

**White men's talk about gender-based violence in South Africa: A thematic narrative analysis of  
the stories told about race, class, and gender**

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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### **Abstract**

Gender-based violence (GBV) research in South Africa has been critiqued for producing and perpetuating trauma-saturated narratives that situate gendered violence in poor black individuals, families, and communities (Boonzaier, 2017, 2018; Boonzaier et al., 2020). Young, black, working class men, in particular, have come to be conflated with sexual violence, while white, financially privileged men remain noticeably absent from the literature (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016). In this way, research about GBV in South Africa has become implicitly racialized (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). As a response to this gap, and with the intention of disrupting racialised knowledge production about GBV, this dissertation explores and critically analyses white men's narratives about GBV in South Africa. This study was theoretically guided by decolonial feminist theory and narrative theory, and a combination of purposive and snowball sampling via social media was utilised to recruit participants. In total, 12 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with white South African men. The individual interviews were analysed using a thematic narrative lens. Three dominant thematic narrative groupings emerged from the data: Narratives of gendered violence, masculinity narratives, and narratives of men's trauma. The narratives speak to how white men position themselves in relation to gendered violence in South Africa and the raced and classed distancing tactics that they employ to achieve this. This analysis provides a more nuanced and detailed understanding of how narratives of race, class, and gender interact with understandings of GBV. Such information could inform future GBV prevention and intervention work by highlighting novel areas of focus.

**Keywords:** *Gender-based violence, South Africa, masculinities, narrative research, decolonial feminism, white men*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been recognized as a pervasive problem in South Africa since the turn of democracy (Abrahams, Mathews, Martin, Lombard, & Jewkes, 2013; Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka, & Loxton, 2019; Muluneh, Francis, Agho, & Stulz, 2021; Nduna & Nene, 2014). Within the last three decades, awareness campaigns, legislation amendments, activism, and research have sought to address South Africa's exceptionally high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) (Boonzaier, Huysamen, & van Niekerk, 2020; Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2020; Meyiwa, Williamson, Maseti, & Ntabanyane, 2017). Furthermore, over the last two years, GBV has received increased attention within the South African public arena, due to the widespread media coverage of the murders of Karabo Mokoena and Uyinene Mrwetyana in 2019, as well as the surge in GBV reports during South Africa's COVID-19 lockdown period (Dlamini, 2020; Joska et al., 2020). Yet despite ongoing prevention efforts and increased public attention, GBV continues to be a major threat to the lives and well-being of girls, women, and gender-diverse persons. For example, almost one in three men in South Africa admit to having raped a woman or girl (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009) and a woman in South Africa is more likely to die due to violence from her male partner than by any other means (Abrahams et al., 2013). Not only does GBV create great distress for individuals, but it also has far-reaching consequences for families, and communities (Beyene et al., 2019; Decker et al., 2014). While there is an emerging body of work exploring violence in same-gender relationships, most research centers on men's perpetration of violence against women partners in mixed-gender relationships and until recently most GBV research assumed that both partners are cisgender (Gibbs et al., 2020).

### **GBV prevalence**

The prevalence of GBV in South Africa has frequently been referred to as an 'epidemic' in research and public media (Rollston et al., 2020) and since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, GBV has been referred to as South Africa's 'shadow, twin, silent, parallel epidemic' (Nduna & Tshona, 2021, p. 352). To illustrate the extent of the problem, I present some statistics in the next paragraph.

It is estimated that 20-25% of South African women will experience violence from a partner during the course of their lifetime (Selin et al., 2019). Additionally, within a year, 25-35% women

who are pregnant are estimated to experience sexual or physical violence from an intimate partner (Groves, Kagee, Maman, Moodley, & Rouse, 2012; Hoque, Hoque, & Kader, 2009) and IPV accounts for most of the femicides in South Africa (Abrahams et al., 2013). The disparity between the volume of GBV prevention/intervention work and the lack of observable change, points to the need to think differently about research on GBV in South Africa. Part of this thinking differently involves critiquing the conceptualisations of gendered violence<sup>1</sup>. In the following section I outline some of the ways that GBV in South Africa has been theorized about, and the understanding of GBV that was used for this dissertation.

### **Conceptualising gendered violence**

Broadly speaking, ‘gender-based violence’ is an overarching term that demonstrates how gender spans a spectrum of violence(s) (e.g. sexual harassment, rape, intimate partner violence, homophobic violence, femicide, and the rape of men during conflict and in prisons) while still distinguishing between the different forms that the violence takes (Boyle, 2019). However, dominant conceptualisations of GBV have been critiqued for perpetuating the idea that GBV only affects cisgender, heterosexual women, as well as the false dichotomy of women as only victims and men as only perpetrators (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). In response to this, Bennett (2001) proffers that violence can be deemed ‘gender-based’ when the being gendered as a “man” or a “woman” has bearing on the existence and form of the violence. While GBV takes multiple forms, what the violence/s have in common is the “fuel of gender relations” (p. 2). Such an analysis takes us beyond the idea of ‘women as vulnerable to men/men as violent’ and instead suggests that both men and women are vulnerable through the ways in which hegemonic gender relations are at work within their contexts. This creates space for men to be seen as potential victims of GBV, while simultaneously acknowledging that the social system of patriarchy creates stark gendered patterns of victimisation and perpetration (Boyle, 2019). Thus, most (but not all) GBV is violence against women, and most (but not all) violence against women is gender-based (Boyle, 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> I use the terms ‘gender-based violence’ (GBV) and ‘gendered violence’ interchangeably in this dissertation.

Anderson (2005, 2009) adds to this by drawing on gender systems theory and proposing a framework of gender as: identity, interaction, and structure. Such a framework allows for the specific drivers of different forms of GBV to be identified in various spheres of society. For example, understanding gender as identity acknowledges that individuals are socialised to classify themselves - and others - as either male or female, and that such classifications are associated with particular traits and roles (Anderson, 2009). Understanding gender as a system acknowledges that patterns of behaviour at the interpersonal level are shaped by dominant cultural ideas about gender (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Lastly, understanding gender as social structure acknowledges that culturally constructed hegemonic gender norms organise and shape institutions, systems and practices (Raewyn W Connell, 1987; R. W. Connell & James, 2005; Risman, 2004).

Taking the above conceptualisations of GBV into account, this study employed an understanding of GBV as violence that is fueled by hegemonic gender relations (Bennett, 2001) and thus creates gendered patterns of victimisation and perpetration (Boyle, 2019). This violence is understood as existing within various facets of society such as identity, interaction, and structure (Anderson, 2005, 2009) and is influenced by intersecting factors such as race, class, sexuality, and nationality (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). This understanding of GBV invited a comprehensive analysis of the issue, one that included women, men, and gender-diverse persons, while still acknowledging the ways GBV disproportionately affects women.

However, what is lacking from these theories, is engagement with the ways in which other identity axes, such as race and class, are involved in the construction of identity, interaction, and structure (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). Ideas about gender are always racialised and classed, as evidenced by the patterns that have emerged within the knowledge produced about GBV in South Africa (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). For example, white middle-class persons remain mostly invisible in the literature about gendered violence and when gendered violence in white middle-class households is explored, it is often framed as individual flaws or pathology (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). Contrastingly, poor black communities are over-represented in the literature about gendered violence in South Africa and the issue is more often positioned as the result of problematic “culture” (Boonzaier, 2018; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Kim & Motsei, 2002). An intersectional approach is thus necessary to avoid one-

dimensional theorising and to strengthen insights into the ways which race, class and sexuality co-construct gender in the spheres of identity, interaction, and social structure (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020).

### **Research Aims and Overview**

This dissertation forms part of a broader research project that aims to unsettle knowledge production on gendered and sexual violence in South Africa. Therefore, this dissertation is situated within the same theoretical and political orientation. My aim for this research was to disrupt the implicit racialisation of the literature in this area by focusing on white masculinities and gendered violence. Within this, I also sought to add to our understandings of GBV in South Africa by using a decolonial feminist framework which allowed me to pay close attention to raced and classed ways of speaking. In this way, the project aims to trouble the acceptance of the discursive invisibility and neutrality of white men in relation to GBV.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter presents a review of the current literature regarding gendered violence in South Africa. I first outline and discuss the three different periods of GBV research in South Africa. Secondly, I consider the main critiques about this research, as well as the gaps that these point to. Thirdly, I discuss in detail the way that GBV knowledge production has become implicitly racialised and the outcomes of this racialisation. I end the chapter by outlining how the present literature positions GBV as a problem exclusive to poor black men and discursively erases white men's violence, and how this creates an opportunity for incorporating "privileged patriarchies" (Suttner, 2009) into GBV research.

### **Gender-based violence research in South Africa**

Knowledge production about gender-based violence in South Africa has had two main 'waves' (Boonzaier, 2018). The first wave, which roughly spans the first decade after democracy, sought to understand apartheid's role in shaping South Africa as a violent society and the normalisation of gendered violence. Within this research, GBV was understood to emanate from South Africa's broader 'culture of violence' which had developed from the physical and psychological violence wrought by the apartheid state and colonialism (Boonzaier, 2018). This period of research also saw the development of the emasculation narrative. Herein, men's violence against women is understood as a response to their perceived loss of power due to women gaining social and political rights post-apartheid (Boonzaier, 2018). This was the catalyst for further interrogation into the relationship between masculinities and violence (Ratele, 2008).

The second wave, which roughly spans the second decade after democracy, used a public health lens to identify risk factors for perpetration and victimisation (Boonzaier, 2018). This public health approach is argued to have been part of the global response to HIV/AIDS (Shefer, 2016). Within this era, there was a focus on understanding the connections between gendered violence and HIV, pregnancy, and mental health (Dunkle et al., 2004; Karim & Baxter, 2016). Inherent to this type of research is the idea of 'risk' and identifying those 'at risk' for perpetration and victimisation (Boonzaier, 2018). Therefore, much research in this era focused on understanding risk factors. The main risk factors identified for victimisation are living in poverty, low level of education, being

pregnant, lack of economic independence, experiencing or witnessing abuse in childhood, harmful substance use, and having a partner that uses substances harmfully (Mason-Jones et al., 2016). Risk factors for perpetration have been identified as having multiple, concurrent sexual partners; harmful substance use; history of abuse; inequitable gender beliefs and control; poverty, and having a low level of education (Hatcher, Colvin, Ndlovu, & Dworkin, 2014; Machisa, Christofides, & Jewkes, 2017). Other research during this period foregrounded how masculinity and violence are relationally constructed (Boonzaier, 2008; Lau & Stevens, 2012; Matzopoulos, Bowman, Butchart, & Mercy, 2008; Ragnarsson, Townsend, Thorson, Chopra, & Ekström, 2009). However, through such research, certain categories of people have come to be seen as inherently 'risky' (van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2016). Thus, scholars have argued that such 'risks' and violence perpetration cannot be read outside of the contexts that perpetrators are embedded in: relationships, communities, society at large (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2016). This shall be discussed further in the next section.

In the current moment, we have a decent understanding of the role of colonialism, patriarchy, and apartheid in shaping South Africa's GBV problem (Boonzaier, 2017, 2018). Patterns of victimisation and perpetration have also been reliably identified (Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman, & Laubscher, 2004; Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher, & Hoffman, 2006; Abrahams et al., 2009; Abrahams et al., 2013). Additionally, the work around masculinities and violence has helped us understand how violence is deeply entangled in various constructions of masculinity (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015; Ruspini, 2011; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Ratele, 2008). However, there remain noteworthy gaps in the literature (Boonzaier, 2018; Gottzén, Bjørnholt, & Boonzaier, 2021; Shefer, 2016). Boonzaier et al. (2021) identify two areas that warrant more attention. Firstly, research and theorising about men's violence within intimate heterosexual relationships is underdeveloped when compared to other research about men's violence. Secondly, the contexts of coloniality, capitalism, white supremacy, neoliberalism, inequality, and globalisation must be engaged with when producing knowledge about masculinities in the global South. This dissertation speaks to both areas, and this will be explained further in the section to come where I outline the main critiques of GBV research in South Africa.

### **Critiques of GBV knowledge production**

A central critique of mainstream research about gendered violence is the way that women are represented in the literature (Amisi, Vanyoro, Archibald, Gould, & Mulondo, 2021; Boonzaier, 2017, 2018; Boonzaier et al., 2020; Boonzaier & van Niekerk, 2019, 2020; Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2018). Within academic texts, women are constructed as constantly vulnerable to violence across diverse contexts. Not only does this frame experiences of violence in a woman's lifetime as inevitable and normal, but it also suggests that there is something inherently 'at risk' about womanhood in South Africa (Boonzaier, 2018; Boonzaier et al., 2020). This narrative stems from a broader academic discourse where groups who are oppressed are (re) presented as 'the problem' (Boonzaier et al., 2020).

