

**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF YOUNG ADULTS' DISCUSSIONS OF INTIMATE
PARTNER VIOLENCE IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS**

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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

Research on intimate partner violence (IPV) has focused predominantly on the married or cohabiting adult population in South Africa; however, IPV also occurs in young adults' dating relationships. The purpose of this research was to explore the discourses young adults at a South African university collectively drew upon in peer-group discussions on the topic of IPV in dating relationships. Six focus groups were conducted with a total of 31 students between the ages of 18 and 26 who were recruited through the distribution of flyers and posters advertising the study at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Foucauldian discourse analysis was used to identify 3 main discourses in participants' talk on IPV in dating relationships, namely the discourse of 'othering', the discourse of men's authority, and the discourse of women's responsibility. Related sub-discourses were also unearthed, which included the discourse of women as abusive, the discourse of men's sexual entitlement, explanatory discourses on IPV, and the discourse of love and violence. The identified discourses enabled students to simultaneously obfuscate and demonstrate the existence of IPV in the UCT context; - to talk about IPV as a normal, acceptable and inevitable part of men's authoritative and sexually entitled behaviour in dating relationships and to talk about IPV as women's responsibility bound by constructions of love. Overall, this study has shown how dominant discourses of IPV and gender power inequity amongst young adults might encourage male violence and dominance, and women's victimisation and passivity.

Key words: intimate partner violence, dating relationships, young adults, students, focus groups, Foucauldian discourse analysis, South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION

Dating is typically seen as a relationship filled with romance and fun but for many young adults it is an experience filled with pain and fear because of the pervasiveness of intimate partner violence. The playwrights Beaumont, Craik and Fletcher (1999, p. 189) wrote, “Those have most power to hurt us, that we love”. Indeed, a dating relationship, in which trust and safety are usually assumed, could also provide a platform for abuse to occur. Furthermore, this context of abuse is insidious because it often remains hidden due to the private nature of dating relationships. A dating relationship entails the involvement of two people in any non-marital form of romantic relationship (Kettrey & Emery, 2010). Dating relationships usually entail (or have the potential for) commitment, future interaction and physical intimacy (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1991). For the purposes of this study, intimate partner violence¹ (IPV) in dating relationships will be defined as “any attempt to control or dominate another person physically, sexually, or psychologically, causing some level of harm” (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999, p. 436). Physical abuse entails “the use or threat of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury to another” (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989, p. 5). Sexual abuse or aggression is defined as “any unwanted or coercive erotic or sexual behaviour” (Burke, Stets, & Pirog-Good, 1988, p. 272). Psychological abuse includes verbal and emotional abuse used to intimidate, dominate, denigrate, isolate, threaten, coerce or hurt a partner (Murphy & Hoover, 1999). In abusive dating relationships physical, sexual and psychological abuse often co-occur (Aosved & Long, 2005; Lewis, Travea, & Fremouw, 2002; Murphy & Hoover, 1999).

¹The terms intimate partner violence, woman abuse, dating abuse, and dating violence are used interchangeably in this study.

1.1 A Unique Phenomenon

IPV research focuses predominantly on the adult population (for example: Gass, Stein, Williams, & Seedat, 2010; Harrison & Abrishami, 2004). People are often unaware that those in dating relationships also experience IPV (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schrieber, 2001; Valls, Puigvert, & Duque, 2008). IPV in dating relationships is a form of IPV that is unique in many aspects from the IPV that occurs in cohabiting/marriage relationships (Shorey, Stuart, & Cornelius, 2011). Dating is different to marriage, especially since it is more transient. For example, scholars have left a trajectory of research demonstrating the way in which university students often have many dating relationships of short duration (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, et al., 2001; Shorey et al., 2011; Valls et al., 2008). Investment in marriage relationships is greater than in dating relationships possibly due to the greater economic and familial attachment associated with marital relationships (e.g. a greater likelihood of involvement in each other's families of origin, being economically bound and having children)(Carlson, 1987). Dating relationships do not involve a legally binding contract and may suggest that alternative relationships are more accessible to those dating than to married couples, at least theoretically (Shorey, Cornelius, & Bell, 2008).

Beyond differences in the types of relationships, Shorey and colleagues (2008) also outline the differences between dating violence and domestic violence. Abuse in dating relationships often has a less severe nature, particularly regarding physical aggression, than abuse in cohabiting or marital relationships (Shorey et al., 2008). While psychological abuse in cohabiting/marital relationships often includes behaviours intended to control or restrict the financial behaviours of a partner, this is rare in dating relationships (Murphy & Hoover, 1999). In Follingstad and colleagues (1999) study some factors relating to marital abuse did *not* predict dating abuse, including fear of negative evaluation, problem-solving skills and

self-esteem. Several factors related to dating abuse did not relate to marital abuse and these will be outlined next (Shorey et al., 2008). Gender roles, which support male dominance and female subordination, may be more pronounced in young people thus potentially making young women more vulnerable to victimisation (Smith & Donnelly, 2000; Sousa, 1999). Furthermore, pressure for young people to conform to social norms has been argued to be intense and, as a result, they may feel pressure to remain in a violent relationship to avoid ostracism (Smith & Donnelly, 2000; Sousa, 1999). For these reasons, it makes sense to investigate abuse in dating relationships separately from abuse in marital or cohabiting relationships (Shorey et al., 2011).

1.2 Prevalence of IPV in dating relationships

In an international sample, a higher rate of physical assault was found in dating couples than married couples, with university students in particular reporting prevalence rates ranging between 17 percent and 45 percent (Straus, 2004). A review of the literature in the United States shows that amongst young people, about 20-30 percent of dating couples experience at least one act of physical aggression, 3- 20 percent experience sexual aggression and 70-90 percent experience psychological aggression each year (Shorey et al., 2008). In a sample of college women in Canada, 22.3 percent report being physically assaulted, 27.8 percent report being sexually coerced and 79.1 percent report psychological abuse from a male partner (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993). A study in mainland China found that 35 percent of college students reported physical violence in dating relationships (Straus, 2008).

A series of studies in South Africa, primarily using samples from high schools, have shown that in dating relationships between 10.2 percent and 52.4 percent of young people are involved in physical violence and between 9.8 and 35.6 percent are involved in sexual

coercion (Andersson et al., 2004; Buga, Amoko, & Ncayiyana, 1996; Flisher, Marais, Lombard, & Reddy, 2007; Mathews et al., 2009; Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002; Wong, Huang, DiGangi, Thompson, & Smith, 2008; Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes, 1998; Wubs et al., 2009). Emotional abuse is also common in dating relationships, with 28.3 percent of a sample of young women in a large sample from rural South Africa experiencing emotional abuse along with physical and/or sexual abuse, 14.6 percent experiencing emotional abuse only and 11.1 percent experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse without emotional abuse (Jina et al., 2011). However, South African and international researchers concur that reported rates of IPV are underestimated because various issues complicate the measurement and reporting of IPV, such as social desirability and definitions of IPV in dating relationships which often only measure physical violence (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Jackson, 1999; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1997). If this is the case, IPV in dating relationships is likely to be even more common than statistics indicate.

1.3 The South African Context

Most current literature on IPV in dating relationships emerges from Western contexts such as the United States (Graves, Sechrist, White, & Paradise, 2005; Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, & Kupper, 2009; Gomez, 2010; McCarry, 2007; McDonell, Ott, & Mitchell, 2010; Perez-Jimenez, Cunningham, Serrano-Garcia, & Ortiz-Torres, 2007; Prospero, 2007; Raj et al., 2006; Santana, Raj, Decker, La Marche, & Silverman, 2006; Silverman et al., 2011; Werkerle & Tanaka, 2010; Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman, 2007) and Western Europe (Valls et al., 2008; Wiklund, Malmgren-Olsson, Bengs, & Ohman, 2010). However, the prevalence of IPV in dating relationships appears to be higher in South Africa than in Europe and North America (Flisher et al., 2007; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). More research is

needed in the South African context because its violent and unique political history has created a patriarchal society in which violence is seen as a tool for men to maintain power (Hook, Kiguwa, & Mkhize, 2004; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, et al., 2001). Some scholars have argued that men who were subordinated and emasculated during apartheid might have positioned themselves more strongly with violent attributes of hegemonic masculinity so as to attain the norm of male power, at least in their intimate relationships with women (Morrell, 2001; Wood, Lambert, & Jewkes, 2007). Since the abolition of apartheid, some gradual shifts in power have occurred, allowing that traditional gender roles are being challenged, for example, through increasing emphasis on women's rights, more powerful positions for women in the work place, yet also high rates of unemployment amongst young men (Morrell, 2002; Walker, 2005). Young South African men might experience feelings of estrangement, uncertainty and loss of power and violence against women might be a common way in which men respond to these feelings in order to assert themselves and re-establish an expected form of control and power (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Walker, 2005).

Today the dominant ideal of South African masculinity is "toughness, strength and expression of prodigious sexual success" (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, p. 1). Masculinity is demonstrated by controlling women and since violence is often the means of control, gender power inequity can be seen as a contributing factor to IPV (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Therefore, male superiority is asserted and maintained through the display of sexual and physical violence in South Africa (Shefer, Strebel, & Foster, 2000; Wood, Lambert, & Jewkes, 2008). In contrast, the dominant ideal of femininity is one of tolerance of violent behaviour and compliance in South Africa (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The feminisation of poverty² is particularly evident in Africa and, due to the intersection of gender power and

²According to Chant (2007, p. 1) the feminisation of poverty has three central tenets:

economic inequalities might increase women's vulnerability to violence and sexual abuse (Hunter, 2010; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Shefer, 1999). In Bhana's (2012) study amongst school-going girls from townships in KwaZulu Natal, participants articulated fear of rape and sexual violence at the hands of their boyfriends, men in the home, teachers and men in the township neighbourhood. Bhana (2012) argues that anxieties around sexual violence are connected to gender inequality and local/cultural meanings that uphold masculine violence and power. According to Bhana (2012), this calls into question the moral fabric of South African masculinity. The acceptance of female subordination and male dominance and violence in dating relationships has been identified as a significant predictor of dating violence (Swart et al., 2002). Hence, the perspectives of students regarding gender power dynamics and violence in dating relationships is worth researching further.

More research on dating violence is needed because it has become a public health problem in South Africa (Swart et al., 2002). In a large sample of young women (aged 15–26) from rural villages in the Eastern Cape province IPV was associated with hazardous drinking, illicit drug use, psychological distress, depressive symptoms and suicidality (Jina et al., 2011). Because victims of IPV are disempowered in terms of sexual agency, they are placed at increased risk of pregnancy and STD infections (Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna, Jama, & Puren, 2010; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, et al., 2001). Most significantly, South African researchers have linked gender inequalities and dating violence to the spread of HIV/AIDS as it is associated with increased risk HIV infection and higher levels of HIV risk behaviour (Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna, & Shai, 2010; Jewkes et al., 2006; Susser, 2009). Young adults are an exceptionally high-risk group for HIV infection (Bhana & Pattman, 2009) with 10.2 percent of South

“The first is that women are the majority of the world's poor. The second is that their disproportionate share of poverty is rising relative to men's. The third is that the ‘feminisation of poverty’ is linked with the ‘feminisation of household headship’, as manifested in the widely cited epithet that women-headed households are the ‘poorest of the poor’”

Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 infected with HIV/AIDS (Pettifor et al., 2005). It is critical for health and human rights that violence against women ends; consequently, the need for the development, improvement and implementation of prevention programs and interventions is urgent (Susser, 2009). The findings from the current qualitative study on young adults' perspectives on IPV in dating relationships will most likely contribute towards this area of research and could also inform policy and interventions programmes.

1.4 Researching IPV among Young Adults

During young adulthood, energies become invested primarily in intimate relationships (Weiten, 2004). Students at the University of Cape Town emphasised the importance of intimate relationships at this time in their lives and attested to the intensity with which they pursued them, often at the expense of engagement with family and peers (Marais, 2009). Significantly, in this study intimate relationships were identified as the main context in which work on their identity takes place (Marais, 2009). At this crucial stage of social and personal development, young adults are at risk of becoming consumed by, and isolated in, potentially abusive relationships and this will affect how young women and men construct their sense of self (Marais, 2009). Furthermore, during young adulthood, there is an emphasis on becoming self-reliant and individuals go through a transitional period during which they leave their own families (Weiten, 2004). Living in residence away from their parental home (Lehrer, Lehrer, & Zhao, 2010) and a lack of social support (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001) have been identified as risk factors for dating abuse victimisation. The general strain and stress of achieving a valued goal, such as a university degree, has also been found to increase the likelihood of IPV (Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, & Burke, 1999; Mason & Smithey, 2011). A few reports and quantitative studies have identified sexual harassment as a serious problem on university

campuses in South Africa (Naidoo & Rajah, 1992; University of Cape Town, 1992; University of Cape Town, 1991; University of the Witwatersrand, 1992 as cited in Braine, Bless, & Fox, 1995). At the University of KwaZulu Natal, 38 percent of female respondents report having personally experienced sexual harassment and 14 percent of all the respondents report having observed or experienced sexual or physical assault (Braine et al., 1995). Residences in particular have been identified as the venues at which sexual harassment occurs most frequently and community tolerance of peer harassment has been identified as an exacerbating factor (University of Cape Town, 1991 as cited in Braine et al., 1995). Therefore, this study's focus on IPV in the university context amongst the young adult residence students (specifically between the ages of 18 and 26 years) is a useful step towards contextualizing the problem of IPV in dating relationships in South Africa.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

IPV is a rife and serious problem among young adult dating couples (Shorey et al., 2011). However, research on IPV in South Africa has focused on domestic abuse in the married and cohabiting adult population and research on abuse amongst young dating couples is still minimal. While research on IPV in dating relationships in South Africa has begun to explore the secondary school-going population, with a focus on abuse of a sexual nature, more research on the phenomenon of IPV in dating relationships in the university-going population is needed. For this reason, this study aims to explore the discourses that South African university students draw upon in their discussions of abuse in dating relationships.

Chapter Two is a review of the current literature on dating abuse and an argument for the necessity of the current study. Chapter Three is an outline of the methodological choices of a feminist poststructuralist theoretical approach, focus groups, and Foucauldian discourse

analysis for this study. The ethical considerations of this study are also outlined. Chapter Four presents an analysis and discussion of the discourses of othering, men's authority and women's responsibility that participants drew upon in this study. The final chapter of this thesis provides summaries, conclusions, limitations and implications of this study, as well as recommendations for future research.

1.6 Aim of Research

This study aimed to explore the discourses that students draw upon when they collectively construct their views, experiences, definitions and explanations of IPV in dating relationships in focus group discussions. The following research questions were explored:

- 1) What discourses do UCT students collectively draw upon in peer-group discussions about IPV in dating relationships?
 - 1.1) In what ways were gender power dynamics constructed between men and women students?
- 2) What implications do these discourses have for the ways in which IPV in dating relationships is understood and addressed in the university context?

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEMPORARY STUDIES ON IPV IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

Literature on IPV has focused extensively on married or cohabiting adults (Shorey et al., 2008). However, research on abuse in the context of a dating relationship has been relatively sparse and only emerged in the 1980s (Jackson, 1999; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Shorey et al., 2008). A growing body of literature on dating violence has raised considerable concern about the extent of abuse occurring in dating relationships, particularly amongst university students (Jackson, 1999). After Makepeace's (1981, p. 100) formative study, which revealed dating violence as a "major hidden social problem" on college campuses occurring in 1 in 5 dating relationships, more researchers began to focus on dating violence. This literature review is not a comprehensive presentation of all research on IPV in dating relationships, but includes research relevant to this study, with a focus on South African findings. In the first section of this chapter, I outline quantitative research on IPV in dating relationships. In the second section, I address issues relating to gender and methodology in IPV research. In the third section, I review qualitative research dealing with young people's construction of gender and heterosexuality, sexual violence and coercion, as well as IPV in dating relationships. In conclusion, the rationale behind the current study and its main aims are presented.

2.1 Quantitative Research

Much research on dating violence has stemmed from a traditional positivist psychological perspective and focused on prevalence, description of key characteristics, attitudes and risk factors for perpetration and victimisation, largely using self-report surveys (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991). Because the current study is concerned with

young people's constructions of IPV in dating relationships, this section will focus on quantitative research on young people's beliefs and attitudes towards IPV in dating relationships. Most of the South African research on IPV in dating relationships has focused on adolescents and these studies are included in this review, along with international studies using samples of young adults predominantly from college.

Swart and colleagues (2002) explored risk factors for dating violence among secondary school students (aged 13-23) in a township southwest of Johannesburg in South Africa. They found that perpetration of dating violence was strongly associated with beliefs about violence in a romantic relationship (Swart et al., 2002). Male and female participants' belief that physical aggression is an acceptable part of a dating relationship and a way of showing love was associated with the experience of physical abuse in a dating relationship, especially for male participants (Swart et al., 2002). Similarly, in a more recent study amongst school-going adolescents in Cape Town, perpetration of partner violence was associated with attitudes about the acceptability of partner violence as well as outcome expectancy, such as whether a participant expected a partner to become angrier if they prevented her/him from assaulting them (Flisher et al., 2007). Another South African study among young adults (aged 15-24) in rural KwaZulu Natal found that male sexual coercion was more likely in relationships when a man's desire to have sex was perceived as greater than a woman's (Hoffman, O'Sullivan, Harrison, Dolezal, & Monroe-Wise, 2006).

Similarly, in international studies negative gender-based attitudes and beliefs supportive of rape have been linked to male sexual aggression amongst college students (Carr & Van Deusen, 2004). Restrictive and traditional gender role ideology has been correlated with physical and psychological dating violence (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992; Fitzpatrick, Salgado, Suvak, King, & King, 2004). In comparison to women, males were

found to have greater acceptance of violence and more traditional attitudes toward women (Bookwala et al., 1992). Acceptance of violence against women and hostile attitudes were found to be a significant predictor of sexual aggression in relationships (Carr & Van Deusen, 2004). Furthermore, college students in abusive dating relationships were more likely to be accepting of physical abuse as a means of conflict resolution in general, compared to those in non-abusive dating relationships (Miller, 2011).

According to quantitative studies, dating violence is perpetrated almost equally by women and men, or more by women, in a sample from 31 universities in Asia, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Latin America and North America (Straus, 2004) in samples of young people from the United States of America and Canada (Archer, 2000; Foshee, 1996; Gray & Foshee, 1997; O'Keefe & Treister, 1998; Prospero, 2007; Shorey et al., 2008; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989; Straus, 2008; Symons, Groër, Kepler-Youngblood, & Slater, 2007), as well as in samples from South African high schools (Flisher et al., 2007; Mathews et al., 2009; Swart et al., 2002; Wong et al., 2008; Wubs et al., 2009). Patterns of violence perpetration in dating relationships were presented as less differentiated by gender than those in co-habiting relationships or marriages (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1998). Rather, abusive non-marital relationships were depicted as mutually violent, where both partners initiate violence (Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997; Gray & Foshee, 1997). For example, Gray and Foshee (1997) found a high proportion of mutually violent relationships (66%) as opposed to victim-only relationships amongst high school pupils in North Carolina. Adolescents involved in mutually-violent relationships reported initiating and sustaining greater amounts of violence and being more accepting of dating violence than one-sided violent relationships (Gray & Foshee, 1997).

Several quantitative studies have explored university students' perceptions regarding

the gender of the perpetrator. Dating violence studies in Mainland China (Anderson et al., 2011) and the United States (Bookwala et al., 1992) found that participants were more accepting of female perpetrated psychological and physical dating violence than that perpetrated by males. In Canada, Hamel, Desmarais, and Nicholls (2007) examined the perceptions of motives for male- and female-perpetrated IPV in a sample of adults and university students. While adults ascribed more expressive intentions to female perpetrators and more coercive intentions to male perpetrators, there was no gender bias in the student sample (Hamel et al., 2007). They suggested that students might be more inclined to view women's violence more seriously because of the higher rates of female-perpetrated physical and emotional abuse in dating populations (Hamel et al., 2007). In contrast, Hamby and Jackson (2010) found that male-perpetrated IPV against a woman was often perceived to be more serious than other forms of IPV among college students in the United States because of men's relative strength and size in relation to women (Hamby & Jackson, 2010).

The literature above speaks to the importance and the need for the current study. This study's focus on young adults' constructions of their views and perceptions of IPV in dating relationships is useful because the above studies show how young adults' views are linked to an increased likelihood of involvement in dating violence. Furthermore, an increasing focus upon female-perpetrated IPV in dating relationships in recent years has emerged within the literature. A study on adolescents in South Africa found that being female was associated with perpetration and being male was associated with victimisation in the Cape Town sample, while the opposite was found in the samples from Mankweng and Dar es Salaam (Wubs et al., 2009). Wubs and colleagues (2009) suggest that more research should be done on the role gender plays in dating violence. Issues that arise around gender and methodology in IPV research will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 A Critique of Quantitative Findings of Gender Symmetry

In the field of IPV there is a debate between family violence researchers who are in favour of a gender-neutral analysis of IPV and feminist researchers who construct IPV as a problem of violence against women (Melton & Belknap, 2003). This debate is consequential because research suggesting that women's perpetration of dating violence is equal or more prevalent than men's has been used to contest the prioritisation of service provision for abused women (Saunders, 2002). In dating violence research, the most common measurement instrument is the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), and the Conflict Tactics Scale 2 (CTS2). A critical assessment of the CTS and CTS2 is warranted because when these measures are used, as opposed to others, they consistently produce findings that support a pattern of gender-symmetry in victimisation (Archer, 2000; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). However, there has been relatively little debate about this controversial measure amongst dating violence researchers, thereby leaving the issues largely unchallenged. Chung (2005, p. 446) notes, "it is an interesting anomaly that dating violence researchers have extensively used the CTS without drawing on domestic violence theories in any systematic way to explain dating violence". As a result, dating violence has been largely framed as a gender neutral issue. In this section, four fundamental problems with findings of gender symmetry based on the CTS will be presented.

First, the problem of the apparently high levels of female aggression in dating violence might be a result of methodological limitations related to the use of predominantly self-report quantitative measures, such as the CTS, which measures incident-specific acts of violence (Hird, 2000; Jackson, 1998; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Findings may be misleading because of the differing operational definitions of dating violence across studies, which often

do not include psychological or sexual abuse in addition to physical violence (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). Older versions of the CTS did not include “sexual assault” or “sexual coercion” in its checklist of behaviours and this might have led to a significant underestimation of female victimisation (Loseke & Kurz, 2005). In studies that include the measurement of sexual abuse, women are overwhelmingly the victims (Hines & Saudino, 2003; Saunders, 2002). Furthermore, in quantitative measures, gender is often studied uncritically as an independent variable that might predict violent behaviour (Anderson, 2005). Research in favour of gender symmetry has reduced gender to what women and men do and as a result, the importance of gender in IPV is missed. Gender is framed as essential through its construction as innate, stable and natural, and as a result, the constructs of femininity and masculinity are given authority as ‘truth’ (Risman, 2001). This is problematic because it suggests that these constructs are intrinsically unchangeable and the problem of gender inequality is located in the individual (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). Lewis and Fremouw (2001) argued that the effects of selection bias and social desirability might explain the findings of gender symmetry in dating violence research. Because male-perpetrated dating violence is often perceived as less acceptable than female perpetrated dating violence (Anderson et al., 2011; Bookwala et al., 1992), male perpetrators may choose not to participate in research on dating violence (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001), or for that matter, report on their own violence against women (Gray & Foshee, 1997; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). Lewis and Fremouw (2001) acknowledged that these explanations for men’s hesitance to report honestly on their own violence might be relevant for female perpetrators too depending on the motivations of their violence.

Second, feminists argue that motivations for using violence are gendered (Melton & Belknap, 2003). Only counting acts of violence without attending to contextual and

interactional factors might be the reason for inflated rates of perpetration of IPV among women (Melton & Belknap, 2003). Lewis and Fremouw (2001) pointed out that some studies do not discriminate between individuals using violence as a problem-solving or manipulative strategy from those using violence as a defence measure. The authors suggested that an interactional dynamic might exist in some mutually violent couples in which one partner initiates violent behaviour and the other defends themselves by reciprocating (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). It has been argued that, on the one hand, women are more likely to use violence in self-defence to obtain short-term control over immediate situations to escape or stop attacks (Dasgupta, 2002; Foshee, Bauman, Linder, Rice, & Wilcher, 2007; Makepeace, 1986; Stuart, 2006). On the other hand, men might use violence to intimidate or punish unwanted behaviour and to exercise power and coercive control in the long term (Makepeace, 1986; Dasgupta, 2002; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). However, the explanation of women's violence against men as entirely self-defensive has been criticised because it precludes the possibility of women's violence and of situations in which men are abused (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Women also reported using physical violence to gain control (Follingstad et al., 1991); however, it is unclear if they seek to gain control of the situation or of the person (Jackson, 1999). Foshee and colleagues (2007) found that the most common type of dating violence perpetrated by adolescent women was "patriarchal terrorism response", which delineated violence used in self-defence against a boyfriend who has used physical and psychological abuse as a means of control for some time. This indicated that women could be both victims and perpetrators of violence, however very seldom are they just the latter. Anger and a sense of a boyfriend's wrongdoing, such as sexual infidelity, pressurising her to have sex and 'ugly' talk, were the second most common motivations for girls' perpetration of violence (Foshee et al., 2007). These motivations can be related to the threat women may feel

in an abusive relationship (Dasgupta, 2002). Leisring (2009) investigated the expected consequences of using physical aggression against a male partner among college women in the United States. Aggressive women were more likely than nonaggressive women to expect that aggression would help win arguments, but that it would also lead to retaliation from their partners (Leisring, 2009). Some research suggested that women's use of violence in intimate relationships cannot be separated from their on-going victimisation through male coercion (Swan & Snow, 2002).

Third, male-perpetrated dating violence was more likely to be severe and result in injury than female-perpetrated dating violence (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Makepeace, 1986; Marcus & Swett, 2002; Murray & Kardatzke, 2007). Therefore, female victims were more likely to suffer greater negative physical and psychological consequences as a result of dating violence than male victims (Anderson, 2005; Saunders, 2002). Studies specific to dating violence have found that women were at increased risk of serious physical injury, extreme fear, anxiety, lack of agency, eating problems, panic attacks, depression and suicidal ideation (Follingstad et al., 1991; Roberts, Klein, & Fisher, 2003; Romito, Beltramini, & Escribà-Agüir, 2013; Silverman et al., 2011; Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman, 2007). Larkin and Popaleni (1994) suggested that the threat of the harm that can be caused by male force, be it veiled or direct, was in itself an effective means of power for men to achieve their objectives with women. Significantly, links have been made between dating violence against women and increased risk of HIV infection, and it is no coincidence that young women between the ages of 15 and 29 are simultaneously the majority who were infected with HIV and were more likely to be infected with HIV than young men (Dunkle et al., 2004; Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Jewkes et al., 2010; Jewkes et al., 2006; Pettifor et al., 2005; Santana et al., 2006). Young women's vulnerability to disease is increased by their gendered roles in

heterosexual relationships (O'Sullivan, Harrison, Morrell, Monroe-Wise, & Kubeka, 2006). Thus, IPV against women is a serious public health, human rights and social issue.

Finally, quantitative studies tend to ignore the patriarchal context in which violence might occur (Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Feminist theorists make a strong case that violence in intimate heterosexual relationships, and a cultural tolerance thereof, is a product of a structural system of patriarchy and that there should be a contextual focus on the imbalance of power between men and women (McCarry, 2007). A review of the qualitative research, which pays attention to the meaning and context of dating abuse, has found that gender power relations and the oppression of young women is serious problem (Hird, 2000; Jackson, 1999; Shefer et al., 2000; Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes, 1996). Qualitative studies on dating abuse will be further explored in the following section.

In sum, it has been argued that the prevailing positivist approach to the study of dating violence has misrepresented the problem as gender neutral, through its use of the CTS and neglect of the motivations for and consequences of IPV. These quantitative studies are important for data on the incidence and nature of dating violence, but they do not attend to the context of dating violence, the gendered processes that inform its prevalence, and the way that young people make meaning of it (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Ismail, Berman, & Ward-Griffin, 2007; Jackson, 1999). Reviews of the literature related to dating violence have concluded that more qualitative and nuanced research is needed to go beyond enumerating the problem and focusing on risk, to exploring; the meaning of IPV in dating relationships, the importance of gender in victimisation and perpetration, and to provide rich contextual data that presents understanding from participant's perspectives (Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Jackson, 1999, p. 200; O'Keefe, 2005). Bhana and Pattman (2009, p. 72) argued, "There is little published research in South Africa, which centres on young people and addresses them

as experts and authorities”. They make a case for the necessity of focusing on the voices of young adults on their lives and identities through forming relationships with them to allow them to express themselves eloquently (Bhana & Pattman, 2009). Such research is essential in order to address gender inequality and the related issue of HIV/AIDS (Bhana & Pattman, 2009). Furthermore, some authors have recently suggested that research should focus on both women and men’s constructions of relationships and gender dynamics in order to come to a better understanding of IPV (Allison, Bartholomew, Mayseless, & Dutton, 2008; Boonzaier, 2008). Masculinity and femininity need to be addressed in relation to each other because gender is constructed relationally (Pattman, 2005). Human relationships are dynamic and in this study, the paradoxes and complexities of dating violence emerged through discourses drawn upon by *both* men and women in focus-group discussions. While I acknowledge that women *and* men can be the victims of IPV, I posit that a qualitative and contextual exploration of the power dynamics between young men and women students in South Africa is necessary in order to more fully understand the ways in which participants make meaning of violence in intimate relationships.

2.3 Qualitative Research on IPV in dating relationships

While there is a proliferation of quantitative studies on dating violence, there are fewer qualitative studies on young people’s perspectives thereof. Because the HIV/AIDS epidemic increased in the severity of in the mid-nineties, previous research has focused particularly on sexual abuse and coercion in South Africa, predominantly amongst the secondary-school going population (Wood et al., 2008). For this reason, this review includes studies mainly on school-going South African’s perspectives on sexual violence and coercion (Bhana, 2012; Buga et al., 1996; O’Sullivan et al., 2006; Pattman, 2005; Petersen, Bhana, &

McKay, 2005; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1996, 1998, 2007). More specifically, research focusing on young South African's constructions of dating abuse (Marais, 2009; Sathiparsad, 2005; Wood et al., 2008) as well as gender and heterosexuality (Bhana & Pattman, 2009, 2011; Harris, Lea, & Foster, 1995; Shefer et al., 2000) will be reviewed. In addition, related international studies are included (Black & Weisz, 2004; Chung, 2005, 2007; Few & Rosen, 2005; Izugbara, Duru, & Dania, 2008; Jackson, 2001; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Johnson, 2005; Lavoie, Robitaille, & Hèbert, 2000; Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007; Sears, Byers, Whelan, & Saint-Pierre, 2006; Tolman, Spencer, Rosen-Reynoso, & Porche, 2003; Wood, 2001).

2.3.1 IPV in dating relationships as Normal

The volume of qualitative studies suggest that dating abuse, overwhelmingly against women, is a common and widespread occurrence. Due to the fact that it is so pervasive, sexual coercion and/or physical violence were perceived as a normal and inevitable part of dating relationships in samples of high school students in rural KwaZulu Natal (O'Sullivan et al., 2006; Sathiparsad, 2005), at various schools in Gauteng (Haffejee, 2006), amongst pregnant adolescents in a township in Cape Town (Wood et al., 1998), amongst adolescents in semi-rural KwaZulu Natal (Bhana, 2012; Petersen et al., 2005; Varga & Makubalo, 1996), in young people aged between 14 and 25 in an Eastern Cape township (Wood et al., 2007, 2008), as well as amongst students from the University of the Western Cape (Shefer et al., 2000), the University of Cape Town (Harris et al., 1995; Marais, 2009) and the University of Uyo in Nigeria (Izugbara et al., 2008). Increasingly, femininity and masculinity are being understood as socially constructed ideological practices as opposed to 'objects' or variables to study (Durrheim, 1997). Gender roles are a set of beliefs, assumptions and expectations

dictating how *normal* women and men *should* think and behave in society (Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007). However, gender roles are contextual and flexible, as opposed to fixed dimensions of personality, because they are constructed and reproduced socially and historically (Harris et al., 1995). Dating relationships are a significant arena in which men and women perform and produce malleable forms of masculinity and femininity (Messerschmidt, 1993; Totten, 2003). Studies on young peoples' accounts of relationships and sexuality show how their subjectivities are constructed along the lines of gender.

Research has linked 'normal' and 'natural' heterosexual gender interaction to sexual aggression and violence against girlfriends. In a South African study, Harris and colleagues (1995) explored the way in which male students from the University of Cape Town constructed gender and gender interaction. First, the "discourse of gender as social norm" was identified, in which gender was constructed as a consequence of socialisation and framed as normative (Harris et al., 1995). Second, a "discourse of gender as natural" was found, in which the differences between men and women were constructed as biologically derived and therefore essential, universal and stable (Harris et al., 1995). Significantly, in their subsequent focus on gender interactions, Harris and colleagues (1995, p. 177) showed that these discourses not only normalised the concept of gender, but also justified sexual aggression against women, thus showing that "gender aggression, far from being deviant, is an integral part of 'normal' gender interactions". Harris and colleagues (1995) concluded that it was particularly concerning that students, usually thought to be progressive, had such patriarchal views.

Another important South African study explored discourses drawn on in discussions of heterosexual negotiation among psychology students at the University of the Western Cape (Shefer et al., 2000; Shefer, 1999). First, the "discourse of heterosex and violence" constructs

heterosex as interlinked with violence. Frequent talk about sexual violence or coercion, date rape, and battering in students' accounts of sexual experiences indicated how pervasive and normalised violence against women is in the local context (Shefer et al., 2000). Second, the discourse of "heterosex as male power" was identified, in which sexuality between men and women is constructed as a means for men to assert power over women (Shefer et al., 2000). Male participants spoke of sex as a reflection of their masculine identity and any attempt by women to take control of the sexual relationship was seen as a challenge, resulting in acts of violence to retain sexual, social and personal power in the relationship (Shefer et al., 2000). In the free-association exercise, sex was associated with gaining power for men through their number of sexual partners and the use of women as sex objects, while women associated it with disempowerment and oppression (Shefer et al., 2000). Heterosexual relationships were constructed as a site of power struggle in which women lack power, while men's behaviour is naturalised as inevitable (Shefer et al., 2000). Similarly, the belief that it is natural and normal for men to be uncontrollably violent, sexually aggressive and jealous in romantic relationships underpinned the narratives of Nigerian college women who had experienced dating violence (Izugbara et al., 2008).

In the United States, Tolman and colleagues (2003) conducted a narrative analysis on adolescents' descriptions of their heterosexual relationships and found that they were dominated by unwritten compulsory conventions on how males and females should behave, which were precursors to dating violence. Rich's (1983 as cited in Tolman et al., 2003) concept of compulsory heterosexuality was the lens through which relationship narratives were analysed. She argued that heterosexuality is a political rather than natural institution comprising of compulsory conventional norms of relational heterosexual dynamics that require and produce female subordination and male dominance (Rich, 1983 as cited in

Tolman et al., 2003). Tolman and colleagues (2003) identified the belief that it is natural for boys to be sexual predators and that sexual aggression and controlling behaviour was expected and normalized in romantic relationships. In conclusion, Tolman and colleagues (2003) suggested that dating violence programs should not focus on the message that dating violence is dangerous and bad, but rather focus on the power dynamics of gender, race and class and pay attention to more subtle instances of domination. Similarly, Chung's (2005, 2007) analysis of the micro-practices of heterosexuality in interviews with Australian adolescents revealed gendered power relations characterised by inequality and violence. Chung (2005) argued that dating is an institution that schools young people in the practices and performance of heterosexuality and reflects their progress to adulthood through their performance of feminine and masculine heterosexuality and confirming their attractiveness to the opposite gender.

The findings of the above studies are significant because a qualitative exploration of risk influences for sexual violence amongst adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, found that vulnerability to become a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence was influenced by; the normalisation of violence in a relationship, patriarchal notions of masculinity, a culture of violence and high risk social norms, such as norms that encourage boys to have sex to prove their masculinity (Petersen et al., 2005). In such an environment, the current study's focus on students' constructions of gender and violence in dating relationships is clearly relevant.

2.3.2 Boyfriends as Authoritarian Disciplinarians

Across studies, young men were placed in a role of authoritative discipline over their girlfriends and it was seen as acceptable for them to discipline their girlfriends for being

disobedient, assertive, and unfaithful by beating them (Few & Rosen, 2005; Izugbara et al., 2008; Sathiparsad, 2005; Wood et al., 2008). Young men from KwaZulu Natal believed that it is necessary to beat a girlfriend if talking to her did not elicit the desired response (Sathiparsad, 2005). Beating a girlfriend was perceived to be rewarding in that it earned respect, recognition that the man was in control and good behaviour (Sathiparsad, 2005). Similarly, amongst predominantly African-American urban youths and young adults between 14 and 22 in the United States, male participants described violence as a tool of punishment and correction, used to prohibit disrespect, and to establish dominance by simultaneously lowering the partner's self-esteem while promoting their own (Johnson, 2005).

The use of physical assault by young men from a township in the Eastern Cape to control and discipline their girlfriends was underpinned by the moral discourse of men's superiority and corrective action against women (Wood et al., 2008). If the girlfriend had lowered the boyfriend's dignity or reputation, it was seen as his right to defend his dignity by beating her, and a man would be judged unmanly not to beat her (Wood et al., 2008). This supports the theory that when men's sense of masculinity is threatened they may use violence as a means of minimising their vulnerability and regaining or maintaining superiority in the hierarchy of gender (Wood et al., 2008). Because men's performance of masculinity was largely dependent upon his ability to control his partner, the ideal woman was successively constructed as faithful and submissive (Wood et al., 2008). Similarly, in a study among Australian adolescents, the identity status of young men was found to be connected to their girlfriend's behaviour, and for this reason a girlfriend was required to be monogamous (Chung, 2007).

Women across studies tended to blame themselves for their victimisation. The perceived contributing factors for women's abuse amongst Nigerian college women, who had

experienced dating violence, were all related to behaviour that challenged notions of ‘proper’ femininity, such as talking back, acting without their partners’ approval, expressing suspicions of infidelity and refusing sex (Izugbara et al., 2008). The perception that men are justified in using violence against women because women are deserving or responsible for their victimisation was identified in female adolescents at various schools in Gauteng (Haffejee, 2006), among abused women who attended university in Nigeria (Izugbara et al., 2008) and also in two samples of women who had experienced dating violence in the United States (Few & Rosen, 2005; Wood, 2001). In a study among young men in KwaZulu Natal women were constructed as responsible of controlling men’s sexual desire and were, in turn, blamed for arousing men’s sexual desire and causing them to be abusive (Sathiparsad, 2005). Young women victims of abuse in the United States saw it as a woman’s duty to accept the abuse and remain in the relationship in order to be complete (Wood, 2001). In summary, these studies show that boyfriends’ violent discipline of their girlfriends is seen as acceptable, particularly when their masculinity is threatened and if women’s behaviour defies expected feminine submission. This leads women to frame their abuse as a result of *their* bad behaviour and leads to self-blame.

2.3.3 Minimising, Justifying and Challenging Male Dominance

Studies have shown how young people minimise and justify dating violence. Explanatory discourses on male power in heterosex were used instrumentally to naturalise and legitimise inequality in participants’ intimate relationships (Shefer et al., 2000). Essentialist and social psychological notions of gendered human nature were used to support male power (Shefer et al., 2000). Male sexual behaviour was linked to the social construction of masculinity, peer pressure and ego, whereas women were constructed as nurturing and less

ego-driven (Shefer et al., 2000). The discourse of socialisation, framed as an irreversible and fixed process, was used by both men and women to explain their inequalities, thus reinforcing apathetic attitudes towards challenging the status quo (Shefer et al., 2000). Similarly, in a study amongst Puerto Rican male college students, participants indicated that men should be dominant, aggressive, controlling, unsentimental economic providers who are physically strong and maintained that such gender roles are imposed mainly by society, family and the mass media (Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007).

Harris and colleagues (1995) showed how men at the University of Cape Town were able to justify sexual aggression against women while also appearing to condemn it conceptually, using three rhetorical strategies, which legitimised the discourses of gender interaction as essential and normative. First, men constructed women as powerful in hidden ways within the current gender positioning and thus make any argument against women's oppression appear absurd (Harris et al., 1995). Second, they constructed women as having an actual preference for the gender positioning status quo - thus holding women responsible for their own oppression while simultaneously absolving themselves from any responsibility (Harris et al., 1995). Last, men constructed women who actively challenge the entrenched gender positions as marginalised, for example as 'raging feminists' with minority views (Harris et al., 1995). Similarly, in Shefer's (1999) study the "discourse of change" emerged when student participants from the University of the Western Cape, usually males, discussed the past and how women are becoming more dominant, which was used to minimise the problem of inequality.

The discourse of change also emerged in this study when student participants, usually women, challenged the way men are still dominant and how things need to change (Shefer, 1999). However, the emphasis on equality, mutuality and communication contradicted the

discourse of male power because of the assumption that men and women have equal power in negotiations (Shefer, 1999). These strategies for change were predominantly located at an acontextual individual level and this reflected the lack of acknowledgement of the importance of power in the process of change (Shefer, 1999). Furthermore, it was implied that women are to blame for their absence of negotiation in heterosex and thus the responsibility for change was placed on women (Shefer, 1999).

Similarly, discourses of individualism and equality underpinned Australian adolescents' accounts of dating relationships (Chung, 2005). Within the discourse of individualism, it was assumed that people are able to make choices freely, outside of any social pressures and structures, and thus served to conceal gender power relations (Chung, 2005). Significantly, young women's explanations for dating violence focused on why women remained in violent relationships and did not address men's responsibility and motivations for their violence, thus blaming the young women for their individual choice and failure to leave (Chung, 2005). Interestingly, the majority of the students in a sample of students from the University of Cape Town (particularly those with personal experience, understood IPV from an individualistic perspective) whereas the few who did not have first-hand experience with IPV were able to make sense of it in the context of broader cultural, social and economic practices in South Africa (Marais, 2009). This suggested that a person's level of personal experience with IPV affects the level of abstraction used to make meaning of and explain IPV (Marais, 2009). In summary, various explanations have been used by young people to minimise and justify inequality in dating relationships. While challenge to male dominance is evident, emphases on individualistic explanations of dating violence, which ultimately continue to blame women, appeared to emerge strongly in the above studies.

2.3.4 The Sexual Double Standard

The sexual double standard can be defined as the way in which “an active, desiring sexuality is positively regarded in men, but denigrated and regulated by negative labelling in women” (Jackson & Cram, 2003, p. 113). The belief that men were naturally unable to control their biological sexual urges and physical aggression and therefore entitled (even encouraged) to control all sexual interactions, to use violence, and to have several girlfriends concurrently was identified in samples of university students in Cape Town (Shefer et al., 2000) male high school students in KwaZulu-Natal (O’Sullivan et al., 2006; Sathiparsad, 2005), pregnant adolescents in Cape Town (Wood et al., 1998) and a sample consisting mainly of adolescents in eastern and southern Africa (Pattman, 2005). Conversely, in the above studies, women were not believed to be naturally sexual and therefore women were expected to be the passive recipients, not the active initiators, of sex who were reluctant but agreeable when a partner pressurised them. Furthermore, women who had more than one sexual partner were disrespected, earned negative reputations of being promiscuous and were even punished, beaten or raped by their male partners.

There are several consequences of stereotyping of girls as the objects and boys as the subjects of sexual desire. These consequences included harassment by boys and men, a lack of decision-making power in relationships, being unable to express sexual desire publicly, and being subject to numerous every day that do not apply to boys restrictions (such as not being able to wear certain clothing) in Pattman’s (2005) study amongst boys and girls (aged 6-18) in eastern and southern Africa. Boys also incurred costs for identifying as possessors of the sex drive as well as providers, such as being unable to express intimacy and love , and fear of girlfriends’ rejection for more sexually experienced, older and richer men (Pattman,

2005). Vance (1992 as cited in Pattman, 2005) argued that women are oppressed not only through violence and sexual harassment but also by their construction as not possessing strong sexual desires, unlike men. Therefore, the imposition of restrictions on female expression of sexuality should also be the focus of feminist politics, and educational interventions should be careful not to reinforce sexual desire as exclusive 'male' yet 'dangerous' for women (Pattman, 2005).

In the study of Shefer and colleagues (2000), women were critical of the silencing of women's sexual desire through double standards as the acceptability for men to have multiple sexual partners was seen as a mode of male control within the broader context of male domination. Although students were critical of male power, they also colluded with it by not acknowledging the shifting nature of power as women were positioned as being powerless and passive to male power (Shefer et al., 2000). The sexual double standard has also been identified amongst young people in international literature (Jackson & Cram, 2003; Tolman et al., 2003; Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007). Young women in New Zealand (aged 16-18) disrupted the sexual double standard in various ways, including articulating sexual desire, positioning themselves as knowledgeable about sex and young men, positioning themselves as active agents (as opposed to passive victims) and challenging the sexual double standard language by denigrating male sexual promiscuity (Jackson & Cram, 2003). However, these voices of resistance might have been individual rather than collective and muted (Jackson & Cram, 2003). In summary, the sexual double standard has been identified in local and international literature, the restriction placed on female sexuality is an important aspect of women's oppression, and, while there is some significant resistance to the sexual double standard, it is limited.

2.3.5 The Influence of Love

Exerting control over women through violence was not only constructed as normal, but as an expression of men's love, care, discipline and emotional involvement in the relationship in samples of male youth in rural KwaZulu Natal (Sathiparsad, 2005), pregnant adolescents in a township in Cape Town (Wood et al., 1998), young people aged between 14 and 25 in a township the Eastern Cape (Wood et al., 2008), students at the University of the Western Cape (Shefer et al., 2000), and Nigerian college women (Izugbara et al., 2008). Milder acts of violence were linked to a discourse of caring and loving in the talk of young people in the Eastern Cape (Wood et al., 2008). Women students at the University of the Western Cape spoke about tolerating men's use of violence to regulate women's sexuality because violence was linked to notions of love (Shefer et al., 2000). Adolescents in semi-rural KwaZulu Natal reportedly acquiesced to their boyfriend's demands for sex out of love, commitment and fear of rejection (Varga & Makubalo, 1996).

In a study in the United States amongst women who had been victims of IPV between the ages of 14 and 32, participants justified their victimisation as understandable by constructing their partners as "Prince Charmings" whose occasional violent outbursts could not overshadow their powerful romantic connection (Wood, 2001). Amongst adolescents in the United States, boys' aggressive and controlling behaviour was accepted by girls as a form of attention and was constructed as more desirable than no attention at all (Tolman et al., 2003). Amongst Australian adolescents, young men's jealousy and description of their girlfriends in terms of 'ownership' was interpreted by women participants as a signifier of true love, not that women are considered men's property (Chung, 2005, 2007). Chung (2005, 2007) suggested that young women interpreted dating violence as a signifier of intimacy and commitment in order to divert attention away from male control and power. Furthermore,

discourses of romantic love were reportedly used by some male participants to coerce women into having sex by insinuating that if she loved him she would agree to it (Chung, 2005, 2007). A sample of young women (aged 16-18) from New Zealand saw romance narratives as a trap because women were positioned as passive and expected to provide love for men and place their needs first, and this prevented women from leaving their abusive boyfriend (Jackson, 2001). At the same time, romance narratives provided a resource used by young women in abusive relationships to make sense of what had happened (Jackson, 2001). For example, the perception that love blinded the women to the abuse and stopped them from leaving their abusive boyfriends allowed them to avoid victim status and avoid self-blame (Jackson, 2001). Significantly, this perception of love as blinding allowed women to avoid negative labelling connected to victimisation; however, it also poses the danger of making the problem of dating violence invisible (Jackson, 2001).

Bhana and Pattman (2011) show how economic relations influence the meaning participants attach to love through their exploration of how young South Africans (aged 16-17) from poor townships in KwaZulu Natal gave meaning to love. In South Africa, men usually tend to sustain a more privileged economic position than women with their ability to provide (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Because of their impoverishment and girl's aspirations towards middle class consumerism, girl participants' ideals of love were tied to the provider masculinity and romantic relationships through which they could ascertain fashionable clothes, money and prestige (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). Boys, who felt that their power was undermined by their inability to live up to provider masculinity in relation to township girls, strategically focused their love investments on virgin farm girls from rural areas because they were not interested in commodification and enabled boys to experience relative power and prestige (Bhana & Pattman, 2011). In summary, the above studies show that gender

inequality in dating relationships is supported and reinforced through the influence of constructions of love.

2.3.7 Naming Abuse and the Influence of Reputation and Peer Pressure

Because of the way in which abuse is often legitimised and accepted as normal in dating relationships, studies have found that it was difficult for those in abusive relationships to recognise and name this. Marais (2009) conducted a narrative analysis of five male and nineteen female University of Cape Town students' accounts of partner violence in their own and their parents' relationships. They found it difficult to define their experiences in dating relationships as emotionally abusive and felt ambiguous about claiming the status of victim (Marais, 2009). Participants were more likely to recognise their fathers and boyfriends as abusive if there was evidence that the perpetrator's behaviour had negative intent and not just negative impact (Marais, 2009). Interestingly, amongst Canadian adolescents, boys identified intent as a criteria for behaviour to constitute abuse, while girls were more likely to identify the behaviour as abusive if its impact was negative (Sears et al., 2006). It was easier for women adolescents from a sample in Australia to acknowledge their experiences as abusive after the relationship had ended because their identities were no longer interdependent (Chung, 2005). Significantly, acknowledging that one's experiences can be defined as dating violence was identified as a crucial point in being able to speak about one's victimisation, seek help and begin the termination process in the narratives of students at the University of Cape Town (Marais, 2009), as well as black American college women in abusive dating relationships (Few & Bell-Scott, 2002).

Recognising and naming a coercive sexual act within a dating relationship as sexual abuse or as rape was particularly difficult for students from the University of the Western

Cape because of the expectations and norms in heterosexual relationships (Shefer et al., 2000). In a study amongst youth in the Eastern Cape, rape was constructed as a “violent sexual act committed by a man who is not a sexual partner and with whom there is no prior sexual ‘contract’”. As a result, many young women did not believe sex against their will within a relationship constituted rape and referred to it as “forced sex” (Wood et al., 2007). Interestingly, this term also included desired sexual experiences or cases where a reluctant woman is persuaded to have sex, because being sexually coerced was seen as the socially correct manner for unmarried women to have sex (Wood et al., 2007). Similarly, being in a dating relationship seemed to entail an ‘implicit contract’ to engage sexually in a study amongst adolescents attending secondary schools in rural KwaZulu Natal (O’Sullivan et al., 2006). Strikingly, in an open-ended survey amongst American college women, most participants did not include sexual abuse in their definitions of dating violence (Berkel, Furlong, Hickman, & Blue, 2005).

All the student participants from the University of Cape Town in Marais’ (2009) study emphasised the importance of intimate relationships at this time in their lives and the intensity with which they pursued them, often at the expense of engagement with family and peers. Significantly, this study identified intimate relationships as the main context in which work on their identities took place (Marais, 2009). At this crucial stage of social and personal development, young women were at risk of becoming consumed by and isolated in potentially abusive relationships, affecting how they constructed their sense of self (Marais, 2009). All the females in the study, despite having been involved in abusive relationships, presented a preferred self in their narratives as women who are in control and empowered in order to avoid victim status (Marais, 2009). Women made effort to protect the reputations of their abusive partners or fathers to protect their own identities (Marais, 2009). Similarly,

Australian adolescents who had experienced dating violence did not want their partners to have a violent reputation because it positioned them as a victim, thus placing the onus on them to end the relationship (Chung, 2005). Chung (2005) argued that the interdependence of identities between dating partners discouraged women from identifying their relationships as abusive, violent or coercive because the victim identity was experienced as shameful as it was incongruous with a desired identity for young women.

According to the above review of the literature, young people's responses to dating violence might be significantly affected by the importance of their reputations amongst their peers. Students from the University of Cape Town reported feeling hesitant to talk to their peers about IPV in their own lives or the lives of their families for several reasons; including the possible negative impact, it might have on their reputations and identities (Marais, 2009). Furthermore, students also expressed that they would be hesitant to confront friends in potentially abusive relationships for fear of having their intentions misjudged as misguided, selfish or inappropriate (Marais, 2009). Peer pressure, avoidance of being shamed in the community or having their reputations destroyed were motivations for submitting to male demands, to have a boyfriend, have sex, submit to males' demands, be silent about violence in a relationship and remain in an abusive relationship in samples of pregnant adolescents in Cape Town (Wood et al., 1998), women university students in Nigeria (Izugbara et al., 2008), and adolescents in Canada (Lavoie et al., 2000).

Peer pressure was one of the most frequently given reasons that women began sexual activity in a study on the sexual behaviour of adolescents in rural Eastern Cape (Buga et al., 1996). In a study with predominantly African-American urban youths between 14 and 22, the views of male and female adolescents were informed by observing peer behaviour in dating relationships (Johnson, 2005). Boys in the study described constantly feeling peer pressure to

act in sexually aggressive ways, especially in front of other boys, and to have a girlfriend as well as sexual experiences to confirm their heterosexuality and masculinity (Tolman et al., 2003). Friends reportedly placed peer pressure on Puerto Rican young men to be sexually active, particularly at university (Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007). Due to the dominant collectivist culture in South Africa, in which behaviour is mediated more by social norms than individual decisions, peer norms were identified as being particularly important in a qualitative study exploring risk influences for sexual violence amongst adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal (Petersen et al., 2005). For this reason, the current study explored how participants negotiated meanings in the context of focus groups amongst their peers.

2.3.8 Gaps in the Literature

Three gaps can be identified in the reviewed literature. First, previous research on abuse in intimate relationships has focused predominantly on domestic violence in adult couples who are married or cohabiting and there is a dearth of research focusing on abuse in younger couples in dating relationships.

Second, most qualitative South African studies amongst young people have focused predominantly on general sexual violence and coercion (Bhana, 2012; Buga et al., 1996; O'Sullivan et al., 2006; Pattman, 2005; Petersen et al., 2005; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1996, 1998, 2007). Sexual harassment was more likely to be perpetrated by men known to victims, such as a boyfriend, than by a stranger (Fineran & Bennett, 1999). However, sexual violence and coercion were often overlooked or minimised in dating relationships and it is critical that such abuse be explored specifically in this context (Nicholas, 2007). Furthermore, sexual, physical, emotional, economic and verbal abuse often co-occurs in dating relationships. For this reason, the current study placed a broader focus on

the phenomenon of IPV in dating relationships so that the system of coercive control and domination that might occur in dating relationships could be understood more holistically and naturalistically (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). This understanding facilitated a more critical perspective of gender power dynamics in intimate relationships.

