The construction of violent femininities at a university campus in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings of and exposure to gender violence.

By

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Declaration

I, Charnell Ruby Naidu (Student Number: 216077026) declare that:

i.   This research report, except where otherwise stated, is my original work.

ii.   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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v.   The work discussed in this dissertation was carried out in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2020 to 2022 under the supervision of Doctor B.M.Anderson (supervisor).

vi.   The Ethical Clearance No. HSSREC/ 00002102/2020 was granted before conducting the study.

Signed: ▮▮▮▮▮

Date: 02 December 2022

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people:

- My late parents for instilling in me the value of education

  <u>P</u> – **P**arents   **<u>H</u>** – **H**elp   **<u>D</u>** – **D**aughter

- My late brothers, gone too soon.

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You are always in my heart, I miss you all so much. I LOVE YOU, ALWAYS and FOREVER.

Declaration (Supervisor)

'As the candidate's supervisor I agree to the submission of this thesis'.

Signed ███████

Name   Dr Bronwynne Anderson

Date   2 December 2022

Abstract

This study explored university students' understandings [and perceptions] of as well as exposure to female gender violence at a university in KwaZulu-Natal. Using qualitative research, the study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. The rationale for this study is based on the under researched phenomenon of university female students' violence in all its forms. The study used purposive sampling and engaged in individual semi-structured open-ended interviews to generate data, with fifty-one purposively selected participants. Inductive and thematic analysis was used. The study used an eclectic theoretical approach which includes Judith Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity, Raewyn Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Michel Foucault's Post Structural Theory so as to provide a comprehensive and nuanced insight into this complex phenomenon. The main findings showed that students understood gender violence with both males and female students as perpetrators, but with females disproportionately the victims. The students' perceptions of female students' use of gender violence and the forms it took according to the data were variegated in that their perceptions were both similar and differed in many instances. The forms of violence they mentioned ranged from physical, sexual, verbal, emotional as well as the use of social media platforms to derogate and humiliate individuals. The findings also reveal that female students were perpetrators of violence against other males and females, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and homophobic violence. Their engagement in violence challenged the stereotypical feminine status of docility. The findings further reveal that female students engage in gender violence for a multiplicity of reasons that may or may not be provoked. The study also found that alcohol and drug use was rife on campus and this exacerbated female gender violence. Evidently, the females being referred to and the males who witnessed or experienced female perpetrated violence showed the subversion of power from male domination and female passivity. These findings provide evidence that female student violence at university is prevalent and this has implications for future research in this field as well as implications for policy and practices at Higher Education Institutions. These finding have implications for a more holistic and inclusive approach in terms of tackling gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

Okucoshelwe

Lolu phenyo belugxile olwazini abafundi besikhungo semfundo ephakeme abanalo, Kanye nendlela ababuka ngayo izinto ngokunjalo nezimo ababhekana nazo ezithinta udlame olubhekiswe kwabesifazane eNyuvesi KwaZulu-Natali. Kusetsheziswe uhlelo lokuqoqa ulwazi/locwaningo olubizwa (qualitative research) lapho kuba nokuxoxisana ngendlela evulelekile phakathi kwalowo oqoqa ulwazi nalabo abakhethile aqoqa kubo ulwazi, uphenyo lugxile olwazini oluphathelene nezimo ezithinta umlando othile, wesikhashana, othinta amasiko oloku uziphindaphinda ngendlela thize. Izizathu zalolu phenyo zigxile ocwaningweni olubukeka lungenzekanga ngendlela lapho kubhekwa izimo ezinhlobonhlobo zodlame lwabafundi besifazane enyuvesi. Uphenyo lusebenzise (purposive sampling) lapho lowo owenza uphenyo ezikhethele yena labo abangamashumi amahlanu nanye (51) abe nengxoxo evulelekile nabo ukuze athole lolu lwazi aludingayo. Kusetshenziswe lokhu esikubiza (Inductive and thematic analysis) lapho kuvezwa imbangela eholele kulesi simo esikhona nendlela lapho kucutshungulwa lolo lwazi oluqoqiwe ngenkathi kuxoxiswana. Uphenyo lusebenzise indlela yokwelapha ebizwa (eclectic theoretical approach) lapho abafundi bezochitha ingxenye yosuku bethola ukwelulekwa okwahlukahlukene kuvela kosolwazi okubalwa kubo uJudith Halberstam womnyango obhekelela labo besifazane abazithola sebebhekene nesimo semizwa yobulili besilisa nendlela abazibona bethatheka ngayo emiphakathini kubandakanya imisebenzi abayenzayo noma abathokozela ukuyenza, ngibale usolwazi uRaewyn Connell wezimo ezithinta amandla angokobulili noMichel Foucault okhuthaza indlela yokubuka umhlaba ngeso lokulwisana nalokho okumelene nendlela eyiqiniso okumele siphilisane ngayo singabantu emhlabeni. Iziphumo ezibalulekile zalolu phenyo zikhomba ukuthi abafundi bayaluqonda udlame lwangokobulili, ikakhulu lapho abafundi besifazane kuyibo abangabagqugquzeli balo. Imibono yabafundi ngalesi simo sodlame langokobulili nezindlela oluziveza ngayo ngokolwazi olucoshelwe / olutholakele ivela iyiphethini elinokwehlukahluka – ngalokho imibono yabo ibe nokufana yabuye yahluka ezikhathini eziningi. Lezi zindlela zodlame abazibalile ziqala odlameni ngokwamandla, okocansi, olwamazwi, okomoya kanye nokusetshenziswa kwezinkundla zokuxhumana ukudicilela phansi nokwehlisa isithunzi sabathile. Imiphumela yophenyo iphinde yaveza ukuthi abafundi besifazane bazibandakanya nodlame oluthinta abalingani babo bangaleso sikhathi kanye nalabo besikhathi esidlule ngokunjalo nodlame olubhekiswe kulabo

abathandana nobulili obufanayo. Ukuthinteka kwabo kulolu hlobo lodlame kuphazamise lokho abantu abakholelwa kuko mayelana nendlela owesifazane okulindeleke abe iyo ukuthobeka.

Iziphumo zocwaningo ziqhubeke zaveza ukuthi abafundi besifazane kulesi khungo bazibandakanya odlameni oluthinta izizathu ezahlukahlekene lokho okungavusa noma kungavusi uhlevana. Uphenyo luphinde lwaveza ukuthi uphuzo oludakayo nokusetshenziswa kwezidakamizwa kube nokusabalala esikhungweni, lokho okwenze isimo sodlame lobulili besifazane sadlebeleka. Ngokobufakazi abesifazane babekwe babangabahlukumezi abesilisa kwaba yibo abazithola bebhekene nodlame oluvela kwabesifazane okukhambise ukuphazamiseka emandleni okuba inhloko ngokunjalo nesimo lapho kubhekeke ukuthi owesifazane othobele owesilisa. Lezi ziphumo ziletha ubufakazi bokuthi udlame oluqhamuka kubafundi besifazane esikhungweni ludla lubi kube sekuba neziphakamiso zokwenza olunye ucwaningo esikhathini esizayo kuso lesi khungo neziphakamiso zokubhekwa kwemithetho nendlela okusetshenzwa phansi kwayo kuzo lezi zikhungo zemfundo ephakeme. Lezi ziphumo zalolu phenyo zibonise isidingo sokwenza indlela/izindlela zokulekelela bonke labo abadinga ukwalulekwa empilweni ukuze kulwiswane nesihlava sodlame oluthinta ubilili ezikhungweni zenfundo ephakeme (HEI).

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Glossary

AAU   -   Association of American Universities

CEDAW   -   Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

CSVR   -   Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

DHET   -   Department of Higher Education and Training

Erap   -   Emergency response action plan

EUC   -   European Union Commission

HEI   -   Higher Education Institutions

HRW   -   Human Rights Watch

IMC   -   Inter-Ministerial Committee

KPMG   -   Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler

LAN   -   Local Area Network

NICE   -   National Institute for Clinical Excellence

NSP   -   National Strategic Plan

NSP-GBVF   -   National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

NUS   -   National Union of Students

PSET   -   Post-School Education and Training System

RMS   -   Risk Management Services

SACE   -   South African Council of Educators

SAMRC   -   South African Medical Research Council

SAPS   -   South African Police Services

SIDA   -   Swedish International Development Agency

SRC   -   Students Representative Council

STATS SA   -   Statistics South Africa

SVTT   -   Sexual Violence Task Team

UKZN   -   University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNO / UN   -   United Nations Organization / United Nations

WHO   -   World Health Organization

SRC   -   Students Representative Council

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This thesis is titled:

"The construction of violent femininities at a university campus in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings of and exposure to gender violence."

This chapter provides the background and motivation of the study. The chapter also provides a brief literature review of gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) so as to provide relevance to and the backdrop of the study. I also provide a brief discussion on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study. In addition, the chapter highlights the aims, objectives and critical research questions that guide the study. The geographical context of the study is also briefly discussed. The chapter also provides a concise description of the research design and methodology as well as a short discussion of the rationale for using these research methods. There is also a discussion on the ethical considerations. The chapter finally concludes with an overview of each chapter of the thesis.

1.2. Background and Motivation

Despite progressive steps to end the scourge of gender violence, it continues to be a global challenge that transcends race, culture, gender, status and sexual orientation (Davids, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; European Union Commission (EUC), 2012). Global attempts to eradicate gender violence are reflected in the international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women and is also enshrined in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing (UN, 2012; 1993). This global scourge is a human rights violation that violates constitutionally entrenched rights for all (WHO, 2013).