Other scholars have also offered reflexive critique on GBV knowledge production. For example, in a recent policy brief, Amisi et al. (2021) outlined an analysis they had conducted that explored at how 57 research papers represented violence against women and children. The findings showed that there were multiple different terms used to describe gendered violence and that there were used interchangeably throughout the literature. Additionally, there was little description of what each term meant and limited explanation of the differences between terms. Amisi et al. (2021) also noted that most of the papers foregrounded physical violence and that emotional, psychological, and verbal violence were not given as much attention. The interventions discussed in the papers reviewed mainly worked with risk factors at the individual and relational level, and the structural drivers of violence and societal risk factors were not considered. Furthermore, and adjacent to this issue, is the finding that the intertwining of racism, trauma, structural violence, coloniality, and physical violence have not been sufficiently interrogated or theorised about in relation to South Africa's GBV crisis.

Lastly, research about GBV in South Africa has been critiqued for producing and perpetuating trauma-centred narratives that locate GBV in poor black individuals, families, and communities (Boonzaier, 2017; Boonzaier et al., 2020; T. Shefer, 2016). Such narratives obfuscate the broader contexts of violence that exist within post-apartheid, postcolonial South Africa (Boonzaier, 2018). This will be discussed in detail below.

### **The racialisation of GBV research**

Although most research articles begin by stating that GBV exists across socio-economic status, race, age and religion, researchers working from decolonial, intersectional, and critical stances, have highlighted the skewed attention on poor black communities (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2017 & 2018; Buiten & Naidoo, 2016 & 2020; Helman & Ratele, 2016; Judge, 2017; Kramer, 2017; Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2020). This implicit racialisation of the research takes place through two mechanisms: research sampling, and the risk profiles constructed from the research (Boonzaier, 2018).

Numerous papers have highlighted how sample groups for GBV research mostly consist of black participants – particularly young black men - from rural or peri-urban areas (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2018; Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). This is problematic because it creates the false perception that gendered violence only exists in such spaces (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2018; Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). In this way, black people and communities come to be seen as inherently more violent than others and thus are positioned as ‘the problem’. Such a positioning conceals the historical, political, social, and structural factors that contribute to gendered violence, thereby feeding raced and classed stereotypes about what it means to be black in South Africa (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2018).

The risk factors that emerge from GBV research in SA converge to construct poor black men as most likely to be perpetrators and poor black women as most likely to be victims (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2018; Buiten & Naidoo, 2016 & 2020; Van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2020). For example, in their analysis of how rape is framed within South African scholarship about rape, Buiten and Naidoo (2016) show how black, working-class men have come to be conflated with sexual violence. Living in poverty is frequently listed as a risk for violence and this provides the motivation for locating research studies within these communities. However, other poor communities are not equally represented in the literature.

White, financially privileged men also remain noticeably absent from most research about GBV in South Africa: “There is a dearth of research on privileged groups of men in South Africa, including their roles in both rape and rape culture” (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016, p. 543). Because of this,

violence perpetrated by white men is treated as exceptional, whereas violence perpetrated by black men is seen to be normal and is even expected (Amisi et al., 2021). This entrenches colonial ideas about black male violence (Moffett, 2006; Suttner, 2009) and comes to shape how society (e.g. neighbourhood watch members, security guards, suburb social media groups) see and treat black men (Amisi et al., 2021). The outcome of this is that racial identity itself comes to be seen as a risk factor for violence (Boonzaier, 2018). In this way, research about GBV in South Africa has become implicitly racialized (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). This highlights the need for including “privileged patriarchies” (Suttner, 2009) in the research about GBV in South Africa.

### **Rationale and aims**

The above review outlines the way that GBV in South Africa has been attended to in the academic literature and shows that the narratives evident in this work frame perpetration of gendered violence as a problem inherent (only) to poor, black men, and communities. The way that phenomena are discussed in academic literature has implications for the way that these phenomena come to be understood in the world (Amisi et al., 2021; Boonzaier, 2018). The choice of what to study, how and where to study it, and what to report all shape conceptualisations of the social world. It is thus imperative that GBV research starts to include white, financially privileged men (Boonzaier, 2018; Gqola, 2007, 2015). Therefore, this project sought to foreground “privileged patriarchies” within research about GBV in South Africa, and in doing so resist the racialisation of the work. Following several scholars (Rosenblatt, 2013; Shore & Wright, 2003) who have investigated the strategies employed by persons of privilege to reproduce themselves, I suggest that by exploring white men’s talk about GBV, and asking questions about how they position themselves in relation to it, we can begin to understand the mechanisms through which white men perpetuate their position of power and show that that position is neither normal, natural nor necessary. This project also aimed to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how race and class interact with understandings of GBV. To this end, this project explored and critically analysed white men’s narratives on GBV in South Africa to understand how white men perform, construct, and negotiate identities of race, gender, and class through this talk.

## Questions

Considering the above aims, the central question that this study sought to answer was, ‘What narratives do white men draw on when talking about gender-based violence in South Africa?’ The following sub-questions allowed me to explore specific aspects relating to white men and GBV.

1. How do white men construct and negotiate their (masculine) identities through their talk on gender-based violence?
2. How do dominant narratives of heterosex(uality) and masculinity shape white men’s understandings of gender-based violence?
3. How do dominant narratives of race and class shape white men’s understandings of gender-based violence?
4. How do white men resist or subvert dominant narratives of gender, sexuality, race, and class through their talk of gender-based violence?

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical lenses**

To facilitate a nuanced understanding of GBV in South Africa, I situated this research within the broad theoretical realm of feminist post-structuralism. More specifically, I drew on decolonial feminism and narrative theory as the theoretical anchors for this project.

Post-structuralism can be understood as an umbrella term for critiques aimed at hegemonic understandings of knowledge and knowledge production (Tamara Shefer, Boonzaier, & Kiguwa, 2006) Within this framework, the idea of an absolute truth is rejected, and instead, knowledge is understood as socially, historically, and politically constituted and rooted in power relations (Gavey, 1997). Feminist post-structuralism makes use of such theorising to analyse dominant gendered power relations, as well as to identify resistances (Weedon, 1987). Below, I outline the main features of decolonial feminism and narrative theory and explain how I made use of these.

#### **Decolonial feminism**

##### **The need for a decolonial approach in psychology**

The ‘decolonial turn’ within psychology has emerged as a response to “the symbolic and material types of violence of the discipline” (Boonzaier et al.) (2019) (pg. 58). Within the modern era, psychology has played a central role in constructing and circulating ideas around psychological ‘normality’ and how to rectify ‘abnormality’ (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018; Tamara Shefer et al., 2006). Thus, indirectly serving as a way of regulating behaviour and identity. As such, scholars have pointed to the ways that psychology works to uphold those in power and further marginalises oppressed groups by re/producing narratives of dysfunction and trauma (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Psychology can therefore be considered a knowledge form produced by the settler-colonial system (Boonzaier et al.; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). A decolonial feminist approach recognises that racialised, classed, and gendered oppression is produced between people, but also influenced by the broader context of coloniality (María Lugones, 2007). Decolonial feminism therefore works to illuminate the enduring coloniality of contemporary psychology and how the constructs of race, gender, class, nationality, location, etc. continue to be imbued with this coloniality. Such a framework allowed me to analyse the enduring hangover of coloniality and how this influences contemporary racialised, classed and gendered understandings of the social world.

### **A different point of departure: The coloniality of gender**

Decolonial feminism critiques the departure point of most other feminisms – the gender difference – and instead departs from the colonial difference (María Lugones, 2010). In doing so, Lugones (2007; 2010) theorises that the concept of ‘gender’ is itself a colonial imposition and thus contemporary ideas about gender cannot be divorced from their colonial origins. Lugones (2007; 2010) argues that the first project of colonialism was to impose a “hierarchical, dichotomous distinction between human and non-human” (i.e., the colonial difference) (pg. 743) and that other “hierarchical, dichotomous” distinctions – such as the difference between women and men – are predicated on this initial differentiation. Thus, to be called ‘a man’ or ‘a woman’ was to acknowledge another’s *humanness* and civility. Within this enforced framework,

“the bourgeois white Europeans were civilized; they were fully human. The hierarchical dichotomy as a mark of the human also became a normative tool to damn the colonized. The behaviours of the colonised and their personalities/souls were judged as bestial and thus non-gendered, promiscuous, grotesquely sexual, and sinful” (pg. 743).

Lugones (2010) therefore argues that central to colonialism’s logic of oppression is the dehumanisation of the colonised. This was achieved through systemic classification of being labelled “less than human beings” (pg. 745). In this way, the modern gender classification (i.e., the categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’) system cannot be read outside of the broader dehumanisation of coloniality.

### **Opportunities for resistance**

A decolonial feminist lens also created opportunities for resistance. Lugones (2010) suggests that decolonial feminist work can assist us in seeing “what is hidden from our understandings of both race and gender” (pg. 742) due to the invisibility and erasure of coloniality. Thus, decolonial feminist research should firmly be grounded in lived experience. It is here that we can find daily resistances to the colonial difference: within our complex, dynamic, and entangled social lives (Lugones, 2010).

A decolonial feminist framework emphasises the ways in which constructs like gender, class and race are entangled, and the importance of bringing these intersectionalities to the fore in

psychological work (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Such a theoretical stance was important for this project because, while much psychological work has highlighted the role of colonisation, slavery, and apartheid in present South Africa, the “impact of these histories on contemporary ways of being and relating have not been sufficiently engaged with” (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018, pg. 305). This theoretical framework thus allowed me to explore, in a more nuanced way, how such traumatic histories are still implicated in the persistence and prevalence of gendered violence in South Africa (Kess & Boonzaier, 2018). This lens allowed me to highlight and analyse the ways in which coloniality persists in narratives about GBV and how its “categorical, dichotomous, hierarchical logic” (pg. 742) continues to underly modern understandings of race, gender, and class. Additionally, this framework assisted in highlighting how oppressive power is produced and perpetuated by/through the knowledge produced by the discipline of psychology (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018). Lastly, a decolonial feminist approach centres the production of psychological knowledge that is situated in and relevant to the South African context. Despite this theoretical orientation, my dissertation still relies heavily on colonial ideas of ‘gender’ but given the entrenchment of these in modernity it is difficult to work ‘outside of gender’.

### **Narrative theory**

The term ‘narrative’ has slightly different meanings across disciplines, but this dissertation makes use of a comprehensive understanding of the term. Within this conceptualisation, ‘narratives’ are understood as stories, in different spheres of meaning, that intersect and overlap with each other (Riessman, 2008). The various spheres of meaning may be interpretive accounts developed by the researcher/s; narratives told by participants, or fieldwork observations. Such an understanding also incorporates the meta-narrative that has been created through me writing this dissertation.

Narrative theory allows us to explore identity, subjectivity, and lived experiences through the stories that individuals and communities tell about their lives and themselves (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). The main concept is that narratives can assist in accessing how people perceive their social worlds and experiences and that aspects of identity are reflected in the stories that people tell about themselves and their lives (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Lastly, narrative research highlights the context within which the story was told, and how this influenced the telling (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

(Segalo, 2011, 2016) outlines how the telling of personal narratives gives individuals an opportunity to give a sense of order and consistency to events that were traumatising or incomprehensible at the time, and for these happenings to be given meanings and incorporated into identities. This allows people to represent themselves in ways that potentially healing and liberating. The telling and retelling of stories about one's life gives space for the enactment of varied identities and/or subject positions within these. This foregrounds the connection between identity, performance and narrative. Therefore, narrative can be understood as "the performance of the self as a story of identity" (Parker, 2004). Narrative theory understands the stories that we tell as socially and culturally created, rather than reflections of an external reality (Crossley, 2000). Riessman (2008) posits that one of the core functions of stories is the creation of identity and selfhood. Performative narrative analysis in particular focuses, not only on the story being told, but also on who the story is being told to (Riessman, 2008). Paying attention to narratives in the context of GBV research is important because they tell us something about how GBV has been chosen to be understood and who is viewed as a victim and who is viewed as a perpetrator.