Last, most qualitative studies have used samples from the secondary school-going population (Buga et al., 1996; Sathiparsad, 2005; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1998, 1996). Very few South African studies touched on university students' constructions of abuse in dating relationships (Harris et al., 1995; Marais, 2009; Shefer et al., 2000). Dating relationships are likely to proceed into young adulthood because marriage occurs relatively late in South Africa, as the mean age of marriage for women is 28 (Jewkes, Morrell, & Christofides, 2009). Furthermore, young adults are more likely to be in longer-term dating relationships than adolescents, and it has been found that the longer the relationship the higher the risk of experiencing IPV (Mason & Smithey, 2011; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Prevalence rates of dating abuse have been found to be higher amongst university students than high school students, as the onset of victimisation may occur more commonly in young adulthood (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007; Malik, Sorenson, & Aneshensel, 1997; Thompson Jr, 1991; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Young adulthood differs from adolescence as there is a greater emphasis on becoming self-reliant, independent, and energies become invested primarily in intimate relationships (Weiten, 2004). Residence away from parental home (Lehrer et al., 2010) and a lack of social support (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001) have been identified as possible risk factors for experiencing dating violence. Furthermore, young adults may experience isolation in intimate relationships due to the increased intensity and prioritising of romantic relationships (Marais, 2009). The general strain and stress of achieving a valued goal, such as a university degree, has also been found to increase the

likelihood of IPV (Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, & Burke, 1999; Mason & Smithey, 2011).

The current study's exploration of the perspectives of young adult South African university residence students is useful.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study. The first section expands on the research design of this study and includes a critique of positivist methodologies, an outline of qualitative methodologies as a valid alternative, a review of feminist methodologies and finally a more in depth look at this study's feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective. The second section will outline the methods employed in this study, including details about the participants, their recruitment, the focus group data collection procedure and ethical considerations. The third section will outline the process of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. The final section will address the issues of power and reflexivity in the research process.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Positivist Quantitative Methodologies: A Critique

Psychological research has traditionally used positivist quantitative methods, which assume universalistic understandings of human behaviour and 'truth' (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Research embedded in a positivist paradigm has been critiqued for two main reasons. First, individual behaviour is often studied without consideration of political, social, historical or cultural context (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). A result of the minimisation of context is that individualism is endorsed and identities, such as those along the lines of gender, sexuality, class and race, are essentialised (Hook et al., 2004). Furthermore, oppressive systems are obscured, such as apartheid in South Africa (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996).

Second, positivist research claims to be value-free and objective and, as a result, the

power of the researcher is not adequately acknowledged (Kiguwa, 2004; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). The subjectivity of the researcher cannot be denied because he or she is the one to determine the topic of research, to interact with participants and to interpret the results (Crawford, 1995).

3.1.2 Qualitative Methodologies: A Valid Alternative

In its own right, qualitative methods have surfaced as a valid form of scientific enquiry (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). First, qualitative methods are more contextual and naturalistic than quantitative methods (Wilkinson, 1999). The aim of qualitative research is to understand and describe the meaning people attach to their everyday lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Qualitative research posits that the meaning of people's behaviour and experiences can only be understood in its specific historical, social and cultural context (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Qualitative research does not aim to work with representative samples, but rather to emphasise the uniqueness of a situation and to "create a comprehensive record of participants' words and actions" (Willig, 2001, p. 16). Therefore, this method is suitable for generating an in-depth understanding of students' construction of IPV in dating relationships.

Second, qualitative methods are concerned with the central role of the researcher in constructing interpretations of the meaning of human behaviour (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Instead of ignoring the subjectivity of the researcher, qualitative methods encourage the acknowledgement that the researcher is not removed from studied contexts through reflexive practices (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Reflexivity involves continuous reflection on how the researcher's identity, life experiences, positions, values, and assumptions shape and inform the research process (Banister, 2011).

In addition, qualitative methods are more participant-focused than quantitative methods (Wilkinson, 1999). The focus of qualitative research is to interpret meanings of human experience from the social actors' perspectives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). In the current study, a qualitative design was employed because participant-led methods are fitting for the objectives of this study to analyse participant-generated meanings (Willig, 2001). Qualitative methods are flexible and allow unanticipated categories of meaning to emerge in students' co-construction of IPV in dating relationships, whereas researcher-generated categories are inappropriate for exploring open-ended research questions (Willig, 2001). Feminist methodologies, which have a substantial number of commonalities with qualitative methodologies, will be discussed in the following section (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006).

3.1.3 Feminist Methodologies

Feminism is “a politics directed at changing existing power relations between women and men” in patriarchal society in which the interests of women are subordinated to those of men (Weedon, 1987, p.1). There is a plurality of feminist methods (Reinharz, 1992; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). While there is no single feminist research framework, there are some key principles shared across feminist research methodologies (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Gray et al., 2007).

Similarly to qualitative methodologies, feminist methodologies “are based in a fundamental critique of conventional social science, its methods and the roots of the knowledge on which it is based” (Gray et al., 2007). Like qualitative methodologies, feminist methodologies value contextual and self-reflexive research practices (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Gavey, 1989). Results from experiments conducted in laboratory settings are difficult

to interpret because they ignore the relational and contextual aspects of ordinary life (Gergen, 2001). In contrast, feminist researchers recognise the social and historical embeddedness of participants, and themselves, and do not aim to generalise their results (Gergen, 2001). A traditional view of the scientist is that he or she should be an unbiased and uninvolved spectator (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Yet feminists argue that any form of interaction between participants and scientist constitutes relatedness and interdependence (Gergen, 2001). Therefore, feminist researchers emphasise the research process and power relations between the researched and the researcher (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Gavey, 1989).

Furthermore, feminist research acknowledges and theorises the political role of research processes and output (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Gavey, 1989). Traditional science claims that scientists should have a stance of value neutrality (Gergen, 2001). However, feminist researchers argue that it is impossible to keep research free of personal values and selfish considerations because value implications are embedded in the choice of words, theoretical framework, and interpretation of results (Gergen, 2001). Feminist research asserts that the political and personal spheres are interrelated and that individual's experiences and identities are partly produced by their positioning in society (DeVault, 1990). Therefore, for feminists the personal is political as women's experiences of everyday life and subjectivities are the site of the redefinition of patriarchal values and meanings and resistance to them (Parker, 1992; Weedon, 1987). Ultimately, feminist methods are concerned with social activism as a by-product or as part of research (Gray et al., 2007).

There are three feminist epistemological positions, which arose in response to the predominant use of methodologies from a positivist paradigm in social science research: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism or poststructuralism (Harding, 1987). The first two feminist methodological critiques, namely feminist empiricism

and feminist standpoint theories will be discussed in this section (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006).

Feminist empiricists in the 1960s and 1970s critiqued research for presenting the male experience as universal and excluding female experience, thus only presenting partial knowledge (Burns & Walker, 2005; Gray et al., 2007; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Feminist empiricism maintains that for science to be conducted properly within the positivist paradigm women's experiences should not be sidelined (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006).

Therefore, feminist empiricists aimed to eliminate sexist bias by adding women's experiences and voices into research in an attempt to produce objective knowledge (Burns & Walker, 2005). In other words, feminist empiricists "fight against sexist practices *within* the field" (Gergen, 2001, p. 27). However, the feminist empiricist perspective does not adequately problematise or challenge the male-centred paradigms and epistemological framework of knowledge production and science itself (Harding, 1991).

The feminist standpoint position is different from the feminist empiricist position in that the former asserts that empirically sound research cannot be produced under sexist conditions and challenges the possibility of 'objective' research (Gergen, 2001). Feminist standpoint theorist, Harding (1991) for instance, argued that bias cannot and should not be eliminated from scientific research and that the subjectivity of the researcher is important in research design. Standpoint feminists ask for more modest, honest, explicitly situated and more authentic production of scientific knowledge (Gray et al., 2007). Stanley and Wise (2002) argue that when the researcher's standpoint is acknowledged knowledge produced is more visible and thus more revisable than knowledge that hides its partiality. Feminist standpoint theories assert that traditional positivist paradigms do not explain or take into account the perspectives of members of oppressed groups, in particular women, on social reality (Gray et al., 2007). They suggest that women's unique and subjective perspectives are

particularly valuable and must be accounted for in interpretation (Burns & Walker, 2005) because women “are authoritative speakers of our experience” (Smith, 1990, p. 28).

The feminist standpoint perspective has been critiqued for supporting essentialist views of gender, as women and men’s qualities are positioned as innate, fixed and stable (Gavey, 1989). While trying to prioritise women's experiences, feminist standpoint theory perspective has been criticised for presenting the experiences of women as universal and not acknowledging the differing voices and experiences (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Gergen, 2001). This is problematic because the differential impact of heterosexism, racism, classism and so forth on women is overlooked (Sawicki, 1991). Feminist theory was originally strongly critiqued by “black, poor, and third-world women” as being “white middle-class feminism” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 9). This shows the significance of poststructuralism, which calls into question homogeneity amongst women by arguing that there are many equally valid versions of reality (Burns & Walker, 2005). Last, feminist standpoint theories have also been criticised for accepting women's language as reflecting their experiences transparently (Gavey, 1989).

While feminist research is critical of some of the underlying assumptions of positivist research, earlier feminist perspectives still tended to fall within the mainstream positivist tradition of research psychology (Gavey, 1989). Feminist poststructuralism emerged in response to the shortcomings of the former two feminist epistemological positions, and was employed as the theoretical framework for the current study. Feminist poststructuralists argue that the status quo has been supported and there is a lack of criticism of power and the dependency of meaning on language (Gavey, 1989). The rationale for adopting a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective for the current study will be presented in the next section.

3.1.4 A Feminist Poststructuralist Theoretical Perspective

Feminist poststructuralism “has become a field of scholarship in its own right – addressing the inequalities, biases and exclusionary assumptions based in hegemonic production of knowledge” (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006, p. 8). Poststructuralism refers to a loose collection of theories, which are part of and parallel to postmodern practices (Gavey, 1989). Culler (1982, p. 22 as cited in Gavey, 1989) makes it clear that structuralists maintain that systematic knowledge is possible, whereas poststructuralists assert that the impossibility of this knowledge is all that can be known. Poststructuralist theory rejects the idea of absolute truth or knowledge (Gavey, 1997). Furthermore, poststructuralists emphasise the multiple meanings of texts and maintain that the researcher’s interpretation represents one of many possible interpretations (Gavey, 1989). Therefore, the traditional scientific method is not considered to have any superior access to truth (Gavey, 1989). The aim of poststructuralism is to deconstruct traditional conceptions of knowledge, which describe human behaviour (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Gray and colleagues (2007, p. 217) offer a succinct outline of the alternative principles of poststructuralism:

“Poststructuralism emphasises a radical shift from objectivity to subjectivity, from reality to social constructed reality, from unbiased knowledge to socially situated knowledges, from singularity to plurality, and from “partial knowledge presented as generally true” to admittedly “partial knowledge””

Weedon (1987) was the first to argue that feminist practice could be supported through the conceptual basis of poststructuralism. She defined feminist poststructuralism as:

"A mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity; social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change" (Weedon, 1987, pp. 40-41).

In patriarchal societies, men's perspectives of reality tend to be dominant, accepted truth and to favour of men's position of power (Gavey, 1989). However, women's perspectives of reality can present a different truth and this suggests that there are multiple truths and realities (Gavey, 1989). The central feminist poststructuralist principles of power, language and subjectivity, discourse and the related Foucauldian theory will be discussed in the following subsections.

3.1.4.1 Power

Most importantly, feminist poststructuralism insists that knowledge is linked to power (Gavey, 1989). Knowledge and constructions of reality or truth are not neutral because "those who have the power to regulate what counts as truth are able to maintain their access to material advantages and power" (Gavey, 1989, p. 462). Feminist poststructuralism is concerned with disrupting and displacing oppressive and dominant knowledge rather than 'revealing' the truth or 'discovering' reality (Gavey, 1989). Feminist poststructuralism emphasises the material bases of power, such as cultural, social and economic arrangements and has a political focus of change at this level (Gavey, 1989). The goals of feminist poststructuralist research are to develop understandings that are socially, culturally and historically specific, related to changing oppressive gender relations (Gavey, 1989). This study might assist in disrupting oppressive systems by identifying the ways in which South African students attending the University of Cape Town and living in residence make

meaning of IPV in dating relationships.

Some feminists might object to the relativism of poststructuralism (Gavey, 1989). It might be frightening for those who are oppressed by other's power to let go of the notion of the triumph of rationality and objectivity and accept that power determines the result of competing claims of truth (Gavey, 1989). However, relativism is only problematic from a foundationalist approach to knowledge and this criticism tends to come from a position of crisis in absolutism (Lather, in press as cited in Gavey, 1989). Relativism does not require feminists to abandon their values and knowledge, but requires awareness that there is no way of guaranteeing them as truth (Gavey, 1989). According to Kitzinger (1986, p. 153) research and theory should not be evaluated in terms of their “truth value” but rather their usefulness in achieving politically defined goals. Feminist poststructuralism offers promising ways of theorising about deconstructing, reconstructing and ultimately changing the current socially constructed gender power inequities (Gavey, 1989).

3.1.4.2 Language and subjectivity

Poststructuralists assert that knowledge, meaning, experience, and subjectivity is constituted through language (Gavey, 1997; Willig, 1999). In contrast to liberal humanists who view language as a transparent reflection of human experience and meaning, poststructuralists do not see language as neutral (Gavey, 1989). For this reason, language can be seen as social and a site of political struggle (Weedon, 1987). From a poststructuralist perspective, subjectivity is constructed or socially produced through language (Weedon, 1987).

Subjectivity can be defined as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the

world” (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). While mainstream psychology assumes subjectivity is essential, unique, fixed, rational, coherent, and unified, poststructuralism proposes an inconsistent, contradictory, fragmentary and precarious subjectivity (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralism denies the existence of essential, innate, genetically determined or fixed dimension of female and male personality or natures (Gavey, 1989; Harris et al., 1995). Rather gender is seen as a flexible construct that is experienced, performed and reproduced socially, culturally and historically (Harris et al., 1995). Gender is no longer conceptualised as essential as it has been in traditional feminism through the notion of a unified identity among all women, but rather the heterogeneity of women (and men) is acknowledged (Kiguwa, 2004).

The subject is often misrecognised as the authorial source of meaning, however individuals identify with specific subject positions within discourses (Weedon, 1987). Because subjectivities are socially and historically produced and contradictory in nature, there is the possibility of change and political choice (Weedon, 1987). Feminist poststructuralists claim that subjectivity changes when the range of discursive fields, which constitute them, shift (Weedon, 1987).

3.1.5 Foucauldian Theories and Discourse

The Foucauldian idea that language is always situated in discourse is compatible with feminist poststructuralist theory (Gavey, 1989). From a Foucauldian perspective, the term ‘discourse’ refers to “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 1992, p. 291). In a vacuum, language has no meaning and it is only through discourse that meaning is shaped. Discourse provides a system of meaning for experiencing,

understanding and acting in the world (Willig, 2001). Discourses are used in everyday language to draw on shared meanings and aid communication. People come to understand who they are by the way in which they use discursive practices to position themselves in relation to discourses (Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992), which is referred to as taking up 'subject positions' (Gavey, 1989; Hollway, 2004; Weedon, 1987).

The various positions available for constituting subjectivities offer different amounts of power to individuals (Gavey, 1989). Dominant discourses tend to constitute the subjectivity of the majority of people at a given time and place because they appeal to common sense, gain authority by appearing impartial and legitimate existing power relations (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Marginalised discourses, such as feminist discourses, offer fewer subject positions, have limited power and challenge existing practices (Weedon, 1987). Individuals have agency and choice in how they position themselves in relation to discourses (Gavey, 1989). However, this choice is not simply rational because consciousness is influenced by a discursive battle for the individual's subjectivity (Weedon, 1987). When language is understood in terms of competing discourses, it becomes a significant site of political struggle (Weedon, 1987). Contradictory and multiple discourses can be drawn upon in making meaning of the world because subjectivity is continuously being reconstituted in discourse every time we speak or think (Gavey, 1989). For instance, a woman could choose feminism as a system of meaning but at the same time retain behaviours and desires incompatible with feminist goals (Gavey, 1989).

Discourses constitute the existence of knowledge, power, and ideology (Willig, 1999). Foucault argued that power is not possessed by specific individuals but exercised relationally (Hook et al., 2004; Sawicki, 1991). From a Foucauldian perspective power is not located in a centralised source, such as class or state, instead Foucault draws attention to the "many forms

of power exercised at the everyday level of social relations” (Sawicki, 1991, p. 23). Power relations are established and propagated through discourse (Willig, 1999) because when one speaks one assumes a subject position within discourse and one is subjected to the regulatory power of the discourse (Hall, 1992). For this reason, local struggles should be the context for resistance (Sawicki, 1991). Foucauldian theory is interested in historically specific social practices and discursive relations because discourses are not static (Parker, 1992). Foucault maintained that discourse produced radically different forms of knowledge, subjects, objects and practices from period to period (Hall, 1992).

Discourse is a principle which structures society at an institutional, social, and individual level (Weedon; 1987). Foucault’s theory of language and social power pays careful attention to “the institutional effects of discourse and its role in the constitution and government of individual subjects” (Weedon, 1987, p. 107). The most powerful discourses have strong institutional bases, for example in medicine, law, education, social welfare, and the organisation of work and family (Weedon, 1987). IPV, and a cultural tolerance of it, can be seen as a product of discourses in the broader context, such as patriarchy, whereby men are offered more power than women in the private and public domains (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Hence, IPV is understood by feminist researchers in the broader framework of gender inequality and power relations (Yllö & Bograd, 1988). As mentioned earlier, researchers using the feminist poststructuralist approach aim to disrupt oppressive power relations (Gavey, 1997). A feminist poststructuralist approach in conjunction with Foucauldian theories of discourse is therefore well suited to this study on IPV in dating relationships, as it aims to add to the body of literature addressing gender power inequality in South Africa.

3.2 Methods

This section is an outline of the methods employed in this study to explore the discourses young adults' draw upon in their talk on IPV in dating relationships. It includes details about the participants, their recruitment and the data collection procedure.

3.2.1 Participants and Recruitment

Students living in residence at the University of Cape Town were recruited through the distribution of flyers and posters advertising the study in residences (see Appendix A). This broad recruitment method was used, as opposed to more 'focused' recruitment strategies such as Student Research Participation Program³, so that the potential of sample bias was reduced (Jackson, 1999). Kauai fast food vouchers to the value of R40 were offered as both an incentive and small token of appreciation for participation. On the one hand, payment is useful for encouraging prospective participants to take part in studies and it has been characterised by some writers as a mark of ethically sound research as the participant is fairly compensated for their time and effort (Head, 2009). On the other hand, there is concern about the potential for monetary incentives to compromise autonomous participation in research if the reward is too significant to refuse (Head, 2009). In the current study, a reasonably valued fast food voucher since residence students are catered for daily, and consequently the fast food voucher may have been perceived of as a luxury rather than a necessity. Therefore, this method of recruitment did not perceptibly jeopardise the voluntary nature of participation. Interested students replied to the email account set up for this research.

Thirty-one students, consisting of 15 men and 16 women, participated in this study.

Participant demographics are summarised in the attached table (Appendix B). Participants

³Psychology students are required to gain a certain number of points by participating in research conducted at the University of Cape Town

ranged from the ages of 18 to 26 years (with a mean age of 21) and all participants were from student residences. Most participants categorised themselves racially as black (83%) and only a couple of participants categorised themselves as 'coloured' (6%) white (6%) or other (3%). In terms of socio-economic status, most participants selected option c, that "We have most of the important things, but few luxury goods". Just over half of the participants were enrolled in science or business related degrees (55%) and the remainder were enrolled in humanities degrees (39%), or did not give an indication (6%). Finally, just over half of the students indicated that they were currently in a relationship (52%) with the remainder not in a relationship (45%) or unsure (3%). There are various qualitative data collection methods, but focus groups were considered the most method of data collection for this study.

3.2.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups employ group interaction to generate data (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). From a feminist poststructuralist perspective, phenomena such as IPV are socially constructed and focus groups provide a social context for studying groups' collective-construction of meaning (Överlien, Aronsson, & Hydén, 2005; Wilkinson, 1998). Furthermore, the interactive nature of focus groups creates a more fully articulated and varied account (Wilkinson, 1998). Focus groups draw on experiences of everyday conversation and are more naturalistic than most research methods (Wilkinson, 1999). Focus groups allowed the researcher the opportunity to tap into the language commonly used by students, which was ideal for the purposes of gaining insight into how students' construct IPV in dating relationships (Frith, 2000). The balance of power between the researcher and participants is shifted toward the participants in focus groups because their agendas are given precedence and intervention from the facilitator is minimal in the semi-structured discussion (Kitzinger,

1994; Wilkinson, 1999). This is specifically useful for the discovery of unanticipated areas of interest in exploratory research (Frith, 2000).

Focus groups are especially effective for discussing high-involvement topics and are less intrusive than traditional interviews because participants can decide how personal their input to the discussion will be (Överlien et al., 2005). The group setting can enhance the disclosure of views on sensitive topics because agreement, amongst those with similar experiences, creates a supportive and empathic environment (Frith, 2000; Överlien et al., 2005). IPV is a gendered topic and women and men might feel less inhibited to communicate personal information if they share a common gender (Frith, 2000). For this reason, I chose to conduct six focus groups: two men's groups attended by groups of four men, two women's groups and two mixed groups. The groups all had four to six participants each. Running single sex and mixed group discussions gave me the opportunity to begin to compare the differences between the ways in which young adults talk differs across groups, though this was not a detailed part of my analysis.

Focus groups took place in a private room in the psychology department for a period of approximately 60 minutes each. As participants helped themselves to beverages and snacks, they were given nametags containing numbers so that the researcher could address them anonymously. A fellow psychology master's peer assisted the researcher in taking logistical notes during the focus groups. The researcher facilitated an open-ended discussion and the same broad questions were posed as starting points for each group (see Appendix C). The discussions were recorded using a voice recorder. In the following section, the ethical implications of researching IPV in dating relationships will be considered.

3.2.3 Ethical Considerations

This study was granted ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee in the Psychology Department at the University of Cape Town. The purpose of ethical guidelines is to guide researcher's actions and protect participant's rights in research (Piper & Simons, 2005). Some of the broad ethical principles are that participants should be treated as having dignity, worth, autonomy and fundamental rights (Banister, 2011; Gray et al., 2007). Studies should establish confidence and mutual respect with participants (Banister, 2011). Ethics were carefully considered in this study and this section outlines the principles and procedures of informed consent, confidentiality, risks and benefits for participants, and debriefing.

3.2.3.1 Informed consent

Participants voluntarily participated in the study and this was an initial indication of their willingness to participate and consent. Informed consent means that participants give their permission to take part in the research in full knowledge of the research purposes and the consequences they might experience (Piper & Simons, 2005). Informed consent is consistent with the feminist principal of transparency as open discussion is encouraged so that imbalanced power relations between the researcher and researched are minimised (Banister, 2011; Willig, 2001). Furthermore, informed consent is in accordance with the ethical value of respecting participant's autonomy (Gray et al., 2007). The consent form (see Appendix D) was explained, questions were addressed, and signed forms were collected before the focus groups began. Consent forms informed participants about the purpose of the study, the procedure, and potential consequences of the research, the participant's rights to terminate participation at any point, the voice recording of the discussion, the confidentiality of the data, and contact details of the researcher and the psychology department secretary.

3.2.3.2 Confidentiality

A common ethical assumption in research practice is the assurance of confidentiality during the research process and anonymity in reporting (Piper & Simons, 2005).

Before the focus group discussion began, I emphasised confidentiality on the researcher's part. Participants were informed that voice recordings of the discussions and field notes made during discussions to substantiate the data were only accessible to my supervisors and myself and secured in a locked cabinet to which only I have the key. Furthermore, to ensure that the safest environment possible was provided, and that group members would not share any information divulged by others outside of the focus group, the participants were asked to come up with their own guidelines for privacy at before the focus groups began (Frith, 2000; Smith, 1995).

Participants were ensured that their anonymity would be retained in the write up of the study. They were also told about the limits of confidentiality in that the findings of the study were written up in the form of a master's dissertation and may be published in an academic article (Banister, 2011).

3.2.3.3 Risks and benefits for participants

Beneficence and non-maleficence are key ethical principles, which insist that researchers are obligated to protect participants from harm and that research should have some benefit for participants (Rosenthal & Reshow, 2008). Harm includes causing emotional distress, embarrassment, discomfort, damage to reputation, financial loss and threat to personal safety (Banister, 2011; Willig, 2001).

Participants in this study might have revealed more personal information than intended and might have later regretted it (Frith, 2000). Focus groups' potential for allowing

over-disclosure is problematic, particularly if some students have direct experience of dating abuse or if a participant has a relationship with another group member beyond the focus group (Överlien et al., 2005; Smith, 1995). Therefore, the facilitator emphasised that there was no obligation for participants to reveal personal information and, if the conversation become too intimate or sensitive, that the facilitator would steer it toward more general topics (Överlien et al., 2005). As mentioned above, participants were asked to agree not to share any information divulged by others. In addition, the non-individual setting of focus groups made it relatively easy for participants to stay silent if the discussion explored topics that were too sensitive for them and research has shown that in a group context participants are usually aware of the pitfalls of over-sharing (Överlien et al., 2005).

Shorey, Cornelius and Bell (2010), explored American university students' reactions to participating in a research study on dating violence, in which they were asked to disclose experiences of IPV through a questionnaire. Some students reported that participation was only mildly distressing, and some perceived the questions as too personal (Shorey et al., 2010). Although students in the proposed study were only asked to disclose their views on IPV in dating relationships and not their personal experiences, participants were informed of the possible risk of experiencing some distress, before the study begins.

However, in Shorey and colleagues study (2010) participants also reported personal benefits, such as insight into their personal relationships and life experiences and were glad that they had participated. This may suggest that the benefits of participating in dating abuse research may outweigh the potential risks (Shorey et al., 2010). In general, it may be beneficial for participants to talk to somebody else about their experiences and to contribute to research on IPV in dating relationships (Banister, 2011). Participants in this study were thanked for their willingness to contribute to the research and given a fast food voucher as a

small token of gratitude for their participation (Banister, 2011).

3.2.3.4 Debriefing

Because the discussion of IPV in dating relationships might have caused mild emotional distress or raised feelings around participants' potential personal experiences of victimisation or perpetration, it was important that space was provided in order to talk about any negative emotions and offer help if needed (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008). At the end of the focus group, students were spoken through a debriefing pamphlet, which reinforced the idea that IPV in dating relationships is a serious problem by outlining IPV definitions, statistics, effects and, most essentially, where exactly immediate help can be found (see Appendix E). Before collecting any data, I contacted counsellors at the Discrimination and Harassment Office (DISCHO) and Student Health and gained permission to refer students to them. DISCHO is located on campus and offers a 24-hour service for victims of harassment, rape and sexual assault. Sexual Harassment advisors are also available for appointments. Student Health offers a low-cost counselling service where students can have individual psychotherapy.

3.3 Data Analysis

The analytical technique of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was employed because it is consistent with a feminist poststructuralist approach, and is concerned with language, subjectivity and power (Boonzaier, 2006). In accordance with feminist poststructuralism, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis identifies discourses not as truth, but as one truth held in place by power and language (Parker, 1992). Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is interested in how discourse enables the subject to act or be in the world (Willig, 2001; Arribas-Ayllon &

Walkerdine, 2008). The availability of discourses determines the availability of ways of being in the world and this availability differs for women and men (Harré & Langenhove, 1991). This is because discourses are created and perpetuated through current institutional, social, economic, linguistic and ideological values and practices (Harré & Langenhove, 1991). Thus, discourses are involved in and constitute social processes of power and ideology (Parker, 1992). One of the aims of discourse analysis is to produce a historically contextualised analysis in order to explain how power works in the interest of some people and to identify the opportunities to resist it (Gavey, 1989).

