Social representations of domestic violence against women in the media: A South African study.

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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

The South African mass media has been recognised as playing an important role in influencing individual understandings of social issues, including domestic violence against women. However, few research studies have exclusively investigated the way in which messages concerning domestic violence against women have come to emerge within the South African media. Therefore the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore social representations of domestic violence evident in the *Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*, and *Daily Voice*. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis was used to identify social representations of domestic violence evident in 25 articles that reported on men's perpetration of violence against women. The analysis suggested that the media in the Western Cape largely promoted distorted social representations of domestic violence in South Africa. For example, domestic violence was constructed as a problem of an unjust justice system, and as an uncontrollable outburst 'provoked' by women partners. As a result, responsibility assigned to male perpetrators for their act(s) of violence were lessened, and the possible contribution of wider-societal influences and other sectors of society undermined. Recommendations in response to the findings of the study and for future South African domestic violence research in the context of media representations are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION

Our increasingly crime-weary nation has been shocked recently by two high-profile murders – those of Anene Booysen and Reeva Steenkamp. Suddenly the high rate of femicide in South Africa is dominating the front pages, and we are being forced to absorb the sobering reality that over 2500 women are murdered every year in our country

[Published in the *Cape Times* on February, 28, 2013].

Since democracy was introduced to South Africa in 1994, the media's focus around violence against women has increased significantly (Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, & Japhet, 2005; Usdin et al., 1999). An act of violence once reported as 'just another racial story' under the apartheid regime, now attracts widespread attention from the media within post-apartheid South Africa (de Nobrega, 2009). At present, the South African media is identified as being instrumental in terms of shaping individual perceptions of violence against women (Usdin et al., 1999). The messages conveyed by the media often determine whether or not female survivors speak-out about their abuse, and the nature of the assistance women receive from the public, criminal justice system, and the health sector (Usdin et al., 1999). Moreover, the influential position afforded to the South African media has also been harnessed in order to promote the *16 Days of Activism for no Violence Against Women and Children Campaign*[1]*;* and to raise public awareness more generally (Harries & Bird, 2005; Usdin et al., 1999). For example, the recent murders of Anene Booysen and Reeva Steenkamp during the month of February 2013, were

[1] 16 Days of Activism for no violence Against Women and Children is an international campaign established by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) in New Jersey (USA) in 1991 (Harries & Bird, 2005). It runs from the 25th of November (which is the international day for the elimination of violence against women) through to the international human rights day on the 10th of December (Harries & Bird, 2005). The campaign has been used as an organising strategy by communities and groups to end violence against women and children (Harries & Bird, 2005).

used by journalists to educate media audiences as to the disproportionately high levels of gender-based violence that are evident within the South African context. However, whilst media reports emphasised the ongoing crisis of gender-based violence in South Africa for several weeks, journalists did not hesitate to turn these murders into sensationalist stories. Media coverage, consistent with Wasserman's (2010) definition of tabloid journalism, continually used catchy phrases and magnified the gruesome details of the murder above the experience of the victim[2] in order to keep audiences entertained (Wasserman, 2010). This tabloid-style was also noted within the findings of previous studies that have attempted to explore the possible link between the media and violence against women in South Africa (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; MMP, 2004; Omarjee, 2001).

In post-apartheid South Africa, research studies have begun to examine the portrayal of gender-based violence in the South African media (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; MMP, 2004; Omarjee, 2001). As a result, a number of criticisms have been levelled against the South African media for the manner in which it tends to represent gender-based violence (Harris & Bird, 2005; MMP, 2004). For example, research studies conducted by the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) since 1993, have indicated that journalists report gender-based violence predominantly in a simplistic and event-based fashion, and reinforced the victim-status of the women under discussion (MMP, 2004; Usdin et al., 1999). Of equal importance, it was also revealed that in many instances either the violation or the perpetrator would be placed at the heart of the media coverage, rather than the experience of the victim (MMP,

[2] The current study acknowledges the fact that women, who experience abuse by male partners, cannot always be defined as victims. This issue will be addressed later in the analysis and discussion chapter of the dissertation.

2004; Usdin et al., 1999). Similarly, three empirical studies by Boswell (2003), Lewis and Orderson (2012), and Omarjee (2001) have brought to light the shortcomings of media reports that cover stories of gender-based violence. In these studies it was highlighted that gender-based violence was not seen as a serious crime by newspapers (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; Omarjee, 2001). Journalists sensationalise and trivialise stories related to gender-based violence, and deem such stories not newsworthy to appear on the front page of newspapers (Boswell, 2003). Instead stories that made reference to gender-based violence would be published outside of core business section, steering clear of proactive commentary, or extensive critical investigation (Lewis & Orderson, 2012). All three studies, alongside the MMP projects, have made significant contributions in terms of highlighting how the media often does not necessarily function to promote a transformative understanding of gender-based violence in South Africa. Nevertheless, even though the aforementioned studies have contributed to understanding the possible function of media in the context of gender-based violence; none of these studies have critically examined the way men's violence against a female partner is constructed within the South African media. The current study sought to investigate the way that domestic violence against women is represented in three newspapers that attracted the highest readership in the Western Cape (i.e., *Daily Voice*, *Cape Argus,* and *Cape Times*) through the lens of social representations theory. Adopting social representations theory as a theoretical framework for the current study allowed for an in-depth understanding and analysis of the Western Cape mass media in relation to domestic violence against women (Höijer, 2011). Furthermore, in contrast to the study conducted by MMP (2004) that only monitored media coverage of gender-based violence over the 16 Days of Activism campaigns;

this project went beyond those campaigns and collected newspaper reports that made reference to the topic of domestic violence against women over a longer period of time.

1.1 Background/Rationale of study

Domestic violence[3] is a serious and widespread social problem (Prinsloo, 2007). It is increasingly being identified as a public health problem and is also associated with physical injuries, as well as a wide range of mental, emotional, psychological, and physical health problems (Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002). Research conducted by the World Health Organisation, showed that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2013). Similarly to the global trend, violence against women and children is widespread and on the increase in South Africa (van der Hoven, 2001). South Africa has one of the highest statistics of intimate partner violence in the world (de la Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011). A recent research brief released by the Medical Research Council (MRC) revealed that intimate partner femicide is the leading cause of death among South African women (Abrahams, Mathews, Jewkes, Martin, & Lombard, 2012).

Studies in the United States have begun to explore the ways in which the media might influence the perpetration of men's violence against women (Berns, 1999; Berns, 2001; Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Gillespie, Richards, Givens, & Smith, 2013; Morgan & Politoff, 2012;

[3] This dissertation defines domestic violence as the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, harassment, stalking, economic abuse, damage to property, and any other abusive behaviour inflicted upon a woman either by a former or current intimate male partner (Jewkes et al., 2002; NCADV, 2007). Furthermore, the terms domestic violence, men's violence against women partners, and intimate partner violence will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

Nettleton, 2011; Taylor, 2009). A key finding was that the media reframed domestic violence in a way that obscured the male perpetrator's role while placing the burden of responsibility on the female partner (Berns, 2001; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Gillespie et al., 2013; Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Nettleton, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Presently no study has exclusively investigated the social representations of domestic violence against women that emerge within the South African media. Currently the South African media is identified as a powerful and influential part of South African society, and being recognised as one of Africa's major media players (MDDA, 2009). Howarth (2006) argued that wider-societal influences, such as media, play an important role in generating and maintaining social representations of social phenomena, such as domestic violence against women. Since the media is argued to be a powerful institution within the South African context, it emphasised the significance of the current study.

1.2 Outline of thesis

Following the introduction and background provided in chapter one, the remainder of the thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two reviews social representations theory as well as how the theory relates to the media, a broader societal source of knowledge. In addition, the chapter explores the media's representations of domestic violence on an international level and gender-based violence in South Africa specifically. Chapter Three outlines the methodology of the study. The chapter elaborates on the research design, methods of data collection and sampling, ethical considerations of the study, and the method of data analysis. Furthermore, the chapter will address the researcher's subjective experience throughout the research process, and the ways

in which the current study might be evaluated. Chapter Four explores the findings that were obtained by analysing social representations of domestic violence against women within three local newspapers. In the fifth and final chapter of the thesis, the findings from this study will be summarised and discussed in relation to violence against women in the South African context. Furthermore, the chapter outlines recommendations in response to the findings of the study and for future South African domestic violence research in the context of media representations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter will review social representations theory as well as how the theory relates to the mass media, a broader societal source of knowledge. Furthermore, it will explore existing literature that has examined the media's representations of domestic violence on an international level and gender-based violence in South Africa. For the purpose of the scope of the study, media will be defined in terms of printed forms of media.

2.1 Introduction

Historically, domestic violence against women was not considered as a serious social problem, and was perceived as a private matter (Harway & O'Neil, 1999). However, since the late 1970s, domestic violence was identified by feminist scholars as a widespread social problem affecting all societies, and it brought about the emergence of several theories attempting to explain how men might come to be perpetrators of domestic violence (Bonier, 2003). Much of the available literature can be categorized into three main frameworks: individual-psychological perspectives, societal perspectives, and feminist perspectives (Anderson & Schlossberg, 1999; Loseke, 2005). Although these theoretical frameworks have made significant contributions to understanding the perpetration of men's violence against women partners, they do not allow for an explicit and critical analysis of societal influences, such as the media. Social representations theory, however, allows for an in-depth analysis of the media in relation to domestic violence by linking the individual and society together (Höijer, 2011). Therefore this chapter will exclusively focus on social representations theory in the context of media and domestic violence against women.

2.1.1 Social Representations Theory

Social representations theory is a social psychological theory that holds that knowledge is socially constructed and not a product of social cognition (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). The theory was originally developed by Serge Moscovici, in the 1960's (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). It maintains that social psychological phenomena and its processes can only be truly understood if they are viewed as being entrenched in historical, cultural, and macro social conditions (Wagner et al., 1999). Furthermore, a theory of social representations was formulated to counter the shortcomings of the widespread theories and approaches in social psychology that were based on methodological individualism and on an epistemology which separates the subject from the object (Voelklien & Howarth, 2005; Wagner et al., 1999; Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Social representations[4] refer to the collective cognitions, norms, behaviours, languages, images, and 'thought systems' of societies or groups of people (Höijer, 2011; Levin-Rozalis, Bar-on, & Hartaf, 2003). Social representations can be explained only in the social context of a social situation (e.g., politics, economics, and religion) (Levin-Rozalis et al., 2003), thus social representations are always related to social, cultural situations, and/or symbolic objects (Höijer, 2011; Levin-Rozalis et al., 2003). Höijer (2011) adds that social representations are shaped by everyday thinking that is not made up of logical and coherent thought patterns, but by

[4] Moscovici (1988) identifies "social representations as the contents of everyday thinking and the stock of ideas that give coherence to our religious beliefs, political ideas, and the connections we create spontaneously as we breathe. They make it possible for us to classify persons and objects, to compare and explain behaviours and to objectify them as part of our social setting. While representations are often to be located in the minds of men and women, they can just as often be found in the world, and as such examined separately"(p. 214).

different, sometimes contradictory forms of thinking. The above-mentioned conceptual process is known as *cognitive polybasic*[5].

Moscovici (1988) makes a clear distinction between three different types of social representations: hegemonic, polemic, and emancipated representations. *Hegemonic representations* "are shared by most members of a nation, political party, or a structured macro unit" (Moscovici, 1988, p. 221). *Polemic representations* stem from conflicts amongst groups or controversies in a society (Wagner & Hayes, 2005), such as, liberalism, and communism (Moscovici, 1988). *Emancipated representations* are birthed from subgroups that create their own versions of social phenomena with a certain degree of autonomy (Moscovici, 1988).

One of the critical issues that are of importance is how social representations function (Howarth, 2006). Howarth (2006) argued that social representations allow individuals to make sense of the world in which they live. In doing so, individuals convert and channel social representations into a particular social reality for others and themselves (Howarth, 2006; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Moreover, social representations also permit individuals to make sense of socially significant phenomena (Howarth, 2006; Joffe, 2002). In this way, social representations do not simply inform or reflect reality, but also, by means of intersubjectivity, shape reality (Howarth, 2006). Additionally, social representations promote unity and facilitate communication between group members (Joffe, 2002; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). In this instance, shared representations become the basis of identification for the group, which distinguishes it from its out-groups (Joffe, 1998, 2002). The in-group would associate certain practices and

[5] A concept of social representations theory used to argue that everyday thinking about something is made up of different, sometimes contradictory, forms of thinking (Höijer, 2011).

norms with the other, which in turn builds the cohesion and identity of the in-group (Joffe, 1998). As Joffe (1998) argued, “the deviant other is needed to define the upright, righteous self” (p. 29) .One example which illustrates the latter phenomenon of group cohesion is the process of constructing conspiracy theories relating to and supposedly explaining the existence of AIDS (Joffe, 1998). The in-group (i.e., heterosexual men and women) may associate the transmission of AIDS to the out-group (i.e., homosexual men and women) by defining it as, for example, the “the gay plague” (Joffe, 1995, p. 2). The blaming of homosexual men and women subsequently allows heterosexual men and women to feel protected and safe (Joffe, 1995). Therefore heterosexual men and women may feel that precautionary measures are not necessary because they are not vulnerable to contracting the ‘virus of the out-group’ (Joffe, 1995).

A theory of social representations also argued that collective cognition is produced through communication (Höjier, 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). The aforementioned theory claims that two basic socio-cognitive communicative mechanisms produce representations: anchoring and objectifying (Höjier, 2011). Anchoring could be defined as the mechanism that allows individuals to anchor foreign ideas into known contexts and gradually the unfamiliar becomes familiar (Höjier, 2011; Laszlo, 1997; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Objectification is a mechanism that permits individuals “to turn something abstract into something concrete, to transfer what is in the mind to something existing in physical world” (Moscovici, 1984, p. 29). These socio-cognitive processes complement each other (Moscovici, 1984). Anchoring starts the process of generating a representation and objectification completes it (Moscovici, 1984). For example, when readers are continuously confronted with distorted accounts of domestic violence in local

newspapers (e.g., that intimate partner violence is a private issue), they may begin to perceive these misguided ideas to be a true reflection of the phenomenon (Anchoring). In effect, readers, when confronted with incidents of intimate partner violence, may be reluctant to provide any kind of intervention as they perceive the violence to be a private matter that requires no external intervention (Objectification).

Social representations theory is known to be useful for investigating social phenomena, such as HIV/AIDS, the marginalisation of refugees, racism, health, and the disabilities that plague society (Howarth, 2006; Joffe, 2002; Moloney, 2010; Winskell, Beres, Hill, Mbakwen, & Obyerodhyambo, 2011). However, there has been only one study that has focused exclusively on social representations and domestic violence against women. A study conducted by Levin-Rozalis and colleagues (2003) investigated the emergence of social representations among abusive men within a treatment centre in Israel. This study made a significant contribution to social representations research as it explored the actual process of creating social representations, rather than examining existing social representations, as previous studies had done (Levin-Rozalis et al., 2003). Lezin-Rozalis and colleagues (2003) argued that understanding the formation-process might help researchers to comprehend the maintenance, the changes, and the development of social representations. In much the same way, the employment of social representations theory could be beneficial for researchers of domestic violence against women. As the primary success of social representations theory relates to the investigation of complex social phenomena (Marková, 2008), a focus on social representations within the context of domestic violence research may generate further insights and understandings regarding the complexities inherent to this pervasive phenomenon. Thus, through the

employment of cognitive processes – such as anchoring and objection – research might shed light upon the ways in which people make sense of violence against women within certain social groups. Nevertheless, the study conducted by Levin-Rozalis et al. (2003) was confined to investigating the construction of social representations among abusive men within the immediate environment of the treatment centre (Levin-Rozalis et al., 2003). The current study, however, aimed to focus more attention on the ways in which the media – a broader societal source of knowledge – represented domestic violence against women. At present the media is identified as a leading source of communication (Höjier, 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005), which further emphasised the importance of the current study.

2.1.2 Social Representations Theory and the Media

Media could be defined as the "main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment, which is television, radio, newspapers, and the internet" (Hornby, 2005, p. 916). Wagner and Hayes (2005) reasoned that the emergence of social representations stems not only from conversations in small groups at certain locations, but also from collective phenomena or social institutions, such as the media. Social representations theorists have identified the mass media to be instrumental in both the formation of social representations, and in transforming "expert knowledge" into lay knowledge (Höjier, 2011; Joffe, 2002, p. 561; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Joffe (2002) contended that an individual's first encounter with a social phenomenon, such as AIDS, is often through the mass media, or via other people relaying information presented by the mass media. However, the mass media, when reporting on a social phenomenon, do not simply present "photocopy" (p. 561) information of social

phenomena; but the media also simplifies and sensationalises issues related to a social phenomenon to hold the attention of mass audiences (Joffe, 2002). In view of what has been reported in the media, individuals would then forge, shape, and frame perceptions, ideas, and beliefs of social phenomena, such as domestic violence against women (Boswell, 2003; Sanson et al., 2000).

Social representations scholars have explained the media's function in transferring expert knowledge into lay thinking using three reporting styles: (1) diffusion, (2) propagation, and (3) propaganda (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Breakwell, 1993; de Rosa, 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Firstly, with regards to diffusion: journalists view themselves as readers, and as recipients of new knowledge; hence they would simply report information reflecting the opinions of component experts without any intentions (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). The presentation of information in the media report would be concrete, attractive, quick, aimed at satisfying the interest of the reader, and with no intention to enforce anything upon the reader (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Secondly, in contrast to the diffusion reporting style, journalists report information in the style of propagation with a clear aim in mind (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Reports are written in an attempt not to introduce new ways of behaviour and thought, but to strengthen norms by providing new meanings (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).For example, newspapers and magazines affiliated to the Catholic Church - a well-structured group, would integrate new phenomena and scientific discoveries that will enhance its stern doctrine (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Lastly, in terms of propaganda, media reports are written in aid of political enlightenment (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).The media acts as a tool to promote the identity of a group by denying or eliminating internal contradictions and

magnifying the external threat (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Breakwell, 1993; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Additionally, the key aim of the reporting style is to manipulate audiences and permanently change the existing world-view by introducing new situational demands (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

The mass media has been identified as the most prevalent method of communication within contemporary societies (Höjier, 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). It is highly influential in terms of educating its audience, providing a reflection of reality, and constructing individual identities and perceptions (Damean, 2006; Dines & Humez, 2003; Kabongo, 2007). Media researchers, however, have also argued that the media is instrumental in promoting inequalities found in post-industrialised societies (Boswell, 2003; Collins, 2004; Das, 2012; Dines & Humez, 2003; Sparks, 2009; Van Dijk, 1995). For example, researchers have shown that the media typically promotes and perpetuates stereotypical ideologies of gender, race, class, sexuality, politics, exploitation, marginalisation, and violence against women (Boswell, 2003; Collins, 2004; Das, 2012; Sparks, 2009; Van Dijk, 1995). Consequently, various scholars have argued that the media's representations of domestic violence are products of unequal gender roles and the inferior status of women compared to men (Barker, 2012; Das, 2012; Hermes, 2007; Trujillo, 1999; van der Watt, 2007). In view of the argument above, the next section will first explore the media's representations of gender roles (i.e., femininity and masculinity), and then turn its focus to the representations of domestic violence presented in the media.

2.1.2.1 The media and gender roles

The media, with its capacity to broadcast information to individuals all over the world, is also crucial in reflecting, constructing, and disseminating gender ideologies (Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Hermes, 2007). More specifically, the media's constructions of femininity and masculinity promote and legitimate dominant ideologies that dictate the so called 'proper' or normalised behaviour for men and for women (Hermes, 2007).

2.1.2.1.1 Femininity

Media researchers hold that the media's portrayal of femininity is commonly shaped by traditional frameworks, which function to sustain patriarchal gender relations (Damean, 2006; Višnjić, 2009).

In recent years, representations of femininity within the media have transformed dramatically (Damean, 2006; Ingham, 1995). The media now accommodates the age of the independent, professional, and successful women in modern society (Damean, 2006; Ingham, 1995). Nevertheless, Das (2012) stated that in midst of this transformation femininity is still largely constructed in the media along the lines of patriarchal dominance that exists within society. Cultural theorists have argued that the media is pivotal in transmitting patriarchal ideologies regarding the position of women in society (Ashong & Batta, 2011; Jóhannsdóttir, 2009; Kabongo, 2007; Sanson et al., 2000). Scholars from the cultural perspective have suggested that the media perpetuates patriarchal dominance in two ways: (1) It promotes stereotypes of gender roles, and (2) it marginalises women in the public sphere (Ashong & Batta, 2011). Firstly, media researchers have revealed that the media would commonly promote stereotypical

ideologies of gender by portraying women as weak, naturally nurturing, helpless victims of men's violence, frail, manipulative, dependent, submissive, and fighting to co-exist and survive in a man's world (Barker, 2012; Das, 2012; Dill & Thill, 2007; Sanson et al., 2000). Barker's (2012) study that investigated discursive representations of femininity in contemporary South African women's magazines, found that publications, such as *Cosmopolitan* reinforced the traditional nurturing, subordinate position of women. In another study conducted by Srivastava and Agarwal (2004) which investigated portrayals of violence against women in the media in relation to the perpetration of violence against women, it was found that women were commonly depicted as tortured victims of men's violence (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2004).