Since gender violence is a global problem, governments, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and agencies have all put measures in place to strengthen both the implementation of legal and policy frameworks as well as their multi-sectoral services, programmes and responses in order to address and prevent this violation of human rights (NSP-GBVF, 2020; SIDA, 2015; WHO, 2013; UN, 2012). Despite these efforts and interventions, gender violence remains pervasive. Besides the detrimental social and public health

consequences of gender violence (Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka & Loxton, 2019; Kilpatrick, 2007), it also negatively impacts the economy. The estimated economic cost for gender violence runs into billions (KPMG, 2014; World Bank Group, 2014; WHO, 2013). These economic costs can be directly attributed in terms of the governments' health, medical and legal support services or indirectly in terms of the loss of income and tax revenue as well as the states' costs for the protection of the victims and the incarceration of the offenders (CSVR, 2016; KPMG, 2014; Abrahams, Mathews, Martin, Lombard & Jewkes, 2013).

As the incidents of gender violence escalate, South Africa has been dubbed one of the most dangerous countries in the world for females (NSP-GBVF, 2020; Wilkinson, 2017; CSVR, 2016; Vetten, 2014). As early as 2010 South Africa's scourge of violence has placed it in the position of being dubbed the 'rape capital' of the world (Human Rights Watch, (HRW), 2010). According to the South African Police Services' crime statistics (SAPS) for the first quarter of the 2021/2022 financial year, there were 12702 sexual offences (rape, sexual assault, attempted and contact sexual offences); 10818 of these offences included rape (STATS SA, 2022). The South African police minister, Bheki Cele, stated that this was an increase of 74,1% when compared to the same period last year (STATS SA, 2022). In July 2022, eight females were repeatedly gang-raped while filming a music video in Krugersdorp (Njilo, 2022). In June 2022, a grandmother, her daughter and granddaughter, were allegedly raped and bludgeoned to death in KwaZulu-Natal (Mkhize, 2022). In terms of global rankings, South Africa is ranked very high as femicide, rape, IPV and interpersonal violence continue to plague the country (NSP-GBVF, 2020; Matzopoulos, Abrahams, Bowman, Shai, Prinsloo, Salau, Bradshaw & Gray, 2019; Wilkinson, 2017; Vetten, 2014). While local and international efforts largely focus on ending gender violence against women and girls, it is important to note that men and boys have also been cited as victims of GBV, with females being identified as the perpetrators of violence (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018). It is for this reason that I have chosen to use the definition of gender (based) violence that appears in the United States Strategy document for gender violence globally: *"violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life."* (UNO, 2012). This definition is inclusive of all genders (normative and non-normative). This definition is inclusive and does not portray only males as perpetrators of gender violence and acknowledges the ways in which individuals' diverse sexual identities do

not exempt them from being victims. This study turns to female student violence against males, other females, as well as non-normative genders. Both Connell (2005; 1995) and Bhana (2014) posit that all violence is gendered simply because it occurs between males and females, females and males and same-sex orientated individuals. Connell's theory of masculinity (2005; 1995) is inextricably linked to gender power relations and this provides a lens to understand that the dominant discourse is predicted on the view that violence is perpetrated on the basis of gender, and perpetrated predominantly by males. According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is the key driver of gender-based violence that is legitimised by gendered practices and unequal power relations. However, according to Morojele (2009) and Bhana (2008) females can also be agents of gender violence which is the premise of this study, which will be illustrated in the analysis chapters.

The COVID-19 pandemic also placed enormous economic and psycho-social pressure on females and other vulnerable groups (Maphosa, 2022). Their vulnerable status has been exacerbated by the fact that during the level five lockdown, they remained confined to their homes with the abusers. The surge in the rates of gender violence is of great concern as many victims have limited access to social security and emergency services. According to media reports, the South African Police Services (SAPS) received 2320 complaints of gender violence in the first week of lockdown (Ryan, 2020, p1). These statistics represent a 37% weekly average increase from 2019 (Ryan, 2020, p1). COVID-19 exacerbated an already alarmingly high prevalence of gender violence in South Africa (Maphosa, 2022; Ryan, 2020, p. 1). While the focus of this study is female violence, it is important to pay attention to the predominance of male violence so as to provide possible understanding of female violence, which could be the results of provocation, retaliation, or perhaps females exercising their agency through the use of violence. As the evidence shows, there are also aspects of female masculinity as theorised by Judith Halberstam.

Despite the South African government's commitment to eradicating the scourge of gender violence that threatens constitutional right to freedom from bodily harm (NSP-GBVF, 2020), the violence persists. Post-apartheid, gender violence has received major attention in terms of government policy. The National Strategic Plan (NSP) is a South African government and civil society's multi-sectoral strategic framework to address gender violence at multiple levels (NSP-GBVF, 2020). Several government departments, which include six ministers, formed the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) have been tasked with building the capacity of government

to respond to this national calamity with a budget of R1.6 billion allocated to end this curse (NSP-GBVF, 2020). In order to galvanise this plan, the South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, approved amendments to three Bills in an attempt to strengthen and assist the criminal justice system as well as promote accountability throughout the state (Ndenze, 2022). According to a media report (Shoba, 2021), the success of the NSP remains to be seen, with the negative impact of COVID-19, the slow pace of policy implementation and missed targets set out in the Emergency Response Action Plan (Erap), the rates of gender violence continues to escalate.

While male-perpetrated gender violence largely receives great media coverage, this is not always the case with female-perpetrated violence (Meade, 2015; Chermak & Chapman, 2007). There have been a few highlighted cases in mainstream media and these include a female teenager allegedly stabbing her boyfriend to death (Ngcobo, 2022, p.2); a female allegedly shooting her male partner outside a court (McCain, 2021); a wife allegedly stabbing her husband to death (Singh, 2022); two females, one of whom is a former policewoman, allegedly arranging murder hits on their family (Maphanga, 2022, p.3;Bhengu,2021) and another female who allegedly killed two of her boyfriends and her son (Mahlokwane, 2020). These are a few incidents. However, the scarcity of media attention in respect of female-on-male violence suggests that it could be as a result of the non-reporting or under-reporting of female-on-male violence due to males being embarrassed about reporting being victims of females. Recently, there has been a media report of a female student at the university of Fort Hare who allegedly stabbed her male student partner to death (Kassen, 2020). This incident occurring at a university highlights the issue of female university students as perpetrators of gender violence, which has received scant attention compared to the plethora of literature and media coverage of male student gender violence.

Gender violence at higher education institutions (HEI) is a global phenomenon and it very often reflects a violent society as students converge from diverse backgrounds (Finchilescu & Duguard, 2018) that tolerates, normalises and sometimes justifies gender violence against females and those who identify with femininity as well as non-normative genders (Davids, 2020; Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015). Research shows that gender violence at HEIs manifests in all forms and this includes physical, verbal, psychological, emotional, economic and sexual assault and rape (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Treffrey-Goatley, de Lange, Moletsane, Mkhize & Masinga, 2018; Krebs, Lindquist,

Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Planty, Langton & Stroop, 2016; Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Thomas & Bruce, 2015). Recognising that gender violence is a threat to the prevailing educational ethos as well as a threat to the safety, security and well-being of all individuals connected to the institution, university authorities around the world have recently put measures in place to stem the rising tide (Davids, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Wamboldt, Khan, Mellins & Hirsch, 2018; AAU, 2017; Sexual Violence Task Force (SVTT), 2016) but the success of these measures has not been publicised.

Gender violence at South African universities has reached endemic proportions (Davids, 2020; Finchilescu & Duguard, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Sexual Violence Task Force (SVTT), 2016). However, there has not been much research to date in order to examine the actual extent of this phenomenon (Enaifoghe, 2019; Finchilescu & Duguard, 2018). A similar situation exists in South African society generally, where there is no reliable research or data to evaluate the magnitude of the problem (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2019). Research by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) provided information into the number of reported rape cases across the country in 2012 (Mercilene, Jina, Labuschagne, Vetten, Loots, Swemmer, Meyersfield & Jewkes, 2017). The recent student activism movements (#EndRapeCulture; #RapeMustFall) and the #Me Too campaigns have highlighted the seriousness of sexual violence against female students at universities (Gouws, 2018; Du Preez, Simmonds & Chetty, 2017). In the 2019 academic year alone, there were several high-profile gender violence incidents at universities (Davids, 2020). In 2018, the *Daily News*, a South African newspaper, reported that a first-year female student was shot dead at the university residence allegedly by her male ex-boyfriend, while another paper, *City Press* (2018), reported that a student committed suicide as a result of her being raped by a fellow student. There have been similar reported incidents of rape and sexual assault of female students from 2013 to 2017 (Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2016; SVTT, 2016). The persistence of this scourge led to the development of the Policy Framework to address gender violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (PSET) (DHET, 2020). According to the Department of Higher Education and Training policy framework (DHET, 2020), higher education institutions have been tasked with adopting this gender violence framework by developing policies as well as structural implementation programmes for their specific institution.

Despite concerted collaborative efforts by relevant stakeholders such as university managements, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, The Commission of

Gender Equality and other gender-related institutions, to eradicate this social injustice, it continues unabated. Universities have sadly become breeding grounds for gender violence as they mirror the narrow-minded view of society that tolerates and normalizes gender violence (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Singh, Mabaso, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2016). A plethora of literature shows that gender violence at universities has reached unprecedented levels locally and internationally (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Mengo & Black, 2016; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015; Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015; Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Thomas & Bruce, 2015; EUC, 2012). The increasing incidents of gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has provided further challenges to those in authority as they firstly continue to review their policies regarding this scourge, and secondly, that they strengthen efforts to narrow the gaps between policy and implementation (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; Davids, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Wamboldt, Khan, Mellins & Hirsch, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015).

While pursuing my Master's Degree in Gender, it was evident in the scholarship that males were predominantly the perpetrators of violence (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015). Also evident in the scholarship of gender violence on university campuses was that males were implicated in sexual harassment and other forms of gender violence (SVTT, 2016; Gordon & Collins, 2013). What is glaring is that there is a paucity in research into female students as aggressors and perpetrators of gender violence against males, other female students and non-normative genders. My study is based on the premise that all violence is gendered (Mayeza & Bhana, 2017; Bhana, 2014, 2008; Connell, 2005, 1995) and that males, females and non-normative genders are all implicated in gender violence. This study attempts to address the paucity of literature showing female students as perpetrators of gender violence, including violence within heterosexual and homosexual relationships as well as interpersonal relationships. This study thus turns to the ways in which all students who participated in this study perceive and understand GBV, the forms of violence that they observe females engage in, who they are violent towards and most importantly, some of the reasons for their violent behaviours. This thesis draws on female masculine behaviours (as theorized in Chapter three by Judith Halberstam), toxic violence and their violent forms of agency against hegemonic masculinity, albeit not an ideal agentic response – provoked or unprovoked. The gap in the literature is what I addressed in this study. There is local and international literature that draws attention to female student violence, but this is limited (see Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Mengo & Black, 2016; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay,

2015; Katz & Moore, 2013). This study therefore focuses on a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa where the extant literature largely highlights male violence. Gender violence has portrayed males as the predominant perpetrators of gender violence and justifiably so. However, there are also studies that show girls as perpetrators of violence in schools particularly (Morojele, 2009; Bhana, 2008), thereby opening up spaces for exploring this phenomenon of female violence. My study explored the issue of violence as it pertains to females and how they navigate their worlds, which includes extreme forms of violence. The study not only explored the ways in which some female students responded to violence directed at them but it also sought to show how many were violent despite not being provoked, nor as a result of retaliation – some instances highlighting some females as 'inherently' violent. The complexity of this study showed a nuanced and sophisticated analysis of the phenomenon of gender violence as it pertains to female students at this university.

Historically, masculinity has been associated with violence and male power over females as well as non-hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995). Females and non-hegemonic masculinities are at the base of the masculine hierarchy where powerful male hegemonies may sometimes violently oppress them (Connell, 1995). This subordinate construction of femininities leads to the perpetuation of unequal power relations as well as gender violence (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama-shai & Sikweyiya, 2006; Anderson, 2006; Connell, 2005).

The concept of gender violence points to violence perpetrated on the basis of particular constructions of gender and empirical research shows that males are largely the perpetrators of this behaviour and females and other non-conforming genders are more than often the victims (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015). In patriarchal cultures, violence is the very enactment of masculinity and is used to control all females and non-conforming genders (Connell, 2005; 1995). However, empirical research shows that violence is a problem of both sexes and therefore, both males and females are capable of inflicting violence (Johnson, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2003). Female perpetrated violence challenges archaic assumptions that violence is solely a masculine activity (Halberstam, 2012). Research on female violence is emerging and there is an urgent need to broaden the exploration of this previously under-research phenomenon.

Confronting female violence challenges our belief in the masculine-feminine binary where violence and aggression are seen as solely masculine traits. This notion is in keeping with

feminist theories that posits females as non-violent (Carrington, 2013; Wesley, 2006). It is however, crucial to acknowledge female agency when conceptualizing violence (Gilbert, 2002), even though violence, as a retaliatory response is not an ideal way of resolving conflict. Constructing females as victims and portraying violent retaliation as being beyond their control only serves to enforce a dichotomous society (Byrd & Davis, 2009). 'Violence breeds violence' and this in turn contaminates the moral fabric of our society (Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, 2012). The complex reality of multiple femininities, renders it important to afford these students and their victims the opportunity to tell their stories as they ascribe meaning to gender violence.

As a postgraduate student I became acutely aware of the gender violence that occurs at this university. My involvement in discussions on gender violence with my peers was, therefore, enlightening and offered me a glimpse into the lives of many of the students I interacted with. However, because I am a day student and spend very little time on campus, I was unaware of the extent of this scourge. According to my female and male peers, much of the gender violence was perpetrated by male students however, they also alluded to the female student violence which was largely kept 'hidden'. This is what prompted me to explore and investigate the phenomenon of female students' engagement in gender violence at this campus.

1.3.   Literature Review

Despite global efforts to end violence in all facets of society, it remains ever-present, cutting across boundaries of economic wealth, culture, religion, age and sexual orientation (NSP-GBVF, 2020; SIDA, 2015; UN, 2012). International agreements as well as local prevention policies and strategies to end this human rights violation have not been completely successful in eliminating all forms of violence (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Sexual Violence Response Task Team, 2016; Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Thomas & Bruce, 2015). Gender violence is an extreme expression of unequal power relations, gender inequality and discrimination based on race, class, religion and sexual orientation that threatens the mental, physical and socio-economic well-being of the victims (Davids, 2020; Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Planty, Langton & Stroop 2016). At Higher Education Institutions, this violence manifests in the form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); sexual harassment and rape; physical, verbal and non-verbal attacks (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; Davids, 2020; Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Planty, Langton & Stroop 2016). Drawing on international and local scholarship, gender violence continues to plague

campuses despite Higher Education Institutions' policies to eradicate this behaviour (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016). More broadly, society as a whole is negatively impacted as the ramifications of gender violence is costly mentally, physically and economically (Davids, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; KPMG, 2014; WHO, 2002).

This literature review draws on both international and local research that focuses on gender violence on university campuses. Empirical research shows that female students are victims as well as perpetrators of this human rights violation (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; WHO, 2002). The concept of sexual symmetry contends that females and males can both be equally violent and this is in line with empirical research where both male and female American students perpetrated similar rates of physical and psychological aggression (Cercone, Beach & Arais, 2005). This is consistent with Straus' (2004) interactive study of worldwide university students' dating violence that found that 12% - 42% of male students and 17% - 48% of female students committed an act of gender violence. In the USA and Mexico, Straus and Ramirez (2007) found that younger female students are more likely to perpetrate violence against their partners. Research by Medeiros and Straus (2006) of two American Universities found that female students' perpetration of violence was motivated by a desire to control their partner. This resonates with research by Bates, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2014) that female students use of violence stemmed from other forms of aggression and not patriarchal norms. This speaks to unequal power relations that are central to gender violence and empirical research has shown that not all females are powerless, neither are all females in unequal relationships (Shefer, 2016; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Mantell, 2009).

Not all females shy away from violently asserting their power and influence and in doing so, they challenge patriarchal legacies of female subordination and exercise their agency (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2014; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Medeiros & Straus, 2006). Other scholars like Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez (2006) argue that by denying females their agency in their violent episodes is to deny them their freedom to be who they are and that is, rational beings. Most of the research on female violence is more school-related gender violence which shows that female learners are also agents of gender violence (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Morojele, 2009; Bhana, 2008). The issue of female violence is not a new one as Bhana's (2008) study in a South African school context shows how young girls do use violence and they respond violently. However, the study shows that is a minority of

girls (Bhana, 2008). Earlier studies of schoolgirl violence found that some girls behave aggressively and engage in unacceptable behaviour like bullying (Morojele, 2009; Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Woods & Jewkes, 2001). The use of gender violence, as this study will illustrate, includes intimate partner violence (IPV) as well as sexual, physical, verbal and emotional violence directed at both heterosexual and homosexual males and females.

Research illustrates that not all females are subordinate and passive and that they do exercise their agency by initiating violence (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Straus & Ramirez, 2007). They demonstrate agency as they perpetrate violence as heterosexual or homosexual rational beings. According to Johnson (2006) females may use intimate terrorism as a form of coercive control to intimidate and by threatening to expose their partners' sexual orientation to family and friends, becoming verbally and physically aggressive towards their partner who may want to end a relationship.

Heterosexual dating relationships are characterized by gender power inequalities where vulnerable females construct their lives around male domination (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani & Jacobs, 2009). Research shows that females fear leaving an abusive relationship because this may result in further abuse as males attempt to re-establish control (Fleury, 2000). Females may retaliate with violence after prolonged suffering. In spite of the agency some female students demonstrate that shows resistance to any form of violence directed at them, it is not necessarily an ideal form of agency as violence in all its forms is toxic.

Historically, there has been a gradual shift from seeing females as victims to recognizing them as rational agents of gender violence perpetration (Gartner & McCarthy, 2006; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Female violence challenges archaic, patriarchal assumptions that violence is solely a masculine activity. Halberstam's (2012; 1998) work on female masculinities is particularly useful to this study as it highlights the discrepancy between stereotypical gender norms of female femininity and female masculinity. Females whose image and behaviour defy the conventional gender norms are perceived as transgressive and there exists a cultural intolerance towards this form of deviance (Halberstam, 2012; 1998).

1.4. Theoretical and conceptual framework

Due to the multi-layered discourses of female perpetrated violence, I will use an eclectic theoretical and conceptual approach that will deal with the complexities of female violence.

I draw on Judith Halberstam's concept of female masculinity, (2012; 1998) as it conceptualizes females who have defied gendered boundaries by adopting masculine behaviour and engage in non-conformist behaviour. Halberstam's (2012; 1998) female masculinities refers to a range of masculine inflected identities and identifications that present a shift in social control where females are not afraid to sometimes violently assert their agency, neither do they shy away from being sexually, physically and verbally aggressive. According to Halberstam (2012; 1998) masculinity and stereotypical masculine traits such as power, control, violence and aggression do not only belong to males, nor are they only produced by males. Masculinity can be produced by females as they exercise their agency, thereby challenging patriarchal notions of femininity and violence (Halberstam, 2012; 1998). Halberstam's theory (2012; 1998) is pertinent to my study as it destabilizes the widespread notion that it is impossible to study masculinity without focusing on men and boys.

Despite the fact that not all female masculinities are same-sex orientated, they nevertheless remain misunderstood and marginalized in relation to gender normativity (Halberstam, 2012; 1998). Halberstam (2012) affirms the ambiguous nature of empowered female masculinities wherein females possess the physical features and aggressive strength and power (butch, dyke, stone butch) while simultaneously identifying as female. In this way, they hold the master key to a more powerful, transgressive version of masculinity that is not averse to violence. Halberstam (2012; 1998) suggests that renouncing femininity thus becomes an act of renouncing powerlessness and thereby claiming power for oneself. Female masculinity is therefore more liberating, giving rise to possibilities beyond gender boundaries. Constitutional gender transformations have led to the empowerment of females who do not shy away from challenging powerful male hegemonies and expressing their agency (Shefer, 2016; Bhana, 2014; Halberstam, 2012) in order to achieve their goals. Halberstam's theory of female masculinity (2012; 1998) presents a legitimate contender for female readiness to fight and to claim her rightful place in society. However, we must remain cognizant of the fact that gender violence is a socially deviant act and that regardless of the gender and sexual orientation of the victim of the perpetrator, it is a crime against humanity (WHO, 2002) and therefore female violence is not an ideal way of reclaiming power and enacting agency.

Connell (2005; 1995) asserts that both male and female perpetrators of violence have strong masculine gender traits that embrace control and power to render the victim vulnerable, regardless of their gender. Connell's (2005; 1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity has been

widely used to conceptualize South Africa's patriarchal and violent society. This theory is of particular importance to my study as it theorizes the ways in which patriarchy is valourized while simultaneously subordinating other masculinities and femininities. This results in the perpetration of violence against all others (Bhana, 2016; Msibi, 2012). Masculinity is grounded in homophobia and a violent opposition to femininity, which according to Kimmel (2008) defines them as the inferior other. Females who identify with masculine aggressive traits and those who retaliate with violence after their own victimization are regarded as toxic femininity (Zannell, 2018; Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018; Savin-Williams, 2017). Toxic femininity is the product of a deeply patriarchal system where females have been systematically oppressed and then they hone in on their aggression in violent and devastating ways (Zannell, 2018; Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018; Savin-Williams, 2017). Like female masculinity, seeing females as purely victims of gender violence is to deny them their agency (Carrington, 2013; Morrissey, 2008; Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006; Artz, 2004). Thus, this study's use of toxic masculinity as a concept to explain how females are not always subjugated, and thereby hegemonic masculinity does not always function as a tool for gender policing and unhealthy, harmful expectations that oppress women and girls. These concepts, toxic femininity, and toxic masculinity, encourage violence and domination in order to hold disproportionate power, while simultaneously encouraging silent acceptance in order to survive (Pascoe, 2011; Messerschmidt, 2000). These concepts will be particularly useful as part of the conceptual framework of this study. Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998) and Connell's Theory of Gender Power (1987) will offer an appropriate lens to interpret the complexity associated with such a study.

By drawing on Connell's theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995) I illustrate that gender violence includes all acts of violence because it occurs between male and female; female and male and members of the same sex orientation. Violence within homosexual relationships highlights gender power at play where the perpetrator's violent and aggressive tendencies embody toxic masculinity and/or toxic femininity. Toxic femininity is rooted in the dominant notions of gender where masculinity assumes power and control over others (Savin-Williams, 2017; Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). In this way female masculinity is not only seen as a form of toxic femininity, but it also exemplifies gender-power relations within same sex relationships (Taulke-Johnson, 2010; Msibi, 2009). Connell's theory of masculinity (2005; 1995) deals with gender power, where hegemonic masculinities wield power over all other forms of masculinity and females. Her concept of hegemonic masculinity has been widely used

to conceptualize South Africa as a violent, patriarchal society. Connell (1995) argues that patriarchal gender norms constitutes dominance and control which very often results in violence against females and other vulnerable members of society. Connell (2005; 1995) suggests that we should strive to achieve gender-justice for all. Connell (2005; 1995), like Halberstam (2012; 1998) asserts that gender identity is not static and that males as well as females are bearers of masculinity. In other words, Connell (2005; 1995) suggests hegemonic masculinity is a place in social relations as well as practices, that subordinate and marginalize masculinities even when it is embodied by females.

To galvanize Connell's theory of gender and power, I use Foucault's (1983) theory of Power which is also central to the analysis of gender violence. Foucault (1983) maintained that power circulates and that everyone, including the oppressed and oppressor are caught up in this fluidity of power. Foucault (1983) maintains that power maybe dependent on the use of violence and this is in keeping with Connell (2005; 1995) who posits that hegemonic masculinity wields power over all as it violently subjugates females and non-hegemonic masculinity. However, Foucault's theory highlights how power can shift from one person to another, regardless of gender and sexuality. Foucault's Theory of Power (1983) is useful to my study as it theorizes the fluidity and dynamic ways in which power functions.

In addition, the heteronormative ethos at university campuses results in high levels of homophobic violence, where non-conforming genders experience a range of abuse (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Matabeni & Msibi, 2015). This includes 'corrective' rape, sexual harassment, physical and verbal abuse. Studies show that heterosexual females may also perpetrate homophobic gender violence against non-heterosexual males and females (Turchik, Hebenstreit & Judson, 2015; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). This may include verbal, non-verbal and physical attacks and sexual harassment (Turchik, Hebenstreit & Judson, 2015; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). This homophobic violence reflects their intolerance of non-heteronormative individuals.

Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity and Toxic Femininity (2012; 1998); Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995) and Foucault's Theory of Power (1983) appear to be most useful and pertinent to my study as I attempt to gain a deeper insight into the complex and very often muted phenomenon of female students' engagement in gender violence. Female violence is a complex phenomenon that requires a complex, eclectic approach in order to achieve a more nuanced analysis of the issue.

1.5. Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to explore female students' use of gender violence against other students at a university campus.

The research objectives for the study are:

- To explore university students' perceptions and understandings of female students` use of gender violence.
- To investigate the forms of gender violence female student`s engage in.
- To gain in-depth insight into the factors that contribute to female students' propensity for gender violence.

The research questions that guided this study are:

- What are university students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of violence?
- What forms of gender violence do female students engage in?
- Why, according to students, do female students engage in acts of gender violence?

1.6. The Geographical context of the study

The study is located at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). UKZN claimed the top spot in South Africa in 2021 and was also placed at number 61 out of 475 global universities in Times Higher Education (THE) Young University rankings (UKZNDABA online, 2021). This University campus is spread over 55 acres of land and has a population of more than four thousand local as well as African foreign national students. The university has a huge library as well as Computer facilities (LANS) for all undergraduate as well as post-graduate students. There are also indoor and outdoor sporting facilities available. Security is provided by an external service provider known as Risk Management Services (RMS). The university has both on campus as well as off-campus residences for students that accommodate over four thousand

students. Students come from diverse backgrounds. However, the majority of students who reside in the on-campus residences are Black. There are single and double rooms available where students have an option to live in single sex residences or to cohabit. There are communal ablution and kitchen facilities. Many students are recipients of bursaries and grants. There are students who do not receive any funding while those who do may also struggle to survive. These economic challenges and hardships may also contribute to the high rates of gender violence at university campuses.

1.7. A brief description and rationale for the research methods used.

Research design

In order to answer the critical questions guiding the study, I draw on qualitative research within the interpretivist paradigm (Braun & Clark, 2013; Cresswell, 2012). The study focuses on university students' perspectives of gender violence perpetrated by female students at a university campus in KwaZulu-Natal. The qualitative nature of this research is therefore grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which sets out to understand the individual's interpretation of their world, their experiences, as well as to make sense of the situations or phenomena they encounter (Braun & Clark, 2013; Cresswell, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2010). Through a close interpretation and analysis of the generated qualitative data, I will be able to achieve an in-depth understanding of not only the reasons as to the forms of violence and why female students resort to acts of gender violence, but also at whom the violence is targeted.

Methodology
Sampling

The sampling method was purposive which targeted a specific group of people to be included in the research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The sample consisted of about 50 female and male students from this particular campus. I included both male and female students in this study as it provided a more comprehensive understanding of this issue. The sampling included both undergraduates as well as postgraduates who are both residents and day students. Having being a student at this particular campus since 2017, I have been fortunate enough to have forged friendships with other undergraduate and postgraduate students. I explained to them the focus and purpose of my study and then I requested their participation to be interviewed by me at a convenient time for them. I also targeted those students who had spoken to me about this issue. This study does not assume that females are perpetrators of violence but they may be responding to acts of violence perpetrated against them. When I was unable to get sufficient

participants, I then employed the snowballing technique (Braun & Clark, 2013). Snowballing involved getting my fellow students or participants to enquire from their friends at campus whether they are willing to participate in my study. This method proved fruitful in my previous MEd research.

Data Collection

The data collection method was individual, semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews which are highly appropriate given the sensitivity of the research. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) this type of semi-structured interview is gainful as it will generate rich data that the participants would not necessarily supply when responding to a rigid and structured interview. The main data collection method of this study is semi-structured open-ended interviews which includes a form of narrative enquiry due to the indepth nature of the interviews. Semi-structured open-ended interviews allowed participants the production of the narrative within the interview, especially as they narrated sensitive information and the freedom to relate experiences that may have contributed to them perpetrating gender violence (Dwyer & Davis, 2017). The interview may become dialogical where the participant and researcher engage with each other with the intention of "active narrative production" (Dwyer & Davis, 2017, p162). However, I needed to be mindful of the fact that should this be the case, then as the researcher, it is my task to ask, encourage, prompt, facilitate, connect and suggest in order to uncover the richness and complexities of the participant's experience and to focus on the interview questions (Dwyer & Davis, 2017). This narrative approach allowed me to gather the participants' personal stories and understand why they resort to gender violence. The narrative approach creates a space for the participants to give first-hand accounts of their experience as they make connections between events in a causal sense (Herman, Jahn & Ryan, 2008) as well as creating a space for them to reflect on the events that shaped their actions, re-assessing fragmented and unbearable memories (Riessman, 2008). The narrative inquiry approach assisted me in creating a research that illuminates the experiences and behaviour of female students, and interrogates their agency by giving them a voice. However, as the researcher, it was imperative that I remain cognizant of the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts that shaped the participants' attitudes, beliefs and behaviour (Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005) by listening attentively and without projecting my own views and opinions on the matter. This narrative form of qualitative research, can promote a more in-depth, comprehensive understanding of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of female students who engage in gender violence.

I believe that by using semi-structured in-depth open-ended interviews it afforded me the opportunity to generate thick, rich detailed data as well as nuanced understandings of female student use of gender violence. The interviews were conducted in a quiet, secluded area on campus (in the research commons or in spaces and rooms demarcated for student use) or sometimes off campus. It depended on what the participants were comfortable with. Each interview was about an hour long, depending on the participants' responses. COVID-19 presented challenges and there were some interviews that were conducted via WhatsApp or telephonically.

Data Analysis

In this qualitative inductive approach, I firstly drew on one of Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2007) content analysis methods that suggests that once the data is collected, I needed to carefully and thoroughly go through the data and identify similar categories and thereafter code the data into these categories. Secondly, I drew on what Nieuwenhuis (2010) describes as hermeneutics in order to interpret the data. According to Nieuwenhuis (2010) these hermeneutics involve analyzing the data for "apparent" and "hidden" meaning which allows for a deeper, more in-depth analysis in order to establish context and meaning for what people do by using the literature to support or refute the findings.

The qualitative data was inductively analysed into themes that emerged from the data (Silverman, 2013). Silverman's (2013) approach of identifying 'push' and 'pull' factors enabled me to correlate the influential factors with the contextual factors of the participants and this therefore, allowed me to contribute to the scholarship around female student perpetrators of gender violence. The theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, namely, Foucaults Theory of Power (1983), Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998) and Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995) were the most appropriate theories with which to analyse the generated data as they deal with issues around gender, power, and violence. The conceptual frameworks of agency, toxic femininities and toxic masculinities guided the results of the study. Employing an eclectic theoretical and conceptual framework helped to gain a more nuanced understanding of female student perpetrators of gender violence.

1.8.   Ethical Considerations

All ethical issues regarding trustworthiness such as transferability, dependability, credibility and confirmability (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cresswell, 2012) were strictly adhered to.

Issues of trustworthiness are matters regarding credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Cresswell, 2012). The trustworthiness of the study was established when the findings reflect the meanings exactly as described by the participants (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). In order to get the participants to relax and feel comfortable enough to speak about this sensitive issue, I asked them about their backgrounds and family life. In my previous research with university students, this worked well and they were eager to tell their stories. I was able to gain their trust in this manner.

In order to enhance the credibility both during the data collection and data analysis, I used an audio-recorder to record the individual interviews (with the permission of the participants). These audio-recorded verbatim responses ensured that no misinterpretation occurs of participants' responses. Confirmability demands that an audit trail is undertaken (Cresswell, 2012) and in this regard I made the transcripts available to the participants for the verification and through reflexivity (Cresswell, 2012).

Dependability was established with the audit trail which involved preserving all audio-recordings and transcripts for the stipulated period of five years. Hard copies will be shredded and digital copies will be deleted electronically after five years. All data will be kept in a secure location by arrangement with my supervisor. The authenticity was established by reporting each participants' experiences unbiased by remaining true to the data and thus maintaining respect for the context of the data (Cresswell, 2012). By staying true to the data, the transferability of the research will be applicable to other similar research in the field of gender violence at campus residences (Cresswell, 2012; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

1.9.   Conclusion

This is the first chapter of the thesis. It provided the introduction and motivation for the study of violent femininities at a university campus. The introduction of the study briefly discusses gender violence as a global phenomenon. The discussion briefly highlighted global efforts by governments and international agencies and organisations to end this human rights' violation (WHO, 2012) that continues to plague us all. The direct and indirect impact of gender violence

on society in general as well as on the economy, health, medical and legal services was also briefly discussed. The introduction also focused on gender violence in South Africa, where this study is conducted. South Africa has one of the highest rates of gender violence (NSP-GBVF, 2020, Wilkinson, 2017; CSVR, 2016; Vetten, 2014) and COVID-19 further exacerbated an already dire situation. The efforts made by the South African government to end the scourge of gender violence in the broader society as well as at institutions of higher education was briefly discussed in this chapter. Gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) was also highlighted in this chapter. The motivation for the study of female student violence at a university was also provided. The chapter provided a brief literature review on the phenomenon of gender violence at universities, in particular female student violence. An eclectic theoretical and conceptual framework was used in the study and these were briefly discussed in this introductory chapter. The aims, objectives and critical research questions as well as the geographical context of the study were highlighted. In addition, the chapter provided a discussion on the rationale behind the research methods that would be used in the study. A short discussion was included on the choice of paradigm, sampling procedures, the data collection methods as well as the data analysis. The ethical considerations were also very briefly discussed. The chapter ends with an overview of the thesis.

1.10.   Overview of thesis (structure and organization)

Chapter One: Introduction of the study

This chapter deals with the introduction to the study. The chapter provides the background and the motivation of the study as well as a very brief discussion of the literature relating to female student gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEI). It also provides a concise discussion of the eclectic theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study. The objectives, aims and critical research questions that guide the study are also highlighted in this chapter. In addition, it provides a short description of the context of the study as well as a brief discussion on the rationale for the research methods used in the study. The chapter ends with a succinct overview of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter draws on both local and international literature that focuses on gender violence, particularly as it pertains to female student violence at universities. The relevant scholarly literature on female gender violence is broadly discussed. The literature review is organized

into several themes for a more in-depth analysis of the construction of violent femininities as well students' exposure to and understandings of the phenomenon of female student violence.

Chapter Three: Theoretical framework and conceptual frameworks

The eclectic theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins the study is discussed in greater detail in this chapter. Female violence is a complex phenomenon and therefore an eclectic approach recognizes the complexity of female student violence at university campuses.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

The research design and methodology of the study is the key focal point of this chapter. The chapter provides a description and explanation of the research design as well as the rationale for the choice of the design. It also provides a discussion of the research processes of the study.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven: Data Analysis

These three chapters present in-depth analyses of the generated data that was inductively analysed with the intention of gaining an in-depth, nuanced understanding of female student violence at a university campus. Each of these chapters focuses on one of the three critical research questions that guide the study. The recorded data was interpreted and analysed using the eclectic theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins the study. The data was further organized into themes. The relevant literature was used to support or refute the findings.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This is the final chapter in the thesis. The chapter provides a summary as well as a discussion on the main findings of the study. It also provides suggestions for policy and practice. The chapter ends with providing suggestions for future research on the phenomenon on female student violence at university campuses.

In the next chapter I discuss the literature review.

Chapter 2

The Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the extant international, regional and local literature on female violence.

This section presents the relevant local and international literature on female violence.

At least 17 themes emerged in the literature, all highlighting a different perspective on females' use of gender violence. In keeping with the aims of the study, the review also focuses on violent student femininities and the ways in which they construct their identities. The study focuses on female student violence at university and the ways in which these female students construct their identities. There is a paucity in research on female students' engagement in gender violence and it is this gap that the current study aims to address. This study explores university students' perceptions and understandings of female violence, their exposure to female student gender violence and some of the reasons offered as to why these female university students engage in particular forms of violence. This is a globally under-researched phenomenon. The current study also investigates the various forms of violence that female students engage in and who the victims are. In an attempt to answer the research questions, the literature review highlights females' use of violence at all levels – private and public; heterosexual and same-sex relationships; schools, communities and universities. However, the lack of research on female students' use of violence in South African universities specifically presents a challenge thus I rely more heavily on female violence in general and international research that focused on both male and female students' gender violence perpetration and victimization. The themes that emerged from the literature are:

2.2. The 17 themes that emerged in the literature review are listed below:

1. Gender: A Relational Phenomenon

2. University students' understandings and perceptions of gender violence

3. Societal Perceptions of Violent femininities

4. The Construction of Violent Femininities

5. Forms of violence at university

6. Violent Femininities

7. Violent females: An issue of race and class?

8. Violent femininities: gangs and bullying

9. Violent Femininities at School

10. Violent femininities at Universities

11. Violence within non-normative gender relationships: Lesbianism and IPV (within the community and at university)

12. Female Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

13. Factors offered for female violence

14. Toxic Femininities

15. Female Agency and violence

16. Female Sexual Violence: Accommodation and resistance

17. Rape and Sexual Harassment perpetrated by females

2.2.1. Gender: A Relational Phenomenon

According to gender scholars, gender relations refers to individual identities and the ways in which they relate to dominant discourses around femininity and masculinity (Paechter, 2006; Connell, 1995). Masculinity can be understood as a "place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage" and this can only exist its in relation to femininity (Connell, 1995, p71). Therefore, according to Connell (1995, 1987) normalized masculinity and femininity are constructed via social practices as well as stereotypical notions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviour. It is argued that culturally, males are imbued with power and it is this position of dominance that legitimizes their superiority while simultaneously subordinating other males and females in the gender order (Kimmel, 2008; Connell, 1995).

Historically the constructions of masculinity have been pervasive as they position men as powerful, strong, violent and aggressive versus femininity as powerless, weak, non-violent and passive. These societal and historical constructions not only polarize hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity but also sustain and sanction masculine dominance and feminine subordination (Connell, 1995). Despite the ways in which patriarchy confers male's qualities of superiority and power, not all males subscribe to these dominant notions of male power and aggression, and likewise not all females subscribe to emphasized feminine notions of docility and non-violence (Connell, 1995). My study focuses on female students' use of gender violence. While empirical research shows that males are predominantly the perpetrators of this behaviour (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015), there are studies that shows that females as perpetrators of violence (Fisher & Pina, 2013; Carrington, 2013; Wesley, 2006). My study focuses on the subversion of male dominance as these females illustrate that they are not afraid to use violence against other students – males, other females and non-normative genders.

Women's education, career and socio-economic empowerment through feminism has led to changes in the normative gender relations but also led to challenges in power relations between masculinities and femininities (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002; Connell, 1995). Studies show that it is not all females who embody a fragile, inferior and subordinate status as some are not afraid to engage in violence. In this way, they provide a challenge to masculinity because when females engage in violence the automatic assumption is that the violence is provoked or in self-defense (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Wesley, 2006) simply because female violence may cause us to feel uncomfortable; however, there are females who choose to exercise their agency through violent means (Morrissey, 2003). By engaging in gender violence, female students construct their identities as 'masculine' (Vandenburg, Brennan & Chesney-Lind, 2013; Chesney-Lind, 2006). This not only disrupts gender binaries, but also dismantles outdated stereotypes. Consistent with extant research on gender violence at universities, female students are perceived to be vulnerable (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; SVTT, 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; Gordon & Collins, 2013), however research has begun to show that female students are also capable of committing gender violence within their intimate relationships as well as in their relations with others (Tomaszewska & Krahé, 2015; Krahé & Berger, 2013; Fisher & Pina, 2013; Hamby & Jackson, 2010).

A plethora of research shows that globally, gender violence continues to plague universities despite these institutions putting policies in place in order to prevent this scourge (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; SVTT, 2016; Krebs, et al., 2016; Cantor et al., 2015). However, research also shows that the gaps between policy-making and implementation urgently need to be assessed as they are fundamental to the failing to ensure safe campuses (Singh, et al., 2016; MacKay & Magwaza, 2008)

2.2.2. University students' understandings and perceptions of gender violence

A plethora of research focusing on university students' perceptions and understandings of gender violence shows that students understand what constitutes gender violence even though their perceptions may differ (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015; Gordon & Collins, 2013). While some students perceived gender violence as acceptable in certain contexts, others perceived it to be unacceptable irrespective of the contextual factors (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen & Arnett, 2000). Studies have also shown constant exposure to violence often leads to the normalization of violence because students perceive violence as culturally acceptable and permissible (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Botha, 2014; Gordon & Collins, 2013). In addition, gender violence which was previously perceived as only a feminine issue has emerged as a problem also for non-conforming genders and males (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Taulke-Johnson, 2010; Hill, 2005).

Research shows that in incidents of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (dating violence), female students' perpetration of violence is often underestimated and perceived as less serious than their male student counterparts (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen & Arnett, 2000). This resonates with research that shows the ways in which female perpetrated IPV is perceived as being less serious than male perpetrated IPV (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Seelau, Seelau & Poorman, 2003). IPV (dating violence) was perceived as more acceptable when female students were perpetrators simply because the female students' violence was perceived as an act of defence (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Cauffman, Feldman, Jensen & Arnett, 2000). Hamby and Jackson's (2010) study of American students also found that students perceived female students as being less responsible for their violence. It is this perception that female student violence is less serious that may not only lead to it being underreported, but it may also appear to other students that the university is dismissive of violent student femininities. Although female student sexual aggression has received less attention but it is

also perceived as being less acceptable (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). Due to gender stereotypes and gender norms, sexual aggression is minimized when it comes to females as perpetrators therefore, when other students who fall victim to sexually aggressive female students, they find it difficult to perceive their experience as an assault (Russell, 2013; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). Oswald & Russell (2006) found that females who were perpetrators of sexual harassment were perceived as promiscuous or 'romantically interested' in their victim. It is these perceptions that reduce the extent of reported female perpetration and simultaneously minimizes the suffering of the victims (Oswald & Russell, 2006).

Research on students' perceptions of female students' use of gender violence is scant both locally and internationally and this poses a challenge to our understanding of the magnitude of the problem of violent femininities at Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Given the paucity of local research on violent femininities at universities, this literature review relies heavily on international literature which provides statistics for both female and male students' perpetration and victimization of gender violence (Tomaszewska & Krahé, 2015; Krahé & Berger, 2013; D'Abreu, Krahé & Bazon, 2013; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). This will be discussed in section 2.2.12 on violent femininities at universities.

Despite an extensive search of scholarship on students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of gender violence, the paucity in this literature is glaring. Globally much of the research on student gender violence at universities largely focuses on females and non-conforming genders as the victims and males as the perpetrators of this scourge (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; AAU, 2017; SVTT, 2016; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015). The current study attempts to fill the gap as it focuses on female students' use of gender violence at Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

2.2.3. Societal Perceptions of Violent femininities

Perceptions of females who use violence have been largely influenced by historical, stereotypical gendered notions of female passivity (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). These notions also influence the way people not only respond to female violence but also the way in which they construct females who engage in violence (Chesney-Lind, 2006). The reality is that some females or those people who identify with femininity, who engage in violence are perceived as transgressors of their gender norms and they are therefore consigned to the realm of 'abnormality' (Lazar, 2008; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Morrissey, 2003).

In attempting to fully understand the phenomenon of female violence, it is necessary to interrogate one's personal ideologies and to recalibrate one's mindset as it pertains to female violence, the complexity of female experiences of violence and their emergence as more than mere victims.

Societal perceptions of violent females are largely dependent on the manner in which the media constructs their story. In the context of crime and criminology, females who engage in crime are perceived as "doubly deviant" – not only have they violated their gender roles, but they have also violated the law (Marchbank & Letherbay, 2007, p.285). Females are perceived as transgressors who deserve punishment for challenging their gender role (Marchbank & Letherbay, 2007). Their transgression of notions of appropriate femininity not only positions them as 'other' in relation to normal women but it also perceives them as contradicting the image of a rational, self-contained individual (Scharff, 2012; Boyle, 2005; Morrissey, 2003; Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). Violent and aggressive females are perceived as a violation of our cultural archetype of the ideal woman (Motz, 2008). When females challenge cultural and societal notions of femininity by engaging in violence, they are perceived as masculine (Vandenberg, Brennan & Chesney-Lind, 2013; Chesney-Lind, 2006). In this way, not only is their behaviour excused but it is also separated and excluded from femininity. However, the ability to commit violence is present within all of us, regardless of our gender identity.

The masculinization of their violence becomes a credible explanation for their violent behaviour, but it also maintains the gender binary of masculine aggression and violence and female passivity and non-violence (Ferraro, 2006; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gilbert, 2002). While the masculinization of female violence appears to be a reasonable explanation for their violent behaviour, it further polarizes the dichotomous gender norms (Africa, 2010; Ferraro, 2006; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gilbert, 2002) making it difficult for some to accept that female violence is a reality. Violence is perceived as masculine appropriate behaviour (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and therefore Morrissey (2003) and Kelly (2003) argue that violent females, who do not fall into the category of irrationality or pathological are often neglected in feminist research. Morrissey (2003) further posits that while feminism purports equality for females, they may not be willing to accept that some females just choose to be violent. The masculinization theory of women's violence assumes that once females are liberated from their gender constraints, their urge to engage in violence will be produced by the same forces that push males to become violent (Chesney-Lind & Eliason, 2006).

Foundational to this masculinization theory is the simplistic notions of "good" and "bad" femininity standards that results in the demonization of females if they digress from the appropriate femininity (Chesney-Lind, 2006; Chesney-Lind & Eliason, 2006). The perception is that females who engage in violence were becoming just like the violent males (Chesney-Lind, 2006). Common assumptions about masculinity are that very often it is the males who are the perpetrators of violence, so when females become the violent perpetrators, their behaviour is stereotypically labelled as masculine (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002).

Perceptions of females who engage in violence as 'othered' (toxic, non-normative, deviant) and masculinist (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Gilbert, 2002) is influenced by outdated idealized stereotypes about femininity passivity, weakness and fragility. These perceptions not only perpetuate gender oppression and inequalities, but also overlook female agency and their choice to engage in violence. Denying females their agency in violence further polarizes the 'violent' women from the 'normal' woman (Motz, 2008; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007).

2.2.4. The Construction of Violent Femininities

The construction of violent femininities as insane (mad), deviant (bad, monsters) or victimised demonstrates that traditional subordinating gender norms prevail despite numerous gains in equality for all (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2006). The feminist assumption that all female violence is as a result of some legitimate action denies them their rational agency and womanhood. (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Their aberrant behaviour is therefore constructed as 'other' in relation to idealised non-violent femininities (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Morrissey, 2003) where masculine violence is often normalised, tolerated and in some instances celebrated, feminine violence is perceived as a perversion of femininity. These double standards serve as a reminder that we still have a long way to go in terms of seeing women "in their own right" (Reynolds, 2015). These double standards together with the pathological constructs of females who use violence denies women their personal autonomy and their capacity to choose – even if it is violence. History shows that females are rational agents, capable of unleashing direct and indirect violence and aggression against others, both privately and publicly (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007).

Cultural prescriptions establish our gender role socialisation, portraying females as naturally nurturing and self-contained. When a female becomes violent, there is tendency to profile her

as insane or mentally ill. Cultural assumptions are that violent women are sick (Pickard, 2011). Positioning female violence in opposition to female sanity and humanness exposes our discomfort with this contradiction of the idealised femininity (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007).

Constructing females who engage in violence as mentally incompetent feeds into the cultural and structural narratives of female passivity in ways that deny them their moral responsibility and role in their violence (Motz, 2008; Morrissey, 2003). Females who engage in violence are a heterogeneous group and therefore understanding the contextual factors involved requires a complex, nuanced approach (Wesley, 2006).

When females transgress prescribed feminine norms by engaging in crime and violence they are constructed as deviant 'other' (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Boyle, 2005; Morrissey, 2003). This 'othering' of violent females is a way of distancing violent femininities from 'normal' non-violent femininities (Morrissey, 2003; Ballinger, 2000). Violent females are therefore demonized, constructed as monsters who are devoid of humanity (Shildrick, 2002; Morrissey, 2003). This is dehumanising because males commit heinous violence and yet their humanity is not called into question. In fact, their violence is normalised, tolerated and even lauded in certain contexts. Morrissey (2003) asserts that labelling violent females as monster's prejudices and discriminates all females not just the violent females. The media construction of a violent woman as a "she devil" and a member of "queens of violence" (Riddell, 2004) alters our perceptions in ways that force us to stereotype females who use violence as deviant demons and thus further robs them of their humanity. Female violence poses a threat to hegemonic, patriarchal norms and therefore their challenge is often met with ridicule and monstrosity (Shildrick, 2002; Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Hinds & Stacey, 2001). However, violent females are a heterogeneous group who occupy several marginalised positions and whose lived experiences are significantly different.

Females who engage in violence and aggression are often ostracised and their violence sexualised (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Violent females are othered in relation to 'normal' (non-violent) females just like lesbian women are othered in relation to heterosexual women – both the violent women and the lesbian women are connected by their 'displaced' sexual assertiveness. (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Morrissey, 2003; Gilbert, 2002). Both groups of women are constructed as transgressors, doubly deviant transgressors (Ringrose, 2006). Myths associating violent women with lesbianism (Gilbert, 2002) are harmful to the global image of

the lesbian community because not all lesbian women are violent, similarly not all heterosexual women are passive and non-violent. Socio-cultural notions that lesbians are not real women forces non-conforming genders, LGBTIQ+ to construct their identity within an oppressive framework where sexual 'deviants' are devalued and ostracized.

While violence dissociates females from their stereotypical femininity, their victimhood aligns them with womanhood (Gueta & Chen, 2016). Hochstetler, Copes and Williams (2010) posits that claiming victimization is a way of distancing oneself from positions that may threaten the dignity that defines us as human. Cultural perceptions of appropriate feminine norms lead some females who have engaged in violence, to express remorse and take responsibility for their violent behaviour; in this way they redeem their image as properly gendered (Kilty, 2010; Dasgupta, 2001). These constructs of victimhood therefore distinguish the violent acts from the self, thereby maintaining an image of cultural respectability. The victimised construct emanates from violence between intimate partners, where females are largely on the receiving end (Comack & Brickey, 2007). Several feminist scholars maintain that females are likely to commit violence in their intimate personal relationships in a defensive or reactive manner and that their constant abuse and victimisation is what caused them to become violent (Schauer, 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Frieze, 2005; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005).

However, it is important to remember that the decision to use violence by females is never a simple one and that the consequences of some violence is irrevocable. Scholars like Ferraro (2006) and Dasgupta (2001) argue for an examination of the broader cultural factors relating to the source and structural inequalities as well the cultural conditions in which the violence unfolds. This resonates with Wesley (2006) who posits that female violence is part of cumulative victimization in the lives of females who occupy multiple marginalised positions. Wesley (2006) further suggests that within the context of disadvantaged communities, violence is perceived as a way for them to cope, a means of survival and thus may therefore lead to further marginalisation of females who use violence. Socio-economic factors like finances, accommodation and child care, amongst others, may prevent victimised women from leaving an abusive volatile relationship. Cultural expectations of females may inhibit their attempt at freedom, incapacitating them from within and causing them to internalise their victimization until they can no longer bear it (Wesley, 2006).

Ongoing victimisation, physical and emotional, has been cited by several scholars as one of the many reasons for females using violence within their relationships. (Swan & Snow, 2006;

Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). Self-defence and protection of children, retaliation as well as other perceived threats form part of women's cumulative victimisation that may trigger a female's violent response (Swan & Snow, 2006; Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003; Dasgupta, 2001; Miller & Meloy, 2006). Not all abuse is physical and therefore the 'battered women' construct does not adequately describe all victimised women's experience (Ferraro, 2006). The 'battered women' construct presents a probable explanation especially in the context of intimate partner homicide (Walker, 2000; Ferraro, 2003; Rothenberg, 2002). Prolonged victimisation in the context of intimate partner homicide removes the culpability as the victim becomes the perpetrator. Contextualising female violence is critical if we are to fully understand this complex phenomenon. Fighting back and responding violently contradicts widespread cultural feminine expectations where female violence is taboo. In some instances, when females do fight back, they are met with even more severe abuse (Yoshihama, 2002). Historical gender power structures lock females into the private space (Hafkin & Huyer, 2006; Young, 2000) and so when they experience violence within their intimate relationship they assume that their victimisation should remain private, their "learned helplessness" prevents them from leaving the relationship (Walker, 2000). Their victimisation renders them powerless and helpless and they are unable to exercise agency in their abusive relationships. Victimhood eliminates their agency, rendering then vulnerable and threatening their rational image (Skeggs, 2010). In some instances, females may remain in their abusive relationships and they choose alternate forms of aggression (relational and indirect aggression) to respond to their partners' abuse (Dunn & Powell-Williams, 2007; Simmons, 2002; Lamb, 2001). Scholars argue that females who remain in an abusive relationship, still have agency as they choose to stay (Gartner & McCarthy, 2006). Therefore, agency in the context of women's violence is complex and cannot be understood in simple binary terms. Examining the source, cultural dynamics and gendered inequalities within these relationships is the key.

However, given the complexities of female violence, constructing females as insane, deviant and victimised may in some way attempt to shed light on this area but in no way is it complete. In addition, constructing females who engage in violence as masculine is weak and simplistic as it does not consider that some femininities can be naturally violent. While violence may seem like an acceptable means to an end for some, for others there is no other choice.

2.2.5. Forms of violence at university

The term gender violence defines all forms of violence and abuse, namely physical, sexual, economic, verbal, emotional and psychological violence including intimate partner violence, femicide and domestic violence (NSP-GBVF, 2020; CSVR, 2016; SIDA, 2015). Gender violence affects us all, however, research shows that females are primarily the victims of this global scourge (NSP-GBVF, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; CSVR, 2016; WHO, 2013). Gender non-conforming individuals have also been cited as a vulnerable (NSP-GBVF, 2020; DHET, 2020; SIDA, 2015; WHO, 2013). Globally, 35% of women have experienced some form of gender violence (WHO, 2013) with at least one out of three likely to be physically or sexually harmed in their lifetime (Bloom, 2008). In South Africa, the situation is dire with the country having one of the highest rates of gender violence in the world (NSP-GBVF, 2020; CSVR, 2016). As universities more often than not mirror broader society, gender violence has therefore, become common at these institutions (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018; Hames, 2009).

An earlier safety review of South African universities by MacKay and Magwaza (2008) found that 2000 female students experience gender violence in a year with no less than 10 students experiencing gender violence on a daily basis. A recent cross-sectional research of four South African universities by Mutinta (2022) found that 57,8% of female students had experienced some form of gender violence at campus. Research shows that gender violence at universities manifests in various forms, but are not limited to physical; verbal; emotional and psychological; economic; stalking; homophobic attacks; sexual harassment and rape; murder and IPV which may include all forms of gender violence and cyberbullying (Mutinta, 2022; Anderson & Naidu, 2022; DHET, 2020; Beyene, Chojenta; Roba; Melko & Loxton, 2019; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2018 Krebs et al., 2016; SVTT, 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Rentschler, 2015).

Physical assaults and violence by intimate partners or against other student include throwing objects at someone, slapping, beating, choking, kicking, burning and threatening someone with a weapon (Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015). Research found students experience one or more forms of physical violence at university (Mutinta, 2022; Davids, 2020; DHET, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018). Research by Mutinta (2022) shows that 36,3% of students had experienced some form of physical violence. Verbal, emotional and psychological violence includes name-calling, belittling, and humiliating others as well as controlling, threatening and intimidating intimate partners, other students and non-conforming genders (Mutinta, 2022;

DHET, 2020; Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015). Results from research by Mutinta (2022) shows that at least 56,5% of students experienced verbal or emotional violence in the past three years. Stalking may include watching, spying, and following another student, and unsolicited communication – and research shows that this form of gender violence is quite common at universities (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000; Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015; Cantor et al., 2015). At least 12% of 2000 students were stalked (NUS, 2010) and 4,2% of students according to research by Cantor et al. (2015). Research by Fisher et al. (2000) reported that at least 13% of students were stalked while research by Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman (2015) reported that 7,7% of students had been stalked.

Homophobic violence includes all forms of discrimination and assault (verbal, physical, sexual) against non-normative genders or same-sex orientated individuals (Matabeni & Msibi, 2015; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Panayiotou, 2010). An abundance of research shows that homophobia is rife at universities where some heterosexual students are not only violently intolerant of non-conforming genders but that they also lack respect for diversity (AAU, 2015; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Taulke-Johnson, 2010; Mkhize, Bennet, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010). Derogatory language is used to victimize and stigmatise homosexual students (Matabeni & Msibi, 2015; Yost & Gilmore, 2011). Research by the AAU (2015) found that 25% of homosexual students experienced gender violence. Valentine, Wood and Plummer (2009) found that 31% of LGBT students experienced some form of homophobic violence (30% verbal; 7% physical). An 'out in sport' report published by NUS (2012) reported that at least 14,3% of LGBT students experienced homophobic violence which put them off participating in sport.

The research shows that sexual harassment and rape are the most common forms of gender violence at universities (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; DHET, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs et al., 2016; SVTT, 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013). Sexual harassment includes unwelcome advances, statements or requests of a sexual nature; while sexual assault includes coerced sex by threatening and intimidating others into forced unwanted sexual activity (Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015; Cantor et al., 2015; Walsh, Banyard, Moynihan, Ward & Cohen, 2010; Karjane, Fisher & Cullen, 2005). Requests or demands for sex in exchange for improved marks, accommodation at student residences as well as for other benefits (status) or needs (economic) is also prevalent at universities (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013; Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Mosavel, Ahmed & Simon,

2012; Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani & Jacobs, 2009; Dastile, 2008; Ziehl, 2006). Sex in exchange for wants and needs exposes students to gender power imbalances that often results in gender violence (Varjavandi, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Duma, 2016; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013). Unwelcome touching, sexist comments and rape are also common forms of sexual harassment and assault that occurs at universities (SVTT, 2016; Krebs et al., 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Daigle & Cullen, 2010; Steenkamp, 2010; NUS, 2010; Hames, 2009). Research by Cantor et al. (2015) shows that at least 23% of female students across 27 universities had experienced some form of sexual assault from unwanted touching, to kissing and rape. These findings were similar to Karjane et al. (2002) who found that 23% of students experienced sexual violence involving physical violence or incapacitation. Research by Mutinta (2022) shows that 46,7% of students experienced sexual violence including rape. Research by Anderson and Naidu (2022) also found that first year female students were more vulnerable to sexual violence. In 2017, at least 47 reported rapes at South African universities were confirmed by the then minister of Higher Education and Training, Doctor Naledi Pandor (Naidu, 2018).

Intimate partner violence (IPV) (or dating violence) includes all forms of abuse (physical; verbal; emotional and psychological; economic and sexual) against an intimate or dating partner (DHET, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Cantor et al., 2015; Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). Research shows that females use 'intimate terrorism' as a form of coercive control to intimidate and threaten their partners (Johnson, 2006). Intimate partner violence also includes extreme forms of gender violence such as rape and murder and research shows that this form of intimate partner violence also occurs at universities (Gordon, 2017; SVTT, 2016; Singh, Mabaso, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2016; Iliyasu, Abubakar, Aliyu, Galadanci & Salihu, 2011; Hames, 2009; Luthra & Gidyez, 2006). IPV has become common at universities as students may be socialized to accept that if things do not go their way in their relationship that they may resort to violence (Gordon, 2017; Gqola, 2015; Hames, 2009). A nationally represented survey of American university students found that 43% reported experiencing IPV (dating violence); 29% reported that they had been in an abusive relationship while 52% reported that a friend had experienced IPV with at least 57% reported that the abuse occurred at university (Knowledge Networks, 2011).

In Sub-Sahara Africa and Nigeria, research shows that at least 20% to 87% of students reported experiences of IPV (Ongunwale & Oshiname, 2017; Iwemjiwe & Okojie, 2016). A cross-

sectional study of four South African universities found that within intimate partner relationships, 21% of female students experienced physical violence, 19% experienced sexual violence and 12% experienced verbal or emotional violence (Mutinta, 2022). The unprecedented levels of IPV at universities reflects the broader society where violence has become so normalized and it is this normalization that is reflected in the reproduction of gender violence at universities (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013).

Cyberbullying takes place online and research shows that gender violence is prevalent on unregulated social media sites (Rentschler, 2015; Fairbairn, Bivens & Dawson, 2013; Daly, 2008). Research shows that younger femininities body shame, slut shame, threaten and harass their victims (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2008; Daly, 2008; Jones, 2008; Oliviero, 2004; Batheja, 2004). This form of gender violence also filters to universities (DHET, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018). Students use mobile phones to stalk their victims (Catalano, 2012). A plethora of literature shows that while sexual violence and IPV are more common forms of gender violence at universities, other forms such as physical, verbal, emotional and psychological, stalking, economic violence and homophobic violence also occurs (SVTT, 2016; Krebs et al., 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; Harrison, Lafrenière & Hallman, 2015; NUS, 2010). With the advancement in technology, gender violence can now also take the form of cyberbullying (DHET, 2022). In South Africa, there is a lack of research that provides the real extent of gender violence at universities (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018) and so there may be other forms of gender violence that may not be reported.

2.2.6. Violent Femininities

A profusion of literature shows that females who perpetrate sexual aggression and violence were more likely to be perceived as uncontrollable, mentally ill and mad (Beech, Parrett, Ward & Fisher, 2009) manipulative, controlling and power-seeking (Straus, 2011; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2006; Hines & Saudino, 2003) masculine, non-normative and 'other' (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Addis & Mihalik, 2003). Historically there has been a gradual shift from seeing females as victims and to recognising them as rational agents of gender violence perpetration (Gartner & McCarthy, 2006; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Previously some scholars were discouraged from studying female violence as it was not considered a viable field of research (Lambert & Hammond, 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Female violence was regarded as unimportant

and less serious (Lambert & Hammond, 2009; Davies, 2002). These perceptions of female violence being less serious are echoed in research by Hamby and Jackson (2010). Their study of American undergraduate students explored the different perceptions regarding male and female perpetration of IPV. Hamby and Jackson (2010) found that the students perceived that male perpetrators were more frightening than female perpetrators. Like other studies (Cormier & Woodworth, 2008; Seelau & Seelau, 2005) Hamby and Jackson (2010) found that the gender and physical differences were responsible for the differing perceptions. What these findings suggest is that the participants rated the severity of the violence on gender norms that may be biased in some cases as these are females who are physically stronger than males. The common assumptions that females are physically weaker do not negate the fact that women can perpetrate lethal violence against others.

Renzetti (1999, p51) argues that feminists must finally "own the problem of women's violence". In other words, they must be more amplified in heightening the debate about social concerns relating to the increase in female violence. Carrington (2013) argues that there is no single reason, explanation or theory that explains the sharp increases in adolescent female violence and that many of the explanations are motivated by anti-feminist backlash and ideology. Carrington (2013) asserts that by focusing on females as victims only and seldom as perpetrators, feminist criminology has avoided the issue of female violence, leaving anti-feminists a space to castigate feminism. Feminist scholars maintain that the increasing rates of female violence can be attributed to feminism (Chesney-Lind & Irwin 2008; Alder & Worral, 2004). We need to dismantle these myths that purport that women's liberation movements and feminism are responsible for female's involvement in violence and crime. Research on female offending exposes the weakness in this argument as very few studies point to women's liberation movements and feminism as the root cause for the rise in female violence (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 2004).

The argument by some feminist and criminology scholars is that females are not becoming more violent rather changing modes of social control are having unintended effects on offences defined as violent (Sharpe, 2012; Luke, 2008; Alder & Worrall, 2004; Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 2004). Similarly, Alder and Worrall (2004) argue that definitions of females' violence are carefully constructed, and that the increase in female violence is partly attributed to their increased public visibility. Feminist criminologists historic view is that femininity is passive, non-aggressive, non-violent. Rather, research shows that perpetrators are predominantly male

and victims predominantly female (Price, 2005). While gender inequality creates conditions for violence against one gender by another (Marmion, 2006), violence is widespread and it transcends race, gender identity and sexuality (Lombard & McMillan, 2013).

While some feminist scholars argue that gender violence is a consequence of patriarchy, a system that maintains gender inequality (Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2006), others maintain that female violence is not purely the consequence of patriarchy and gender inequality, but that female violence is in retaliation to their long suffering (Schauer, 2006; Dutton & Nichols, 2005). However, this victimized construct has been criticized for rendering females powerless and bereft of agency (Ferraro, 2003). The feminist argument points to the link between women's victimization and their perpetration (Schauer, 2006; Dutton & Nichols, 2005). A plethora of research by feminist scholars into the relationship between violence against women and their use of violence share the common idea that women are as quite likely to engage in IPV in a defensive or reactive manner and that their victimization by their partner is often prior to their offending (Schauer, 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Wesley (2006) describes women's use of violence as part of cumulative victimization, suggesting that women resort to violence to cope with their marginalized (victimhood) position. Ajzenstadt (2009) concurs with Wesley (2006) but further points out that taking into consideration the contexts of women's violent action, such as their victimization, need not preclude viewing women who have used violence as active agents responsible for their activity.

2.2.7. Violent females: An issue of race and class?

Race and class are important factors to consider in our analysis of female violence. Black American females, just like their male counterparts were historically depicted as dangerous, sexually aggressive and hyper-sexed (Phipps 2009; Brennan, 2006). Black females in particular were constructed as hyper-sexed "welfare queens" (Farr, 2000, p.55) while White American females were depicted as decent, passive, intelligent (Brennan & