perfect. However, although (Organization 3) started off at a time of transformation, in an atmosphere of freedom and hope, getting an NGO up and running in the post-Apartheid climate would prove less straightforward than anticipated. A well-to-do white South African woman of the Jewish faith, (Founder's Name) paints a detailed and insightful picture of the challenges of establishing bonds of trust with disadvantaged communities, of fostering sisterhood across the boundaries of racial classifications during the early years of South African democracy, and of bringing men and women together in discussions about abuse. She also writes openly about her personal relationship with God…. seen in a larger context, the book is essential reading for anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the situation of women in South Africa's

immediate post-Apartheid era. The book provides an interesting take on interracial, intercultural and inter-class dynamics, and to a certain extent even issues of gender and sexuality. (Sourced from a book promotion website)

Organization 3's website reveals that the founder obtained her social work degree in 1992 and that she registered with Organization 3 in November 1993. A blog notes the following on the founder:

She *was born into a middle class, Jewish family. She was raised with a clear commitment to community service. The family was strongly opposed to the apartheid regime and was politically active with the progressive party…and subsequently with parties opposing the nationalist government.* (Sourced from a blog dated 2 June 2008)

On the back cover of the book the following words appear:

This book describes Organization 3's *support from our caring God. It is a human story where honest values are realized and people's lives are changed forever. The account of that journey of God's compassion, honest values and lives changed are captured in the book* that she authored and was being launched.

When this statement is read alongside the accounts of PI-7 and PI-8 where the founder described herself as the *white light* that God has provided to protect them; this book launch and the founder's regular speeches about God's love and care, several ideological inscriptions become clear. Examples of such underlying ideological modes of operation include legitimation and reification (Thompson, 1990), which serve to establish and sustain asymmetrical relations of power operative in Organization 3. Furthermore, the founder's series of practices culminated in a book with a title that exemplifies dissimilation where the negative connotations of the asymmetrical relations are concealed and obscured. The book and its title are an example of euphemization (Thompson, 1990) in that the asymmetrical social relations at play in Organization 3 are represented and described in terms that evoke a positive valuation. Metonymy (Thompson, 1990) is also evident in that God and God's attributes of *care, compassion, honest values and changing lives* are used to imply endorsement and legitimation of the asymmetrical social relations in Organization 3. Evidently, Organization 3 might be an example of seemingly good work within a problematic racist and Eurocentric worldview.

Two of the three programme designers had extensive experience and exposure to the Charismatic / Pentecostal Christian experience while the other participant had an experience across several Protestant Christian church experiences and ended up in a Pentecostal setting. PD-1 and PD-3 had deeply challenging experiences within their church experience. Both these participants identify as embracing spirituality rather than religion. While both indicated a reluctance to bring faith into interventions, the depth of their personal Christian experience and their faith journeys within and outside of the church appeared to have shaped sound and well-balanced professional implementers to engage issues of Christianity in the intervention programmes. These participants' practice tended to align with Allport & Ross's (1967) characterization of intrinsically motivated people. For people with an intrinsic religious orientation, religion "is not a mere mode of conformity, nor a crutch, nor a tranquillizer, nor a bid for status" instead it is "an overarching religious commitment" that involves the internalization of the religion's "values of humility, compassion, and love of neighbor" (Allport & Ross, 1967:441).

PD-2 was born into a domestic violence nuclear family where both Christianity and Hinduism were practiced. In her 20s she became a born-again Christian and has since been active in the Charismatic Church. Although she is also clear about not mixing faith with work, the interviews and participant observation encounters showed that she was in fact living her faith in her work. Her colleagues mentioned that she often offers prayers and words of encouragement to them. When we met for her interview, her Bible was visible on her desk, and quoting verses of encouragement seemed natural to her. Whilst this participant appreciates being in a *Pentecostal environment,* she was clear that she does not believe in denominations. She identifies as *following the Holy Spirit.* She believes that Christianity is not a religion because as she narrates: *I think religion has rules and laws that are very dangerous*. This participant's critical navigations about her Christian religious orientation and belonging is echoed by Mercadante (2017:11) who argues that people who see themselves as spiritual but not religious (SBNR) "have particular reasons for not belonging to religious groups. Identifying with and belonging to a certain religious group is often regarded as "not only narrow, restrictive, and doctrinaire but, most important, very limiting of spiritual options" and "seriously inhibiting their personal spiritual growth" (Mercadante, 2017:11). According to Mercadante, people who identify as SBNR often gravitate toward traceable ancient pearls of wisdom which "accords with the desire to eliminate religious authority yet ground their beliefs in some kind of eternal or universal authenticity…" (2017:11).

The founder of Organization 1 (Programme A) has been quite forthright about not entertaining religion and issues of faith in the intervention programme. When one looks at the profile table, it is apparent that PD-1 and her family have navigated various complex life experiences ranging from ambiguous racial classification under apartheid; asserting her understanding of what it means in practical terms to be Christian throughout her childhood - for which she had often been punished - to the point of finally being excommunicated from the church for her unwillingness to submit to rules of dress code and for her husband's "inability" to control her. Also evident from her lived experience is the alienation that she experienced in the feminist gender-based violence world for using language that reflected her religious commitment, and for staying true to her mission of addressing violence against women from the angle of working with sex offenders and male domestic violence offenders.

From the abovementioned observations, there is an in-principle understanding of not bringing religion officially into the work with men either as stated by their organizations or the programmes themselves, but evidently, it is not possible to completely ignore the topic. This finding is consistent with scholarship about the prevalence of religion as lived experience in African societies (Abbink, 2014; Mbiti, 1969). Furthermore, Bell & Taylor also asserts that despite the ambiguous relationship between religion and spirituality, "it is clear that spirituality provides a means of connecting with ideas of wholeness, creativity and interdependence, stimulated by cross-cultural inter-penetration of multiple religious traditions." (2001:A1). It is further argued and confirmed in this study that "despite spirituality not necessarily being bounded by formal religious practice" it is hardly possible to define it "without reference to religion" (Bell & Taylor, 2001:A2).

These 3 programme designers as well as the other 8 implementers were open to engaging in the research with some requesting training in this area of religion and IPA interventions with men.

5.6. AMBIGUOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

5.6.1. Implicit Religious Values and Beliefs

None of the organizations profiled demonstrated any explicit Christian beliefs in their vision or mission statements. However, traces of religious ideological expressions and practices were at times evident. Hogg et al point out that "religious ideologies have a greater explanatory reach than most other ideologies because they address questions of existence, ultimate causality and

absolute morality" (2010:76). For example, in emphasizing their stance against the death penalty, the Chairperson of Organization 2 reported that the organization has been a vigorous proponent in favour of *reconciliation and healing* and *has dedicated its research and services to addressing the root causes of crime and restoring the balance affected by crime*. He emphasizes the organization's sentiment by quoting John Donne, who said: *Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind*. The Chairperson continues in his report and states: *The death penalty is morally, philosophically, and theologically questionable.* (Organization 2, Annual Report, 2014/2015:2).

Organization 2's (Programme B) appeal to *morality, philosophy* and *theology* when arguing against the death penalty; and their recommendations for *reconciliation* and *healing* as alternate interventions in dealing with the root causes of offender behaviour might be indicative of their Christian roots (see participant profile). According to Sider & Unruh "faith-background organizations tend to look and act secular although they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition." (2004:120). Kretzschmar (2020, 2014) has written extensively about the influence of Christian moral thinking within secular South African workplace contexts. As another participant, PD-3 from Programme C noted, *Christianity* can be particularly helpful because it *has a language that appeals to the intention of working to restore offenders* and *the religious side of our country gives a moral code that gives people a sense of community to belong to*. (PD-3).

It is in this light that the comments and appeals regarding the death penalty and restorative justice, advocated by the Chairperson and Programme B are signs of hidden Christian values and morals. In his article titled *Is there an implicit Theology in the practice of Ordinary Law?,* Vining (2002) refers to the idea that theology is implicit in the law. Vining argues that "[A]ny connecting between worlds of human endeavour is in at least three strands: what practitioners do; what they presuppose or presume or take as starting points, and what they believe." (2002:1048).

The chairperson uses ideological legitimation (Thompson, 1990) to locate the organization as worthy of support in its stance against the death penalty. Furthermore, he constructs a chain of reasoning by using persuasive language to justify the organization's position. The chairperson's second statement resembles Thompson's (1990) unification mode of ideology in that he amplifies the common humanity that is shared between himself and those facing the death penalty. By implication, he appeals to the audiences' shared humanity and reassures them of the organization's dedication to addressing the roots of crime and its commitment to restoring

balance in society. His use of concepts such as *reconciliation, healing, restoring balance* concerning the dehumanizing effect of the death penalty constructs the organization as being in alignment with the post-1994 South African developmental welfare programme that seeks to "contribute to reconciliation, transformation and development" (Harms Smith, 2017:338). While the chairperson is not explicitly religious in his utterances, the words that he uses appeal to "meaning-making frameworks and moral compasses that serve basic psychological needs ranging from existential meaning to social identification and connection and a sense of certainty and stability." (Hogg et al, 2010:76). This secular quest for meaning is described by Bailey (1997) as implicit religion. Bailey (1997:8) offers the word "commitment" as a first definition for implicit religion. The word commitment "highlights how the concept [implicit religion] combines scholarly consistency and popular comprehension, by concentrating upon human attitude, rather than the forms of its expression." (Bailey, 1997:8). The second definition namely integrating foci clarifies "that anybody (singular or plural: an individual, social, societal or corporate body) may have more than one focus of commitment." (Bailey, 1997:8). The third definition of implicit religion according to Bailey (1997:9) "would be described as intensive concerns, with extensive effects" – referring to the pervasiveness of influence on the phenomenon. The sentiments shared by the Chairperson in the abovementioned extract reflects the organization's commitment to the value and meaning of life in favour of reconciliation and healing.

Organization 2 also lists their intervention programme for men who abuse their intimate partners under their diversion services, stating in the Annual Report (2014/2015:8) that the Organization

> *Believes that prison is not the best option for many convicted offenders, and in some cases, sending an offender who has committed a non-violent, less serious crime to prison simply makes the problem of crime worse. Certain offenders can be sentenced to appropriate psycho-educational, therapeutic, and rehabilitative programmes and services that have been specially designed to address their behaviour and special needs. These sentences can be carried out in the community. In this way, the root causes of the criminal behaviour can be far more effectively addressed, and offenders are afforded real opportunities to turn their lives around.* (Annual Report, 2014/2015:8)

In their *Minimum Standards for work with perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence* document, Organization 2 (Programme B) states that to accomplish its objectives, the programme

curriculum will need to cover an extensive list of topics, *Spirituality*. It states:

Spirituality in their (male clients') own lives, and the misunderstandings of religious and cultural teachings (some perpetrators have misinterpreted the religious teachings of their faith and use it to justify their abusive behaviour), needs to be addressed (Minimum Standards 2005:14).

The listing of Organization 2's intervention programme as one of their diversion services; its appeal for a focus on psycho-educational, therapeutic and rehabilitation programmes for offenders; and the call to incorporate male clients' spirituality to demystify misinterpreted religious teachings that justify abusive behaviour, into its programme intervention are not surprising when considering the organization's origins in the criminal justice system and Christianity (see participant profile). Even though official traces of its Christian faith background have virtually vanished (I have requested for documents such as the constitution and/or historical documents to support verbal claims – albeit it was uncertain, on several occasions from various organization members including a board member and senior management but to no avail), it is hardly possible to ignore the implicit forms of religious expressions in Organization 2's practices. According to Bailey expressions such as "I believe" or in the case of Organization 2's annual report - we believe, "if sincere, is always a statement of fact, about the believer..." (1997:83). In this regard according to Bailey (1997) faith and sin alike are always confessed; and religion - when properly expressed, is a basic attitude that becomes visible in acts of kindness. Organization 2's confession of belief in the offenders' ability to be transformed, and their drawing on the use of their male clients' spirituality as a resource, "opens up conceptual space for 'implicit religion'." (Bailey, 1997:44). Bailey reminds us that long before the concept of spirituality became recognized as an inevitable dimension of being human in the 1980s, the term 'spiritual' was used "to describe the inner core of the person" (1997:107). This inner core or sacred self refers to the person's intuition from which his/her "ethics, ontology, [and] epistemology" flows (Bailey, 1997:269). From this understanding, when Organization 2 and its intervention programme draw on the male client's inner resources of spirituality it "affirm a bi-focal conviction in the reality of a certainty which is simultaneously a mystery." (Bailey, 1997:269).

Considering Organization 2's faith background (see participant profile) and criminal justice orientation, Vining suggests that "In the method, the legal and the theological are both text-based in some fashion. Both speak openly of the spirit informing the 'letter' of their texts…"

(2002:1049). The "spirit" according to Vining "can be described as a person" as reflected in legal thought and some of the world religions (2002:1049). Furthermore, according to Vining "Each practitioner is a person too - they are persons speaking for persons" (2002:1049). Vining further expounds and emphasizes that it is the individual's unique value recognises that "touches the roots of what theologies of many faiths try to express as *equality*" and that "Seeing another as fully individual, not fungible but irreplaceable, is inescapably a move toward a sense of equality." (2002:1050). When Organization 2's insistence on a restorative justice approach to offenders in South Africa is analysed against its criminal justice and religious origins, it takes on a different meaning. Its inclusion of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners as a diversion service also takes on a different meaning when investigated through its criminal justice and religious (albeit in the guise of secularity) lenses. It is practitioners' own experience of awe of life, and their belief in the dynamic force of purpose - embedded in the legal and theological worlds, according to Vining (2002) that is presupposed in their standpoints. Vining further suggests that "awe of life may mark and join together the legal and theological…and may just possibly be an essential part of jointly building a life in place of violence, confinement and death." (2002:1053). So, when Organization 2 and its intervention programme insist on restorative justice including diversion services which include a focus on offenders' spirituality to address among other aspects the misunderstandings of religious and cultural teachings, it reflects their quest for the protection of life not only of the individual offender but society as a whole.

Through insistence that offenders be met with a restorative justice approach, Organization 2 reveals its commitment to facilitating an intervention process that would afford offenders *real opportunity to turn their lives around*. It is this "commitment" that is defined as implicit religion and that "religion is interpreted first and foremost in terms of spirituality" (Bailey, 1997:8). Organization 2's cause is thus legitimated as just and worthy of support (Thompson, 1990).

What can be seen from the above extracts are some of the ways that certain religious language is used in their advocacy strategies, as well as the importance of covering religion and culture about IPA in intervention programmes.

5.6.2. Explicit Christian Values & Beliefs

- **Notions of Mercy and Justice**

The annual report of Organization 2 shares a quotation by Abraham Lincoln that reads "I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice" (Annual Report 2018/2019:10). Sider & Unruh argue that religious language such as mercy and justice may be based on organizations' religious heritage and can sometimes "be found in self-descriptive statements such as the text in program brochures." (2004:121). Consistent with scholarship, Organization 2, resembles a "faith-background" type of organization that has religious roots in its founding which has since been dissolved (Sider & Unruh, 2004:121). These scholars explain that "Faith—background organizations tend to look and act secular, although they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition." (Sider & Unruh, 2004:120). Notions of mercy and justice seem to be foundational in Organization 2's restorative justice approach through its comprehensive Non-Custodial Sentencing (NCS) programme with offenders – including some men who abuse their intimate partners.

As participant PI-4 from Programme B pointed out, in some instances men are diverted into other programmes because the abuse is regarded as an incident and not a pattern of abuse:

We look for certain patterns, you understand? If it's a one-time offence, then it could be an anger management issue and not necessarily an intimate partner programme candidate. In some cases, it's anger management, and in some cases it's mediation. (PI-4)

Evidently, the notion of mercy is applied when IPA is defined as an incident and not a pattern – consistent with the organization's restorative justice approach. The notion of mercy is found to be a pervasive concept in the Christian belief and is linked to the forgiveness of sin (Ely, 2018).

- **Respect for human dignity and worth**

Notions of respecting the dignity and worth of every human being resonate deeply with these participants' (PD-2, PI-2, and PI-3 from Programme B) Christian belief that human beings are image-bearers of God. In Christian understanding, human beings are created in the image of God as moral beings with a conscience and innate ability to discern between good and evil (Odeleye, 2020). Pope John Paul II is quoted as saying:

> The recognition of the dignity of every human being is the foundation and support of the concept of universal human rights. For believers, that dignity and the rights that stem

> from it are solidly grounded in the truth of the human being's creation in the image and likeness of God. (Beattie, 2015:155)

There is a growing interest in legal, theological, and philosophical debates about the importance of the discourse on human dignity (Beattie, 2015). In the context of IPA, Fortune & Enger assert that "theologically and ethically, sexual and domestic violence constitute sin—the physical, psychological, and spiritual violation of one person by another." (2005:5). IPA is a serious sin because it violates the bodily and spiritual integrity of both victim-survivor and perpetrator, and it distorts and shatters the image of God in them; and it goes on to threaten, if not destroy, harmony in families and communities. In Christian scripture, the human body is metaphorically regarded as the temple of God, and together people constitute a dwelling place where God is present in a special way. As such, humans are to be treated with respect and held as sacred. In both Christianity and the African Traditional Religion, sin is regarded as a violation of moral laws against God and human beings. While there are divergent theologies about sin in these two prime religions, there are several areas of convergence including:

> (i) Both associated sin to Supreme God. Sin is a violation of moral law given by God and this is paramount to African Traditional Religion and Christianity. The biblical mandate and African Traditional Religion affirm the love of God and justice, which will not spare any sinner unpunished. (ii) The biblical mandate and African Traditional Religion have moral standards that prohibit sin against God and man. (iii) Both religions believe in penalties of sin for sinners. (iv) Both religions accept the forgiveness of sin. (Odeleye, 2020:11).

Moral theology, according to Kretzschmar is described as "the theological discipline that engages in critical reflection on human behaviour in every sphere of life on the basis of moral norms, obligations and values." (2014:2). Christians' moral pursuit for the morally right, true, and good is rooted in their love for God and people. Gospel readings such as the one found in Mark 12:28-31 speaks about Love being the greatest of all the commandments. Jayasundara, Nedegaard, Flanagan, Phillips & Weeks (2017) suggest that gospel readings like these "allow(s) Christians to experience personal and social relationships based on the values of peace, justice and mercy" Jayasundara et al (2017:53). Themes of *Love* and *God* are often used by the founder of Organization 3 as noted in her report: *We know that with our love for God and trust in God, we will be able to aid many thousands of women, men and youth for many years to come* (Annual Report 2016/2017:3).

- **Prayers and Singing of Christian Songs**

From my observation at a GBV awareness workshop that was facilitated by Programme B in a local 'coloured' community, the Christian resources (Pentecostal church building as a workshop venue, fervent prayers and singing of religious songs) served as a unifying strategy. It also served the purpose of creating rapport at this first encounter between implementers and workshop attendees. Workshop attendees and programme implementers alike were participating in fervent prayers which were infused with echoes of rebuking the evil forces that kept all present from advancing in life. The prayers also invoked God's presence during the workshop proceedings that would address the issue of GBV. According to Bompani (2010) African Christians – especially Charismatic/Pentecostal adherents "take the negative forces within African cosmology seriously by responding to real problems as perceived by Africans, namely witchcraft, sorcery, and evil spirits, understanding that it is acceptable to interpret socio-economic hardships and deprivation in contemporary society within the context of adverse cosmic forces." (2010:309). This point was also made in the following narrative by PI-1 when he referred to a domestic violence training workshop that he facilitated:

But when I'm into the training and it goes deep, I start to sing songs like: 'Maak my toe onder die bloed' [translated] 'Cover me under the blood of Jesus'. As where I come from, I deem it necessary to put my stamp. This is deep. So I want to tell them when I sing an African religious song, it's deep. And we cannot do it all by ourselves. (PI-1)

It is evident that PI-1 uses African religious music for several reasons: protection against evil forces, to assert peaceful masculinity that defies and stamps out violent masculinity, and thirdly, to touch their shared vulnerability as human beings in need of the Divine. On reflection about this participant's religious background, his use of African religious songs is consistent with Lutheran theology about music. Lebaka points out that "Luther accepted music as part of the true church, and as an expression of faith itself" and that Luther believed that music "controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits" (2015:1). Lebaka expounds that in the Reformed tradition music is regarded as "sung prayers", …singing as spirituality (and therefore shaping of God-images); and singing as hermeneutics, that is, as a mode of giving meaning." (2015:1).

Evidently from both the scenarios mentioned above, the unifying quality of music is not unusual

in contexts such as South Africa because music is inseparable from everyday lived experience and expression in African society. Tönsing confirms that "Songs deeply influence people, be it in their faith or in their political action." (2017:1). How PI-I positions himself in the training workshop with men who are involved in gangs through the singing of African religious songs, resonates with the idea, that for Africans, music is "something like an 'identity card' which shows people what group they belong to" (Tönsing, 2017:2). Tönsing makes the point that music can be used "both in asserting domination and in resisting domination", a human phenomenon that is found all over the world (2017:5). In both scenarios, the implementers are using the singing of African religious music to defuse potential evil forces and assert their spiritual / Christian position politically in the context of addressing GBV and issues of masculinity.

5.7. INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES AND CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

The following section reflects on how intervention programmes perceive the men and how these perceptions are linked with Christian beliefs.

5.7.1. Perceptions about Male Clients

The perceptions that programme designers and implementers hold about their clients directly influence the approaches that are implemented in the programmes.

- **The Victim-Perpetrator Dichotomy**

One of the participants described her perceptions about her clients as follows:

There is definitely a wounding, a hole there and therefore it's very much like an addiction. Violence can be addictive for someone who has a lack inside of them. There's an emptiness and when they abuse and put someone down, it makes them feel good for a while. It's just like other addictions, you know? And when it is sanctioned by society I suppose it becomes a habit, but I think it's just like an addiction. If it feeds your lack and you don't have that inner connection, then you keep doing it. (PD-3)

This participant sees the men as wounded and empty, and their use of violence as an addiction in their attempt to fill the emptiness. She believes that they experience a sense of emptiness because of a lack of inner connection. Consistent with her belief in a transpersonal approach to counselling, she believes that *work with men needs to be spiritually based which is practiced*

connection. (PD-3). According to Frame a transpersonal approach to counselling "is a way of working with clients that combines a variety of psychological concepts with spiritual interventions" (2003:5). This *practiced connection* is also referred to as awakening her male clients to the benefits of taming the ego by cultivating the divine within themselves.

Another participant who is both an implementer and designer offers a reflective account of her perception about her clients based on her journey within the sex offender space:

If you asked me seven years ago about sex offenders in their recovery, I would say: "Once a rapist always a rapist". Now I'm saying: 'If you're using the proper risk assessment instruments, we can tell who's gonna be amenable to treatment, who's not and who we should be protecting society from'. (PD-1).

- **Male clients: wounded and broken people or condemned abusers?**

Smith posits that the "history of South African social work is interwoven with the history of colonization and imperialism" that denigrated and "disrupted traditional forms of social relations" (2014:309). I have not come across any material that specifically deals with the ways in which Organization 3 addresses the impact or intersections of colonialism and apartheid on the lived experience of their clients. Saraceno explores how "a dominant western ontology rooted in white masculinity and coloniality has shaped the field of human services and its embeddedness in the systems and structures of professional helping in Canada." (2012:248). Saraceno cautions that a western ontology "privileges the normative values of whiteness and the coloniality of power." (2012:249). Similar concerns have been pointed to when it comes to South African intervention programmes that have been adapted from western and North American programmes (Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2014). This is for example the case with Organization 3's founder's research in Europe and the USA that informed the establishment of the organization; and the organization's continued partnership with western funders who appear to insist on western solutions to problems of IPA in a post-apartheid South African context. In this regard, questions have to be asked about "how dichotomous power structures are created and maintained to the detriment of humanity and creation" and leaders (including Organization 3's leaders) must be called to exercise power "in religiously ethical ways" as suggested by Withrow (2009:1). Writing from their post-apartheid South African leadership experiences, Petersen & Swart (2009) propose a "movement away from subject-object to subject-subject relationship where the exercise of leadership takes place mutually, with the possibility of divine revelation occurring in

the midst of connection" (Withrow, 2009:2).

From the perspective of PD-3, it appears that she was hoping for the approach suggested by Petersen & Swart. Furthermore, participant PD-3 was intentional about moving "across difference toward a model of praxis that seeks social justice through…an affirmation of the complexity of life through solidarity" with her clients (Saraceno, 2012:249).

PD-3's act of solidarity with the humanity of her clients seemed to have clashed with the hegemonic elements of the dominant culture represented in the organization's leadership and funders who had an already fixed perception of the targeted clients - as PD-3 lamented their sentiments '…*These horrible abusers. They should all be locked up'.* West has cautioned against the risky yet necessary process of cultural translations and the notion of solidarity when working across cultures (2019:108). Saraceno makes the point that "human service work is inherently colonial" and that "its central goal is to control and discipline bodies and minds" (2012:251). To mitigate such, De Villiers Graaff suggests that countries like South Africa where "white supremacy over black people is an issue"; with "certain race, class, religious or sexual identity norms being considered positive, while others are negatively defined in opposition to them", special focus must be given to the situation facing black men which had a colonial white rule (De Villiers Graaff, 2017:17). In this regard, it is incumbent on intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners in South Africa to weave these complex nuances into its analysis of the problem and potential solutions.

According to Dube (2016), the "crisis of/in masculinity discourse" and its link to GBV against women in intimate and public relationships is central in imperialist and colonialist contexts like South Africa (Dube, 2016:3). Dube cautions that it is white male privilege that is at the heart of the "crisis in/of masculinity" discourse. In South Africa, as in the USA, "appeals to Christian religious language to reclaim white masculine power under the guise of servant leadership" has found "resonance in evangelical Protestant, Pentecostal and other radical Christian men's organizations" (Dube, 2016:5).