Secondly, cultural theorists have also suggested that patriarchal dominance is magnified in the media through the marginalisation of women.The marginalisation of women in the media could be explained through the idea of *assumed alienation of women*; which states that through the promotion of patriarchy as a worldview, images of men as the centre of reality become normalised (Ashong & Batta, 2011). As a result, women are underrepresented, and their issues trivialised (Ashong & Batta, 2011; Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Dill & Thill, 2007; Jóhannsdóttir, 2009). A study conducted by Nowosenetz (2007) exploring the construction of masculinity and femininity in alcohol advertisements in men's magazines in South Africa, was consistent with the argument above. In her study she found that women being underrepresented in advertisements led to the reinforcement of patriarchal discourses – rendering women as an insignificant part of society, only existing to serve the needs of men (Nowosenetz, 2007). Furthermore, the male-dominated media industry also fosters the marginalisation and construction of femininity along the lines of patriarchy (Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Ingham, 1995;

Jóhannsdóttir, 2009). In Jóhannsdóttir's (2009) paper on patriarchy and the subordination of women, she argued that one of the direct consequences of a male-dominated media industry is that women are framed as mere sexual objects. She added that advertisement-producers of well-known brands (including, *Dolce & Gabbana* and *Yorkie-chocolate*) are continually urging women to take part in sexualised behaviour, allowing men to take control of them, and even encouraging women to get ready to be abused sexually (Jóhannsdóttir, 2009). Jóhannsdóttir's (2009) argued that women are marginalised and kept in subordinate positions when they are presented as being mere sexual objects.

Like patriarchy, the media's construction of femininity is also shaped in accordance with race (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Mainstream media within the United States has been criticised greatly for its negative depictions of African American women (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). One of the main reasons for the latter occurrence is that such depictions within the media promote a hegemonic ideology - a white patriarchal discourse that represents white women as the ideal (Deliovsky, 2008). This hegemony is characterised in terms of five elements: (1) beauty: the ideal woman is slim, well groomed, blonde, has exquisite taste in clothing, and takes pride in the presentation of her home; (2) demeanour: she should be loving, caring, nurturing, gentle, passive, and sensitive; (3) marriage and family arrangements: a woman should be submissive to her husband, and caregiver to her family, putting their needs before her own; (4) sexuality: a woman is heterosexual; and (5) race: white femininity constitutes the ideal from which to construct a female identity (Collins, 2004; Deliovsky, 2008; McCue, 1995).These elements of hegemonic femininity are frequently advertised through social networks and cultural institutions, including the mass media (Cole & Zucker, 2007). All women are meant to aspire

toward these feminine ideals in order to construct and perform gender (Collins, 2004). However, only the dominant cultural ideals of femininity and white upper-middle class women successfully meet these feminine ideals, earning them value within mainstream society (Collins, 2004). Collins (2004) and Deliovsky (2008) suggested that white women successfully meet the so-called normative feminine ideals because they are perceived as being conservative, submissive, nurturing, educated, and beautiful, with desirable body types. A direct consequence of the above phenomenon is that black women are devalued as the ideology becomes the most basic way of representing normative feminine behaviour for all femininities (Collins, 2004). In this regard, black women are positioned at the bottom of the gender hierarchy, and are faced with virulent stereotyping (Cole & Zucker, 2007). For that reason, black women are commonly represented by the media as being aggressive, mammies, matriarchs, oversexed-black-Jezebels, oversexed fantasy objects, and welfare mothers (Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Cole & Zucker, 2007; Mayo, 2010; Meyers, 2004). Although vast amounts of research have investigated the media's representation of black and white women, media scholars have also examined how femininity amongst Asian and Latino women is constructed in the media (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that Latino and Asian women are represented as child-like, submissive, aggressive, dishonest, silent, eager for sex, and as passive figures that exist merely to serve men (Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Ceulemans & Fauconnier, 1979; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

2.1.2.1.2 Masculinity

As with femininity, media plays an integral role in the construction, maintenance, and representation of masculinity (Shroeder & Zwick, 2004). The media is viewed as an engine that suggests gender roles, prescribes sexual identities, and promotes images and ideas about what it means to be a 'man' (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004; van der Watt, 2007). These representations of masculinity are reflective of the patriarchal system, based on the dominance of heterosexual men and the marginalisation of homosexual men (Trujillo, 1999).

Like women, the lives of men and the media's representations of masculinity have undergone major transformation (Hermes, 2007). Former bread-winners and heads of households are now able to engage in supposedly egalitarian relationships (Hermes, 2007). However, Shroeder and Zwick (2004) and Dill and Thill (2007) promulgated that masculine activities in the media are still characterised by exaggerated macho activities, such as a hardened sexual attitude, a pronounced desire for action and danger, driving fast cars, having a good appetite, smoking cigars, and drinking liquor. Trujillo (1999) argued that the perpetuation of such stereotypes is a direct consequence of the dominant and unwavering presence of hegemonic masculine norms and ideas in the media. Hegemonic masculinity could be defined as "the culturally idealized form of the male" (Connell, 1990, p. 83). Trujillo (1999) suggested that the media, when promoting hegemonic masculinity, uses the following five features: (1) physical force and control, (2) occupational achievements, (3) familial patriarchy, (4) frontiermanship, and (5) heterosexuality as the ideal and normative reflection of masculinity. The following section will

discuss how hegemonic masculinity is represented in the media in accordance to the five features outlined above.

Firstly, Trujillo (1999) argued that masculinity is hegemonic in the media when power is defined in terms of physical force and control. In the media the male body is used as vehicle to promote force and control, which in turn reaffirms men's position of power and women's subordinate position (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Trujillo, 1999). By force and control being channeled into male bodies, the position of superiority held by men is naturalised (Trujillo, 1999). Schroeder and Zwick (2004) and van der Watt (2007) suggested that men's lifestyle magazines (such *Men's Health* and *Gear*) often encourage men to view their own bodies as "sites of identity management" (p. 24), and aspire towards the 'muscle-man' look. This image is to be admired, celebrated, and enjoyed (van der Watt, 2007).The 'muscle-man' image is illustrated in terms of a massive chest, strong arms and shoulder muscles, and a narrow waist (R. Elliott & L. Elliott, 2005; van der Watt, 2007). In this manner, the male body becomes the site of power that is expressed through various masculine activities, like physical strength, force, speed, control, toughness, and the practice of domination over an intimate female partner (Trujillo, 1999).

Secondly, Trujillo (1999) further showed that the media defines hegemonic masculinity according to occupational achievement in an industrial capitalistic society. He argued that work itself is constructed along gender lines, thus division of labour is classified in terms of either "men's work" or "women's work" (Trujillo, 1999, p. 9). With this said, Brescoll, Uhlmann, Moss-Racusin, and Sarnell (2011) contended that economic achievement is a key area in which

masculinity is proven. Men are therefore expected to pursue careers paths in which they have access to high salaries, exercise power and influence over others, have a high-level of responsibility, and receive high-levels of prestige (Weisgram, Dinella, & Fulcher, 2011). In contrast, in situations where men occupy highly feminised occupations (e.g., pre-school educator or a nurse); their masculinity comes under question (Brescoll et al., 2011). In Jerome's (2008) analysis of men and masculinity in men's stylish lifestyle magazine, he noted that men's magazines (namely *GQ* (i.e., *Gentlemen's Quarterly*), *Esquire, and Arena*) commonly reinforced traditional ideologies of masculinity by its promotion of occupational roles characterised by high-levels of power.

Thirdly, the mass media is inclined to constitute hegemonic masculinity in terms of patriarchy (Trujillo, 1999). Patriarchy is manifested by men holding a position of superiority, practicing dominance and power over women, men being portrayed as providers for the family, authoritarian, aggressive; whereas women are perceived as sexual objects, care-givers, and nurturing mothers (McCue, 1995; Trujillo, 1999). Informing this argument, van der Watt (2007) claimed that even though in recent years the media's representation of masculinity has become less stereotypical; factors, such as '*preferred meaning*[6]', and the strong white male influence that controls the media industry – still facilitates the construction of hegemonic masculinity along the lines of patriarchy. In De Gregorio Godeo's (2006) study, for example, which explored identity issues in British men's magazines, it was argued that although the media openly

[6] 'Preferred meaning' refers to reflecting the interest of the dominant groups (van der Watt, 2007).

accepted the emergence of the modern masculinity (i.e., *newmannism*[7]) in the eighties; men's magazines (such as *Sky Magazine*, *FHM* (i.e., *For Him Magazine*), *GQ*, and *Arena*) still reassert traditional masculinity - "a tough independent authority" (p. 51). In Nowosenetz's (2007) discourse analysis performed on nine alcohol advertisements in South African magazines, it was also found that men's magazines and in particularly, *GQ* and *FHM* still reiterated masculine discourses of dominance, aggression, and control (Nowosenetz, 2007).

Fourth, "masculinity is hegemonic as symbolized by the daring, romantic/frontiersman of yesteryear and of the present-day outdoorsman" (Trujillo, 1999, p. 2). Put more simply, the media depicts men as daring, courageous, adventurous, outgoing, occupying positions outside the home, and are fond of high-risk activities (Brannon, 2004; Flook, 2007; Herrington & Nee, 2005).

Fifth, masculinity is only hegemonic when it is heterosexual (Trujillo, 1999). Heterosexuality is characterised by an adult male's social relationships with men and intimate and sexual relationship with women (Trujillo, 1999). Heterosexuality is not effeminate in physical appearance (Trujillo, 1999). Although the media has undergone significant transformations in terms of the construction of masculinity (such as embracing of newmannism to some degree), masculinity is still constructed through a heterosexual lens within the media (De Gregorio Godeo, 2006; Molina, 2006). Therefore in situations where media attention is accorded to

[7] The concept of *newmannism* "represents the ideal partner for the modern, liberated, heterosexual woman. He is softer, more sensitive and caring individual, who also avoids sexist language, change nappies, and loves to shop all day for his own clothes" (De Gregorio Godeo, 2006, p. 47).

homosexual men, they are subjected to *symbolic annihilation*[8]*;* according to Molina (2006), homosexual men are rarely or never featured in the media (Molina, 2006). When homosexual men are represented in the media, it is often in an unrealistically negative light and with the purpose to reinforce stereotypes. For example, homosexual men are commonly presented as being overly friendly, colourful and flamboyant, or simply as being dangerous psychopaths (Molina, 2006). In Sanger's (2007) analysis of the representations of gender, sexuality, and race in South African men's magazines, it was highlighted that despite the large number of homosexual readers of men's magazines, homosexual readers are largely ignored, underrepresented, and are constructed as being abnormal. For example, Sanger (2007) argued that journalists would purposefully report homosexual men as partaking in abnormal sexual activities, such as cannibalism, in order to represent homosexual subjectivities as being psychopathological and abhorrent.

While the issue of race is not addressed by Trujillo (1999), the media's construction of hegemonic masculinity is intertwined with the construct of race (Nowosenetz, 2007). In this vein, white, heterosexual, and middle-class masculinity is represented as the ideal site for the construction of normative and ideal versions of masculinity (Clowes, 2003; Gibbs & Jobson, 2011; Nowosenetz, 2007). Sanger (2007) argued that in South African magazines (such as *Men's Health, FHM*, and *Blink*) the one-sided portrayal of masculinity continues to be magnified. In these magazines whiteness serves as the foundation upon which the 'other' is defined (Sanger, 2007). Sanger (2007) further pointed out that journalists would often praise black men for

[8] Symbolic annihilation refers to the "absence", "condemnation", "trivialization", or underrepresentation of a particular group in the media (Coleman & Yochim, 2008, p. 4922). It is generally applied to women and sexual and racial minorities (Coleman & Yochim, 2008).

striving towards fulfilling the white ideals of masculinity, thereby performing the so-called 'true masculinity'. Examples of such actions include, mountain climbing and swimming (Sanger, 2007). Furthermore, in opposition to the civilised and sensitive characters (to a certain extent) that white men typically represent in media portrayals, black masculinity is depicted as representing the 'deviant and uncivilised other' (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Black masculinity is characterised largely in terms of magnified aggression, sexual appetite, sexual domination, violent superiority, and violent criminal behaviour (Enck-Wanzer, 2009). Subsequently, Enck-Wanzer (2009) contended that every so often media reports would exclusively blame the occurrences of domestic violence against women on 'black aggression' or hyper-masculinity.

In summary, the media has been identified as playing an active role in promoting and perpetuating traditional, unequal ideologies of gender roles (i.e., masculinity and femininity). The media's representations of gender roles has been argued to normalise the practice of aggression amongst men, often exercised over women, who in turn, are portrayed as helpless victims of men's violence. The next section will examine the ways men's perpetration of domestic violence against an intimate female partner has been represented in the media. This section will first focus on the media's representations of domestic violence on an international level, followed by a more localised investigation examining the ways gender-based violence is represented in the South African media.

2.2 Domestic violence and the media `

The mass media has been interpreted as playing an important role in constructing society's understanding of social issues, including domestic violence against women (Berns, 2001;

Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). Media forms, such as popular magazines, newspapers, movies, and television programmes are all identified as being authoritative and important sources form which images of domestic violence are constructed and reproduced (Berns, 2001; Ferguson et al., 2008; Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Nettleton, 2011; Thill & Dill, 2009). From these media sources, individuals use the images presented by media to construct their own perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of what is normal and acceptable in terms of domestic violence (Berns, 2001; Morgan & Politoff, 2012). However, researchers have indicated that the media's representations of domestic violence often tend to be distorted or skewed (Berns, 2001; Taylor, 2009; Thill & Dill, 2009). For example, the media would typically underrepresent stories of domestic violence, focus primarily upon female victims of domestic violence, and give little or no attention to perpetrators of domestic violence (Berns, 1999; Berns, 2001; Taylor, 2009; Thill & Dill, 2009). Additionally, the media are prone to sensationalising and trivialising stories of domestic violence (Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Nettleton, 2011; Ryan, Anastario, & DaCunba, 2006; Wilcox, 2008). The above-mentioned issues often take on the form of frames through which domestic violence is represented in the media.

Media frames[9] of domestic violence are constructed on the basis three components: sources, context, and word choice or language (Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). In terms of *source*, the police and criminal justice system routinely act as the primary source of reference to obtain insight concerning incidents of abuse against women (Berns, 2001; Taylor, 2009). Therefore, media news on domestic violence are from a criminal justice system and police perspective

[9] Media frames are "conceptually defined as central organizing ideas or story lines that provide meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 103).

(Taylor, 2009). However, because domestic violence is usually underreported to the police, it commonly leads to false depictions of domestic violence as well as inaccurate information of some individual cases of domestic violence in the media (Taylor, 2009). Moreover, other people, such as the friends and families of the couple involved, or professional female advocates, typically constitute more reliable sources than the police, in terms of information-provision regarding the context of the relationship under discussion (Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). Despite this, reporters are typically prone to approaching the neighbours of the involved couple in order to obtain insights and observations (Berns, 2001; Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). Often the above phenomenon leads to the perpetuation of stereotypes associated with domestic violence, including the notion that domestic violence may be an unpredictable phenomenon or an isolated act of violence with no other history of similar violence. On the other hand, there may simply be no indication that domestic violence is thought of as a social problem at all (Ryan et al., 2006).

In terms of *context*, Gillespie et al. (2013) stated "when considering how domestic violence is framed by the media it is necessary to examine the context of the incident" (p. 5). Campbell and colleagues maintained that domestic violence would be represented in a more comprehensive manner if the media critically evaluated the history of both the victim and the perpetrator (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007). Unfortunately, the media's representations of domestic violence often do not satisfactorily contextualise incidents of domestic violence (Gillespie et al., 2013). All too often details dealing with the couple's past are either non-existent or appear at the end of the article (Gillespie et al., 2013). For example, in Bullock and Cubert's (2002) content and frame analysis of how newspapers portray domestic

violence, and its victims, it was found that more than two thirds of the articles in their sample of newspaper coverage from 1998 “elaborated little” (p. 483) with regards to the context of domestic violence. Thus, the violence continued to be represented as an isolated incident (Gillespie et al., 2013).

In terms of *Language*, journalist’s wording or language also impact the framing of domestic violence (Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). Wording or language usage in both the title/headline and throughout the article determines the public’s perception of an event and the participants involved (Domingo, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). For example, language used to describe female victims of domestic violence is often highly sexualised, oppressive, and likely to portray the perpetrator as blameless. Additionally, such language typically magnifies harmful cultural myths and promotes traditional representations of gender stereotypes (Gillespie et al., 2013; Taylor, 2009). In Bullock’s (2007) study of femicide coverage in all Utah newspapers, it was revealed that “most coverage portrayed domestic violence fatalities in ways that supported patriarchal institutions such as law enforcement and legal systems and obscured connections between violence against women and societal structures that help preserve gender-based power”(p. 36).

The common frames used by the media to shape stories of domestic violence often, include the underrepresentation of stories of domestic violence (Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Nettleton, 2011; Ryan et al., 2006; Wilcox, 2008).The media has often been criticised for giving greater attention to other violent crimes, such as those of a sexual and violent nature, while approaching crimes related to domestic violence with little interest (Wilcox, 2008). In response to the former

argument, Gilchrist (2010) associated the underrepresentation of domestic violence in the media to the issue of 'newsworthiness'. Newsworthiness is defined as "what makes a story worth telling" (Jiwani, 2006, p. 38). The specific criteria of newsworthiness are largely dependent on the opinion of the journalist and the news organisation (Gilchrist, 2010; Wilcox, 2008). So, stories deemed newsworthy are generally characterised by drama, action, and conflict (Gilchrist, 2010). Stories are aimed at keeping media audiences captivated (Gilchrist, 2010). Unfortunately, often times, violence against women is considered to be too ordinary to be 'newsworthy' (Gilchrist, 2010). Moreover, Wilcox (2008) and Gilchrist (2010) identified the traditional masculinist lens through which domestic violence is viewed, as another reason to why domestic violence receives such limited media coverage. From this perspective, violence is considered to be an aggressive act committed in the street, and any other public area, which largely involves male-on-male violence (Wilcox, 2008). Domestic violence, which usually takes place in the home, is not classified as a form of assault, but a special class of victimization (Naffine, 1996). Researchers have argued that the dominant discourse of silence and stigmatisation surrounding the issue of domestic violence is perpetuated when it receives limited media coverage (Gilchrist, 2010; Wilcox, 2008).

By contrast, the mass media has also been deemed problematic for its overrepresentation of physical and extreme cases of domestic violence (Wilcox, 2008). Wilcox (2008) pointed out that media reports tend to emphasise domestic violence murders or the most gruesome cases above other cases of domestic violence. Although the murder of an intimate female partner is the most serious outcome of domestic violence, focusing only upon physical acts of abuse distorts the true reality of domestic violence, which is multifaceted and inclusive of emotional

and psychological abuse (Wilcox, 2008). Wilcox (2008) postulated that the media's continual emphasis on physical acts of abuse in relation to domestic violence, leads to a widespread perception of domestic violence as a distinct incident of physical violence as opposed to it being continuous process of abuse, where the portrayal of male power and control does not depend on violent acts alone. Nevertheless, feminist researchers have argued against the overrepresentation of physical violence in relation to domestic violence found in the media (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Burman, Brown, & Batchelor, 2003). Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk (2011) and Burman and colleagues (2003) highlighted that women are more prone to perceive verbal and psychological abuse as an expression of violence, defining it as being more serious and damaging than physical abuse.

The media's coverage on domestic violence has also come under much scrutiny because of the imbalanced discourses of violence against women it presents in local newspapers and magazines (Nettleton, 2011). For example, in Nettleton's work on domestic violence in men and women magazines, she found, by means of a discourse analysis, that women's magazines (such as *Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan*, and *O*: The *Oprah Magazine*) often held the female victim responsible for domestic violence. These magazines would often blame women for choosing the wrong men; while men's magazines (particularly, *Men's Health* and *Esquire*) side-stepped male responsibility (Nettleton, 2011). Taylor (2009) revealed that the notion of victim-blaming promoted in media news largely emerges from the *good girl-bad girl dichotomy* used to unfairly represent female victims of domestic violence. The dichotomy proposes that "good girls follow the rules and avoid trouble and bad girls break the rules and get what they deserve" (Bullock & Cubert, 2002, p. 478). In view of the dichotomy, close attention is given to the woman partner,

and what she has done, or not done to contribute to the abuse by a male intimate partner, rather than to focus on the social context of the problem or the perpetrator (Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Ryan et al., 2006; Taylor, 2009; Wilcox, 2008). Various strategies are used in the media to blame female partners for the abuse experienced by an intimate male partner, while minimising the responsibility of male offenders (Taylor, 2009). One commonly used strategy is attributing women's responsibility in terms of domestic violence to their appearance and behaviour (Batanchiev, 2008). Articles appearing in female magazines often suggest that if women cleaned their houses, do not 'talk back', lose weight, wear lipstick, and smile often, they would not be subjected to abuse (Batanchiev, 2008). Another strategy used by the media to hold women accountable for their own victimisation is using sympathetic language to describe the male perpetrator and representing him as a passive victim of innate forces beyond his control (Taylor, 2009). On the one hand, media news would commonly construct male violence toward an intimate female partner as product of individual dysfunction: for example, mental illness, being inebriated, aggression or irrationality. On the other hand, the offender might also be portrayed as the hero of a tragedy in which he has succumbed to his intense love for the victim (Ryan et al., 2006; Taylor, 2009). As a result, the actual sense of culpability that might be attributed to the male perpetrator for his act of violence is diminished. Instead, the media tend to blame female partners by framing their actions as an 'ultimate trigger' that sparked-off men's violence (Bern, 2001; Michelle & Weaver, 2003; Taylor, 2009). Morgan and Politoff (2012) and Wilcox (2008) argued that domestic violence – a public issue - continues to be shaped as a private and rare problem when the media assigns the responsibility of domestic

violence solely to the female partner and when male offenders are portrayed as victims of various pathologies.