This method of analysis is well suited to the proposed study because it is concerned with how people see the world, it acknowledges the constructed nature of phenomena and it allows the researcher to identify dominant constructions (Willig, 2001). Discourse analysis involves carefully discerning discursive patterns of meaning, inconsistencies and contradictions and opens up the possibility of challenging dominant discourses (Gavey, 1989). This study focused on identifying structures of power in the way that language is expressed (Gavey, 1997). The role of discourse was explored in enabling and constraining who says what (Parker, 1992; Willig, 2008). Attention was paid to the dominant ways in which IPV in dating relationships is discussed, what words are used, the context of the discussion, who is speaking, and what interactional and self-representation goals are evident (Willig, 1999). The ways in which students reproduce or challenge discourses in their talk on IPV in dating relationships was explored (Parker, 1992).

Although there are no rigid rules in discourse analysis, Parker (1992) provides a set of twenty steps, which were employed as a guideline in the analysis of the data:

1. Treating our objects of study as texts which are described, put into words.
2. Exploring connotations through some sort of free association, which is best done with

other people.

3. Asking what objects are referred to, and describing them.
4. Talking about the talk as if it were an object, a discourse.
5. Specifying what types of person are talked about in this discourse, some of which may already have been identified as objects.
6. Speculating about what they can say in the discourse, what you could say if you identified with them (what rights to speak in that way of speaking).
7. Mapping a picture of the world this discourse presents.
8. Working out how a text using this discourse would deal with objections to the terminology.
9. Setting contrasting ways of speaking, discourses, against each other and looking at the different objects they constitute.
10. Identifying points where they overlap, where they constitute what look like the 'same' objects in different ways.
11. Referring to other texts to elaborate the discourse as it occurs, perhaps implicitly, and addresses different audiences.
12. Reflecting on the term used to describe the discourse, a matter which involves moral/political choices on the part of the analyst.
13. Looking at how and where the discourses emerged.
14. Describing how they have changed, and told a story, usually about how they refer to things which were always there to be discovered.
15. Identifying institutions which are reinforced when this or that discourse is used.
16. Identifying institutions that are attacked or subverted when this or that discourse appears.

17. Looking at what categories of person gain from these discourses
18. Looking at who would want to promote and who would want to dissolve the discourse.
19. Showing how a discourse connects with other discourses which sanction oppression.
20. Showing how the discourses allow dominant groups to tell their narratives about the past in order to justify the present, and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history (Parker, 1992, pp. 6–22).

The following section will take a reflexive look at the potential impact of the researcher on the research project as a whole.

3.4 Power and Reflexivity

A self-reflexive and open spirit is characteristic of feminist methodologies (Gray et al., 2007). Reflexivity is a “way of working with subjectivity” self-consciously, so that the researcher’s influence can be recognised (Parker, 2005, p. 25). Because it is impossible for a researcher to be truly objective towards research, and for research to be value-free, qualitative approaches maintain that researchers’ subjectivity should be acknowledged throughout the research process (Willig, 2001). According to Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1991) subjectivity, is a means of increasing the validity of a study. Revelations of one’s bias and subjectivity will not necessarily minimise their impact but to admit their existence is a valuable attempt to open the work up to other interpretations (Banister, 2011; Gergen, 2001). Various institutional constraints place the researcher in a position of power, for example, researchers initially choose to conduct the research, manage the logistics of the research process and receive recognition for it (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Parker, 2005). Reflexivity is practiced by feminist researchers as a way of levelling the power relations between the researched and the

researcher (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Parker, 2005).

While the focus group setting lessened my power as a researcher, I was present and involved in the group-construction of meaning. The fact that I chose to ask certain questions and neglected to ask others influenced which aspects of students' constructions they chose to emphasise or neglect in discussions. The questions I asked centred on the meaning that participants made of IPV in dating relationships and what was considered abusive (see Appendix C). By questioning whether or not certain mentioned behaviours were considered abusive, I might have encouraged people to construct behaviour which they might not have previously considered to be abusive or vice versa. The questions that I asked in later groups were also informed by issues raised in earlier groups. For example in an earlier group, participants focused on 'cheating' as a form of abuse and drew attention to the impossibility of sexual abuse in dating relationships, and as a result in later groups if infidelity or sexual relations were raised I was more likely to ask whether they considered this to be abusive.

The group interactions were affected by potential similarities and differences amongst the group members as well as between the group and me. My identity as a postgraduate psychology student might have placed me in a position of perceived expertise. For example, when one participant emphasised that she studied psychology, perhaps because she might have thought that her perspective might be taken seriously by me and other focus group participants, another participant responded by stating "*Okay, okay although I'm not doing psychology, but let me defend myself hey*" (Participant M7, Mixed, group 1). This point was illustrated again when a participant positioned me as an expert on IPV by asking, "*Lauren, how are the things like in terms of the statistics, the report of abuse in UCT? I don't think they're that high, are they?*" (Participant M1, Mixed, group 5). On the one hand, this perception of me as an expert could have encouraged students to be more trusting of me. On

the other hand, participants might have been more likely to construct their responses in a socially desirable manner. Therefore, I used casual language, dressed casually, and emphasised that we were all gathered to discuss IPV in dating relationships as a group of students in which I included myself. My similarity in age and vocation with participants might have been advantageous in minimising the distance and power differential between the participants and me; it seemed to enable me to create rapport with participants easily, and perhaps made it easier for students to speak more freely knowing that we had some shared experience. Furthermore, beverages and snacks were provided so that the venue was more relaxed than a typical research setting.

My perceived white race and 'Western' culture was salient and affected participants' talk. For example, a black participant paused in her narrative to explain her cultural traditions and to translate a cultural saying spoken in isiXhosa:

F5: Because your mother –in African cultures when you get married they tell you- “uyabekezela”⁴ {Xhosa traditional saying meaning you can't give up so easily}. You don't give up.
(Mixed, group 1).

Indeed, the participant appeared to adjust her way of speaking to accommodate me and my perceived cultural and racial difference. A second more stark example is one in which a participant positioned myself and my white research assistant as cultural outsiders in the group of black participants:

M1: Maybe *you* do... things differently besides with *us* 'cause you know like black people we believe in something else. [] Ja, cultures and stuff.
(Men, group 5).

This statement created distance between “us” the black male participants and “you” the white women researchers. It might have felt easier for participants to speak freely about

⁴ Xhosa translated by Ms NolubabaloTyam, Xhosa lecturer at the University of Cape Town.

race and culture to an outsider to because they may have positioned me as ignorant about such cultures and they might have been aware that I was not implicated by what they said about their culture. The following extract amongst a group of black participants is an example:

M2: I mean, in terms of demographics I think Africans are more abusive.

F5: Mmm hmm (agreement).

M7: Haai! (Disagreement).

M1: It's my own opinion.

M7: I'm against that.

(Mixed, group 1).

At the same time, other black participants might have felt defensive about the reputation of their culture in research as indicated by the response of participant M7 above.

As a female researcher conducting focus groups on the topic of IPV in dating relationships, which is related to sexuality and gender, my gender obviously influenced the researcher-participant relationship. Reflexivity is particularly significant in men's focus groups in which the embodied gender difference between participants and I was most salient. Because of my identity as a female researcher, participants might have presumed that I would approve of resistance to violence against women. Male students in particular might have been wary of participating in my study because of their possible preconceptions that the discussions would be anti-male. I took this into account in recruiting participants by asking male colleagues to hand out flyers for me. Male participants might have also been wary of expressing certain perspectives because of the gender distinction between us. For example, in men's only groups many disclaimers were used to position participants as critic of woman abuse, such as *"I'm totally against like um, um, beating up woman and stuff, like but..."* (Participant M4, men, group 4).

Another interesting reflection was that I tended to ask more clarifying questions, such

as confirming what participants meant, or asking them to explain or give examples, in men's groups in comparison to women's groups. While women participants seemed eager to speak to each other and me, men participants seemed slightly more hesitant (which I assumed was because of my identity as a woman) and perhaps that is why I felt they needed more encouragement to speak and be put at ease. Or perhaps I was more likely to assume that we were on the same page in women's groups because of our shared gender. Admittedly, I found myself identifying and sympathising more strongly with participants in women's groups. I also felt more comfortable and less stressed about managing the group dynamics, possibly because I anticipated less likelihood of conflict. Perhaps this was the reason that women's groups seemed to have a warm and supportive atmosphere, which provided the space for sharing more personal experiences.

In mixed groups, the presence of my female research assistant and I meant that there was an imbalance in the numbers of women and men. This might be one of the reasons that men participants seemed to be more defensive in these groups. For example, this will be illustrated in the analysis section through the salience of the discourse of women as abusive in mixed groups. In the second mixed group, men sat on one side of the circle and women on the other and this almost created the atmosphere of a debate or contest. Because of this atmosphere I felt wary of appearing to 'take sides' and asked noticeably fewer questions in this group. For this reason, the discussion seemed to unfold more naturalistically as participants spoke mainly to each other. My reflections on facilitating mixed focus groups will be further explored in chapter five.

The process of identifying discourses was affected by me as the researcher. It is imperative that my reasons for doing research and personal alliances are acknowledged, because data analysis does not occur "in an epistemological vacuum" (Braun & Clarke, 2006,

p. 84). Researchers' interpretations of the data and findings "are always a function of what we thought we would find and the position we try to make sense of it from" (Parker, 2005, p. 27). My choice of this research topic and adoption of a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective were motivated by my exposure to the issue of woman abuse and my location in feminist methodologies during my psychology degree. Furthermore, as a woman, during times in which I have felt overwhelmed by violence against woman in South Africa, the sexist and women-subordinating constructions of femininity and masculinity amongst friends and family, and my own complicity in traditional gender relations as a heterosexual woman, I have felt encouraged that my research might contribute towards the struggle for gender equity. Since I used a feminist theoretical perspective, I may have been inclined to look for discourses previously identified in research. For this reason I was careful to check that the discourses I identified during the interpretive process reflected the transcriptions and give precedence to participants' agendas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My own assumptions about what students mean by what they say will influence my analysis of the discourses they drew on. In light of this, the findings of this study must be seen as a limited depiction of my reading of students' constructions and remains open to interpretation (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). I acknowledge that my findings and interpretations "could have been otherwise" (Gergen, 2001, p. 47). While the formal exploration of power and reflexivity ends here, I continued to point to the influence of my relationship with participants in instances in the analysis and discussion section which follows.

3.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has provided an outline of the methodology selected and employed in this study. The assumptions underpinning positivist methodologies, qualitative

methodologies, and feminist methodologies were investigated. The researcher's choice of qualitative methodologies and a feminist poststructuralist theoretical perspective informed by Foucauldian theory on discourse was defended. Details about the participants, the recruitment process, the focus group procedure, and the ethical considerations of this study were provided. The process of data analysis using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was outlined. Finally, issues of power and reflexivity in the research process were examined. The next chapter presents an analysis of the discourses of othering, men's authority and women's responsibility that the participants drew upon.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
DISCOURSES OF OTHERING, MEN'S AUTHORITY AND WOMEN'S
RESPONSIBILITY

This study employed the analytical technique of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). The term 'discourse' refers to "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Hall, 1992, p. 291). Foucault draws attention to the power exercised in social relations at the everyday level (Sawicki, 1991). In this chapter, three sections with main discourses and additional discourses related to each of them are analysed and discussed. In the first section the discourse of othering is presented along with the related discourse of women as abusive. In the second section the discourse of men's authority is presented along with the related discourse of men's sexual entitlement and explanatory discourses on IPV. In the third section, the discourse of women's responsibility is presented along with the related discourse of love and violence. All of these discourses are intersecting and speak to an overarching theme of participants' simultaneous obfuscation and demonstration of the existence of IPV in dating relationships and gender inequality in the UCT context. FDA identifies discourses not as truth, but as one truth held in place by power and language (Parker, 1992). This analysis and discussion is a presentation of my own "version of history" (Weedon, 1987, p.114) or interpretation of participants' co-construction of meaning.

4.1 The Discourse of Othering

Participants across groups drew on the discourse of othering. Othering can be defined as "a process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between 'us' and

'them' – between the more and the less powerful – and through which social distance is established and maintained” (Lister, 2004, p. 101). Stigmatising and othering discourses were identified in early HIV and AIDS literature and gave rise to denial of risk amongst the general public, the blaming of others and the politicisation of the disease (Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Mankayi, 2009; Ratele, 2001; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998; Treichler, 1987). Similarly, participants in the current study drew on a discourse of othering in order to obfuscate their own risk and involvement in dating abuse. Significantly, while IPV in dating relationships is othered, participants across groups drew on their own life experience of witnessing, being victim to or perpetrating IPV. This discourse has political implications as IPV was positioned as a problem of the uneducated and the poor.

Under the socioeconomic status section of the demographics form (see Appendix D), most of the participants (48%) selected option c to indicate “we have most of the important things, but few luxury goods”, and the next most common choice (23%) was option b indicating “we have money for food and clothes, but are short on many other things”. Therefore, most participants had a lower to middle socioeconomic status. It must be noted that I am not denying the finding that vulnerability to become a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence is influenced by poverty (Petersen et al., 2005). Rather, I am drawing attention to participant’s spontaneous comparison of IPV in the UCT context and poorer areas and how participants’ emphasis on the higher socioeconomic status of those in the UCT context enabled them to minimise the threat of IPV. For the participants who grew up in poorer communities, the construction of UCT as an educated utopia free from the concerns of their childhood and adolescence might be might have been a way in which they set themselves apart from what they may perceive as their violent past in poorer communities or townships.

In the following two extracts, participants constructed socioeconomic status and education as determinants of how people think about abuse and whether or not they will be abusive:

M5⁵: ‘Cause here we have like lectures about abuse and stuff, so then you can see that it’s actually, how wrong it is. Like when you’re at home you don’t get it, you just watch it on TV and you’re like wow, entertainment, that’s all. []⁶

M4: ‘Cause like from where I’m born, I’m from the township and in the township it’s a norm, like its normal to beat up women.
(Men, group 4).

M2: If the guy is more educated I don’t think he will be abusive. Compared to someone who’s illiterate.
(Mixed, group 1).

In poorer socioeconomic settings, such as townships, “illiterate” people are positioned as accepting of woman abuse as “normal”, even “entertainment”, and as more likely to perpetrate IPV. In contrast, UCT is constructed as an environment in which people are educated and IPV is seen as “wrong”. This perceived intolerance for abuse sets UCT students apart from uneducated others and even precludes them from taking up the subject position as abusive because of their education. In the first extract, participant M5 uses the words “we” and “here” to establish social distance between students at UCT and “you” at “home” (Lister, 2004). This language positions IPV as only occurring elsewhere and is a means of deflecting attention away from oppressive conditions in one’s own context (Ahmed, 1993 as cited in James, 1998). Othering is a process through which people construct others as different from themselves but it is also a means of constructing one’s own identity in reference to others (Coward & Ellis, 1977 as cited in Inokuchi & Nozaki, 2005; Weis, 1995). In the second extract, participant M2 might be drawing on the discourse of othering to position himself, and the other educated men in the group, as unlikely candidates to be perpetrators of IPV. The

⁵ All names and personal identifying factors have been changed to protect the participant’s anonymity.

⁶ [] indicates omitted dialogue

emphasis on education in both of the above extracts offers particular subject positions for students at UCT as enlightened and powerful, which is illustrative of the Foucauldian concept of power-knowledge which purports that power and knowledge always operate together (Foucault, 1977 as cited in Hook, 2004).

The discourse of othering is problematic because it enables students to deny, repress, ignore, or minimise their own potential risk or involvement in IPV. On the one hand repression is a coping mechanism which alleviates the anxiety of those who might be living with the constant and serious threat or reality of IPV at UCT and in South Africa (Hoosen & Collins, 2004). On the other hand, defence mechanisms are likely to retard behavioural changes even when knowledge is adequate (Perkel, 1992). For this reason, I argue that the discourse of othering leads to opportunities for perpetrators to continue to abuse their girlfriends, acceptance of the way things are and it prevents the issue of IPV in dating relationships from being acknowledged and addressed at UCT. Furthermore, the discourse of othering is problematic because it might contribute to the creation of a negative stereotype of poor and uneducated people as violent, intellectually and/or morally inferior and dehumanised (Jensen, 2011; Lister, 2004; Riggins, 1997). In particular, educated women are contrasted to poorer uneducated women:

M2: The women in varsity, you know, like all of them are independent, they feel that they don't need a man, they can support themselves...⁷ that's the reason that all these women, you know, stay in these relationships [] 'Cause it's like I stay in an abusive relationship or I don't have anything, I can't go to varsity, I can't get a job, this guy's taking care of me.

M5: Ja.

M2: ...And whereas in varsity, you know, the girls here, you know, they can tell you "no, you know, if you beat me up I'll leave you..."

M5 and M4: Ja.

M2:...because I have so many other routes to take."

⁷ ... indicates omitted words or sentences

M4: I like what you said. You said the girls in varsity, you know, it's a different story from like people out there, (M5: Ja, it's totally different) you know, people who didn't go to varsity, people who didn't finish school.
(Men, group 4).

M1: And for example women, like where I come from, I mean I'm not talking about a typical learned girl like you guys are, I mean like most girls are not as learned as you, some of them don't even have matric and they will do that. Like a guy will hit them and they'll still go back to them.
(Mixed, group 5).

In the first extract, educated women are described as “a different story” to uneducated women because they are independent and empowered. Uneducated women are constructed as “people out there”, excluded from this elite group of abuse-proof “varsity girls”. They are described as jobless women who are trapped in abusive relationships because they are financially dependent on their partners and “have nowhere else to go”. The construction of poorer women as powerless is problematic because Stamp (1991, p. 845) argues that they are often treated as “passive targets of oppressive practices and discriminatory structures,” and this positioning “colludes with sexist ideologies that construct women as naturally inferior, passive and consigned to a private apolitical world”. Alternative constructions are available, for instance, in a study amongst South African adolescents, girls strategically chose to date wealthier boys in order to negotiate their economic marginalization (Bhana & Pattman, 2011).

In the second extract, participant M1 is able to openly blame women for tolerating violence in dating relationships while maintaining a complementary relationship with the educated women in the mixed group through his separation of educated and uneducated women. Significantly, this discourse was drawn upon most frequently by male participants and participant M1's words could cause women in the group who had been victims of IPV to blame themselves. The discourse of othering has implications for the subject positions

available for those educated women at UCT who are involved in abusive relationships as are positioned as stigmatised more than uneducated women:

F1: I knew like the girl in the res that I stayed in...and her boyfriend used to beat her up almost every week, like to the point where, um, the warden had to step in and had to phone like the CPS⁸ office, police were there every week and then every week she would just take him back and everyone used to sit down with her and speak to her like, what is your problem? Like you're educated, like you have an honours degree, like you know that what he's doing is not okay.
(Women, group 6).

The above extract positions educated women as able to exit abusive relationships easily because they should know better, whereas uneducated women are positioned as tending to remain in abusive relationships. However, the notion that it is easier for educated women to exit abusive relationships contradicts the narratives of women in this sample who speak about the difficulty of leaving an abusive boyfriend. Participant F1 also draws on the discourse of women's responsibility as an educated woman who struggles to exit an abusive relationship is stigmatised as the partner with the "problem", whereas the responsibility of her educated and abusive partner is not raised. The discourse of othering might lead to the increased stigmatisation of educated women at UCT who are involved in abusive relationships. This stigmatisation might encourage UCT women to remain silent about IPV in dating relationships, to believe that they are alone and that dating violence is an individual (as opposed to social) problem. Educated women were assumed to be wealthier and have more career prospects than uneducated women, and thus as unlikely to be at risk of financial dependence on partners and to remain in an abusive relationship. However, the existence of IPV at UCT (demonstrated in students talk), suggests that there is an additional influence beyond financial dependence at play that enables men to abuse women, which I argue is the primary issue of gender power inequity.

⁸Campus Protection Services

Participants also drew on the discourse of othering by framing the IPV that occurs at UCT as trivial in comparison to that which occurs in less privileged contexts:

F5: I know someone who was in an abusive relationship here at UCT ... he hit her...But I think it's less in the UCT like sphere. I think it's more emotional abuse []
F7: You must just listen and see where you can stand in the street, 'cause people in the township they stand in the middle of the street...like (fighting sounds)...But you never get such things here. [] No fighting, no screaming, no, you know what I mean?
[]
F5: I can't imagine someone getting into a physical fight on Jammie.
[]
M3: Uh, I also remember in a Marquard after party that guy you know unamatayitayi (Xhosa term meaning "he is a show off") beat up a girl in the bus to the after party event.
(Mixed, group 5).

Despite numerous examples of severe cases of women being physically abused by their boyfriends given during each of the focus groups, as well as the example given by participant F5 herself, she still positions UCT as a place where physical IPV is not a serious problem. Overt "physical fight[ing]" and "screaming" are constructed as lower class forms of IPV. The designation of certain types of violence against women to certain groups is a form of othering based on assumptions about class and culture (Montoya & Agustin, 2011). While participant F5 cannot imagine an overt display of physical abuse occurring in public at UCT, participant M3 gives her an example of just that and this contrary evidence challenges the discourse of othering. The Xhosa term used emphasises the overt nature of this instance of violence as the perpetrator is positioned as beating his girlfriend in public in order to show off. The perceived covert nature of IPV at UCT, which is supportive of the discourse of othering, is explained as a result of the greater threat of expulsion or arrest associated with overt violence:

M3: I think it's kind of difficult to explain things at UCT because...if you beat up someone you get expelled from varsity. So as a guy it crosses your mind that if I beat

her up she might report me and then I'll be out of university so...

F7: Otherwise you would have beat her up?

M3: No, no I'm saying that that might be another reason that we don't see most relationships being abusive physically. They might be emotionally but physically it's rare.

(Mixed, group 5).

M2: And I think maybe the most prevalent abuse here will be, you know, emotional abuse.

M5: Emotional.

M4: Ja.

M2: 'Cause that's the easiest form to do because it's like no-one's gonna arrest you if you emotionally abuse you can do it to her all the time, you can cheat you can do whatever. And you know even if its physical abuse I don't think it's like the ones you see at home like the wife gets beat up until she can't walk, it's like maybe a slap here, I think that happens.

M5: Ja, it does happen.

(Men, group 4).

The discourse of othering violence is demonstrated as physical abuse is othered as “rare” in the UCT context and milder than “the one's you see at home”. These extracts position some men at UCT as seeing emotional abuse as a way to continue to dominate and control women in a more covert and socially acceptable way. In addition to avoiding expulsion from UCT or arrest, emotional abuse is framed as the “easiest”, and perhaps most effective, form of abuse because it allows for continual domination (“you can do it to her all the time”) and it enables men to have “do whatever” to their girlfriends. Domestically-violent men attending interventions in South Africa (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; De La Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011) as well as the U.S. (Buttall & Carney, 2004) continued or increased their perpetration of non-physical abuse (emotional, psychological and verbal), instead of physical abuse while they were monitored during the intervention in order to conceal their abusiveness. While the men in this study were not necessarily perpetrators of dating violence, these findings support participants' explanations that the context of monitoring and surveillance at UCT might lead men to conceal their violence

against women temporarily. This suggests that the current system of education and intervention related to IPV in dating relationships at UCT might not address the underlying issue of male power but rather facilitate alternate forms of violence, such as emotional abuse which is left unmonitored. Findings show that psychological forms of abuse are seen as equally or more damaging to a woman's well-being than physical violence (Bell, Cattaneo, Goodman, & Dutton, 2008; De La Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011). Furthermore, psychological abuse is linked to future physical abuse (Bell et al., 2008). Participants' construction of IPV as a minor or non-issue amongst the educated might be indicative of the limitations of IPV education programmes in terms of outreach and effectiveness. This study suggests that the message that physical IPV is socially unacceptable seems to be conveyed to students but that this might have lead men to conceal their violence against their girlfriends instead of changing their behaviour.

In the second extract above, there is some resistance to the discourse of othering as participant M2 and M5 suggests that physical abuse, albeit constructed as milder, does happen at UCT. The following extract demonstrates more direct resistance to this discourse as a female student argues that the attitudes of educated men do not differ from those of uneducated men:

F1: Like for me my experience with abuse at UCT like, you would think like if someone is educated and like he knows that he's doing something wrong...And, um, you'd think, um, because he's educated he would know better but like it doesn't look like it and it's scary and it's quiet.
(Women, group 6).

Participant F1 resists the discourse of othering by attesting to the abusiveness of male students at UCT, despite their education. IPV at UCT is described as "scary" and "quiet", pointing to the terrifying and isolating position in which it places women and to the lack of

acknowledgment and adequate address of the issue in this context.

In summary, the discourse of othering enabled participants to deflect attention away from their own risk and involvement in IPV by positioning it as a problem of the uneducated and the poor. UCT was constructed as a safe environment where educated men do not abuse women, and if they do, educated women were positioned as both smart enough and strong enough to leave their abusers. Participants from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds might have drawn on the discourse of othering in order to de-emphasise their past context by drawing attention to their education and new living context. The discourse of othering offered UCT students the subject position of being set apart from and uninvolved in the problem of IPV. This discourse might facilitate silence around IPV at UCT and prevent the issue from being acknowledged and addressed. As a result, educated women in abusive relationships might face increased stigmatisation, remain silent about their victimisation and believe that IPV is an individual, as opposed to social, problem. The othering of IPV that occurred in this study is influenced by institutional and social contexts which create conditions for othering practices (Johnson et al., 2004). By denying this problem exists, students could feel a false sense of safety and pride in their university. There might be resistance to acknowledging this problem because it might sully UCT's status and reputation as an excellent learning facility by inferring its students suffer from problems plagued by uneducated, lower class communities. Similarly to UCT, South Africa is often perceived as an example of post-liberation progress and is praised for its progressive sexual rights and gender equality legislation, however the rates of woman abuse continue to be amongst the world's highest (Lewis, 2008). This is all the more reason that this façade needs to be actively challenged through the acknowledgement of the seriousness of IPV in South Africa. In addition to the occurrence of othering along the lines of socioeconomic status and

education, IPV was othered along the lines of gender. Through the discourse of women as abusive, men's abusiveness was othered and allocated to women. The discourse of women as abusive will be unpacked in the next section.

4.1.1 The Discourse of Women as Abusive

The discourse of women as abusive emerged in students' discussions as male participants consistently emphasised that women abuse men. It is important to state that the victimisation of men by their female partners is not being denied as a real problem as the nature of IPV is not always linear (Follingstad & Edmundson, 2010). Rather the discourse identified here presents specific instances in discussion groups in which participants strategically redirected the focus of the discussion away from men as abusive by othering abusiveness to women. The extract below from a mixed group shows how male participants attempted to regain power over women participants, who had been sharing some personal stories of serious incidences of victimisation at the hands of their boyfriends, by challenging them through the discourse of women as abusive:

M7: Let's not look at one side guys; even you ladies abuse us, haai! {Xhosa exclamation indicating shock and disagreement}

M2: Ja (laughs).

F6: Emotional.

M7: Okay emotional physical, whatever, how can you just like...

F5: But most you know men you know, uh...

F6: Mmm, physically.

M7: Men they just express it physically. But woman, I think they are equal, there's no, um...

F5: But then check the stats, I mean men are...

F3: Mmm, ja.

M7: Because they express it.

M1: They express it, ja.

M7: Ja, they express it in that way, you know? They don't just, like with you, you'll find ways to abuse us, you know?

F3: Ways like what? (F5 and F6: Like what?).

M7: You know ladies, eish! {Xhosa exclamation indicating shock and disagreement}(Group laughter).

F5: We can hold a grudge?

M7: Okay I almost forgot, okay (laughs). Ja, that's what I'm saying.
(Mixed, group 1).

Participant M7 positions “you ladies” as the abusers of “us” men and a debate between the two unified groups ensued. This tactic resembled basic deflection skills which could be illustrated by a simplified scenario in which a woman attacks a man by saying, ‘you’re abusive’ and a man defends himself by saying ‘no, *you’re* abusive’. The men in this group suggested that the statistics reflect men as more abusive than women because they express their abuse physically, but in reality the abuse of men and women “are equal”. Again it must be emphasised the focus of this discourse is not on whether women may or may not be abusive, but on men’s use of the topic of women’s abusiveness to deflect attention away from male perpetration of IPV and designate perpetration as a problem of others: women. The victimisation of men does not seem to be considered a very serious problem as participant M7 cannot come up with examples of how women abuse men and the group continuously laugh. This suggests that these male participants might be framing abuse as a gender-neutral problem in order to trivialise woman abuse (Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Previous studies have found that raising the issue of men as the victims of partner violence can be a means of deflecting attention from men being associated with abusiveness (De La Harpe & Boonzaier, 2011; van Niekerk, 2010). The following excerpt illustrates how a male student drew on the discourse of women as abusive in response to another male participant’s overt description of a man abusing a woman:

M4: So, ja, I don’t think, um, like beating her up it’s a good idea. [] I feel like so much energy and attention is being invested in woman abuse, um, men are being abused out there. And I think that like it’s so not fair because there’s like so much

energy and attention that's being invested in woman abuse and we try to forget about women abusing men out there.
(Men, group 4).

Notice how Participant M4 began by positioning himself as someone against woman abuse. Having admitted that woman abuse is a problem, and perhaps feeling slightly defensive as a man, he swiftly deflected attention to the point that there are “woman abusing men out there”. Shefer (1999, p. 291) found that some male students in her study drew on a contradictory discourse which positioned women as powerful over men in order to challenge the perception of seamless and universalised male power over women and “save face”. In the current study, participants in this men’s group might have been attempting to distance themselves from a position of power. The fact that the two group facilitators were females might have led members of this men’s group to feel that they needed to present socially desirable identities. By positioning themselves not only against woman abuse but as the victims of abuse themselves, they might have been trying to ensure that they were not seen as potential perpetrators. The discourse of women as abusive was most prominently used in the context of mixed groups, perhaps because men felt that they needed to defend themselves against female participants’ focus on men as perpetrators:

M1: I personally think that men are also abused and it's something that's been ignored.
[] So far we've just been focusing on women, which is another way, for me, of like abuse. Sort of implicit abuse, in a way, I don't know if you get me.
(Mixed, group 5).

The discourse emerges as participant M1 draws the attention away from men’s implication and instead emphasises men’s victimisation. When women challenged power imbalances, men framed women as implicit abusers and the plight of men who are abused as “ignored”. Because women had been voicing concerns around gender inequality, male participants emphasised how women are becoming more powerful, possibly in order to

minimise women's concerns (Shefer, 1999). In the following extract, the discourse of women as abusive is drawn upon by a male participant who directly accuses a female participant of being abusive:

M7: This girl comes to me...and she's like shouting at me, accusing me of saying some other stuff I didn't know about instead of coming to me and asking me herself and I...

F3: (interrupting) Were you in a relationship with her?

M7: Yes.

F5: Did you sleep with her? (M7: laughs).

M2: Sorry but can I say something [directed at F5], I think you're abusive (F5: laughs). I think you shout at men, don't you?

M7: Ja, she is, I noticed that.

M2: Ja.

F5: No, no, no, I don't shout, I don't shout, but um, sho I've never been...
(Mixed, group 1).

Participant M7 was in the process of defending his identity as a non-perpetrator and participant M2's othering the perpetrator identity onto participant F5 seemed to be of assistance in his endeavour. The male participants' accusation that participant F5 is an abusive woman occurs in response to her interrupting, questioning and challenging participant M7. Participant F5's outspokenness, assertiveness and non-submissiveness defy traditional feminine norms of passivity, subservience and acceptance of male authority (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Shefer, 1999). These male participants might have drawn on the discourse of women as abusive in order to try to put participant F5 back in her subordinate place and regain control as men in this mixed group context, and also to avoid answering her questions. This tactic was momentarily effective as her energies became invested in defending herself and she ceased her questioning. Although participant F3 was quite shocked by the accusation that she was abusive, it should be noted that she did not leave at the end of the focus group feeling visibly upset and she continued to be outspoken in the discussions that followed. In retrospect, my choice to run mixed focus groups yielded

valuable data on men and women's interactions but it also exposed women to men's direct challenges and justifications for IPV. For this reason, a thorough debriefing was outlined at the end of the group. In addition men were framed as having less power than women and thus women's empowerment was positioned as absurd and unnecessary. In the next excerpt, a male student constructed women as a bigger threat than men in terms of IPV:

M7: And to tell the truth, women are more dangerous than men.

F5: (laughs).

M7: Yes they are! To be honest with you, okay well, men might be the cause of them being dangerous but the thing is, I will abuse you, maybe men will rape you and stuff, but what a woman can do, yoh!

F6: Like what?

M7: Yoh, they can kill you, chop you into pieces!

F3: No, women can't chop you.

M7: Yoh, abuse a woman make her mad! Did you watch that movie with J. Lo?

L: 'Enough'?

M7: 'Enough'. Ja, it's like when they come back, hey. Yoh!

F5: Ja, but like the main cause...

F3: Fighting back, defending themselves.

(Mixed, group 1).

A female student (F5) responds to the claim that "women are more dangerous than men" with laughter, presumably because she considered it to be absurd. By othering the threat that men pose onto women, the spotlight on men as dangerous is removed from men and transferred onto women. According to anthropologist, Hays, (1966 as cited in Balbus, 1985) men have always experienced women as the "dangerous sex" and this is one explanation for men's domination of women throughout history. While participant M7 acknowledges that "men might be the cause of them being dangerous", he suggests woman's propensity to kill her abuser is fatal and more dangerous than men's abuse and rape of women. This claim is received as absurd by the women participant who suggest that their actions might be in self-defence to the abuse and rape of women which participant M7 is positioning as relatively unproblematic. In the following extracts, women's empowerment is

framed as a way of falsely attacking men:

M3: Coming back to the UCT system of being informed about it, this abuse and things, it tends to give women to be mostly like black mailing, emotionally or whatever. Because, especially in the res, whatever you, if you happen to get into a conflict with a girl, she's like, "beat me up you'll see, you'll see" just to provoke you to beat her up, she'll go press charges, then to the tribunal, you know you're out of UCT. So I think it gives them more power now that they know that if you beat her there's no way that you're gonna be still around at UCT.
(Mixed, group 5).

M7: See, the way things are today it's as if you need a contract for you to sleep with someone. 'Cause that is a bit naughty, I've noticed that they will sleep with you and do some harsh, harsh things and report you and stuff.

M2: And say it's rape.

M7: ... and you can't defend yourself 'cause you're a guy. []. Some girls, where you go like after whatever and then you go like "Yoh, hey so tight right now, I can't take you out" and then she's like "I will scream" then I'll be like "What? Okay, I'm taking you out then".

(Mixed, group 1).

Women are depicted as abusive towards men through their misuse of the system. They are said to use their empowerment to manipulate or blackmail men by threatening to falsely report rape, or provoking them to violence, in order to get them expelled from UCT. In previous studies in which violent adult male partners were interviewed, men positioned themselves as victims of gender politics and the criminal justice system, which was framed as biased in favour of women and seen as providing women with increased power and leaving men powerless (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; van Niekerk, 2010). In the above extract, women are constructed as "naughty", "harsh" and in a position of power, whereas men are depicted as powerless and defenceless victims who are taken advantage of. In this way the abusiveness of men is othered as women are positioned as abusers who use the system to abuse innocent men. By constructing empowered women as vindictive and dishonest, men participants in this study frame women's empowerment as negative and in so doing strip women of power and reclaim it as belonging to males. In the study of Harris and colleagues

(1995), men constructed women as powerful in hidden ways within the current gender positioning and in so doing make any argument against women's oppression appear absurd. Through the discourse of women as abusive, the validity of women's voices and grievances is diminished, thus further disempowering women. The way in which this discourse casts doubt on women's accounts is significant because attitudes of disbelief and a lack of sympathy for abused women might discourage them from reporting their abuse (Izugbara et al., 2008; Ludsin & Vetten, 2005). In the following excerpt from a mixed group discussion, women are constructed as dangerous and abusive because they can ruin the abuser's life through reporting:

M1: It's that ideal...I'll go to the police and I'll report this person and I'll do this and I'll do that. I mean at the end of the day you're gonna have to come back and be the witness...Are you gonna be standing there and saying this person that I spent a year with, that I understand where they come from, "I'm willing to destroy his future", and...

F7: Destroy? What about me? []

F5: I think...he doesn't even have a right to a future if he thinks he's okay with laying a hand on me. [] And you've clearly shown me that you have no respect for me so don't expect the same. It's tit for tat. And mine isn't hitting you back like you hit me...

M1: Such decisions also depend on the level of your maturity [] You know what, this has happened and stuff, but then we'll get to... some kind of a compromise or something. And then because you don't wanna despise, I mean like you might say, I'll feel better if he's sitting at home and stuff but then that's gonna lie on your conscience forever...

F7: No, no, no, no!

F5: I will remember his fist on my face! []

M1: Can I just, I think like I said you know such cases of physical abuse do happen in UCT. And from what I know I don't know anyone in my personal experience who's ever been expelled because of any physical abuse (M8: Ja) of which most of the cases, the two parties come together and come to an understanding to say you know what, I don't want you getting expelled [], you know that irrational thing...I think you should also put yourself out of the situation a bit. []. Like what if I just slapped him a bit and he decided you know what, screw this thing I'm just gonna go to the tribunal and stuff. Would you be comfortable having to leave UCT because of a mistake? Something that you didn't even predict, you know what I'm saying?

F7: No.

(Mixed, group 5).

Women who report their abusers are constructed as merciless, immature, irrational and abusive people who “destroy”, “despise”, and have no conscience. Women were positioned as mature and rational if they remain silent and reach a compromise. Men drew on discourses of male domination and superiority when they positioned themselves as more competent and rational than their female partners (van Niekerk, 2010). Women are expected to be forgiving and understanding, in line with the performance of traditional femininity (Wood, 2001). Rich (1983 as cited in Tolman et al., 2003) argues that heterosexuality is a political rather than natural institution comprising of compulsory conventional norms of relational heterosexual dynamics that require and produce female subordination and male dominance. By appealing to the fact that most cases are not reported, participant M1 attempts to reinforce the status quo that most women would respond in this way. Similarly, in the study of Harris and colleagues (1995), men constructed women who actively challenge the entrenched gender positions as marginalised and having minority views. Women are discouraged from reporting abuse because far from the “ideal” result they will experience guilt for the destruction of their boyfriend’s future as this will “lie on your conscious forever” (M1). In essence, these men attempt to convince women that it is far more admirable and womanly to be silent, thus potentially enabling men to continue to abuse without facing any consequences. The women in this mixed group responded by resisting the discourse of women as abusive by drawing attention to the destruction and pain that has been inflicted on them (“Destroy? What about me?” (F7), and “you have no respect for me so don’t expect the same...I will remember his fist on my face...” (F5)). The discourse of women as abusive is most clearly challenged when participant F5 suggests that reporting abuse should not position women as equally abusive because “mine isn’t hitting you back like you hit me”. However, nearer the end of the discussion they partially agree with the men’s reasoning that abuse can

be understood as a mistake for which they would not want to be expelled. Through this discourse the focus is placed on women's choice whether or not to report and not men's choice whether or not to abuse.

In summary, through the discourse of women as abusive the subject position made available to men was one as the victims of abuse. Conversely, the subject position made available to women through this discourse was not as the object, but the subject of IPV: dangerous perpetrators of violence, who misuse the female-sympathetic legal system to sabotage men, and who unnecessarily ruin the life of the abuser through reporting. Furthermore participants talk allowed them to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and femininity by framing women as irrational, immature and manipulative people and men as more reasonable and mature. The discourse of women as abusive was drawn upon predominantly by men in the mixed discussion groups, where it was used instrumentally to deflect attention away from men as abusers by othering abusiveness to women. Ultimately, through the discourse of women as abusive, men are able to dismiss and ignore the problem of woman abuse and their role in it, thus minimising their guilt and preserving a positive subjectivity. This discourse offers an alternative explanation for why men might be motivated to report high rates of victimisation by women perpetrators of IPV in quantitative surveys in which they might feel guilty or implicated. In addition this discourse might contribute to opposition to women's empowerment and reporting of abuse because it is constructed as absurd, especially when women are positioned as even more powerful than men. In the broader scheme of things, the positioning of women as abusive, domineering and controlling might result in the loss of attention and resources for abused women (Loseke & Kurz, 2005). This larger section has shown how IPV is othered in terms of socioeconomic status, education, and gender. Despite

men being positioned as victims in relation to abusive women, men were also positioned by participants as having authority and sexual entitlement over women in participants' talk. In the next section the discourse of men's authority is outlined, followed by the discourse of men's sexual entitlement and explanatory discourses on IPV.

4.2 The Discourse of Men's Authority

The discourse of men's authority was drawn upon in participants' talk as they positioned men as authorities over their girlfriends. This discourse echoes Boonzaier and de la Rey's (2004) hegemonic gendered discourse of masculinity as authority and femininity as subordination. Early feminist researchers recognised woman abuse as a performance of female submission and male authority and thus identified gender power inequity as central to violence against women (Bograd, 1990; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). Similarly, discourses of male domination and superiority (Adams, Towns, & Gavey, 1995; Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Wood, 2004; van Niekerk, 2010) and the discourse of male power (Boonzaier & De La Rey, 2003; Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Shefer et al., 2000; Shefer, 1999; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998) have been identified in previous research in which men were also subtly positioned as dominant, superior, powerful and in control of women. In the following quotation, participants draw on the discourse of men's authority by subordinating and objectifying women as the slaves of their male partners:

M4: You get the sense... women are just there to serve us as guys, as slaves... There's this saying that a woman's place is in the kitchen [] She can't go to the universities and further her whatever studies, um, she has to get married to a man and settle down and have kids and work and work and do whatever. It's just, I dunno, like women we just see them as objects. Like, you know, just, they can be just used for whatever...
M1: ...And like, they getting married and they both working and then the guy will just say to the woman like, "can you please like leave your job." And then the woman will be forced like "you have to sacrifice. [] You have to give up your things and then

follow me”, like, we always saying like, “men are the head and then like women agree” [] And then like in this generation now, okay, you can see like that you both, okay we have, like we have to meet each other halfway and then, like, I still don’t believe that, like seriously.

M5: It’s not happening.

M1: It’s not happening. It should not happen to me or in my house, like that’s the thing.

M4: ...like, people are resistant to change. They won’t accept like it’s the 21st century now like women are being empowered, like they can work, they can have powerful jobs, they can be breadwinners at home.

(Men, group 4).

In the above extract participants talk about society's influence on the way that they position women as “objects” who “can be just used for whatever”, in so doing they appeal to the explanatory discourse of socialisation discussed earlier. Similarly, in a mixed focus group (5) a female participant (F4) pointed out that “men feel like they own the women...like, “this is my property””. In line with the typical construction of femininity, the above extract demonstrates that women are expected to take up the subject position of submissiveness and passivity as they are “forced” to “sacrifice”, “serve”, “agree”, “give up [their] things”, and “follow” their authoritative male partners (Boonzaier & De La Rey, 2003; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). The reason offered for women’s subordination to men is intrinsically gendered: “men are the head”. When the conversation focuses women’s empowerment and equality with men in the new generation participants speak about how “people are resistant to change” (M4) and how men feel “I still don't believe that...it should not happen to me” (M1). In line with previous findings, males are constructed with the desire to maintain the subordination of women and opposed the disturbance of patriarchal gender relations (Adams et al., 1995; Shefer et al., 2000; van Niekerk, 2010). As this conversation continued, participant M2 explained that the empowerment of women translates to loss of masculinity for men:

M2: Maybe it’s just that, you know, it’s just like part of the change would be for us as men, you know, to be comfortable with...ourselves...When we were growing up, you

know, we used to hear people saying [] never let her earn more money than you, 'cause, you know [] you lose yourself, you know, you lose your manhood. You're no longer a man if a woman is earning, you know, more money than you and if she knows she's the breadwinner, you're supposed to be the breadwinner. But you're not like, uh, we need, you know, to like redefine the term, you know, 'being a man.' 'Cause the thing is, you know... we believe that, you know, being a man you have to be strong, you know, always, you have to be the one that's always the leader, stuff like that. That's why, you know, you feel that if a woman says something you know to, you know, that makes you feel challenged you have to beat her up. 'Cause you know that challenges that concept you have of a man.
(Men, group 4).

The term 'man' has come to be so closely associated with authority and superiority (Adams et al., 1995) that these words are used interchangeably as participant M2 states that "you're no longer a man" to imply that you no longer have authority. Participant M2 argues that when women challenge and usurp the masculine role in the relationship it is the masculine imperative to respond with violence because to tolerate equality is "to lose yourself". This echoes the explanation of men's violence as a reaction to perceived or actual threat or loss of masculine identity in order to minimise their vulnerability and reassert their male power and superiority (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Petrik, Olson, & Subotnik, 1994; Wood et al., 2008). Successful masculinity is often linked to a man's ability to be the head of the household and provide financially and when women are identified as the primary breadwinner this disrupts the gender hierarchy (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007). By using abuse to control and correct women's insubordinate and disobedient behaviour, men are defending, enacting and constituting their manhood (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). It is significant that participant M2 initially demonstrated resistance to the discourse of men's authority by suggesting that men need to become comfortable, and perhaps less defensive, about their identities as men and redefine manhood. However, he dismisses the possibility of this resistance by drawing on the explanatory discourse of socialisation, which will be explored later, and indicates that the

“concept you have of a man” has been too firmly entrenched. Therefore the position of male participants was predominantly supportive of the discourse of men’s authority. In the following extracts, participants emphasise the paramount importance young men place on defending their male reputation and pride:

M7: And we as guys we have this thing of I don’t wanna be overcome by a woman. For example, this woman walks up to me, we are in a relationship. And ja something happens and now she starts shouting, you know in front of people and I’m like, yoh, you know, my pride. [] “Okay cool you want this to happen? Okay cool I’ll go with the flow.” [] My reputation counts hey.

M3: Your pride as a man.

M7: Ja, like people looking up to me, hey.

(Mixed, group 1).

M1: Uh beating a girl I think it’s a good idea ‘cause like...when girls like are in front of their friends they wanna show off...Like as the guys we cannot... argue with a girl, ‘cause you’ll be degrading yourself... So what do you do? You have to beat them so that they can shut up. [] I don’t stand like nonsense. [] Ja, I know it’s wrong but I think it’s wrong in a good way, you know cause like your girlfriend will be fine. [] I’m not good at arguing so like I think, if you can just one [slap] you know.
(Men, group 4).

In the first extract, participant M7 emphasised that this encounter happens “in front of people” and indicates that when his male reputation and pride are challenged in public it is inevitable that he will “go with the flow” and beat her. In the second extract, participant M1 is concerned with not “degrading” himself “in front of [her] friends”. Similarly Wood and colleagues (2008) found that if a girlfriend had lowered a boyfriend’s dignity or reputation, it was seen as his right to defend his dignity by beating her and a man would be judged unmanly if he did not. Previous research on dating abuse has found that maintaining a positive presentation of one’s identity and reputation amongst peers is of particular importance amongst young adults (Few & Rosen, 2005; Izugbara et al., 2008; Marais, 2009). Participant F7’s choice of the word “overcome” indicates the assumption that the man is in possession of authority and he does not want his power to be taken away by the woman.

Notice how participant M7 enacts his male authority by forming an alliance with the rest of the males in the group by using the refrain “we as guys”. Men’s alliance-forming can be interpreted as a way of maintaining group identity as the dominant partner and is a means of regulating women’s submissive behaviour.

In the second extract, physical abuse is constructed as a “good idea” for instrumentally and intentionally expressing male authority over “a girl” in order to manage their “nonsense” and put them back in their patriarchal position of subordination (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). This is significant because the acceptance of female subordination and male dominance in dating relationships has been identified as a significant predictor of dating violence (Swart et al., 2002). Although participant M1 acknowledges that violence against women is wrong, positioning himself as a socially moral person, he argues that it is “wrong in a good way” because “your girlfriend will be fine” and justifies violence as an acceptable (and no doubt effective) means of shutting up women and controlling what they can and cannot do. Across studies, young men were placed in a role of authoritative discipline over their girlfriends and it was seen as acceptable and necessary for them to beat their girlfriends, particularly if talking to them did not elicit the desired response (Few & Rosen, 2005; Izugbara et al., 2008; Sathiparsad, 2005; Wood et al., 2008). Thus, women are positioned as needing guidance and correction from men, which is largely communicated through violence.

The other participants in this men’s group responded to participant M1’s statements with much laughter, perhaps indicating nervous energy as they seemed to identify with him somewhat but also perhaps felt that voicing these notions was not socially desirable, specifically in the presence of women facilitators. This was indicated by their increased use of disclaimers, such as “I’m totally against...beating up woman and stuff” (M4), and “I know

it's wrong, but..." (M2). However the unacceptability of girlfriend abuse was not emphasised in their challenge to participant M1, suggesting that their support for the discourse of men's authority:

M2: But, you know...all of us have got so much, so much to lose and, you know, so little to gain from, you know, that, you know, little slap. []

M5: But like slapping someone leads to something else []

M2: But then, you must be careful, you know what it's like when you beat up someone, you know, you don't have the control to say, "Uh no this is enough." [] So that's the thing, if there was a way you know, like, [] it's like you don't, when you discipline your kid, you know, your parents smack, you can never say no... 'Cause, you know, you just gonna be outnumbered, because the thing is like it's important to think, if the slap doesn't work...what are you gonna do, you know, it's gonna be a punch, until, you know?

(Men, group 4).

The main deterrents listed to caution participant M1 against using IPV are the risk of losing self-control and facing expulsion. Similarly, in research with young people in the Eastern Cape, participants in the current study showed that as long as men were able to maintain self-control and not seriously or visibly injure their girlfriends, physical abuse was seen as an acceptable means of control and discipline (Wood et al., 2008). Participant M2's comparison of a romantic relationship with the parent-child relationship shows that he positions men with parental authority over their girlfriends. However he seems to imply that he wishes "there was a way" to make women respond with the same child-like obedience after "one smack", so that men did not have to resort to more severe violence. In a sense he seems to indicate that he would prefer it if men held even more power over women. There were also instances in which women participants supported and reinforced the discourse of men's authority by marginalising men who did not conform to hegemonic masculinity:

M1: They don't expect the male to be physically abused; they don't expect the male to be emotionally abused, which is why I feel if a guy went [] to the police station and

was like, you know what I just got beaten up by my girlfriend, and...(F5: laughs). You see, that is the reaction that you're gonna get and chances are you don't wanna risk going through that. [] Someone laughing at them doesn't make it any easier. [] No guy complains [] Like there's literally no one to talk to.
(Mixed, group 5).

Participant F5 reacts to the participant M1's assertion that men are also physically and emotionally abused by women of men with laughter, perhaps indicating that this notion is absurd to her because men are expected to be in authority over women, rather than their victims. This ridiculing and potentially shame-inducing response is constructed as a risk which deters men from reporting or talking of their abuse. This extract shows how women, and not only men, are supportive of hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Shefer, (2000) points out that it is important to acknowledge that women play a role in reproducing discourses of male power and are invested in them because of the benefits they might gain from supporting their subordination, including men's approval, the maintenance of relationships and the avoidance of further abuse. While this is concerning, in the current study men were most frequently framed as victims of IPV in instances in which they might have felt implicated through the discourse of women as abusive. Some participants demonstrated resistance to the discourse of men's authority. The following two extracts are a critique of the way that men's authority is played out in gender relations:

F1: That's how men play out to gender roles in society.

F4: ...like respect, "I want you to respect me and if I don't get it my way I'm gonna do that until you respect me". And obviously if you're being abused you become like scared, and you like inferior so you kind of respect the person for that, but then it's wrong.

(Women, group 6).

M4: I don't think it's a good idea to beat her up, cause she's gonna stay in the relationship because she's scared of you (M5: Ja) You know, it's not gonna be out of love. You know she's gonna be scared of what you might do next so she's gonna be like a robot, like she's programmed...

(Men, group 4).

Participant M4 draws on a progressive discourse of resistance by framing the “programmed” result of violence against women as futile and inferior because she will not be choosing to remain in the relationship “out of love” but fear. Particularly in women-only focus groups, women were critical of male authority over women being “wrong” and the respect that abusive men demand was problematised, perhaps because their true respect as equals is not gained. Another female participant warned against the danger of getting trapped in an abusive relationship through believing that “he’s a guy I need to respect him, I need to do whatever he says” (F5, women group, 6). Although participant F4 was critical of men’s authority, she positions women as “inferior” and thus simultaneously reinforces women’s subordination. Feminist theorists have criticized the positioning of women as powerless and disempowered victims because this reproduces patriarchal discourses (Hollway, 1995; Smart, 1996).

In summary, the discourse of men’s authority was identified in participants’ talk and offered men, by virtue of their gender, the subject position as authoritative, dominant and controlling in relation to women. Conversely, women were positioned through this discourse as men’s objects and property that need to be corrected and forced to submit. Therefore the hegemonic gender roles for both men and women become entrenched through the discourse of men’s authority. Men’s violence and dominance over their girlfriends was constructed as an acceptable means of defending, enacting, constituting and maintaining male authority, especially in the face of threat to their reputation and challenge to their authority as men through women’s empowerment. This discourse allows participants to maintain the subordination of women and oppose the disturbance of patriarchal gender relations, which was equated to the loss of male power and masculinity. Similarly, in South Africa, Jacob

Zuma's rape trial symbolically conveyed how female disobedience or defiance to patriarchy resulted in exile and loss of citizenship for the victim as Zuma's supporters threats led her to leave the country (Lewis, 2009). Through these performances of the nation the state conveys the message that society can reprimand or expel deviant, wayward and feminised bodies (Lewis, 2009). Because the discourse of men's authority allowed participants to justify men's aggression and dominance over women, I argue that the broader issue of gender power inequity is central to IPV. Involvement in abusive dating relationships can be seen as a way in which young men and women perform successful masculinity and femininity. This argument is in line with the feminist perspective that abuse in intimate relationships can be seen as a performance of female submission and male authority (Bograd, 1990; Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). Although there was some resistance to this discourse; it was largely reproduced by both men and women. In addition to participants' construction of men as authoritative over women, they were also constructed as sexually entitled. The discourse of men's sexual entitlement will be explored next.

4.2.1 The Discourse of Men's Sexual Entitlement

The discourse of men's sexual entitlement was evident in the talk of both female and male students. Through this discourse men are positioned as having the right to access their girlfriends' bodies for sex. Research amongst adolescents and young adults in South Africa shows that sexual experiences are intertwined with coercion and violence, and that men's sexual entitlement is endemic in this context (Buga et al., 1996; Harris et al., 1995; Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer et al., 2000; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1998, 1996). In a men's focus group, sexual abuse had not been mentioned in discussion about various forms of IPV. When I raised this point, students indicated that they felt entitled to sex, that they

demanded it in their relationships and that they did not see anything wrong with that:

L: You guys have mentioned physical and emotional but like do you think that you can get sexual abuse in a relationship?...

M1: Been there, been there, done that! (Group laughter) []

M5: Ja, that's what we do, like convincing her.

M4: Ja, that's what we guys do. []

M2: Have you heard the saying that says that uh, "she wants it, but she doesn't know she wants it?" (Group agreement and laughter).

M4: Ja, I think it's a guy's thing, like, you know like even in the dining hall then like you see it with different people, different races but we all agree on that. If the chick said no, just (claps) (group laughter). It doesn't mean no, it's a yes but it's a no, so just try you know, to convince her whatever...

M5: Ja.

L: So you think it's acceptable?

M4: Ja.

M2: It's also, uh, accepted.

M5: Especially in a relationship, you know?

(Men, group 4).

Participant M1 bragged that he had "been there, done that", a statement that was received with laughter, implying that sexual entitlement was not constructed as abuse at all, but something to be proud of as a man. In line with previous research, being sexually involved with women was seen as the main way that men assert their power and construct a successful masculine identity (Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer et al., 2000). Male participants reconstructed sexual abuse as "convincing her", which involved understanding her refusal for sex as "a yes but it's a no". Their reconstruction of sexual abuse corresponds with previous findings that men's use of insidious coercion and violence to control access to women's bodies is considered normal (Buga et al., 1996; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1998, 1996). Pressurising women to have sex after they have already said no is justified because "she doesn't know she wants it". Similarly to previous research, women are positioned as sexually unaware and ignorant, while men are positioned as sex experts who are in control of initiating sexual activity (Shefer et al., 2000). The discourse of men's sexual entitlement is

problematic because opportunities for the coercion and abuse of women are increased and women have a lack of decision-making power in relationships (Pattman, 2005).

It is not surprising that this sexually aggressive talk emerged most frequently in men's groups, in which male sexual entitlement was encouraged by peers perhaps as a means of performing hegemonic masculinity (Tolman et al., 2003). In a South African study peer norms were identified as being an important risk influences for sexual violence (Petersen et al., 2005). The group consistently used the language of "we guys" and enacted male power in their solidarity in acceptance of sexual entitlement reportedly across race groups. Similarly, previous local studies have documented the normalisation and acceptance of sexual coercion and violence as part of an intimate relationship (Buga et al., 1996; Harris et al., 1995; Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer et al., 2000; Wood et al., 1998). Women participants also called into question the possibility of the existence of sexual abuse within the context of a dating relationship:

F4: Even sexual abuse...like when people talk "I got sexually abused" then like [] to me, you know, it's like "have sex man!" [] You should know, if you're in a relationship, having sex is going to happen whether you like it or not. So when you come to me like, "ah, he raped you" like, "no man, he's my boyfriend".

F1: ...People will be like... "how can he rape you? How can he sexually abuse you if he's your boyfriend?" It's like the female doesn't have any entitlement, she doesn't have the right to say no...

(Women, group 6).

In accordance with other local studies, being in a relationship seems to entail an implicit contract to engage sexually; male partners are entitled to satisfy their sexual needs because "he's your boyfriend" (Harris et al., 1995; Hoosen & Collins, 2004; O'Sullivan et al., 2006; Wood et al., 2007). In contrast a woman "doesn't have any entitlement" and her agency in intimate relationships is restricted as she cannot refuse sex ("she doesn't have the right to say no"). Participant F4 conflates rape with the mutual and consensual act of "having sex".

The accounts they were “having sex” and “he raped you”, characterise the nature of the act as either affectionate or violent and this is important because one calls for legal intervention whereas the other does not (Coates & Wade, 2004). Due to the expectations and norms in heterosexual relationships, women often have difficulty naming a coercive sexual act within that context as 'rape' or 'abuse' (Berkel et al., 2005; Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Shefer et al., 2000; Wood et al., 2007). Significantly, acknowledging that one’s experiences can be defined as dating violence, has been identified as a crucial point in being able to speak about one’s victimisation, seek help and begin the termination process (Few & Bell-Scott, 2002; Marais, 2009). Because sex is framed as inevitable and compulsory within a relationship, participant F4 encourages women to give in and “have sex, man!” and does not take those who claim to be sexually abused within a relationship seriously. Similarly, young South African women reported peer pressure amongst female friends to have sex, submit to males’ demands and be silent about violence (Wood et al., 1998). In a similar way, pressure is placed on men who are positioned as being in charge sexually and always eager to have sex:

M4: I’ve seen guys in my res being emotionally abused by women. You know, um, let’s say a woman comes to my room at 12 in the evening and I don’t touch her, I do nothing to her we just sleep or we just watch a movie, and then she goes to her room, you know she’ll go to her friends and be like, “that guy, you know he did nothing whatever he was just you know.” And then, we see the guy walking in the dining hall and the chicks looking, laughing pointing fingers at him.
(Men, group 4).

This quotation speaks to the pressure placed on men, in this case by women, to be sexually eager, prodigious and experienced. Women’s surprised or mocking responses at a man’s lack of initiating sex, as indicated by their “laughing pointing fingers at him” suggest that women also play a role in reinforcing and reproducing the discourse of men’s sexual entitlement. Connell (1995) argued that hegemonic constructions of men as possessors of the

sex drive are costly not only for women but for men who experience pressure to live up to unrealistic expectations. Because men are positioned as possessors of the sex drive they may be unable to express intimacy and love publicly and fear of girlfriends' rejection for more sexually experienced men (Pattman, 2005). Participant M4 resists the expectations placed on men through positioning them as possessors of the sex drive by suggesting that this pressure is emotionally abusive towards men. However, men participants also drew on the discourse of the male sex drive in order to legitimate their entitlement to sex:

M1: Hayibo {isiZulu exclamation indicating surprise}, even like that's the thing, I can't stay in a relationship without sex, never!
(Men, group 4).

Men are framed as being unable to continue dating if their sexual 'needs' are not being satisfied. The male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984) posits that men need sex and their sexuality is linked to biological urges out of their control. Subscribing to the notion that sex is a commodity was identified as a risk factor for dating violence amongst South African youth (Petersen et al., 2005). Furthermore, the male sex drive discourse is often drawn upon by men to justify infidelity (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004). By implication, women in relationships are expected to have sex with their boyfriends or face losing the relationship:

F7: I think pressure in the relationship, pressure for sex where you like feel uncomfortable doing certain things and the boy's like, "ah, if you don't do this with me who am I gonna do it with?" Or...

M6: That's a good question, if he's not getting it from you, where is he getting it?

F7: He's getting it somewhere else.

M6: Exactly!

F7: ...it's pressure and it becomes abusive because now you don't feel comfortable doing this and you think, "yoh, to keep my baby just have sex". It's not worth it I'm telling you.

(Mixed, group 5).

The female student explains that men coerce women into having sex by asking: "if

you don't do this with me who am I gonna do it with?" The male participant (M6) demonstrates the discourse of men's sexual entitlement by asking this very question in order to emphasise the imperative for girlfriends to acquiesce to sex. The belief that men are expected to be unfaithful because of their "rampant sexual needs" has been identified in previous local research (Shefer, 1999, p. 247). This belief might cause women to define their sexuality in terms of men's drives and needs (Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). Participant F7 resists the discourse of men's sexual entitlement by concluding "it's not worth it". Women participants were also critical of the sexual double standard inherent in the discourse of men's sexual entitlement:

M7: 'Cause, when a guy is dating a lot of girls, you know, you're considered to be 'The Man' []. And you're like...the top, you know, whatever. Even girls they will like you...But when a girl does that, yoh, I think "I don't even want to talk to that girl", like really now. When I look at them I just think, "yoh!" I just get a bit disgusted, and when it's the guy I'm like "yoh dude (F3: it's cool), its cool man!"

F5: But it shouldn't be like that, like consider...the sex video. People are gonna say, "ah she's a slut, she's a slut". No one says anything about the man.

F3: The guy.

M7: Ja.

F5: Why is it like that? [] I think it's because, you know, men are expected to, they listen to, they have to have, if you have many girlfriends you're considered to be cool and stuff like that. But if you are a girl you are supposed to, you know, to have one partner and, you know?

(Mixed, group 1).

In this extract, men are not only constructed as entitled to sex from their girlfriends, but from many women (O'Sullivan et al., 2006; Wood et al., 1998). Having multiple sexual partners is equated with the achievement of successful masculinity and for this reason men who sleep with lots of women are positioned by both men and women as "the man" or "the top" (Jackson & Cram, 2003; Perez-Jimenez et al., 2007; Sathiparsad, 2005). Thus male promiscuity is rewarded through dominant discourse on masculinity (Boonzaier, 2005; Shefer, 1999; Wood, 2001). Participant F5 is critical of the way in which men's sexual

activity is “expected” whereas women are “*supposed* to have one partner”. She challenges the sexual double standard discourse in which men’s promiscuity is framed as healthy, appropriate and positive, whereas women are framed as having bad reputations as ‘sluts’ if they were sexually experienced (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Jackson & Cram, 2003; Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer, 1999; Tolman et al., 2003).

Participant F5 illustrates these double standards by referring to an earlier part of the discussion about sex videos made by students in residences. She questioned why it would be considered wrong if a woman felt comfortable and gave her consent to be filmed. The men in the group responded by saying that it was almost impossible that a woman would choose to be in a sex video and that “she will be punished, she will be seen as a slut, as a bitch, as a porn star” (M2). Male participants' shocked reactions reflect the 'sex is male' discourse identified by Shefer (1999), which posits that sex is a male-centred activity and women are usually positioned as passive sexual objects. In this discussion women are judged when they take up the role of the sexual subject. Similarly previous research has identified the social expectation that young women should be the passive recipients and not active initiators of sex so as to avoid being labelled promiscuous (Jackson & Cram, 2003; O’Sullivan et al., 2006; Sathiparsad, 2005; Wood et al., 2007). The terms ‘whore’ and ‘slut’ are used to denigrate women as impure and attack their lack of conformity to hegemonic femininity (Boonzaier & De La Rey, 2003). As a result, women’s sexual desire might often be silenced and made invisible (Pattman, 2005). However, resistance to sexual double standards implies that gender dynamics are not static, that women can construct positions alternate to being the passive object (Shefer et al., 2000; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). Furthermore, cheating was identified as a form of abuse in dating relationships: “But like at university... its emotional abuse if a guy, um, I dunno, he cheats” (F5, Mixed, group 1). While men’s infidelity in heterosexual

relationships is often naturalised, women in this study further resisted male-centred discourses by being critical of men's assumed right to many sexual partners. However, women might abide by these double standards because of the normative prescriptions for women to uphold fidelity and fear punishment (Shefer et al., 2000). The following extract reveals the way that pressure on women to appear sexually conservative limits their behaviour:

F6: You know I am a girl, right, and I'm scared of dating many guys to be known as a person who is dating many guys and if you abuse me, I will stay in that relationship to secure my reputation.
(Mixed, group 1).

So great is the fear of women to be labelled as promiscuous that participant F6 would rather remain in an abusive relationship than risk her reputation. The Madonna-whore dichotomy positions women who are chaste as sexually pure Madonna's and those who are not as sexually impure whores (Macdonald, 1995 as cited in Boonzaier & De La Rey, 2003). This polarised definition is used to regulate women's adherence to traditional femininity through the threat of stigmatisation and loss of relationship (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Shefer, 1999). When a woman is accused of promiscuity or infidelity her subjectivity is attacked and her sense of herself as a moral person is degraded (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). Therefore gendered power imbalances are sustained through the surveillance of young women's sexuality (Chung, 2005; Pattman, 2005).

In summary, the discourse of men's sexual entitlement offers men the subject position as authorised to access their girlfriend's bodies for sex. Participants spoke openly about men's sexual entitlement and use of subtle coercive practices to control access to their girlfriend's bodies and ignore their wishes, though they did not construct such practices as a violation but as girlfriend's compulsory fulfilment of boyfriend's sexual needs. In this discourse women

were expected to be sexually available for their boyfriends because of the gendered construction of men's sexual needs. For this reason, sexual abuse and rape within relationships was often not acknowledged in participants talk. While the successful performance of masculinity was constructed as being sexually dominant and having many sexual partners, the successful performance of femininity was constructed as being passive sexual objects and upholding fidelity. However, the discourse of men's sexual entitlement was challenged in the talk of women as they critiqued the sexual double standard. This discourse has obvious implications for the increased spread of HIV/AIDS. Because victims of IPV are disempowered in terms of sexual agency, they are placed at increased risk of pregnancy, STD and HIV/AIDS infection (Jewkes et al., 2010). Men's power, as well as IPV more generally, was legitimised through explanatory discourses. The third related discourse in this section, explanatory discourses on IPV, will be presented next.

4.2.2 Explanatory Discourses on IPV

Shefer and colleagues (2000) identified explanatory discourses on male power in students' talk on negotiation within heterosexual relationships. These discourses were popular ways of normalising and legitimising male power and male sexual behaviour in participants' intimate relationships (Shefer et al., 2000). In the current study, the two main explanatory discourses on IPV spontaneously voiced by participants were socialisation and the influence of cultural norms. In the following extract, being abusive is framed as a result of socialisation:

M1: Some people abuse, not because it's a position that they make, it's because of like how they were raised and stuff, and as a result they might be insecure, and for them to protect themselves they act in ways that end up hurting like the next party. (Mixed, group 5).

The speaker frames abusive people as damaged by their childhood, which “makes” them “end up” being abusive. Ultimately a person’s upbringing is constructed as directly and inevitably predicting their violent behaviour (Harris et al., 1995). While research supports theories of socialisation, explanatory discourses bring the use of such theories in certain instances into question. Experiencing or witnessing violence in one’s social environment, especially in a child’s family of origin, has been identified as a factor associated with being abusive towards one’s intimate partner later in life (Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman, & Laubsher, 2004; Foshee, Bauman, & Linder, 1999; Jewkes, 2002). While social learning can be seen as a contributing factor, experiencing or witnessing violence does not *necessarily* predict future perpetration (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Arguing that abusive behaviour is the fixed and unavoidable result of socialisation can be interpreted as a justification for woman abuse and indicates participants’ resistance to change in the traditional gender order (Boonzaier, 2006; Harris et al., 1995; McDonnell et al., 2010; O’Neill, 1998; Shefer et al., 2000; Totten, 2003; van Niekerk, 2010). The instrumental use of the explanatory discourse of socialisation is demonstrated in the following two extracts:

M4: I grew up in a very abusive home...So like I grew up with that mentality that ...the only way to solve problems...is through violence...I remember...I think it was back in high school, like I had this girlfriend and, ja, we had an argument and stuff and, ja, I remember like hitting her and like felt bad...
(Men, group 4).

M2: Ja. I slapped her [his girlfriend] []

F5: (gasps and then laughs) Okay...

M1: [] First of all I think we need to ask ourselves, what leads a person to beat another one physically?

(Mixed, group 1).

Both of these male participants draw attention to explanations for abusiveness just before or after incidences of physical abuse against a girlfriend in the past was revealed. The

timing of the use of this explanatory discourse suggested that there may have been justificatory benefits to focusing on explanations for men's abusiveness. Similarly to the violent men in van Niekerk's (2010) study, participant M4 constructs himself as a powerless object that is the victim of intergenerational violence and in so doing deflects attention away from his own volition and guilt. By drawing on explanatory discourses, group members' shock or outrage might be minimised, and sympathy or leniency towards the perpetrator is garnered. As a result apathy and resistance towards challenging the notion of inter-generational transmission of violence is facilitated and male participants might feel more comfortable to discuss stories of perpetration. Explanatory discourses are also used by female participants:

F4: Ja, maybe it is a stupid decision [abusing a girlfriend], but you have to look at the way that the structures that we've talked about and the norms that we speak about being raised under. They do not have a proper upbringing.
(Mixed, group 5).

F5: I think there are a lot of factors that, you know, *makes* a person to be abusive. For instance, my ex-boyfriend the guy who was abusing me, uh, he grew up with an abusive father (M2: Ja, ja) who was beating up his mother... that *made* him to, you know. I think there's a lot of factors that go into it and background is the most important because it builds a person hey?
(Mixed, group 1).

In the above extracts, perpetrators are portrayed as passive objects who lack agency over the influence of the "structures", "norms" and upbringing which "builds" or "make[s]" people abusive. By using the explanatory discourse of socialisation to make sense of her abusive ex-boyfriend's behaviour participant F5 is able to distance him from the label of 'abuser' so that she, in turn, can distance herself from the label of 'victim'. Similarly, in previous research, young women constructed male dominance and violence in dating relationships as a result of socialisation and projected a positive identity onto abusive partners

so that they did not reflect negatively on their own identity (Izugbara et al., 2008; Jackson, 2001; Marais, 2009). Furthermore, finding explanations for men's abusive behaviour can enable young women to gain a level of control (Kristiansen & Giuletti, 1990 as cited in Jackson, 2001). Participant M2 enthusiastically agrees with this explanation, perhaps because it deflects attention from men's implication, and might make him feel more comfortable as a man in this mixed group discussion. In addition to the reference to socialisation through parental figures, participants identified peers as influencing men to become perpetrators of IPV:

M2: Uh boys...influence each other to, you know, "You have to beat your girlfriend. [] You have to do this to your girl...you're not man enough [] You should beat her...if she wears a short skirt she will go with another guy, you should beat her, beat, beat her..."
(Mixed, group, 1).

Participant M2'S repetition of the words "beat her" is mimetic of the intensity and continuance of the peer pressure experienced and this chant, coupled with the insistent words "you *have* to" and "you *should*", suggests that resistance to the commands of peers is futile and that this influence cannot be overcome (Harris et al., 1995). Peer encouragement to be violent is consistent with earlier talk of the young man's public violence as a performance of hegemonic masculinity. While being part of a peer group that supports woman abuse and witnessing violence amongst peers has been associated with the perpetration of dating violence (Schad, Szwedlo, Antonishak, Hare, & Allen, 2007; Swart et al., 2002; Valls et al., 2008), it is not inevitable. By framing themselves as objects acted upon by external pressure, participants legitimise IPV and normalise the actions of perpetrators (Shefer et al., 2000; van Niekerk, 2010). In the next quotation, men's violence against women is explained as a result of the influence of the media:

M4: I don't, I'm totally against...beating up woman and stuff. Like but I was going to say like I also think the media influences the way us guys think. Like, just look at the music videos...You know, like women, you see women as objects....
(Men group, 4).

The speaker uses a classic disclaimer to position himself as a critic of woman abuse but goes on to explain that the media is a powerful socialising force regulating gender interactions. He positions "us guys" as automatically and passively adopting the media's construction of women as objects. Despite presenting himself in disagreement with patriarchal constructions of women, explanatory discourses are used to legitimate men's adherence thereto and men's resistance to the influence of negative role-models is not considered (Shefer et al., 2000). Some participants, mainly women, were aware of how explanatory discourses were being used by men to justify male domination and challenged such discourses. In the following extracts female participants respond to male participant's use of explanatory discourses:

M7: If you like see your parents abusing each other. Probably the same will be instilled in you.

F5: But not always...
(Mixed, group 1).

F5: It's not an excuse. Your upbringing isn't an excuse, it doesn't justify it. Someone, I mean a lot of people who have been brought up in situations that aren't you know, like the best of conditions and they can either- like I think you have a choice...
(Mixed, group 5).

These female participants challenge the notion that the inter-generational transmission of violence is fixed, inevitable, and irreversible. In the second extract, participant F5 argues that despite their upbringings, men are not justified in their abuse because they have choice and agency to resist repeating the pattern of violence in their relationships.

Closely related to the explanatory discourse of socialisation is the construction of

men's abusiveness as prescribed through cultural norms, which has also been used by participants in previous research to support the explanatory discourse of male power and violence (Shefer et al., 2000). Culture and race intersect in the following explanations of male dominance:

M3: I also think when it comes to physical abuse especially in blacks, for instance, if a girl disobeys you, your friends or someone will say "uyakuqhela la mtwana" {Xhosa expression meaning "that child is taking you for granted, being overly familiar or disrespecting you"} she's fooling you around...beat her up so you can show her who's boss here.
(Mixed, group 5).

M1: Okay maybe you do...things differently besides with us 'cause you know like black people we believe in something else...Ja, cultures and stuff...we always saying like men are the head and then like women agree.
(Men, group 4).

Cultural norms are constructed as factual, taken-for-granted and entrenched realities to which people are obligated to subscribe (Harris et al., 1995; Shefer et al., 2000). In the first extract, participant M3 uses a Xhosa expression to capture the social and cultural pressure to maintain men's traditional position of authority and this is specified to exist "especially in blacks". In so doing he might be attempting to justify physical abuse as part of his culture. Similarly, in previous research, cultural norms have been used to explain and justify male domination over women (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Shefer et al., 2000; van Niekerk, 2010). In the second extract, participant M1 resists change in the traditional gender order by referring to black people's subscription to a different cultural norm. He emphasises a black group identity in this men's focus group by using the pronouns "us" and "we", which emphasises the white race of "you" group facilitators. Perhaps participants might have assumed that the white women facilitators had a feminist standpoint and felt the need to defend or justify their ways of thinking through this cultural explanatory discourse in order to

avoid feeling judged.

Shefer and colleagues (2000) argue that the emergence of a discourse of culture in the South African context is not surprising because culture has been racialised through apartheid. Similarly, in European Union policy discourse as violence against women is predominantly framed as a problem found in other cultures and this can lead to the othering and stigmatisation of already marginalised cultural and racial groups (Montoya & Agustin, 2011). This stigmatisation might become internalised as black participants argued: “I mean, in terms of demographics I think Africans are more abusive...: An African girl she will say she wants to date a white guy, compared to a black guy” (M2, Mixed, group 1). Explanatory discourses of culture are also problematic because they contribute to a deterministic and ethnocentric understanding of both violence against women and culture (Montoya & Agustin, 2011). In other words, participants’ construction of some cultures as more patriarchal and violent than others is problematic because, from a postmodern perspective, ‘culture’ itself is fluid and constantly changing and cultural groupings or cultural practices are not seamless, ahistorical and unitary (Gray et al., 2007; Shefer, 1999). Furthermore, by emphasising cultural elements, the gendered and pervasive nature of violence against women is de-emphasised. Cultural norms as well as socialisation were used by participants to explain why women do not exit abusive relationships:

F5: But like guys it’s not that easy [to leave an abusive boyfriend]. You know even like your experience at home. I mean maybe your dad whatever whatever but then you see your mother is staying (inaudible). So you just feel like if a guy cheats it’s fine it can be resolved [] Because your mother, in African cultures when you get married they tell you-“uyabekezela” {Xhosa traditional saying meaning you can’t give up so easily} You don’t give up.

F3: Ja! []

F5: And you don’t you...

F3: You stay.

(Mixed, group 1).

Participant F5 defends women who remain in abusive relationships by emphasising socialisation (“your experience at home”) and Xhosa cultural teachings discouraging women to exit abusive relationships. Cultural norms are constructed as commanding powerful obedience, demonstrated by women’s abidance to them: “you stay”. IPV is a site of cultural struggle made more complex by a history of colonialism and apartheid (Ahmed, 1993as cited in James, 1998). Long and Zietkiewicz (2006) found that female black university students felt a schism between the patriarchal discourses at home and the liberal discourses of gender equality associated with the university. Such students may live with the tension of wanting to be a perfect university student but, at the same time, a perfect cultural member (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). Through the use of explanatory discourses of culture, women’s agency to leave abusive relationships is diminished and this might encourage apathy. Although minimal, there was resistance to the use of cultural norms to explain and support IPV. It was particularly encouraging that this challenge came from a male participant:

M2: I think maybe like different people, different cultures you know, ja, that also plays a role in how you know in how you, ja it might happen...but you know just because, you know, I might be from somewhere [] ...whether you like it or not that’s abuse here, it’s wrong man, don’t do that.
(Men, group 4).

Although the speaker seems to maintain that culture “plays a role” in IPV and that the acceptability of IPV is culturally relative, he goes on to challenge other participants not to use culture as an excuse to perpetrate violence against women but rather to accept that it is wrong in the UCT context.

In summary, participants drew on explanatory discourses on IPV through constructing the impact of the external influential forces of socialisation and cultural norms as fixed, inevitable and irreversible causes of IPV. By positioning perpetrators and victims as objects

acted upon by external factors, such as their upbringing, peers, the media, and culture, this allowed participants to normalise and legitimise men's abusiveness and women's tolerance thereof in dating relationships. Explanatory discourses are problematic because men's agency in perpetrating and women's agency to leave abusive relationships is diminished and this encourages apathy and resistance to change in the traditional gender order. In addition, they contribute to a deterministic understanding of violence against women and culture and increase the stigmatisation of certain cultures and races (Montoya & Agustin, 2011).

Ultimately explanatory discourses are problematic because obfuscate men's responsibility for their abusiveness and encourage leniency towards the perpetrator. Significantly, explanatory discourses were challenged mainly by women, who emphasised men's ability to resist repeating the pattern of violence in their relationships. In contrast to the subject positions of authority and entitlement made available to men with the support of explanatory discourses, the main subject positions made available to women in students' talk was ones of responsibility. In the final section the discourse of women's responsibility, and thereafter the discourse of love and violence, will be explored.

4.3 The Discourse of Women's Responsibility

The discourse of women's responsibility has been identified in South African AIDS studies in which women were constructed as more responsible caregivers than men generally and in terms of condom usage (Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998).

Similarly, in Shefer and colleagues' (2000) study of students' talk on heterosexual negotiation, participants constructed women as responsible, caring, and nurturing, whereas men were constructed as irresponsible and driven by ego needs. In the current study, girlfriends were positioned as ultimately responsible for the relationship and for managing

their boyfriend's abusive behaviour through the discourse of women's responsibility. In the following extracts women were framed as responsible for causing IPV in dating relationships and, in turn, as responsible for changing themselves in order to prevent or stop abuse in their dating relationships:

M5: But like women are more abused in figures. So we should invest more time in trying to change, um, women's perceptions and behaviour like in relationships, than focusing on men.

(Men, group 4).

F1: He doesn't see anything wrong with it. It's just a way for him to vent.

F4: But I mean, in the relationship, once you're in the abusive relationship, but obviously we cut out the abuser because the abuser doesn't know that or maybe the abuser might know it's wrong [] but they still go and, I don't know how to put this, just still don't like, they know it's wrong (F1: Ja) but they're not really doing anything to like change it because you're like "I'm gonna change" and then you do the same thing...

F1: It's like a cycle.

F4: It's a cycle. Unless you decide that you want help.

(Women, group 6).

In the first extract, women are constructed as the partner with problematic behaviours and perceptions, which participant M5 causally links to the high figures of woman abuse. Participant M5 suggests that attention should be focused on changing women's perceptions and behaviour in dating relationships as opposed to men's. This reflects popular thinking about dating violence, in that the victim is inherently blamed (Geiger, Fischer, & Eshet, 2004; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). In the second extract, the discourse of women's responsibility is further illustrated as participant F4 places responsibility on the abused women to cease their abuse by attempting to change their boyfriend's behaviour or seeking help. Participant F4 constructs the notion that "we cut out the abuser" as obvious when talking about solutions, and the possibility of men changing their own behaviour is not considered. The onus is not placed on men because they are positioned as largely ignorant, unaware or indifferent to how

“wrong” IPV is. Similarly, male ignorance in relation to AIDS and condom usage, and inflexibility in their attitudes towards women and sex were used as reasons for their lack of responsibility for it (Hoosen & Collins, 2004). Men might be indifferent to changing their abusive behaviour because of the benefits of ‘respect’ and control it affords them (Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer et al., 2000). Another possible explanation is that they could be positioned as less emotionally invested in the relationship and as poorer communicators than their girlfriends (Chung, 2005; Shefer, 1999). The following quotation illustrates how the discourse of women’s responsibility leads women to blame themselves:

F3: You always blame yourself in a way. Like okay if I don’t ask him a lot of questions maybe it will be fine, or he’ll stop beating me, or we’ll stop having arguments. So in some way you see that this person is abusing you, yes, but you think that if you change that certain thing, then things will be okay.
(Women, group 6).

While the speaker described that women acknowledge their abuse in part, their overriding belief is said to be that the victim is to blame and, if further abuse is to be prevented, she must be the one to change. Similarly, previous studies showed that abused young women constructed themselves as responsible for their victimisation (Few & Rosen, 2005; Izugbara et al., 2008; Wood, 2001). Similarly to this study, women in previous studies blamed themselves by attributing the violence perpetrated against them to their inaction, or actions that challenged notions of ‘proper’ femininity, such as talking back (Izugbara et al., 2008; Wood, 2001). The portrayal of girlfriends as partly or entirely responsible for IPV diminishes or removes boyfriends' responsibility for their abusive behaviour. By accepting some - or most - of the responsibility, abused women might be able to make sense of their relationships and justify their continuation in them (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). In the next extract, women were constructed as responsible for choosing an abusive partner in

the first place:

F4: No, like I think a lot of people feel like ashamed that they've actually gotten themselves involved in the situation. [] Like you feel stupid like you've made a wrong decision. (F3: Mmm mmm). [] 'Cause like you, I dunno the way I'd feel, I'd feel like stupid to say like I made this huge mistake I picked the wrong guy...it's difficult to explain to your friends.
(Women, group 2).

Women frame choosing the wrong guy as a “mistake” for which they are responsible because initiating a relationship with an abuser is constructed as a “wrong decision”, despite the fact that one cannot know in advance whether or not someone will be abusive. In this instance the real problem - the man's abusiveness - is ignored and the focus deflected to the woman's “mistake”. Similarly, previous research reveals that young women were expected to select non-abusive partners and were blamed if they chose violent boyfriends (Chung, 2005; Tolman et al., 2003). Participant F4 acknowledges that “it's difficult to explain to your friends” and avoidance of shame has been found to be one of the main reasons young women keep their abuse secret and remain in abusive relationships (Izugbara et al., 2008). In the following extract, women are positioned with the full responsibility of trying to fix the relationship through discussing it with their partner:

M1: Sometimes it might happen maybe you are fighting, but if maybe your partner takes initiative like to sit down so that you can discuss where things went wrong. Then I think you'll see okay then I think this person is the right one.
F3: But I would have to go and get help, seriously, I wouldn't just sit there...like counselling 'cause if they want to slap me it means there's some problem there
M1: Help, like...but we have to support him.
F3: Each other, exactly. []
M1: For those who are in relationships, they need to like speak to their [] partners.
F5: Men don't wanna talk.
M1: ...talk about their issues.
(Mixed, group 1).

Although participant M1 began by using gender neutral terms, women are constructed

as the partner who should take the “initiative”, and therefore responsibility, to “sit down so you can discuss where things went wrong”. Participant M1 also suggested that it is the abused woman’s responsibility to “support him”. The expectation that it is a woman’s responsibility to support her partner is in line with Connell’s (1987 as cited in Jackson, 2001) discourses of emphasised femininity, which imply that women should be selfless and provide care, love and tenderness to assuage male hardness. The construction of women as responsible for understanding and comforting men and ensuring that the relationship remained healthy echoes constructions found amongst abused young women (Wood, 2001). However, participant F3 resists the discourse of women’s responsibility by asserting that the couple should support “each other”, and that the responsibility for working at the relationship should fall on both “partners”.

The above extract illustrates the tension women face with being responsible for managing the abusive relationship in the face of men's resistance to their efforts. When participant M1 suggested that women “need to” speak to their partners about their issues, participant F5 pointed out that “men don’t wanna talk”. This highlights the paradox of the expectation that women should talk through issues with men in the face of their unwillingness to listen and engage. An emphasis on communication was identified in a local study and is underpinned by the assumption that men and women have equal power in negotiations (Shefer, 1999). However, the discourse of women’s responsibility is in direct contradiction to the discourse of men’s authority and power (Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Shefer, 1999). It is difficult for women to fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them through this discourse because of their disempowered position in patriarchal society (Hoosen & Collins, 2004). If they have tried everything else, women are also framed as being responsible for ending the abusive relationship:

F5: It's not okay for us...to be forced to sleep with a guy...

M7: If you feel forced [to have sex], like why don't you like, okay I don't wanna say get away as well, but why don't you end the relationship?

(Mixed, group 1).

The above extract shows how the focus of the group is deflected from men's responsibility for being abusive, to women's responsibility to end the relationship. When participant F5 brought up the unacceptability of women being "forced to sleep with a guy", participant M7 challenged her as to why she had not left the relationship. Chung (2005) notes that equality should not be distorted to mean individual women's choice to remain in or leave an abusive relationship. Through this discourse, participant M7 avoided engaging in a discussion about how men's use of sexual coercion and rape in relationship is wrong and needs to change. Similar thinking is demonstrated by young women in a New Zealand study, whose explanations for dating violence focused on why women remained in violent relationships and failed to address men's responsibility and motivations for their violence (Chung, 2005). Participant M7 indicated that a woman's well-being is her own responsibility and, in correlation with previous research, expected women to disallow mistreatment (Tolman et al., 2003). He positioned women who choose to remain, as choosing to tolerate the abuse. Thus through this discourse women were held responsible and even blamed for their own oppression while men were absolved from any responsibility for it (Chung, 2005; Harris et al., 1995). Another study found that violence was seen as normal and unavoidable in romantic relationships, and it was constructed as a woman's duty to accept the abuse and remain in the relationship (Wood, 2001).

When participant M7 positioned women as free to choose to leave a relationship he draws on the discourse of individualism, in which people are expected to use their agency to make choices freely under all circumstances (Burns, 2000; Chung, 2005; Rich, 1996 as cited

in Tolman et al., 2003). By placing responsibility on women at an acontextual individual level, people were precluded from seeing how dating violence is a social problem rooted in gender inequality (Wiklund et al., 2010). In another discussion group, abusive men were described as “those kind of guys [who] don't wanna be left... *they're* the ones who end the relationship” (M1, Mixed, group 5). In this context, the discourse of women's responsibility is paradoxical because ending the relationship is directly impeded by their abusive partners. Furthermore, being in a heterosexual relationship is seen as central to a woman's social identity and this makes women's decision to leave abusive relationships complex (Burns, 2000; Rich, 1996 as cited in Tolman et al., 2003). Because women in the current study were constructed as responsible for the success or failure of a relationship, this might have fed into the have/hold discourse:

F5: I had a boyfriend for five years [] Um, basically it was an abusive relationship... I didn't wanna leave the relationship...I'm still not over him y'know, and my friends are doing well in their relationships so it's kind of like I'm a failure, and stuff like that. (Mixed, group 1).

Notice how this woman participant took on the identity as a failure because she could not “do well” in her endeavour to make the abusive relationship work, as opposed to designating her ex-boyfriend as the failure for sabotaging the relationship by abusing her. Participant F5 experienced difficulty leaving the relationship; perhaps because leaving would mean that she could not fulfil the responsibility of maintaining a successful relationship. Hollway's (1989; 1984) have/hold discourse posits that it is imperative for women to have a male partner because this is central to a woman's identity. Across studies, young women spoke about the social pressure to be in a relationship and take up the identity of 'girlfriend', irrespective of whether it is a satisfactory relationship, and single women were likely to experience personal inadequacy (Chung, 2005; Marais, 2009; Shefer, 1999; Wood, 2001).

Because maintaining a successful relationship is constructed as women's responsibility and is central to women's social identity, it might lead abused women to justify continuation in the relationship by accepting responsibility for her abuse. However, the following extract demonstrated young women's resistance to the discourse of women's responsibility and the have/hold discourse:

F5: I think at this age, if someone hits you and you're in a relationship- and I mean I'm 21- I would just be like I'm sorry- well first of all I'd hit them back 'cause I'm kind of violent- (F1 and F7 laugh) but I would be like... "you have no right to treat me this way, I'm not married to you, I'm not in need of needing someone to be with,"...If someone does that you need to be able to, you know, walk away or go report them or whatever...

M2: No but like in theory it's all nice and rosy eh, (male agreement)...

F7: Ja, for you yes (laughter).

F5: ...At my age, I don't see the point of being in a relationship with someone who doesn't care about me, someone who doesn't take care of me, and like I don't need to hold on to someone who's going to hit me. For what reason? I'm not a dying old maid there's no need for me to be- I can't be like "I'm gonna be alone for the rest of my life", I'm starting my life and to stay with someone who'd abuse me at this age that would make me feel so useless.

M2: But the fact that you're failing to appreciate here is that in these relationships right, it's not like you're being hit all the time.

F7: What!? (Incredulous).

(Mixed, group 5).

Participant F5 challenged the notion of traditional femininity which entails the responsibility to maintain a successful relationship. First, she suggested that violence is used in self-defence. However, because women's use of violence against an intimate partner, whether in self-defence or retaliation, is disallowed by the cultural prescriptions for women, she labelled herself as "violent" (Dasgupta, 2002). Previous research shows that submission and silence is framed as the appropriate response to sexual violence (Wood et al., 1998). This disapproval of women's violence is evident in the literature as young adults' were found to believe a violent girl "deserves no respect" (Sathiparsad, 2005, p. 84). Second, it is significant that participant F5 constructed age as the main motivator for young women to exit

abuse relationships and report their partners because as someone just “starting [her] life”, she does not “need someone to be with”. However, by resisting the applicability of the have/hold discourse to the identities of younger women she reinforces it by positioning “dying old maid[s]” and married women as perhaps more likely to remain in abusive relationships in order to avoid “being alone”. Last, it is also significant that participant F7 responded to men's challenges to resistance by blatantly calling participant M2 out on how abusive relationships are “nice and rosy” for men and by openly voicing her disapproval to his attempt to convince her of the sense in remaining in an abusive relationship. This resistance shows that some young women do not subscribe to the discourse of women's responsibility to manage an abusive man's behaviour and maintain a successful relationship.

Through the discourse of women's responsibility, women were positioned as responsible for choosing a non-abusive partner, causing the abuse, stopping the abuse through personal change, attempting to change the man's abusive behaviour, working on and maintaining a successful relationship, and lastly, ending the relationship. Through the discourse of women's responsibility, men were positioned as justified in continuing to be ignorant, complacent and not taking responsibility or action regarding their abusiveness, while women are blamed (Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). This discourse is problematic because it might make it hard for IPV to be acknowledged and addressed, it reinforces essentialist and patriarchal gender subjectivities, and it might cause women to experience guilt and stigma as a result of being blamed for their victimisation. The discourse of women's responsibility is reinforced in the media. In their analysis of teen magazines as educational texts on dating abuse, Kettrey and Emery (2010) found that victims are portrayed naïve and often blamed for choosing the wrong boyfriend and placing herself at risk, instead of blaming the male perpetrator. Furthermore, the checklists that are included in teen magazines to encourage girls

to be savvy might lead young female readers to believe that they are responsible for preventing dating violence (Kettrey & Emery, 2010). Furthermore, women's responsibility has been reinforced through responses to woman abuse in previous research that targets women only and expect women to adapt their behaviours. For example, a common response to the threat of rape on university campuses was to advise women not to go out after dark or to dress differently (Weedon, 1987). While the blame of women was increased through the discourse of women's responsibility, it was somewhat diminished through participants talk on love and violence which opened up the subject position for women as powerless to the effects of love.

4.3.1 The Discourse of Love and Violence

Through the discourse of love and violence the abusive acts of a boyfriend - and a girlfriend's acceptance thereof - were framed as expressions of love. Research shows that violence is often linked to notions of love and influences how young people make meaning of their experiences in romantic relationships (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Chung, 2005; Jackson, 2001; Sathiparsad, 2005; Shefer et al., 2000; Swart et al., 2002; Wood, 2001; Wood et al., 2008, 1998). In the following extract violence was constructed as a sign of love:

F1: I knew like the girl in the res that I stayed in...and her boyfriend used to beat her up almost every week []

F6: That was how my mother was shown love, like that is how our family was raised, for, so for me, beating you up might be my way of loving you. []

F4: Yeah, but I think the understanding part, like I said, afterwards you only realise what abuse is, in terms of the like "I love you, I love him"...

F1: But every week? Like when is it gonna sink in, when he removes like five teeth? (Women, group 6).

Beating is constructed as "my way of loving you". Participant F6 also drew on the

explanatory discourse of socialisation, explored earlier, to support this construction.

Participant F4 positions love as a lens affecting one's viewpoint in saying that only once the relationship is over do you "realise what abuse is". Young women might draw on discourses of romantic love in order to divert attention away from male control and power (Chung, 2005, 2007). The re-interpretation of painful experiences in a self-affirming and positive way may enable abused women to believe that they are in fact loved (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Borochowitz & Eisikovits, 2002). If violence is concealed as love, it follows that it is unnecessary for women to defend themselves against these expressions of love, enabling women to accept, justify and tolerate abuse (Coates & Wade, 2007; Shefer, 1999). Participant F1 challenges women's interpretation of violence as a benign way for men to show their love by suggesting that the longer they do so, the greater the danger of increasingly violent attacks. Abuse might be seen as an expression of love because it was constructed as an indication that the perpetrator is serious about the relationship:

M5: Okay I have these girlfriends and these are my straight girlfriends and they ahead of the other girlfriends and stuff. [] Let's say I cheat on my straight girlfriend, the one I love, (inaudible) and show that I'm so sorry. But if it's the other one I'll be like okay fine you cheating, I'm also cheating, I know I have someone, so I don't care, so I just walk away, type of thing. 'Cause I don't wanna beat you, I don't wanna be violent with you.
(Men, group 4).

If a man's "other" girlfriend cheats on him then he will not beat her because he doesn't "care" and he will simply end the relationship. By implication he *would* care if his "straight girlfriend" cheated: he would beat her because she is "the one I love" and this might be a sign that he wants the relationship to continue. Similarly, interviews with young people in a township in the Eastern Cape revealed that it was common for young men to have multiple concurrent sexual partners and that they were only concerned with controlling and

disciplining their main sexual partner (Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Being physically abused by one's boyfriend is often interpreted as a sign of love, commitment, emotional investment, depth of feeling, and care (Wood et al., 1998, 1996). In the following quotation, participant F2 speaks about the importance of being loved in the UCT context in spite of abuse:

F2: More especially at UCT, you tend to not have friends that you can really kind of rely on. Your boyfriend is normally your friend, so this person is the person you always cry to, you always talk to, you know, it's this one person that you know. [] You'll be in love and everything but he'll keep on doing the abuse thing, beating you up or doing whatever they do. And the advice from friends, like, okay I can take it, but the thing is at the end I'm gonna feel abandoned, I'm gonna feel being isolated or left out []. So it kind of comes as a disguise that this person is everything I need...even though they do this.
(Women, group 6).

In the above extract, a boyfriend is positioned as someone to rely and deeply depend upon for companionship, support and help. Doubt is not cast onto the love of an abusive boyfriend, but abuse is constructed as occurring at the same time as love ["You'll be in love and everything but he'll keep on doing the abuse thing"]. Therefore love, and the associated support and companionship, is not nullified by the presence of abuse and participant F2 constructs this fulfilment of needs as creating dependence in spite of abuse. Jackson (2001) noted that the romantic narrative is problematic because of the dependency it invokes and for this reason an abusive boyfriend may be constructed as better than no boyfriend at all. Chung (2005) pointed out that dating relationships were characterised by the intimate sharing of confidences which make individuals potentially vulnerable to their partner. Students living in residences at UCT are described as particularly vulnerable to relying solely on a boyfriend and tolerating IPV, perhaps because they are isolated from the social support they may have had from friends and family in their hometowns. Significantly, intimate relationships have been identified as the main context in which young adults' identity work takes place (Marais,

2009). At this crucial stage of social and personal development, young women are at risk of becoming consumed by, and isolated in, potentially abusive relationships, affecting how they construct their sense of self. Young women's identities are affirmed by being loved therefore dependency on a boyfriend is all the more likely (Jackson, 2001). The quotation above illustrates the importance of having support from an external source in order to guard against complete dependence and isolation, and increased risk of IPV. Some resistance is shown to discourse of love and violence as participant F2 casts doubt onto whether an abusive boyfriend really is “everything I need” by framing this thinking as a “disguise”. In the following extract, a male participant constructs love as a powerful force which acts to mask abuse:

M8: But what she knows about her boyfriend, what he does, I mean if you had to choose who to love and who to fall for, I mean she could have left him long ago, but now she can't leave him because she loves him, he's everything to, to her, though she knows that all the things that he does are bad.
(Men, group 3).

Love was constructed as a mask of abuse as it makes the victim believe “he’s everything to her”. Falling in love was framed as an uncontrollable process as one cannot “choose who to love”. By minimising women's freedom in the area of love, their agency in leaving the relationship was diminished or even precluded as she “*can't* leave him because she loves him”. Through the discourse of love and violence women took up the position as object acted upon by the subject of love. It is interesting that participants focused exclusively on the effects of love on women. While love was constructed as making women accepting of men’s faults, it was not constructed as having the same effect on men, who were framed as indicating their love through violence to punish or discipline. The double standards within the discourse of love have been recognised in previous research but were not noticed by

participants in the current study (Wood et al., 1996). The notion that love is not a choice was contested by participant M9 in men's group 3 who argued that people should "choose who they love, period". However, the rest of the group did not accept this construction of love as a realistic possibility. In the following two extracts love was described as a reason to overlook violence:

F1: I know of a friend of mine that was being emotionally abused...But the excuse was that she loved the guy and that sometimes they're happy. So she was always riding on the happy thoughts and neglecting that most of the time she's not happy []
F4: But like she said you rely on the happy times, you kind of push it or you suppress it. Like yes that guy's bad but the fact that I love him, we do have like our happy moments...
(Women, group 6).

F7: I'd rather be on my own actually [] Being in a relationship where somebody is actually gonna persuade me indirectly to do things which are not- which are against my choices... It's just wrong for me
M2: But the thing is you won't see it coming, eh. [] You know love is very powerful. []
M1: Sometimes when you in love, like they say, you don't really rationalise as much as... 'cause like it's not as much as about you know your standards and stuff because you get to that point where you know you feel like you'll do anything for this person and ...the feeling is so great and it feels amazing []
F4: But ja, even if you are emotionally and physically abused, if you love the person, sometimes maybe love blinds people.
(Mixed, group 5).

In these extracts, love is constructed as a "powerful" "great" "amazing" and unexpected force which "blinds" abused women, causing them to "suppress" the bad times and selectively remember the good times. In previous research with abused young women, love has been constructed as blinding, violent incidents were framed as unusual in contrast to the ordinary rhythms of the relationship, and women maintained that despite the problems in the relationship, the good outweighs the bad and love can conquer all (Jackson, 2001; Wood, 2001). Participant F1 resists the discourse of love and violence by framing her friend's love for her boyfriend as an "excuse" that enabled her to remain in an emotionally abusive

relationship. According to psychodynamic theory, repression is a defence mechanism used as a way of coping with anxieties by pushing a threat out of awareness (Hoosen & Collins, 2004). Therefore, in one sense, the discourse of love can be a resource that helps women cope by making sense of their abuse in a way that allows them to avoid labelling themselves as victims and their boyfriends as perpetrators (Jackson, 2001). In another sense, the passivity of romance narratives can function as a trap for women in abusive relationships and make the problem of IPV invisible (Jackson, 2001). The discourse of love and violence was also substantially drawn upon by male participants who might have been interested in using it for the latter.

In the second extract, a male participant (M2) challenged a female participant's (F7) assertion that it is wrong to be in a relationship in which a boyfriend coerces you into do things "which are against my choices", by arguing that women tend to get into, and remain in, abusive dating relationships because they are powerless to the effects of love. By speaking of notions of romantic love, participant M1 discouraged participant F7's resistance. Male participants' familiarity with the discourse of love and violence could indicate that men might draw on notions of love to surreptitiously encourage women to overlook their coercion or violence in order to get women to "do anything". Similarly, in previous research discourses of romantic love were have been identified as a means for men to coerce women into acquiescing to have sex by insinuating that if she loved him she would agree to it (Chung, 2005; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood et al., 1996). Because love is associated with romance and freedom, as opposed to power, the power dynamics within romantic love are often ignored (Langford, 1996). In another instance, a male participant drew on the discourse of romantic love to assert that women should demonstrate their true love by enduring abusive relationships because "love is stronger than pain". It is unsurprising

that some participants explained that women might become convinced that “if you really love the person, no matter how much they beat you up, you will still want to go back to them” (F4, mixed, group 5).

Some participants were critical of the way that men use the discourse of love and violence and framed it as emotionally abusive:

M2: The thing is that person will make you; you'll be so in love that it'll get to a point whereby it feels like you are the one who's at fault.

F5: Ja, I know that, I think physical abuse and emotional abuse are the same.

M2: Sorry?

F5: I think when someone is physically abusive to someone they're also emotionally abusive with like “baby I love you, you know you need me” and then, you know-

M2: Ja. So you feel like you're the one at fault. So that's why you, it happens but you don't see it happening.

F5: I think the women who feel like that is stupid

F7: Ja, thank you very much.

(Mixed, group 5).

When participant M2 draws on the discourse of love and violence as an explanation as to why women remain in abusive relationships, participant F5 challenges the validity of this discourse as an explanation for women's behaviour, and reframes men's instrumental use of this discourse to manipulate women into remaining with them as emotionally abusive. This resistance is significant because it challenges men's use of the discourse of love in the group setting as well as in relationships. Furthermore, women who subscribe to the discourse of love are constructed by these female participants as “stupid”. In so doing they also draw on the discourse of women's responsibility by blaming women for their own victimisation. The discourse of love and violence also positions the man as rational and the woman as emotional and thus epitomizes gender differences (Jackson, 1999). The positioning of women who interpret abuse as an indicator of love as unintelligent, irrational and weak might be the reason that women might feel conflicted about drawing on this discourse:

M1: Now why do you remain?

F3: But there are girls, do you know that there are girls who actually believe that if your boyfriend beats you up it means that he loves you? (F6: Yeah, that he loves you)... Like, really?

(Mixed, group 1).

It might be beneficial for participant F3 to draw on discourse of love and violence in order to defend women's toleration of abuse and diminish the blame of victims (Jackson, 2001). Subscribing to notions of romantic love might be a way in which women deal with feelings of guilt related to the discourse of women's responsibility in which women are often held responsible for choosing a non-abusive partner and leaving the relationship. However, while women participants draw on this discourse they simultaneously distance themselves from women who think in this way by referring to other "girls" and using the words "actually" and "like, really?" perhaps because this discourse positions women as irrational. This can be interpreted as a sign of resistance to discourse of love and violence.

By drawing on discourse of love and violence, participants were able to position women as vulnerable, emotional, desperate and irrational people who are unable to resist the power of love. In contrast, men were positioned as rational and largely unaffected by love. Therefore traditional patriarchal gender subjectivities were reinforced through this discourse, which is also readily available in romantic fiction and magazines to which young women are exposed from a young age. On the one hand, some feminists argue that the construction of women as powerless enables women to make sense of their abuse without labelling themselves as victims and their boyfriends as perpetrators, justify the tolerance of their boyfriend's behaviour, and diminish their guilt or self-blame (Jackson, 2001). On the other hand, the discourse of love and violence can make the problem of IPV invisible, and can serve as a trap for women in abusive relationships (Jackson, 2001). It was significant that

men in this study drew on discourse of love and violence frequently and mostly in mixed groups, where it could be used instrumentally to discourage women from resisting men's abuse and to encourage them to remain in abusive relationships. Ultimately, through constructing men's abusiveness –and women's acceptance thereof- as an expression of love, this discourse enabled men to treat women as they please under the guise of love.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter analysed and discussed three main discourses that UCT students drew upon in peer-group discussions: the discourses of othering, men's authority and women's responsibility. Discourses related to these main discourses were presented, namely the discourse of women as abusive, the discourse of men's sexual entitlement, explanatory discourses on IPV, and the discourse of love and violence. Participants positioned themselves in relation to these discourses in multiple and contradictory ways (Shefer, 1999). Both men and women simultaneously obfuscated and demonstrated the existence of IPV in dating relationships at UCT through the discourses they drew on. Despite participants' overall lack of acknowledgement of their implication as potential perpetrators and victims, they performed traditional masculinity and femininity and supported traditional gender power relations. First the discourse of othering and women as abusive showed how the perpetration of IPV was othered to the poor, the uneducated, and women in order to deflect attention away from the problem of IPV at UCT and men's abusiveness. Second, despite men being positioned as victims in relation to abusive women, the subject positions of authority and sexual entitlement over women were made available to men with the support of explanatory discourses. Third, in contrast to the more powerful subject positions made available to men, the main subject position made available to women in students' talk was one of

responsibility. While the blame of women was increased through the discourse of women's responsibility, it was somewhat diminished through participants talk on love and violence which opened up the subject position for women as powerless to the effects of love and also constructed abuse as an indicator of love. Significant resistance to each of the discourses was highlighted throughout the analysis. The following concluding chapter is a summary of the findings of this study and their implications, along with an exposition of recommendations for addressing the issue of IPV in dating relationships at UCT and in the broader South African context.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Effectively, this study has answered the research question: What discourses do UCT students collectively draw upon in peer-group discussions about dating violence? Discourses have been identified that enable students to talk about IPV as an issue irrelevant to UCT students and men, as a normal, acceptable and inevitable part of men's authoritative and sexually-entitled behaviour in dating relationships, and as women's responsibility tied up in constructions of love. This chapter will speak to this study's second research question: What implications do these discourses have for the ways in which dating violence is understood and addressed in the university context? Firstly, the discourses that participants drew upon will be summarised. Secondly, the methodological, implications of this study will be presented. Thirdly, the theoretical contributions and practical implications of this study will be expounded. Fourth, the limitations of the study and, finally, recommendations for future research will be expounded.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section will summarise the discourses that UCT residence students drew upon during peer group discussions according to three main sections, namely the discourse of othering, men's authority and women's responsibility.

5.1.1 The Discourse of Othering

The *discourse of othering* illustrated the way that UCT students deflected attention away from their own risk and involvement in the problem of IPV by designating it to the poor

and the uneducated. Despite numerous examples of severe cases of IPV given during each of the focus groups, UCT was positioned as a place where IPV is not a common or serious problem. In addition to the othering of IPV along the lines of socioeconomic status and education, IPV was othered along the lines of gender. The *discourse of women as abusive* was drawn upon predominantly by men, where it was used instrumentally to deflect attention away from men as abusers by othering abusiveness to women. Through this discourse men positioned women not as the object, but as the subject: dangerous perpetrators of violence who manipulatively misuse the female-sympathetic legal system to sabotage men, and who unnecessarily ruin the life of the abuser through reporting. This discourse allowed men to dismiss and detract attention from woman abuse, obfuscate their potential role in it, construct women's empowerment as absurd, and to discourage women from reporting their abusive boyfriends. Despite being positioned as victims in relation to abusive women, men were also positioned as having authority over women.

5.1.2 The Discourse of Men's Authority

Through the *discourse of men's authority* hegemonic gender roles were entrenched as men were positioned as authoritative, superior, dominant and powerful in relation to women, who were positioned as men's property who need to be corrected and forced into submission. This discourse allowed participants to justify men's violence, dominance and control over their girlfriends as an acceptable means of defending, enacting, constituting and maintaining their authority, especially when it is attacked or threatened through women's empowerment. In addition to participants' construction of men as authoritative, they were constructed as sexually entitled. The *discourse of men's sexual entitlement* enabled participants to normalise

and legitimise sexual coercion and violence in the context of dating relationships as this behaviour was constructed as women's compulsory fulfilment of men's sexual needs. This discourse positioned girlfriends as sexually available and, as a result, the existence of sexual abuse and rape within relationships was often denied in participants' talk, concealing the need for legal intervention. Furthermore this discourse resulted in pressure for men to be sexually dominant and experienced and for women to be passive sexually inexperienced objects.

Explanatory discourses on IPV were used to normalise and justify men's abusiveness and women's victimisation in dating relationships as the inevitable, direct, fixed and irreversible result of external influential forces, namely socialisation and cultural norms. As a result, young people's agency and responsibility for their actions were minimised. However, responsibility was ultimately designated to women through the following *discourse of women's responsibility*.

5.1.3 The Discourse of Women's Responsibility

The *discourse of women's responsibility* was used to position women as ultimately responsible for managing her boyfriend's abusive behaviour. This discourse is problematic because attention is deflected from men's responsibility for being abusive and men are positioned as justified in continuing to be ignorant, complacent and deny responsibility for their abuse. Furthermore, women are inherently blamed for their own victimisation and as a result it might be difficult for IPV to be acknowledged. The acknowledgement of IPV was also hindered through the *discourse of love and violence* because men's violence against their girlfriends was justified as loving. Patriarchal gender subjectivities were reinforced through this discourse as women were positioned as vulnerable, emotional, desperate and irrational individuals who interpret violence as an indicator of love, as opposed to men who were

positioned as rational and unaffected by love. While this meant that women were blamed for their irrationality and continued victimisation, the blaming of women was simultaneously diminished through the construction of women as powerless to resist the influence of love.

This study's findings draw attention to problematic ways of making meaning of gender and IPV in dating relationships. In response, the implications of these findings and recommendations for addressing related issues in the South African context will be outlined. In the following section, the methodological implications of this study are expounded.

5.2 Methodological Implications

I put forward that this study's most valuable methodological contribution was its demonstration of the usefulness, as well as the potential pitfalls, of focus group methodology.

First, focus groups were advantageous in that participants' co-constructions of meaning could be studied in the context of peer group discussions (Överlien, Aronsson, & Hydén, 2005; Wilkinson, 1998). In accordance with previous research, the dialogical nature of discourse, subjectivity and meaning was demonstrated through the focus group processes (Shefer et al., 2000). For instance, the negotiated construction of meaning was demonstrated in a mixed group discussion in which women initially demonstrated resistance to men's authority but were subsequently discouraged from resisting and reporting men's violence. This temporary dissolving of women's resistance was achieved dialogically as men carried increased empathy for perpetrators through the discourses of love and violence and women as abusive. The effect of male participants' emotive and persuasive sentences on women's way of making meaning of IPV in focus groups might give us insight into how boyfriends coerce and dominate their girlfriends in dating relationships (Shefer et al., 2000). Because focus groups are relatively anonymous, one could speculate that men's more private coercion

and domination of their girlfriends is more volatile and complex (Shefer et al., 2000). Another example of the value of researching group interaction was the opportunity to observe demonstrations of enacted peer pressure to be sexually coercive and dominant over one's girlfriend in order to perform successful masculinity in the context of men's discussion groups. These findings show how focus group methodology was useful for observing participants' interaction and gaining insights into the way in which IPV in dating relationships is understood collectively by young adults.

Second, in accordance with previous research, focus groups were useful for the discussion of the sensitive and high-involvement topic of IPV (Överlien et al., 2005). The group setting seemed to enhance the disclosure of opinions because agreement amongst those with similar experiences and struggles created a supportive environment (Frith, 2000; Hoosen & Collins, 2004; Överlien et al., 2005). This study also found that men and women seemed to feel less inhibited to share personal information when they shared a common gender with group members (Frith, 2000). However, this study contradicts previous research because the finding that focus groups provide a supportive environment was only relevant in single-sex groups and or minimally demonstrated in same sex interactions in mixed focus groups. It is also significant that participants' resistance to dominant discourses were more frequently expressed in single-sex as opposed to mixed sex focus groups and more so in women's groups than men's groups. For these reasons, I suggest that *single-sex* focus groups might be preferable for the discussion of sensitive and high-involvement topics, such as IPV. In future, researchers should make use of single sex focus groups in instances in which they wish to offer a supportive space in which story sharing, encouragement and challenging can take place. Participants' story sharing was beneficial for challenging notions that people's experiences of abuse are individual. Hoosen and Collins (2004) found that the containment,

solidarity as well as the challenges from other members offered in the focus group assisted in attenuating denial. Indeed the solidarity offered by single-sex groups in this study seemed to provide a context that gave rise to challenges to the identified dominant discourses. Because of the importance that young adults in this study placed on peer opinions and reputation, providing spaces for challenges to dominant discourses on IPV to emerge from peers is an invaluable resource and opportunity of potential change for both men and women.

On the one hand, mixed groups were incredibly useful for observing the dynamics and negotiations between men and women, as mentioned earlier. On the other hand, mixed focus groups provided a context, which exposed women to men's justifications for IPV, men's direct and counterproductive challenges, and men's undermining, diffusing and silencing of women's resistance to dominant discourses. This suggests that mixed focus groups might be a less useful space for challenging dominant discourses than single sex groups, especially when there are inequalities between group members. Furthermore, this suggests that the mixed group research context might allow for potentially harmful interactions to occur, particularly if not handled sensitively. For this reason, I suggest that mixed focus groups should be run with caution and that facilitators should be trained to handle mixed group dynamics sensitively and appropriately before conducting them. I would also like to emphasise the importance of a thorough debriefing to be conducted at the end of each focus group, as was done in the current study.

While debriefing was adequate, on reflection I ended the mixed groups feeling guilty that I had missed several opportune moments for drawing attention to the group dynamics and discourses, which were oppressive to women during focus groups. Among the reasons that I did not seize these opportunities were: 1) prioritising the collection of controversial and valuable data, 2) not wanting to come across as judgemental, hence I was inclined to

encourage participants' use of patriarchal discourses through my nods of agreement and 3) my lack of courage to step outside of what I perceived as normal research practice. I was concerned that my selfish desire to gain rich data played a role in my encouraging and non-judgemental body language and that I was somehow complicit in reinforcing dominant patriarchal discourses as a result. Overall, I was left with the feeling that I had intervened in young people's lives by drawing their attention to the topic of IPV but also exposed participants to other participants' dominant patriarchal discourses without intervening in any meaningful way to challenge them. The literature attests to the benefits of using focus group methodology because the researcher can purposefully take a back seat in the discussion and let participants direct the conversation so that the balance of power between the participants and the researcher is shifted toward the participants (Wilkinson, 1999). However, I suggest that future research could be more effective if researcher's use a data collection strategy that incorporates an intervention and advocacy component that is instrumental in raising consciousness of oppressive gender power relations (Gray et al., 2007). This means that it might be helpful for focus group facilitators to be more involved in challenging gender power dynamics and discourses as they arise during the focus group in a more participatory, immediate and transparent way.

5.3 Broad Contributions and Practical Implications

This study has contributed towards research on dating abuse in various ways. On a broad level, this study has begun to address the gap in the literature by producing knowledge about IPV in the young adult population specific to the South African context. More specifically this study has provided insight into young adults' perspectives through identifying discourses that students collectively draw upon in peer-group discussions.

Discourses enable the subject to act or be in the world (Willig, 2001). Everyday ways of speaking about intimate relationships and gender, made available in broader society, facilitate and encourage young people's understanding of IPV as acceptable and ultimately enable them to "do" IPV. In order to begin to address the issue of IPV, these discourses, which facilitate and enable abuse were examined, so that students' ways of making meaning of IPV could be better understood.

Overall, this study has shown how dominant discourses relating to IPV in dating relationships and gender power inequity, which are part of our daily lives, are central to the performance of IPV in that they encourage male violence and dominance and women's victimisation and passivity. Effective ways of addressing IPV in dating relationships can be developed by taking into account the dominant discourses young adults draw upon and attempting to disrupt and challenge them where necessary. Contradictions in relation to these dominant discourses offer the potential for change (Shefer et al., 2000). The fact that discourses which challenge dominant definitions of masculinity and femininity, are at least in circulation means that they have the potential to offer the discursive space for individuals to resist dominant subject positions and can have a positive social effect (Weedon, 1987). The following five practical suggestions for effective ways of addressing the problem of IPV in dating relationships will be informed by the ways in which participants' resisted dominant discourses.

First, this study's use of focus groups amongst young adult peers captured the importance of peer interactional for the way in which young people collectively make meaning of IPV and gender power dynamics through discourse. Discussions occurred amongst peers with minimal interference from the researcher and this was an indication of young adults' eagerness to talk and that they had their own agendas around dating violence.

This shows that research as well as interventions using focus group discussions amongst peers provides a valuable opportunity to encourage young adults' talk on the topic. While the influence of peers was often framed and demonstrated as negative in focus groups, there were instances in which fellow participants challenged or encouraged others in their groups and, ultimately, this study has shown how student's ways of making meaning were significantly influenced by interaction with one another. For this reason, peer-led interventions might be an effective means of addressing IPV in the student population at UCT. More generally speaking, peers could be educated about the helpful impact they could have on others' lives by talking to their friends about IPV. Similarly to the findings of Marais (2009), participants in this study framed IPV as something not usually spoken about and young adults need to be equipped to speak up in a supportive and insightful way, particularly to friends in abusive relationships.

Second, in response to the finding that the discourses participants' drew upon enabled them to obfuscate and repress the existence of IPV in the UCT context, facilitators of interventions should be made aware of the discursive strategies students' employ to do so. Campaigns need to address the defence mechanisms used by students to repress or minimise the threat of IPV because they are likely to impede behavioural changes even when knowledge is adequate (Perkel, 1992). The issue of IPV should be acknowledged through the creation of awareness of the risk of IPV in the student population on campus. Awareness about IPV in dating relationships could be created through educational interventions incorporated into the university curriculum, posters on campus, and more informal spaces for the discussion of IPV, such as discussion groups run by residence masters. In addition to educational programmes on campus, online social media can be used as an effective and immediate platform for creating awareness as well as challenging dominant discourses.

Participants' construction of IPV as a minor or non-issue amongst the educated, as well as their construction of emotional abuse as an acceptable means of girlfriend domination, might be indicative of the limitations of IPV education programmes in terms of outreach and effectiveness. Educational efforts need to avoid merely communicating to students that IPV is socially unacceptable and instead challenge the heart of the matter of all forms of abuse, which I posit is gender power inequity.

Third, this study found that the reporting of abusive dating partners was constructed as unnecessary and abusive, especially because perpetrators in the university context might have their future's threatened by expulsion. For this reason, reporting (as well as help seeking in general) should be promoted amongst students as a positive and necessary step. It was encouraging that women participants resisted the discourse of women as abusive by 1) by refocusing attention on the harm that has been inflicted on them through their victimisation and 2) by arguing that reporting is not comparable to the reciprocation of abuse but a means of self-protection and seeking justice. During debriefing, participants indicated that they were unaware of the services available and questioned why they were not better advertised on campus. Students' lack of awareness of the support structures and services available strongly suggest that student help facilities - such as the Discrimination and Harassment Office (DISCHO), counselling services at Student Health, and Residence Life at UCT – need to be better advertised to both men and women students as accessible and confidential in order to serve students' needs more effectively.

Fourth, given that IPV was discussed as an inevitable outcome of the influence of socialisation, cultural norms and the power of love in this study, I suggest that educational interventions should emphasise both men and women's agency to resist such influences. As some participants did, interventions need to directly challenge the use of explanatory

discourses to justify IPV. In particular, there needs to be an emphasis on culture as a constantly shifting ideological framework, in order to create an openness to change and challenge the blame of any particular culture for the problem of IPV (Gray et al., 2007).

In addition, young people's agency specifically in the area of love should be emphasised. Because love is associated with romance and freedom, as opposed to power, the power dynamics within romantic love are often ignored (Langford, 1996). The findings of this study showed how some participants were critically aware of the power dynamics involved in love. They resisted men's use of the discourse of love and violence as a means of coercing women to tolerate this abuse by positioning this as emotionally abusive and they also resisted women's use of this discourse to justify remaining in an abusive relationship as an invalid excuse. It is important that programmes draw attention to the to the power dynamics of 'love' in relationships and aim to bring about vital changes in gender relations through an emphasis on agency.

Fifth, and finally, participants drew particular attention to the vulnerability of students living in residences at UCT to becoming solely reliant on a boyfriend and tolerating dating abuse in the absence of social support, which they may have had from friends and family in their hometowns. Significantly, intimate relationships have been identified as the main context in which young adults' identity work takes place (Marais, 2009). At this crucial stage of social and personal development, young people are at risk of becoming consumed by, and isolated in, potentially abusive relationships, affecting how they construct their sense of self (Marais, 2009). For this reason, interventions should emphasise the importance of having support from sources outside a dating relationship. Opportunities should be created for residence students in particular to develop a supportive community in order to guard against complete dependence and isolation in dating relationships. Increased support could perhaps

be made available from existing resources, such as health care workers at Student Health, DISCHO, residence supervisors, counsellors working at Residence Life, as well as peers.

This section has looked at the theoretical and practical implications of this study's findings. Particular attention has been paid to the way that participants' resistance to these discourses can be amplified and inform interventions. In order to be effective, interventions need to incorporate the way in which young adults talk, think and make meaning of gender, sexuality and IPV by reproducing and also challenging dominant discourses. The next section will speak to the limitations of the study and corresponding opportunities for future research.

5.4 Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The review of the literature emphasised the shortage of research on dating violence, specifically from the perspective of young adults in the South Africa context. More qualitative research on the way that young adults make meaning of IPV in dating relationships is needed.

This study was limited in that participants only attended one hour-long focus group and participant's feedback on the findings of the study was not obtained. Future research might yield richer data if groups attended more than one focus group discussion so that greater rapport can be developed between each participant, the researcher and other participants. Furthermore, I suggest that in the second focus group participants are given the opportunity to listen to selected extracts from the first focus group and critically discuss the observations of the researcher. Yardley (2008) lists participant feedback is an important criterion for validating qualitative research. Hence, gaining feedback from participants on preliminary aspects of the analysis would be very useful for researchers, as they could clarify the validity of their findings and minimise confusions misinterpretations (Kvale, 1996;

Yardley, 2008). This would also allow for a more collaborative approach to research, which is in line with feminist research, as participants can offer their own ideas and evaluations of the research and this helps give priority to participants' voices and the minimise the power imbalance between the researcher and researched (Gergen, 2001). A second focus group would also be useful because at the end of each focus group participants wanted to say more and this process would allow them to do so. Furthermore, if I could run this study again I would use the opportunity to ask participants to reflect on how they experienced their participation in discussions facilitated by me in order to enrich insights into reflexivity. In addition, this process might assist them to think about the way that they speak and engage critically with their own constructions.

Another limitation of this study, albeit unavoidable, is the way in which my subjectivity impacted on the research process and findings, as discussed in the methodology section on reflexivity. My assistant and myself were both females and this influenced the dynamic of the groups. I would recommend that future research investigates the varied discourses that would be elicited, reproduced and challenged when two male facilitators or male and female facilitator work together. Furthermore, both of the facilitators were white English speakers and it would be interesting to see how the study would be affected if the research was undertaken by black or 'coloured' Xhosa speaking facilitators who spoke isiXhosa or Afrikaans and had a similar culture to the majority of participants.

The sample in this study consisted of volunteers who did not know each other and this might have influenced the way in which they performed their subjectivities during data collection. Future research might undertake observation of more naturalistic groups of friends, through getting groups of friends to sign up together or observing existing online

communities. It might also have been useful to find out the reasons that participants volunteered for this study and how this informed what they chose to speak about.

The current study had a limited focus on abuse in heterosexual dating relationships and did not explore constructions of violence that occurs in homosexual dating relationships. The homosexual population is under-researched in the dating violence literature and this has implications for their access to services (Jackson, 1999). For this reason, it is imperative that future research focus on IPV amongst homosexual dating couples.

Finally, this study highlighted participants' resistance to the dominant discourses identified in young adults' talk on IPV in dating relationships; however, it did not specifically focus on progressive or alternative discourses. There is a paucity of research in South Africa focusing on discourses and subjectivities, which resist dominant discourses of IPV, gender and sexuality. A further and deeper exploration of progressive and contradictory discourses might be a useful focus for future research as this could point to further opportunities for potential change (Shefer et al., 2000). It would also be useful to find in which instances and contexts progressive discourses displace patriarchal discourses successfully (Harris et al., 1995). If space is allowed for the amplification of resistant voices, these might be used to destabilise and challenge dominant discourses and combat IPV in dating relationships.

5.5 Concluding Words

In closing, this study has provided insight into young adults' perspectives and how they understand IPV in dating relationships. Discourses have been identified that enable students to talk about IPV as an issue irrelevant to UCT students and men, as a normal, acceptable and inevitable part of men's authoritative and sexually-entitled behaviour in dating relationships, and as women's responsibility tied up in constructions of love. Through these

discourses, students simultaneously obfuscated and demonstrated the existence of IPV in the UCT context. This study has shown how dominant discourses relating to IPV and gender power inequity, which are part of our daily lives, are central to the performance of IPV in that they encourage male violence and dominance and women's victimisation and passivity. Effective ways of addressing IPV in dating relationships can be developed by taking into account the dominant discourses young adults draw upon and attempting to disrupt and challenge them. While this thesis might leave the reader feeling overwhelmed by the problem of IPV in dating relationships, it has also presented opportunities for change in gender power relations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Advertisement

**Come and join a small-group discussion and
share your views on**

**ABUSE IN DATING
RELATIONSHIPS**



ALL RESIDENCE STUDENTS WELCOME

WHEN: Thursday 17th May (men and women)

Friday 18th May (men and women)

Monday 21st May (women only)

Tuesday 22nd May (women only)

Thursday 24th May (men only)

Friday 25th May (men only)

TIME: 9:50-11:00

WHERE: Humanities Graduate Building, Room 4.21

SIGN UP BY EMAILING : datingresearch2@gmail.com

Appendix B: Demographics Summary Table

FG 1	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES*	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
1	M	21	Black	Krugersdorp	Forrest Hill	2 nd	B. Industrial & BSW	b	No	/	/	/
2	M	19	Black	Durban	Forrest Hill	1 st	B.Soc.Sci. industrial sociology	e	No	/	/	18
3	F	18	Black	/	Baxter	1 st	Bachelor Social work	c	Yes	8	Exciting, challenging & loving	8
5	F	22	Black	Johannesburg	Forrest Hill	1 st	/	b	Yes	1	Very nice & romantic	60
6	F	20	Black	Cape Town	Forrest Hill	1 st	B.Soc.	e	Yes	18	Fascinating, exciting	36
7	M	19	Black	Johannesburg	Leo Marquard	1 st	Quantitative Literacy	e	Unsure	/	Good	2
FG 2	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
1	F	21	White	LA, California USA	Forrest Hill	3 rd	Psychology	c	Yes	10	Committed	10
3	F	19	Black	Cape Town	Forrest Hill	2 nd	B.Sc. Occupational Therapy	c	No	/	/	10
4	F	18	White	Pietermaritzburg	Baxter	1 st	B.A. Fine Art	d	No	/	/	2
5	F	23	Black	Maseru, Lesotho	Forrest Hill	2 nd	B.Sc. Civil Engineering	c	Yes	3	Very fulfilling	48
FG 3	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
2	M	20	Other	Bulawayo	Forrest Hill	1 st	B.Soc.Sci.	e	No	/	/	/
4	M	26	Black	Mutare,Zimbabwe	Obz square	5 th	M.Sc. Computer Science	c	No	/	/	12
8	M	19	Black	Rustenburg	Smuts Hall	1 st	B.Sc. Chemical Engineering	c	No	/	/	/
9	M	21	Black	Bothaville, Free State	University House	3 rd	B.com. Accounting	b	No	/	/	9
FG 4	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
1	M	21	Black	Durban	Clarendon	3 rd	B.com. accounting	b	Yes	36	It is good	36
2	M	23	Black	Harare,Zimbabwe	Smuts Hall	2 nd	B.S.W.K	f	No	/	/	/
4	M	21	Black	Ladysmith	Obz Square	2 nd	B.Soc.Sci	f	Yes	10	Happy relationship	10
5	M	21	Black	Newcastle	Obz Square	2 nd	/	b	Yes	13	It's okay	13

FG 5	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
1	M	22	Black	Pretoria	Groote Schuur	3 rd	BCom Economics	c	Yes	8	Yes	8
2	M	22	Black	Kuruman	Groote Schuur	3 rd	B.com. economics & statistics	c	No	/	/	8
3	M	23	Black	Butterworth	Groote Schuur	3 rd	Org psych & P.P.A.	b	Yes	10	Unstable, insecure, due to long distance	10
4	F	24	Black	Manzini	Forrest Hill	4 th	B.Sc. Civil Engineering	c	Yes	84	On and off	84
5	F	21	Black	Zimbabwe	Gracamachel	2 nd	B.Soc.Sci Law	d	No	/	/	2
6	M	22	Black	Bloemfontein	Forrest Hill	1 st	Computer Science	c	Yes	6	Fun relaxed	6
7	F	22	Black	East London	Forrest Hill	2 nd	B.Sc. Construction Studies	c	Yes	60	Fun, it's interesting, we have a good understanding of one another	/
FG 6	Sex	Age	Race	Hometown	Res	Year	Degree	SES	Current Rel	Length in Months	Description of current relationship	Longest Rel
1	F	22	Coloured	Laaismith	Edwin Hart Annexe	4 th	Post Graduate Diploma specializing in marketing	c	No	/	/	18
2	F	23	Black	Cape Town	Unknown	3 rd	B.Sc.	c	No	/	/	26
3	F	23	Black	Queenstown	Unknown	3 rd	B.Sc. Human Physiology	b	Yes	41	Stable and fun	72
4	F	22	Coloured	East London	Forrest Hill	3 rd	B.Sc. Biochemistry, Microbiology	c	No	/	/	9
5	F	23	Black	Johannesburg	Forrest Hill	3 rd	B.Sc. Biochemistry	d	Yes	9	We are too much in love & it's more deeper	48
6	F	21	Black	Polokwane	Forrest Hill	3 rd	/	c	Yes	11	Content	11
<i>T=31</i>	<i>Mal es=15</i>	<i>Me an=21</i>	<i>B=26</i> <i>W=2</i> <i>C=2</i>		<i>Mode= Forrest Hill</i>	<i>1st=9</i> <i>2nd=8</i> <i>3rd=1</i> <i>1</i> <i>4th=2</i> <i>5th=1</i>	<i>Science/Business=17</i> <i>Humanities=12</i> <i>Unknown=2</i>	<i>a=0</i> <i>b=7</i> <i>c=15</i> <i>d=3</i> <i>e=4</i> <i>f=2</i>	<i>No=9</i> <i>Yes=9</i>			<i>Mean=18,5</i>
	<i>Fe mal es=16</i>		<i>Other =1</i>					<i>Mode =c</i>				

*Social Economic Status: a) Not enough money for basics like food and clothes b) Have money for food and clothes, but short on many other things c) We have most of the important things, but few luxury goods d) Some money for extra things such as going away for holidays and luxury goods e) Don't know f) No response

Appendix C: Questions for Focus Group Discussion

- 1) What does abuse in dating relationships mean to you?
- 2) How would you define that?
- 3) What are your views on abuse in dating relationships?
- 4) What is considered abusive?
- 5) How would you distinguish between a normal relationship and an abusive relationship?

Additional prompting questions:

- 1) Why do you say that?
- 2) Can you say that in different words?
- 3) What do others think?
- 4) Let's discuss that further.
- 5) You look as though you may disagree...

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dating Abuse in Young Adult Intimate Relationships

1. **Invitation and Purpose**

You are invited to take part in a research study about Dating Abuse. We are researchers from the Psychology department at the University of Cape Town.

2. **Procedures**

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in a focus group discussion. The questions will be about your views on dating abuse in general. It will take about 60 minutes and you may choose not to respond to any question you do not wish to answer.

3. **Discomforts & Inconveniences**

- The topic of dating abuse is sensitive and you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to discuss it. However, the questions asked will be very broad, you will not be expected to share personal information, you will not be obligated to participate in any part of the discussion that you do not wish to discuss and you are allowed to stop participating at any point without any negative consequences.
- You might be made aware of issues related to dating abuse in your own life through this discussion and referrals will be made to places at which you can get immediate help. If you were interested in this discussion because you have been a victim or perpetrator of dating abuse in any way, there is a 24-hour service helpline especially for UCT students who are sexual assault, rape and harassment victim/survivors (021 650 2222) or you could visit a trained Sexual Harassment advisor who can assist and support you with your complaints at the Discrimination and Harassment Office at the Cottage on Lovers Walk (021 650 3530).
- You might be influenced by the views of others regarding dating abuse and for this reason you will be given a debriefing pamphlet outlining the statistics and effects of dating abuse.
- You might be inconvenienced by having to give up an hour of your time.

4. **Benefits**

You are given an opportunity to share your views and experiences and your information will contribute to the larger purpose of understanding how students view dating abuse.

5. **Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Focus (discussion) groups will be conducted in a private room in the psychology department.
- Your contribution to the discussion will remain confidential to the researchers and you will be given a pseudonym at the beginning of the study.
- The researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard the recording of the focus group. It will be locked away in a secure cabinet to which only the researcher has the key and destroyed once the study is completed.
- Participants should be aware that they might know other people in the group but group members will be asked to keep what is said in the group within the group

6. **Money Matters**

We will offer you a R50 Steers voucher for participating in this study.

7. **Contact details**

- If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study or if you have signed up and wish to withdraw from the study please contact the researcher, Lauren Barkhuizen, on 0741582311 or datingresearch2@gmail.com.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or concerns about the research, you may talk to Dr Floretta Boonzaier at the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, 021 – 650 3429. Alternatively you could talk to Rosalind Adams, the secretary of the Research Ethics Committee at UCT, 021 – 650 3417.

8. **Signatures**

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

Investigator's Signature Date

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

Subject's Signature Date

By signing below I am giving my consent for the focus group discussion to be voice recorded.

Subject's Signature Date

Appendix E: Debriefing Pamphlet

DATING ABUSE

- Dating abuse includes physical (e.g. pushing, slapping, beating), sexual (e.g. unwanted sexual comments, unwanted touching, forced sex), economic (e.g. disposal or vandalising of property), emotional, psychological and verbal abuse (e.g. insults, name-calling, excessive jealousy and possessiveness, spreading rumours), as well as intimidation (e.g. threats to hurt), stalking (e.g. repeatedly following), harassment (e.g. loitering, repeatedly contacting), entering the home of the victim without permission, and any other abusive or controlling behaviour aimed at harming the victim⁹.

PREVALENCE

- **29% of university students** in an international sample reportedly physically assaulting a dating partner within a year¹⁰
- In South Africa studies show that **between 9.8.2% and 52.4%** of young people are involved in abusive dating relationships¹¹

EFFECTS

- Increased risk of **serious physical injury**¹²
- Increased risk of contracting **HIV and STDs**¹³
- Increased risk of **abusing alcohol and drugs**¹⁴
- Increased risk of **unhealthy patterns** of romantic relationships¹⁵
- **Psychological and emotional distress**, such as lowered self-esteem, negative body-image, loss of sexual pride, depression, anxiety, trauma and suicidal behaviours¹⁶

WHERE TO FIND HELP

DISCHO-*If you need advice, assistance or just a chat, do make contact with us...no case too small or 'unimportant'*

For immediate help call the 24-hour service especially for sexual assault, rape and harassment victim/survivors on (021) 650 2222 or speed dial 8519 from any UCT extension. Visit a trained Sexual Harassment advisor who can assist and support you with your complaints at the Discrimination and Harassment Office, which can be found at the 'The Cottage' on Lovers Walk in the big parking lot as you walk from Baxter Theatre to Bremner. Call: 021 650 3530.

Student Health

A counseling service is offered where students can have individual psychotherapy and get help at a negotiable rate of R100 a session. Call: (021) 650 10200 for an appointment.

⁹Ludsin&Vetten, 2005

¹⁰Wiklund et al., 2010

¹¹(Andersson et al., 2004; Flisher, Marais, Lombard, & Reddy, 2007; Mathews et al., 2009; Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002; Wong, Huang, DiGangi, Thompson, & Smith, 2008; Wubs et al., 2009)

¹²Whitaker, 2007

¹³Wood et al., 2008

¹⁴McDonnell et al., 2010

¹⁵Farrington, 1991

¹⁶Roberts et al., 2003 as cited in Spriggs et al., 2009; Wiklund et al., 2010