Of particular interest is how programme implementers construct and negotiate discourses of masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa and what this reveals in terms of the ways in which they address the key signifiers of IPA. For example, participants in this study, have often used words such as *wounded*, *injured* and *broken* to describe the men in their intervention

programmes. Such descriptions find resonance with some South African scholars who define "the persons oppressed by apartheid" as having been broken (Withrow, 2009:2). Petersen & Swart's (2009) article *Via the Broken Ones: Towards a phenomenological theology of ecclesial leadership in post-apartheid South Africa* suggests that an "engagement with the *Broken Ones* in the midst of their circumstances of brokenness" provides an opportunity for programme implementers to recognize their humanity – as such to see them "not [as] mere objects to be ignored, manipulated, and denigrated, but are the significant partners for an incipient understanding of leadership" (2009:19). Recognizing and focusing on the humanity and agency of their male clients in the quest to heal their brokenness, opens the way for "a theology that takes seriously the presence and activity of God within the messiness" of life (Petersen & Swart 2009:20).

Differently put, when participants' perceptions about the men are linked with participants' Christian roots or orientation (evident in the profile table), many participants spoke about the image of God being present in the men - which is what would enable the healing (wholeness) that they seek to cultivate through their intervention approaches.

5.7.2. Male Clients' Agency and Ability to Change

The central ethos around men's agency and their ability to change is essential within the programme as also asserted by PD-2

At Organization 2 (Programme B) we wouldn't be doing what we are doing if we didn't believe that people have the potential to change. They can learn new skills and new ways of thinking around certain things. Which is exactly our faith. So, it is fascinating that if people were given tools and resources and information and knowledge that they could apply, it could change their lives. (PD-2)

Religions have their respective understandings of the notion of salvation and in a Christian understanding, Jesus is the saviour of humankind (Tawiah, 2015). According to Tawiah, African Christians see salvation "as the dynamic power of God." Tawiah also makes the point that life is about being practical for Africans and as such the spiritual must manifest in the physical. A holistic understanding of the meaning of salvation for African Christians incorporates "forgiveness and reconciliation of sins as well as deliverance from spiritual and material oppressions." (Tawiah, 2015:50). Likewise, Hanciles insists on such a holistic framing of the

notion of salvation: “blacks understood the evangelical message very differently from whites [colonizers]… Conditioned by the experience of slavery and oppression, their [black Christians] response to the gospel message fused religion and freedom in a manner that was patently subversive.” (2013:208-209). This means that Africans used Christianity to emphasize human dignity and related freedoms that such dignity implies.

Participant PD-2 shares her perspective of dignity as inherent and as something which cannot be taken away, even through the worst behaviour.

She suggests that it is the sense of internalized condemnation inflicted by a society that distorts abusive men’s ability/agency for behavioural change. In a 2005 version of Programme B’s manual, she explains:

Many men with whom one works would need to find ways to heal from the sexual and physical abuse they experienced as children. Clearly one cannot discount their pain and their scars. Nevertheless, these individual experiences can easily become both an explanation of why a man batters and an excuse to continue his violence. To change long-held patterns, men must acknowledge the destructive nature of their present behaviours and accept the responsibility for their actions. They are not, however, responsible for creating the many forces that have shaped their thinking, however, they can and should take responsibility to work on them. (2005, Offender Rehabilitation and Reintegration – Programme B''s Programme for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence)

For PD-2 it is important to recognize men’s dignity as *human beings crowned with honour because they were created in the image of God*. Furthermore, it is to be understood that while some male clients may not be responsible for the abuses experienced during their childhood and its influences on their thinking, they must appreciate the destructive impact of their abusive behaviour and as such take responsibility for it. From the interviews with PD-2, the idea of people being created in the image and likeness of God provides a hopeful resource.

Bader & Froese posit that a person’s conceptualization of the nature of God provides important insights into their “religious beliefs, attitudes and behavior” (2005:3). Tutu opines that being created in the image of God implies that “Each person is not just to be respected but to be revered as one created in God's image.” (2000:152). Dube (2008) reiterates that each human life is to be

regarded as sacred, "created in God's image and … loved by God, who is the source of human dignity." (Dube, 2008:40).

There is a passionate plea for society to relinquish the condemnation that they place on abusive men. From a theological perspective, PD-2's conceptualization of male clients as image-bearers of God coincides with Tutu's argument that:

> however diabolical the act, it did not turn the perpetrator into a demon. We had to distinguish between the deed and the perpetrator, between the sinner and the sin, to hate and condemn the sin while being filled with compassion for the sinner. (2000:66-67)

For Tutu:

> The point is that, if perpetrators were to be despaired of as monsters and demons, then we were thereby letting accountability go out the window because we were then declaring that they were not moral agents to be held responsible for the deeds they had committed. Much more importantly, it meant that we abandoned all hope of their being able to change for the better. (2000:67).

PD-2's notion of abusive men's inability to know how to not be abusive is not sustained in the Ubuntu feminist understanding of IPA. On the contrary, Ubuntu feminism places "social bond" (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015) as an obligation on South Africans and it asserts that violence against women is a learned behaviour which implies that abusive behaviour is unnatural in Afrocentric understanding.

- **The importance of patience in the process of change**

The importance of understanding the complex nature of the problem and the kind of context required to respond most effectively was also pointed out by programme designer and implementer PD-1 from Programme A. In a newspaper article where she testified for the defence in the trial of a convicted paedophile, the participant is reported as saying:

The client's affliction is not a problem that could be addressed overnight, and long-term imprisonment was not conducive to effective treatment. She noted that the client *had during consultations admitted to the regular use of pornography.* She then recommends to the magistrate: *We need strict control over his treatment, in order to make it very difficult for him to*

re-offend. The effective management of his treatment would also involve his family (Newspaper article by Megan Baadjies: 'No quick fix for paedophilia', 23 Jan 2013)

From this extract, the participant suggests that banishing the person to prison would not bring about the intended outcome of stopping his abusive behaviour. She suggests that the male client be perceived as a person that is afflicted by his sexually abusive behaviour and that the process of change in him requires a therapeutic context that involves his family. Imprisoning him would deteriorate his humanity. Instead of ostracizing, shunning and isolation as punishment, she appeals for the perpetrator to be brought back into the community for righteousness and justice to be applied. This approach of cultivating connection (facing oneself in the presence of the community) is consistent with Ubuntu feminist and Afrocentric approaches to hold accountable and restore balance and harmony in the person and community.

Otherwise said, PD-1 believes that the humanity of offenders can be recovered – an idea that is consistent with Nkulu-N'Sengha's (2007) reference to a human being who has become *kintu* (a thing or lost his humanity) and can become *muntu* (a human being) again. Such recovery of male clients' humanity can be cultivated through the Ubuntu-feminist approach. Since being merciful is a quality that is intrinsic to the nature of the Divine / God in whose image and likeness human beings are created, we have the capacity to emulate this divine quality of mercy (loving-kindness) to which PD-1 appeals. As Nkulu-N'Sengha postulates "God's goodness is the fundamental source of African morality. The notion of God as the supreme judge of human thought and actions is predicated not only on his purity and ownership of the whole creation but also on the fundamental fact that nothing escapes God's eye." (2011:289).

5.7.3. The embeddedness of the Christian faith in intervention activities

The following narratives show how the programmes interact with Christianity through the strategies they employ during intervention activities. These include the use of church buildings, prayer and inviting religious leaders as resources to intervention activities.

Programme implementers reported that they were not to bring religion into the interventions. P1-4 attested to this commitment but differed in her opinion on the embeddedness of faith:

Even though our facilitators know and they've been trained not to bring faith into a counselling session, I think in everything that we do there is some aspect of faith. (PI-4)

From my observation of Programme C's community-based GBV education workshop, the utilization of a charismatic church venue and the opening of workshop proceedings with prayer seemed natural for both workshop participants and programme facilitators. It was explained that community members feel that church venues are accessible and safe with all the crime and violence in the surrounding community. The workshop was opened in prayer with fervent improvisations agreeing and "rebuking the evil one" and requesting "God's intervention" as well as giving thanks for the opportunity granted by Organization 3 to community members to attend the workshop on domestic violence.

During the workshop proceedings, one participants' use of profanity provoked severe reprimanding by other workshop participants. Two workshop participants left the session in protest and another responded: *This is a church. This is our church. You can't speak like that in our church*. The person was prompt and repetitive in her apology, and thereafter another participant communicated acceptance: "*We accept your apology*".

This story confirms the notion that sacred spaces such as the church can provide an important opportunity for people to share their concerns and request help through what Ammerman (2013) refers to as the lens of sacred consciousness.

5.8. CONCLUSION

It is evident from this chapter that Christian beliefs are present in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. Also evident from the above section is that participants' religious persuasions are identifiable and that they do take their male clients' talk about religion seriously. These participants harness their own religious persuasions and their clients' use of religion to help the process of change. The following section examines how Christian beliefs about gender power relations shape the construction and implementation of intervention programmes.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS - 2

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents themes on the second research objective: to establish how Christian beliefs about gender power relations shape the construction and implementation of intervention programmes.

6.2. ADDRESSING HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPICAL CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Two of the participating programmes' manuals include sections with some guidance on addressing culture and religion with their clients. From the profile table, this is evident in Programme B and Programme C.

Participant PI-8 shared her interaction with clients who justify their abusive behaviour:

The men would complain by saying: 'Everything is changing and we should just accept the changes. Because in the olden days there were arranged marriages, but now my child can just get married. And also women were not supposed to go and work, but now the women are the ones who are working and the man is not working. So there are all those changes you see?' (PI-8)

This narrative above refers to some of the issues relating to gender stereotyping. Evidently, the men are struggling to accept the changing realities in their lives pertaining to women who are working while some of them are unemployed. This challenge confirms Ratele's calls for the need to address men's "positioning in society as well as their cognitions, emotions and bodily practices" which if not attended to, are likely "to perpetuate stereotypes, misunderstandings and delay efforts toward democratising gender relations." (2008:522). While the legacy of apartheid persists through systemic and structural oppression resulting in dire socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty, the men that PI-8 sees in her programme try to use this complex reality that affects both them and their partners, as justification for their abusive behaviour toward women in their intimate relationships. Ratele argues for poor black men to be treated differently when it comes to the intersections of their poverty, unemployment, and violent behaviour, but Maluleke cautions that "so-called powerless men share with the powerful men,

the same aspiration to attain or maintain (some form of local) hegemonic male supremacy, even if it is only based in an imagined manhood" (Maluleke, 2018:43). Instead of colluding with so-called powerless men who abuse women, Maluleke (2018) argues that such men should be encouraged to abandon their intolerant masculinities and collaborate with women to transform the world.

In response to the complaints of the male clients, the female participant – using herself as an example, responds to her clients: *'You see it is helpful if I'm working. My husband is at home and he can cook, clean, make the bed, and he can do everything. We are working together.'* (PI-8)

This response by the participant to the male client coincides with Maluleke's (2018) insistence that it is distorted notions of manhood that must be addressed. The participant's response also resonates with African feminism that, being mindful of the shared experience of oppression, many South African women understand that the real task is to collaborate with men to change the world. Participant PI-8 uses the opportunity to diffuse unrealistic and potentially harmful gender stereotypes by pointing out to the aggrieved male client that both (employed) wife and (unemployed) husband are still working together for the common good of the household. This approach is also resonant of African scholarship about the complex and changing contexts within which Africans seek to flourish in intimate relationships (Maluleke, 2002; Chitando & Chirangoma, 2012; Uzodike & Isike, 2012; Owino, 2010). In this regard, the participant refuses the oppressive demands that unrealistic patriarchal tendencies seek to enforce through gender stereotyping.

The approach of insisting on men's agency to confront the destructiveness of male privilege is reflective of African feminism in this participant's response, in that she respects the male client's humanity which requires him to diffuse harmful gender-stereotypical tendencies by cultivating Ubuntu in his relationship with his partner. While the participant shows empathy for the man's struggle in *forsaking the traditional role of being a real man* (Annual Report 2008/2009:11), she encourages him to become more human by owning his feelings and sharing these feelings with his partner instead of allowing himself to be consumed by distorted gender-stereotypical beliefs.

Buntu (2019) suggests that the gender trouble between African women and African men can be ascribed to the obscure construction of men's humanity in western theory and practice that has deeply influenced many (South) African contexts. Scholars also note that one cannot truly reform masculinity without dismantling patriarchy (Vaz & Lemons, 2012).

6.3. INTERVENTION APPROACHES

6.3.1. Utilizing African Proverbs & Biblical Phrases to interrogate Headship and Love

Headship was a pervasive aspect that emerged from interviews. A participant noted that some male clients try to justify their abusive behaviour towards their partners by using the Bible, f*or example: 'Man is the head of the wife.'* (P1-7)

Another participant confirmed: *They use the scripture that says the woman must be submissive to the man and the man must be submissive to God.* (P1-3)

The use of biblical texts to control women in intimate relationships remains a rigorously debated discourse in literature. Curle (2013) points out that for many Christians who believe in the hierarchical order, "male leadership, as raised in Ephesians 5:24, is critical and overrides all other considerations." (2013:107). According to Ephesians 5:24 wives submit to their husbands 'in everything'. African women theologians believe that it is the patriarchal teachings regarding male headship and female submission of many churches that need to stop (Pillay, 2016; Nadar & Potgieter, 2010; Nadar, 2009) and that both women and men are needed "to transform gender relations" (Van Klinken, 2011:110). Proponents of a model that embraces "the egalitarian 'Christians for Biblical Equality', point to Galatians 3:26–28 which states that "there is no longer male or female; for all are one in Jesus Christ". Moreover "Paul shows that overcoming the hierarchical dichotomy of male and female, is an essential element of the baptismal oneness in Christ." (Togarasei, 2012:238).

It was also cited by P1-7 that men use the Bible verse about God being the head of the man and the man being the head of the women. This participant challenges the male client by saying to him:

'We accept that. Really you are the head of the house. But the woman is your neck. You can't work alone. She is there to support you. Secondly, God doesn't say beat your wife or don't give your wife money. God is Love. God wants the couple to love each other and raise their children in an environment of happiness. If you are doing this abuse, this wife is not happy. Do you think God is happy? Do you think God loves you while you are doing this [abuse]? God doesn't love someone who violates other people, who hurt other people. Because God is Love.' (P1-7)

In this scenario, participant P1-7 combines an African proverb, her knowledge of scripture regarding headship and love, together with her knowledge of the dynamics of IPA to challenge her clients' ways of thinking, and use of African proverbs and biblical texts to justify their abusive behaviour. The participant refers to the Yoruba proverb that states "'*Okurin lori, obirin lorun*' Man head, woman neck" which means that "without the neck, the head would be floating in the air." (Dickson & Mbosowo, 2014:640). Unlike ordinary words, African proverbs are considered to have a significant impact on the mind. African "proverbs offer more than moral lessons, warnings, advice and truth." (Adamo, 2015:3). Furthermore, Adamo asserts that:

> Proverbs offer such truth which extends to epistemological, metaphysical, aesthetical, legal, scientific, and anthropological facts. Proverbs are not mere relics. Again, although many proverbs are short sentences, Yoruba proverbs are sometimes exceptional. (2015:3).

The participant combines the use of African proverbs and biblical phrases such as God is Love and that God requires that love be shared to cultivate happiness within the home environment.

It is understood that proverbs are an important medium for transferring human wisdom. According to Bailey, proverbs are important in the history of religion and in human culture because "they have bridged the gap between popular and official culture, between implicit and explicit religion" (1997:91). Bailey purports that proverbs "exhibit three of the distinguishing characteristics with which religious phenomena are generally credited" (1997:92). Firstly, proverbs describe realities that are "inherently unquantifiable, with an air of finality"; secondly they "prescribe and proscribe specific behaviours, while leaving that actor to apply the principles; and thirdly, proverbs "balance these potentially divisive characteristics with an integrative power: they integrate contemporaries with one other, with their own histories, and with departed generations." (Bailey, 1997:92). Evidently, PI-7 challenges the male client's extrinsic use of religious and cultural resources and insists on the intrinsic embodiment of his faith and culture.

The participant resembles Frame's notion of healthy religion whereby those who practice religion in a healthy way "tend to be more egalitarian" (2003:114). Furthermore, a person with a healthy religious orientation "is inspiring and prophetic" and when mysticism is employed, "that element is grounded in reality." (2003:115).

It is worth noting that women in African cultures have been able to converge secular and religious feminist approaches to confront and challenge complex patriarchal beliefs embedded in IPA problems (Chisale, 2017). Chisale has found in his study that women "freely interpret the Bible from their lived experiences and disapprove of the chaos" instigated by patriarchy (2017:2).

The abovementioned extract from the manual provides an opportunity for programme implementers to explore various aspects of masculinity and to explore with their male clients various aspects of egalitarian models of intimate relationships.

6.3.2. Enrolling Male Clergy to Demystify distorted religious teachings

Another participant from Programme C explained how she had invited a pastor and an imam to participate in a men's group; and how beneficial their presence and inputs were in addressing distorted religious beliefs and teachings. She stated

I invited a pastor and an imam as participants of our men's group. In that group, we discussed spirituality and religion. And one of the Muslim men spoke about the feather indicating that the Quran said you can hit your wife. The imam said: 'No, this is your interpretation of that verse.' He explained: 'So if I touch my wife, whether in anger or in joy whatever, I should leave no marks on her skin. Your interpretation of the word 'touch' is I can hit her. You leave bruises and you hurt her internally. Your interpretation of that verse is not right.'

The Participant continued: *The men actually had a discussion around what, how do they interpret the Quran and the Bible. Where the Quran says 'your touch must be as light as a feather', means it shouldn't hurt. And then it also goes to the person's emotional state. It shouldn't hurt her emotionally. So you can interpret 'touch' as an emotional touch, a physical touch. It doesn't specify what kind of touch. And you could see how the men started really thinking about how they interpret certain words. Many of the men, even yesterday one of the guys from that group came and asked when is there another group? Just that information alone changes how you see people. How you see women.* (PI-6)

These religious leaders not only inspired the men because they honoured them with their time and presence, but they also offered important insights about demystifying misinterpreted scriptures. Islamic scholars have written extensively about the controversial Quranic verse 4:34 which is often used to justify men who beat their wives. Shaikh asserts that contemporary feminists "insist[s] that violence against wives is contrary to the logic of the Quran" in which "themes of justice, moral agency, and human equality are to be unconditionally prioritized." (2007:74). In the scenario, the imam facilitates an important process of critical thinking about the interpretation of verse Q 4:34 which appears to move the men in the direction of constructive change. The participant demonstrates religious maturity (Allport, 1950) in that, although she may not feel confident about addressing the clients' religious dilemmas, she takes them seriously enough to invite faith leaders to address these theological issues. PI-6's religious maturity together with her social constructionist orientation enables her to acknowledge that she does not have all the answers and by collaborating with the faith leaders in the intervention process, she instils "hope for change and renewal" in her clients (Frame, 2003:159).

6.3.3. Applying Christian Resources in the Process of Change

Various theologians, anthropologists and scholars of comparative religions have defined religion. In Africa, Mbiti's perspective sheds precious light on the importance of religion in general and Christianity in particular:

> "Man [sic] cannot live by the bread of science and politics alone; he also needs the vitamins of ethics and morals, faith and hope, love and security, comfort and attention in the face of death and misfortune, a feeling and experience that as a person he matters infinitely, and assurance that he is not immediately 'forgotten' or even annihilated when he dies. These are the elements that religion tries to offer… Religion makes a contribution in man's [sic] search for identity and security... "(Mbiti, 1989:270).

For many South Africans, Christianity serves as a source of hope and it assists many of PI-6's clients through life's hardships. This idea of Christianity as a source of hope is confirmed in the literature. According to Cone "religion is the search for meaning if your life has no meaning in this world" (2011:18). The persistent traumatic effects of institutional and structural violence inflicted by colonialism and apartheid that remain largely unaddressed, leave most South Africans deeply wounded and with a sense of hopelessness because of the dire socio-economic

conditions within which they seek to make meaning of life in intimate relationships. It is within this context that intervention programmes seek to bring about healing and transformation in the lives of the men in their programmes.

Participant PI-6 points out that for many of her clients, it is the hope embedded in their Christian beliefs that make them resilient.

As is evident from participants PI-6, PI-7 and PI-8, there appeared to have been an easy flow of drawing on resources from Christian, African Traditional Religion, and Islamic beliefs. These embodied practices find resonance with proponents of compatibility between African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam (Oden, 2007; Maluleke, 2018). As Oden (2007) posits:

> The evidence overwhelms all ambiguity. The assumption that there is a fundamental incompatibility between African traditional religion and Christianity has been proved wrong by literally millions of living African Christians. What may be more needed is a redefinition of "African traditional religion" that includes both Christianity and Islam, assuming that religions that have sustained over a millennium of continuity surely must be called traditional. (2010:95).

Noteworthy is how easily programme implementers harness resources from their Christian beliefs, African Traditional Religion and Islam. Also notable is the ease with which PI-8 navigates and fuses her ancestral call with her pastoral and counselling roles. She demonstrates that it is possible to draw on both her Christian and ancestral calling resources as required, in addressing issues relating to unequal gender power relations with some male clients. From her account of how the counselling session went with that male client, it appears that drawing on African traditional knowledge assisted the client. PI-8's approach finds resonance in assertions that "In Africa life is an indivisible whole with no compartmentalisation of a belief in the order of life which has been set by God and the ancestors which everyone must follow, or else something unpalatable may be the consequence (Adamo, 2015:9).

- **The notion of Love in the Process of Change**

PD-3 explains that a therapist as a spiritual guide returns men to their inner selves and that religion can be helpful for two reasons. Firstly, because religion has the terminology; and secondly, it assists with the inner work that is required to bring about positive change. She

describes religion as an activity of practiced love that results in connection. Oden (2007:110) confirms that religion is faith becoming evident "in the works of love". He posits that "love is what faith does" and reiterates that "those whose faith is active in love are living out true religion as defined by the epistle of James, whether they call themselves Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals or Charismatics. They embody the one family of God in different family memories and genetic variations." (Oden, 2007:110).

6.3.4. Implementers' Personal Experiences as Resource

The pivotal facilitative role of the programme implementer connecting their personal experiences with that of their clients as they help the men progress from *violence* to *non-violence* (P1-3) consistently emerged from the data.

In the South African context, it is rare for a white colleague (participant PD-3) to acknowledge her personal experience of IPA to a black colleague (me as a researcher), as was revealed during the interview. I had worked with her in the women's shelter during the 1990s and we had many deep conversations over the years, but this was the first time that she spoke openly about her personal experience of entrapment in her abusive marriages and the role of the church:

And the Church didn't want me to leave him. Even though it wasn't physical abuse. We went to Charismatic Churches together and we were very active Christians. We were gonna have children, cause it was about 8 years of marriage already and I have been unhappy from the honeymoon, hey? And then I thought to myself, 'no you can't have children. Children are not gonna heal this.' I was so miserable with this person and my understanding from the Church was that 'you can only leave if he is unfaithful.' I mean never mind that he was manic depressive and that he was in Valkenberg [psychiatric hospital] and all of that. He was abusive in a bullying kind of way and he even admitted it and then I decided, 'I'm leaving him and I will deal with God and the Church myself.' And I left the Church. (PD-3)

The participant's experience is consistent with scholarly findings that in many Christian contexts "Marriage is considered sacred, and intimate partner violence may not be considered a justifiable reason to leave the marriage." (Klaasen, 2018:40). This experience is an internal struggle of faith compounded by daunting Christian teachings and practices in some faith communities about the role of women in preserving marriage at all costs. Christian women who decide to step away from abusive marriages often experience harsh consequences. Urging religious and secular

leaders, Fortune & Enger state that "no woman should ever be forced to choose between safety and her religious community or tradition." (2005:1).

PD-3 continued to share her experience of navigating personal faith, her personal experience of IPA, working with women in the shelter and the sense of judgment from the church group where she had hoped to find support:

I just couldn't live that life - and I couldn't stay in the Church as someone who divorced her husband for the "wrong" reasons. And so I went my own way, on my spiritual journey and then I married a man who was also abusive again. And then I realized my pattern was I was saving them like I was saving my father. I was going for men that were wounded, so I could save them, I suppose. And then that relationship was even worse in terms of the manipulation and then physical violence. I've been married from varsity with my first husband. So, he has been there for me. But only in working with abused women did I actually see that this was happening in my own life. And I mean, I was telling women to leave a man that is abusing them and then I'm saying to myself, 'look this is happening to me and how do I handle it as a Christian, you know?' Am I living my life with this Church group? Cause it was a little group that we were belonging to that just wouldn't allow me to make that choice. So, I became a rebel, I suppose, you know? To the Church in their eyes and ja, I still felt that. Even now, If I see those people, I feel embarrassed and I feel judged that I was a bad woman, wife and 'you think of me as bad.'

Both participants PD-3 and PI-3 demonstrate the degree of influence their personal commitment to change had on their work with their male clients.

6.3.5. Moral Discernment as Resource

This section reflects on findings of how Christian religious belief systems are used during programme interventions.

P1-1 spoke about some clients' strategies of deflection and how important it is for the programme implementer to be alert and insist on clients being honest and engaging in "truth-telling":
With this kind of work, clients struggle to be honest and truthful. So when they try to mesmerize me, or when they want to make a point to justify, they will say: 'I'm now born again'. (P1-1)

PI-1 is not distracted by the client's claims of being born again. Even though being born again can potentially be a resource to aid a client's process of change, the programme implementer must discern when it is being misused, as in this case, to avoid the real and deep work of taking responsibility for the harm that the client has caused to the victim-survivor. In this instance, PI-1's extensive experience of working in environments where he's been exposed to such deflections, together with his personal life as a devout Christian, stood him in good stead.

PI-1 continues to offer several examples of his clients' use of Christian references as a distraction from taking responsibility for their abusive behaviour:

So when he came back after 10 years, he tried to mesmerize me with 'I'm at a new church - a Charismatic Church now, and I play a role in the church.' So by having that behaviour, he wanted me to hear that he is good. But he was not convincing, because, underneath that, he was still fantasizing, journaling, taking pictures of his potential victims. So they (clients) try to tell stories about 'the good me' now. (PI-1)

In the above scenario, the participant was able to discern that the client was trying to deflect and manipulate by painting a flattering picture of himself in the therapeutic environment. The participant's confidence in calling the client out for being manipulative can be attributed to his religious maturity (Allport, 1950) as a Christian coupled with an in-depth experience of working with this client population. The combination provides a "deep-seated tradition of critical thinking", enabling the participant to discern between the "good" (buya) and "bad" (bubi) use of religion (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2007:144).