Journalists may also use faults within the criminal justice system as a frame of reference from which to report stories of domestic violence (Berns, 1999; Bullock, 2007; Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Gillespie et al., 2013). Articles reflecting this frame of reference shift the blame of men's violence from the perpetrator onto the criminal justice system (Berns, 1999; Bullock, 2007; Gillespie et al., 2013). For example, intimate partner violence might be explained by focussing upon the failure of criminal justice personnel to protect the female partner and to summons perpetrators with protection orders; these are represented as the core issues underlying the problem (Bullock, 2007; Gillespie et al., 2013).

Gillespie et al. (2013) claimed that media reports commonly reframe incidents of domestic violence as both normative and as a common occurrence. As such, media reports would characterise incidents of domestic violence as one of many homicides, weighing down the seriousness of the individual incident (Gillespie et al., 2013). Alternatively, media reports would indicate that the incident of domestic violence was preceded by violence. For example, the media report would highlight that the perpetrator had already served a prison sentence for murder before killing his wife this week (Gillespie et al., 2013). In such instances, as argued by Gillespie and colleagues (2013), the complexities of domestic violence remain unaddressed; and offenders are represented as criminals easily distinguishable from other individuals, when the media frames domestic violence as a normative and common occurrence (Gillespie et al., 2013).

Lastly, the media is known for sensationalising and trivialising stories related to domestic violence (Batacheiv, 2008; Michelle & Weaver, 2003; Morgan & Politoff, 2012; Ryan et al., 2006). Often sensationalism involves incorporating humour, rhymes, quotes, and humourous nicknames for the perpetrator when reporting on violence against women (Morgan & Politoff, 2012). Morgan and Politoff (2012) posited that the inclusion of humour and ridiculous elements when reporting on violence against women tends to override the seriousness of the issue and underrepresent the true reality of the social problem. For example, in Jóhannsdóttir's analysis of patriarchy and the subordination of women, she argued that the mass media commonly uses pornography as a vehicle to normalise, sensationalise, and trivialise men's perpetration of sexual violence against women partners (Jóhannsdóttir, 2009).Jóhannsdóttir' (2009) argued that pornography often gave men the impression that sexual violence is 'manly', and that it will eventually be rewarded.

The section above has broadly explored the ways in which domestic violence is represented in the media on an international level. However, due to the current study's focus on representations of domestic violence in the South African media, the next section will turn its focus to a local investigation of the mass media. Given the history of apartheid, and the culture of violence[10] that still defines post-apartheid South Africa (Hamber, 2000; Morrell, 2002), it will be important to reflect upon the role of the media during the apartheid era before discussing the media's representation of gender-based violence in post-apartheid South Africa. This

[10] Culture of violence could be defined as "a society which endorses and accepts violence as an acceptable and legitimate means to resolve problems and achieve goals" (Hamber, 2000, p. 5).

section will be divided into two sections: (1) *Apartheid and the South African mass media*; and (2) *The mass media in post-apartheid South Africa and gender-based violence*.

2.2.1 Apartheid and the South African mass media

The South African mass media is identified as a powerful and influential source of communication in South Africa (MDDA, 2009). It has always had a powerful influence on South African society (Sparks, 2009). For example, during the apartheid era, the mass media was strongly influenced by the political situation of that time (Sparks, 2009). The mass media was predominantly a white-controlled business, dominated by elite views and interest on social issues, such as racism (Nyamnjoh, 2010). Therefore the mass media played an instrumental role in upholding the unequal racial socio-economic climate by denying citizenship to black groups while allowing the white minority to occupy positions of influence (Sparks, 2009).

Under the apartheid regime, the mass media dehumanised, disempowered, and represented black groups as the 'negative other' (Duncan, 2003; Nyamnjoh, 2010). For example, in newspaper reports, people of colour would be featured reflecting stereotypical themes, such as violence, crime (especially, drug-related crimes, theft, and corruption), industrial conflict, cultural differences, and ethnic conflict (Duncan, 2003). Along the similar lines, media reports represented black South African's as unruly, barbaric, savage, and child-like (Duncan, 2003). Conversely, media reports would favourably feature the white minority in topics related to the economy, education, social affairs, sporting and culture achievements (Duncan, 2003). Other techniques used by the mass media to facilitate representations of black groups as the 'negative other', included the depersonalisation of the death of black people (Duncan, 2003).

When reporting on the deaths of black people, the media would only focus on the greater number of black people killed, shying away from the circumstances of death and the histories of the deceased (Bird & Garda, 1996; Duncan, 2003). In contrast, when the media reported on the death of white people, the name, occupation, circumstances of death, and life history of the deceased were extensively reported in a number of newspapers (Bird & Garda, 1996; Duncan, 2003).

Race and gender constructions subsequently intersected in the media (Motsemme, 2003; Sideris, 1998). In terms of femininity: although white women never had full access to power during the apartheid regime, they exercised power in the domestic, commercial, and academic spheres (Motsemme, 2003). In contrast, black women assumed domestic roles, focused on household chores, rather than positions of power and production in the wider-social structure (Nolde, 1991). Within this framework, black women were expected to take charge of house-maintenance in white households, and perform basic functions of a wife and mother at minimum wage (Motsemme, 2003).The iconic imagery 'white madam' and her 'black garden boy' and 'black maid' displayed by the media was reflective of the unequal relationship of power amongst black and white women in South Africa (Motsemme, 2003).

Like femininity the media's portrayal of masculinity was also constructed along the lines of racial ideologies of that time (Clowes, 2003). *Drum* magazine, a white owned magazine, largely written by black men, played an integral part in the promotion of hegemonic white heterosexual masculinity (Clowes, 2003). The racial discourse of hegemony promoted in the media was used as a tool to deny black men true manhood (Clowes, 2003). Often, paid work

and unemployment were used as factors to construct true manhood (Epstein, 1998). However, because of the unequal, oppressive economic system of that time, black men were left to face high levels of unemployment, and settle for a minimum wage in the lowest skilled jobs (Brown, 2000; Epstein, 1998; Mariotti, 2009). Since black men may have been unable to meet the 'white hegemonic, middle-class, heterosexual, family man, living with his family' ideal; black masculinity was constructed as ad 'lacking'. In effect, *Drum* magazine represented the sexuality of white men as moral and pure; while the sexuality of black men was characterised by barbaric and uncivilized behaviour (Clowes, 2003).

These racial ideologies promoted by the mass media framed the social reality of apartheid South Africa (de Nobrega, 2009; Nowrojee & Manby, 1995; Sideris, 1998). For that reason, social issues, such as domestic violence, and other forms of violence against women were deemed insignificant, not newsworthy, and treated as a private issue (de Nobrega, 2009; Nowrojee & Manby, 1995; Usdin et al., 2005), consistent with trends found in international work (Gilchrist, 2010; Wilcox, 2008). In fact, under the apartheid regime, women from oppressed groups were reluctant to report being victims of domestic violence as they feared being stigmatised and devalued by their own communities (Sideris, 1998). Also, black[11] women were commonly urged not to report or focus upon the abuse of an intimate male partner as domestic violence was perceived to be 'white issue' (Nowrojee & Manby, 1995). Instead women were encouraged by family and community members to focus upon the fight against the oppressive practices of apartheid (de Nobrega, 2009). Nonetheless, in situations where media reports covered stories related to domestic violence against women, it was rewritten as

[11] The term 'black' in this context refers to all oppressed racial groups.

stories of race (de Nobrega, 2009). Therefore, for the duration of the apartheid regime, domestic violence against women continued to be represented by the media as an issue of not great concern rather than a social phenomenon that affects all levels of South African society.

2.2.2 The mass media in post-apartheid South Africa and gender-based violence

Presently, in post-apartheid South Africa, the mass media still maintains its strong position of influence (Ndlela, 2010). It remains the main means of getting information to the South African public (Ndlela, 2010). This dynamic media culture includes newspapers, television, magazines, radio, film, books, advertising, music and public relations (MDDA, 2009). Recent studies have shown that newspapers in South Africa are printed mainly in English and Afrikaans (MDDA, 2009). These newspapers are divided in four major newspaper chains: *Argus Newspapers* (i.e., *Johannesburg Star*, the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*, the *Daily News* and *The* Mercury, and the *Pretoria News* and the *Sunday Tribune*), *Times media* (i.e., *Business Day*, *Eastern Herald*, *Evening Post*, and the *Sunday Times*) and two Afrikaans language chains: The *Nasionale Pers* (i.e., *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, and *Die Volksbald*) and the *Perskor* (i.e., *Rapport* and *The Citizen*) ('SOUTH AFRICA PRESS, MEDIA, TV, RADIO, NEWSPAPERS', 2008). An estimated 940 million newspapers circulate in South Africa annually (MDDA, 2009). These newspapers are categorised either as mainstream, local, small commercial and community newspapers (MDDA, 2009).

Despite the political transformation that emerged in South Africa post 1994, and the promotion of affirmative action policies, much of the ownership and managerial positions in the media industry are still occupied by white shareholders (MDDA, 2009).Therefore there continues to be columns of racism endorsing racial and stereotypical portrayals of black racial groups in South

Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2010). Nevertheless, the political transformation has also brought about positive changes in the media industry (Jacobs, 2002). The South African media has been granted freedom of speech to criticise the government and other social institutions (Jacobs, 2002). The South African media has also received access to state-held information, and is at liberty to report on and discuss diverse social issues; one example is gender-based violence (Jacobs, 2002; Lewis & Orderson, 2012).

Since the abolishment of Apartheid in 1994, the media's coverage of gender-based violence has increased (Usdin et al., 2005; Usdin et al., 1999). Stories related to gender-based violence appear more frequently in all forms of printed media and television, and the media plays an active role in combating gender-based violence in South Africa by promoting campaigns, such as the *16 Days of Activism for no Violence Against Women and Children* (Usdin et al., 1999). Nevertheless, much of the South African media reports regarding gender-based violence have come under intense scrutiny (Usdin et al., 1999).South African scholars have claimed that the media, when reporting on violence against women, perpetuate stereotypes and negative myths concerning men's perpetration of violence against a women (Boswell, 2003; Holtman & Domingo-Swarts, 2008; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; MMP, 2004; Omarjee, 2001; Usdin et al., 1999). Media reports would also lack the requisite of sensitivity for such issues, as reflected by a critical focus on the criminal aspect of the incident, rather than a focus on the experiences or rights of the survivor (Lewis & Orderson, 2012). Furthermore, journalists typically portrayed women as being helpless and passive victims in need of protection (MMP, 2004), and trivialised stories of gender-based violence by publishing stories in the form of summarised crime round-ups, rather than detailed features (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; Usdin et al., 1999).

Presently, only a few studies have attempted to explore the link between the media and violence against women in South Africa (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; Omarjee, 2001). In the first of these, a study conducted by Omarjee (2001) investigating the presentation of sexual violence against women in the *Cape Times*, *Cape Argus*, *Saturday Argus*, and the *Sunday Times*. Omarjee (2001) performed a discourse analysis on 173 stories in order to examine how rape was presented in the South African media. The analysis revealed that media reports frequently reinforced myths about rape, such as 'myths' that women make up rape charges to get back at men, or beliefs that the victim is responsible for her rape. Omarjee (2001) also found that rape was not perceived as a serious crime by newspapers, and was thus relegated to inferior status as a subject for news. Furthermore, the study showed that reports did not sufficiently question the motives for rape and that colloquial language was commonly used to trivialise and sensationalise incidents of rape (Omarjee, 2001). In response to the finding presented in Omarjee's study, Boswell (2003) explored the representations of gender-based violence in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*. The study found that stories related to gender-based violence (i.e., rape, sexual harassment, and the murder of a female security guard) were predominantly not deemed newsworthy to appear on the front pages of the respective newspapers (Boswell, 2003). However, in cases where stories of gender-based violence were published on the front page of newspaper, it would be positioned below the fold of the front page, signifying that the story is of lesser importance (Boswell, 2003). Moreover, the study revealed that victims of gender-based violence would be left nameless and faceless, painting the victimisation of women as a random act of violence (Boswell, 2003). Media reports also underrepresent and trivialise gender-based violence (e.g., rape), lack sensitivity, and

reinforce negative stereotypes and myths (Boswell, 2003). Furthermore, out of 28 reports on gender-based violence analysed in the study, only one was sensitively written, without trivialising the issue or perpetuating negative myths about women and gender-based violence (Boswell, 2003).

Another study investigating the reporting trends of gender-based violence evident in the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Voice*, revealed that both newspapers sensationalised subjects of violence and trivialised stories of violence against women (Lewis & Orderson, 2012). At the same time, the study indicated that stories related to violence against women published in the *Sunday Times*, would appear in the "Opinions and Insight" section, outside of the core business section, and were written by writers other than the newspaper staff. Therefore stories of violence against women steered clear of proactive commentary, or extensive critical investigation. In a similar vein, the *Daily Voice*, when reporting on violence against women, would shy away from critical investigation as the paper is more concerned with breaking stories of scandal and sensation, and keeping its readers entertained (Lewis & Orderson, 2012).

Although all three of the above studies have attempted to examine the possible role of the media in promoting violence against women, the scope of analysis of these respective studies did not specifically explore intimate partner violence against women. The current study sought to investigate the way that men's perpetration of domestic violence against an intimate female partner is represented in the Western Cape mass media through the lens of social representations theory. Furthermore, this study also aimed to investigate the implications of these representations of intimate partner violence within the South African context.

2.3 Summary of Chapter

The chapter sought to provide an overview of social representations theory as well as how the theory relates to the context of the media, a broader societal source of knowledge. Seemingly, social representations theorists have argued that the mass media is instrumental in both the formation of social representations of social phenomena (such as domestic violence), and in transforming "expert knowledge" into lay knowledge (Höjier, 2011; Joffe, 2002, p. 561; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). According to a theory of social representations, the media transfers expert knowledge into lay thinking using three reporting styles: (1) diffusion, (2) propagation, and (3) propaganda (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Breakwell, 1993; de Rosa, 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). At the same time, the chapter also critically explored the ways gender roles (i.e., femininity and masculinity) and domestic violence are represented in the media on an international level, followed by a local investigation that examined the ways gender-based violence is represented in the South African media. Empirical studies revealed that media reports that reported on gender-based violence commonly lacked sensitivity, reinforced negative stereotypes and myths, and did not perceive it as serious crime (Boswell, 2003; Lewis & Orderson, 2012; Omarjee, 2001). Nevertheless, this chapter also highlighted that while empirical studies have begun to explore the role media may play in disseminating messages that could possibly promote gender-based violence in the South African context, the scope of analysis of these respective studies did not exclusively explore intimate partner violence against women. Therefore the current study aimed to address this gap in research by critically exploring social representations of domestic violence against women evident in the Western Cape media. The methodology of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.4 Specific aim and research questions

The primary aim of this study was to investigate and discuss social representations of domestic violence evident in the Western Cape media through the lens of social representations theory. Furthermore, this study aimed to examine the implications of the findings in the context of South Africa – a country in which the scourge of violence against women is rampant and messages concerning gender-based violence might be consumed by audiences in particular ways. Therefore the research questions for this study were as follows:

1.) What representations of domestic violence against women emerge in the Western Cape media?

2.) What implications do these representations of domestic violence hold for the problem of violence against women in the South African context?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Hayes (2004) contended that the term 'methodology' is the "conception of research in which consideration is given to the context(s) of the research; the theoretical or philosophical assumptions underlying the chosen strategy; how the data was gathered; and the implications of analysing part of data that makes up a greater whole" (p. 174). In view of the argument presented by Hayes (2004), the methodology section will begin with a focus on the research design with a brief overview of the origins of qualitative research. This will be followed by an outline of the sampling selection and data collection procedure, method of analysis, and the examination of ethical issues of this study. Furthermore, the chapter will address, through self-reflexivity, the researcher's subjective experience throughout the research process, and the ways in which the current study might be evaluated.

3.1 Research design and origins in psychological research

The study of social representations requires no particular methodological approach (Flick & Foster, 2008); however, the exploratory nature of the research study leaned itself to a qualitative method of inquiry as it aimed to identify and critically analyse social representations of domestic violence against women in the media. Qualitative research could be defined as an interpretive study of a specific problem or issue in which the researcher is instrumental in making sense of the data (Babbie, 2004; Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). The approach places great emphasis upon the context of the problem as well as on in-depth information surrounding a research area (Rossouw, 2003). The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to capture a detailed interpretation of text and to critically understand social

phenomena (Da Rocha, 2008). The qualitative approach was well suited to this study as it shared primary features of social representations theory through its emphasis on interpretation, and meaning-making of personal and social experiences (Smith, 2003; Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Qualitative research has a short history in psychology (Flick, 1998). When the science of psychology was first developed by Wilhelm Wundt in the mid-19th century, it was dominated by quantitative methods that were deeply rooted in the positivist, empiricist paradigm (Eatough, 2012; Eisner, 2003; Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 2008; Saville, 2008). Early psychologists such as Wilhelm Wundt, known as structuralists[12], largely defined psychology as the analytical examination of human consciousness and individual subjective experiences (Meyer et al., 2008; Saville, 2008). Consistent with the positivist paradigm, methods used to investigate the human consciousness and individual subjective experiences were considered to be scientific, rational, and objective (Eatough, 2012; Meyer et al., 2008), and included laboratory experiments, introspections[13], surveys, and standardized tests that originated from natural sciences (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Meyer et al. 2008; Saville, 2008). In ensuring that psychological research was replicable across studies, research that was conducted in laboratories employed methods that were thought to be 'objective' (i.e., that limited the execution of personal judgment in research) (Eisner, 2003; Flick, 1998). In addition, psychological research was expected to be carried out according to fixed rules (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). If these so-called

[12] Structuralism is a scientific philosophical approach that analyses systems according to relations between their elements in order to determine and examine the underlying structural elements of phenomena – in this case, processes of consciousness (Colman, 2006; Meyer et al., 2008).

[13] Introspection is an experimental method of data collection in which participants would perform a task and then give an account of their own internal mental processes and experiences (Goodwin, 2010; Meyer et al., 2008).

'rules' were not adhered to, the research was perceived to be invalid (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). The positivist paradigm subsequently became the site of inquiry to explain the 'truth' behind human behaviour for many studies in psychology in the latter part of nineteenth century and for the most part of the twentieth century (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Eisner, 2003).

Although the positivist, empiricist paradigm had a vast impact on early psychological research, it too came under severe scrutiny for a number of reasons (Flick, 1998; Meyer et al., 2008). Firstly, the paradigm was criticised because it made generalisations to various populations based on the findings presented in positivist research (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). The findings put forward by positivist researchers commonly emerged from white, middle-class, heterosexual males, marginalising the experiences of women in psychology, and legitimising and rationalising sexist, racist, and classist practices in psychology (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Secondly, the work of traditional psychology also came under scrutiny for its overemphasis on objectivity in the research process (Howe, 1992; Lather, 2006). According to traditional positivism teachings, researchers are expected to achieve a form of 'scientific objectivity' in which data are linked to theory and remain uninfluenced by values and interests that researchers bring to collecting and interpreting data (Howe, 1992). However, because the researcher is subjectively involved in the investigation and interpretation of results, it makes objectivity problematic in the research process (Howe, 1992). Furthermore, critics have argued that mainstream psychology placed the individual as the focal point of research, turning a 'blind eye' to the social, political, economic, and historical context of the individual (Hook, 2004). As a result, the political nature of psychology remained concealed and oppressive systems of society

understudied (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Hook, 2004). Consequently, the critiques lodged against traditional psychology brought psychology as a science into question, and "a re-visioning of the foundations of psychology has occurred along with a consequent modification of research tools" (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006, p. 5). One way in which the shortcomings of the traditional psychology were addressed was through the emergence of qualitative methods (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Eisner, 2003; Flick, 1998).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, qualitative research methods became an alternative method of inquiry for researchers (Gergen, 1973). Although critics highlighted the shortcomings of mainstream psychology (Giorgi, 2009), alternative methodologies were only introduced to the science of psychology in the 1980s and 1990s (Smith, 1996). During the 1980's discourse analysis emerged as a tool to understand the role of language and discourse in psychological phenomena (Smith, 1996), and by the 1990s the paradigm was furthermore advanced by new approaches, such as narrative analysis, grounded theory and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 1996). Scholars, such as Gordon Allport and Jean Piaget, proposed that qualitative methods and its naturalistic ways were better suited to understand human behaviour and psychological phenomena (Gergen, 1973). The qualitative paradigm claimed that in order to obtain a comprehensive account of human behaviour, people should be studied in their everyday social settings (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Gergen, 1973; Goodwin, 2010), and that close attention should be given to customs, beliefs, and rules that give rise to human behaviour (Howe, 1992). Moreover, unlike the quantitative paradigm that emphasised the importance of objectivity in the research process, the qualitative paradigm positioned the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Watt, 2007). Data collection techniques in

qualitative research required the researcher to be subjectively involved in the research process, and through a personal account, reflect upon how their self-location (e.g., race, class, and gender), position, and interests influenced all stages of the research process (Pillow, 2010; Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Watt, 2007). The conceptual process of reflection has been termed by qualitative researchers as reflexivity (Babbie, 2004; Macbeth, 2001; Pillow; 2010; Watt, 2007), which will be investigated more closely in relation to the current study later in this chapter. Furthermore, a qualitative method of inquiry also does not focus on controlled and isolated variables, but it seeks to unravel perspectives rather than truth when investigating social phenomena (Eatough, 2012; Flick, 1998). Qualitative researchers contend that there is no fixed truth (Flick, 1998), but rather that truth is multidimensional and relational (Flick, 1998). Interpretations of observed events or social phenomena are a continuous process as it is deeply interwoven within a world that is continuously subjected to change, which in turn stresses the way truth is conceived of as fluid in the qualitative paradigm (Flick, 1998). In the case of the current study, a qualitative method of inquiry was also fitting as it allowed the researcher to identify and unearth meaning behind the multiple social representations of domestic violence against women that continuously emerged from the three newspapers under analysis (i.e., *Daily Voice*, *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times*).