## Chapter 4: Methods

### Study design: A narrative approach

This study was situated within the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research in general is concerned with describing and understanding peoples' experiences of phenomena, and the subjective meanings that these hold (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research also focuses on how an individual's interpretation of events is influenced by the context within which such events take place (Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). It also allows for iteration and flexibility within the methodology, as qualitative research often involves people in real-life contexts that are ever-changing and complex (Willig, 2013). Lastly, through reflexivity, qualitative research highlights the role of the researcher in research process and explores how their identity intersects with the results and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

This study utilised a narrative approach which falls under the broader poststructuralist framework (Crossley, 2000). The term 'narrative' can be understood in multiple ways, yet definitions of 'narrative' from the global north have dominated narrative research thus far (Fraser, 2004; Kohler Riessman, 2000; Smith, 2000). These conceptualisations describe a narrative as having a clear beginning, middle and end, as well as being chronologically ordered and temporal (Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2000). However, many narratives do not fit this description. For example, narratives of non-western, collectivist cultures which may be non-linear or episodic (Riessman, 2000) and the narratives of trauma survivors may be disorganized, chaotic, and missing information (Crossley, 2000; Herman, 2015). Regardless of the form that a narrative takes, it has been argued that the core feature that separates narratives from other forms of communication, is contingency of events (Crossley, 2000; Riessman, 2008). Meaning that, in the recounting of a narrative the speaker selects, relates, and performs the occurrence of a particular set of events, which are in some way consequential to one another, in order to convey a message to an audience (Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, within a narrative approach, the self is understood as constituted through the language and linguistic devices which are available to individuals in their daily lives (Crossley, 2000). There is thus less emphasis on the self as an entity, and rather the focus is on exploring how the self is talked about and therefore constructed (Crossley, 2000). In other words, narratives are functional and strategic, and are a way to

construct the self. This is the understanding of narrative that this research dissertation used. Such an approach allowed me to analyse which stories participants chose to tell about GBV in South Africa, as well as how they portrayed these stories, and how their masculine identities were constructed through them.

### **Sample and recruitment strategy**

#### **Sample**

In keeping with this project's aim of foregrounding "privileged patriarchies" within GBV research in South Africa, I recruited white South African men as interview participants. To be eligible for the study, participants needed to be South African citizens, 18 years of age or older, and identify as a white man. I chose to include only South African men in this study given that this research problem is specific to the South African context. Given that this project is not specifically interested in boys' or adolescents' narratives about GBV, I only interviewed adult men. An 'adult' according to the South African Children's Act is anyone who is 18 years or older. I chose to leave the meaning of 'white man' loosely defined to avoid reinforcing essentialising discourses of race and gender. Additionally, sexually and gender-diverse men do not exist outside of the broader patriarchal systems that allow for South Africa's GBV problem, and thus their talk on GBV would be equally relevant in this study as that of cisgender, heterosexual men. Following this rationale, any individual who self-identified as a white man was eligible for this study.

#### **Recruitment strategy**

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, whereby participants were selected because they met a set of predefined criteria (Wilson & MacLean, 2011). This is a type of non-probability sampling because selection is not determined through randomness. Qualitative research makes use of non-probability sampling because it is mostly not concerned with generalising to a larger population. Rather, it seeks to explain in detail a group's experience of a particular phenomenon at a certain point in time and within a particular context. This recruitment strategy thus aligned with the theoretical stance of this study.

Given my identity and positioning as a white, tertiary-educated woman in Cape Town, South Africa, I have access to a substantial population of white men through my social networks. I therefore

decided to capitalise on my ‘insider status’ to facilitate the recruitment process. I shared the call for participation (see Appendix A) with people of all genders in my social networks via social media, WhatsApp, and email.

I took a transparent approach to the call for participation to explain the rationale behind the study and thus introduce the interview as a collaborative space. Participants who were interested in the project were invited to contact me via email. The details of the interview were then discussed and confirmed. In accordance with established qualitative research protocols, recruitment ceased when information redundancy was reached (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Participants were not offered any kind of compensation for their time. Thus, all participants who agreed to be interviewed, did so due to their own motivations. These motivations will be explored to some extent in the discussion section.

### **Participants**

The final group of participants consisted of 12 self-identifying white men between the ages of 24-52. Most participants were born elsewhere in South Africa but were now residing in Cape Town. The majority of the men had tertiary qualifications and one man had a Matric certificate. One man was a fulltime student, and the rest were employed fulltime – most of these were professional or management positions. Most participants had received a combination of government and private schooling. In terms of sexuality, most men self-identified as ‘heterosexual’, one man self-identified as ‘homosexual’, and one participant chose not to define his sexuality. Most of the men were in long term committed relationships e.g., married, engaged, or dating. The rest of the men were single, and of these, two were divorced. All the married men had at least one child. The names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms – some of the men chose their own and some preferred me to choose for them. Participants’ demographic information is summarised in *Table 1* below.

*Table 1: Participants’ demographic information*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education level</b>	<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Relationship status</b>	<b>Self-defined sexual orientation</b>
Anton	50	Tertiary	Employed	Engaged	Heterosexual

Ben	26	Tertiary	Student	Single	Heterosexual
Chris	26	Tertiary	Employed	Single	Heterosexual
Dylan	35	Tertiary	Employed	Single - Divorced	Heterosexual
Elliott	29	Tertiary	Employed	Long term relationship	Heterosexual
Francois	37	Tertiary	Employed	Married	Heterosexual
George	31	Matric	Employed	Single - Divorced	Heterosexual
Hank	49	Tertiary	Employed	Married	Heterosexual
Ian	44	Tertiary	Employed	Married	Heterosexual
Josh	24	Tertiary	Employed	Relationship	Homosexual
Kyle	36	Tertiary	Employed	Married	Did not state
Luke	52	Tertiary	Employed	Married	Heterosexual

### Data Collection

Data was collected through once-off, individual narrative interviews conducted by me. My intention for the data collection process was to keep the interviews relatively unstructured and open-ended. The open-ended or narrative interview aims to move away from the traditional question-answer format, towards a more collaborative and open interview space. In this way, the interview takes a conversational form where the two speakers are positioned as co-constructors of meaning and narrative (Langellier, 1989; Riessman, 2008). The aim of such interviews is to encourage long sections of talk and detailed accounts of participants' experiences and thoughts (Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2000). Thus, instead of being directed by a strict interview schedule, I asked participants a few broad questions as prompts for discussion and then asked appropriate follow-up questions according to the direction that the interview took (see Appendix B for the interview guide). The interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated health risks, the interviews were conducted via Zoom. With participants' permission, all interviews were recorded via the Zoom platform and then transcribed verbatim.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Thematic narrative analysis**

Data analysis was primarily guided by Riessman's (2008) understanding of thematic narrative analysis. Thematic narrative analysis has its foundation in narrative theory, which states that people form their personal and social identities through the stories they tell about their lived experiences (Murray, 2003). This analytic approach thus allowed me to explore how white men make sense of, as well as construct, gendered violence in South Africa through the stories they tell about the topic.

While some data analysis techniques follow a step-by-step guide, a thematic narrative approach is more of a flexible outline for how to work with narrative data. In thematic narrative analysis, data is analysed by identifying common themes across research participants' narratives (Riessman, 2008). The individual narratives across and within participants' accounts are analysed as a whole and, as much as possible, not fragmented. Compared to other forms of narrative analysis, thematic narrative analysis places greater emphasis on the content of the narratives rather than how the narrative is structured or how language is used. Interpretation of the data can be guided by prior and/or emergent theory; the aims of the study; themes developed by the researcher; the data themselves. Another central feature of thematic narrative analysis is that it is "case centred". Rather than dividing narratives into coded segments, it aims to keep stories intact and thus extensive quotation is used in the writing up of narrative results. However, even though narratives are preserved, the focus is on identifying themes across individual stories even as these are grouped together and preserved (Riessman, 2008).

### **Using elements of discourse analysis**

While the principal method of data analysis for this thesis was thematic narrative analysis, I also drew on elements of discourse analysis and performative narrative analysis, to fill in some of the gaps in the thematic narrative approach. For example, within thematic narrative analysis, the focus is principally on *what* is said rather than *how* the story is told (Riessman, 2008). This approach views language as a means for communicating a narrative, rather than an avenue of investigation itself. However, because I wanted to pay attention to how language was used by men in these interviews, I also made use of the tools of discourse analysis (Hall, 2001). Discourse analysis is based on the post-

structuralist theory that knowledge and meaning are discursively constructed through language (Gavey, 1997). Discourse thus provides a structure for experiencing, understanding, and acting in the world (Willig, 2001). Therefore, because I wanted to pay attention to how race, class and masculinity, were constructed through participants' narratives, drawing an elements of discourse analysis was appropriate. This allowed me to explore how discursive resources provide white men with certain ways of talking about, constructing and positioning themselves in relation to gender-based violence in South Africa.

### **Process**

A decolonial feminist lens informed the data analysis process. Data analysis was approached iteratively and loosely followed the steps for thematic analysis outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2015). I began with familiarising myself with the data. This involved a close reading of the transcripts. During this process I highlighted words, phrases, and paragraphs that I felt were significant to the research questions and wrote accompanying notes. Digital copies of the transcripts were then uploaded onto the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 Pro. I used this software to help with coding and organising the data. The data was then coded according to initial codes that developed out of the close readings. Further codes were generated as the analysis progressed. Once this initial coding was complete, I examined the thematic-narrative groupings that had emerged to see if there were any similarities and incongruencies. Similar concepts were amalgamated under overarching ideas and delineated according to sub-themes. Once I was content with the thematic mapping, I transferred the most relevant quotes from NVivo to Word documents. Each theme had its own document, and I used these documents to help me select the most appropriate quotes for the results chapter. I then began the process of writing up the results. Given the nature of qualitative data, data analysis continued as I wrote up the results, and further insights and connections became clear. The last stage of analysis was therefore a combination of analysis, refining, and writing.

### **Reflexive considerations**

I grappled endlessly with the content and process of this research because of the multiple tensions it evoked in me. I spent hours churning over my decision to interview white men and whether this reinforced the space, voice, and power easily afforded to them in our milieu. I wondered what my

whiteness unconsciously permitted in the interview space, as I frequently left interviews feeling as though I had been privy to a confession. However, I also pondered what my womanhood silenced in the interviews. Were there things participants would have said in the presence of a masculine presenting researcher that they un/consciously felt they could not share with me? I often felt confronted by how moments of insight, empathy and resistance could sit so close to moments of violent racism and sexism within the interviews. Given these complexities I often felt as though I was walking a tightrope delicately trying to balance my multiple positions of feminist, anti-racist researcher; victim/survivor; white woman, and fellow human. This task felt daunting and intricate, but I think the outcome is a piece of work that can hold the contradictions and messiness of our current gender tensions in South Africa. By taking this stance I was able to see the men I interviewed as victims and perpetrators of violence, and in doing so explore in a detailed manner how trauma and privilege intertwined in their lives. I feel that this project is an example of how rich qualitative data can be when methods of knowledge production that allow for the acknowledgment of complexities are utilised.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was part of a larger project – Unsettling Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence in South Africa – which had already obtained ethics clearance (Reference number: PSY2019-045).

#### **Informed consent**

Consent was approached as an ongoing dialogue between me and the participants that took place throughout the research process. Participants were free to ask questions regarding the study and research ethics at any time. Consent to participate and for the interview to be recorded via Zoom was obtained from participants before the commencement of the interview.

Information about the project and the consent process was explained to participants verbally and was also outlined in consent forms (see Appendix C). Once the study and the consent procedures had been verbally explained the participant was given time to read through the consent forms on their own and to decide if they wished to participate.

Participants had the autonomy to decide whether they wished to participate in the study or not. Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Participants did not have to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable about and they were free to terminate the interview at any point without explanation and without adverse consequences. At the end of the interview participants were debriefed about the broader aims of the research project.

### **Privacy and confidentiality**

Before the interview commenced, the participants were asked to choose a pseudonym that was used instead of their name. This pseudonym was used on their demographic information form and to label the audio recordings and transcripts. This pseudonym was used throughout the research process to maintain privacy. Any other identifying features such as address, place of work, or names of other individuals were removed from the transcripts. No identifying information of participants will be present in data released for analyses, publications, or presentations.

All data collected will be kept confidential. All digital research data is stored on password protected computers and on password protected storage devices. All recording devices, demographic forms, hard copies of transcripts, handwritten notes and field notes are kept in locked cabinets in my office. Only the researchers involved in the study have access to the data.

Zoom provides a several features that assisted in assuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants' information and identity. Firstly, only participants with the Zoom meeting link or meeting ID and password could join the session. These details were only available to myself and the relevant participant that I was interviewing. This allowed user-specific authentication and prevented unwanted persons from joining the Zoom meeting. Secondly, Zoom is an extra secure platform to use for research interviews because it allows for the real-time encryption of meetings. Another advantage of Zoom is its ability to securely record and store sessions without using third-party software. Zoom enables audio/video recordings, and control is limited to the host of the meeting. Also, access to the recordings is restricted to the host and these recordings are saved to the host's computer after the session.

**Description of risks and benefits**

This study posed a low risk to participants and thus the potential for harm was minimal. However, talking about gender-based violence could have been emotionally or psychologically distressing for some. However, I did not anticipate that this risk was any greater than those usually encountered in everyday life or during the administration of routine psychological examinations. No participants became visibly distressed during the course of the interview. All participants were given a support resources document that outlined organisations they could contact should they feel the need to discuss their distress (see Appendix D).

There were no direct benefits of participating in this study, however, participants might have found value in knowing that they contributed to research that furthers our understanding of gender-based violence within South Africa.

**Reimbursement for participation**

Participants were not financially reimbursed for their participation. Research costs were covered by the funding for the broader project.

## Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

The individual interviews were analysed using a thematic narrative lens. Three dominant thematic narrative groupings emerged from the data: Narratives of men's trauma, narratives of gendered violence, and masculinity narratives. How these thematic narratives presented in the data will be discussed in this chapter, as well as the various sub-narratives within them. Throughout this discussion I also attend to the counter-narratives that the participants drew on. The chapter starts by discussing narratives of men's trauma and draws attention to the ways in which participants' trauma may shape their understandings of themselves and their social world. Narratives of gendered violence are discussed thereafter, which explores how GBV was constructed as omnipresent and extreme, as well as complex and insidious. In the final section - masculinity narratives - I show how narratives of the ideal man, the violent men, 'I am a good man', and 'the white man's struggle' combine to construct white men as non-violent, and poor, black men as violent. Overall, the narratives explored here speak to how men position themselves in relation to gendered violence in South Africa and the raced and classed distancing tactics that they use to achieve this. This analysis seeks to hold space for the ambiguities and tensions present in the data, while simultaneously outlining the dominant thematic narratives that emerged.

### **Men's trauma**

An unexpected narrative that emerged from these interviews was participants' experiences of trauma whilst growing up. While this narrative wasn't as pervasive as the others discussed in this dissertation, from a decolonial feminist perspective, it felt important to include. Following in the footsteps of the work of Boonzaier et al. (2020); Peters, Kessi, and Boonzaier (2019), and van Niekerk and Boonzaier (2019) - who explore black men's violence against women from a decolonial feminist perspective - I wanted to present a critical thematic narrative analysis of the stories participants told about GBV, whilst also centring their humanity. A decolonial feminist lens thus allowed me to explore the complex intricacies of privilege and trauma that have shaped white men's lives in South Africa. Such an analysis hopefully offers further insight into the ways in which white men's experiences of trauma shape themselves and their experience of the world. Participants in these

interviews spoke about violence they had experienced at school, at home, and within the South African context while they were growing up.

“[Talking about his high school science teacher] ...there next to his classroom he had this sort of like a tiny little room where he kept all the chemicals and that is also where he would beat you...you know he was getting upset with the child and then there is that sort of almost vindictive type of getting upset with the child where you kind of want to destroy them, and you could sense that with me, he would like flare up with rage you know embarrass you in front of the class and then you know you take your beating and not in front of the class you know in the little room.” – Ian (44)

“It’s quite hectic. It’s, it’s like, it’s, it’s, it’s like mentally and physically draining and challenging...Because ja, they would just, they would really smack you around a lot [Sorrel: Like hit you?] Ja, ja, lengthy, like every day...So for instance, if you’re a standard six and you go into school, you get a senior, like a person that is your, they call it your ‘oom’, your uncle in hostel. So you have to like look after that guy. You have to make his bed, you have to make him coffee, you have to carry his suitcase, all of that stuff.... But then it always goes a little bit further where, so say for instance it’s forty days....Ah then, like on, on day forty, your senior, your uncle, he can like pick a tool or something that’s, that he’s going to punish you with now and on day forty, you get forty shots and then thirty-nine the next day and so it goes every day, until the last day you get forty shots again. So ja, you get smacked every day...It was really tough in the beginning but then, [pause], ja maybe it sounds silly but you, you freaking grow up quite quickly and you, you learn how to take a beating because that’s...That’s what it pretty much is. You very quickly learn how to take a beating and then if you, if you get to the point where you can show them that they can’t really, they can’t break you with stuff like that, then they, as, as silly as it sounds, I guess, they start to respect you as well and then that relationship becomes much better.” – Francois (37)

In these excerpts, Francois and Ian detail their experiences of physical violence at school. Corporal punishment in schools was banned in South Africa in 1996, meaning that many of the men interviewed went through a schooling system where corporal punishment was normalised. Of interest here is the underlying power dynamics behind the violence that both men comment on. Ian comments on how he experienced his teacher's beatings, "there is that sort of almost vindictive type of getting upset with the child where you kind of want to destroy them...embarrass you in front of the class," indicating that this punishment was about discipline *and* reinforcing the power differential between teacher and student by instilling fear and undermining students. Francois observes that the violent initiation at his school was more than just a tradition, but also a way of enforcing a certain type of masculinity in young men: "if you get to the point where you can show them that they can't really, they can't break you...I guess, they start to respect you as well and then that relationship becomes much better." If new students could endure the beatings and thus gain the respect of the seniors, then they were accepted into the school social sphere. Thus, imbuing a masculinity that centres on stoicism, loyalty without question, and violence. These experiences of school violence cannot be read outside of the context in which they took place. Young (white) men in school during this time had the certainty of military conscription looming ahead of them. Indeed, Woods (2005) argues that apartheid left a legacy of "militarisation, repression, interpersonal violence, and weapons" within white South African men. These four factors can be seen in the quotes to follow.

"But you know like when I was 16 you still didn't know whether you would have needed to go and fight a war in Angola that you knew absolutely nothing of. And you know it's jail time if you didn't go and do those things. So luckily democracy came and the military sort of fell apart, all of that stuff, but so with that military also comes a certain type of governance which is generally quite top down you know, you will obey what I say as opposed to you know more dialogue and sort of co-design of things and I didn't like that." – Ian (44)

"I think if you looking at the white South African based men in this country...And you look if there is a problem with us, it's definitely conscription and people not addressing the problems

that they came out with the war, and being painted as the enemy, you know...Most white South African men won't talk about the war...It's because, ja, nowadays it's, it's a racist or you were fighting against the Freedom Fighters, you were the Nazis so...Like, you know, I think emotional trauma is bottled up, not spoken about and then it's released on your closest person which is your wife, you know... I think it's, I think it's interesting cause just the whole trauma thing and how, I mean most men don't talk about it, you know. I think, ja, most of my friends would kind of just completely avoid the topic..." – Hank (49)

Ian and Hank both highlight the psychological and social impact of forced military conscription and/or the possibility of it. The Defense Amendment Bill was passed on 9 June 1967 and aimed to make military service mandatory for white men in South Africa between the ages of 17-65 years old (Kalley, Schoeman & Andor, 1999). Initially, 9 months of service was assigned but, as South Africa became increasingly militarised, the time period was extended to a number of years. These men became members of the South African Police (SAP) or the South African Defence Force (SADF) and were used to violently contain anti-apartheid activists as well as the perceived 'communist threat'.

Ian's quote speaks to the fear of the unknown that young white men experienced due to the possibility of being sent to fight a war in an unknown country. Alternatively, conscientious objectors faced the threat of incarceration - anxiety provoking imagined futures for teenage boys. Ian's relief at not having to join the military is thus apparent. He also points to how, even though the military became less important in democratic South Africa, hierarchical leadership styles remained the norm. In this way, the psycho-social effects of a heavily militarised country endured after apartheid was ended.

Hank's excerpt also identifies the complex psycho-social legacies left by forced military conscription. He proposes that white South African men still carry much repressed trauma from their military service. This trauma is three-fold. Firstly, the overt trauma from being involved in armed conflict. Secondly, the juxtaposing emotions post-apartheid from being forced to do military service that upheld the inhumane apartheid regime. And thirdly, the lack of space and emotional language to speak about such experiences which are socially constructed as taboo. However, it must be noted that

Hank's story can also be read as an attempt to pardon men who served in the apartheid military by foregrounding white men's trauma. It is thus important to acknowledge that individuals can have experienced their own abuse and/or trauma, and still enact violent oppression against others.

### **Narratives of gendered violence**

Participants spoke of gender-based violence in South Africa in ways that attended to its omnipresence and its extremities, as well as its complexity and insidiousness. I have endeavoured to maintain these overlaps and intersections while also delineating the central narrative threads identified. Although such an analysis appears messier than other kinds of qualitative analyses, I decided to keep the multiplicity of the narratives as much as possible because a decolonial feminist framework allows for an intermingled anti-binary reading (María Lugones, 2007; María Lugones, 2010; Vergès & Bohrer, 2021). I also argue that such a narrative presentation makes sense within our current post-colonial moment: as we grapple with the long hangovers of colonialism, enslavement, and apartheid, so too do our narratives. Methodologically and theoretically creating space for complex narratives also permits more complex narrator positions. Indeed, individuals are rarely only ever a perpetrator or only ever a victim/survivor. A decolonial feminist lens allows for such a reading of the data. The extended quote from Ben below is a good example of the multiplicity of narratives within one person's talk.

“Ah, you know violence or discrimination against or not necessarily discrimination against women [pause]. So okay, so gender-based violence, you know the name could imply that there is violence towards either gender from the opposite gender...But I think as with, I assume most people only really think of it in terms of male violence against females, [sigh] yeah...So, violence against females essentially...Physical, sexual, emotional, discrimination I guess could be a form of gender-based violence in my mind, depends on the, like the, the [pause], the hostility from like where that discrimination is coming from and whether or not it is like, passive or, very like active, obvious discrimination, yeah...I guess for enforcing certain stereotypes, whether they are like cultural or not, mm, enforcing gender roles, that

kind of, that kind of sort of thing but when I say enforcing, I mean enforcing, not just believing that a person should fit a specific role but, making... not that I have witnessed it myself that I can think of but, you know like, ah, like sexualising women in, whether it be in the work place or on the street and that kind of thing, catcalling, you know, harassment or you know unwanted, like, like flirtation but being like over persistent, what not, yeah... So, I think making someone uncomfortable to the point that they're, you know fear for their wellbeing, I know, ah, you know over persistence by men with women is a, quite a big thing that's being talked about these days... So I think, yeah just aggressive persistence, and [pause], yeah, yeah, just I guess aggressive persistence." – Ben (26)

The pauses, backtracking, hesitancy, and use of multiple narratives shows Ben's conceptual wrestling with gendered violence. The three sub-narratives that he draws on to make sense of GBV in South Africa are 'gender-based violence as omnipresent', 'gender-based violence as extreme', and 'gender-based violence as complex and insidious'. The three sub-narratives identified in this quote are representative of how participants in this project generally conceptualised GBV. In-depth discussions of the sub-narratives are presented below.

### **Gender-based violence as omnipresent**

All participants spoke of the pervasiveness of gender-based violence within the South African context. Such talk about GBV is not novel within the South African context and indeed it does emphasise the extent of the country's (very real) gendered violence problem.

"...the numbers don't make sense, like there, it is such a problem in this country, you know and until someone goes, like it's everywhere. I think, I think, I forget her name now, the one who was raped in the post office and kind of... [Sorrel: Uyinene.] Ja, her. She was raped in the post office next to the police station, you know... That's how, that's how prevalent it is... You know and I think, like the fact is it's, I mean it's a catchphrase but it's like, it's just like fuck man. You know it's everywhere, you know, like I mean as I said to you on the street

there is definitely a bad sexual encounter happening on my street, it's just too prevalent, you know" – Hank (49)

Hank emphasises the extent of the GBV problem by referencing the brutal rape and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana in 2019 that took place in a suburban post office. For many, this incident highlighted the ubiquity of gendered violence because it dismantled the hegemonic idea that GBV only takes place down dark alleyways when a woman walks home alone at night (Fakunmoju, Abrefa-Gyan, Maphosa, & Gutura, 2021; Finchilescu & Dugard, 2021; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019). Hank further emphasises this by stating that "on the street there is definitely a bad sexual encounter happening on my street, it's just too prevalent". As a way of illustrating this to his friends, Hank has a "catchphrase" of "All men are rapists until proven otherwise". Although Hank heavily engages a narrative of rape culture awareness there are simultaneously other narratives at work. By continually emphasising that GBV "is everywhere" and glibly referring to Uyinene Mrwetyana as "the one who was raped in the post office" reiterates GBV as inevitable, as well normal, for women in South Africa. Additionally, stating "it's everywhere" without a subject who is enacting the violence, constructs GBV as something that 'just happens' without any person having to take responsibility for it.

### **Gender-based violence as extreme**

The second sub-narrative within this section foregrounds extreme cases of GBV. Many participants referred to Uyinene Mrwetyana's rape and murder as well as other kinds of overt physical, sexual, and psychological violence. One such example is the story below from Francois.

"She killed him...it was a long time ago...But if I remember correctly... he was very, very physically abusive, ah, and I think it got up to a point where he was dragging her out in the street one night again and when she got back, she grabbed the gun and just shot him." – Francois (37)

Here, Francois is recalling an incident of extreme violence that took place in the community he grew up in. Another notable incident includes a participant's fiancé who discovered that an ex-partner of

hers had installed a complex system of surveillance cameras throughout her house to spy on her (Anton's transcript, pg. 10, lines 316-320). Other participants referred to heterosexual men's violence against lesbian women, as well as extensive bullying in the workplace from male bosses, as examples of obvious or overt forms of gendered violence. These examples span the spectrum of gendered violence which could indicate that dominant narratives around GBV are changing to incorporate forms of violence other than physical or sexual. However, these are all examples of extreme forms of violence and therefore the nebulous, systemic nature of daily forms of gendered violence is obscured (Boonzaier et al., 2019). The 'GBV as extreme' narrative is closely linked to narratives of shock and outrage found in media and other types of communiques about gendered violence (Boonzaier, 2017; Kiguwa & Stevens, 2021; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2016). This has been termed the 'shock and awe' response by Judge (2013) who argues that such a "performance of surprise" hides the everyday nature of GBV. Most participants foregrounded extreme and overt forms of GBV, while simultaneously attending to more intangible forms of violence. Anton's quote below is one such example of this.

"I think the woman who got murdered at the post office... That upsets me no end and, LGBT, like lesbian women who get beaten and like that upsets me. So, the thing is, I mean I know on a sort of, I mean, not blunt because it's not blunt but like the primary things which come to my mind are instances of extreme violence... and then all the really insidious types of violence that are directed at women, so structural bullying and... these sort of structural barriers to women living easy going lives where they are free of, of, of this sort of psychological violence that gets brought on them." – Anton (50)

Anton explains that 'blunt' forms of GBV are the first examples that he can think of, however, he then acknowledges the impact of structural and psychological gendered violence. Most of the participants reflected to me that it was 'easier' to list 'blunt' forms of GBV because these were more obvious, however, other forms of violence were more difficult to define because of their immaterial nature. The sub-narrative discussed next explores this further.

### **Gender-based violence as complex and insidious**

An equally strong narrative across the interviews was that of GBV as complex and insidious (“it’s multi-layered”). Ben emphasises this in the quote below.

“...like non-traditional gender based violence cause I think a lot of the time and when people think of the term gender based violence, their minds go directly to you know rape and murder and you know, domestic abuse, you know physical abuse and that kind of thing ...I don’t know what the correct term is, maybe traditional is not, not but in I guess in South Africa, like [pause] the more, you know publicised forms of gender-based violence, obviously like rapes and murders and that kind of thing...There’s not necessarily much focus on, on you know less obvious forms of [pause], bad conduct with women, like the whole aggressive persistence kind of thing.” – Ben (26)

Ben highlights that GBV extends beyond highly publicised cases of brutal violence. Ben’s struggle to name and identify the other kinds of gendered violence is obvious. He uses various phrases to try and articulate how else GBV is enacted e.g., “non-traditional gender-based violence”, “less obvious forms”, “like the whole aggressive persistence kind of thing” and yet does not seem able to find a word that accurately captures what he is thinking of. This indicates how slippery and indefinable some types of gendered violence can be. Indeed, participants noted that assumed control, non-consensual sex (“she just accepted it”), continual microaggressions, daily cyber sexual harassment, aggressive persistence in dating, manipulation, chronic infidelity, systemic sexism, and objectification could all be considered forms of violence towards women. A few participants connected these daily yet inarticulable forms of GBV to our contemporary gender system.

“I guess that will be any violence which is as a result of predominant gender norms in our society or maybe not the result, but let’s say is influenced or emanated by gender norms in the society.” – Kyle (36)

“All these small things in your day-to-day life where you do objectify women or you’d catcall or something like that, is part of a bigger problem, even though that in of itself is not illegal. It’s part of a broader, cultural problem and cultural change that we need to initiate to get away from that.” – Chris (26)

Both these quotes emphasise gendered violence as emanating from hegemonic socio-cultural understandings of gender. Chris in particular explains how “small” daily instances of violence are not separate from the broader gendered context. There is a large body of work that supports this theorising. Multiple studies have highlighted how South Africa’s broader context of gender inequality and the underlying patriarchal system drives GBV (Boonzaier, 2017; Jewkes & Morrell, 2018; Jewkes, Morrell, et al., 2015; Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2019). This system privileges men above women; normalises men’s control over women and produces hegemonic masculinities that are defined by physical strength, dominance, and sexual entitlement (Abrahams et al., 2004; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). The literature also foregrounds how gender inequality interacts with other structural factors to produce GBV. Due to South Africa’s socio-economic conditions, many men are unemployed and unable to support their families (Niehaus, 2005; Richter & Morrell, 2006), furthermore, some men feel that, because of social changes, positions that were previously retained for them are now being occupied by women (Sigsworth & Rapist, 2009; Walker, 2005). This can lead to feelings of anger, insecurity, and anxiety due to the ‘failure’ to achieve ‘complete masculinity’ and this can lead men to reacting violently to their partners (Abrahams et al., 2009; Walker, 2005).

However, the connection between gender inequitable attitudes and GBV perpetration has been questioned as some multi-national studies have not demonstrated a correlation. For example, the United National Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific (UNMCS) found that in most countries there was no association between men’s inequitable gender attitudes and their lifetime IPV perpetration (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013). Considering this, some have hypothesised that the association may operate through other pathways. Gibbs et al (2018, 2020) proffer that men’s masculine identity and their aspirations as men may be the link between gender

inequitable attitudes and IPV perpetration. In this way, it is not just rigid gender attitudes that are important, but also how men understand and enact their gendered privilege. While Gibbs' et al. (2018, 2020) hypothesis warrants further investigation, I argue that coloniality must also be considered as a systemic factor that influences the connection between hegemonic masculinities and GBV perpetration.

This section has demonstrated how participants drew on narratives of GBV as omnipresent, GBV as extreme, and GBV as complex and insidious to make sense of the problem within South Africa. The narratives of GBV as omnipresent and extreme draw attention to the widespread and brutal aspects of gendered violence. However, these narratives also play into a wider 'shock and awe' narrative (Boonzaier, 2017; Judge, 2013) which obscures conceals how forms of gendered violence are common and ubiquitous. The narrative of GBV as complex and insidious resists the first two narratives by detailing the myriad of ways that women can experience gendered violence daily. I argue that some forms of GBV are so subtle and intangible that they are difficult to speak to, as is evident the fumbling, backtracking, and pauses when participants described GBV in the interviews. The following section unpacks the masculinity narratives that were present in the data.

### **Masculinity narratives**

Given the gendered component of GBV, talking about gendered violence was an opportunity for participants to construct and negotiate their (masculine) identities. In the section to follow, I show how participants utilised four core masculinity narratives to position themselves (and white men more broadly) as 'good men' who are non-violent and striving to 'do something' about GBV in South Africa. These narratives are 'the ideal man', 'the violent men', 'I am a good man', and 'the white man's struggle'. Furthermore, I argue that these narratives implicitly situate gendered violence in poor, black men, thus psychologically distancing the problem from white men's reality and responsibility.

#### **The ideal man**

At the beginning of each interview, I asked participants a couple of demographic questions (see Appendix B for interview guide) to help contextualise our discussion, but also as a way of

developing rapport. I asked questions about where they had grown up, what their educational experiences were like, what they did for work, and if they had a partner or children. Such questions opened the possibility to talk about schooling, family dynamics, and intimate relationships, and so I frequently asked what messages they had received about masculinity from these different spaces. One of the most dominant narratives that participants drew on when answering was that of ‘the ideal man’. Below, I explain the different components of ‘the ideal man’ narrative, how participants locate themselves here, and how this relates to conceptualising white masculinity and gendered violence. I also foreground resistances to this narrative. The four quotes that follow will be discussed together as they all narrate aspects of the ‘ideal man’.

“I think certainly the message that I received at my school because it was a very traditional masculinity in the sense you know the sort of loyalty and camaraderie and brotherhood and that you should face up to your problems you shouldn’t be afraid of complexity, you should meet challenges head on that sort of thing which is I think a very crucial masculinity and some of this I think is good and useful and some of it is maybe not you know, you’ve to score, like that.” – Kyle (36)

“I think the way it was presented when I was a child obviously through the normal gender stereotype [unclear 0:32:02] we were exposed to, but in addition to that there was this religious component that fed them into the whole atmosphere. So for instance as I mentioned earlier with the subservient thing whatever, so that was very much there you know, so the man is destined to be or it is his duty to be the head of the household be sort of a moral compass for those around him very stern, very righteous, very fair that type of thing. But a lot of importance placed on being hardworking as well the provider...” – Josh (24)

“I have, ever since then, I’ve hated that, culture and the, the sort of values because there no real [pause], basically the message is consistent, you’re told you’re a man, you’re at [an all-boys’ private school], you’re the cream of the crop... You are going to be successful. You are

going to have a hot wife, you going to be rich, you going to have everything you want out of life, ah and the only reason is because you came to this school and that's like this constant message that is bashed into you, you're special, you're special, you're special, you're special, you're special, you're above everything in South Africa, you're above everything in the world, you're the cream of the crop...It was always the exceptional that was, there's no normal. So there's, so your always presented with the exceptional...There was no celebrating of this is a good person or this is a...It was always accomplishments beyond the norm.” – Dylan (35)

“[Sorrel: What does an alpha male mean to you?] I suppose just [pause], I suppose take charge, lead, doesn't follow [pause]. I don't know. I mean like, ja confident I would say. I would say confidence is a big one...Ja, I suppose how they relate to women I think cause like I never had a girlfriend. Ja, I first kissed a girl when I was twenty-one and I think, and I think I suppose part of the whole alpha male is kind of being good with women in a, like that romantic, desirable way...I suppose those. I think confidence and taking charge, I suppose would be the two biggest things I would think of...” – George (31)

Within this narrative the ‘ideal man’ is constructed as the heterosexual “alpha male” – a natural and confident leader who is the spiritual and financial head of his family. He is expected to take charge and *do something* when met with a problem. He is successful, wealthy, and excels at all he does because he *is* exceptional. He is loyal to his “brotherhood” of other alpha males. He is sexually desirable and a virile lover. Many of these traits are positive characteristics, indeed, Kyle states that “...that sort of thing which is, I think, a very crucial masculinity and some of this I think is good and useful and some of it is maybe not you know...”. However, as Dylan observes, there is an unspoken assumption of dominance threaded through each description of this ideal masculinity. Given the hardy nature of coloniality (Lugones, 2010), this assumption of dominance cannot be read outside of white colonial dominance i.e., the assumption is that the dominant man can only be white. Of interest is that these ideas about masculinity emerged from different spaces in participants’ lives e.g., family, school,

church - all spaces that are physically and emotionally close to participants. This stands in contrast to the way in which violence is positioned in the second theme (to be discussed later). However, many participants also critically reflected on this version of masculinity and the assumed dominance that came with it. Dylan's extract below is one such example of this.

“Growing up in this, you know, upper, rich kid, white, English speaking, Cape Town, that I have, we have always been told that we're top of the food chain...And it's very common. You meet any white, white English speaking, private school educated kid from anywhere in South Africa and they really feel like they are at the top of the food chain and that doesn't just mean out of men in South Africa, English speaking men. It basically means above everybody, like women are here to serve us or our partners are here to serve us and we're always right and people need to listen to us and a lot of men try and emulate their fathers and if we look at, if I look at like my, my parents' generation, there quite a few sub or it's more common for there to be subservient women and this like dominating, all-knowing, all-powerful, like thinks he is fucking Steven Fry, ah husband, man...The demographic that I grew up in, we were all told that you know we were the bee's knees and, everyone should listen to us.” – Dylan (35)

Dylan's quote highlights the raced, classed and gendered aspects of patriarchal domination and invites whiteness and financial/class privilege into the conversation. He also makes a similar observation as Lugones (2010) in the way that white 'ideal' men view the rest of the world. Not only are they superior to 'other' masculinities, but they are “above everybody”. Recent local literature about masculinity and schools has identified schools as sites where masculine identities are produced and policed (Mayeza & Bhana, 2021; Moosa, 2021; Ngidi et al., 2021). In particular, through a combination of participant observation, autoethnography and focus group discussions, Clacherty (2016) found that elite all-boys' schools in South Africa are spaces where particular forms of masculinity are constructed. The study found that the idea of 'success masculinity' produced in the schools (synonymous with the 'ideal man' narrative) shares several similarities to what Robert Morrell (2001) calls 'settler masculinity'. Morrell (1998) explains that British colonies in South Africa

produced a specific type of masculinity through social institutions such as the family, sports and leisure clubs, the military, and schools. Within these spaces deeply bonded, racially exclusive communities were formed with a hegemonic masculinity that drew heavily on Eurocentric representations of manliness. In this way, white men were bound to a set of gender rules that were class and race specific. Given the settler-colonial histories of most boys' schools in South Africa, it is not surprising that the masculinity narratives emerging from these spaces bear resemblance to settler masculinity narratives. In the section to come, I present a deeper analysis of the 'other' masculinities that are juxtapositioned with the 'ideal man'.

### **The violent men**

When giving examples of gendered violence and describing men who they considered to be violent, participants utilised diverse masculinity narratives to locate perpetrators (and violence) on the periphery, and in contrast to 'the ideal man' where they position themselves. Men who use violence were referred to as "pigs" or "dogs" and likened to children ("naïve and immature"), thus implying that GBV perpetrators are neither human nor fully developed adults. Participants also spoke of men who use violence as strangers ("that rogue person in a crowd that slaps a girl's ass"); substance ab/users ("now he is abusing drugs", "alcohol abuse and substance abuse that go along with these things"); psychologically unwell ("turns out that he was a bit of a psychopath", "used way too much steroids and his brains got fried"), and morally flawed individuals ("they don't have like the moral understanding", "there's something wrong with you"). The social stigma still attached to these positionalities allows for men who use violence to be psychologically distanced.

Violent men were also spoken of as (spatially) existing outside of urban centres. For example, they were situated in spaces away from city centres ("Parow", "deep Belville South", "rural areas") which, due to South Africa's history of racial and spatial segregation, have deep raced and classed connotations. Race and class were also spoken about explicitly in relation to violence.

"I mean I am often gobsmacked at how black men treat women, like, I've got two black academic friends who are American and like, they, the one dude is just off the charts...I mean he's a very good looking, big, black guy, an academic and he, I mean he was sleeping with

multiple women...I've actually, I, I, I detest him...So I guess I don't have any first-hand experience of gender-based violence but I do find black men, if you had to ask me of who I find most sexist, it's generally like black dudes...I hope it doesn't sound racist but I'm just saying, I'm telling you what my experience is." – Anton (50)

Despite his stated lack of experience with GBV and his 'naïve' positionality, Anton still feels very confident in making broad, racist generalisations about who a GBV perpetrator is. Anton explicitly states that he thinks black men have the most sexist attitudes towards women, and thus implicitly states that they are most likely to perpetrate GBV. By drawing on colonial narratives of black male sexual prowess, promiscuity, and patriarchal attitudes, black men are positioned as inherently more likely to be sexually violent – in contrast to the blameless white man who is "gobsmacked at how black men treat women". Such expressions of shock and outrage ("I detest him") serve as another discursive distancing tactic, because one can only be shocked and horrified by that which is not of the norm. In this way, GBV is constructed as something that is abnormal and other in Anton's spatial imaginary, and he further emphasises this by stating that he does not have any first-hand experience of gender-based violence. By emphasising his lack of direct exposure to GBV, Anton also positions himself as a somewhat naïve and ignorant observer (from a distance), and this is used to excuse his blatantly racist comments because, as someone who is ignorant on the topic, he does not know better. However, Anton does have some awareness that what he is saying is racist ("I hope it doesn't sound racist"), yet this does not stop his racist utterances. I am certain that in some way, my whiteness in this interview context allowed Anton to feel that he could say such things in my presence without punishment – this is an uncomfortable thing to sit with. But perhaps this is also important, that in creating a space where men feel 'allowed' to state things that (for good reason) are not socially sanctioned, we can gain some insight into the narratives that men engage with when they are not performing the good white man identity for a perceived audience of judges.

In the extract below, Francois responds to the question 'Who do you think perpetrates GBV in South Africa?' By drawing on narratives that are prolific within social science research and the media, Francois outlines why he thinks that poor men are more likely to perpetuate GBV.

“Definitely a male, from a [pause] low-income household background, with a lower level of education. Yes, that’s how I would classify that person and, and I think that then leads to [sigh] a variety of things like, I guess that specific type of person that I named there is also more prone to substance abuse etcetera, etcetera, etcetera and all these things then contribute, you know to that specific demographic being a gender-based violence perpetrator... Well I think I’ve, well I’ve definitely said this as well but, what goes hand in hand with that is substance abuse, and I think [sigh] is such a vicious, vicious cycle. It’s unemployment, it’s not knowing what to do with your, like your time, it’s like, households that’s not, that don’t have like I suppose a father figure and a mother figure in a house, and kids end up in, you know in the streets or with the wrong friends and it sounds such a cliché but if you really think about it, it’s exactly that and they don’t have, you know if you don’t have, if I didn’t grow up in the house where I did and I didn’t have the father that I had and I was on the streets constantly hanging out with kids that you know, that are trying to sell drugs or whatever to, to help their parents, initially the idea is to get some form of an income but you know and then they become dependent on that, you know whatever, and they start hanging out with just with drug lords or you know that will become the people they look up to, their hero’s... And that is just the example you will get from guys like that will be one of violence and just hardship and cruelty, and that then becomes the norm and if kids are surrounded by that, that’s their norm and that’s then their reference point.” – Francois (37)

The above “vicious cycle” narrative re-produces the inevitable violence and trauma of poor men, and thus positions them as the obvious perpetrators of GBV. Social science research has played a main role in producing this narrative by centring research that seeks to identify risk factors for violence perpetration – e.g. ‘the intergenerational cycle of violence’. Much of this research has been critiqued for its skewed focus on poor and working-class families and communities.

Francois’s story is also interesting because of what is not said, yet implied. By not talking about black persons directly, yet simultaneously drawing on social science narratives that locate

violence in poor black communities (Boonzaier, 2018), Francois further removes the violence from his white, middle-class milieu. In this way, through his discursive absence as well as the emphasised innocence of white men, the black man is constructed as a threatening figure even if not directly spoken about (Langa et al., 2020). Thus, even though Anton and Francois use different discursive tactics to other GBV, they arrive at the same conclusion: poor, black men are responsible for this problem. This narrative therefore gives white, financially/class privileged men permission to remove themselves from responsibility for this violence. It also links white men to the ‘ideal man’ narrative through foreground them as the non-violent, unproblematised and neutral man (Clacherty, 2016). However, Francois also shows some awareness of the tiredness of this trope, “it sounds such a cliché”, but also acknowledges that this is the lived reality for many South Africans, “but if you really think about it, it’s exactly that”. I am curious as to how, as psychological researchers, we can hold this complexity in our work. We need to identify and acknowledge the very real hardships that many South Africans face daily without reducing people to *only* these traumas.

Another way in which participants distanced themselves from GBV, was by locating violence within the religious and cultural other. Below, Hank tells a story about gendered violence that took place within his social circle.

“I think the best [example] would be my wife’s friend in the UK who married an evangelical, Jewish rabbi's son...Ah, I mean this is a helluva story. Anyway, so he is all types of terrible. I met the man once and I didn’t like him from the get-go, but he is a homophobe, racist, very much Israeli punting kind of like trash the Palestine type guy...He’s now, he kind of convinced her to have two children with her and then kind of made her convert to, I mean I say made her, emotionally manipulated her to becoming more orthodox Jewish, and now they kind of self-isolating, she realises that now he is abusing drugs and you know, she can’t run away quite as quickly as she wanted too...The language that he uses is kind of terrible. There’s a few things where like, you know, he demands sex from her even though they’ve had like, ah, bad altercations and stuff like that...Verbally. So like verbally wise he’s terrible. So like the thing is like I can only gauge my wife’s side that she wasn’t completely happy

with being alone and this guy was alone and willing to kind of join forces with her as a rabbi's son which he. She is Jewish so I think...I think, I think she just kind of saw that as running away with the, the priest's son." – Hank (49)

Hank spends a lot of time in this extract emphasising how terrible this man is, as well as the fact that he is Jewish. As shown above, the 'ideal man' is Christian and therefore, by foregrounding the perpetrator's Jewish identity, Hank removes the violence from his 'ideal man' context, even though this incident of GBV took place within his close circle of friends.

The various violent men narratives used by participants explicitly and implicitly other gendered violence (Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2018). This is a discursive distancing tactic that allows participants to emerge from the interview as the ideal, benevolent (white) man who could never perpetrate violence or be associated with it (Ahmed, 2006; Hall, 2001; Berthold, 2010). Invoking the concept of the 'African man' is a mechanism of Othering, because within the Western colonial imagination the black man was symbolic of difference (Spronk, 2014). These narratives about violent men allowed participants to psychologically dump the 'bad things' into/onto 'the other'. This condemnation of the black 'Other' gave participants psychological permission to narrate their white masculine identities in positive ways (Huysamen & Boonzaier, 2018). The 'Other' is many things but it is not a straight white Christian middle-class man. The outcome of such narratives is that gendered violence remains a problem that exists on the outside/periphery (spatially and psychologically) and in the other. The outsider and sub-human nature afforded to GBV perpetrators stands in stark contrast to the central and robust humanity afforded to 'the ideal man' (Hall, 2001).

As discussed earlier, within the media and research, poor black men have been constructed as the only perpetrators of gendered violence (Boonzaier, 2018). This cannot be read outside of the South Africa's long history of racist tropes relating to black masculinity and sexuality (Shefer, 2016). Within this white, heteropatriarchal, hyper capitalist system black men are subordinated and constructed as the threat and source of danger. This allows them to be othered (Boonzaier, 2018). Fanon (2006) emphasises how historically within white-dominated societies black men (and black men's sexuality specifically) has been a stimulus for anxiety because they are constructed as a threat

to white women. There is a very long historical narrative of demonising black men and seeing them as a source of danger (Lewis, 2011). The narratives discussed in this thesis are no different.

### **I am a good man**

One of the most prominent narratives in this dataset was the ‘I am a good man’ narrative. In this narrative, participants constructed themselves as ‘good men’ who were not capable of violence - even though some of the other stories they told in the interview conflicted with this positioning. The men I spoke to told different types of stories to position themselves as ‘good men’, the first of which was public displays of allyship.

“...There was a couple I socialised with in Dubai...over the last year and he treated his wife like this [badly] and [pause], I was super drunk at a braai in January, and I just didn’t care anymore...So, at his, in their own home, I turned off the music and I told him that, I thought he was a redacted, I called him a cunt...I said that no one liked him and that he’s abusive and, that, she should leave him and, I’ve never spoken to them since. I’m not friends with them anymore [...] (Sorrel: Is that something that you see happening frequently?) [pause] Once and then I won’t hang out with that person again...I don’t choose to be around people like that...But I do have a very close friend of mine who is currently dating a guy like that...And I won’t be around him anymore, no.” – Dylan (35)

Here, Dylan explains how he intervened in a relationship that he thought was emotionally/psychologically abusive. Of interest here is how Dylan approached the situation. He chose to confront his friend in a social setting, while intoxicated, and using provocative language. The performative nature of this intervention thus troubles the idea that this is solely for the woman’s benefit. By making an evocative and public display against GBV, Dylan gains social capital within his group for calling out a ‘bad guy’. However, there is little consideration for how his actions might affect the woman in that couple, or for how that verbally violent encounter could have escalated to a physical altercation given the context. This intervention thus appears to be more for Dylan’s benefit than anyone else’s. Dylan also emphasises how he is no longer in contact with this couple, and that

once he witnesses a man's 'bad behaviour', he does not socialise with them again. This physical cutting off relationships is the material equivalent of narratives that place GBV perpetrators on the periphery.

The second type of stories that participants used were emphatic statements of anti-violence. Anton's quotes below are an example of this.

"...I mean I never, raped anyone or forced anyone, like had sex with anyone who didn't want to have sex with me but, that was a carbon copy." – Anton (50)

"I mean I, as I said I never treated women badly in the way that those, that, that jurist who was interviewed treated women but certainly I didn't have the same response to my partners then that I do now." – Anton (50)

"...like I don't have a history of domestic violence, period. You can ask any of my girlfriends...It doesn't exist." – Anton (50)

The first two extracts come from a story that Anton told me about Brett Kavanaugh – an associate justice in the United States supreme court who was accused of sexual assault by three women in 2018/2019. Anton is very insistent about his non-violence, yet he also comments on how some of his previous behaviour is identical ("carbon copy") to that of Kavanaugh's. The conflicting nature of these statements could speak to the conflicting feelings that Anton has about this realisation. Seeing similarities between his and Kavanaugh's behaviour allowed Anton to begin a process of changing his behaviour towards women. However, seeing yourself in another man accused of sexual assault is undoubtedly unsettling. Thus, perhaps in an attempt to comfort/convince himself (and me) of his non-violence, Anton puts a lot of effort into distancing himself from gendered violence.

### **The white man's struggle**

Participants utilised three sub-narratives to construct the broader 'white man's struggle' narrative. These were: the emasculation narrative, women's manipulation narrative, and the anti-white male narrative.

#### **The emasculation narrative.**

“So I think when I look at white men, I think that's a formative thing, frustration, not being heard, you know, the, the perceived notion of being like not heard...Or respected or taken seriously or being an active role in the country or, you know. That they would need to get a big car, I mean Jesus, I am doing the same thing, get a big car and move to the countryside.” – Hank (49)

“I think, you know, I think men, I suppose like white people and stuff with more awareness of minorities and that kind of thing, being oppressed, I think men are, there is a kind of feeling of [pause] [sigh], emasculated is the right word, you know the whole, well geez, what can I do now, you know consent in the office about how you talk to women and things like that, you know the whole mindset of something, what, can't I even give a woman a compliment anymore? I think that is kind of, I suppose emasculating is the best way to put it and I think when some men feel emasculated, they want to enforce their masculinity, I suppose.” – George (31)

In both quotes, Hank and George use the emasculation narrative to explain why they think men turn to other avenues to express their masculinity e.g., buying a bigger car or enacting physical violence. This is rooted in the idea that masculinity is being attacked or undermined in contemporary times – “the perceived notion of being like not heard...Or respected or taken seriously or being an active role in the country”. More specifically, it is men's sexuality that is being curtailed – “you know consent in the office about how you talk to women...what, can't I even give a woman a compliment anymore?” Such ideas have gained further traction since the #MeToo movement became a global hashtag for

drawing attention to the pervasiveness of men's violence against women. This emasculation narrative is also racialised as both men refer to this being a problem for white men.

**Women's manipulation.** In the extracts below, Anton and Ben talk about two different ways that women may manipulate our "socio-political identity moment" to tarnish a man's reputation.

"In America, you get something that's like, it's called divorce, what is it called, but, but essentially what you do is you call the cops and you say there is a domestic violence episode and the, there's an automatic restraining order against the man and then the, it's, and then litigation is so expensive that often men will go into the criminal justice system and they won't get out. And when I got back to South Africa, I also went and I saw a family lawyer and I said to her, listen, this is the situation, [Anton's partner] in my opinion is, is a little bit unstable and I don't want this to go out of hand, I just want to log my story and I want to give you and, and both of the lawyers, both the lawyer in [American city] and the lawyer in [South African city] said this is without doubt the part of the law that we experience that gets manipulated and abused more than anything else. So on the one hand, I reckon [laugh], to a certain degree I also was on the wrong end of a sort of structural assumption which might be the result of a socio-political identity moment which will fade or, and I don't think that, I think it's good to overcompensate when there are real issues like gender-based violence, you know or it's, rather be politically correct than politically incorrect, you know." – Anton (50)

This excerpt comes after Anton had told me about an incident with his partner that took place when they were living together in America. They had a verbal argument, and his partner called the police because she felt threatened: "*It was super hectic and like I just said, you know, we had a domestic dispute. There was no violence, there was like, uhm, but, and, and [my partner's] motivation for this whole thing was like "I felt threatened". Like I don't have a history of domestic violence, period. You can ask any of my girlfriends, it's not like I, I. It doesn't exist...and, but I, I was on the wrong end of assumptions of guilt.*" There is much to unpack in both quotes, but most relevant to this sub-narrative is Anton's perception that he was wrongly accused of violence *because he is a man*. Within Anton's

narrative, there is the potential for this false accusation to have long-term consequences due to a legal system that is biased against men, and laws that are open to manipulation and abuse. This, coupled with high legal fees, can mean that some men never leave the criminal justice system. Additionally, the validity of his partner's claims is questioned by glibly referring to her as "unstable". Below, Ben explains how he feels when women disclose to him their experiences of GBV.

"I mean it's not right. It's ja, unfortunately giving a lot of guys like a bad reputation, but if I do hear about it from people who aren't close to me, I do, ah, you know not [pause], not question their stories but I do kind of pry a little bit and you know, because I, there are a lot of, well not a lot, but you know there are examples of, of, you know exaggerating in certain cases and stuff. There is this whole cancel culture and what not, so I do like to kind of get a little bit more insight on a person's story who I am not close with before coming to any conclusions of my own...But that being said, I have never after listening to people's stories. I've never ended up not siding with them or not believing what they are saying is true." – Ben (26)

In a very similar way to Anton, Ben refocuses the discussion to how "there are instances of, of using you know cancel culture or like manipulatively cancelling people" (Ben). This sub-narrative of 'women's manipulation' does several things. Firstly, it removes attention from women's distress and makes the central issue the false accusation of men. Secondly, it undermines the validity of women's experiences of GBV by creating suspicion about women's decisions to disclose their stories of abuse. Thirdly, it reinforces the myth that white men are not capable of gendered violence, because only innocent men can be wrongly used. Anton and Ben's quotes also end with reassurances that they are still 'good men'. Ben states that he always ends up believing women and Anton states that he agrees that it's better to be 'politically correct' than not to be. Assurances to myself and them that their narrative identity as the ideal man is not undone.

**The anti-white male narrative.** Many of the participants explained how they felt they experienced prejudice because of their identities as white men in post-apartheid South Africa. In the

following quotes, Ian and Anton explain how they feel the “anti-white male movement” is affecting South African men.

“...But certainly I do see that as a man I feel completely disempowered to help in society to try and make a difference I feel uhm like the sort of anti-white male movement you know has a very negative impact on me and I also see the sort of anti-patriarchy you know movement and the feminist movements and I go that’s all great and well [...] Men are not catered for emotionally at all. We have the highest suicide rates of all populace groups and yet we are sitting with all this rhetoric about how bad the man is, how bad the colour of their skin is, all these things right” – Ian (44)

“...when I was in my relationship, this relationship with [my partner], the social justice queen, she used to send me articles every day on like how to be a better middle-aged white guy, like why mansplaining was and, and you know what Sorrel, I’m not, I’m not perfect but I’m also like, I’m trying to engage with this stuff...But I was vilified from start to finish, uhm, and a lot of the critique of men starts off from a point of like, you’re a piece of shit, get better...And maybe if the register in which the critique or, or, or the information came was, was or the register was different, like for example, I understand why you are like this, maybe this is an alternative...It would come across as less of a virtue signal...” – Anton (50)

Both Ian and Anton suggest that their identities as ‘middle-aged white guys’ predispose them to being unfairly judged and this can be a factor in mental health concerns. Just as with the ‘women’s manipulation’ narrative, this narrative detracts from the issue at hand and refocuses the discussion on men’s feelings, how men are not being catered for, and tone policing. Additionally, the pejorative terms for people (especially women) who take strong political/moral stances - “social justice queen” and “virtue signal” – is another way of undermining the issues at hand and the women who choose to speak out about these issues.

The masculinity narratives discussed in this section converge to construct white men as benevolent and non-violent; psychologically and physically distant from violence, and as unfairly victimised in current gender politics. What is of interest about the masculinity narratives used, is that they overlap with some of the strategies and distancing tactics that perpetrators of GBV utilise. For example, Smith (2007) found that men who had perpetrated violence against a woman partner had resisted their criminal positioning by constructing themselves as ‘good men of the law’. Additionally, van Niekerk & Boonzaier (2014) found that the men in their interviews foregrounded their perceived powerlessness, victimisation, and injustice, rather than the violence that had perpetrated.

### **Concluding comments**

This chapter presented and discussed the main thematic narratives that emerged from the data and their sub-themes. Narratives of men’s trauma spoke to how participants experienced trauma at school and because of the broader context of apartheid South Africa. Narratives of gendered violence included the sub-themes ‘GBV as omnipresent’, ‘GBV as extreme’, and ‘GBV as complex and insidious’. The sub-themes of masculinity narratives were ‘the ideal man’, ‘the violent men’, ‘I am a good man’, and ‘the white man’s struggle’ which combined to locate gendered violence in the racial, classed, and spatial ‘Other’. Overall, these narratives speak to how white men make sense of gendered violence in the current moment; how they position themselves in relation to gendered violence, and how their histories of trauma and privilege intertwine to produce complex narratives around GBV. These results affirm that a complex web of identity positionings and representations are drawn upon when men in South Africa speak about gendered violence (van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). Secondly, they align with research that shows how performances of masculinity relational, multiple, and constructed within a particular sociocultural context (Boonzaier, 2005; Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Thirdly, they reiterate the enduring nature of coloniality, and show that dominant constructions of gendered violence absolutely cannot be read outside of South Africa’s history of colonialism, enslavement, and apartheid. Lastly, some the insights from the participants are critical and insightful. This perhaps speaks to the fact that these participants are mostly individuals who have tertiary education, which influences their responses.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions**

The purpose of this research was to foreground “privileged patriarchies” (Suttner, 2009) within research about GBV in South Africa, and in doing so resist the racialisation of the work. This was underpinned by the concept that studying people of privilege is valuable in order to learn how they reproduce their power (Rosenblatt, 2013; Bourdieu, 1984; Shore & Nugent, 2003). This project also aimed to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how race and class interact with understandings of GBV. To this end, this project explored and critically analysed white men’s narratives on GBV in South Africa to understand how white men perform, construct, and negotiate identities of race, gender, and class through this talk. A narrative approach informed the study design of the dissertation and the theoretical frameworks used were decolonial feminism and narrative theory. Twelve self-identifying white men took part in in-depth individual interviews about gender based violence in South Africa. This data was then analysed using thematic narrative analysis. Overall, the findings highlight how coloniality still pervades understandings of gendered violence through raced and classed narratives of the ideal, non-violent white man and the violent, black ‘Other’. This chapter provides a summary of the findings. I then discuss the research contributions that this dissertation makes. Lastly, I outline some of the limitations of the study as well as offer suggestions for future research.

### **Summary of findings**

In this dissertation, I enquired about how white men understand GBV in South Africa and how they position their masculine identities in relation to it. I also explored how narratives of resistance intersected with tired, colonial tropes in white men’s talk of GBV. The results show that the white men interviewed made use of raced and classed distancing tactics to locate the problem of GBV in the ‘Other’. I argue that this way of talking is embedded within the broader context of coloniality. Additionally, using a decolonial feminist framework allowed me to explore how men’s own experiences of trauma and violence may have influenced their sense-making around GBV. These findings emerged from three dominant thematic narratives and their sub-themes: Narratives of gendered violence, masculinity narratives, and narratives of men’s trauma. Within the first main thematic narrative, ‘narratives of gendered violence’, the sub-narratives of GBV as omnipresent, GBV

as extreme, and GBV as complex were used to grapple with the problem in South Africa. The narratives of GBV as omnipresent and extreme foreground the pervasive and traumatic aspects of GBV. However, these constructions perpetuate a wider discourse of 'shock and awe' which treats GBV as an abnormal occurrence. The narrative of gendered violence as complex and insidious resists the first two narratives by outlining how GBV is a daily and systemic problem. In the second dominant thematic narrative - masculinity narratives - participants utilised three core narratives to position themselves (and white men in general) as 'good men' who are non-violent, but also not implicated in the problem in any way. These narratives are 'the ideal man', 'the violent men', and 'I am a good man'. I argued that these narratives tacitly place gendered violence in poor, black men, and communities, thus psychologically and spatially separating the problem from their perceived realm of responsibility. A fourth sub-narrative, 'the white man's struggle', constructed white men as victims of the current gender system and racial context which, in the context of these interviews, served as a distraction from the topic at hand. The third and last dominant thematic narrative identified was narratives of men's trauma. This thematic narrative did not have any sub-narratives, but participants spoke about the violence they had experienced at school and within the South African context while they were growing up. This speaks to the complex psycho-social legacies left by forced military conscription and corporal punishment, and the potential trauma from this. I thus suggested that it is important to recognise that individuals can have experienced their own abuse and/or trauma, and still enact violent oppression against others. Indeed, much social science literature supports the existence of an intergenerational cycle of violence.

### **Research contributions**

These results are not necessarily novel nor unexpected when it comes to examining talk about gendered violence in South Africa. Multiple scholars have written about the intersections of violence, masculinities, and race and how black men are continuously positioned as the violent 'Other' in the research.

However, the results do speak to how a particular group of white men make sense of gendered violence in the current moment. The findings show, in more detail than previously articulated, how participants position themselves in relation to gendered violence, and how their histories of trauma

and privilege entangle to produce multiple, often contradicting, narratives around GBV and masculinity. The use of a decolonial feminist theoretical framework allowed me to recognise the continuation of coloniality in most of the narratives used by participants and thus acknowledge how ‘meta-colonialism’ is still a background influence in contemporary understandings of gendered violence. Furthermore, this lens assisted in troubling the idea of the victim/perpetrator binary, by helping me to see white men as human beings whose lives have also been shaped – albeit differently from black persons’ lives – by colonial and apartheid patriarchy. This produced a more nuanced and complex interrogation of histories of intertwined trauma and power. This dissertation therefore highlights how the utilisation of theorising from the South creates space for such subjective complexities.

### **Significance of study**

For decades, white men have been excluded from studies about GBV in South Africa, not because they are marginalised or oppressed, but because they have been assumed as the invisible, non-violent norm (Boonzaier, 2018). Conversely, black men have been implicitly assumed to be the violent perpetrators. This dissertation speaks back this racialisation of the research by positioning white men as necessary participants in knowledge production on gendered and sexual violence in South Africa. This marks an important, and overdue, departure from mainstream research sampling patterns. In this way, it also adds to the unsettling of psychological knowledge production by foregrounding white men’s (potential for) discursive, psychological, and physical violence. Additionally, this dissertation contributes a more nuanced and detailed understanding of how constructions of race, class, and gender inform understandings of GBV. This information can be used to inform future GBV prevention and intervention programming.

### **Study limitations**

The recruitment and sampling strategy used in this study will limit the generalisability of these results. Given that randomised sampling was not utilised, the sample for this study is not representative of the larger population of white men in South Africa. This is not necessarily problematic from a qualitative research standpoint, as qualitative research seeks to produce rich, in-depth descriptions and interpretations of phenomena within a certain context. Additionally, some may

argue that by conducting research with white men, I have given further time and space to a group that already occupy positions of privilege in South Africa. However, as Huysamen and Boonzaier (2018) argue, studying privileged men is not necessarily always a shortcoming, as South African social research is often conducted using samples drawn from underprivileged or marginalised populations. Only focusing research on marginalised persons inadvertently serves to associate them with the stigmatised social issues being investigated.

The fact that interviews were conducted online meant that the quality of the interviews was affected slightly. For example, unforeseeable technical difficulties such as Zoom freezing, microphones not working, and unexpected loadshedding meant that some interviews were interrupted or of poor sound quality at times. However, these issues were not pervasive and are comparable to disturbances that would normally take place during an in-person interview.

Lastly, my identity and positionality as a white woman in South Africa may have influenced the types of narratives that were told to me during the interviews. For example, most of the participants seemed to have no difficulty in saying overtly racist things in my presence. In this way, my whiteness and what it symbolises in South Africa implicitly gave permission to participants to share very racist utterances. As a researcher who endeavours to embody an anti-racist stance in my work and broader life, sitting with the knowledge of what my whiteness evoked in the interview is very uncomfortable. However, I argue that, had my racial identity been any different, I would not have received as frank answers as I did. Thus, I suggest that my racial 'insider status' assisted me in eliciting narratives that would otherwise have remained concealed.

### **Suggestions for future research**

Given the findings of this project, I urge future researchers to continue to work with "privileged patriarchies", not only to problematise existing racialised sampling patterns, but also to build on the nuanced and complex decolonial body of work that is emerging around race, class, gender, and violence in South Africa. Additionally, further attention needs to be given to the ways in which traumatic histories of corporal punishment and enforced military conscription have shaped contemporary white men's ways of seeing and being in the world. Lastly, all-boys' schools and elite, private schools need to be interrogated further as sites where settler-colonial narratives of 'ideal'

masculinity are (re)produced, promoted, and awarded. However, consideration should also be given to how these can also be spaces for resistance and social change.

### **Closing comments**

The narratives used by contemporary white South African men to explore the topics of gendered violence and masculinity are troublingly resemblant of colonial representations of 'the Other'. The deeply enduring nature of such representations within academic and lay narratives around violence point to how imperative it is that we forge alternative ways of speaking about GBV. Researchers in this field must endeavour to promote and support knowledge production about gendered violence that engages with decolonial theorising and situates the problem within its broader social, historical, and politic context.

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## Appendix A – Call for Participation

# Research contributors needed

*We are looking for white men to  
contribute to a research study about  
gender-based violence.*

- The research aims to explore how South African men understand our country's gender-based violence problem.
- Data will be collected via online interviews.

TO PARTICIPATE OR FOR MORE INFORMATION  
USE THE LINK BELOW:

**[qrco.de/bcBF5d](https://qrco.de/bcBF5d)**

OR EMAIL:

**[gbv.research.2021@gmail.com](mailto:gbv.research.2021@gmail.com)**



## Appendix B – Interview Guide

### Introduction

Hi [*insert participant's name*] and thank you for your interest in this research. My name is Sorrel and I am part of a research group in the UCT Psychology Department that investigates gender-based violence prevention in South Africa. Over the last two years, gender-based violence has received increased attention within South African, due to the widespread media coverage of certain incidents, as well as the surge in GBV reports during South Africa's COVID-19 lockdown period. Such events have got researchers like me asking the question: How can we understand this problem better? In particular, I want to better understand the role that men can play in gender-based violence prevention. In order to do this I am interviewing South African men about their thoughts and feelings about gender-based violence in South Africa.

### Ethics reminder

I know this is outlined in the consent form that you have already signed, however, just to reiterate: You are free to ask questions regarding the study and research ethics at any time. You have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the study at any point without explanation and without adverse consequences. You have been asked to choose a pseudonym for yourself. This pseudonym will be used throughout the research process in order to maintain privacy. Any other identifying features such as address, place of work, or names of other individuals will be removed from the transcripts. No identifying information of participants will be present in data released for analyses, publications, or presentations. All data collected will be kept confidential and stored in password protected storage devices. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to the data from this study. This study is of low risk and thus the potential for harm is minimal. However, talking about gender-based violence could be emotionally or psychologically distressing for you. Should you feel distressed or uncomfortable at any point, we can pause the interview until you feel able to continue. If you do not wish to continue then the interview will be terminated. You will not be financially reimbursed for your participation.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

**Getting started**

Thank you again for talking with me today. I know it can be strange to talk to someone you do not know about such a topic. This interview will not follow a strict ‘question-answer’ format but will rather have a more conversational style.

- 1) Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
  - a. Prompt for information about age, gender identity, sexual identity, education, employment and relationship status in order to create a brief demographic profile of each participant.
- 2) What made you decide to respond to this advert?

**Broad opening question**

Tell about what the term ‘gender-based violence’ means to you?

**Potential follow-up questions**

Why do you think South Africa has such high levels of gender-based violence?

Who do you think is most likely to perpetrate gender-based violence in South Africa?

Who do you think is most likely to be a victim of gender-based violence in South Africa?

What do you think needs to be done to prevent gender-based violence from taking place?

What were you told about being a man when you were growing up?

**Closing comments**

We have come to the end of the interview. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me today.

I really appreciate it. Do you have any questions you would like to ask? Or any final comments/thoughts?

Thank you again to contributing to this very important research.

## **Appendix C – Informed Consent Form**

### **University of Cape Town: Department of Psychology**

#### **White men's talk about gender-based violence in South Africa**

##### **1. Invitation and purpose**

You are invited to take part in a research study about white masculinities and gender-based violence in South Africa. I am a Masters student from the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

##### **2. Procedures**

If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you to participate in one interview with me. The interview will be focused on your understandings of gender-based violence in South Africa and what it means to be a man in South Africa today. The interview should last no longer than 90 minutes. To adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols, the interview will be conducted via Zoom. The most convenient time for you and the researcher to have the interview will be arranged via email.

##### **3. Potential inconveniences and discomforts**

Talking about gender-based violence can evoke distressing emotions for some people. If at any point of the interview you feel anxious or uncomfortable, you can choose to stop at any point without any negative consequences. You are also welcome to take a break and step away from the interview and then return once you feel more settled. You are under no obligation to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with.

##### **4. Benefits**

You are given an opportunity to share your views and experiences and your information will contribute to the larger purpose of understanding gender-based violence in South Africa.

##### **5. Privacy and confidentiality**

The interviews will be recorded via Zoom. The researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be stored on password protected storage devices without your name and other personal identifiers. Once the study is complete, your recorded information will be stored for a further 5 years and after this period it will be

destroyed. While this research will be used for educational purposes, there is a chance that this work might be published in an academic journal. In this case, your identity will still be kept confidential. While the interview will be conducted via Zoom, I will be located in a private room that has good soundproofing and therefore no one else in the vicinity will be able to hear what you say to me.

#### **6. Duty to report**

If you disclose to me during the interview that you intend to harm yourself or anyone else, it is my duty to report this. If you disclose to me that there is a minor that is currently being subjected to violence, then I also have a duty to report this.

#### **7. Money matters**

You will not be reimbursed for your participation in this study. However, should you not have access to a reliable internet connection, data will be provided by UCT for you to participate in the Zoom interview.

#### **8. Contact details**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, please contact the **Researchers:** Floretta Boonzaier on 0216503429 or email at Floretta.Boonzaier@uct.ac.za OR Sorrel Pitcher at sorrel.p@gmail.com **OR Contact for the Ethics Committee:** Rosalind Adams on 021 650 3417 or email at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za

#### **9. Signatures**

The participant has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in its performance. They have been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability.

have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and inconveniences. I agree to take part in this research as a participant. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time, and that doing so will not cause me any penalty.

Participants signature:

Date:

**PERMISSION TO RECORD**

I consent to the interview being recorded via Zoom. I understand that the interview will be recorded, and that the researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard my personal information throughout the study.

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Participant's Signature

Date

## Appendix D – Resource List

### ORGANISATIONS DEALING WITH GENDERED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

1. The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO):

Mitchell's Plain: 021-397 3782

Cape Town: 021-422 1690

Bellville: 021-944 3980 or visit their website on: [www.nicro.org.za](http://www.nicro.org.za)

2. Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA):

Observatory: 021 447 7951 or visit their website on: [www.famsa.org.za](http://www.famsa.org.za)

3. Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women:

Wynberg: 021 761 7585 or visit their website on: [www.mosaic.org.za](http://www.mosaic.org.za)

4. Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children:

Manenberg: 27 21 633 5287 or visit their website on:

<http://www.saartjiebaartmancentre.org.za/>

5. Rape Crisis

**Observatory (Head office)**

23 Trill Road, Observatory, 7925, Cape Town

P O Box 46 Observatory 7935

Email: [communications@rapecrisis.org.za](mailto:communications@rapecrisis.org.za)

Complaints: [complaints@rapecrisis.org.za](mailto:complaints@rapecrisis.org.za)

Telephone: 021 447 1467

**Athlone**

335a Klipfontein Road, Athlone

Telephone: 021 684 1180

**Khayelitsha**

89 Msobomvu Drive, Khayelitsha

Telephone: 021 361 9228