The notion of being *born again* emerged several times in the data. It is indicative of what Evangelical Christians refer to as a new birth experience; also referred to as accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour or as "having an assurance of salvation," from past sin (König, 1998:83). This new birth experience involves "a change in perspective that is accompanied by a new way of thinking, forgiveness of a past lived in selfishness, and hope for a future lived in submission to God and God's commandments." (Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend 2015:113).

Claims of being "born again" infer moral transformation. Walking with one's Bible in public is a powerful proclamation to the community of one's "born again" status, letting them know that

you have turned away from wrong behaviour and are now devoted to living according to God's way. The "authority and inspiration of the Bible" is a central feature for Evangelicals (Owino, 2010:35) and they often refer to themselves as "the people of the book" (König, 1998:83). The response of the prison staff in the scenario above is not unusual because it is often automatically assumed that being "born again" means the person has been divinely or miraculously transformed from previously bad ways of thinking and behaving.

In this scenario, the participant points out how the authority of the Bible is used by some male clients to silence programme implementers because such powerful symbolism, if unexamined, can imply that real positive change has occurred. The male clients' attempts of legitimation (Thompson, 1990) was subverted by implementers' insistence on the intrinsic use of religion and religious expression as evident in the following scenario.

Another point of interest is the debate about human nature and its relationship with original sin because during participant observation one of the clients argued that he sees his condition (paedophilia) as a natural affliction that he must endure and learn to tame. PI-1 also reiterated that he is particularly alert when some male clients present Christianity to tell their stories of change to which he responds:

'*Don't come and try to mesmerize me. Don't come to soften me. Because I'm active in church myself and I know where I'm heading. There's a difference between me as a churchgoer - as a Lutheran and me as a practitioner here. So we need to have clear boundaries. I come here in my role as a therapist. Preparing myself to listen to you, and to listen emphatically and not be clouded by Lutheran doctrine.'* (PI-1)

The participant's religious maturity and his commitment to intrinsic religion (Allport & Ross, 1967) enable him to apply sound clinical judgement/discernment when Christian resources are misused by male clients to deflect and soften or coerce implementers into collusion. The participant suggests that he is not going to be drawn into theological debates about whether clients' church attendance and active participation automatically means they have fundamentally changed. On several occasions during the interview, also visible from the profile table and during participant observation, he has confirmed his Christian orientation as a *staunch Lutheran*. He also spoke clearly about keeping healthy boundaries pertaining to his role as a therapist and his Christian orientation. From my observation of his interaction with the male clients, it was

apparent that he did not accept the idea that paedophilia is part of human nature. The latter is consistent with The Lutheran Declaration of Concord rejects and condemns the "identification of original sin with human nature" (Ely, 2018:148). Consistent with his Lutheran theological perspective on the matter of human nature, PI-1 does not accept the male client's deflection that God created him as a paedophile.

6.3.6. Confrontational Approach

PI-1 believes that his confrontational approach is meant to assist clients in understanding that being in an intervention programme is an opportunity to get honest about their real problems. To mitigate any chance of collusion, clear professional boundaries are practiced in that PI-1 does not entertain any requests for favours, such as a lift to the train station or anything similarly personal. Participant PI-1 stresses professional boundaries, not being distracted and staying focused. He explains:

Keeping professional boundaries is crucial. I have no interest in discussing his church activities. This is not a place to discuss that. My interest is how you are and what do you bring to the group session. I want to know about your grooming methodology. '*How did you get your grooming style? Determine where you are.'*

Programme implementers "are usually encouraged to maintain a professional distance and discouraged from disclosing personal information about themselves." (ANROWS, 2020:2).

PI-1 explained his confrontational approach: *So if it (the threat to commit suicide) was sincere, he could do it there. So it was all about his methodology of justifying and him looking for pity "poor me, shame on me", you see? He was never going to take accountability. I engaged him to say, 'where does this behaviour start? Where does that trigger come from?' But he doesn't come to the point to say: 'this is my trigger'. So you push him in a direction so that he can get what you say in Afrikaans 'jy moet insig kry' [you must get insight].*

PI-1 elaborates: *So he (the client) was in the beginning very suicidal. So I asked him 'when you were there [traveling in a distant country], why didn't you jump out the buildings there, man?*'

Developing a relationship of trust with the male clients is central to the confrontational approach in programme A. This combination is important to support male clients into being honest.

Confrontational approaches are commonly used in intervention programmes and have been dubbed by many scholars as punitive and unhelpful (ANROWS, 2020). Confrontational approaches may come across as judgmental and cause the perpetrator to "become defensive, denying that he has a problem, justifying his behaviour, blaming the victim and avoiding help." (Chisale, 2018:6). It however appears that Programme A's modelling of a balanced professional relationship coupled with using the self and religious language as resources, provide interesting insights into how the confrontational approach works in this context. Programme A invites clients to relinquish manipulative tendencies and insist on truth-telling as central to the healing process.

Participant PI-1, explains:

*The encouragement is that they are in a programme of renewal where they can make better choices. It's also within their choice to go to church. I encourage them to go to the gym or to run or to walk and to contribute to constructive stuff. So he also needs to be connected to a spiritual group whether it is a church or whatever. The point is to connect with something so that you are constantly being renewed. Instead of you being here [in the group], but you perpetuate with your old ways. (*PI-1)

In this narrative, the participant demonstrates how Programme A continues to integrate individual personal responsibility and maintain a reflective 'renewal' within the programme. Holding a clear vision of renewal, the participant demonstrates how the programme's awareness and ways of addressing some clients' tactics of deflection and distraction are central to their approach. Clients are guided into seeing how tactics such as "playing the victim" and "using Christianity to mesmerize counsellors" or hiding in the programme are distracting and delaying their own healing and renewal. PI-1 also points to the importance of reminding clients to be involved in some spiritual group or church which he regards as an important resource to assist the client's constant need for renewal. It is in this regard that PI-1 makes a clear distinction between the purpose of the treatment intervention group and that of a spiritual group and church. PI-1 demonstrates religious maturity which Allport describes as the ability to critically engage one's religion and as evident in PI-1's practice of drawing on the liberating instead of oppressive sources of that faith.

6.4. CONCLUSION

From this section of the data analysis, it is evident that Christian beliefs and culture do influence how programmes implementers approach their clients' interpretations of male headship and female submission. For example, Programme A's confrontational approach which emphasizes moral agency in clients reinforces responsibility and accountability in clients. This approach of instilling strict boundaries regarding when and on what basis religion will be engaged during interventions fostered a climate for critical self-reflection in the men. Additionally, it was established that when Christian beliefs are critically engaged, male clients tend to recognize their own ways of manipulating religion to justify their abusive tendencies. In this way, they were pointed to more authentic uses of religion to advance their healing.

This section also pointed to the benefits of creating therapeutic environments that are safe and compassionate and which advance opportunities for truth-telling about clients' use of distorted religious teachings about male headship and female submission during intervention programmes. The programme implementers' insistence on their male clients' agency to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour, and their ability to choose self-regulating aspects of religion and culture, proved to be positive for the transformation and healing processes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DATA ANALYSIS - 3

7.1. INTRODUCTION

Having established that Christian beliefs about gender relations are present in intervention programmes, this chapter, responding to research objective three, illustrates specifically why it shapes intervention programmes in the manner that it does. Two dominant themes emerged from the data that provide analytical insight. These include:

- **'The Personal is Political'**: It was evident that participants' personal experiences with Christian beliefs about gender relations do inform their professional decisions about the construction and implementation of intervention programmes. The inextricable linkages of "the personal and political in their day-to-day lives and work" resonated for programme designers and implementers. (Mwikya, 2014:103).
- **Intersectionality:** Evidence of the intersectionality of Christian belief systems, race, gender, culture, and patriarchal power structures also inform the construction and implementation of intervention programmes.

7.2. THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

7.2.1. Christian beliefs do permeate lived experience and inform intervention programmes

From the participant profile, it has been established that all the programme designers and implementers were/are personally exposed to and have personal experience of the Christian faith. While all participants identified as Christian, the programme designers identified as spiritual instead of religious. Selvam's (2012) multidimensional matrix of religion and spirituality describes persons identifying as spiritual-but-not-religious as being quest orientated searching for meaning/significance and thus very well able to straddle the sacred and secular. Consistent with participants' discomfort to completely discard or clearly define themselves as religious, Baston promotes that quest orientated individuals often "view religion as an endless process of probing and questioning generated by the tensions, contradictions, and tragedies in their own lives and society" (1976:32). Considering the participants' personal religious-spiritual experiences evident in this investigation, and its implications for how they address the key signifiers of IPA during interventions with their male clients it is important to take seriously Cabrita & Erlank's warning against downplaying "the significance of religion in people's lives" in South African society (2018:307). Also apparent from the participant profiles is that while participants have been exposed to several Christian denominations and some other religions such

as Hinduism and African Traditional Religion (as evident in the profile table), Christianity remained central to both their personal and professional lives.

A participant explained the vital role of faith since his childhood:

I come from a very religious family. Since I've opened my eyes, we will have church meetings every evening. Every person gets to read, choose the hymns, and pray. So religion for us was a thing as if we inhale our breath. I'm a staunch Lutheran. We went to a Lutheran primary, middle and high school. So my father believed that whenever you get married, you bring your wife over to the Lutheran church. So he's very staunch on that and very proud of me because I've never left the Lutheran church. (PI-1)

Another participant attested to adaptability as she recalled her experience of growing up in a family where Hinduism and Christianity were both observed. She recalled the generational role played by her mother and a persistent grandmother who institutionalized church attendance in her family. She noted:

My mom would go [to church]. *My dad agreed that we are baptized and go to church. I think it was my strong grandmother's insistence which was great and we went to church our whole lives. He [my dad] never stopped us, but he didn't go [to church].* (PD-2)

Her dad was a practicing Hindu and expected the entire family to participate in Hindu rituals and festivals. She reiterated his tolerance and acceptance of the Christian faith. She explained:

He wasn't intolerant and nothing swayed us from being Christian. Ja interestingly enough and, but we did observe their [Hindu] traditions. (PD-2)

From this participant's perspective, religious tolerance was practiced, and diversity was accepted. Even though her father was abusive, he never prevented them from attending church or practicing their Christian faith. It also appears that this "religious co-existence" (in this patriarchal family environment) was "negotiated" (by the women) and "chosen" by the older women (mother and grandmother) in the family as a strategy to retain the core of their human existence. The women in this scenario demonstrated what Maluleke and Nadar (2004) point to regarding the various and creative ways in which black women use their agency to negotiate and resist oppression. This dynamic "negotiation and exchange between the oppressed and oppressor…is not merely one wherein the former does something to the latter, but one in which

both do something one to the other…" (2004:9). Evidently, these women asserted their own personhood and religious identity and did not merely adopt Hinduism. Additionally, they demonstrated religious maturity and adaptability to assert their agency. Such religious diversity and adaptability within the family home of PD-2 influences her professional environment as her religious conviction are embedded in religious identity.

She reiterated her complete devotion to the Christian faith:
I love God (laughs confidently). So, faith is very important to me and ja, it's the lens through which I view the world. (PD-2)

PD-2 is unapologetic, and she makes explicit her devotion to her Christian faith. Reflective from the above is her commitment to working within a social justice space that allows her to practice her Christian values. She has worked at the organization for 24 years and later designed its intervention programme. The centrality of her Christian values when working with the oppressed, marginalized and vulnerable is evident as she reflects on her commitment:
The organization was started by a group of Christians. Can you actually believe it? But I will not work anywhere that contradicts my value system and so far, it hasn't. So, it's consistent with my Christian belief. (PD-2)

PD-2 asserts the coherence of her value system within her personal and professional life. According to Hohn, McCoy, Ivey, Ude & Praetorius many Social Workers join the profession because they seek "to put their Christian faith into practice" (2017:3). While the participant is not that explicitly Christian in the programme which she designed, she suggests that programme implementers encourage men to cultivate the spiritual aspects of their lives to facilitate the process of change. She believes that some men who are ready to change recognize the damage that they have done, and want to discard destructive notions of maleness:

Today many men are finding ways to discard the tough-guy armour and redefine what being male is all about. This is partly a result of women's frustration with being controlled, and partly men's own recognition of the emotional, spiritual, and physical destructiveness of trying to live up to the superman image. (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence manual, 2008:69).

Here the participant is also pointing out the spiritual damage that comes with IPA and in the following sections of the manual, she encourages the inclusion of spiritual activities to bring

about change in the men. Implementers are also encouraged to use spiritual reflections during interventions. For example in a section of the manual that is called *SELF-REFLECTION –"A MIRROR FOR MY SOUL.'*, programme implementers are encouraged to include Spirituality */ a spiritual* reflection (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence manual, 2008:8). She also encourages programme implementers to incorporate *Quiet time activities (self-nurturing activities) which include spiritual reflection* (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence manual, 2008:182).

> Conceptualizing spirituality in a way which does not use specifically religious language or concepts, may enable discussion of spiritual issues to be incorporated into social work practice when either practitioners or service users have…religious background or affiliation or no shared religious background. (Crisp, 2008:363)

7.2.1.1. Contextualizing the Centrality of Christianity within a work environment

Another participant reflected on two previous work experiences and mentioned how the Christian faith formed an unquestionable component of the physical work environment, as evident in the following narrative:

When I worked in the prison [with sex offenders], the Social Worker's office was littered with all kinds of biblical verses and every sex offender that walked into the office, walked in with a Bible in his hand, because he expected the parole board report from the Social Worker. And if he had a Bible in his hand - and sex offenders being as crafty as they can be, he has already checked that [biblical verses in the social worker's office] out. So he will sing and he starts telling you (the Social Worker): 'You know, I had a wonderful time of devotion this morning with the Lord. The Lord just laid it on my heart to tell you… and daar kry jy jou [and there you get your] parole report. (PD-1)

Clearly, the presence of the biblical verses on the office walls elicited a response by the offenders, which may not have been authentic. Nonetheless, Participant PD-1 also narrated how the practice of prayer had positive outcomes from her early experience as a Social Worker in the children's home. The centrality of religion both in the personal and professional experiences of the

participants is consistent with the literature (Mbiti, 1999). Christian religious beliefs, concepts, symbolism, and connotations are an indelible component of the personal and professional lives of participants.

7.2.1.2. Personal faith as resource in the therapeutic environment

Another participant emphasized the role of faith in his personal life and work:

Growing up, we were guided by the Zion Church Christian values and norms. Since varsity, I am going to a charismatic church. You take what is right from your parents and you also create your own belief system. I believe in Christ and pray and stay in the light with Him. So I am born again (PI-3)

This participant reflects on his spiritual quest and that which enables freedom of choice to create his own belief system that is compatible with the development of authentic spirituality (Crisp, 2008; Perrin, 2007). In this narrative, the participant, guided by critical reflection resonates with the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian expression of his spirituality. Informed by his Pentecostal theological beliefs, PI-3 shared the implications for his present lived experience:

Christianity it's a good thing because at church we are taught good values, norms, respect and obedience. You must obey God. You must respect God and you must protect your wife and your kids. So Christianity encourages or reinforces the good behaviour, the good way of living. It teaches us how to conduct ourselves in a good appropriate way - in a godly way. And it's straying us from evil deeds and evil things. So we must refrain from the wicked deeds such as assault, beating your wife or abuse. So Christianity, I think it plays a huge role because it teaches us how to live a good life and to protect our loved ones and be there for them all the time'. (PI-3)

The participant points to the resourcefulness of Christianity in guiding intimate relationships. As Noted by Nkulu-N'Sengha "…religion is the way by which a society defines what it means to be male and female and what responsibility and right behaviour are expected from each one. More specifically religion shapes the way men must behave toward women and vice versa". (2007:134).

The participant explained how he engages male clients who use certain Christian teachings to justify their abusive behaviour

When they [male clients] become so defensive, they will tell you that in my culture I have the

right to do this and that type of thing. So they will use Christianity or religion to defend their wrongdoings most of the time. They even quote scriptures. For example, this one that the woman must be submissive. The client would say*: 'So the woman was disrespectful to me, so that's why I gave her a hiding. I beat her up so that next time she must not do it.'* (PI-3)

The implementer assists in the intended interpretation of submission*: And I listen but then I say 'no but also Christianity promotes good things at the same time. So when it says she must be submissive it doesn't mean you must beat her. It says that you must respect her so she can respect you back. Respect must be mutual, it must be both ways.'* (PI-3)

Chitando & Kilanzo (2018) remark on the growing appreciation for Pentecostal/Charismatic influence in promoting transformed African masculinities and refer to its promising role from the teachings about mutual respect between women and men in intimate relationships. The notion of submission masquerading as religion and culture has been flagged as foundational in IPA in the scholarship of African women theologians (Kapuma, 2015; Dreyer, 2011; Phiri, 2002). Phiri (2002:20) argues that "naïve biblical interpretation" is often "used to tolerate domestic violence." PI-3's critical engagement with his clients to embrace the notion of mutual respect as a more rewarding resource in their intimate relationships finds resonance in the literature about the promising role of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement on African masculinities (Chitando & Kilanzo, 2018; Owino, 2010). Chitando & Kilanzo posit "Pentecostalism has been a form of a liberating resource that is meant to empower men and build their personalities as respectable men before their wives." (2018:68). The notion of mutual respect is central in "Pentecostal teachings on mutuality" in relationships between husband and wife (Chitando, 2007:121).

In the following section, the themes and associated narratives relate to why Christian beliefs inform approaches to change in intervention programmes in the way they do.

7.2.2. Christian beliefs and approaches to change in intervention programmes

This section presents the reasons why intervention programmes are shaped by Christian religious beliefs about gender power relations.

- **Ministry of Care to the Marginalized**

The notion of a *ministry of care to the marginalized* emerged as a theme motivating intervention approaches to facilitate transformation in the men. This was linked to the need to encourage self-

regulation with a particular focus on insisting that men take responsibility and embrace accountability for their abusive behaviour. In line with the overarching theme of the personal being political, it emerged from the narrative that this particular intervention approach can be linked to the participant's personal experience of marginalization in the church and profession, which is presented in this section.

- **Personal experiences of Gender Discrimination in the Church**

In the new church, Participant PD-1 experienced severe gender discrimination and marginalization. Her own and her husband's defiance of patriarchal oppression exercised by the church leadership resulted in them "being kicked out of the church," as her narrative noted:

After our wedding, they sent a delegation of the sisters to speak to me about the fact that I wasn't dressed appropriately for the kids' camp that happened two weeks earlier. And then after that, they sent a delegation of the elders and they spoke to Shaun [pseudo name for PD-1's husband] and said, 'You better control your wife because her education is getting to her. That this is how communists are born and when women don't know their place in the church.' And Shaun was like, 'You know, I think PD-1 has worked very hard to get where she is. She doesn't sing from the same hymn sheet, but she does what the testament is built on.' So, ja, I think it was three weeks later, the brethren sit around the communion table. And before they did the communion, the elder got up and said, 'we are not gonna start with the breaking of bread because Shaun, (so he wasn't brother anymore), Shaun and his wife are being put out of fellowship'. So, they waited. My parents were sitting there, all of them were sitting there and they all probably thought, 'you deserve that'. So the idea was that Shaun should come back and show repentance for not controlling me. And I should go back by keeping my mouth shut and not asking questions. Ja, I don't think I wore tight revealing clothes, but anything that was not modest by their kind of standard. So often they would say: 'So sorry, you can't come in dressed like that'. (PD-1)

This type of systematic and persistent oppression has been lamented in feminist scholarship globally and specifically by African women theologians. Kobo (2019) writes about the compounding complex interplay of patriarchy and Christian teachings and practices that many women in certain church contexts struggle against in search of liberating the spirituality that is their whole existence. Kobo laments women's ministries in these church contexts that have

become “seedbed[s] of patriarchy” that cultivates a “pseudo-spirituality” which “enhances the death of their [women’s] consciousness” and in so doing “propels them to escape and not to respond to their material condition.” (2019:1-2). Kobo (2019) builds on the notion of pseudo from Allan Boesak’s (1977) theory of pseudo-innocence. According to Boesak pseudo-innocence serve two functions. Firstly, it “uses ‘the ideal’ to blind people so that they do not see the atrocities of the present”; and secondly, “it effectively blocks off all awareness and therefore the sense of responsibility necessary to confront the other as a human being” (1977:4). Evidently, in this case of Participant PD-1 the women and the entire congregation including the participant’s parents appeared to engage in this pseudo-innocence / pseudo-spirituality as they all participated in; and/or were silent witnesses to the hypocrisy endured by PD-1 and Shaun.

The concept of “othering” as demonstrated in the scenario resonates with Spivak’s (1985) analysis of how othering as a multi-dimensional process is used to dehumanize and exclude people. Firstly, the participant and her husband are constructed as “morally inferior” in relation to the rest of the congregation (Jensen, 2011:65). Construction implies “a top-down imposition of authority” (Curle, 2013:117). In this hierarchy of power, the delegation of sisters is constructed as superior because of their compliance and as such, they are endowed the authority to go and counsel the morally inferior “other” to come in alignment with the church’s required modest dress code. Similarly, the Brethren enact an even greater authority by using the Holy Communion / Eucharist worship service to assert their authority against the husband. The Brethren Church teaches “the spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist” (Hlasek, 2017:16). Moreover, the sacrament of Holy Communion (also called the Lord’s Supper) symbolizes “not only communing with God personally but also experiencing fellowship with others” (Van Hook, 2002:175).

Using the holy communion worship service to excommunicate the husband and by implication, the wife signals a strong message about the severity of discipline that is applied when a congregant defies the patriarchal institutional order/authority of the church. This act not only signified that the couple were banished from fellowship with the Brethren church community, but it also symbolized their banishment from the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This demonstration reminds not only the couple but also the congregants “who they are subject to” (Spivak, 1985:254). In other words, the Brethren or elders (who are powerful) in the church construct the “other” (the couple) as subordinate. These are elements of social constructs that

dehumanize people, Dreyers argues

> In order to open up the possibility of authentic humanity for all people, it is necessary to be aware that constructs and social patterns are human creations, not God-given structures. (2011:5).

Ideologically, the church leadership uses expurgation (Thompson 1990) by constructing the insubordinate behaviour of PD-1 and her husband as harmful and evil which make them enemies of the church which calls for the congregation to unite in resisting them. In this way, the church uses differentiation (Thompson, 1990) to disunite the congregation from the couple. The actions of the church are an example of fragmentation (Thompson,1990). Because the couple is constructed as a threat to the dominant group (the Brethren), and by cultivating differentiation between the congregation and the couple, through expurgation of the couple, the church leadership justifies the ex-communication of the couple not only from the Brethren church but by instituting this ex-communication at the Eucharist, symbolically from the church as a whole. Chisale argues that "it is hard to liberate congregants and communities" in contexts where "the patriarchy of the Bible" has been internalized (2018:2). Not only had the couple been subjected to internalized nuances of power and patriarchy, but other congregants perpetuated othering and exclusion of them. As Dreyer pointed out

> the feminist task will be over when all human beings are valued equally and have the equal opportunity of leading healthy lives – being who God made them to be, living authentic lives in the presence of God. (2011:5)

Reflecting on her challenging journey within the Church in search of a welcoming or conducive space to live her spirituality (full existence as a human being), PD-1 humorously offers:

So maybe I would have worked in the Church. Maybe it was a good thing that they kicked me out. I think my work was kind of pre-determined way back then. (*PD-1)*

She reflects, despite the confrontation on her commitment not to digress from the essence of her existence (her spirituality). Maluleke (2000:84) too has criticized and challenged some churches in South Africa for their tendency to proclaim freedom in Christ publicly whilst struggling with "a certain propensity for the tragic" as can be observed by the participant's experience. Concerning the attitudes of some in the Pentecostal and African Independent Church and his thesis on the search for Jesus in 'the hidden scripts' Maluleke defends:

> They will proclaim and extol the 'Biblical' and 'Western' Jesus verbally (i.e., the 'public script') but underneath of all that and in their practical lives of faith, they will rewrite the image of Jesus (i.e., the 'hidden transcript') (Maluleke, 1997:18).

The persistence with which the church leadership and congregation sought to dominate and control the participant and her husband also finds resonance in Maluleke's assertions:

> Domination always implies and provokes resistance of one sort or another. Therefore domination needs resourceful maintenance and constant reinforcement. This, then, is a key function of the public transcript of the dominant elite - to constantly maintain and reinforce domination, through a variety of acts designed to conceal, euphemise and stigmatise the harsher side of power and control, while at the same time seeking to display the power of the dominant through open rituals and ceremonies. (Maluleke, 2000:56).

The participant and her husband's resistance (refusal to submit themselves) to the oppressive and controlling behaviour of the church resulted in harsher expressions of domination i.e. being expelled from their faith community.

The experience of being banished from the church - a place of compassion and care, strengthened the participant's resolve to associate with others who are often marginalized and banished in society – sex offenders and male perpetrators of intimate partner abuse. The participant often used humour as she described her experiences of discrimination and banishment by the church. Nkulu-N'Sengha suggests several precious lessons that can be drawn from "the hermeneutics of laughter." Laughter, according to Nkulu-N'Sengha "looks on the cold solemnity of fanatical orthodoxies as a spiritual disease" it "is cathartic and therapeutic" and most importantly it is "*matter et magistra* of life" calling "for caution, discernment, and constant flexibility." (2009:292). Finally, Nkulu-N'Sengha regards "laughter as prophetic; it denounces the folly of dogmatic modes of thinking… (2009:292). When the hermeneutics of laughter is held in the context of an "African vision of God as the father of laughter" then laughter becomes a source of "liberation from all types of dogmatic and authoritarian ways of thinking, praying, or being in the world." Nkulu-N'Shenga (2009:292). According to Nkulu-N'Sengha it is a well understood concept of God that includes God's humour that becomes helpful in shaping "the outcome of the perennial struggle for meaning and dignity and the quest for peace and happiness." (2009:293).

Another participant indicated that she initially considered becoming an ordained pastor in the church but instead chose to study Social Work. She opines that the Social Work profession has its origins in Christianity. She recounts being subjected to gender role stereotyping:

I finished high school in 1991. And I remember telling our reverend that I would love to become a pastor. I would love to go to the theology department. So that time it was still that you [as a woman] cannot be on the pulpit. I remember the reverend told me that I will have a place in their hearts but I won't have a place in the church. And so when we [our family] left the church, my exact words were that I will never, ever, ever belong to a church again. I felt messed up, betrayed and left out in the cold without a foundation. (PI-2)

The topic of women in ordained church leadership "is still controversial and is still debated within the Church today." (Graham, 2005:135) The participant left the church feeling depleted by the reverend's response. Evidently, the reverend was more interested in protecting the patriarchal structure of the church than entertaining the idea of female ordination. The Church has been criticized for its sexism and androcentrism whereby masculine worldviews are prioritized, consciously or unconsciously. Christian feminist literature has "traced the roots of androcentrism" in the "relationship between the androcentric practices of the Churches and the androcentric nature of the Christian belief in God." (Britto, 2005:27). Pillay (2017) posits that it is the relationship between the gender of God and the gender of clergy that is central in arguments against the ordination of women into the priesthood. Pillay laments "This theology of exclusion appears to have been justified by the ways men in authority use the Christian Bible." (2017:1). Pillay notes that popular white male-led Christian movements such as the Mighty Men Conference (MMC) propagate that "gender equality is a secular, more precisely a non-Christian imposition by a non-Christian government" (2017:9) The MMC's founding leader, Angus Buchan, "uses the Christian bible to justify male-headship as a God-ordained precept and benevolence to women" (Pillay, 2015:30). Pillay suggests that to recognize and accept the full humanity of women and men, the church ought to embrace an alternative theology to male-headship embedded in patriarchal beliefs. She proposes a theology of interconnectedness that can be found in the Trinity. According to Pillay "if the Trinity is considered to be a non-hierarchical relationship of mutuality and reciprocity it may be divested of its patriarchal hierarchy" and as such, it may then challenge gender stereotyping (2017:10).

Common to both participants' (PD-1 and PI-2) was gender role stereotyping which denied them the opportunity to develop within their respective church communities. In both instances, it

appeared that the church communities were set in their views about the role and place of women and would not change their practices for PD-1 or PI-2. Harms Smith notes: "Structures of racism, patriarchy and class retain their salience in present-day society through entrenched social practices and hegemonic assumptions about what should be the norm or what is aspirational." (2019:289). The silencing and harmful effect of the hegemonic gender stereotyping assumptions not only impacted the participants but their families and faith communities.

PD-1's supportive husband defied the patriarchy of the church and demonstrated his commitment by leaving the church. PI-2 felt deeply betrayed and almost two decades later her resentment was still evident at the time of the interview. She is registered for a personal growth course to address the pain of being denied by the church as well as her personal experiences of IPA as a victim/survivor. She lamented her missed opportunity but her commitment to work within a healing space found expression in the Social Work profession. These personal narratives demonstrate how gender politics obstructed their choices to minister, and that Social Work with its shared essential philosophy with religion and spirituality offered a conducive space to continue their commitment to working with fragility and vulnerabilities.

PD-1 recounts that her first employment as a Social Worker was at a Christian non-profit residential facility for abused and abandoned children, which afforded her reconciling her faith with a community of those that were vulnerable: *it's a Christian organization, so in my head, it was a ministry to injured people.*

The notion of continuing ministry outside of the church is captured by Pickard:

> the locus for ministry transcends the boundaries of the institutional Church and…is correlated to God's work and creativity in the world. This matter has significance upon the issues of ministry, vocation, and work in the 'secular' world. (2009:44).

From my observation of the intervention programme, Participant PD-1 ensures a conducive therapeutic environment that facilitates deeply critical and honest engagement about religion when clients refer to it.

- **"Quick forgiveness equals cheap grace"**

An example from this participant's approach to men who use Christian values such as forgiveness to distract from taking responsibility is evident in this narrative:

They [the men in the group] will tell you: 'I go to church and there is forgiveness'. But I block

that and say: 'Quick forgiveness equals cheap grace.' And I get into huge trouble for that with the conservative Christians (PI-1).

The Participant blocks clients from distorting Christian teachings about forgiveness. She refers to Bonhoeffer's notion of "'cheap grace', that is, forgiveness without obedience to God or moral change" (Kretzschmar, 2004:89). In other words, PD-1 believes that moral change must precede forgiveness. She exposes the clients' extrinsic use of their faith and insists on an intrinsic Christianity. Again using humour, she mystically points out that her Lutheran male co-facilitator *is far more committed to religion than I appear to be*. She continues to talk in humorous yet urgent ways about the importance of confronting any misuse of religion which she believes is inseparable from spirituality:

The client - a *bible professing Christian, said: 'the Lord just led me'. So I said: the Lord didn't lead you to me, you came to me because your medical aid is done, which is fine.*

She reiterates the symbiotic nature of her religiosity and her profession in the following narrative: *So irrespective, I would like to think my personal and professional beliefs around spirituality and spiritual growth are not mechanically separate. You cannot be one and not the other.*

PD-1's articulation of her religious orientation finds resonance with Selvam's multidimensional religious-spiritual matrix theory about the inseparability of religion and spirituality. It also confirms the African understanding that religion permeates every aspect of lived experience which upends the notion that there is a separation between the sacred and the secular. PD-1's practice reflects an uncompromising intolerance of the misuse of religion, which can be linked to cognitive dissonance theory. Zimbardi, Ebbesen & Maslach explain that cognitive dissonance "is based on a few main assumptions about how the human organism works. The central assumption is that human beings cannot tolerate inconsistency. This means that whatever inconsistency exists in a person, he [sic] will try to eliminate or reduce it." (1969:67). Rather than being against religion or the use of Christian resources during interventions, it appears that PD-1 is more aggrieved about extrinsic religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967). It is, therefore, the misuse of Christian belief systems that she confronts, and she calls for moral change in her clients. In this way, PD-1 confronts the uses of dissimulation which as described by Thompson (1990), is a way in which clients try to maintain relations of domination. PD-1 interrupts the clients' attempts at using the positive elements of religion such as *forgiveness* to obscure and

deflect from utilizing their agency which is the real issue in their strategy of displacement (Thompson, 1990). Motivated by her own commitment to authentic spirituality she resists extrinsic forms of religiosity and insists on intrinsic religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967) which connotes the clients' agency. Nell & Rothman (2018) make the link between agency and hope. PD-1 believes in her clients' agency and cultivates agency hope – "a force that motivates people to pursue their chosen pathways towards the achievement of a valued goal." (Nell & Rothman, 2018:253). The participant seems to suggest that the hopeful attainment of the satisfaction that comes with authentic forgiveness is linked to the clients' agency and therefore forgiveness cannot be acquired cheaply by using extrinsic expressions of religion.

- **Personal experiences of alienation from peers and feminist colleagues**

In her adult and professional life, PD-1 identifies as spiritual and explicitly not religious. She recounts the challenges that she experienced amongst her peers and feminist colleagues when she commenced working with sex offenders and men who abuse their intimate partners:

It was like flying by the seat of my pants trading-off and trading-on and rooted in this kinda Christian principles of a ministry of restoration. The more engrossed I became with working with adults [men] that did bad stuff, the more alienated I was by the professional community. The feminists thought I was soft on these wicked people [men]. My critics thought that I liked the attention of these men because I didn't look too shabby at that time. And I knew a couple of things, One: There was a certain language I couldn't use and that filtered into later work. I think my beginning says that I have a very clear position on equality and patriarchal privilege and inequality…I mean I got kicked out of the church! So ja I'm feminist of course! But the second thing was: If I wanted this work to be taken seriously, I had to tailor my language. And for many years, publicly I would never get up and say: look, you know, there can be healing, there can be restoration. It was not the kind of thing to say. It didn't endear in this work. Now, I have a different opinion. (PD-1)

Ironically, the participant was not only shamed, constrained and rejected by the church but also by her feminist colleagues. In her experience, the church and feminism denied her the freedom to liberate the expression of her humanity. As a feminist herself, the participant experienced the contestations that have been evident in the development of feminist ideas as pointed out by African feminist scholar, Oyewumi (2004). Evident here is the danger of feminism that is void

of cultural competence. According to Ramazanoglu (2003) the feminism that was "conceived within western culture during the period of colonialism "came to dominate and transform not only the economies but also the cultures of other societies." (2003:140). The use of language is central in communicating and spreading common assumptions and beliefs about feminism. In complex multi-cultural societies such as South Africa, feminist "beliefs and customs differ from those of the dominant ideology" as argued by Ramazanoglu (2003:140). Scholars have written about the role that women from the same cultural context play in sustaining patriarchal beliefs about women's subjugation (Nadar & Potgieter, 2010).

From the narrative, it was clear that churchwomen galvanized their efforts to insist on participant PD-1 submitting to their dress code. The elders, the men in this congregation, insisted her husband use his patriarchal dividend to control his wife and force her to submit. Such an oppressive system is reflective of the broader apartheid system that is embedded in submission. The need for the church to address teachings and practices of oppression continues to be addressed in the literature. Feminism also contextually remains central in African scholarship. Maart cautions about "the role we play in either perpetuating, maintaining, and reproducing the very system we claim to be against or actively refusing it." (Maart, 2014:15). The contradictory lived reality experienced by this participant suggests continued contestations of dominant power.

- **The politics of language in feminism**

From the above PD-1 portrays the use of politically correct language as her choice as a feminist:

And so I quickly learnt, words like 'ministry', words like 'healing', words like 'restoration', are words I had to drop very quickly because it was not accepted language in the domestic violence field. And *so for a long time, I worked in a very isolated context and was isolated by my peers.* (PD-1)

The participant's discomfort within the domestic violence discipline of the use of religious language was underscored by Nason-Clark who pointed out "From the earliest days of the battered women's movement, there was a reluctance to see any perspective informed by religious language or passion as part of the solution…" (2009:380). This scenario reflects PD-1's experience of being alienated by her peers and feminist colleagues for her quest to be culturally competent.

Correspondingly Nason-Clark (2009) advances the need for the inclusion of spiritual/religious language to effectively engage men who rely on religion and cultural beliefs either as justification or restraint. She reiterates "a cultural language that is devoid of religious symbols, meanings, and legitimacy is relatively powerless" in bringing about positive change in men who abuse their intimate partners (2009:389). Despite some preoccupation with the eventual demise of religion by sociologists, scholars of religion are focused on how women and men continue to consider religion to satisfy "ongoing human longings" (Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend, 2015:15). Nason-Clark & Fisher-Townsend also write about the "fragile relationship between feminism and conservative religious traditions" and the implications for IPA interventions (2015:17). African feminists have critiqued Western assumptions about culture, language and patriarchy on African society and the pressure exerted to apply these western categories and assumptions in African contexts (Davies, 2014).

Evident from Participant PD-1's experience with her feminist colleagues is the erasure of African feminist knowledge and pearls of wisdom to address localized IPA in culturally informed language use. In this regard, Davies remarks "Pan-Africanists who were feminists (or feminists who were pan-Africanists), practiced the art of navigating a variety of complex positions around race, gender, class, national origin and culture within a larger goal of the liberation of African peoples internationally." (2014:78). Throughout PD-1's personal and professional life, she has had to navigate these various identities and most especially her religious-spiritual identity in the quest to live her full humanity - which includes her ministry of care and restoration to sex offenders and men who abuse their intimate partners. She has remained defiant of gender, religious and cultural oppression and has pursued her work with men who perpetrate IPA and has continued her commitment that "challenges those of us who have been professionally socialized to keep private, the rich insights we have gained from our experiences of living and engaging with various spiritual traditions." (Crisp, 2008:373).

It appears that the ways in which the participant negotiates her agency regarding the use of religious and feminist language remain a significant part of recognizing and confronting the complex power dynamics embedded in language. It is this understanding of the power and politics of language, rooted in her personal experience that empowers her to keep the men in Programme A accountable for the ways in which they use religious language during the therapeutic encounter.

- **A spirituality-based approach to advance change in the men**

PD-1 reaffirms that men in an intervention programme must be held fully accountable for their abusive and controlling behaviour; and that they must be guided into taking personal responsibility for their process of change. For Programme A, most of the men are white, typically from affluent backgrounds and Christian. PD-1 emphasizes several components that are necessary to facilitate a process of change in the men:

It's been very important, not to push religiosity, but to look at spirituality and so the focus and the responsibility is different. Our approach is one man at a time and that you can't have the cookie-cutter to the crunch. You need to take the context, the person, and a whole lot of factors into account to see what takes you to the best outcome. The moment you start using manualized stuff, court-mandated clients complain that they have this kind of condition hanging over their heads. But if you shift the focus, that man invests in his own kind of recovery. And so the idea is to get that person to invest in their own recovery and to look at 'what it is I need to do for myself to break this addiction'(PD-1).

The participant believes that a spirituality-based approach instead of a religiosity-based approach advances a conducive therapeutic environment that helps the men to focus inwardly and take responsibility for their own recovery. Taking the person in his specific situation and context into account to advance introspection that enables access to their internal resources and agency are consistent with literature concerning strength-based approaches to models of change. This approach is also resonant with an Afrocentric approach. Mazama & Asante posit that locating people "within their own centred context for analysis and interpretation", enables "them to produce more authentic and genuine responses to phenomena." (2005: xxvi).

From an Afrocentric social work perspective, this kind of approach as a practice that acknowledges the men's agency in Programme A, challenges "hidden sources of oppression within social work knowledge and [it] create new models for practice." (Graham, 2005:71). Programme A emulates an Afrocentric model of addressing white supremacy and patriarchy simultaneously. This is done by refusing to allow male clients to use Christian religiosity extrinsically to escape personal responsibility and agency. Persons with an extrinsic orientation to religion use it for selfish justification (Allport & Ross, 1967). Furthermore "the concept of agency is given pride of place" in Afrocentric theory and it "entails Africans' self-conscious action", reiterates Rabaka (2005:67). This Programme is intentional about contextualizing and personalizing their intervention approaches with each of the men in the therapeutic environment.

Evident from the participant profile and the attitudes toward their clients during participant observation and interviews, the intervention approaches in Programme A can be linked to the programme designer PD-1 and her co-facilitator PI-1's rootedness in their own Christian and spiritual values. Some of these values include honesty, compassion, and the insistence on a moral agency that they seek to embody. These embodied values rooted in their personal Christianity and Spiritual lived experience, compels them to believe in the moral agency of the men in their programme.

There is an urgency with which they apply Christian and spiritually-based values of compassion and patience as is evident in the following narratives.

PD-1 explained the various components that make for a conducive therapeutic environment:

You need to have particular aspects in your programme. You must have stuff around developing empathy, behaviour change, value clarification, psycho-educational component, but I believe that your programme implementation plays a greater role in terms of modelling to these men. Because they come very shame-based. So if you humiliate, you defeat the objectives.

This participant focuses on the need to be sympathetic to the sense of indignity and disgrace that the men bring into the therapeutic environment. Bennet et al point to studies that have suggested that "confrontation of men who batter is unproductive" (2007:52). The participant's personal experience of being treated with indignity and humiliated within the sacred space of her faith community provided her with guidelines for treating the male clients who already come shamed into the context of the therapeutic sacred space with respect. Evidently, when the male clients use religion to cover their shame for fear of being further humiliated by programme implementers, Programme A has "found spiritual resources for confronting what was happening" whilst affirming their dignity and insisting on their agency for self-regulation. (Ammerman, 2013:196).

Contrary to Bennet et al's (2007) claims that a confrontational approach is unproductive, in Programme A's use of confrontation, men are challenged to see the ways in which they distort the truth and sources of truth to avoid dealing with the root of their problem:

With this kind of work with partner violence or the sexual offenders' programme or addiction, the one thing that my clients struggle with is, to be honest, and truthful. (PI-1)

Pence and Paymar posit that

> Some men feel ashamed and tell only part of the story, some try to justify their actions, and a few simply don't care that they have been abusive and violent. Whatever the reasons, most abusers deny or minimize their behaviour. That is why it is vitally important for the facilitator to confront these statements whenever they occur. (1993:77)

Confronting the men's lies (distortion of truth) and thus covering up or muting potentially helpful sources of truth, PI-1 demonstrates courage. It is precisely because PI-1 is benefitting from the sources of truth (benefits of being transformed by faith and participating in church life), and because of his belief in the moral agency of the men that he resists the life-threatening misuse of hegemonic authority of Christian religious belief as presented by the men in the group. While Programme A refuses extrinsic forms of religiosity, they embrace intrinsic modes of religiosity. By insisting that male clients practice values of honesty and truth-telling, Programme A advances characteristics of intrinsic religiosity. Allport & Ross (1967) suggests that "persons with an intrinsic religious orientation" embrace and internalize that religion's creed whilst following it whole-heartedly. Otherwise said, by confronting male clients' refusal to employ the values of their Christian faith properly and fully, Programme A is not denying the potential resources of Christianity but insists that the male client "lives his religion" (Allport & Ross, 1967:434).

Courage as practiced by Programme A in this context is described as "an ingredient of subversive moral agency" (Moe-Lobeda, 2002:93). Moral agency, from a theological perspective, is conceptualized as:

> the power to embody a fundamental moral norm of Christian life. That norm is active love for creation where creation includes self, others, and the rest of nature, and where love implies serving the well-being of the beloved, which may call for challenging systematic injustice. (Moe-Lobeda, 2002:35-36).

In a Lutheran understanding "the most powerful courage known in humankind is generated by the Spirit and Christ living in the faithful" (Moe-Lobeda, 2002:93). As a faithful Lutheran, PI-1's courage or subversive moral agency enables him to challenge the systemic injustices embedded in patriarchal Christian beliefs invoked by the mostly white male clients in the programme. In a Lutheran Christian understanding, it is the indwelling God through the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ that enables subversive moral agency. Subversive moral agency as

used in this context refers to the resistance and undermining of Christian belief systems of "domination and injustice by forging more faithful ways of life" (Moe-Lobeda, 2002:13). Evidently, the practices of PI-1 and Programme A can be characterized as intrinsic religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967). This is demonstrated in their appeals to "the justice-bearing, largely marginalized traditions within Christianity [that] carry subversive knowledge of a possible character transformation through which persons gain new lives." (Ellison, 2001:59). PI-1's intentional approach and urgent response to the men's misuse of the authority of the Bible and Christian practice can be linked to his beliefs about "mutual responsibility of care" for the well-being of everyone affected by the men's attitude and actions. (Du Plessis, 2019:44).

PI-1 continues to explain why it is dangerous to ignore or be uncritical of how the men use the Bible and their active roles in the church as a sign of their apparent transformation:

You see. So it is like my guard is on. That is when I come from prison. Because the moment the work in the prison becomes dangerous is when a hardened criminal start to walk with a Bible, he then gets access to go through the gates, because he is now born again. He talks 'God is good and God is great.' But in the meantime, if you don't open the Bible and see what's in the Bible. Because, in that Bible, half the pages are cut out and there's a cell phone, a knife and there is dagga. That is how the gang was established [in the prison].

The Bible is a powerful symbol in African Pentecostal Christianity (Clarke, 2014). This programme implementer, inspired by his Lutheran Christian convictions, engages the ways in which the men try to use the authority of the Bible to side-step the real work of confronting the meticulous ways in which they plan their abusive behaviour. By insisting that the men use the therapeutic environment to gain insight into their triggers and strategies relating to their sexually abusive behaviour, whilst acknowledging the transformative power of Christian beliefs, PI-1 exercises subversive moral agency. This kind of moral agency is also reflective of an Ubuntu-feminist approach of cultivating self-accountability in the men that are embodied in "a feminist ethics of care, linked to a deep sense of belonging" (Du Plessis, 2019:43). This approach of Christian love and care points to "key beacons for alternative, context-specific imaginings" of being human. (Du Plessis, 2019:43). McLaren notes "Feminists have produced and should continue to produce counter-discourses, subversive practices, and collective resistance to combat women's oppression." (2002:116). This Ubuntu-feminist based philosophy as demonstrated by PI-1 "forms part of the knowledge and wisdom of how African communities" hold each other accountable (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019:28). Resonant with Ubuntu, the programme and its

designer and implementer defy "pessimistic ideas of human nature", by presenting "itself as a new way of being human together" with their clients which points to a philosophy of "solidarity building" that can be likened to the notion of "revolutionary Ubuntu" (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015:3). The notion of "revolutionary Ubuntu was coined by the Shack Dwellers movement" in South Africa and "as a project of 'radical transformation', solidarity [is] at the core of Ubuntu-feminism (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015:3). This kind of solidarity can also be described as defiant spirituality.

According to West "defiant spirituality with a faith-based impetus may be especially equipped to step into the moral gaps that violence maintains." (2019:218). Empowered by their personal and collective spiritual and religious resources and convictions, participants in Programme A employ moral subversive agency not only to expose distorted Christian beliefs and teachings that maintain patriarchy in their work with men in their programme but to show intervention approaches that reflect the life-affirming core of African feminism. The life-affirming feminism that appears to emerge from this programme finds consensus with African women's theological scholarship. Also, Masango (2006) posits that "This kind of spirituality shapes persons in such a way that they grow into the concept of Ubuntu (humanness). In other words, an integrated spirituality is a spirituality in which who we are, and what we do are intimately related." (2006:930).

The centrality of relationship in African life and spirituality cannot be overstated for it is at the core of being human and becoming humane. It is incumbent on "those who are good (while living)" to be able "to pass their knowledge and wisdom to others (Masango, 2006:930). This idea of sharing knowledge and learning from each other is regarded as the "beginning of caring for each other" informs Masango (2006:931). Masango further explains that "The notion of caring manifests itself in the respectful and humble way elders and superiors are greeted and addressed by young ones. This kind of Ubuntu is passed on from one generation to the other." (2006:931). The flow of mutual and shared respect between programme co-facilitators in Programme A, and the ways in which they work with the men in the group were evident during participant observation, data from interviews, client reports and a documentary film. The humility with which these implementers conducted their co-facilitation felt more like a reverence

for the gifts and wisdom that each brings to the therapeutic environment. The male co-facilitator spoke highly about the female co-facilitator, PD-1 as he recounted with awe her giftedness as a leader over and above her academic qualifications as evident in the following narrative:

She was very prominent in my community She was very assertive, eloquent and not scared for the white authority then. She was never a follower. She stood out and could sometimes be a loner because of her pilgrim's journey. So she asked me if I can assist her. She always knew where she wants to go and she had a stance. (PI-1)

The experience of being marginalized by the church and her peers did not sway PD-1 as she continued and created a sense of community and support for her *ministry of care* by reaching out and asking PI-1 to assist her in this work. The denial from the church and her peers of meeting her needs for acceptance and support "strong as they may be are regarded as of less ultimate significance" (Allport & Ross, 1967:434) by PD-1 as she pressed on to create Programme A which seems to resemble her intrinsic religious orientation.

Furthermore, in an African understanding, a person cannot be fully human by themselves as pointed out by Mbiti that "an individual does not exist alone except corporately" (1970:109). This seeking out of collaboration with her male colleague is consistent with African Feminism. According to Masango "being in relation to others, or belonging represents the essential characteristics of being truly human." (2006:939) These assertions are sustained in literature by Nkulu-N'Sengha (2011, 2007) about the culmination of this ongoing process of becoming *muntu* (a genuine person) which is located in fusing our humanity and divinity.

The participant likens his colleague's journey of tenacious confrontation of white authority and clarity of vision as a leader in her own right in the face of adversity and alienation, to that of a pilgrim's journey. The idea of conceptualizing one's work in the world as a pilgrimage resonates with a Christian understanding. George suggests that Christian pilgrims offer a three-dimensional picture of God's interaction in this world", namely "progressing in our relationship with Christ, overcoming obstacles that rust our faith, and gaining stamina to battle the world, the flesh, and the devil." (2016:20).

PD-1's tenacity against all odds in pursuing her mission of care in the world finds resonance with George's idea of what it takes for devout Christians to manifest the three-dimensional picture of God's interaction in the world. George notes that "the motif of pilgrimage is deeply ingrained in biblical narrative" (2016:20). From the perspective of a pilgrim, it is not foreign to ask for accompaniment on life's journey as evident in the action of participant PD-1 in the abovementioned narrative. The journey of a pilgrim is about understanding that the work is about being open to new knowledge and an ongoing process of learning. This strategy of inviting PI-1 to help PD-1 in the work with male sex offenders reflects her social constructionist orientation, in that "multiple perspectives are generated, valued," which "become the opportunity for clients and counsellors to view presenting problems (and solutions) in alternative ways" (Frame, 2003:217) whilst being confident of one's vision and destination as articulated by PI-1 in the above narrative.

PD-1 poses a question to the men: *What do you need to put in place so that you don't come back as a repeat offender?* She reasserts the warning: *I don't want to see you at Pollsmoor*.

The belief that men are responsible for choosing their abusive behaviour and that they are able and responsible for connecting with their internal self-regulation to change for the better coincides with the participant's Christian understanding that the power of choosing freedom is available to the male clients. In this instance, the participant encourages the clients to use their freedom of choice responsibly. This ability to choose creatively also relates to the African understanding that humans are directly linked to the Divine / Creator, and as such, each person has been endowed with the power of self-cultivation (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2001). It is asserted that each human being has the agency/capacity to improve their character, and they have "the ability to grow morally as a good human being…" (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2001:79). This understanding is sustained in the notion of Ubuntu that asserts that each person has free will to choose between good and evil, and bad or praiseworthy conduct (Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2001).

As is evident from the above discussion, a spiritually-based approach to change offers an opportunity for programmes to use Christian resources to identify and confront distorted beliefs that entrench IPA. Likewise, the use of Christian resources is proven to be a source for moving male clients beyond their tendencies to minimize, manipulate and justify their abusive behaviour as evident in Programme A's approaches.

- **A coordinated community response, ministry of care and the church**

Participant PD-1 identifies the church as one of the key role players in the process of change as reflected in the following narrative:

Where the ministry of care is concerned, I think my best work is with a whole range of role players, but particularly faith-based communities to work in the best interest of everybody. It has to be the individual (the man), plus their church and the community. If you (as the priest/pastor) say to the offender: 'you can be at church but look you can't do the worship because if my un-churched cousin is sitting in that church and they hear what you've done, they will probably become un-churched for the rest of their life'. Now that must not be seen as a punitive thing. It is not. So I think as role players, we need to be clear and realistic about the part that each one can bring to ensure integrity. (PD-1)

PD-1 envisions that a ministry of care inclusive of the church/faith leader as accountability partners in the process of change can reinforce personal responsibility in the men. This notion of having the church as central in the "circle of significant others that surround the victim [-survivor] and the perpetrator" during intervention is sustained by Chisale (2018:7) and by Davis who reiterates that "religious faith and spirituality" must be incorporated "as a complement to the intervention program" (2018:81).

The participant regards the church and the fellowship with others as an essential part of the ministry of care in the therapeutic intervention process of change in the men.

It is clear from the above discussion and the participant profile, that Programme A embraces Christian values and practices that resonate with Ubuntu feminism in that their male clients are invited to reflect for themselves on the ways in which they are not asserting their full humanity. This Ubuntu feminist Christian approach also finds resonance in African tradition that seeks to restore and affirm human dignity in African people with a particular emphasis on the interconnectedness of, and shared responsibility between the individual and community.

- **Christianity as a love-based belief system**

PD-3 expressed disappointment when she was not allowed by Programme C's leadership to implement the counselling model/manual within the black, coloured townships and farm communities where she conducted the research for the curriculum. As mentioned before, PD-3's consulting services were terminated because the organization and its funders did not approve of her affirming stance towards the black male clients' humanity during her research and in the humane philosophy that she employed about the men's agency and ability to change.

This participant argues that when implementers connect spiritually with their clients it facilitates a pathway for them to get in touch with their humanity. She also makes the point that awakening clients' spirituality is an important resource in the therapeutic environment. She encourages the use of discernment/mindfulness to assist humans to connect with their spirituality which assists in them accessing spiritual resources such as love. She believes that Love, as a Christian and universal truth and value, is central in the healing process. Frame confirms that transpersonal psychology "is a way of working with clients that combines a variety of psychological concepts with spiritual intervention." (2003:5). Frame presents Vaughan, Wittine, & Walsh's (1996) four assumptions of transpersonal psychology as follows:

> First, it is 'an approach to healing and growth that addresses multiple levels of the spectrum of identities in clients namely, prepersonal, personal and transpersonal'. Second, 'it recognizes the therapist's unfolding awareness of the Self and his or her spiritual worldview as central in shaping the nature the nature, process, and outcome of therapy'. Third, it is a process of 'awakening from a lesser to a greater identity'. Fourth, it 'facilitates the process of awakening by making use of techniques that enhance intuition and deepen awareness of personal and transpersonal realms of the psyche' (Frame 2003:5).

It is understood that whilst counsellors that utilize a transpersonal psychology perspective might not identify as religious, some such as in the case of PD-3, "are able to integrate transpersonal ideas and experiences into traditional religious frameworks" (Frame, 2003:6). Since this perspective to counselling integrates religion and spirituality and takes into account PD-3's personal spiritual journey, it is not surprising that she resonates with transpersonal psychology in her work with male clients who abuse their intimate partners.

The notions of love and the cultivation of discernment/mindfulness can be linked to the participant's own Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian roots that "values religious discernment" and advances "the commitment to work toward a common humanity living together in peace." (Keller et al, 2006:923). The participant notes that while she respects her clients' culture and religion, she believes that focusing on spirituality offers a different perspective to advance the process of change:

I respect people's culture and religion, but I also think, people need to be helped to question some things. So, I'm quite bold with that, and I say: 'you don't have to accept what I'm saying and it might tread on your cultural toes or whatever, but let's just think for ourselves.' I don't come on it in a confrontational way but I often have just another angle. So, this counselling approach is just offering a different perspective. If it's right, and it resonates with them, it opens their mind to see things differently and that's all you are really doing. (PD-3)

Here, the participant reiterates that cultivating spiritual awareness in clients can advance "experiential aspects of human existence that transcend sensory phenomena" and as such facilitate the possibility of seeing a different, more life-affirming vision for themselves (Hodge, Bonifas, & Wolosin, 2013:284). Joseph, Page-Shipp & Van Niekerk note that recognizing that "spirituality can be related to religion, or it can be 'religionless'" allows for an individual's beliefs and values rather than, or in addition to, religious doctrine" to amplify and make sense of human experience (2018:5).

When considering this participant's personal experience of not being supported by her church community because of her divorce, her bold yet sensitive approach to her male clients makes sense. Her awareness of the pain of being separated from and abandoned by her community of care enabled her to create a therapeutic environment that fosters care and safety with her clients, assisting them to confront and critically reflect on their abusive behaviour. Her spiritually based approach that is rooted in her Christian value – Love - enables her to respectfully assist her clients to critically reflect on the role of cultural and religious influence in their abusive behaviour.

PD-3 then shares her perspectives on the aspects of Christian belief systems that can be of particular use in couple counselling situations:

I think Christianity is a love-based belief system. It is a beautiful system in many ways, and a lot of the biblical quotes I still use. Christianity, if truly lived, is absolutely beautiful. So things like: 'Love your neighbour as yourself. Do unto others as you would have done unto you.' It's Christian, but it is a universal truth. If you practice that, you will change your world tremendously. I love the quotes on love. Love is kind, love is patient, love keeps no record of wrongs. I've got that in my office. It's the most beautiful quote. If you have a couple working through: 'what is love in your relationship?' and men can be guided to start being kind to themselves. So, definitely, there is a place for Christian beliefs in this work. It's absolutely essential to combine the spiritual with therapy. Because actually, the problem is a deeper one of wounding. So, we need to combine our understanding of how people can heal themselves with the core beliefs of their faith because hurting and abusing and controlling isn't life. (PD-3).

From the narrative above, the participant emphasizes Christianity as a love-based system that can serve as a key resource in the healing process with the male clients.

7.3. EVIDENCE OF INTERSECTIONALITY

The data demonstrate intersectionality including, race, gender, class, age, culture and religion within the South African context. Intersectional feminism coined by Crenshaw (1989), considers all forms of oppression and their different manifestations that were evident in the data. In the context of South Africa, it is particularly "important to explore violence against women as a problem embedded in relations of gender and power but simultaneously influenced by a multitude of systems of domination and inequity…" assert Van Niekerk & Boonzaier (2018:4). This analysis is cognizant of the complex interplay of factors in addressing the patriarchal power structures that shape all interactions including those dynamics that inform intervention programmes for men in the Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid South African context.

In this section, I present the intersections of class, race, gender, culture and religion as they emerged from the data.

7.3.1. Interrogating race and class identities

With reference to her work within Programme C, PD-3 believes that potential barriers related to her racial identity as an English white implementer were almost irrelevant when she worked with younger black men and with coloured men in townships and on farms. She explained that it was not a focal point of her interactions:

When we connect with each other as human beings, you don't see the role. It falls away when you start being authentic. There is a lot of common humanity. We are all human beings, we all have pain, we know what emotion is, you know? So there's so much in common and it's just that, you can't go in there in fear or be in our roles or be in our judgement.

From this narrative PD-3 demonstrates that appealing to the common humanity that exists between implementers and the men in their intervention programmes, is a resource to regulate notions of fear and judgement which supposedly defuse racial, class and/or gender identities. This idea of common humanity is also alluded to by Programme C's founder who noted that *It is difficult to listen to helpless and hopeless cases of heart-breaking abuse and not to be affected*. (Annual Report, 2017/2018:3). The notion of common humanity is resonant with the Ubuntu philosophy that challenges discrimination (Eliastam, 2015) and values "respect, love, care and compassion for others" (Mabvurira, 2020:75). In 1997, the South African White Paper for Social

Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997) had already introduced a human rights approach that included principles of Ubuntu and non-discrimination. According to Harms-Smith "in order to embrace these principles, Social Workers were required to depart radically from the forms of intervention and service provision of the previous Apartheid-era" (2013:10-11). While participant PD-3's appeal to the life-affirming principles of Ubuntu is plausible, her claims that racial and class differences are irrelevant when authentic or common humanity is embraced is laudable but needs interrogation.

Programme C's founder recently launched a book that she authored in which she describes how she as a white affluent Jewish middle-aged woman managed to gain access into the townships where she found the black and coloured women that she recruited and trained as Social Auxiliary workers in Programme C. She writes about being in her forties, studying Social Work and feeling compelled to start a counselling service for poor black women who, because of socio-economic reasons were unable to access such costly services. Soon after she graduated as a Social Worker, she started the organization and recounted the strain that her move to start working with black and coloured women in the townships had on her marriage and family:

I talk about my vision of training unskilled black and coloured women to become community workers so that they can deliver free, culturally appropriate services to women who need help in their own disadvantaged communities…my husband cannot be sure of me anymore and I am sure that he sometimes wants to disown me. I can no longer be the goody-two-shoes who slipped into his life and supported him at every turn. Now that I want his support it is difficult for him to give it to me. I am changing patterns of behaviour established over twenty-five years of marriage. He is no longer certain of who I am or where we stand in our relationship. (Extract from book, 2018:5)

From the abovementioned extract, the founder implies that her husband did not approve of her journey of personal emancipation that was primarily centred around her work with poor women from disadvantaged communities. She also links the uncertainty about the future of their 25-year-old marriage to the fact that she was embarking on her journey of working in disadvantaged communities with poor black and coloured women. In the book, the founder explains how she embarked on a three-month journey to England, Canada and the United States to meet iconic feminist advocates and to learn how the work with abused women is done. On her return from her research trip to Cape Town, she writes:

I realize that I now have to design appropriate services to meet our own so-called third world needs. The services of these organizations [abroad] are not viable or culturally appropriate within our own local context. I hope that I can produce services that are exactly what we need to help our thousands of abused women who are caught up in the destructive cycle of violence. (Extract from book, 2018:10)

What the founder describes in terms of her vision to provide a counselling service for black and coloured abused women in the townships of Cape Town, happened against the backdrop of "a South African context where racism stratified society into what basically meant 'black' equalled poverty, oppression, internalized inferiority and family breakdown, while 'white' meant privilege, power, supremacy and advancement." (Harms-Smith, 2019:287).

From the founder's narratives and my study of the records of Programme C, it appears that race and poverty were noted but not engaged as part of the research that informed the establishment of Programme C. The experience of institutionalized racism and poverty are central in the lives of the women and men that Programme C seeks to influence. African liberation theologian and Cameroonian Roman Catholic priest, Angelbert Mveng used the term anthropological poverty which he conceptualized as "the kind of poverty which no longer concerns only exterior or interior goods or possessions but strikes at the very being, essence, and dignity of the human person." (Mveng, 1994:156).

African feminists have cautioned against well-meaning white feminists who in their approach universalize identifications and experiences of black and coloured women. The founder realized that the programmes abroad were not culturally viable nor appropriate for the South African Cape Town township setting. Intersectional feminists have critiqued white feminists' generalizations that all women experience patriarchal oppression in the same way. Instead of consulting black and coloured colleagues, she, with the help of her white psychologist family members and colleagues developed what became the training programme that formed part of the screening and recruitment of the first group of community workers in the Programme. It is therefore not surprising that later when the women indicated that it is their husbands that need the intervention, that once again the organization's leadership employed a white Social Work consultant, PD-3, to conduct research with black and colored men. Instead of consulting the women for their insights into what such intervention might look like, the organization's leadership worked with European-based funders and colleagues and appointed the white Social

Work consultant, PD-3 to develop a comprehensive Counselling Toolkit for men who abuse their intimate partners. Also as indicated by PD-3, it appeared that the organization leaders and funders already had a particular profile of the black and coloured men that did not match her framing of them as agents of change in their own lives. The consultant's refusal to rewrite the profiles of the men to fit the Eurocentric biases was punished with her contract being terminated. Harms-Smith argues that it is imperative in the post-apartheid South African context that Social Workers acknowledge and challenge the "complex matrix of oppression and privilege and relations of power" (2013:310). Such historical and current power relations according to Harms-Smith, "forms an important site of resistance for which social work knowledge and practice must account." (2013:310).

It is evident from the discussion above that the intersections between race, class and gender identities and professional experience contribute significantly to the tact with which religion / Christian religious beliefs are engaged during programme implementation.

Scholars have referred to the struggle in reaching consensus about which theories (within Eurocentricism) make the best sources to combat domination, oppression and/or exploitation (Rabaka, 2005; Mazama & Asante, 2005); calling for the need to place African values and ideas at the centre of African epistemology (Ntseane, 2011; Asante, 1998). Afrocentricity seeks to acknowledge "the contributions made by Africans in the development of the world." (Chawane, 2016:99) which is the case with PD-1, PD-3 including the other intervention programmes in the study.

7.3.2. Complex interplay of race, culture, and patriarchal power structures in intervention programmes

African feminists and Afrocentrists have been consistent in concentrating on liberation for women that is embedded in the liberation of all oppressed groups. It is in this context that some scholars caution against offering simplified understandings of IPA (Heilman and Barker, 2018). A measure of suspicion must be applied to any IPA intervention by white-led programmes that gloss over the question of race, especially in contexts such as South Africa where notions of forgiveness and reconciliation embedded in Christian belief have been used in the political transformation process of the country. To overcome the "interstructured hierarchies of

oppression" gender must be seen within race, insist Keller & Ruether (2006:xlv).

In this regard, the dynamics in Programme C are applicable. The Counsellor's Workbook manual details the following directives to the programme implementers:

To do this work effectively the counsellor will have to release outdated, misinterpreted and biased traditional and religious practices. Counsellors need to keep their egos with its culturally conditioned attitudes and beliefs, well outside the office. (Toolkit for Men-Counsellor's Workbook p 46)

It is apparent from the first section of this instruction that implementers (all black and coloured women) are invited to interrogate socialized thoughts of tradition and religious practices as they invite their male clients to engage. Whilst asking men to get rid of harmful traditional and religious practices, implementers are urged to lead by example and as such also rid themselves of such harmful practices. This notion of practicing what you preach can be linked to the programme designer PD-3's personal Charismatic Christian roots (see profile table).

It is the second part of the instruction that raises the question about who is instructed by whom and about what? In this context, it is the white programme designer who is instructing the black implementers to leave their egos, which are presumably contaminated with harmful cultural attitudes and beliefs, outside of not only the intervention encounter but outside of the office. West (2019) posits that within white dominant mindsets "only certain populations are regarded as mired in a cultural trap of replicating religious and racial/ethnic traditions and customs from the past that reinforce violence against women" (2019:6).

By implication, the extract from the workbook starts with the premise that African traditions and religious practices are harmful. From this premise, the implementers are forced into accepting an already set negative worldview about themselves and the men from their cultures. In other words, the workbook uses cultural othering language that dislocates and decentres programme implementers by providing them with a pre-set agenda that insults their culture and undermines their intelligence. This type of practice that approaches "African realities from a Eurocentric worldview…without having a fair hearing from the Africans themselves" has been lamented and critiqued by Afrocentrists (Mpembe, 2018:127). Mpembe elaborates:

> the Western mind is trained from childhood to think in terms of dichotomies where the dichotomy "is presented, then the process of valuation occurs in which one term is valued and the other is devalued". "One is considered 'good,' positive, superior; the other is considered 'bad,' negative, inferior." It is through this worldview, with the concept of 'cultural othering' in mind, the Westerners judge 'other cultures', non-European cultures. (2018:127).

The abovementioned extract from the workbook judges and devalues African traditions and religious practices from the outset, with scant reference to any positive aspects of it. The restraint placed on implementers from the directive in the manual was confirmed during an interview in the following extract:

Although it is in the manual, we can only discuss it but we can't bring it in ourselves. You can ask the client 'do you believe?' Some will say I believe in God and in my ancestors. (PI-8).

This devaluing of Africans and their cultural and religious practices evident in these extracts coincides with the Programme C founder's practices when she consults other westerners / white colleagues about how best to develop a *culturally appropriate* intervention for *unskilled black and coloured women from disadvantaged communities.* Once this organization was well established, a white Social Work consultant is employed to research and design an intervention programme for black and coloured men who abuse their intimate partners.

During my interview with PD-3, she explained how her research for the manual was conducted in third world countries, including several other countries in Africa, South Africa, and South America. This research pointed to the need for a group work setting that is flexible and that emphasizes a more strength-based approach to working with African men. The approach had to include a focus on specific practical things they wanted to change in their lives, for example, to stop drinking alcohol, to use their money to improve their living environments and to do positive things with their wives and work the land. She recounted:

Organization 3 had a sponsor from the Netherlands and they told me they gonna advertise, for someone to do the research first and then a programme for interventions with men - A Counselling programme. I got the contract and I first did the research in courts and in the

communities. The research included reading about programmes in 3rd world countries for men. So, I looked at Africa, South Africa, South America only these countries that is kind of equal to us. So, I did a survey of programmes that they ran for men and from that, I was able to also think, what could be appropriate for us. A lot of those programmes were mostly groups where men shared their stories. So, there wasn't much on one-on-one counselling. There was nothing very structured about how particularly we need to work with an abusive man, or about one-on-one interventions. So I was just looking at what I was doing working on the farms with men who were abusive and from some of the theories. The strength perspectives stood out for me a lot. Strength perspective goes to: what are our abilities? What has these men got that we can build on to? They want to be family men, you know? They were great workers, they were great, they loved the land, they loved to farm, you know? So, I included that perspective and then of course my spiritual perspective which I would call: trans-personal psychology - its transformation through connecting with the essence of who we are. It's connecting to our own resources. So, I just looked at my own process and how I was working with these men and the reading and the research and it sort of came together. I think it was partly the sponsors from Holland that wanted to do a counselling programme.

Evidently, the programme designer's Afrocentric research findings about a group intervention setting had to be adapted to a Eurocentric intervention strategy, namely one-on-one or couple counselling to fit not the needs of the African men and their context but the funder's pre-set answer to the problem. In this instance, it appears that implementers are asked/instructed to associate with a Eurocentric worldview of religion and culture which is not reflective of their African identity. Chukwuokolo posits that "Colonial experience left two broad "legacies" on Africa: denial of African identity and the foisting of western thought and cultural realities and perspectives on Africans." (2010:29).

In requesting them to leave their religion and culture outside of the office, the programme designer is not being cognizant of the intersecting identities of the implementers. Important to note is that this is the same white programme designer who was subsequently dismissed by Programme C's white leadership and European funders because she demonstrated "too much compassion" for the black male clients and she refused to change her compassionate Afrocentric approach to a more Eurocentric approach in the counselling manual, as was desired by the organization and its funders.

Of interest about Programme C is that one of the implementers identified as also being a pastor in her church (PI-7); another was in the process of responding to an ancestral calling (PI-8), and yet another participant (PI-6) came from an egalitarian family where God was considered as loving and where each person and other religions were treated with respect. By assigning a homogeneous deficient identity to the implementers, Programme C appears to miss the opportunity of engaging the culturally rich insights with which the implementers present. By denying the African identities of its programme implementers, Programme C unintentionally dehumanizes them. It assumes that the workspace is "neutral, passive and uncomplicated" thus ignoring "the tensions, the fractures, refusals and silences that occur in the progression of the everyday acts and relations that inform the meanings of place." (Salo, 2010:96).

In her book: *Can the subaltern speak?* Spivak (1988) refers to the poor and most marginalized in society as the "subaltern". From Spivak's description, the implementers in Programme C would be regarded as the subaltern. Consistent with Spivak's critique of the apparent recovery of the female subaltern's voice, Programme C would do well by recognizing and addressing the normalized disempowering relationship between the implementers and the well-meaning white feminist founder and European funders. From my observations and interaction with programme implementers during interviews, they initially appeared ambiguous but delighted/increasingly enjoyed being able to reflect and share their perspectives and experiences.

When reading the specific directives given to implementers about how they should verbalize their belief in the men's ability to change, together with what feels like disrespect for the implementers' *culturally conditioned egos*, it is difficult to understand what is required from implementers in their interactions with clients. It is evident that the implementers' cultural contexts and their own agency to engage in its appropriate use is not being considered. During my interview, PD-3 indicated that whilst it was the women clients who raised the need for some intervention with their partners, the intervention strategy (i.e. male counselling programme) was essentially imposed as those women were not consulted about ways in which interventions with their husbands/partners could happen. PD-3 noted that the need to establish a counselling programme for the men was suggested and funded by Holland: *I think it was partly the sponsors from Holland that wanted to do a counselling program.* (PD-3).

The women's recommendations were heard, but their input on programme construction was ignored, and the European funder imposed a solution that ignored the lived realities of these

women and their abusive partners. In this regard, West has cautioned that the "interrogation of male dominance would be inadequate without attending to intersecting issues of social power like race" (1999:201). This is especially true in contexts such as South Africa where discourses about violence and abuse of women are often primarily framed as rooted in patriarchy - thus ignoring white supremacy as patriarchy's conjoint / Siamese twin. Asante has made the point about South Africans "hoping to shake the firmly established structure of white supremacy", which appears to remain entrenched in Programme C (1998:54). The firm hold of white supremacy in Programme C is evident in its framing of African traditions and religions as harmful together with its tendencies to consult white colleagues to design programmes thus side-lining African women's voices and insights into the construction of programmes that are targeting African people.

The following narrative by PD-3 demonstrates the women's attempt to influence the framing and construction of the problem:

I think maybe the demand was there when in the organization, the women were saying: 'But you need to speak to my husband because, in fact, he's the problem, not me.' In a way, it was out of balance. They needed to do couple counselling - and of course, the man might not share as deeply if he is with his partner. So, they [organization's leadership} were also beginning, hopefully, to see that the men were wounded. They [the men] were victims of abuse themselves and they needed counselling, not prison.

From this narrative, several aspects relating to intersectionality emerge. The African women attempted to get the organization to prioritize their husbands for intervention. This coincides with arguments from some African feminists, that the goal is to create communities in which women and men flourish and "not to dethrone man or enthrone woman on the seat of power. Rather it is to create a community in which human beings flourish." (Eze, 2008:115). In other words, consistent with Afrocentric and African feminist perspectives, the women were seeking to restore balance by suggesting that it was the men in their intimate relationships that needed intervention. The women clients in Programme C are identified as the ones who redirected or expanded the organization's IPA intervention focus to include men, as confirmed in the interview with PD-3.

Also evident from the narrative is the participant's (PD-3) appeal to consider that the men might be victims in as much as they are perpetrators. This appeal relates to PD-1's findings about the

victim-perpetrator dichotomy in Programme A. In other words, the men that PD-1 worked with had often also experienced sexual abuse and domestic violence in their childhood; and most of the black and coloured families that lived in the townships were trapped in poverty and the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

The directives given to counsellors who would be implementing counselling services with the male clients appear to be loaded with negative codes and connotations about the counsellors' cultural and religious beliefs and practices. For example, implementers are told in the manual that their cultural and religious beliefs and practices are *outdated, misinterpreted and biased.* During my fieldwork with Programme C, I observed that all the programme implementers were women; and they shared with their male clients a similar race. Immediately it appears plausible that Programme C has been able to practice cultural competence in delivering services to men who abuse their intimate partners. Of concern though is the assumption that implementers are unable to discern and apply their own cultural and religious resources responsibly and with wisdom. In this way, through reification, Programme C ignores the potential resources and wisdom of PD-3 and the women requesting help for their male partners. In this way, the programme – even though it claims cultural sensitivity and competence - denies Africans the freedom to apply African insights and resources to address IPA and its intersections with culture and religion. This attitude and practice resemble reification that entails externalization in that the fundamentally flawed cultural and religious beliefs are framed by Programme C as unchanging due to their a-historical nature (Thompson, 1990). The programme's attitude also resembles expurgation - a form of fragmentation that constructs and portrays their beliefs as naturally evil and harmful to themselves. In these ways, implementers are called on to unite and resist (Thompson, 1990). By denying their cultural and religious beliefs, and their agency in using it appropriately, the programme exercises passivization as a form of reification (Thompson, 1990). Also, the black and coloured women implementers are used in Programme C as instruments of a form of social control, thus keeping the historical white hegemonic state of affairs over black people intact.

Another assumption reflected in the manual suggests that people can separate themselves from their attitudes and beliefs. Implementers are told to keep their egos with their harmful culturally conditioned attitudes and beliefs *well outside the office*. Such an understanding contradicts an

African understanding of the inseparable relationship between religion, culture and lived realities. These Eurocentric solutions to African realities can be regarded as cultural ignorance on the part of Programme C and the programme designer. This has profound implications for its well-meaning initiatives that appear to be politically correct on the surface, but which are fundamentally flawed.

Asante justifies that "without sensitivity to the intellectual and cultural elements of others, the white social scientist has often proceeded as if what is correct for whites is correct for everybody" (1998:188). In this context, the organization's interpretation of the problem and its solution clashed with the lived realities of black and coloured women implementers. As one of the participants explained: *when we first started with Organization C, we were working with only six forms of abuse i.e. physical, emotional, verbal, psychological, sexual, financial. Now that we work with our clients and we have the direct experience with clients, we see that there is cultural and spiritual, and we also have political abuse. Now we have nine types of abuse* even though they have only discussed the six types of abuses. *And it's not only coming from us. Whenever we do groups and we ask people 'what is GBV?'. It comes from the people. We then ask them 'if you say cultural abuse what do you mean?' …. Now each of these abuses have its explanations.* (PI-8). From this narrative, it is clear that while the organization initially framed the problem of GBV in a certain way, implementers having listened to ways in which their clients described the problem, expanded the organization's framing of GBV to include cultural and spiritual abuse. Organization C includes in its website under the theme *Types of Abuse* the following:

Spiritual or Cultural Abuse occurs when the victim is denied the right to pursue religious, spiritual and cultural activities or when other forms of abuse are justified as cultural tradition or acts supported by religious beliefs.

Among the examples provided to explain this type of abuse, the following appears on the Organization's website:

- *Using another's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate them*
- *Preventing another person from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs*
- *Ridiculing another's religious or spiritual beliefs*
- *Threats to harm or kill in the name of 'honour'*
- *Using religious teachings or cultural tradition as an excuse for violence*
- *Denying access to ceremonies, places of worship, land or family*

- *Forcing another person to do things against their beliefs*
- *Forced marriage (Ukuthwala)*
- *Female genital mutilation*

Evidently, clients and implementers concur that cultural and religious abuse is a type of GBV. While Organization C includes a clear description of the features of cultural and religious abuse on its website and counselling manual, and interviews with implementers revealed that they were not allowed to bring religion into the counselling environment unless the client first brought it up. In this way, the organization restrains implementers' ability and agency to apply their ways of knowing how to address cultural and religious abuse from their own contexts. Segalo & Kiguwa make the point that "The refusal to acknowledge multiple ways of knowing is a violent act against those whose knowledge is rendered irrelevant/unimportant." (2015:82). They reiterate that"in a country like South Africa that continues to be plagued by remnants of its violent historical past, contextual theorizing is pertinent" (Segalo & Kiguwa, 2015:82). While the organization seems to apply contextual theorizing of GBV as influenced by the implementers in this South African context, it still holds on to a historically white hegemonic approach that confines black and coloured implementers to a very specific approach/instructions to address the problem. Gramsci defines hegemony as "the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige and consequent confidence which the dominant group enjoy because of its position and function in the world of production." (1971:2). Evidently implementers are caught up in a complex web of interlocking oppressions of white supremacy and patriarchy. Implementers are working to find constructive ways of challenging and transforming the patriarchy that is embedded in cultural and religious abuse expressed in GBV in a limiting feminist environment - the organization that provides for their economic security. Intersectional feminism recognizes the need to continuously work "to interrupt and end systemic interlocking systems of oppression" (St Pierre & Pillow, 2000:9). Both the founder and the programme designer in Organization 3/Programme C are white women who are also Social Workers. Both have experienced various forms of oppression including IPA as is evident from the profile table and the book authored by the founder, yet it appears that they are not cognizant of the intersection of racial, class and gender dynamics embedded in their programme. Any discourse on gender-based violence against women in South Africa demands not only the recognition of patriarchy but also white supremacy. Maart has cautioned against environments where "race takes center stage within a discipline that has written itself as though race does not

exist." (Maart, 2014:1). This caution is particularly relevant in the post-apartheid South African context where this study is undertaken.

Scholars including West (2019, 1999) have written extensively about the ways in which white supremacy and patriarchy work together in the oppression of black women and women of colour. As bell hooks cautioned:

> White-supremacy enables us to recognize not only that black people are socialized to embody the values and attitudes of white-supremacy, but that we can excuse white-supremacist control over black people. As black people, we exercise power over one another when we perpetuate white-supremacist beliefs (hooks, 1989:113).

From the above narratives, it appears that Programme C has a disjuncture of contextual implementation in that its programme implementers are expected to accept the organization's interpretation of the problem and its solution as shared and right. According to Billings "To exercise moral and intellectual leadership over society, a group must win the support of the dependent groups by connecting the perceived interests of these groups with their own." (1990:6). While the organization shares programme implementers' interest regarding addressing GBV, its approach leans away from engaging localized black and coloured insights.

This disjuncture was confirmed in that during my fieldwork and participant observation, it was found that Programme C has taken on a different approach to working with the men they target. Structural changes had also occurred since I initially approached them to participate in the research: the organization now employed a black woman of Zimbabwean descent as co-Executive Director to oversee operations and programmes; however, it still had the Afrikaner white male co-Executive Director overseeing the finances.

Programme C underwent various changes with regards to its work with men: most of the programme implementers that worked in the men's programme no longer worked for the organization. The intervention programme is now a community gender-based violence (GBV) educational workshop format that incorporates the global *MenCare: Global Fatherhood Campaign that has been launched to promote men's involvement as equitable, responsive and non-violent fathers and caregivers.* (Toolkit for Men: Male Counselling in the context of intimate partner violence – Adaptation and Implementation Guidelines, 2012:37). It was explained that the workshops are sometimes with men only but most often also include women, because even

if they are targeted at men only, it is not possible to stop people from attending community workshops. These workshops are based on aspects of the Counselling Toolkit manual as well as the MenCare approach. In terms of Programme C's strategic objective of increasing support to men towards achieving gender equality, the annual report revealed:

Through the MenCare+ programme, [Programme C] engaged men and boys. The programme focussed on adult men and boys in order to promote men's involvement as equitable non-violent fathers and caregivers. Funding for this project significantly reduced over the strategic period and affected the number of men reached but [Programme C] continues to sustain it with limited support and reaches on average 500 men a year. (Annual Report, 2018/2019:16).

The MenCare campaign is a global initiative coordinated by Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke) in collaboration with the MenEngage Alliance. The MenCare campaign encourages fathers to treat mothers with respect and care, diminishing the corporal punishment which feeds into cycles of family violence, involving fathers in preventing sexual violence against children, and contributing to boys' adoption of peaceful and progressive masculinities and girls' empowerment. It is described as having a preventative effect on men's violence against women. (MenCare, 2010).

7.3.3. GBV educational workshop in an impoverished coloured community

My observation of the MenCare workshops revealed some challenges faced by the programme implementers: workshop attendees included children as well as men who abused their partners. This was the case at a GBV educational workshop that I attended in an impoverished coloured community. During the session, a physically disabled woman complained about her abusive husband, who was sitting next to her in the workshop. She explained that she was dependent on him to accompany her when she collected her disability grant, but that he would abuse her and use her money on alcohol without her consent. This woman mentioned that she did not know where to go for help and asked the programme implementers to assist her. Also present at the workshop were two primary school-aged children. The other workshop attendees were robust in their response to the woman's complaints. Some admonished the husband while others advised that she report this to the grant official when next she went to collect her grant. The "coloured" programme implementer couldn't ignore the lived realities of the workshop attendees (also coloured people) including the couple and their pressing intersecting needs relating to poverty, disability, alcoholism, and IPA. The woman probably felt that the workshop environment (being

in a church building, facilitated by programme implementers that opened the session with prayer) was reasonably safe for her plight to be heard.

While programme implementers from Programme C have told me that they don't bring religion into their intervention activities, it appears to be a contradiction as not only was the workshop conducted in a church building but proceedings opened with fervent prayers which seemed automatic as implementers did not seek consent from workshop attendees. At another programme activity by Programme C, proceedings also opened with the singing of Christian choruses and prayers. On further inquiry about the reasons for using church buildings instead of more neutral public buildings such as schools, libraries or community centres, one of the programme implementers noted that

C*ommunity members didn't have a problem with that because of the violence and crime in some of these communities. People feel safe when our workshops are in a church building. There were previous workshops that were even held in the small churches that some people have like in Wendy houses or the containers. Those were actually the venues of some of the workshops. So it's a little bit about the community and what they are comfortable and familiar with.* (PI-6)

The above observations and narratives are layered with the various intersections of IPA, disability, poverty, age, class, gender, and the role of Christianity and some of its symbolism in this community and its use in Programme C. 'Coloured' townships with unique political, physical, spatial and socio-economic meaning such as these where the workshops were held, were created through the racialised legislative processes of the Group Areas Act (1950) during the apartheid era. (Salo, 2005). Notwithstanding that most coloured people struggle to make a decent living because of daunting socio-economic conditions in the segregated townships that are rife with gangsterism, alcoholism and violence, they do occupy a relatively favourable position "in the black hierarchy of "deprivation vis-à-vis people classified as African" under apartheid (Salo, 2010:98). Shore posits that the term "black" popularized by the black consciousness movement in the 1970s is inclusive of "Africans, coloureds (people of mixed African and European ancestry) and Indians" (2009:38). Religiosity plays a key role in "collective healing from race-based marginalization" in coloured communities in Cape Town and the broader South African society (Farrar, Falake, Mebaley, Moya, & Rudolph, 2019:3). Of interest is how coloured and black programme implementers in Organization 3 are allowed to use Christian religious spaces and resources in the implementation of its programmes. The need

for engaging the moral and religious dynamics and dichotomies as evident in Organization 3 and its programmes against the backdrop of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past requires attention. This is relevant when considering that implementers are instructed not to bring religion into counselling environments. It appears that memory and forgetfulness are selectively used when Organization 3 executes its programmes. These concepts of memory and forgetfulness are powerful religious concepts within the context of South Africa where social justice is sought to be advanced by Organization 3. Vosloo suggests that religions such as "Judaism and Christianity are often described as 'memory religions'" (2017:4). Vosloo quotes Holocaust survivor Ellie Wiesel as saying "'Jews grow and live under the sign of memory…To be Jewish is to remember'" (2017:5). Evidently in this context, Organization C uses an extrinsic form of religion by using the safety that the church environment provides. As PI-6 reiterates, even the smallest church structures such as Wendy-houses and containers are used. These moments of safety from violence and crime within the church place Organization C in a positive light. Church buildings are also used as symbolic forms of unification (Thompson 1990) – here a sense of unity unites community members and Organization C in a collective identity, despite the social and economic differences that separate them. In this context, the real implications of IPA within the context of institutionalized poverty are forgotten. Coloured and black programme implementers are co-opted into maintaining a status quo that ignores the interlocking nature of structural and institutional poverty and violence. The organization focuses on educating the community about the evils of IPA whilst naturalising institutionalized poverty in a violent crime-ridden community. Thompson (1990) refers to this as reification through the strategy of normalisation.

Organization 3's symbolism of unity with the community extends to the use of Christian prayers. From my observation, at this workshop, the example of unification expressed through standardisation (Thompson, 1990) was evident in the way that prayer created a collective identity between programme implementers and workshop attendees. This finding is consistent with Maluleke's claim that African Christianity is to be found wherever Africans "have a presence or have an influence" (2010:377). Although according to the implementer, this was the first workshop with this group of people, it was interesting to observe how positively all present responded to the call for an opening prayer, and their improvisations throughout the prayer, appealing for God's presence to guide the workshop proceedings.

According to Kroesbergen, "Most people in Africa are continuously aware of the connections

with the spirit world. One can see this, for example, in the pervasiveness of prayer." (2019:36). During the opening prayer at the workshop, there was frequent interjection by some workshop attendees *rebuking the devil in Jesus's name;* as well as asking for *God's protection and blessing on workshop proceedings.* This observation is consistent with studies that point to the increase in Pentecostal-Charismatic religiosity and its prevalence in post-apartheid South Africa with three-quarters of the population reporting a resolute faith in God, and 9 out of 10 reporting a belief in the "power of prayer" (Leatt, 2017:159).

When considering Mafeje's 1960s study of social class and Church affiliation in impoverished black communities (Langa), similarities were found in this predominantly coloured community where the workshop was conducted - in that workshop attendees were largely unemployed and subscribing to a Pentecostal-Charismatic religious faith. Kroesbergen notes that prayer and its meaning in people's lives must be contextualized. He makes the following point:

> Simply asking someone why people pray or what they mean by their prayers will not do, unfortunately, because the meaning of people's words is not determined by what people say or how they understand their own words themselves but by the wider context, by the role that they play in their lives and that role may not be clear to the person involved him- or herself. (Kroesbergen, 2019:39).

According to participant PI-6, being in a church environment brought some comfort to community members who attended Programme C's GBV educational workshops. She further noted that prayer had several other effects as she reflected on another programme activity where I was present. This programme activity brought together black and coloured men from across several townships, including the Cape Flats. There were approximately 60 men who had all previously participated in GBV educational workshops in their respective communities. They gathered on a Friday morning at the main office of Programme C for graduation to receive certificates for having completed these workshops. Participant PI-6 reflected on the calming effect that she thought the prayer and the singing of Christian songs might have had on the men:

I think it [prayer] also calms the space. I don't know if you saw how calm the men were. And there was this brotherhood on that day you know. Those were all men from different communities. They didn't know each other but by the time that we finished with lunch, everybody was talking to everybody. The men were cheering each other on. And I don't know if maybe the prayer had something to do with that. The singing, the prayer, it's very much entrenched in this

organisation. It gives that sense that you are in a family. They were all coming from the Cape Flats from different communities and townships. And then there was this sense of camaraderie. That is how our meetings big or small look. We usually all sit in a circle. No matter how many of our staff is here, there's that sense of somebody's praying, and somebody's singing a Christian song. I think as much as the organisation is not a faith-based organisation, there is some foundation that is interlinked with Christianity.

Evidently, the use of prayer not only had a calming effect on the space (venue) and men, but its use together with the singing of Christian songs created a sense of "family" between clients and programme implementers. It furthermore had a harmonizing and unifying effect - potentially healing divides and aligning the men's common humanity and connection with the Divine, as evidenced in the discussion that follows.

In this scenario, people resonated with the life-affirming qualities of the praying, singing of Christian songs and dancing – resources that gave them a sense of belonging, where there was conversation and celebration of each other's achievements. Notable at the ceremony was the absence of the white leadership of the organization. Notable too was the use of normalisation and passivization in which the attention of the hearer and observer was focused on certain themes at the expense of others (Thompson, 1990). For example, the focus was on celebrating these 60 black and coloured men for completing GBV educational workshops, yet not on them being unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. Thompson (1990) categorises this form of naturalisation whereby the unemployed black and coloured men were celebrated for completing a GBV educational workshop which was presented to them by black and coloured women implementers, as reification. The absence of their white colleagues also seemed not to faze the black and coloured programme implementers at the event. It is noteworthy that the founder frequently referenced the intention of creating *culturally appropriate* interventions. When Thompson's modes of ideology are applied to Organization C's claims versus their practices of cultural sensitivity, it becomes evident that Christianity and universalizing religious resources are selectively used to maintain the relations of white domination while patriarchy is potentially being pacified or entrenched through Christian song and prayer. In other words, these GBV educational workshops which are followed up by graduation ceremonies to celebrate the men's completion of the workshops and sealed with Christian prayers and songs, without time for deeper engagement about the patriarchy of GBV, could raise questions about the effectiveness of this intervention approach.

Noteworthy also from the abovementioned narrative is the cultivation of African experience through prayer, singing and dance whilst celebrating the human dignity and agency of the men who seek to heal and transform their intimate and public relationships. It was also pointed out by PI-6 and confirmed by my own observation that the use of prayer and singing of Christian songs provided a specific contextual framework that both programme implementers and their clients resonated with. The use of Christian resources embedded in African cultural traditional expressions of song and dance is believed to contribute to the ways in which Africans invent and re-invent themselves in contexts that remain predominantly socio-economically segregated.

For participant PI-6, who is also the programme manager, cultivating and endorsing the use of Christian faith resources during workshops, meetings, and programme activities such as the graduation that cut across racial barriers, can be linked to her upbringing where respect for people's humanity was synonymous with her experience of Christianity:

I believe myself to be a Christian. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus Christ. For me, it was always inclusive. In the family that I grew up in, we were raised with the belief that God loves us. That He is a merciful God. That He is a loving God. Not one of submission and possessiveness. And not one of oppression, you know? And for me, it was eye-opening to see how abuse also can numb us to the truth you know. How it can smooth over some rough edges that we don't want to acknowledge to ourselves. (PI-6).

This participant's life-affirming and agency-cultivating attitude towards the implementation team and the men draw on "moral renewable energies" from her Christian religious beliefs and orientation to "apply them to the healing of women and men" (Maguire, 2007:2). This constructive use of religion also heals religion itself because "the constructive moral revolutions they [world religions] house get lost in the swirl and morass of history" argues Maguire (2007:2). This participant continues to practice these personal convictions when, as a Social Worker, she invites a pastor and an imam to join her in facilitating a men's group in one of the coloured communities where her office is based. She explains that IPA overlaps with substance abuse and dire socio-economic conditions such as poverty, unemployment and gangsterism that plague masculinities in these communities. She explained that the male religious leaders were not perpetrators, but were invited to participate in the men's group:

We had a pastor and an imam as participants. No, they weren't perpetrators. I invited them as

participants of a men's group. There were different men: Young men, older men, men that were in the enrichment group [substance abuse group] that we have across the road from us and then just men from the community. In that group what was discussed was how spirituality and religion influence or are linked to IPA. And there the men actually had a discussion around how they interpret the Quran and the Bible. And you could see how the men started really thinking about how they interpret certain biblical words. Two of the men openly admitted to being perpetrators. (PI-6)

This participant leveraged her faith and her position as a Social Worker with a deep understanding of the cultural context within which IPA occurs to solicit inputs of male religious leaders. She goes beyond her own carefulness about integrating religion by partnering with an imam and pastor to help facilitate a discussion about easily misinterpreted scriptures and teachings. She explains: *Religion is a source of hope and I believe that it can be a resource* (PI-6). Fortune (2013) encourages Social Workers to work with religious leaders to confront and redress IPA in its many forms, "especially if it is masked in religious language" (Jayasundara, Nedegaard, Flanagan, Phillips & Weeks, 2017:60). What participant PI-6 demonstrates in this scenario is an expression of intrinsic religiosity which is consistent with how she speaks about her inclusive non-judgemental Christian upbringing in the profile table. Although some of the Social Workers (programme implementers in this study) have been cautious or not confident about engaging religious and cultural beliefs about IPA, they are trained in critical thinking theory. Consistent with the notion of Social Workers "as independent [critical] thinkers concerned with mindful and ethical practice", the participant in this scenario uses the influence of her "personal, societal and ideological values" to invent an intervention approach cognizant of and compassionate for the multi-layered dynamics at play in IPA in that community. (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2015:510).

7.3.4. Men and Women are Equal: *Don't look at her as a woman, look at him [her] as a man:*

From a conversation with two black Xhosa-speaking women programme implementers - PI-7 and PI-8 - it was revealed that they received training at Sonke Gender Justice on the use of the MenCare workshop material. Questioned about how they navigate issues of gender as they do not work with male co-facilitators, they explained that they had received training at Sonke -the men's organization that Organization C has partnered with in its revised GBV intervention approach. They explained

Before we start, we say that we are here to facilitate a GBV workshop to you men. In the workshops we only have one goal and that is Gender Equality. Nothing else. Men and women are equal. We are doing everything together. And we were learning from one another. When we first started these GBV workshops and Sonke introduced us as women facilitators to the male workshop attendees, they [Sonke male facilitators] would say to the male workshop attendees: 'Don't look at her as a woman today, you must look at him as a man today.' (laughter). Because if the men can keep that in mind that this is also a man, they will be there and listen. But if they see me as a woman, they will feel like they can't listen to me because I can't answer certain things. And we also respect that because if they also talk the deep things of men, we respect that and they also respect that there are things that are only for women. But with the younger men, we are able to talk directly about the sexual organs and sex; and how to respect women and each other. And the men appreciate how we facilitate and answer questions to the men.

The political significance of what unfolds in this scenario as described by PI-7 and PI-8 requires interrogation. Several points for reflection can be drawn from this narrative:

In the context of the scenario, the programme implementers, PI-7 and PI-8 described, they are collaborating with male colleagues to address gender-based violence. From the outset, they are clear that the goal of the workshop is gender equality and they do not seem fazed about being constructed in the workshop context as male if the goal of gender equality is to be achieved. Ntseane notes that in Afrocentricity and African Feminism, "Gender roles/expectations are critical for processing knowledge." (2011:307).

This narrative finds resonance in Afrocentricism and African feminism in as far as the assertion of the interconnectedness of the human dignity of women and men, "that knowledge is communal", and learning about ways to dismantle gender-based violence is dependent on social change which is a collective responsibility (Ntseane, 2011:307). This idea that knowledge is to be found in community highlights the interconnectedness of human beings and implies that each person has something to contribute in terms of knowledge to heal, transform and cause human relationships to flourish.

From the programme implementers' reflections, this approach of emphasizing mutual learning and being willing to be constructed as a man in the context of the workshop, served the goal of gender equality because the men in the workshop could engage fully and appreciate the

knowledge these implementers had to share with them.

It is ironic (and the programme implementers found it humorous) that their colleagues (the Sonke workshop facilitators who are Xhosa men) chose to construct and introduce them (Xhosa women facilitators), as men. Mugumbate & Chereni (2019) mention irony and humour as components of Ubuntu and being part of African culture and lived experience. One wonders about the underpinnings of the gender power dynamics that were playing out during these GBV workshops. Could it be that since the workshop attendees and facilitators were all Xhosa, they already shared common cultural assumptions about gender and gender roles; and that these assumptions provided the basis for an enabling environment for the kind of deliberations and navigations of gender dynamics that were at play? Uzodike & Isike assert that:

> men and women in pre-colonial African cultures and societies … coexisted not as equals but as complementary subjects living in a mutual world of responsibility-sharing, where differences were appreciated and celebrated. The gender worldview that underpinned and defined masculinities in this era [pre-colonial African cultures and societies] was one that saw women as spiritual and earthly leaders with awesome abilities, and powers to both produce economically and reproduce existentially. (2012:44)

A feminist interrogation of the scenario offers important insights into some of the complexities involved when women are invited to co-facilitate with men in working towards gender equality. It is important to note that these black female and male gender equality workshop facilitators are employed by their respective organizations to do this work with black men within historically marginalized black impoverished communities. While the programme implementers' perspectives about being constructed as male in the context of the abovementioned workshop seem humorous and harmless, it carries much deeper meaning when the potentially disastrous (fatal) implications of the embeddedness of patriarchy embroiled in white domination are considered. As more men and male-led gender justice organizations take up space in addressing issues of gender equality, the need for intentional African feminist strategies when women collaborate with men in this work becomes critical. Salane points out the importance of recognizing the particularity of "sexism meted out at black women" and its persistence and perpetuation "in black spaces - by black men who should otherwise know better." (Salane, 2018:29). De la Rey draws attention to the "triple oppression" debates which point to the "accumulative model of oppression – race plus class plus gender" (1997:6) which raises

awareness of the various conflicting dynamics that might be at play in the navigations of the women implementers in the scenario. De La Rey (1997) suggests that the ways in which the social world and (in this case the men in the workshop) respond to the women are inextricably bound to this triple oppression. De la Rey continues her argument in favour of "feminist standpoint theory which argues for knowledge production situated in social positioning and location." (1997:7). In this scenario, women are stripped of their gender identity and made to perform as men to gain access and supposedly advance gender equality through knowledge sharing. In other words, the male workshop facilitators in this scenario erase the women's femaleness to appease the male workshop attendees and bring about gender equality. The issue of male control over women and especially women's sexuality is a theme that remains central in the quest to end GBV. In this scenario, the knowledge that women are bringing into the male-dominated space is said to only become valid when they become male. The women implementers are asked to embrace their otherness and to take on the male form to be validated and heard for the sake of gender equality advancement. The implementers' respect for the men and their commitment to their gender equality mission undergirds their acceptance of being stripped of their gender identity in this instance. Such an approach finds resonance in some forms of African feminism as expressed by Ang (1995). Writing about the many strategies that non-western women have navigated in the face of western feminism's difficulty to embrace racial difference authentically, Ang (1995) suggests that instead of accepting a false unity, a feminism that entails a self-conscious politics that cannot accept difference be considered in some instances. Such instances "should not be encountered with regret, but rather should be accepted as the starting point…" (Ang, 1995:60). Considering how PI-7 and PI-8 also respected Organization 3's white feminist founder's extrinsic use of Christianity and religious symbolisms showed elsewhere in this study, they similarly use humour/laughter as they report their respect for the men's reasoning. In the spirit of their commitment to gender equality, they accept being constructed in identities that assist the founder and the men for the purpose of gender equality. While these implementers had an opportunity to expose oppression, they seem to suggest understanding and respect for the need for these seemingly limiting constructions. A lot has been written about feminism and the politics of the body and I want to suggest that hidden in these implementers' respectful acceptance of being stripped of their femaleness in this instance may offer some insight into their embodied theory. These implementers seem to demonstrate an understanding of the power of the politics of their bodies – an understanding that feminists have articulated long before "Foucault's complex theoretical contribution to the 'politics of the body'" (Bordo,

2002:185). Bordo reiterates what feminists have been saying that "the 'definition and shaping' of the [woman's] body is 'the focal point for struggles over the shape of power'" (2002:185). In this scenario the implementers mockingly comply and, according to them, achieved their goal of sharing knowledge with both the older and younger male workshop attendees. Butler talks about the ways in which mocking enactment of gender performance within certain gender-essentialist cultural contexts are used to expose and subvert cultural notions and its belief in the idea of "a true gender identity" (1990:138). The implementers' strategy of enacting a different gender in this scenario amplifies Butler's argument that "it is impossible to separate a theory of gender from a political philosophy of feminism" and "that without a radical critique of gender constitution, feminist theory fails to take stock of the way in which oppression structures the ontological categories through which gender is conceived." (Butler, 1988:529). Also, the ease with which the implementers accepted the idea of being stripped of their female gender identity and the taking on of a male gender identity, finds resonance with Foucault's comment about gender during an interview when he said, "Because they are made they can be unmade" that is "assuming we know how they were made." (Foucault 1989:252).

I am also reminded of common experiences of oppression and dehumanization that the programme implementers, their Sonke colleagues, and the male workshop attendees share. In this regard, attention is drawn to the racialized South African history and its impact on gender relations. De Villiers Graaff points out that because of "white supremacy over black people" in South Africa, the Apartheid government infantilized black men, which continues to harm their masculinities (2017:17). This infantilization of black men in South Africa contributed significantly to their ability to own land or be financially able to provide for their families. The apartheid system was so constructed that "African men were in a subordinate position to white men and women, while still being in a position of authority over African women." (De Villiers Graaff, 2017:18).

P1-7 and P1-8's earlier narratives about challenging male clients' lamentation about changing gender roles and their wives/female partners' being employed while they are unemployed, hints at the ease with which they agree to enact male-gender identities to reach their gender equality knowledge-sharing mission. Levine-Rasky argues that "multiple, fragmented, and shifting identities signify the contradictory positions of oppression and domination within it." (2011:243).

Proponents of an intersectional framing of masculinities (Moolman, 2013; Ratele, 2008) suggest that failure on the part of GBV intervention programmes to recognize and engage the multiple aspects of identity such as race, class, culture, etc can increase the risk for women who are partnered with male clients in these programmes. I would add that such an omission would also be an opportunity missed to "reinvigorate our conceptualization of history as multiple, open and pointing to different outcomes other than the inexorable drive towards racial solidarity that seeks only to recuperate Africans as human." (Salo, 2010:94). From my observation of these programme participants during the interview and at the various programme activities where I experienced their interaction with the men in their programmes, I believe that they are going beyond just the recuperating or asserting of the humanity of being black / African and women. Evidently, implementers use humour to humanize themselves, their colleagues, and male clients. Scholars have written about the ways in which professionals use humour to humanize themselves in therapeutic settings (Berger, Coulehan & Belling, 2004). Outley, Bowen & Pinckney (2020) pointed out how humour has also been used for centuries as a form of protest/resistance/defiance and hope in desperate situations of oppression and inequality.

The implementers' authenticity, integrity and generosity of spirit invigorate the creation of new ways of being human, both individually and in communion with the men that they work with. This practice resembles features of Ubuntu feminism – an offspring of African feminism.

7.3.5. Notions of gender, culture, cultural shame, and religious belief

The following section reflects the ways in which Programme B engages the notion of gender, culture, cultural shame and religious beliefs. As introductory remarks on the concept of culture, Programme B's manual details:

Culture - some men may use examples of culture to argue that male domination of women is perfectly acceptable and to justify their own behaviour. But if you peel back the rationalizations, most men, regardless of culture, know that devaluing and hurting women and girls is not right. Using violence to dominate another is morally and ethically wrong. We need to rethink outdated beliefs that dehumanize women and – though in a different way – men as well. (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence 2008:67)

This excerpt guides programme implementers about engaging men in their counselling environment on the question of gender and culture. It provides the moral and ethical framework

that would challenge harmful cultural beliefs whilst steering implementers to reach for the men's humanity, in this way enabling the men to recognize and appreciate the humanity of the women they are partnered with. In South Africa, the discourse on culture and religion pertaining IPA almost always starts from the premise of "harmful practices". This presumption must be considered with caution. Similarly, the need to rethink the notion of *outdated beliefs* in the narrative above requires interrogation to mitigate the potential marginalization of cultural knowledge that implementers might bring to the therapeutic environment. For example, in an interview with one of the implementers from Programme B, PI-3, revealed the creative ways in which he listened and guided some men who used certain easily misinterpreted cultural and religious beliefs to justify or insist on male headship and female submission. Even though Programme C's manual also introduces the topic of culture on the basis that it is harmful, two programme implementers from Programme C, PI-7 and PI-8 demonstrated creative ways of addressing the clients' misguided cultural and religious beliefs about the key signifiers of IPA. These participants acknowledged the misguided belief about male headship and female submission as it was presented to them during counselling; after which they guided their clients to think deeply into cultural beliefs and traditions which enabled them to gain more helpful and liberating cultural insights.

Some implementers who draw on resources from within culture and faith note that the focus is on reality as PI-3 narrated: *We use the topics in the manual but we add some information based on reality…we have to address the issue of reality because people experience everything.* He noted that while some men report that the new insights help them to see different ways of dealing with *certain issues without being carried away by emotions,* he also noted that real lasting change is up to the men and that it is difficult to track whether the men apply these new helpful insights: *I don't know if they relapse.* (PI-3).

The following extract entitled "Cultural Shame" as drawn from Programme B's manual reads as follows:

Cultural shame – learned when we fail to meet the expectations of institutions such as religion, socio-economic class, or the media. Cultural shame may also be learned when we internalize negative and destructive information about our race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability. Examples may include men feeling bound to religious-based or socially-based

prescriptions of masculinity, of people feeling ashamed because of attraction to members of the same sex. (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence 2008:235).

The manual also poses the question: *What does your culture and your religious beliefs say about the role of men?* The introductory note to this section is entitled *Theory: The struggle for equality* and reads as follows:

Working toward an equal relationship and dealing with the changes it brings, raises profound issues for men and women. We are sometimes unsure how to relate to each other in a world of changing norms and expectations. For many individuals, personal experiences with marriage and relationships have been confusing. In these changing times, men and women often give and get conflicting signals and messages about who they should be and how they should act and interact with each other. Women are demanding equality in the workplace, the family, and all institutions of society. Men can support this effort, yet many do not. Some resist the prospects of equality because they think there are certain "natural" reasons for men to be dominant. Even those who profess to support women's liberation, sometimes experience confusion, fear, and distrust in their relationships with women. (Programme for Intimate Partner Violence, 2008:73-74).

From the above excerpt, the choice of words such as *Women is demanding equality* give the impression that women are creating problems in society and that men are somehow pushed into a corner with little agency because of their patriarchal values. This extract does not seem to reflect the impact of the socio-political contexts within which African women and men seek to live in relationships with one another. The training manual misses an opportunity to sketch the specific post-apartheid religiously pervasive context within which women and men seek to create meaningful intimate and public relationships. The absence of locating the specific cultural and socio-political context within which patriarchy impacts relationships between women and men, makes it difficult to address the real concerns head-on. The extract is reflective of the decentering effect of uncritically employing Eurocentric theories to address African problems. Afrocentricism encourages Africans to look for insights from within the African lived experience to theorize and address problems such as IPA as experienced by Africans (Rabaka, 2005; Mazama & Asante, 2005).

Programme B relates vaguely to traditional gender roles and then refers broadly to societal expectations about what it means to be a "Real Man". Regular reference is made to socialization during childhood and in the family of origin. The manual also references comments such as *The struggle for equality; Women are demanding equality; Men can support this effort, yet many do not;* and then it refers to the notion of *Cultural shame. Cultural shame* is said to be *learned when we fail to meet the expectations of institutions such as religion, socio-economic class, or the media. Internalized negative and destructive information about our race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability* - all these aspects contribute to the feeling of cultural shame that male clients supposedly experience.

One of the implementers in Programme B explained the male client's perspective:

Maybe sometimes you feel like 'I don't want to be beaten by a woman (he laughs). Because I am the man. How can a woman beat me?' And maybe sometimes he can feel like "I'm stronger than the woman and I was told I'm the man, I'm the head, how can I be beaten up as the head. And what are people going to say? Sometimes I can't even open a case because they [the police] will laugh at me." 'You are being beaten by a woman?' It's those things and those stigmas. (PI-3).

PI-3 explained the justification offered by some men. This narrative is reflective of hegemonic masculinities. Among the various masculinities that exist, hegemonic masculinity privileges those who own the culture in a given society; and it dominates not only women but other masculinities as well (Morrell, 2001).

In the narrative expressed by the participant, PI-3, his clients seem to appeal for his understanding of the dilemma that they find themselves in when their "manhood" is being threatened by the woman. This is a popular narrative that has been used as justification that some men use for abusing intimate partners instead of reaching out for help. Reference to the headship of the man as well as him being physically stronger than a woman are drawn from readings from popular Christian teachings and scriptures. Chitando & Chirongoma (2012) are among African scholars who have written a book titled *Redemptive Masculinities* as one of the many resources to engage men who use such justifications. For example, Togarasei refers to how "Paul downplayed gender difference" and advocated for women and men being one in Christ and how "Paul challenged the hegemonic masculinities of the time, providing a very good lesson for Christians living with dangerous hegemonic masculinities today" in South Africa (2012:238,

242).

Another implementer in Programme B comments on the portrayal of violence that is construed as playful

I know in our culture, when boys grow up there's this game they play, it's a stick game stick fighting game so they literally play with violence, they playing sticks they fighting each other with sticks but it's a fun thing, you understand? Even when you watch it there's nothing wrong, it's nice you know it's amusing it's entertaining but with that mentality? Sometimes you could think that I'm playing but you are actually abusing the person. (PI-4)

The implementer explains how culture perpetuates the socialization of young boys' playful engagement as a game to be watched and be amused by. By neutralizing violence through this cultural game, PI-4 believes it can easily translate into making abuse seem like a game, not to be taken seriously.

These perspectives on the notion of cultural shame have been found to increase the confidence in these participants to raise similar awareness in clients who present with these challenges. By contextualizing both cultural and religious resources, participant PI-3 and PI-4 offer more culturally informed interventions to the men in their programmes.

7.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to provide reasons why Christian belief systems about gender power relations shape intervention programmes in the ways they do. It revealed that programme designers' and implementers' personal experiences of Christianity directly influence their Christian beliefs. Their personal Christian beliefs about gender power relations inform the beliefs they hold about the men in their programmes and it informs their intervention approaches. The analysis also confirmed that intervention programmes seek to address the key signifiers of IPA within the intersecting context that they inhabit which is cognizant of an Afrocentric worldview. It is evident that the personal experiences of IPA and/or egalitarian experiences of intimate relationships influence how programme designers and implementers perceive their male clients. Personal experiences of gender discrimination and abandonment by the church resulted in intervention approaches that tended to be more sensitive to cultivating a therapeutic environment that is welcoming and sensitive to the needs of clients. Such compassionate therapeutic environments enabled Programme A to confront the extrinsic use of Christian beliefs and

practices by male clients to detract from taking responsibility for their abusive behaviour. Examples of drawing on personal experiences of and/or Christian teachings about egalitarian intimate relationships also influenced some participants' insistence of clients' agency to choose non-abusive behaviour. Programmes A's stance about keeping clear boundaries between the purpose of the therapeutic environment and their religious-spiritual beliefs and practices resulted in male clients being a lot more reflective and self-regulating in the ways that they use Christianity. Programme A's model of addressing Christian beliefs pertaining to the key signifiers of IPA holds promise. Inviting religious leaders to participate in a therapeutic group encounter in Programme C had a positive effect on the male clients' ability to critically reflect on their use of religious teachings and point them toward healthier more egalitarian models. Armour too elaborates that "basic ideas that organize experience become embedded in the public mind and structure the ways in which issues are understood and tackled" (Armour, 2004:389).

The intersectionality of race, class, gender and culture was particularly evident in how programmes were constructed. For example, Programme C used white colleagues as lead consultants for research and the development of intervention programmes that were targeted at unskilled, poor black and coloured women and men. Even though "black" and "coloured" women are programme implementers, it appears that their insights about religion and culture are not woven into the construction of the programmes.

Even though it is inferred that religion is not to be initiated by implementers, it was evident that programme implementers across the three programmes do integrate religion and culture into their interventions with their male clients. For example, participants engaged their male clients about their use of certain Christian biblical references and teachings relating to notions of male headship and female submission. This was particularly evident during individual counselling sessions in Programme B, as well as in individual and group sessions in Programmes A and C. It must therefore be emphasized that it is not only a mistake but potentially life-threatening for women who are partnered with intervention programmes' male clients if organizations including funders - who may think that since religion contributes to cases of IPA that it is a sworn enemy that must be muted or ignored. Instead, if these organizations are serious about cultural competence when addressing IPA in the direction of its eradication, they would acknowledge that the programme designers and implementers' approaches appear to be more suited in religiously pervasive contexts such as South Africa.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter focuses on the salient conclusions that emanated from the analysis chapters. These conclusions are presented in relation to the research objectives of the study. Thereafter the limitations of the study, its contributions and recommendations for further studies will be discussed.

Objective one: **To identify Christian beliefs present in the construction and implementation of** intervention programmes for perpetrators of IPA.

8.2. NUANCES OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

All eleven participants who were interviewed were found to have deep roots in Christianity in their upbringing, which in some ways facilitated their choice of working in the helping and Social Work professions. While the study unintentionally revealed the tension that participants expressed regarding their relationship with and between religion and spirituality, I did not seek to resolve it. Consistent with Selvam's (2013) findings in different situations even the same participant gravitated between seeing these concepts as different and in other situations, it was regarded as similar. Even though their Christian beliefs were not always explicitly articulated in the construction of the programmes, it was most often implicitly evident. Bailey (1998) has developed Thomas Luckman's (1967) term 'invisible religion' which was later included in Meerten ter Borg's (2004) term 'wild religion' to refer to what happens with people's religiosity when it is rejected in the public domain. All three programme designers preferred to identify as spiritual and not religious, but as they reflected on the life experiences that led to their construction of intervention programmes, they spoke extensively about how faith combined with a strong commitment to addressing issues relating to injustice against marginalized people informed and motivated for their work with men who abuse their intimate partners. Their personal experiences of, and commitment to the potentially liberating qualities embedded in Christianity, served as driving forces for working in the specific field of IPA intervention. For example, in the absence of formal training or knowledge about how to work with sex offenders and men who abuse their intimate partners, the programme designer who developed the first intervention programme noted that she drew on her Christian resources of a ministry of care and

continued to trade on and from her Christian faith. She was rudely awakened into tailoring her language when she discovered that religious/spiritual descriptors were rejected within feminist circles in the public domain. It was evident that programme designers and implementers, whilst mindful of the so-called secular work environments that they entered, identified with the employing organizations' values. These values, including notions of mercy and justice, commitment to reconciliation, healing and restorative justice were instrumental in their decisions to work in those organizations. The organizations did not explicitly talk about or exhibit links to their faith-background (Sider-Unruh, 2004) heritage. While the reasons for disconnecting from its faith heritage was not explored with organizations in the study, Clarke & Jennings (2008) point out that western donors have traditionally been reluctant to fund the activities of religiously inspired organizations. Reasons for the ambivalence related to concerns that religion was regarded as counter-developmental and that "religious discourses…were inflexible and unyielding in the face of social and political change" (Clarke & Jennings, 2008:1). The disconnect with the organizations' religious heritage as observed in this study, created a vacuum for programme designers and implementers, leaving them uncertain about the real place of religion in the workplace. Some participants resonated with the organizations' use of religious language to express their values and objectives. In instances where Christian religious sentiments were used explicitly by some organizations, it resembled Allport's (1950) notion of immature religious sentiment in that it tended to operate in ways that served the purpose of what Thompson (1990) describes as legitimation and reification to represent relations of domination as eternal and natural. Relations of domination embedded in the misuse of Christian beliefs run deep, based on the historically colonial and apartheid South African context where intervention programmes were constructed and are implemented. From this South African historical context, western models of religion have been used as a strategy to divide and conquer; and by keeping employees in the dark about its exact place, the latter must find comprehensive healing and transformation models that end IPA in a work environment that dislocates and decentres them from being fully human.

Thompson explains: "We speak of 'domination' when established relations of power are 'systematically asymmetrical', that is, when particular agents or groups of agents are endowed with power in a durable way which excludes, and to some significant degree remains inaccessible to, other agents or groups of agents, irrespective of the basis upon which such exclusion is carried out" (1990:59). Two of the organizations are reliant on funding that mainly comes from

government and western sources. All three programmes were constructed and are implemented in an environment that according to the South African constitution is regarded as secular. Yet, the key signifiers of IPA which they seek to address in these intervention programmes are deeply rooted in patriarchal Christian beliefs that are reified in western constructions of Christianity. In other words, intervention programmes in this study are navigating several layers of systemic oppression and complex relations of power that insists on using fragmentation (Thompson, 1990) that decentres and dislocates programme designers, implementers, male clients and the women that look to these programmes for healing and transformation that would potentially bring about human flourishing.

From this finding, it appears that some of the organizations' relationships with religiosity resemble forms of extrinsic religion. Building on Allport's model, African scholar, Selvam argues that extrinsic religiosity in its extreme form "jeopardizes human flourishing" (2013:140). Selvam expounds that extreme forms of extrinsic religion not only negate intrinsic religion but also has their own attributes, namely "naïve religiosity and religious fundamentalism." (2013:140). Naïve religiosity is characterized as "a certain level of intellectual lethargy and social exclusivity about individuals' attitude towards [religious] creed, code, cult and the community." (Selvam, 2013:140). On the other hand, fundamentalism is when the "creed, code, cult and the community of a particular faith-system get petrified, and sometimes hierarchical judgements arise, that is, considering 'our' faith-system as being superior to 'their' truth-claims." (Selvam, 2013:140). For a deeper grasp of the relations of domination and power dynamics at play in the faith-background of organizations and the intervention programmes emanating from them, it appears that they are conducting their transformation and healing endeavours under challenging constraints.

Many of the programme designers and implementers found resonance with organizational values which some of them constructed and interpreted as inextricably bound to their Christian values. This finding is consistent with an understanding that while secularity is claimed in these work environments, it remains contested in religiously pervasive non-western cultures and contexts (Lord, 2006) such as South Africa. While South Africa and these intervention programmes and organizations are heavily influenced by persistent western notions of polarizing the world into "religious" and "secular" (Lord, 2006:215), it is hardly possible in the lived experience. Furthermore, the present study confirms "there is no separation of the sacred and profane" and the "inseparability of religion and society among African peoples" has often resulted in scholars

speaking "about African philosophy and culture in conjunction with African religions." (Selvam, 2013:132). Selvam and this study find Bailey's (1998) term 'implicit religion' (albeit a western construct built on the secularization assumption) useful for its potential to be "a tool to tip the balance in the other direction by encompassing those rituals and behaviours that were once perceived as being at the edge of religion or beyond." (Lord, 2006:215). In other words, implicit religion as it manifested in this research project at times has been used as a tool to dismantle and expose the hypocritical disguise of harmful religious beliefs embedded in the key signifiers of IPA.

Expressions of implicit religiosity were also observed as programme designers and implementers used it to upend experiences of injustice, gender discrimination and marginalization in both church and/or the secular work environments. In instances where designers refrained from being explicit about their Christian ideology and motivations in constructing the programmes, the inseparability of religion and society was evident in the implicit expressions of religious sentiment in programme construction via certain themes such as spirituality and culture.

According to Lord, implicit religion "has phenomenological and heuristic characteristics in that what defines implicit religion is the mode of behaviour exhibited, rather than the goal towards which the behaviour is directed." (2006:206). The following notions or phrases evident in Christian expressions /notions emerged from the data:

- **Mercy, Justice and Forgiveness**

Acknowledging that forgiveness is inextricably bound to the notion of mercy and justice, it was apparent that forgiveness was to be applied on the condition that a thorough process of justice-making is adhered to. In this regard, participants were motivated by the belief that gender reconciliation and healing were possible if programmes refrained from applying "quick forgiveness". Quick forgiveness was regarded not only as "cheap grace" but also as harmful, detrimental and a source for re-inscribing the key signifiers of IPA. Tutu, Tutu, Kae-Kazim & Badaki (2014) reflect on what forgiveness is not, found resonance in the way that its application was understood and incorporated in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. Tutu et al (2014) summarize:

- Forgiveness is not easy—it requires hard work and a consistent willingness.
- Forgiveness is not weakness—it requires courage and strength.
- Forgiveness does not subvert justice—it creates space for justice to be enacted with a

purity of purpose that does not include revenge.

- Forgiveness is not forgetting—it requires a fearless remembering of hurt.
- Forgiveness is not quick—it can take several journeys through the cycles of remembering and grief before one can truly forgive and be free." (2014:49).

- **Reconciliation and Healing**

The notion of gender reconciliation and healing was regarded as a process of restorative justice that cultivated principles of Ubuntu Feminism. The study confirmed that such a process is treacherous and long and cannot be taken lightly. It is in this context that, while the study confirmed the benefits of an intrinsic application of Christianity in the construction and implementation of interventions, it was clear that designers and implementers were at times cautious and critical about the potential harm that the slightest misuse of Christian belief systems can cause. African feminism that resembled the features of Ubuntu feminism (refusing the demands of patriarchy) served the self-regulation and accountability qualities of Christian belief systems in the context of the programmes. Evidently, programme designers and implementers who identified more strongly with being SBNR also insisted on the intrinsic use of faith and religious resources. In other words, participants who deterred the reification of the key signifiers of IPA, exposed attempts by male clients to use religion extrinsically. Such practice by participants in this research project was reflective of their "spirituality as related to mature religious sentiment". (Selvam, 2012:37).

8.3. NAVIGATING THE SECULAR-RELIGIOUS DICHOTOMY DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES

Most programme implementers alluded to the tension that exists between the inclusion of religion and/or ignoring the secular context because of ethical concerns in meeting the needs of clients holistically. Their reflections suggest that although they were acutely aware of contemplating a client holistically within a Christian religiously pervasive South African context that expects them to refrain from incorporating religion into practice, they did most often deliberately engage religious matters (only) when clients brought it up or alluded to its importance in their lives.

The points of influence were evident in their language and the undertones of religious semantics. For example, they affirmed the caring ethos and maintained that a ministry of care was needed

in the construction and implementation of programmes for male clients who were most often conceptualized as wounded, injured, and/or broken people. Furthermore, they explained the necessity for a ministry of restoration, love, justice, respect and compassion, since they subscribed to the philosophy that their male clients are created in the image of God. In addition, they recognized their clients' spirituality that required them to be cultivated in the direction of the healing and constructive transformation process. In some instances, they encouraged their male clients to actively participate in church and appropriate spiritual activities. In instances where male clients were encouraged to participate in church, some implementers were insistent that church involvement must not be used to deflect from, but enhance, the transformation that clients sought to attain through therapeutic intervention. Explicit examples of the sound use of religion were evident in some instances. One example was that of a two-year therapeutic collaboration between Programme A and a church in support of a male client who was a clergy person. Accountability measures were put in place by the church leadership and the clients' self-regulation commitments were closely interrogated and monitored within the intervention programme.

The study concludes that although more implicit than explicit, Christian beliefs did influence the construction of intervention programmes. The study confirms that while programme implementers were mindful of the "secular" constraints of the context in which they provided services to their male clients, it was impossible to avoid addressing Christian beliefs as these presented during programme activities.

Objective Two: To establish h**ow** Christian beliefs about **gender power relations shape the construction** and implementation of intervention programmes.

The main conclusions on how Christian beliefs about gendered power relations shaped the construction and implementation are presented below.

8.4. HOW CHRISTIAN BELIEFS INFORM PROGRAMMES

Construction

As indicated previously, while it was not always immediately explicit that programmes' beliefs about gender power relations were shaped by Christian beliefs in programme manuals and related documents, its influence became evident during interviews and participant observation.

Implementation

Participants' personal Christian beliefs about gender power relations do inform the ways in which they implement intervention programmes.

- **Men's Agency as a Christian/Spiritual Resource**

Participants held strong convictions about men's ability to change. This conviction was most often rooted in participants' belief that people are created in the image of God; and that Christianity, religion/spirituality hold life-affirming resources to facilitate and sustain constructive change/healing. Most Protestant Christians, including those in this study, share a worldview that acknowledges the paradoxical nature of human beings. The paradox holds that human beings hold intrinsic value and "are elevated because they are created in 'the image of God' and at the same time they are sinners struggling with evil in the heart of the personality – the will. (Van Hook, 2002:170). Masango (2006) makes the point that for many Africans the idea that people are created in the image of God is revered and its interconnectedness with the concept of Ubuntu is important in African spirituality. It is understood that the inner values embedded in the notion of Ubuntu (humanness) "were given to human beings by God" explains Masango (2006:931). It is further understood that human beings "contain the main consistency of the wholeness of life" namely Ubuntu which "was there from ancient times, and it never ceased to exist within the circle of the human race" (Masango, 2006:932). Masango states that notions "around the inner-value and dignity of the human personality" were studied and developed by African philosophers with Savory who finally stated: 'God (supreme God) did not only endow man (sic) with his goodness but also equally inseminated this divine element into all human beings.'" (2006:932). Awakening male clients to their moral agency to bring about moral change was identified as helping men recognize their internal life-affirming resources as opposed to their harmful practices which, if they are not interrogated, will remain. Participants' Christian

philosophy that people can be spiritually *born again*, reiterated and supported the notion of constructive change, which implies moral transformation.

Participants' patience included compassion as they employed confrontational approaches to male clients' distorted cultural and religious beliefs about what it means to be a man. This served as a catalytic tool in challenging men to think more critically about the implications of male headship and female submission. This was especially evident in instances where male clients lamented their inability to provide for their families as culture and religion expected because of unemployment, especially in instances where their wives were employed and became the primary breadwinner/provider. Such laments were met with compassion and male clients were supported to acknowledge the dire socio-economic conditions that both women and men were experiencing collectively in South Africa. Furthermore, male clients were strongly supported to relinquish gender-stereotypical perceptions of women in exchange for a more practical complementarity approach based on a combination of African feminist values and egalitarian Christian values as discussed in chapter 6.

The concept *of ubuntu-based theology was also implicated.* This Ubuntu-based theology was embodied in the practices of patience, respect, compassion and collaboration in several ways.

The notion of compassion was expanded to include a confrontational approach to enable men to realize that even though some of them came from long histories of IPA in their families, they had the power to introspect and halt the inter-generational recurrences in their families. This approach is resonant of Ubuntu feminism (Cornell & Van Marle, 2015) in that men are not only called to account for their abusive behaviour but pointed to their embedded moral agency and responsibility to heal themselves and by implication the women and families they have victimized/harmed. This compassionate confrontational approach is also noted in Nkulu-N'Sengha's (2011) scholarship on ways of holding men accountable and steering them to become more fully humane (bumuntu) - an Afrocentric ethos that emphasizes the need for men to be instrumental in restoring harmony and balance in their personal and communal life.

An example of an Ubuntu feminist-based confrontational approach was seen in modelling to the male clients how women and men co-facilitated group intervention activities – a demonstration of inherent respect between the genders.

Secondly, this practice was emulated by black female programme implementers in the way they interacted with the organization's white Jewish female founder who exposed her vulnerability by using Christian and isiXhosa expressions through singing, and her use of African metaphors to advance her mission of social change in the male clients and the African family.

South African feminists have written about the navigation through multiple sites of power that black women negotiate as they collaborate with white women to set up structures that address IPA (Ramphele, 2020; Moolman, 2013; Salo, 2010). The implementers' Ubuntu-based theological approach points to how the implementers fuse life-affirming African values and Christian beliefs as an enabling combination for the cultivation of a harmonious environment for the intervention programmes that mainly reach black and coloured men. Afrocentric and African feminist worldviews acknowledge the intricate interconnections between "white" and "black" women in the quest to heal unequal gender power relations in IPA situations among "black" couples, especially in contexts such as post-apartheid South Africa.

With the bigger mission of liberating black women and men from patriarchal oppressive intimate relationships, the black women programme implementers cultivated Ubuntu in their relationship with the organization's founder as both an expression of their Christian and African identities and values to advance gender reconciliation and healing. Mbugua & Njoroge (2018) confirm the complexity involved in dismantling oppressive systems (such as white supremacy and patriarchy) to transform IPA for the advancement of harmony in intimate relationships between women and men in contexts such as South Africa.

- **Application of Christian Resources in healing gender power relations:**

The notion of Love, as an expression of compassion in the counselling context, was not only referred to as an important Christian and universal value, but it featured as a fundamental resource in advancing Ubuntu-based egalitarian intimate relationships. The notion of Love was confirmed as central to Christian doctrine and regarded as a universal religious and spiritual resource that is available and accessible to facilitate gender reconciliation and IPA healing.

Male-female mutuality through co-facilitation:

Co-facilitation affords a demonstration of male-female mutuality which male clients not only

witness but which reminds them of the life-affirming quality of love embedded in the personhood of both women and men. Such emulative demonstration through mixed-gender co-facilitation paves the way for male clients to remember that they are endowed with the same resource that can liberate them from the burden of patriarchal beliefs which suffocate their intimate relationships. This implies cultivating Ubuntu that appreciates the diversity, worth and dignity of both women and men.

Mixed-gender co-facilitation also shows male clients how programme implementers navigate differences of opinion and allow each other to take the lead based on their gifts and qualities, and not necessarily based on their maleness or femaleness.

Mixed-gender co-facilitation in this study was reflective of an African feminist approach in which women and men work together effortlessly when they respect and honour each other's human dignity and worth. Without being anti-religious or anti-tradition, mixed-gender co-facilitation as highlighted in this study helps to subvert male clients' distorted patriarchal views through the cultivation of "a genuine, egalitarian relationship between co-facilitators." (Roy, Lindsay & Dallaire, 2013:24)

An example of deep respect for the genuine human existence of women was evident in a programme designer's husband's defiance of their church's insistence that he forced her into submission. He subverted the patriarchy by using his patriarchal dividend as a tool to defy such oppressive Christian doctrines. His defiance of patriarchal Christian doctrines of that church encouraged his wife to continue her spiritual quest - a quest that culminated in her mission of working to assist male clients to self-regulate and self-transform in situations of sexual violence and IPA, which are rooted in unequal gender power relations.

- **The Ubuntu-feminist practice of tough love**

The practice of tough love as noted in Programme A became a salient theme and focal point to demonstrate that dysfunctional communication need not be abusive. The concept of tough love was promoted as central in sustaining and maintaining non-abusive relationships in the therapeutic environment and between male clients and their partners. The practice of tough love was evident when clients tried to derail their process of change and was applied without coercion

or shaming by implementers. It was regarded as an important element in assisting male clients to see the healing qualities of love in relation to restoring balance and harmony which had been distorted by unequal gender power dynamics in intimate relationships. Tough love included the assertion of moral agency and the cultivation of embedded Ubuntu / Bumuntu in the male clients. This practice is resonant with Ubuntu Feminism in that it contains the self-regulating elements of what it means to transcend harmful gender power dynamics to become more fully human (Du Plessis 2019; Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2011). Consistent with African understanding of becoming fully human, compassion is regarded as the essence of Ubuntu (Tutu, 2000) and Bumuntu (Nkulu-N'Sengha 2011) described in chapter 3. Compassion enables human beings in general, and Christians in particular - as evident in this study - to emulate Christ, which is the image of the invisible God within them according to Colossians 3:10-13. As participants cultivate compassion, they can access the image of God / the Divine within, thus enabling them to help recover the humanity of their male clients who are prepared to reach into compassion for themselves and the women they have victimized.

- **Personal Christian beliefs manifested in the implementation of certain intervention activities. The strategies employed are summarized as follows:**

Healing Un-equal Gender Power Relations through Singing of Religious Songs/Hymns as Sources of transforming power

The singing of Christian religious songs/hymns during intervention proceedings was a regular practice in most programmes as it helped build a sense of community. The use of music to assert or resist domination is consistent with the literature (Tonsing, 2017). Singing allows for the expression of thoughts, emotions and feelings which add meaning to life (Joseph et al, 2018). Specific familiar Christian songs asserted spiritual authority in certain spaces. In the context of the study, it situated itself to avert danger and/or as a cleansing ritual to drive out evil forces, in certain intervention spaces which is resonant with African traditional practices.

The invocation of Divine consciousness is not unusual in many African societies because humans are regarded as essentially spiritual beings. By raising collective consciousness through the singing of Christian religious songs, the male clients' consciousness to become more aware of the Divine, automatically causes them to tap into and connect with their individual and collective spiritual consciousness of other men in the intervention space. Religious songs were also

incorporated to acknowledge gratitude and invoke God's presence and blessing on the proceedings and in the gathering of the men, as described in the analysis chapters.

Similarly, prayer was a normative occurrence in one of the intervention programmes during certain activities. Prayers were also used to invite God's presence and blessing into the intervention activities or to accompany clients as they worked on their healing processes, beyond the programme activities. This invocation of Divine intervention points to a levelling of the playing fields among clients, and between clients and implementers as attention is drawn to the work of confronting harmful patriarchal beliefs in the messy work of healing unequal gender power relations. While prayer can be used to re-inscribe male headship and female submission, in the context of the study it was used to diffuse and deter it.

The use of religious buildings for some intervention activities also played a vital role in asserting God's presence and equalizing the humanity of all participants in that space. By implication the sacredness that the church building represented offered safety in some instances for experiences of IPA to be raised by women in the presence of the perpetrator; and for the witnessing community to help hold the man accountable for his abusive behaviour. The programme implementer utilized the sacredness of the space and the reverence/respect that clients have for it, to facilitate a degree of truth-telling that uncovered distortions about gender stereotypes. It affirmed the dignity of both the woman who was victimized, and the man who perpetrated the abuse, and the accountability space that the witnessing community held for them both.

The use of religious leaders (a pastor and an imam) as resources during intervention with male clients proved to be an effective strategy in several ways. Firstly, it demonstrated to the men that shared leadership between the female implementer and male clergy from different religions was possible and normative.

Secondly, the male clergy's patience, non-judgmental yet decisive approach to demystifying the misinterpreted religious beliefs used by some male clients to justify their abusive behaviour, brought enlightenment and advanced the gender reconciliation and healing process in the direction of deterring IPA. Thirdly, clients felt honoured and supported to have had these respected clergy take the time to sit with them to clarify misunderstood religious beliefs. Fourthly, the combination of spiritual and secular professional resources provided a unique opportunity for male clients to be spiritually vulnerable as they were able to admit to using scripture to justify their abusiveness towards their female partners.

The use of African Traditional Religious and Christian resources to dispel and/or transcend harmful gender stereotypes during intervention was evident in some instances where implementers helped some of their male clients to see that while their female partner is engaged in work outside of the home, their relationship could benefit from him assisting with household responsibilities. A rich resource was found in how these participants were able to marry biblical notions of gender roles with African proverbs to assist the men to see for themselves how distorted beliefs about gender roles are not only un-Christian but also un-African. Here participants invited male clients to reflect critically on gender stereotypical questions relating to why they felt inferior to their wives and its relation to notions of being the breadwinner/provider.

Another aspect that assisted the male clients to embrace their feelings as central in being human, was when female programme implementers encouraged them to talk about their feelings with their intimate partners. Such an approach is congruent with African feminism and Afrocentricity in that it advances the need for healing of both women and men, as well as the restoration of harmony and balance in the African family and community.

8.5. WHY CHRISTIAN BELIEFS PRESENTED IN THE WAYS THEY DID

Objective Three: To understand why Christian beliefs about gender relations shape the intervention programmes in the ways they do.

Two specific intersecting themes inform the reasons why Christian beliefs about gender power relations influence intervention strategies, namely, the personal is political and the intersectionality of the context.

- **'The Personal is Political'**

In some instances, participants' personal experiences of marriage, divorce and the role that the church played had a direct influence on their intervention approaches in various ways. For example, *a* participant exhibited immediate criticism when male clients attempted to distract from assuming responsibility and utilized religion as justification.

Her own experience of being ostracized and rejected by her church, offered a deeper sense of compassion as she managed the fragility of being an outsider that accentuates isolation and exclusion. These resonated nuances were captured during her intervention.

In addition, empathy as a critical aspect of confrontation was vital as participants insisted that clients assert their own agency. They affirmed that the creation in the image of God should be extended to men in the programme, and as such, seeds of ubuntu / bumuntu were embedded in these men. This compassionate confrontational approach is resonant of synergies between Afrocentricity and African feminist principles which recognize the traumatic experiences of oppression that women and men continue to seek healing from in the South African context.

Unlike concerns in some scholarship about the effectiveness of confrontational approaches as evident in some intervention programme research literature, participants in this study applied the approach as an expression of their Christian beliefs in men's ability to change and/or their ability to be spiritually born again, as evident in chapter 6.

Most participants did not allow male clients to use their shared history of oppression and subsequent democratic freedoms, together with misconstrued Christian beliefs about male headship and female submission, as excuses for abusive behaviour. Their shared history and the inherent complexities in the South African context offered a distinctive lens for acknowledging, accepting, and guiding their male clients into taking personal responsibility and accountability for their abusive behaviour. As shown in chapter 6, implementers enabled their clients to see for themselves how their patriarchal notions of male headship and female submission have been a disservice to themselves and their families. This was especially pointed out in cases where clients felt aggrieved by the current economic system that favours female employment whilst leaving men unemployed, thus making it less possible for men to fulfil their traditional roles as providers. Drawing on African cultural values of Ubuntu and Christian doctrines of mutual respect, love and notions of complementarity, participants guided the men to see the value of shared responsibility.

They incorporated principles of Ubuntu feminism which assert moral agency in the men, and which find resonance in implementers' Christian beliefs about love.

8.6. STUDY'S CONTRIBUTIONS

The study sought to understand how the Christian religiously pervasive post-apartheid context influenced "secular" intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. The study was particularly focused on examining whether and how intervention programmes' strategies and approaches influenced by religious beliefs deterred or entrenched the key signifiers of IPA, namely male supremacy and female submission.

The choice to locate the study in Afrocentricism was a hard but crucial ethical decision for me, and the journey was riddled with painful uncertainties and wondrous discoveries. Chukwuokolo (2010) rightly postulates that we are yet to fully understand the real impact of Eurocentricism:

> Africa has not remained the same since the rape of its continent by the West who pretended to be on a "civilizing mission". There was a total distortion of all the values of the African to the advantage of the West. For over two centuries now Africa is not certain as to the path of civilization to follow: Afrocentric or Eurocentric? (Chukwuokolo, 2010:24)

This same dilemma was observed as the intervention programmes, programme designers and implementers grappled with the extent to which to embrace religious-spiritual identities and African values, especially in some of the programmes which have been strongly influenced by Eurocentric models.

Located in Afrocentricism, the study was informed by African Feminist theories and ethics. It was found that cumulatively these theories - especially Ubuntu feminism, offer beacons of hope for the development of context-specific ways of engaging Christian beliefs systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners to advance culturally informed sustained change.

The presence and influence of Christianity and its intersections with African Traditional Religion together with religions such as Islam and Judaism was found to be a reality in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes. It is thus recommended that it be acknowledged and taken seriously in theorizing, discourse, policy development, training and praxis.

As observed in this investigation, there is a need to prioritize contextual insights/wisdom and indigenous knowledge in policy, training, and praxis in the construction and implementation of intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

8.7. FUTURE RESEARCH

There is a need for further uncovering the roots of the Christian-secular dichotomy in addressing men's violence against women and its implications for effective culturally informed intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. It is in this regard that I suggest the following for consideration for future research:

- More Afrocentric studies are needed to uncover potential resources available in religion and culture – this will go a long way in interrupting taken for granted predominantly western/Eurocentric approaches to addressing men's violence against women in South Africa.
- More research is needed to uncover, appraise, and amplify promising approaches to IPA interventions that are informed by religious and cultural resources as developed in praxis by programme implementers in South African GBV service providing organizations.
- Further research is needed to explore the relationship between the religious orientations of GBV organizations in "secular" African contexts and the lived experiences of victim-survivors that depend on its interventions to end IPA.
- Studies that focus on the persistent influence of Eurocentric approaches to change in relation to African communities' quest of finding lasting culturally informed solutions to the impact of IPA on intimate relationships and families.

8.8. CONCLUSION

In South Africa, the intersections of Christianity, white supremacy and patriarchy are crucial components in grappling with finding culturally informed solutions to the root causes of intimate partner abuse, as has been evident in this study.

Through an Afrocentric feminist lens, this inquiry critically engaged the claim of secularity in three Cape Town-based intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners. It attempted to understand the role and influence of Christian religious belief systems in addressing the key signifiers of IPA, namely male supremacy and female submission. The findings suggest that it is impossible (and potentially dangerous) to ignore Christian and other religious beliefs if such interventions take patriarchy seriously. Furthermore, it was established that the dynamic presence and influence of Christian religious belief systems is consistent with the African understanding that there is no separation between the sacred and the secular nor between religion and spirituality.

Reasons cited for the dissonance of integrating religion in intervention programmes were primarily: linked to concerns/fears of (a) its latent harmfulness towards other faiths, (b) its

potential use as justification or scapegoat, (c) imposed and internalized assumptions that implementers are not appropriately qualified to address issues of faith.

Once it was established that Christian religious belief systems were indeed pervasive, whether implicitly or explicitly, its influence in addressing the patriarchal fundamentals in IPA became the more compelling and urgent question. African developed resources such as Selvam's multidimensional religious-spirituality matrix together with the notion of Ubuntu feminism - embedded in African feminism, were found to be helpful academic tools to understand how intervention programmes engaged Christian religious belief systems to address the key signifiers of IPA, namely male supremacy, and female submission. The ways in which intervention programmes addressed these key signifiers of IPA were directly linked to personal experiences of racial, gender and religious oppression that shaped their religiousness/religiosity. Also mindful of the potential danger that some programme designers and implementers might use faith resources out of context because they are largely relying on their personal experiences, this investigation confirmed the need for intervention programmes to be equipped and resourced in life-affirming faith. This request was made on several occasions by participants and programme managers throughout the study.

The idea of religious maturity which is linked to Allport's notions of extrinsic or intrinsic use of religion, and Selvam's religious-spirituality matrix directly informed the outcomes of the intervention programme's strategies and approaches to working with their male clients and the key signifiers of IPA.

The study established that in most instances, programme designers and implementers tended to embody an intrinsic religious (or spiritual) orientation in their practice. This intrinsic practice of their faith tended to resemble Afrocentric values which resonated with Ubuntu feminism (an offshoot of African feminism). These qualities enabled them to uncover, confront and challenge some male clients' extrinsic use of religion that threatens the dignity of those clients, and by implication the women they are partnered with. The practice of Ubuntu feminist values through an Afrocentric worldview was found to confront the dehumanizing outcomes of white-supremacist patriarchal practices evident in some organizations where these intervention programmes emanated from. Disregarding the Divine and its life-affirming quality in the humanity of their male clients is not only implausible in African communities, but it also does a grave disservice to both victim-survivors and perpetrators.

This study concludes that an Afrocentric ubuntu feminist engagement of the Divine and Christian belief systems operating in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners are essential for finding life-affirming solutions for men's oppression of women in South Africa. For organizations and their related intervention programmes in culturally rich and religiously pervasive contexts as South Africa to ignore the Divine is not only potentially fatal for victim-survivors and perpetrators, but it potentially reifies harmful Eurocentric strategies that keep intact a universalized white-supremacist patriarchal order of things. This study encourages intervention programmes to harness faith resources and to equip programme designers and implementers in drawing on faith and culture as potential resources in addressing men's violence against women in intimate relationships.

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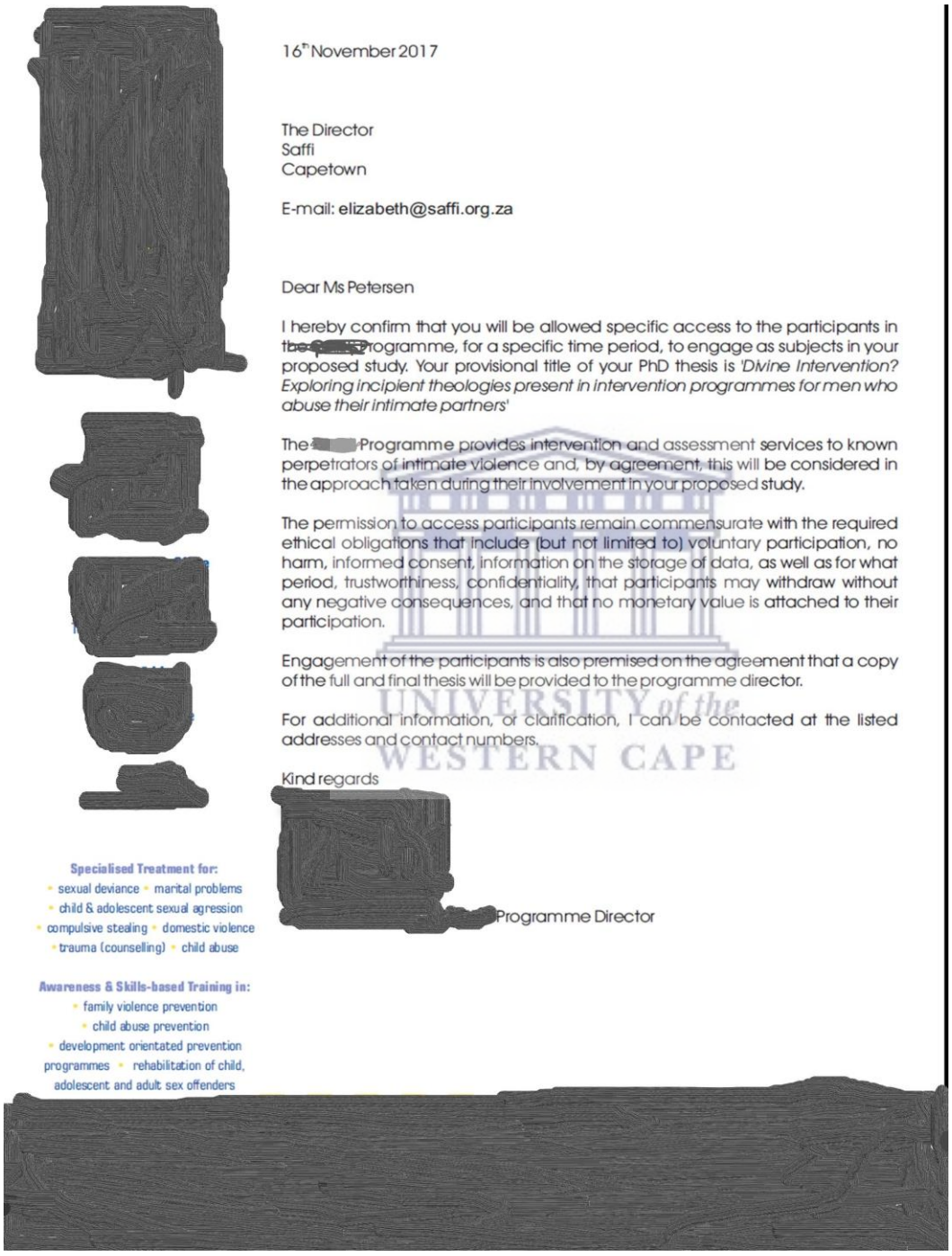
10. APPENDICES

- **3 x Permission letters from participating organizations**



16th November 2017

The Director
Saffi
Capetown

E-mail: elizabeth@saffi.org.za

Dear Ms Petersen

I hereby confirm that you will be allowed specific access to the participants in the [redacted] programme, for a specific time period, to engage as subjects in your proposed study. Your provisional title of your PhD thesis is *'Divine Intervention? Exploring incipient theologies present in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners'*

The [redacted] Programme provides intervention and assessment services to known perpetrators of intimate violence and, by agreement, this will be considered in the approach taken during their involvement in your proposed study.

The permission to access participants remain commensurate with the required ethical obligations that include (but not limited to) voluntary participation, no harm, informed consent, information on the storage of data, as well as for what period, trustworthiness, confidentiality, that participants may withdraw without any negative consequences, and that no monetary value is attached to their participation.

Engagement of the participants is also premised on the agreement that a copy of the full and final thesis will be provided to the programme director.

For additional information, or clarification, I can be contacted at the listed addresses and contact numbers.

Kind regards

Programme Director

Specialised Treatment for:
• sexual deviance • marital problems
• child & adolescent sexual agression
• compulsive stealing • domestic violence
• trauma (counselling) • child abuse

Awareness & Skills-based Training in:
• family violence prevention
• child abuse prevention
• development orientated prevention programmes • rehabilitation of child, adolescent and adult sex offenders

[redacted]

[redacted]

03 October 2017

REF: Letter of support

Dear Elisabeth Petersen

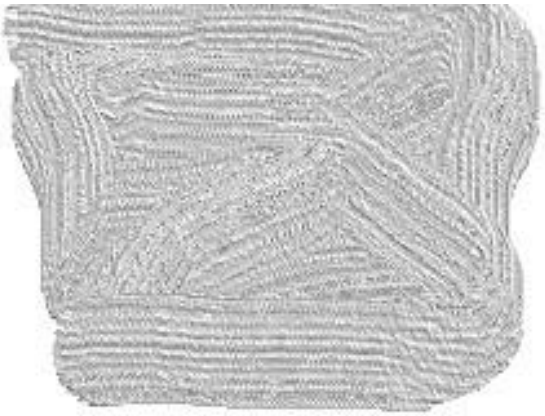
This letter serves to confirm our support and availability to participate in your study titled "Divine Intervention? Understanding the role of religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners"

We believe the study will contribute immensely towards addressing issues of masculinity, the role religion plays in both inspiring and addressing issues of Intimate partner violence and gender based violence in general.

For additional support, please contact me on the details below.

[redacted]

[redacted]



15 November 2017

Dear Elizabeth Petersen,

Thank you for your request for [redacted] to participate in your PHD study, entitled, *"Divine intervention? Exploring incipient theologies present in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners"*.

This letter serves to confirm [redacted] permission, support and availability to allow our staff to participate in your study. We are more than happy to grant you permission to interview the programme founders, programme staff, and to observe and sit in on our group programmes, on the understanding that individuals' identities will be protected and no cost incurred by [redacted]. We are also able to share the content of the programme, if you need it, provided these are not replicated without permission.

We believe the study will contribute immensely towards addressing issues of intimate partner abuse, particularly about the role of religion pertaining to intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.

Please let [redacted], our Area Manager in the Western Cape, know your requirements, and she would be happy to oblige with whatever you may need. For additional support, please contact me on the details in this letter. We wish you well with your study, and ask that you please share your findings with us.

Warm regards

.....

- **4 x Research Participant Consent Forms**

Research Participant Consent Form for Intervention Programmes

University of the Western Cape

Title: ***Divine Interventions? Understanding the role of Christian religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.***

Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (If I wish to withdraw I may contact the lead researcher at anytime) ☐
3. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result for the research. ☐
4. As a group member or participant in the intervention programme, I will not discuss or divulge information shared by others in the group, or the researcher, outside of this group. ☐
5. I agree to have the interview or group discussion audio-recorded. ☐
6. I do not want the interview or my group participation audio-recorded ☐
7. I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research. ☐
8. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

Name of Participant (*or legal representative*)	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent (*If different from lead researcher*)	Date	Signature
Lead Researcher (*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*)	Date	Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

Researcher:
Elizabeth Petersen
Tel: 021 462 2277
Cell: 082 475 5116
Email:
elizabethpetersen1@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Professor Sarojini Nadar
Tel: 021 959 2206
Email: snadar@uwc.ac.za

Co-Supervisor:
Dr Johnathan Jodamus
Tel:021 959 2629
Email: jjodamus@uwc.ac.za

HOD:
Dr John Klaasen
Dept. of Religion & Theology
Faculty of Arts, UWC
Tel: 021 959 2206 / 3537
Fax: 021 959 1313
Email: jsklaasen@uwc.ac.za

Research Office: (021) 959 4111
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Research Participant Consent Form for Programme Clients

University of the Western Cape

Title: ***Divine Interventions? Understanding the role of Christian religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.***

Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐
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Research Participant Consent Form for Programme Designers

University of the Western Cape

Title: ***Divine Interventions? Understanding the role of Christian religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.***

Researcher:

Please initial box

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Research Participant Consent Form for Programme Implementers

University of the Western Cape

Title: ***Divine Interventions? Understanding the role of Christian religious belief systems in intervention programmes for men who abuse their intimate partners.***

Researcher:

Please initial box

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- **Research Interview Schedule**

Research Interview Schedule

Interviews with programme designers and programme implementers:

Introductory question themes: Tell me a bit about yourself? Where you grew up and your family? (Probe when participant became aware of gender differences if at all; how gender was experienced in household). What was your parents' religious background? How was religion observed in your home? Can you tell me about your training and career journey? How did you get involved in the work that you do? Why is this work important to you?

Exploring understandings and perceptions about IPA: How would you define and describe the root causes of IPA? What is your theory of change in relation to working with men who abuse their intimate partners? What is your vision for the men with whom you work? How do you see this vision come to fruition? Who are the role players in bringing about the change that you want to see in the men? Does faith or religion have any role or place in your vision? Why and How?

Explore participants' experiences of when men have drawn on Christian beliefs during programme activities: How does Christian beliefs or expressions present in your programme? What are some of these beliefs and expressions? How do you respond personally and professionally?

Opportunities From your personal and professional standpoint, how and why would you (if at all) draw on Christian religious beliefs as a potential resource to bring about change?