3.2 Sampling and data collection procedure

A media analysis was employed for the current study. Wagner and Hayes (2005) argued that the emergence of social representations stems not only from conversations in small groups at certain locations. Social representations could also be generated, maintained, and transformed

through collective phenomena or social institutions, such as the media, that distribute messages to the masses (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

The media analysis of this study was confined to printed media. Purposive sampling[14] was employed to gather the data for this study from three newspapers that attracted the largest readership within the Western Cape area. These newspapers included: the *Daily Voice*[15]*, Cape Argus*[16]*,* and *Cape Times*[17]. Statistics released by the newspaper house in Cape Town indicated that between April and June 2012*,* the *Cape Times, Cape Argus,* and *Daily Voice*, had the largest readership in the Western Cape. The *Daily Voice* had the largest readership and attracts an average of 493000 readers, the *Cape Argus* attracts 288000 readers, and *Cape Times* attracts 261000 readers. All three newspapers had similar numbers of male and female readership; the *Cape Argus* (52, 8 percent and 47, 2 percent), *Cape Times* (55, 9 percent and 44, 1 percent), and the *Daily voice* (47, 7 percent and 52, 5 percent). In particular, the *Daily Voice* predominantly attracted a Coloured[18] readership of 79, 9 percent. The sample of this study was made up of 25 articles. Of the 25 articles, 21 made reference to the topic of domestic violence, and more specifically, those that reported on men's perpetration of domestic violence against an intimate

[14] Purposive sampling entails the deliberate sassing out of participants and textual material with particular characteristics according to the needs of the developing analysis (Morse, 2004).
[15] *Daily Voice* is a weekday newspaper, which is described as being outrageous, thrilling, and entertaining read for the working class people. The *Daily Voice* lives up to its motto: "Ons skrik vir niks" (Independent Newspapers AMPS, 2012).
[16] *Cape Argus* is a quality afternoon newspaper written for Cape Town's broader middle to upper-class. The publication covers the latest news and sports with a strong local focus (Independent Newspapers AMPS, 2012).
[17] *Cape Times* is Cape Town's dominant and definitive morning daily publication servicing the needs of the upmarket reader, with emphasis on corporate news and providing in-depth coverage of current issues (Independent Newspapers AMPS, 2012).
[18] The racial term 'Coloured' refers to a racial category derived from the apartheid system (Brown, 2000; de la Rey & Duncan, 2003). It brackets people who are neither black nor white, nor Asian/Indian (de la Rey & Duncan, 2003), and who are believed to possess ancestry from the Cape Slaves, Europeans, and Khoisan people (Brown, 2000). Complicating this designation, however, it also includes Sunni Arab and European Muslims (Brown, 2000). Additionally, South African citizens forming part of this racial category vary in complexion - from white to very dark, and speak both English and Afrikaans (Brown, 2000).

female partner. The remaining four articles focused upon the brutal rape and murder of Anene Booysen. Although the victimisation of Anene Booysen cannot be defined as intimate partner violence specifically, articles that made reference to her victimisation functioned as a backdrop to illustrate how the media overrepresented and defined gruesome acts of violence perpetrated against women as more newsworthy than other acts of violence (e.g., emotional, psychological, and verbal abuse). Furthermore, beyond the fact that printed forms of media were selected as the data were more accessible; the trustworthiness, dependability, and quality of data were more easily justified, as the data were presented in a hardcopy written format.

The collection of data took place once a week, for a period of six months (September 2012 – February 2013). Close attention was given to national events and campaigns that focus on domestic violence against women, such as the 16 days of activism against women and child abuse that attracts a wide spectrum of media attention. Although the data collection procedure stretched across a six month period, stories related to domestic violence against women were significantly underreported, particularly in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*. Up until January, 31, 2013, the sample of the study only consisted of 12 newspaper reports that made reference to domestic violence against women. However during the last month of data collection, the media's coverage of intimate partner violence increased in view of the high profile murders of Anene Booysen and Reeva Steenkamp. The sample size then increased to 25 newspaper reports.

3.3 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data, an inductive thematic analysis was employed. Inductive thematic analysis is a research method used for identifying, analysing, and reporting prominent themes and patterns through careful reading of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Sanders, 2010). It explores anything that carries meaning, including textual material, such as media reports, both written and visual material (Da Rocha, 2008; Maxwell, 1988). The current study only made use of written text that emerged from the *Daily Voice*, *Cape Times*, and *Cape Argus*. The method of analysis was used as a tool to highlight and identify social representations that arose from media reports that made reference to domestic violence against women (Da Rocha, 2008).

One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it can be applied to a wide range of theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Joffe and Yardley (2004) suggested that thematic analysis can be applied to social representations research because themes that are shared within social groups may lead to the emergence of social representations. A theme can be defined "as those that permeate the data in different sections and that are formed by different respondents" (Sanders, 2010, p. 306). In terms of this study, social representations of domestic violence that emerged in media reports were categorised according to themes.

This study employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis to define themes and to guide the analysis process of this study. The steps are outlined as follows:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.

2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006. p. 87).

In view of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guideline, once the sample of data was accumulated, the themes emerged from the data themselves (Da Rocha, 2008). The recursive process of reading and re-reading of data brought about the formation, familiarisation, and refinement of chosen themes (Da Rocha, 2008).

Thematic analysis also allows the researcher to interpret and examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, meaning, and conceptualisation associated with a theme that emerges from large masses of text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Breakwell, 2012). In the current study, after the themes

were identified, the researcher explored the underlying meanings, gave a detailed, descriptive and explanatory account of the representations of domestic violence evident in the Western Cape media, which provided a latent level of meaning to the findings. In addition, this method of analysis allowed me to handle the large amounts of data produced by the three newspapers under analysis in a less complex manner, which is an advantage of thematic analysis (Flick, 1998).

3.4 Ethical considerations

No ethical clearance was required for this research as there were no human subjects involved in the current study. Furthermore, the newspapers used in this study were openly accessible to the public, and consequently no permission was required to use the data found in these newspapers.

3.5 Self-Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important subject in qualitative research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). In qualitative research, the researcher's objectivity cannot always be achieved as his/her subjective experience has an impact upon the research process and its outcomes (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Mruck & Breuer, 2003). Therefore, through the process of reflexivity, qualitative researchers are encouraged to continually assess how individual values and life experiences influence the research process and decisions (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). On this point, Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) argued that "the researcher's subjectivity and biases will provide the reader with an indication of how the researcher constructed his or her interpretations" (p.

6). Although the current study did not make use of interviews, as a researcher performing a media analysis, my subjective experiences were instrumental in the research process.

Pillow (2010) maintained that reflexivity is successfully addressed when researchers acknowledge their subjectivity. Parallel to the former argument, Boonzaier and Shefer (2006) suggested that the choice of a research topic is greatly based upon the subjective experiences of the researcher. This was true for the current study. One of the key motivations behind me pursuing this research project was my pronounced interest in the subject of domestic violence against women. My strong interest in the subject matter was birthed out of the various encounters I have had with female survivors of men's violence (i.e., both physical and emotional violence) at church and university. So, in view of this reflection, I anticipate that this research would be reflective of my interest in the phenomenon of domestic violence against women, which continues to be a marked social problem in South Africa.

Howe (1992) and Eatough (2012) argued that reflexivity also involves researcher's reflections on his/her impressions, preconceptions, feelings, and irritations during the research process. Before undertaking this research endeavour, I had strong preconceptions of the *Daily Voice* newspaper. I questioned its credibility and perceived it to be a 'cheap' tabloid solely out to sensationalise and trivialise social issues it reported on. These preconceptions were further strengthened during the analysis when I made inquiries about a specific article and had received no response after being promised feedback. Subsequently, at the beginning stages of my analysis, I struggled to analyse and interpret articles that emerged from the *Daily Voice* in a comprehensive manner as I was greatly influenced by my negative preconceptions.

Nonetheless, I cautioned against the manifestations of these preconceptions in the write-up process by continuously sending drafts of my analysis section to my supervisor and co-supervisor.

Another aspect of the research process I had to reflect upon was my writing style when interpreting the data for this current study. According to Flick (1998), the credibility of a qualitative study is often determined by how findings are written up for potential readers. Therefore in the write-up of my analysis section I had to continuously be mindful of my word choice and the way I structured sentences when interpreting and discussing the media's representations of domestic violence. The credibility of the text was further retained through drafts being critically read by my supervisor and co-supervisor.

3.6 Evaluation of Study

The current study examined domestic violence against women through the lens of social representations theory with the understanding that social phenomena are multi-faceted and deeply entrenched in historical, cultural, and macro social conditions (Wagner et al., 1999). In other words, social phenomena are not understood to have a fixed 'truth' that can be quantitatively measured by experimental methods (Flick, 1998; Golafshani, 2003). Therefore the mainstream criteria used to assess the quality of a research study, such as validity and reliability, were not applicable for the study. In contrast, qualitative researchers have developed new criteria for assessing the standard of qualitative research. Shenton (2004) claimed that trustworthiness is a suitable criterion for qualitative research. The trustworthiness

of a study is assessed on the basis of a four point criteria (Shenton, 2004): (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability.

Credibility is identified as the first and key criterion to assessing the quality of a qualitative study (Flick, 1998). It deals with the question, "how congruent are the findings with reality?" (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). It is a concept used by qualitative researchers to ascertain whether the study has successfully met the key aim of the study (Golafshani, 2003; Marrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Credibility is the equivalent concept for the measurement of internal validity in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Shenton, 2004). A number of strategies have been highlighted to increase the credibility of qualitative research (Flick, 1998). For example, Marrow (2005) reasoned that prolonged engagement with data, persistent observation in the field, peer debriefing[19], member checks[20], and triangulation of different methods, and researchers increased the credibility of a study. In relation to this study, to assess and check for credibility, the data was read and analysed repeatedly.

Like credibility, transferability is also used as criterion to determine the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Krefting, 1991; Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Transferability refers to the degree to which results of a research study could be applied and transferred to people and contexts outside of the study situation (Morrow, 2005). The criterion is established when the reader can make comparisons and transfer information (Shenton, 2004). There are various

[19] The process of 'peer debriefing' "refers to regular meetings with other people who are not involved in the research in order to disclose one's own blind spots and discuss working hypothesis and results with them" (Flick, 1998, p. 232).

[20] 'Member checks' could be defined as the stage in the research process where the researcher validates the data and interpretations of research subjects (Flick, 1998). This is commonly done during or after the interview process when the researcher summarises the findings of the participant and requests of him or her to comment on the content in aid of validation (Flick, 1998).

strategies outlined to increase transferability of qualitative research (Flick, 1998; Shenton, 2004). Firstly, as this study did not involve human subjects, Krefting (1991) suggested that the researcher should consider the data instead of the subject. More specifically, the research should determine whether the content of observed events is atypical or typical of the true reality of a social phenomenon (Krefting, 1991). Transferability was maintained in this study as the data of this study was continuously compared to the true reality of domestic violence in South Africa and the findings of previous empirical studies that have attempted to investigate the possible link between domestic violence and the mass media. In the similar vein, Krefting (1991) contended that sample selection is also pivotal in determining transferability of qualitative research. In relation to this study, transferability was retained as the sample selection was purpose driven. The sample was made up of articles that specifically dealt with men's perpetration of domestic violence against an intimate female partner.

Dependability is the criterion that deals with consistency of findings in a research study (Krefting, 1991). In contrast, quantitative researchers measure for reliability to determine the consistency of result across participants and context (Shenton, 2004). However, the changing nature of a social phenomenon, such as domestic violence makes it problematic for qualitative researchers to assess for reliability; hence dependability is more suited for research conducted within the qualitative paradigm as well as for this study (Shenton, 2004). Krefting (1991) put forward two strategies to assess the dependability of the study, mainly code-recode of data and triangulation. In view of the former strategy, Krefting (1991) postulated that researchers need to code-recode data during the analysis stages of the research process. After coding data for the first time, the researcher is urged to wait at least two weeks and then return and recode

the same data and compare the results (Krefting, 1991). The analysis period of this study stretched across a period of nine months. Because of the flexibility associated with thematic analysis, during the nine month period of analysis code-recode of data took place and interpretations of data were continuously reviewed (Flick, 1998).

Lastly, Shenton (2004) argued that the criterion of confirmability is used as a tool to ensure that the research findings are as far as possible a reflection of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. 'The audit trail' strategy is perceived to be critical in establishing the confirmability and in diminishing the effects of research bias in the study (Flick, 1998; Krefting, 1991). In view of this strategy, an external auditor is assigned to examine step-by-step the product, data, findings, interpretations, procedures, and recommendations in order to understand how and why decisions were made (Flick, 1998; Krefting, 1991). On this point, Babbie and Mouton (2001) claimed that the inclusion of a second researcher might diminish the effects of research bias. In the current study, steps were taken to establish conformability and reduce research bias through working closely with my supervisor and co-supervisor in analysing the data and the write-up process.

3.7 Summary of Chapter

This chapter outlined the methodology of this study. It was structured according to Hayes' (2004) expectation of methodology by discussing the research design of this study with a brief overview of the origins of qualitative research in psychology. The chapter went on to highlight the sampling selection and data collection procedure, method of analysis, and the examination

of ethical issues of this study. Furthermore the chapter addressed the researcher's subjective experiences throughout the research process, and the ways in which the current study might be evaluated through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The next chapter will present an analysis of social representations of domestic violence that emerged in the *Daily Voice*, *Cape Argus*, *and Cape Times.*

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

Thematic analysis was employed as an analytical technique because it involves the analysis of written text and identifies the most prominent themes emerging in a text (Da Rocha, 2008). This chapter explores the four social representations of domestic violence that emerged in three newspapers in the Western Cape, namely: (1) *social representations of domestic violence as a problem of the justice system*; (2) *social representations of victim-blaming and perpetrator -'sympathy'*; (3) *social representations of domestic violence as the problem of the individual*; and (4) *social representations of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence*.

4.1 Social representations of domestic violence as a problem of the justice system

In a series of newspaper reports found in the sample of this study domestic violence was constructed as an isolated incident of an unjust justice system rather than a large social problem which is deeply intertwined in the social, cultural, and historical context of South Africa. For example, in three articles published in the *Daily Voice*, journalists shifted the blame of domestic violence from the perpetrator to the criminal justice system. In the extract below, the continuous abuse Ruby van Niekerk experienced at the hands of her intimate male partner was represented as a byproduct of negligence found in the criminal justice system:

> **'The cops don't do their work'**[21]. Ruby van Niekerk says having a protection order did not stop her abusive ex-boyfriend from raping her. The mom of two from Lavender Hill says protection orders will only work if the cops do their jobs and enforce it. "It is the

[21] The phrases written in bold represent the title and subtitle of the newspaper reports.

> police who are failing women and children," she tells the *Daily Voice*. "I've had my ex locked up a few times, but he always gets out" [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

In the extract above, the series of quotes offered by van Niekerk (i.e., ""I've had my ex locked up a few times, but he always gets out"; "The cops don't do their work") may have played a central role in promoting this representation that constructs domestic violence against women as the failure of the South African Police Service (SAPS) ("It is the police who are failing women…"). Although the journalist attempted to reflect upon the history of the relationship, van Niekerk's continuous victimisation was mainly represented as the outcome of SAPS officials not being compliant to protocol outlined by the Domestic Violence Act of 116 of 1998[22], which may have obscured accountability attributed to the male perpetrator for the act of violence. At the same time, the level of responsibility ascribed to the male perpetrator was also challenged as the journalist chose not to reveal his identity. By the journalist choosing not to reveal the identity, the perpetrator was possibly represented as a passive agent who is merely acting out the injustice found in the criminal justice system. Similar findings were also unearthed in other reports, in which the act of violence focused more exclusively upon the role of the justice system:

> **Mother's tikkop[23] ex 'butchers' her twin daughters.** Tragic Rainetha and Rainecia Neelse [i.e., twin daughters of Reinette] died in the arms of their distraught mother Reinette Neelse, who was also seriously injured during the frenzied attack. The bloody nightmare unfolded on Friday morning when the 30-year-old suspect attacked his ex-

[22] Police Service (SAPS) officials are obligated by the Domestic Violence Act to provide women, who experience abuse, with the necessary assistance they require, which includes assisting women to find shelter, providing them with necessary medical treatment, informing them of their rights to apply for a protection order and lay criminal charges, and arrest male perpetrators (Bendall, 2010; Singh, 2009; Vetten, 2005; Vetten, van Jaarsveld, Riba, & Makhunga, 2009).

[23] 'Tik kop' is an Afrikaans phrase used to describe an individual addicted to crystal methamphetamine.

> girlfriend, two days after they split, with a knife. At one point Anette Adonis [i.e., Reinette's aunt] ran into the road and stopped a police van and begged for help. But for some reason the officer did not take the crazed knifeman into custody. "If they had taken him, those children would still be alive", Anette says [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

Unlike the previous newspaper report in which the journalist attempted to reflect upon the relationship history, the extract above illustrates the way in which the journalist discussed the act of violence in terms of events rather than the couple's history. It was only made known that the couple had broken-up two days before the violent incident had taken place. The police officer's inability to intervene was portrayed as the main reason why the perpetrator was successful in stabbing Reinette Neelse and killing her twin daughters. The argument was further justified by the media report using the phrase "crazed knifeman" to describe the perpetrator. The phrase might have been used to construct the act of violence as uncontrollable. Subsequently, representing the act of violence as uncontrollable may have given readers the idea that police intervention could only stop the act of violence. In a similar manner, the murder of Thabisa Tutwana was constructed as an unfortunate consequence of an unjust justice system:

> **Ex-cop kills wife at party. This woman [i.e., Thabisa Tutwana] was stabbed to death by her ex-cop husband [i.e., Mbulelo Nyengane] who had just come out of jail after he shot her earlier this year.** But their tumultuous relationship came to a brutal end on Saturday night when the couple attended a party in Eersterivier. Now Thabisa's grieving dad blames the justice system for his daughter's death. "If he was still in jail our daughter would still be alive", Maboy Tutwana tells the *Daily Voice* [Published in *Daily Voice* on October, 30, 2012].

The quote from Tutwana's father, Maboy Tutwana (i.e., "If he was still in jail our daughter would still be alive.") was possibly used to magnify the notion that the murder of his daughter was the result of an unjust justice system, and to lessen the Mbulelo Nyengane's (i.e., the perpetrators) role in the violent incident. The journalist discussed the murder of Tutwana in the above report by predominately speaking to the fact that Nyengane was recently released from prison. This piece of information was printed in bold letters and appeared at the beginning of the article, signifying the importance of the information to this case: "This women was stabbed to death by her ex-cop husband who had just come out of jail after he shot her earlier this year." Limited attention was given to the influence of other contextual factors – such as the couple's relationship history - which was summed up in three words: "their tumultuous relationship." The journalist did not include further information regarding the relationship context, which may have portrayed the act of violence as an isolated incident of an unjust justice system.

Violence against women, as an isolated issue of the inefficient justice system, also manifested in reports in which male police officers were being described as perpetrators of domestic violence:

> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them**. Lucinda [i.e., founder and director of Philisa Abafazi Bethu in Lavender Hill], cited a case where the wife of a police reservist was turned away on numerous occasions after trying to open a case of assault against him. [The wife said] "He was violent and had access to a firearm" [Published in the *Daily Voice*, September, 11, 2012].
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> **Officer 'shot dead by ex-husband'.** A police warrant officer was shot dead in Rocklands, near Uitenhage, yesterday, Eastern Cape police said. Captain Stanley Jarvis said Warrant Officer Tessa Steyn, 43, was shot dead, allegedly by her former husband Fanus

> Rautenbach, at about 4am. Rautenbach then apparently turned the gun on himself. He was a former policeman [Published in the *Cape Times* on January, 2, 2013].
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> **'Mthethwa, Plato must go'.** It found 16 cases of domestic violence and assault had been opened against police officers from Khayelitsha police station between January and June, 2011, and 16 during the first six months of 2012. "This is considered an indication that those entrusted with policing of social crimes within the community are, in fact, perpetrators themselves"[i.e., quote from Zackie Achmat, founder of the Social Justice Coalition in South Africa] [Published in the *Cape Times* on November, 12, 2012].

In the extracts above, male police officers were represented as guilty of being perpetrators and subjecting women partners to continuous periods of abuse (as illustrated in the first extract). In recent years the perpetration of intimate partner violence among male police officers has become a great concern in South Africa (ICD, 2009; Nix, 2007). South African scholars have indicated that male police officers are more likely to batter their intimate female partners than are other men (ICD, 2009; Nix, 2007). A study conducted by Nix (2007 as cited in ICD, 2009) of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), revealed that a significant number of South African police officials were perpetrators of domestic violence. Nix (2007 as cited in ICD, 2009) highlighted that often times the colleagues of these police officials were aware of the abuse but chose to do nothing about it. For example, in her study she cited a case of one police officer in Cape Town who let his colleagues sit outside his house while he would physically abuse his wife (Nix, 2007 as cited in ICD, 2009). It was found that the colleagues of the officer did not respond to, or attempt to stop the violent incident (Nix, 2007 as cited in ICD, 2009).

Aligned with the data of the first two newspaper reports above, studies have also suggested that firearms often acted as the "most convenient tool" to injure and murder (ICD, 2009, p. 29).

A study conducted by the Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD, 2009) that investigated femicide amongst members of the South African Police Service, explained that firearms are commonly used as tools of abuse because it is always available to members as part of their everyday duty. According to the findings of this study (ICD, 2009), firearms (including, service pistols of police officers) were commonly used to settle disputes and maintain the position of power and control in the relationship (ICD, 2009). In situations where women wished to terminate the relationship or request for a divorce, they were shot, leaving them either badly injured or dead (ICD, 2009). Nevertheless, while the above newspaper reports confirmed the findings presented by South African scholars, it is essential to point out that both newspaper reports above were published during the period when there was little to no reports on domestic violence against women in the *Cape Times and Cape Argus*. Publishing these articles during this time frame could have given readers the idea that male police officers are only guilty of being perpetrators of domestic violence. In actual fact, in the third newspaper report above (i.e., 'Mthethwa, Plato must go'.), the quote from Zackie Achmat might have functioned as a generalisation to explicitly represent all male SAPS officials as perpetrators of domestic violence:

> **'Mthethwa, Plato must go'.** "This is considered an indication that those entrusted with policing of social crimes within the community are, in fact, perpetrators themselves" [Published in the *Cape Times* on November, 12, 2012].

The stern language used in the extract (e.g., "those entrusted with policing of social crimes within the community are, in fact, perpetrators themselves.") may have reinforced messages to construct and generalise male police officers not only as tolerant of men's violence against a

woman partner but also as perpetrators of domestic violence. In this way, the justice system was represented as not only failing women who experience violence, but it was also tainted as a corrupt institution with questionable morals and officials that are not to be trusted. Nevertheless, depicting all men SAPS personnel as either perpetrators or supporters of domestic violence also denies the helpful assistance women, who experience abuse by male partners, have indicated to have received from police officers in previous South African studies (Gopal & Chetty, 2006; Mathews & Abrahams, 2001; Mesatywa, 2008).

According to Berns (1999), domestic violence against women also continues to be depicted as the problem of the justice system as the media chooses to exclusively criticise police for not taking the crime seriously and providing abused women with the required intervention:

> **'Mthethwa, Plato must go'.** Khayelitsha residents made 1022 complaints against police at three police stations between January 2011 and June this year. Almost half dealt with police negligence or misconduct, except at Harare police station where people complained this year about shoddy investigative work. The task team also found people were arrested and held for 48 hours but never charged. The report found officers did not take witness statements before case dockets were sent to court and this had led to cases being withdrawn. Visible policing had also decreased in the area as resources allocated to sector policing were on the decrease. At present, only one police officer and a car are assigned to sector policing in each sector at Khayelitsha police station [Published in the *Cape Times* on November, 12, 2012].
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> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them.** She [i.e., Lucinda Evans] says another huge obstacle is that police officers do not want to open assault cases against the perpetrator. "Instead, police tell women to get an interdict at the court directly", she says. The problem with this, she explains, is that the abuser is still free to harass the victim. "The police do not always know how to deal with domestic violence complaints", says Charmaine Morris, legal expert at the Saartjie Baartman Centre [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

In the two newspaper reports above, police were significantly criticised. In view of these two newspaper reports above, readers may have been left with the impression that negligence, lack of training, and a lack of resources found within the SAPS were key to explaining the disproportionate levels of domestic violence against women in Cape Town. In fact, across all three newspapers analysed in this study, police were the only sector brought under scrutiny for not being at forefront of the fight against domestic violence perpetrated against women in Cape Town:

> **City to put brakes on domestic violence**. In a bid to minimise domestic violence, the city is launching its first social crime prevention programme this month and will train residents to help victims of the crime. Deputy Metro Police chief Yolanda Faro said that after extensive consultation with experts on gender violence, they found that there was no "quick-fix" to the problem. Gil Lang from the safety lab, said police officers in general regarded domestic violence as a private matter: "They don't know what the most appropriate action is, and often the community will know the couple…" [Published in the *Cape Times* on October, 5, 2012].

In the extract above, the SAPS was represented as blameworthy for the high levels of domestic violence against women in Cape Town. The purpose of the newspaper report above was to introduce the new community crime prevention programme that was developed to address the social crisis of domestic violence against women in Cape Town. However, in the article above the lack of efficacy shown by police officials was constructed as the primary reason to explain the high levels of domestic violence plaguing Cape Town. Despite the fact that the journalist argued that there was no "quick-fix" to dealing with the occurrences of domestic violence, she continued to portray the crime as the burden of the SAPS rather than a larger social problem. No reference was made to the possible contribution of other sectors and wider-societal factors

(such as poverty, high levels of unemployment, or gender inequality) in contributing to the spate of domestic violence against women in Cape Town.

In another example below, newspaper reports in the Western Cape have also assigned blame to the justice system on behalf of women who have experienced difficulty taking legal action against abusive men partners. A report in the *Daily Voice* spoke to inaccessibility of protection orders; which was argued to potentially limit the options that victims have in responding to the abuse:

> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them. Poor women who are victims of crime and abuse are being side-lined by the justice system.** Experts say the biggest problems facing these woman are a lack of education, poor access to courts and financial insecurity. Lucinda says at the moment, only a magistrate can issue a protection order. They are lobbying for police stations to be able to do this as well. "In such severe cases, women still have to go to court, make an application for a protection order and get a court date for the hearing, which takes place six weeks later," she says. "Some of our women have to travel from Lavender Hill to Wynberg Court, they can't even afford the R24 taxi fare." Charmaine Morris, legal expert at the Saartjie Baartman Centre, says "when most women do want to open a case of abuse, then they are the ones being persecuted by the police as if the women did something wrong, or they are made to believe that their husbands has the right to abuse them." Advocate Praise Tsidi Kambula, Chief Director: Promotion of Rights of Vulnerable Groups at the Justice Department says they will consider requests to set up satellite courts in poorer areas to give more access to abuse victims [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

The title and subtitle (particularly the latter part of the subtitle: "are being side-lined by the justice system.") of the above newspaper report was pivotal to holding the justice system completely responsible for women experiencing difficulty taking legal action against their abuser. Though at the beginning of the newspaper report above, the journalist briefly acknowledged (in one sentence) the possible contribution of wider- socio-structural factors (such as "lack of education, poor access to courts and financial insecurity"), the inefficiency of

police and the inaccessibility to legal remedies (such as protection orders) and satellite courtrooms in poorer areas became the focal point of the newspaper report above, which was subsequently represented as instrumental in prohibiting women from taking legal action against their abuser. Although the article above mirrored the findings of past research which have illustrated that inaccessibility to legal remedies (such as protection orders) and poverty often hampers women from taking legal action against their abusive male partners (Gopal & Chetty, 2006; Vetten, 2005), the article above underplayed the significant influence of other social factors in possibly discouraging women from taking legal action against their abuser (Bendall, 2010; Mufune, 2005; Nasikye & Shackleton, 2010; Singh, 2009; van der Hoven, 2001). As a result, domestic violence against women continued to be represented as an isolated problem of the justice system. On the contrary, while women might have been represented as victims of an unjust justice system, the above newspaper report ("Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them.") also included sources who constructed women victims of abuse as being favoured by the justice system:

> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them.** But Mashilo Mnisi of the Moshate Men's rights Organisation[24], says some women abuse the system. "We do have many cases of wrongful accusations because women take advantage of men's ignorance of their rights," he says. "Most women just go to the courts and speak to the clerks there knowing that the law is biased in their favour, so they can just lie knowing that a protection order will be granted" [published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

[24] The Moshate men's rights organisation is the only organisation existing in South Africa that fights abuse against men (Moshate men's rights organisation, 2010). The organisation was founded by Mashilo Mnisi in July 2010. The ultimate aim of the organisation is to create awareness and stave away the 'ignorance', stereotype, and stigma towards men (Moshate men's rights organisation, 2010).

As illustrated in the extract above, the comment by the founder of Moshate men's rights organisation, Mashilo Mnisi was used to construct the justice system as gender biased. The comment by Mnisi, may have given readers the sense that the only reason why there appears to be an increase in incidents of domestic violence in South Africa is because women use their alleged 'stories' of abuse as mere tools to exploit a criminal justice system that is "biased in their favour." In Anderson and Umberson's (2001) study that examined the construction of gender within men's accounts, it was also highlighted (as illustrated in the extract above) that some contemporary men's movements, in opposition to feminism, would often argue that the justice system is gender-biased – only existing to serve the needs of women (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). However, in contrast to the argument put forward by Mnisi, South African scholars have argued that abusive men are commonly the ones who are favoured and abuse the justice system for their own selfish gain (Amien, 2001; Artz, 2003; Artz & Smythe, 2005; Gopal & Chetty, 2006; 'THE JOINT MONITORING COMMITTEE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE AND STATUS OF WOMEN', 2002; Mathews & Abrahams, 2001; Njezula, 2006; Parenzee, Artz, & Moult, 2001):

> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them.** "I don't believe that women abuse the justice system, I have come across cases where as soon as the woman applies for a protection order then the husband also applies for one against her"[Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

While men too may be victims of domestic abuse (Naidoo, 2006), a study conducted by Parenzee and colleagues (2001) monitoring the implementation of the domestic violence act in the Western Cape, revealed that more men were applying for protection orders. Men

commonly applied for protection orders to counter the protection orders their wives got against them (Parenzee et al., 2001). In addition, various South African scholars have pointed out that applications for counter protection orders by men were usually as result of anger, for the sole purpose to evict female partners from the common home, and to reinforce and maintain the position of power in their relationships (Amien, 2001; Artz, 2003; Artz & Smythe, 2005). Artz (2003) contended that men are generally successful in their applications because courts do not have good recordkeeping systems. For that reason, magistrates commonly experience difficulty with determining the reliability of the claim and critically assessing the content of individual cases before issuing protection orders to male partners (Artz, 2003).

According to the findings outlined in this theme, while media messages might have educated audiences about the difficulties abused women experience with regard to the justice system; newspaper reports in the Western Cape also forged representations that blamed the justice system for increased incidents of domestic violence in South Africa.

4.2 Social representations of victim-blaming and perpetrator -'sympathy'

Newspaper reports in this study often depicted women, who experience abuse by male partners, as blameworthy. The theme 'victim blaming' was prominent across the data of this study. The finding coincided with previous empirical studies that have identified 'victim blaming' as a common trend in media reports dealing with stories of domestic violence (Berns, 1999; Gillespie et al., 2013; Nettleton, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Taylor (2009) argued that the good girl-bad girl dichotomy was commonly employed by journalists to describe women partners as blameworthy by giving critical media attention to what the woman partner has done, or not

done to contribute to the abuse by a men intimate partner. The extracts below constructed women partners as responsible for their own victimisation and male perpetrators as individuals whom readers could possibly sympathise with:

> **Sentenced to…work**. The Cape High Court heard yesterday how the warder's wife saddled him with massive debt. And how the 45-year-old man caught Marilyn Dietricht in bed with her younger lover. It also emerged that Dietricht's wife took out a R700 000 mortgage loan and used the money to buy gifts for her toy boy and pay for their overseas holidays. Judge Mokgoatji Delamo said he thought long and hard before deciding on the jail term. "I did take into account that the accused has no previous convictions and was living a clean life…until the crime," he said. The slain woman's father, Edward Solomans, says he has made peace with his daughter's death. "I forgive him. It wasn't easy for him and he had a difficult marriage. I'm glad it's not life imprisonment." "We thank God that he didn't get life imprisonment; he doesn't deserve that", Dietricht's friend Maria Jacobs said [Published in the *Daily Voice* February, 8, 2013].

> **Warden gets 10 years for wife's murder.** Johan Dietricht told the court he had been happily married for years, until his wife, Marilyn, started an affair with her employer. He told the court: "She was a housewife, but then started working, and then began cheating on me with her boss." He said his wife often flirted with her employer in his presence, and even went away for weekends with the employer. On one occasion, he caught his wife in bed with him, he said. He said he left the marital home and stayed with his sister [Published in the *Cape Times* on February, 8, 2013].

The two extracts above are explicit examples of 'victim blaming' and how the good girl–bad girl dichotomy was employed in newspaper reports. In both newspaper reports critical attention was accorded to the role Marilyn Dietricht (i.e., female partner) played in her own death, which was used to possibly represent her as blameworthy and as the bad girl who broke the 'rules' and supposedly got what she deserved (Taylor, 2009). In the *Cape Times*, the murder was constructed as a result of Marilyn choosing to abandon her "housewife" duties. Marilyn's decision to work appeared to have been constructed as the root cause behind the infidelity and

the unhappy marriage, thereby furthermore reinforcing representations of her as the 'bad girl'. In contrast, the male partner (i.e., the perpetrator) was constructed as the innocent victim who had succumbed to circumstances beyond his control. In the *Daily Voice* this argument was further strengthened by the newspaper report including quotes by Judge Mokgoatji Delamo, Edward Solomans (i.e., the victim's father), and the offender's friend. The insertion of quotes from Marilyn's father (i.e., "I forgive him. It wasn't easy for him and he had a difficult marriage. I'm glad it's not life imprisonment.") and the judge (i.e., "I did take into account that the accused has no previous convictions and was living a clean life…until the crime.") had a two-fold function in this report: (1) it was used to potentially draw sympathy for the perpetrator who was positioned at the receiving end of his wife's deviant behaviour, and (2) to deflect from constructing the offender as a perpetrator in the true sense of the word. Likewise, in the *Cape Times* extract, the offender was constructed as someone with whom readers could possibly sympathise. Furthermore, in both *Cape Times* and *Daily Voice* contextual issues linked to this story were particularly underrepresented. Newspaper reports covering this story placed great emphasis on Marilyn's past infidelity and reckless spending. Readers were not provided with a comprehensive account of either Marilyn's or the offender's past. Therefore, Marilyn continued to be portrayed as the deviant 'other' or 'bad girl' who got what she deserved, which in turn may have drawn sympathy to the perpetrator and shifted attention off from his perpetration. In other reports, quotes by relatives and acquaintances were also used by journalists to shift the blame onto the woman partner who experienced abuse:

> **Jealous hubby hacks nurse with knife and axe and kills himself.** "He [i.e., Errol] was a monster from the beginning and my mother begged Vanessa not to marry him 18 years ago", says Vanessa's emotional sister Tenille du Preez, 30. An attorney has told the *Daily*

> *Voice* that he advised Vanessa to get an interdict against her husband but she refused [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

The quote by Vanessa's sister and that of the attorney were possibly used in the newspaper report to construct Vanessa's choice to marry Errol and her refusal to obtain a protection order as reason to partially blame her for her own brutal murder. Within the newspaper report the quotes were strategically positioned: the quote from Vanessa's sister was placed at the beginning of the article and the quote by the attorney right at the end to possibly reiterate the supposed role Vanessa played in her own murder. Meanwhile, a comment by a trauma counselor (i.e., Dawn Roode), which appeared directly after the newspaper report above, used sympathetic language to describe perpetrators of domestic violence, such as Errol:

> **'Our men need support'.** Married couples need support and a place to turn before their disagreements become violent or criminal. Many people don't have a support network to turn to in times of crisis. This is especially true for men and fathers. Often males don't know who to reach out when they find themselves in a place of turmoil. Our fathers, husbands and sons need to be able to speak about their feelings to peers and people they trust and confide in. Over the years counselling men, I've found that there is often unresolved childhood issues or cases of abuse that they have never spoken about [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

Although the comment section by Roode proposed to outline the fact that married couples often experience a lack of support from social networks, her comment section focused strictly on the well-being of male partners (as illustrated in the title of the comment section). At one point in Roode's comment, she represented domestic violence perpetrated against women as the tragic outcome of childhood violence and emotional trauma the male partner has been

subjected to, which may have drawn sympathy to perpetrators of domestic violence, including Errol. Additionally, the language (i.e., "often males…find themselves in turmoil."; "Our fathers, husbands and sons need to be able to speak about their feelings to peers and people they trust and confide in.") used within the comment section above may have further portrayed male offenders as victims of their own violence who are defenseless, helpless, and in desperate need of support from readers. While not disputing the fact that men often find it difficult to obtain support from family and friends; only representing male partners as individuals who lack family and social support tells a one-sided story of domestic violence in South Africa. For example, South African scholars have argued that one of the major reasons why South African women often remain in abusive relationships is due to lack of support they receive from family and friends (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher, & Hoffman, 2006; Singh, 2009; van der Hoven, 2001).

As in the case of Vanessa, the quote from Corlia Olivier (i.e., Anene Booysen's foster mother) was also explicitly used to highlight the supposed, significant role Anene Booysen played in her own brutal murder. The rape and brutal murder of Booysen allegedly by her ex-boyfriend, Johnathan Davids and five to six other men on February, 2, 2013, sparked wide media attention:

> **'I told her not to be late'.** On Friday night Anene [i.e., the victim] went to David's Sport Bar & Pub, about six blocks from their home. Olivier [the victim's foster mother] warned her not to stay out late. At about midnight Olivier went to the bar and told her daughter to come home. "She told me that she still wanted to stay. I left her and told her not to come home later than 1am." A few hours later neighbours knocked on her door. Together they walked to the construction site. It was cold, Oliver said, and all the time she was thinking that it couldn't be Anene who had been attacked [Published in *Cape Times* on February, 8, 2013].

This particular newspaper report was published on the front page of the *Cape Times* with the quote (i.e., "I told her not to be late.") from the foster mother as the headline of the article. Publishing the story in this manner may have emphasised the importance of this piece of information to readers. Furthermore, the way the journalist chose to structure the article further represented Booysen as blameworthy. The article begins with a description of the murder and murder scene and immediately proceeds to explain how Booysen was requested to return home a few hours before the rape and brutal murder had taken place, but Booysen allegedly refused ("At about midnight Olivier went to the bar and told her daughter to come home." "She told me that she still wanted to stay."). In light of the way the article was structured, readers may have been left with the idea that it was ultimately Booysen's stubbornness and disobedience that resulted in her brutal murder.

Although direct victim-blaming was a prominent feature in newspaper reports analysed in this study, Taylor (2009) claimed that the positive and sympathetic language used to describe perpetrators often act as tools to promote indirect victim-blaming. According to Taylor (2009), when positive language is employed in newspaper reports, the perpetrator is commonly portrayed "as a tragic hero, overcome by his love for the victim" (p. 25), as illustrated in the extract below:

> **Guesthouse of horror.** This well-known B&B owner [i.e., Tsebane Ntozini] stabbed his wife [i.e., Vicky Ntozini] to death after they had a row. And he then tried to take his own life once he realised what he had done. The family of Tsebane Ntozini, 58, say they have no idea what sparked the fatal arguments that resulted in his wife Vicky's death. The couple was proud owners of a popular bed and breakfast in Site C, Khalyelitsha. "They were both very good people and they loved each other. I don't know what could have caused this" [i.e., Patrick Qawu, Vicky's brother]. [Published in the *Daily Voice* on November, 22, 2012].

Besides the journalist highlighting that Tsebane murdered his wife, nowhere in the newspaper report was responsibility attributed to Tsebane for the murder of his wife. Rather, Tsebane was portrayed as trying to correct his wrongs. Furthermore the endearing words (i.e., "good people" and "loved each other") used within the article possibly represented the act of violence as a tragic love story that had a sad ending for both parties involved, which possibly drew sympathy to both the victim and perpetrator.

Although in the newspaper report above positive language functioned to portray the act of violence as a tragic love story; in a number of newspaper reports that covered the murder of Reeva Steenkamp, positive language was potentially used to draw sympathy to Oscar Pistorius (i.e., the alleged perpetrator), while Steenkamp was constructed as blameworthy for her own murder:

> **Run-in with the law.** "If anyone makes a statement, it will have to be Oscar. He's sad at the moment" [i.e., Henke Pistorius, Oscar's father]. [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 15, 2013].
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> **Oscar's nightmare. Suffer in silence. Oscar's secret vigil for Reeva. Oscar Pistorius last night held a private vigil for the girlfriend he is accused of murdering in cold blood.** The star's spokeswoman says he invited family and close friends to "share his loss" at the death of stunning model Reeva Steenkamp. Meanwhile, it also emerged yesterday that Pistorius has packed away his famous blades and will not run again until his murder trial has ended. "Oscar has lost his loved one [i.e., Reeva] and to be training at this stage would be inappropriate," family spokeswomen Janine Hills tells the *Daily Voice* [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 27, 2013].

In the two reports above, Pistorius was portrayed as the "sad", devastated, grieving partner whom readers could sympathise with. More so, in the second extract, the fact that Pistorius is a

primary suspect in the murder of his girlfriend came across as irrelevant in the article. This piece of information only appeared briefly at the beginning of the article. Throughout the article phrases and quotes were used to describe Pistorius as the distraught, grieving partner (i.e., "Oscar's nightmare", "suffer in silence", and "share his loss"). One quote, in particular from the family spokeswomen, Janine Hills was used to represent Pistorius as the grieving and remorseful partner, which dissociated him from the traditional imagery of a perpetrator of domestic violence – the violent, psychopathic individual who has no remorse or sympathy for his female partner (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Taylor, 2009). This story was published on the front page of the *Daily Voice,* and even there a phrase was used to represent Pistorius as the distraught, grieving partner (i.e., "Star invites friends to 'share his loss'").

Conversely, in the newspaper report below, Steenkamp was constructed as blameworthy for her own murder:

> **Reeva's bull link.** Investigators are probing the link between tragic Reeva Steenkamp and a hunky Vodacom Bull. Bizarrely, the speculation was fuelled by Nelson Mandela's personal assistant Zelda la Grange in a message placed on twitter. She wrote: "Have you heard rumours about a rugby player alleged to be involved somehow? We all have." Investigators are looking into whether Reeva's friendship with Hougaard may have sparked the rows which were heard in the hours leading up to the shooting on Valentine's Day [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 19, 2013].

In the above newspaper report, the tweet by Nelson Mandela's personal assistant was instrumental in constructing Steenkamp's friendship with Francois Hougaard (a Springbok rugby player) as the primary reason behind her murder. Notably, in this newspaper report the death of Steenkamp was only discussed in terms of an argument that unfolded hours before she was

murdered. The argument was allegedly “sparked” because of Steenkamp’s friendship with the Springbok rugby player. The possible influences of other contextual factors in harnessing the act of violence were not addressed in this article and may have resulted in shifting some blame onto Steenkamp.

Interestingly, an article published adjacent to the one above, once again represented Pistorius as an individual whom readers could possibly sympathise with:

> **Oscar’s nightmare. Oscar’s dash for freedom.** The fallen athlete has assembled an expensive legal team to help him fight the charge of murder of his stunning model girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp, 29. The 26-year-old star spent his fifth night behind bars last night amid growing concern for his mental well-being. Pistorius is being held in a single cell with no other inmates and his lawyers have access to him beyond the usual visiting times. “We have access to him at all times,” Kenny Oldwage said [i.e., Oscar’s lawyer] [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 19, 2013].

Similar to the previous two articles above, the alleged role Pistorius played in the murder of Steenkamp was underreported in this article above. Instead, Pistorius’ alleged involvement in the murder of Steenkamp was described as a “nightmare”, causing him great distress. The aim of the newspaper report above was to demonstrate how Pistorius’ “expensive” legal team was endeavouring towards proving his innocence and liberating him from his “nightmare”. Details pertaining to Steenkamp’s experience were absent throughout the article above. Furthermore, in the newspaper report above comments made by the journalist (i.e., “the 26-year-old star spent his fifth night behind bars last night amid growing concern for his mental well-being.”) and Kenny Oldwage (i.e., “we have access to him at all times.”) may have been used to

punctuate the significant level of distress Pistorius was subjected to, which once again possibly represented him as an individual whom readers could possibly sympathise with.

In summary, newspaper reports illustrated in this theme had the tendency to focus upon the actions and behaviour of women partners and represent them as responsible for their own victimisation. However, quotes from family and friends, and positive language were used to construct perpetrators as individuals whom readers could possibly sympathise with.

4.3 Social representations of domestic violence as the problem of the individual

O'Neill (1998) described '*discourse*[25] *of pathology'* as the discourse that supports the argument that men's violence toward an intimate female partner is an abnormal phenomenon that is explained through pathological causes of behaviour. The discourse positions wife abuse or violence in general as one symptom of abnormal behaviour and that the "agent in this schema" (i.e., violent men) should not be held responsible for his symptoms (O'Neill, 1998, p. 460). The pathological causes of violent behaviour could be explained in terms of (1) alcohol and other drug abuse and, (2) abnormal personality traits (Armstrong, 2000; Kurian, Wechsberg, & Luseno 2009; O'Neill, 1998; Oyekanmi, 2000). Firstly, alcohol and other drug abuse are used by perpetrators to divert from taking responsibility for their acts of violence against an intimate female partner because they are viewed as "victims of an etiology that is beyond their control" (Field, Caetano, & Nelson, 2004; Klostermann & Fals-Stewart, 2006; O'Neill, 1998, p. 463). Secondly, in terms of abnormal personality traits and characteristics, it is argued that domestic violence stems from psychological defects that are located in both the offender and victim

[25] The term *discourse* could be defined as "a group of statements, objects, or events that represent knowledge about, or construct a particular topic" (Morgan, 2010, p. 2).

(Mooney, 2000). For example, abusive men that have been described as presenting high levels of certain psychiatric diagnosis, such as borderline or antisocial personality characteristics, are at a high risk of being perpetrators of domestic violence (Boonzaier, 2003; Cunningham et al., 1998). The basic premise of O'Neill's *discourse of pathology* was identified in number of reports, such as the one below:

> **Jealous hubby hacks nurse with knife and axe and kills himself.** Relatives say it was Errol Davids' violent temper and mental instability that drove him to slaughter his wife with an axe and knife. Michael Cole, 72, and his wife Elizabeth, 70, say they knew the two as very quiet, loving, kind and upstanding members of the AFM Church in Eerste River. And shocked neighbour Jan Julies and his wife Winnie say Errol worshipped the ground Vanessa walked on. "He would treat her like a princess, run her bath water, make her tea and even clean her shoes," Jan tells the *Daily Voice*. But inside the small home, Errol's mental illness was holding them hostage despite him telling everyone he was a born-again Christian. He was admitted twice for psychiatric treatment at the Kuils River Medical Facility and the De Tyger Clinic but he discharged himself [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

The murder of Vanessa Davids was represented as a direct consequence of Errol Davids' mental instability. The newspaper report might have given the reader the idea that the murder of Vanessa was brought about by a mental breakdown experienced by Errol Davids because Errol was admitted twice for psychiatric treatment before killing his wife. Moreover, the brutal act of violence committed by Errol against Vanessa was further constructed as a product of pathology by the neighbours of the couple. Their comments were used as the primary source of reference to obtain insight concerning the incident of abuse. Neighbours' descriptions of Errol as a loving and caring husband possibly painted Errol as an innocent, passive recipient overtaken by innate forces beyond his control. Of equal importance, the journalist's response succeeded to firmly construct Errol as the innocent victim who was imprisoned by innate forces beyond his control:

"But inside the small home, Errol's mental illness was holding them hostage despite him telling everyone he was a born-again Christian." The journalist's response possibly also functioned to distance Errol, as - the "born-again Christian", righteous individual from the uncontrollable, deviant act of violence. As a result, Errol's responsibility as perpetrator was possibly lessened.

In the comment section that followed the above newspaper report, domestic violence was constructed as an uncontrollable act of violence possibly brought on by alcohol consumption:

> **'Our men need support.'** I have more than 10 years experience in counselling and trauma support and every December I see an increase in domestic violence. During December and the holidays, families have more money and there are more parties and more alcohol in the household than at any other time of the year. It's at this time when self-control is most needed [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

Since this comment section was positioned directly beneath the article about Errol, it may have served to reinforce the message about the perpetration of domestic violence against women as an act that is uncontrollable. The comment above may have also functioned to simplify the increased occurrences of domestic violence perpetrated against women during the month of December. In view of the comment above, the increase in incidents of domestic violence during the month of December was constructed as purely brought about by alcohol abuse and a lack of self-control located within the perpetrator.

A similar construction of perpetrator- pathology emerged in the extract below:

> **Mother's tikkop ex 'butchers' her twin daughters**. The paranoid man then walked up and down in the streets of Uitsig, Caledon, while holding a knife to Reinette's [ex-female partner] throat. At one point Anette ran into the road and stopped a police van and begged for help. But for some reason the officer did not take the crazed man into custody. Fearing for her life, Reinette tried to reach out to her terrified daughters. But

> her enraged ex grabbed Rainecia. The madman then locked the badly-injured mother and daughter in the house while he ran out. The cold-blooded man then allegedly threw a speaker box on the tiny girl's head. Reinette says she was later told that her ex-boyfriend was high on tik. "He loved my children and treated them like his own so I don't know how he could do this," Reinette explains [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

This extract emerged from a story that was published in the *Daily Voice* about 25-year -old mother, Reinette Neelse, who was stabbed in the neck and her two-year-old twin daughters were brutally murdered by her 30-year-old ex-boyfriend, two days after their relationship ended. The newspaper report described Neelse's ex-boyfriend's violence against herself and children as a result of him being in a drug induced state ["high on tik"]. The language used in this article played a key role in representing the perpetrator as partially blameless and portraying him as a passive recipient of innate forces beyond his control. Phrases used in both the heading (i.e., "Mother's tikkop ex 'butchers' her twin daughters.") and at the beginning of the article (i.e., "the paranoid man", "cold-blooded man", "the madman", "enraged ex", and "the crazed knifeman") demonised the act of violence. However, in the conclusion of the article, Neelse is quoted describing her ex-boyfriend as a loveable and caring individual, which may have separated the perpetrator from the deviant act of violence. At the same time, the journalist's choice to withhold the identity of the perpetrator might have too removed a sense of responsibility form the perpetrator. The possibility that the violence was purpose-driven with the aim to exert and reinforce power and control over Reinette, remained underplayed.

Issues around substance abuse appeared to emerge strongly within newspaper reports' constructions of the pathological perpetrator and in the extract below, the murder of Marilyn Dietricht by her husband, Johan Dietricht, was found to emerge within a similar vein:

> **Warden gets 10 years for wife's murder**. On August 21, 2009, he took anti-depression medication, and drank a full bottle of sherry before calling his wife from the prison. He asked her to come to the prison because he wanted to give her money. On her arrival, he met her in a guest room, and started shooting wildly at her. Dietricht, in the heat of the moment, then turned the gun on himself in an attempted suicide, but the trigger jammed [Published in *Cape Times* on February, 8, 2013].

The manner in which the information was presented in the newspaper report may have given readers the idea that the only reason Johan murdered his wife was because he was beyond himself (i.e., under the influence of medication, and in an alcohol induced state). In this regard, he cannot be held fully responsible for the murder of his estranged wife. The phrases used within the article (e.g., "started shooting wildly at her" and "in the heat of the moment") continued to construct the act of violence as impulsive and uncontrollable.

O'Neill's (1998) *discourse of violence as an expression of inner-tension* supports the argument of men's violence being driven by innate forces, such as anger and high degrees of tension. The discourse holds that violent men are subject to these powerful, innate forces of which they have little or no control (O'Neill, 1998). These forces are then directed towards objects of frustration (i.e., wife, family, friends, and strangers), causing pain and injury (O'Neill, 1998). Consistent with O'Neill's discourse, the murder of 20-year-old, Ncebakazi Bili, was represented as an isolated act of violence that stemmed purely from her ex-boyfriend's uncontrollable jealousy:

> **Pregnant matric killed. Mom-to-be and unborn baby are 'stabbed to death by jealous lover'. This eight-month pregnant learner was brutally slashed to death, allegedly by her lover as she sat listening to gospel music**. Ncebakazi Bili, 20, was stabbed five times allegedly by her jealous lover as she sat in her Samora Machel home on Saturday afternoon. The Grade 12 learner's sister Nandipha Bili, 18, says the trouble started when the suspect saw her sister's ex-boyfriend talking to one of her brothers. "After seeing Ncebakazi's ex-boyfriend talking to one of my brothers, he became jealous," says Nandipha. She says her sister's lover confronted her [i.e., Ncebakazi} and they had an argument after which he left the house. But he returned minutes later. "He came inside our home and attacked her" [i.e., Ncebakazi] says Nandipha [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 11, 2012].

The sub-heading of the article and the journalist's decision not to reveal the perpetrators identity confirmed this representation: On the one hand, the sub-heading (i.e., "Mom-to-be and unborn baby are 'stabbed to death by jealous lover.'") completely constructed the murder as the byproduct of a jealous rage. In the sub-heading that followed, the journalist also highlighted that Bili was listening to gospel music before she was murdered. Using the aforementioned information as a backdrop to discuss the murder might have not only represented the act of violence as unexpected and random; it may have also described it as a deviant, horrific act, as illustrated by the language used within the subtitle (i.e., "brutally slashed to death…"). On the other hand, by not making the identity of the perpetrator known, the perpetrator was merely portrayed as a 'jealous lover'. In other words, the ownership and level of responsibility associated to the perpetrator was possibly challenged. Furthermore, in the article the act of violence was solely discussed in terms of an argument that unfolded minutes before the fatal stabbing had taken place, and that was described to have activated the jealous rage. Nowhere in the article was reference made to the interplay of other contextual factors that could have illustrated the perpetrator's active role in the stabbing, which further positioned the murder as an uncontrollable act of which the perpetrator had limited control.

In another article published in the *Daily Voice*, the title of the article was once again used to portray the murder of Thembisa Mondleki and Garry Dladla by Warren, as an outcome of a jealous rage:

> **Couple killed by jealous bomber**. A couple died a horror death after a jealous lover, petrol-bombed their home on Christmas day. The tragedy unfolded as Thembisa Mondleki, 28, and her boyfriend Garry Dladla, 38, were sleeping inside their backyard shack at Ngqabe Street, Lower Crossroads in Phillippi, at around 3am on Christmas morning. Thembisa's ex-boyfriend who is only known as "Warren" – approached their house and threw a petrol bomb at the *hokkie*[26]. Nolusindiso Batyi [i.e., landlord of the couple] reported that Warren flew into a jealous rage when he heard his ex was drinking with another man. "He [i.e., Warren] became jealous and waited until everybody was gone and the couple was asleep, "Nolusindiso says. "He then threw a petrol bomb which ignited the fire" [Published in the *Daily Voice*, December, 28, 2013].

As in the case of the previous article, contextual factors were also significantly underreported in this article. In the newspaper report above, readers were only told that Mondleki was previously in an intimate relationship with Warren. The history shared between Thembisa and Warren (i.e., the perpetrator) was not reflected upon in the newspaper report. Instead the landlord's explanation represented the murder as an isolated incident brought about by jealous rage. However, in contrast to the previous newspaper report in which the act of violence was completely constructed as uncontrollable, in the newspaper report above, the landlord's explanation might have represented Mondleki (to a certain degree) as partially responsible for provoking the uncontrollable jealous rage, which subsequently led to her murder. Parallel to O'Neill's (1998) discourse of pathology, newspaper reports analysed in this study represented female partners as partially responsible for aggravating the innate 'forces' that might lead men

[26] The term 'hokkie' is Afrikaans slang for a shack.

to become violent, whilst positioning perpetrators as passive agents. The findings in the extract above share much resemblance to the illustrations presented below, in that the actions of women partners were also described to have propelled men's uncontrollable jealousy and violence:

> **Ex-cop kills wife at party.** A source close to the couple says a man at the party referred to Thabisa as "darling" which sent Mbulelo into a jealous rage leading to an attack [Published in *Daily Voice* on October, 30, 2012].
>
> **Jealous hubby hacks nurse with knife and axe and kills himself.** Vanessa Davids' only sin was that she wanted a divorce from Errol, who had recently received treatment [Published in the *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2013].

In the second extract above, Vanessa's request for a divorce was explicitly portrayed as the 'final' trigger that set-off Errol's uncontrollable jealousy and temper, resulting in her murder.

Since contextual factors were significantly downplayed in the newspaper reports above, the possibility that the act of violence could have been premeditated, or that it might have been used by the perpetrator as a tool to exert power and control over the victim remained hidden.

In summary, domestic violence against women was represented as a byproduct of substance abuse and mental instability, which pathologised men partners. At times, domestic violence was constructed as an uncontrollable outburst 'provoked' by women partners, which in many of the reports, were argued to have led to their tragic murders.

4.4 Social representations of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence

A representation that was largely spread throughout the majority of the data was that of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence towards an intimate female partner. The extreme acts of violence consisted largely of domestic murders and gruesome acts of violence perpetrated against women partners. Of the 17 articles found to carry this representation, four stories appeared on the front pages of the respective newspapers. The following extracts are examples of extreme cases of domestic violence that filled the front pages of the three newspapers analysed in this study:

> **Ex-cop kills wife at party. In May this former policeman [i.e., Mbulelo Nyengane] went to jail for shooting his officer wife [i.e., Thabisa Tutwana]. Last week he was released and he stabbed her to death.** "It was alleged they got into an argument," says police spokesman FC van Wyk. "The couple went into the bedroom where she was stabbed three times" [Published in *Daily Voice* on October, 30, 2012].
>
> **Mother's tikkop ex 'butchers' her twin daughters.** These beautiful two-year old sisters were brutally stabbed to death and their mother stabbed in the neck – allegedly by their mom's tikkop ex-boyfriend [Published in *Daily Voice* on December, 18, 2012].

The issue of newsworthiness has been commonly used as a reason to explain why domestic murders received heighten media coverage as opposed to other cases of abuse e.g., emotional, psychological, and verbal abuse. In this study, the murders of Anene Booysen and Reeva Steenkamp acted as fitting examples to explain the pattern of newsworthiness. Firstly in terms of the extract below:

> **Teen's private part was sliced from vagina to anus. Anene's intestines hung out…she tried to stand up but she could not. Slaughtered Anene Booysen tried crawling to get help as her intestines dangled from her slashed stomach.** A court heard yesterday how

> the raped and mutilated teen fought bravely to get-up after she had been sliced open. **Cop recalls gutted girl's final agony. A security [who found her] notified police. Her [i.e., Anene] clothes were pulled down and her intestines were hanging out** [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 27, 2013].

Booysen's disemboweled body dumped at a construction site in Bredasdorp became the area of focus for many media reports and the subject matter that filled the front pages of all three newspapers for several weeks after the brutal rape and murder had taken place. Although newspaper reports were expected to cover the court proceedings of Booysen's murder, the horrific details of Booysen's injuries remained the centre of newspaper reports in this study, without much attention to Booysen and her experience. Throughout the two-page article, which the above extract formed part of, reference was made to the gruesome mutilation of Booysen. The title and subtitles used within article reiterated the horrific details of the rape and murder (e.g., "Anene's intestines hung out….She tried to stand up but she could not"; "Cop recalls gutted girl's final agony"; "slaughtered Anene Booysen tried crawling to get help as her intestines dangled from her slashed stomach"; and "teen's private parts were sliced from vagina to anus."). Details of the court-proceedings were nearly non-existent within the article. In addition, on February, 15, 2013, the front page of the *Daily Voice* was used to make comparisons between the murder of Booysen and other proceeding horrific cases of violence against women in South Africa, including the brutal murders of Jo-anne van Schalkwyk, 18, and 19-year-old, Ge-Audrey Green from Kraaifontein:

> **Cape of rape. Worst sex crime hotspots revealed. Sick sex crimes and rapes have more than doubled in the town where tragic Anene Booysen was brutally raped and murdered, a *Daily Voice* investigation reveals today.** In Atlantis – where 18-year-old Jo-anne van Sckalkwyk was bashed to death this week – the number of violent sex crimes is

> also on the rise. And Kraaifontein, where the decomposing remains of murdered Ge-Audrey Green, 19, were in a drawer last week – a shocking 231 sex crimes were reported in the last recorded 12 – month period [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 15, 2013].

The comparison above acted as a vehicle to represent both the murder of Booysen and violence against women as normative, commonplace occurrences in the violent and crime-ridden context of South Africa, which undermined the significance of the individual act of violence. The title that accompanied the comparison further promoted this representation: "Cape of Rape".

The substantial media coverage accorded to the gruesome details of Booysen's victimisation subsequently also sparked a nationwide outcry against the increased occurrences of sexual violence and other forms violence against women in South Africa:

> **Gang rape and murder of teen outrages SA**. South Africans have joined in outrage at the horrific rape and murder of 17-year-old Anene Booysen – including President Jacob Zuma in a public statement. The Medical Research Council's Rachel Jewkes said this kind of national outrage was necessary for action to be taken. "I'm really pleased that it has generated a huge level of outrage" [Published in the *Cape Times* on February, 8, 2013].

Just more than a week after the murder of Booysen, the murder of South African model, Reeva Steenkamp - allegedly by boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius (the "Hero athlete"), - also propelled marked media coverage, noted in the extract below:

> **Run-in with the law. Blade runner Oscar Pistorius spent last night behind bars after allegedly pumping four bullets into his model girlfriend.** Pistorius gave the world a glimpse of his jealous streak shortly after he returned from the London Olympics last year. He allegedly exchanged threatening SMSes with former soccer player Marc Batchelor, saying he would break his legs. The saga started when Pistorius allegedly confronted millionaire and *Clifton Shores TV* producer Quinton van der Burgh at the

> Kyalami racetrack. Pistorius was furious about the alleged infidelity of an unnamed 18-year-old woman with van der Burgh. He verbally attacked Batchelor because he is a friend of van der Burgh [Published in the *Daily Voice* on February, 15, 2013].

As media investigations progressed, the story took on the form of pure sensationalism, and journalists began speculating about the possible reasons behind the murder of the model. Contextual factors, including Pistorius' previous offences with the law, his violent temper, "his jealous streak" (as stipulated in the extract above) and Reeva's friendship with South African Bulls rugby player, Francois Hougaard, were brought under the spotlight. Consistent with the story of Booysen, the murder of Steenkamp filled the front pages of the newspapers under analysis for several weeks, which according to Boswell (2003), signified the importance and 'newsworthiness' of story of the day and led to an influx of media attention around the issue of violence against women in South Africa, as illustrated below:

> **2500 women slain a year.** Nearly 2500 women a year are murdered, the SA Institute of race relations says. The spotlight has been turned anew on violence against women since Bredasdrop teenager Anene Booysen was raped and so badly injured she died and model Reeva Steenkamp was shot and died in the home of her boyfriend, Paralympian Oscar Pistorius. SA institute researcher, Lerato Moloi said she hoped the media spotlight on crimes against women would direct attention to the broader problem and prompt policy initiatives needed [Published in the *Cape Times* on February, 19, 2013].

Even though the heightened media coverage around the two stories above elicited positive responses and magnified the disproportionately high levels of violence against women in South Africa, for the most part of the period set aside for data collection of this study (September, 2012, to late January, 2013), media coverage on domestic violence against women, particularly in the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* alike, were nearly non-existent. For the most part of the 16

Days of Activism for no violence against women and children campaign, stories related to intimate partner violence were significantly underrepresented, and front page media coverage of the campaign was nearly absent across all three newspapers.

In this current study, the overemphasis of gruesome acts of physical violence was also used by journalists to possibly reinforce women's victim status:

> **Abuse victims aren't aware of rights and law is failing them.** She [i.e., Lucinda] cited a case where the wife of a police reservist was turned away on numerous occasions after trying to open a case of assault against him. "The police just ignored her. She eventually came to us for help. She showed us SMSes where he says he's going to kill her and their children…Sometimes the women are petrified of their abuser and can't think straight [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

The extract above formed part of a newspaper report proposed to educate readers about the challenges abused women are faced with in relation to the criminal justice system. However, the title ("abused victims…") and the language used in the newspaper report confined women, who experience abuse by male partners, to the role of the "petrified", anxious, and defenseless victim. A picture attached to the above-mentioned news report further exalted the imagery of the badly, battered woman partner. Although the journalist citied a case where the woman partner confronted her victim position by seeking legal and other external intervention, the marginalisation of "abused victims" remained the primary argument of the article above.

Unlike the previous newspaper report where women were represented challenging their victim status (to a certain degree), in the extract below, Ina Bonette (i.e., the female partner) was portrayed completely as the powerless, tortured victim:

> **'I freed rape victim with tool of torture'.** Vivienne van der Merwe [i.e., the landlord of the couple] testified that she went to the house of Johan Kotze [i.e., the perpetrator] late on the afternoon of January 3 at the request of her husband Dirk. Inside, she found Kotze's wife Ina Bonette tied to the window and bed with cable-ties and a rope. She had been gagged, her breasts were exposed and there was blood on her nipples. van der Merwe used a side-cutter on a table next to the bed to free Bonette, who told her three men had raped her. Bonette earlier testified that Kotze used the side-cutter to cut off one of her nipples and small saw to remove her other nipple during a prolonged torture session. Kotze directed his three co-accused to rape her [Published in the *Cape Argus* on November, 20, 2012].

Whilst the main function of the newspaper report above was to keep readers informed about the trial of Bonette and Johan Kotze, the journalist devoted nearly the entire article to magnifying the gruesome details of Bonette's victimisation and "torture". The journalist never attempted to give readers the sense that Bonette had moved beyond the position of 'the tortured women partner'. Rather the title of the newspaper report continued to depict Bonette as the helpless "rape victim" who was subjected to a prolonged period of "torture".

In another example below, preference given to physical acts of violence was also used by the journalist to possibly portray women as passive victims fulfilling their traditional feminine[27] role– the nurturing caregiver, who despite being subjected to a cycle of violence, chose to look past the violence and put the needs of her family above her own:

> **The Cops don't do their work.** Ruby van Niekerk says her ex-berk[28] has been abusing her since they started living together seven years ago. "When he got drunk, he would shout and swear and break things, he'd hit and smack me around." The mom says she'd take her abuser back after every arrest "because he had nowhere to go" and her children cried for their father [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

[27] Traditional femininity is an ideology that dictates so called 'proper' behavioural patterns, attitudes, and personality characteristics consistent with one's sex (Colman, 2006; Hermes, 2007).

[28] The term "Berk" is Afrikaans slang used to refer to an intimate male partner of a female.

Boonzaier (2008) argued that often women, who experience abuse, would perceive the violence they are subjected to as a cycle which requires of them to continuously leave and return to their abusive partner. Women would return or accept back an abusive partner due to feelings of sympathy, hoping for change, or because they view the abuse as not consistent with the "feature of the man's identity but rather a departure from the norm" (Boonzaier, 2008, p. 193). Relating to the extract above, readers may have been given the impression that for the past seven years, Ruby van Niekerk continuously assumed the victim position and accepted her abusive ex-boyfriend back into her home because she took pity on him for not having a place to stay, and because she felt obligated to fulfill her feminine role in the relationship - the nurturing caregiver. In addition, the newspaper report may have given the reader the idea that van Niekerk subscribed to her victim position because she constructed her continuous victimisation as an act brought about by substance abuse. Thus, she did not hold her ex-boyfriend fully accountable for the abuse he inflicted upon her.

While not disputing the fact that women often find themselves helpless to the abuse of a male partner, representing women only as victims tells part of the 'story' about domestic violence against women in South Africa. Representing women only as victims denies the findings presented by South African literature which points out that an increased number of women, who experience abuse by male partners, are challenging their role as victims by applying for protection orders against their abuser and leaving abusive relationships (Boonzaier, 2008; Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2003; Gopal & Chetty, 2006; Mathews & Abrahams, 2001; Mesatywa, 2008; Vetten et al., 2009). For example, a study conducted by Boonzaier and De la Rey (2003) that explored how abused women gave meaning to their experiences, found that an increasing

number of women, who experienced abuse by male partners, were challenging the traditional feminine position they once occupied (i.e., the passive and submissive woman). Women were determined to overcome the abuse inflicted upon them by a male partner (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2003). Different strategies (such as seeking after friendships and family support) were employed to deal with the violence and minimise their partner's control over them (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2003). Another study conducted by Boonzaier (2008) that examined how both men and women make meaning of men's perpetration of violence against women, also outlined changes in the roles women once occupied in their relationships. The roles changed from initially passive to active, and women sought after strategies to end the violence (Boonzaier, 2008).

In sharp contrast to the overrepresentation of extreme physical acts of violence, in cases where other cases of intimate partner violence (e.g., emotional, psychological, and verbal abuse) were reported on, it would be underreported, appear in news briefs, or be hidden among other stories. For example, newspaper coverage in the Western Cape of an incident of domestic violence involving a well-known South African actor who "hit" his girlfriend was nearly non-existent:

> **Local star 'hits' lover.** Local star Rapulana Seiphemo[29] got a slap on the wrist for allegedly slapping his girlfriend. His lawyer yesterday called the allegations a mere misunderstanding after they left the Roodepoort Magistrates' court. "It was just a misunderstanding…no violence was involved, says Lehlohonolo Adonisi. Adonisi says it was unfortunate that the matter had reached the courts, as his client was not violent [Published in *Daily Voice* on February, 19, 2013].

[29] Rapulana Seiphemo is best known for his roles as Tau Mogale in the South African soapie Generations and Pheko Mokoena in Muvhango.

> **Actor's girlfriend lays assault charge.** Actor and director Rapulana Seiphemo spent most of the weekend behind bars after he was arrested for allegedly assaulting his girlfriend [Published in the *Cape Times* on February, 19, 2013].

This story was published in both the *Daily Voice* and *Cape Times* around the time large media coverage was dedicated to gender-based violence in view of the murders of Anene and Reeva. However, unlike the stories of Anene and Reeva, this story was not deemed newsworthy to appear on front pages of newspapers as there were no horrific injuries to report on, which may draw large readership. Instead it appeared outside of the business section of the *Cape Times*, free from any analysis of contextual factors, which might have denoted the insignificance of the story. The newspaper report did not represent the incident as an act of domestic violence but rather an act of assault, which possibly downplayed the seriousness of the story. In a similar manner, the media coverage the story received in the *Daily Voice* trivialised the act of abuse. The story appeared on the far right corner of page three in the newspaper – a section in the newspaper set aside for celebrity gossip and scandal. This publishing style used was in contrary to that of extreme cases of domestic violence in this sample. Extreme cases of domestic violence in this sample would either be published on the front pages of the *Daily Voice* or it would receive double-spread media coverage. Moreover, the newspaper report also possibly challenged the reliability of the claim of abuse by inserting the act of violence in inverted commas and quoting the lawyer of the perpetrator (i.e., "it was just a misunderstanding...no violence was involved."). Furthermore, the quote from the lawyer (i.e., "it was unfortunate that the matter had reached the courts, as his client was not violent") may have also been used to perpetuate the myth that domestic violence offenders are only 'aggressive and physically violent' individuals. This depiction downplayed the vast and common occurrence of male

violence in South Africa (Jewkes et al., 2009) and concealed the fact that male violence is an ongoing process, where the enactment of male power does not rely on extreme physical violent acts alone (Wilcox, 2008).

Of the 25 articles analysed in this study, only one highlighted the seriousness of emotional abuse:

> **'The cops don't do their work'.** "he would shout and swear and break things, he'd hit and smack me around. "He came back one night and raped me"…, Ruby says. "I am suffering from depression and I can't sleep. He is out again and he still phones me in the middle of the night to say he'll kill me, "she says [Published in the *Daily Voice* on September, 11, 2012].

Across the article the victimisation of Ruby was discussed in terms of rape, smacking, and hitting, thereby possibly constructing physical violence as more noteworthy than the emotional abuse she experienced. The negative effects of emotional abuse was discussed indirectly in two sentences right at the end of article, which may have signified the insignificance of this piece of information to the victimisation.

In summary, a vast number of articles that made up the sample of this study represented domestic violence against women as an extreme act of physical violence. The emphasis placed upon gruesome details of violence was also used by journalists to reinforce women's victim status. In articles where other cases of domestic violence were acknowledged, they were hidden amongst other 'newsworthy' stories, and contextual factors were significantly underrepresented.

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter identified and discussed the social representations of domestic violence evident in the Western Cape media according to four themes: (1) *social representations of domestic violence as a problem of the justice system*; (2) *social representations of victim-blaming and perpetrator -'sympathy'*; (3) *social representations of domestic violence as the problem of the individual*; (4) *social representations of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence*. Many of the representations that emerged from the data were consistent with findings presented by past research conducted in this field. The findings were shown to reinforce traditional myths about domestic violence and women were constructed as 'victims' of violence. In the next chapter recommendations will be made to address the distorted accounts outlined in this chapter and to potentially improve the future of media coverage on domestic violence against women.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to identify and explore social representations of domestic violence against women that emerged in the *Daily Voice*, *Cape Argus*, and *Cape Times*. The findings suggested that newspaper reports in the Western Cape largely represented domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence against an intimate female partner, and blamed women for their own victimisation. In this chapter, a summary of the findings will be presented in the order they have been reported on. This chapter will then discuss the implications of the findings in the context of South Africa – a country in which the scourge of violence against women is rampant and messages concerning gender-based violence might be consumed by audiences in particular ways. Recommendations are then presented based on the study's findings. Furthermore, the chapter discusses possible recommendations for future research before concluding.

5.1 Summary of findings

In this section, the findings of this study will be summarised according to the four themes: (1) *social representations of domestic violence as a problem of the justice system*; (2) *social representations of victim-blaming and perpetrator - 'sympathy'*; (3) *social representations of domestic violence as the problem of the individual*; and (4) *social representations of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence*.

5.1.1 Social representations of domestic violence as a problem of the justice system

In this study, the Western Cape media constructed the occurrence of domestic violence against women as an isolated incident of the justice system. Men's violence against an intimate female partner and the difficulty women often experience in taking legal action against their abusive partner, for example, were discussed in relation to negligence found in the justice system. As a result, responsibility assigned to the perpetrator was lessened and the possible influence of other sectors and contextual factors underrepresented. At times, the justice system was also blamed for the increased incidents of domestic violence in South Africa as it was represented as gender-biased, and in favour of women.

5.1.2 Social representations of victim-blaming and perpetrator -'sympathy'

Newspaper reports analysed in this study commonly portrayed female victims of domestic violence as blameworthy. One such victim-blaming tactic included the employment of the good-girl-bad girl dichotomy, which constructed women as having allegedly 'provoked' men to become violent. Journalists also made use of quotes from relatives and other parties involved to represent the victim as blameworthy and to draw sympathy to the male perpetrator. Though explicit victim-blaming was a common message that was distributed in newspaper reports, indirect tactics were also used to perpetuate the theme of victim-blaming and perpetrator 'sympathy'. Consistent with the argument presented by Taylor (2009), positive and sympathetic language used to describe perpetrators acted as instruments to promote indirect victim-blaming.

5.1.3 Social representations of domestic violence as the problem of the individual

It was found that journalists tended to draw upon a *discourse of pathology* (O'Neill, 1998) in newspaper reports, which allowed them to portray domestic violence as a direct consequence of individual dysfunction. Aligned with O'Neill's (1998) discourse, articles in this study depicted men's violence as the aftermath of substance abuse and a mental breakdown experienced by the perpetrator. These representations were used by journalists to depict the perpetrator as partially blameless. Likewise, newspaper reports also appeared to feature *discourse of violence as an expression of inner-tension* (O'Neill, 1998), which represented domestic violence against women as a negative outcome of poor impulse control, uncontrollable jealousy, and a violent temper. In the current study, it was found that media reports held the female partners responsible for setting-off men's uncontrollable tempers.

5.1.4 Social representations of domestic violence as an extreme act of physical violence

Findings in this study implied that the media in the Western Cape constructed domestic violence to appear mainly as extreme acts of physical violence against an intimate female partner. In the majority of the articles that made up the sample of this study, domestic violence was represented in terms of domestic murders. These incidents of domestic violence were defined as newsworthy and appeared on the front pages of the respective newspapers. In cases where domestic murders did not appear on the front pages, it would receive double-spread media coverage. Furthermore, the overemphasis placed upon extreme acts of physical violence also reinforced women's victim status.

In stark contrast, other cases of domestic violence (i.e., emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse) were significantly underreported. They appeared hidden amongst other more 'newsworthy' stories and were published on page three in the *Daily Voice* (i.e., a section reserved for celebrity gossip and scandal), as acts of assault rather than true forms of domestic violence. In a similar way, the 16 Days of Activism for no violence against women and children campaign was also underrepresented across all three newspapers analysed in this study.

5.2 Implications of findings

The representations highlighted in this study might hold negative implications for the way domestic violence against women is perceived in the South African context. Firstly, constructions of the justice system as entirely blameworthy for the occurrence of domestic violence might serve to distribute messages that not only shift blame from perpetrators to the justice system, but also serve to simplify the broader social context in which the phenomenon exists (Abrahams et al., 2006; Boonzaier, 2003; Dawes, Kafaar, de SasKropiwnicki, Pather, & Richter, 2004; Jewkes et al., 2009; Jewkes et al., 2002; Mesatywa, 2008; Njezula, 2006; Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). For example, the possible contribution of other sectors (such as the government) in preserving domestic violence, or broader-socio-structural factors (e.g., lack of family and social support, high levels of unemployment, and low levels of education) in preventing women from leaving abusive relationships may be undermined as full responsibility is accorded to the justice system (Abrahams et al., 2006; Jewkes, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2009; Njezula, 2006). In a similar way, the role of perpetrators may also continue to be mitigated should newspaper reports in the Western Cape persist to describe the South African criminal

justice system as biased to the needs of the women partner (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Anderson and Umberson (2001) suggested that by positioning the legal system as gender biased, the focus is removed from the act of violence. Instead male partners are constructed as powerless, emasculated victims of an unjust justice system, and individuals who are oppressed by a society in which women have access to greater rights (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). A direct consequence of such a depiction is that media audiences may accept these distorted messages and might perceive perpetrators to be valid 'victims' of the justice system, while women are thought of as manipulators and even as the perpetrator in the domestic relationship.

In South Africa, the promotion of victim- blaming may simplify the occurrence of domestic violence and perpetuate the misguided notion that it is a private issue that only concerns the couple involved (van der Hoven, 2001). The potential influence of those traditions, norms, and attitudes structured by notions of patriarchy that emerge across South Africa's multi-racial and multi-cultural population (which promote the occurrences of men's violence against women) remain ignored and unexplained (Boonzaier, 2003; Boonzaier, 2005; Dawes et al., 2004; Hutson, 2007; Jewkes, 2009; Mesatywa, 2008; Njezula, 2006; Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). Furthermore, as newspaper reports in the Western Cape continue to focus simply on the behaviour of the female partner traditional myths may be reinforced, including that women deserve the abuse they have been subjected to, and that it was the so-called deviant behaviour of the woman partner that provoked the act of violence against her (van der Hoven, 2001). However, women who experience abuse might endorse these distorted representations of self-blame presented in newspaper reports, and upon interpreting the violence to be their fault,

might choose to remain in the abusive relationship (J.M. Prochaska & J. O. Prochaska, 2002). Joffe (1995) added that out-groups (such as women who experience abuse by male partners) might even subscribe to representations of self-blame in an effort to maintain a positive group and individual identity and to avoid shame. For example, women may choose to remain in their abusive relationship to keep up the façade of 'happy home' and to avoid the shame of being labeled as a failure.

Holtman and Domingo-Swarts (2008) postulated that although public perception of crime and violence in South Africa is influenced by primary factors (i.e., firsthand experience of crime that an individual, their family, or friends may have had), secondary factors (such as the mass media) also play a significant role in shaping individual ideas of violence. In light of this argument, constructing domestic violence as a product of individual psychological dysfunction may give readers the impression that domestic violence against women is a rare problem committed by individuals who cannot be held accountable for their act of violence (Michelle & Weaver, 2003; Nettleton, 2011). At the same time, perpetrators may also subscribe to these distorted representations and may even be encouraged to exercise violence as they may not be held accountable for it. Ideas that violence may be used as a tool by male offenders to exercise power and control over women, or that substance abuse might be purposefully used as a strategy to deflect from taking responsibility for violent behavior are silenced (Jewkes, 2002; Michelle & Weaver, 2003). Nonetheless, domestic violence against women in South Africa will remain to be to be seen as an isolated and rare incident rather than a marked social problem that is on the increase (de la Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2009; Prinsloo, 2007), if

the media in the Western Cape media persists to portray domestic violence against women as product of individual psychological dysfunction.

Wilcox (2010) postulated that although the murder of a wife or intimate female partner is the most tragic and serious outcome of domestic violence, the choice of media reports to give critical attention to extreme cases of domestic violence tends to undermine the multi-faceted phenomenon of domestic violence and yield a distorted account of its true reality. This is true for violence against women in South Africa. The one-sided portrayal of domestic violence as an act of physical injury against an intimate female partner in the Western Cape media undermines the complexities of the social phenomenon in South Africa. According to the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, acts constituting domestic violence include physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, economic abuse; intimidation, harassment, and stalking (van der Hoven, 2001; Vetten, 2005). Scholars have shown violence against women in South Africa cannot be understood in part but needs to be viewed as interrelated actions and behaviours (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). In Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk's (2011) study which examined the complexities of intimate partner violence amongst poor women of colour in South Africa, it was revealed that physical violence was greatly accompanied by emotionally controlling and verbally abusive behaviour (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). In fact, the authors showed that women commonly constructed psychological forms of violence as more damaging to the self than physical violence (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). A study conducted by Mechanic and associates (2008) that investigated the mental health consequences of intimate partner violence, argued that women who are subjected to long periods of psychological abuse often develop post-traumatic stress disorder, feelings of anxiety,

depression, symptoms of paranoia, and even thoughts of suicide. However, with the promotion of extreme cases of violence in the Western Cape media, the seriousness of psychological and verbal abuse is minimised and domestic violence in South Africa is simplified.

5.3 Recommendations toward the improvement of future media coverage of domestic violence against women and research

Recommendations in response to the findings of this study and suggestions for future South African domestic violence research in the context of media will follow in this section. The possible ways in which journalists could provide readers with more holistic views of domestic violence in the South African context will be the main focus of this section. The recommendations will be addressed according to the following headings: *context, language,* and *moving towards representing domestic violence as a multifaceted act of abuse*.

5.3.1 Context

According to Morgan and Politoff (2012), one of the primary ways media reporting on domestic violence against women could be enhanced is if increased attention is afforded to understanding the context in which the phenomenon occurs. For example, Gilespie and colleagues (2013) have argued that the relationship between the women partner and the offender is highly complex, and journalists are therefore encouraged to examine the context of the intimate relationship more closely. Rather than excessive media attention being placed upon the behaviour of the woman partner, journalists could equally consider the relationship history of both the women partner and the perpetrator when reporting on intimate partner violence. One way in which this could be achieved, is to consult relatives and close friends of

the couple. Taylor (2009) argued that relatives and close friends are generally prone to give a true account of the context of the relationship as they are more knowledgeable about the history of the couple and the events that led up to the final act of violence. However, contrary to the argument presented by Taylor (2009), this study found that often quotes by relatives and close friends were instrumental in shifting the responsibility for domestic violence upon women partners and an unjust justice system. A possible measure journalists could employ to avoid this occurrence is to approach future interviews with such individuals with the aim to contextualise the act of violence and not with the motive to determine who or what the guilty party is.

The misconceptions concerning the possible influence of substance abuse and innate forces might also be challenged as newspaper reports look more critically at the relationship context in which the act of domestic violence had occurred (Omarjee, 2001). Omarjee (2001) reasoned that as journalists begin to recognise the deeper societal roots in which domestic violence against women exists, they may become aware of how gender-based power imbalances encourage men partners' oppressive behaviours toward women partners. For example, journalists will potentially begin to analyse beyond the substance abuse and violent temper of the male partner and question the motive of the abuse to ascertain the multiple contributing factors (Omarjee, 2001). Therefore, journalists are urged, when covering stories related to intimate partner violence, not to focus only on immediate events (e.g., arguments). Instead, journalists could possibly focus upon the subtleties of manipulation between the perpetrator and female partner and discuss how issues of power and dominance operate to perpetuate intimate partner violence. On the other hand, journalists may also take another approach when acknowledging the presence of substance abuse. Reports could illustrate how perpetrators

purposefully abuse substances as a means to divert from taking responsibility for their violent behaviour (Jewkes, 2002).

In situations where journalists attempt to address the incidents of domestic violence against women on a provincial or national level (e.g., the high levels of domestic violence against women in Cape Town), it would be encouraged for such issues to be discussed in relation to the wider-social context in which the social phenomenon exists. Instead of newspaper reports representing the justice system as solely responsible for the increased occurrences of domestic violence in South Africa; journalists could critically focus upon the possible role of other socio-structural factors (such as poverty, high levels of unemployment, and cultural norms) in contributing to the production of violence. Media experts could also highlight that domestic violence is not a problem that can effectively be addressed by one social institution, such as the criminal justice system. (Morgan & Politoff, 2012). Rather it is a social issue that requires the input of many sectors in society (Morgan & Politoff, 2012). A study by Coleman and Thorson (2002) that examined the effects of news reports upon shaping readers perceptions of crime and violence, revealed that the inclusion of context when reporting on violence could create a rich context for understanding. Coleman and Thorson (2002) pointed out that by media reports choosing to discuss violence in the broader context in which it exists, readers might become more attuned with the possible contribution of wider- societal risk factors and prevention strategies used to address violence, including domestic violence against women.

Researchers have argued that interviews with experts may also act as a tool to educate journalists and readers about the contextual roots and patterns of domestic violence on a

broader scale (Berns, 1999; Bullock & Cubert, 2002). Interestingly, in this study a newspaper report published in the *Daily Voice* that proposed to educate readers on challenges that abused women may experience with the criminal justice system reflected upon an interview conducted with the founder of Moshate men's rights organisation. In this interview, Mashilo Mnisi was instrumental in blaming the justice system for the increase in reports of domestic violence as he described the social institution as favouring the needs of women. However, at this point, it is essential to highlight that the Moshate men's rights organisation largely operates on the misguided notion that women, who experience abuse, are manipulators of justice system and that male perpetrators are victims and marginalised by the justice system (as stipulated in chapter four). The aforementioned organisation ignores the reality that an overwhelming majority of incidents of domestic violence in South Africa are perpetrated against women and that men are commonly the individuals privileged by the justice system (Abrahams et al., 2012; Amien, 2001; Artz, 2003; Artz & Smythe, 2005; de la Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2009). Therefore it is recommended that when attempting to address the social struggles abused women are faced with, journalists verify the credibility of sources before publishing their arguments. One way journalists could ensure the creditability of reports is to reflect upon the findings of previous studies or conduct interviews with women's advocates. Although criminal justice personnel may also act as positive sources of reference; it has been argued that women's advocates are among the few professionals equipped to offer a more credible, comprehensive, and valuable account of domestic violence against women, and may too guide journalists on how to frame stories of domestic violence (Bullock & Cubert, 2002 & Taylor, 2009). For example, women's advocates may highlight the importance of labeling in ways that

are not misleading, and guide journalists on how to cover stories of domestic violence without undermining the broader social context in which the phenomenon occurs (Bullock & Cubert, 2002). Furthermore, if journalists do decide to include quotes from women's advocates in reports, it would be suggested that more than one quote be used per expert. Berns (1999) argued that misinterpretations of the expert's knowledge and understanding of domestic violence are avoided when multiple quotes are used in reports.

5.3.2 Language

Domingo (1992) argued that language used in media reports is crucial in both how actors are portrayed and how they are perceived by readers. Riddoch and Orr (2011) added that when reporting on social issues, such as domestic violence against women caution needs to be taken in terms of language usage to prevent offence or improve accuracy. In light of the argument above, journalists could give much thought to the language used to describe the woman partner and the perpetrator. Where possible, journalists could attempt to refrain from using language or quotes in the write-up of an article that may imply that women partners are to blame for their own victimisation. In a similar manner, when perpetrators are described in media reports, journalists could strive towards explicit writing. For example, journalists could attempt to always include the identity of the male perpetrator to stress his active role in the act of violence. Furthermore, journalists could also employ language that would distinctly tell readers that the perpetrator is guilty of abusing or killing his female partner, rather than making use of phrases or quotes that may depict the abuser as a tragic hero, grieving partner, or an individual whom readers could possibly sympathise with.

Doing this analysis, it also became apparent that titles and subtitles of articles often stressed the idea that domestic violence against women was due to a dysfunction found in the male perpetrator or negligence found in the justice system. This was a common trend found in articles published in the *Daily Voice*. Titles and subtitles were frequently printed in bold letters and presented as catchy phrases, written in colloquial language with the key aim to capture the reader's attention at first glance (e.g., "Mother's tikkop ex attacks her with a knife and 'butchers' her twin daughters."). Using colloquial language in titles printed in bold letters does not only sensationalise and undermine the seriousness of intimate partner violence (Wasserman, 2010) it may also give readers a misguided idea of its occurrence (Omarjee, 2001). For that reason, headlines and sub-headings given to articles reporting on domestic violence against women could be more lucid, concise, and specific.

Acknowledging the fact that the media often act as the point of reference for which readers make sense of social phenomena (Usdin et al., 1999; Wasserman, 2010), it is important that media experts challenge the notion of women as helpless victims by describing and referring to them as survivors. According to Usdin et al. (1999), such an approach draws attention to women's coping skills and their survival strategies. It also goes some way to challenge the notion that women who have been victimised are damaged for life and will never recover from the assault perpetrated against them (Usdin et al., 1999). Moreover, stories that exemplify the survivor's voice may be an encouragement to women who are currently in abusive relationships. Women may draw strength from these stories and decide to leave their existing abusive relationships. Nevertheless, journalists are also encouraged to invest much thought before writing stories that exemplify the survivor's voice. Berns (1999) argued that while stories

of previously abused women may be an encouragement to women who currently find themselves in abusive relationships, there is a tendency for such reports to focus exclusively upon why the woman chose to remain in the abusive relationship. In other words, sole responsibility is attributed to the woman partner for ending the violence rather than society or specific institutions (Berns, 1999). It is therefore important that future reports that may record stories of previously abused women not only focus on the coping strategies of the woman, but also give advice to how society can change to assist women who are experiencing abuse by intimate male partners (Berns, 1999).

5.3.3 Moving towards representing domestic violence as a multifaceted act of abuse

Across all three newspapers, greater media coverage could be devoted to other cases of domestic violence, such as emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse. As the overrepresentation of extreme cases of physical violence was a predominant finding found in articles that emerged from the *Daily Voice*; future reports in this newspaper could avoid this trend by not providing explicit detail of the crime scene. Omarjee (2001) contended that too much information given about the crime scene is irrelevant and sensational. Reports could, however, increase its focus upon the experiences of the women partner by discussing the victimisation in terms of interrelated actions and behaviours. For example, instead of journalists discussing the victimisation as an isolated act of physical violence, reports could explain how emotionally controlling and verbally abusive behaviour commonly co-exist with physical violence to keep women partners imprisoned in their abusive relationships (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). Nevertheless, in instances where exclusive media attention is accorded to

other cases of domestic violence (such as emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse), it would be recommended that stories of this nature be approached as serious crimes. One way in which the seriousness of all domestic violence cases could be emphasised is by publishing their stories more regularly on the front pages of the *Daily Voice* and labelling it explicitly as acts of domestic violence to stress its importance, prevalence, and severity.

In contrast to the overrepresentation of extreme cases in the *Daily Voice*, stories of domestic violence against women (including, both extreme and common cases) were significantly underreported in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus.* Considering the fact that the primary function of these two newspapers is to inform readers from middle and upper-class backgrounds about the current issues facing South Africa (Independent News AMPS, 2012) (see Appendix A), the lack of coverage may reinforce the distorted idea that domestic violence is an insignificant, normative occurrence that only affects the working class in South Africa. Thus, it could be beneficial to see an increase in media coverage of domestic violence against women on a broader scale to illustrate the magnitude of the problem in South Africa. Journalists may also incorporate both national and international statistics or content that could mirror the prevalence and echo the far reaching occurrence of the phenomenon across all levels of South African society. By doing this, readers may obtain a better understanding and begin to recognise men's violence against an intimate female partner as a serious social problem, which according to Usdin et al. (1999), could possibly improve public perception and assistance.

Annual national campaigns and events that are set aside to address gender-based violence in South Africa (such as the 16 Days of Activism for no violence against women and children, and

national women's day) could also be used as platforms to educate audiences about the multiple forms of abuse that constitute domestic violence in South Africa. Media reports could possibly highlight the seriousness and legal repercussions of these acts of abuse and enlighten readers about the necessary steps (according to the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998) they need to take in order to obtain legal protection from their abuser.

5.3.4 Methodological recommendations for future research

Due to issues around inaccessibility and time limitations of this study, only three newspapers that attracted the highest readership in Western Cape area were included. Future research could build on the current study by gathering newspapers from other provinces, or conducting in-depth interviews with journalists to get a first-hand perspective on their experiences of reporting on cases of domestic violence. In addition, this study could also be expanded by looking beyond printed forms of media. Studies could possibly look more closely at broadcast media (e.g., television) and explore social representations of domestic violence that emerge in South African television programmes. These television programmes could include soap operas that draw a large and diverse media audience (MDDA, 2009), or television programmes that focus on reporting, namely Carte Blanche, Third Degree, or Special Assignment. This would allow for a more comprehensive account of the diverse media culture in South Africa, and may also allow that an array of media messages about domestic violence against women could be taken into account.

There also remains scope and opportunity for quantitative research in this area. As the study of social representations requires no particular methodological approach (Flick & Foster, 2008);

future quantitative research could possibly determine the relationship between the promotion of social representations in the media and the maintenance of domestic violence in South Africa.

5.4 Conclusion

Domestic violence against women is increasingly being recognised as a problem that seems to be spiraling out of control. The media amongst other social factors have been used to explain the increasing occurrence of domestic violence against women in society. The media has been argued to play a substantial role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes of domestic violence against women. However, the findings of the current study, like that of previous studies, revealed that the media in the Western Cape largely disseminated distorted portrayals of intimate partner violence against women to its readers. The overwhelming majority of articles analysed in this study represented domestic violence in ways that obscured men's violence and placed the burden of responsibility upon women. As a result, the role of wider-societal factors such as culture, gender, and power in fostering men's violence against an intimate female partner remained unexplained.

Nevertheless, Surette (2007) suggested that while the media may be influential in promoting misguided ideas about domestic violence against women, it also has the power to be the solution. For example, the media has the ability to distribute information more rapidly than any other entity in society, and has the potential to drastically shape individual understanding (Surette, 2007). Indeed, the South African media could use its position of prominence and influence to endeavour towards presenting readers with a more comprehensive account of

domestic violence against women. One way this goal could be achieved is if researchers continue to critically examine the messages disseminated by the media that may promote men's violence against a woman partner. The progression of such research may enhance researchers' understanding of the media and therefore allow for further recommendations towards the improvement of media coverage. As media coverage improves, audiences may be presented with a more holistic view of domestic violence against women in the South African context, and may also begin to recognise how wider-societal factors possibly function to promote men's violence against a woman partner. Readers may begin to ask the questions, such as: "what can society do to address the increasing occurrences of domestic violence against women?" In response, policies and intervention programmes might be introduced to address those socio-structural factors and unequal systems of patriarchy that have existed to perpetuate men's violence against women partners in South Africa. In effect, South Africa will be one-step closer to rid itself of the ever increasing plague of domestic violence against women.

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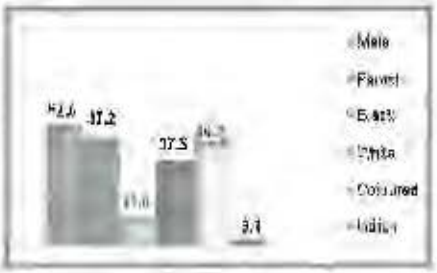
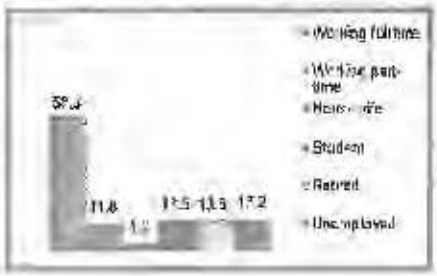
Appendix A: Demographics of the Cape Argus, Cape Times, and Daily Voice

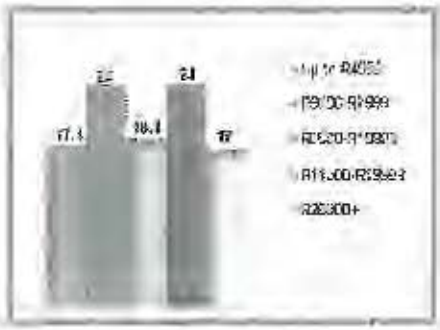
Cape Argus

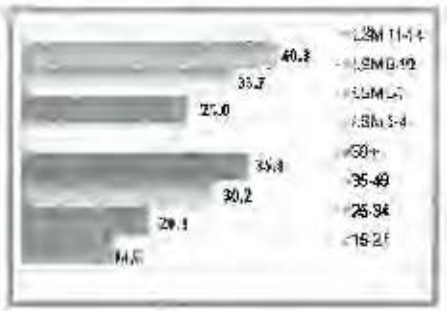
CAPE ARGUS average issue readers in Profile

- Cape Argus has 233,000 average issue readers
- Circulation: 38,432 (ABC: Apr-Jun 2012)
- 253,000 or 38% of Cape Argus readers live in the Cape Peninsula. This compares with 123,000 Peninsula residents who choose to read Die Burger
- Cape Argus readers are independent minded and have entrepreneurial flair
- Cape Argus is a quality afternoon news-paper unashamedly written for Cape Town's broader middle to upper class. The publication covers the latest news and sports with a strong local focus
- 89% of Cape Argus readers have Matric or some form of tertiary education
- Most Cape Argus readers fall within LSM 8 or higher with 40% achieving top status in the LSM groups 11 - 14
- Home language:
  - 54% English
  - 28% Afrikaans
  - 6% Xhosa
- Cape Argus readers are relatively comfortably off with an average monthly household income of R12,307
- Cape Argus readers are becoming increasingly computer literate with 42% accessing the Internet during any given week
- 91% of readers have at least one account with a financial institution
- 65% of readers are responsible for household shopping









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Cape Argus

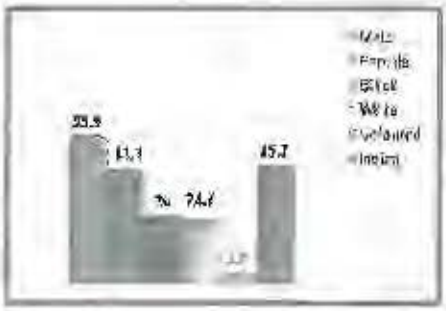
Geographical Distribution of Cape Argus April-June 2012 (Unaudited)

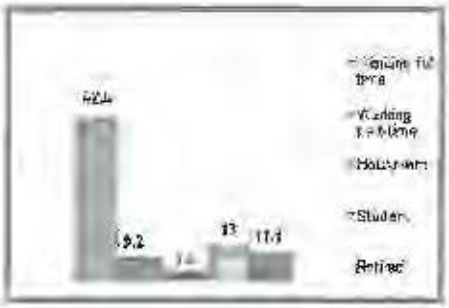
PROVINCE	REGION	MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT	TOTAL	%
WESTERN CAPE	01	Cape, Bellville, Goodwood, Wynberg, Mitchell's Plain	30,386	86.0%
	02	Stellenbosch, Paarl, Somerset-West, Wellington, Kuilsrivier	4,462	12.6%
	03	Swellendam, Caledon, Hermanus, Bredasdorp, Heidelberg	148	0.4%
	04	George, Mosselbaai, Riversdale, Knysna	47	0.1%
	05	Oudshoorn, Ladismith, Calitzdorp, Uniondale	5	0.0%
	06	Worcester, Ceres, Tulbach, Montagu, Mosselbaai	110	0.3%
	07	Malmesbury, Vredenburg, Hopefield, Moorreesburg	157	0.4%
	08	Vanrhynsdorp, Vredendal, Clanwilliam	17	0.1%
		SUB TOTAL WESTERN CAPE	35,332	100.0%
GRAND TOTAL			44,159	100.0%

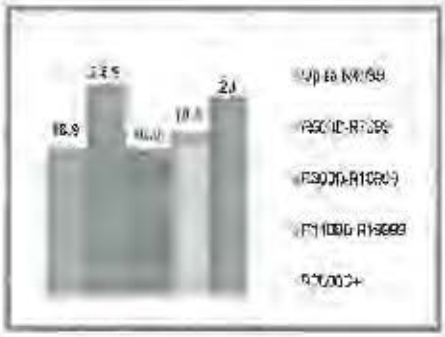
CAPE TIMES

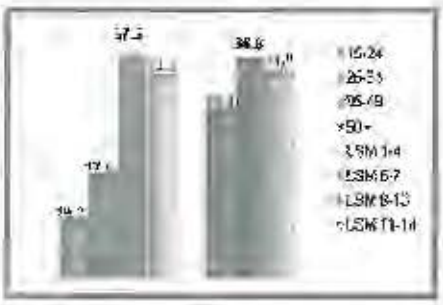
CAPE TIMES average issue readers in Profile

- Cape Times has 261,000 average issue readers 82% of whom live within the Cape Peninsula
- Circulation: 37,948 (ABC: Apr-Jun 2012)
- Die Burger has 122,000 readers in the Cape Town metro area compared with 216 000 for Cape Times
- Cape Times is Cape Town's dominant and definitive morning daily publication servicing the needs of the upmarket reader, with an emphasis on corporate news and providing in-depth coverage of current issues
- Business Report is an integral part of the Cape Times package and provides invaluable information and analysis for the business person
- 83% of Cape Times readers are employed while 70% have a matric or higher education
- 47% of Cape Times readers fall within LSM 8-10 and 30% are to be found in the recently expanded LSM groups 11 – 14
- Cape Times reaches both English and Afrikaans speakers as well as upmarket african readers:
  - 61% English
  - 25% Afrikaans
  - 15% Xhosa
- Cape Times readers are computer literate with 43% accessing the internet during any given week









CAPE TIMES

Geographical Distribution of Cape Times
April-June 2012 (Unaudited)

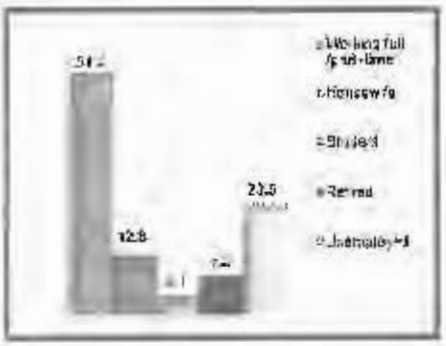
REGION	MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT	TOTAL	%
43	Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage	77	0.20%
	SUB TOTAL (EASTERN CAPE)	*77*	0.20%
01	Cape, Bellville, Goodwood, Wynberg, Mitchell's Plain, Simonstown	30,553	80.51%
02	Stellenbosch, Paarl, Somerset-West, Wellington, Kuilsrivier, Strand	4,191	11.04%
03	Swellendam, Caledon, Hermanus, Bredasdorp, Heidelberg	956	2.52%
04	George, Mosselbaai, Riversdale, Knysna	1,288	3.39%
05	Outshoorn, Ladismith, Calitzdorp, Uniondale	119	0.31%
06	Worcester, Ceres, Tulbach, Montagu, Moorreesburg, Robertson	345	0.91%
07	Malmesbury, Vredenburg, Hopefield, Moorreesburg, Piketberg	368	0.97%
08	Vanrhynsdorp, Vredendal, Clanwilliam	51	0.13%
	SUB TOTAL (WESTERN CAPE)	*37,971*	99.80%
		37,968	100.00%

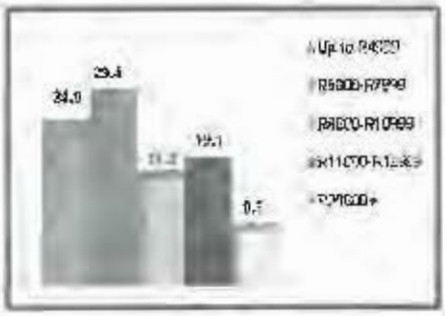
Daily Voice

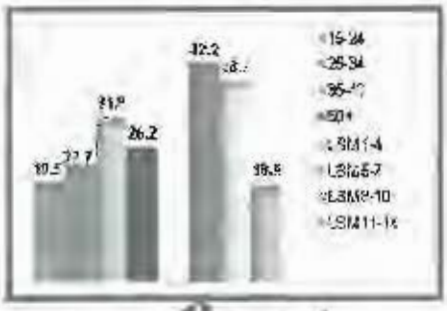
DAILY VOICE average issue readers in Profile

- Daily Voice has 490 000 readers with 430,000 of whom live within the city limits of Cape Town
- Daily Voice is an outrageous, thrilling and entertaining read for working class people
- The Daily Voice lives up to its motto

  'One skrik vir Nuus'
- Daily Voice is loud and proud when capturing everyday life of the Cape flats community
- 20% of Daily Voice readers own, use or maintain a motor vehicle
- 43% of Daily Voice readers have Matric or better
- 93% of Daily Voice readers fall within LSM 8 and above
- 42% of Daily Voice readers are in LSM 5-7
- Daily Voice crosses language barriers
  1. 27% English
  2. 64% Afrikaans
  3. 9% Xhosa
- Daily Voice readers are an economically viable market segment
  - 71% are wholly or partly responsible for household shopping
  - 79% are 'banked' while 52% access the internet in any given week
  - 56% recently bought women's clothing
  - 38% recently bought children's clothing
  - 27% recently bought men's clothing
- 83% of Daily Voice readers have a personal cell phone
- 50% Daily Voice readers have an interest in soccer and love going to stadiums







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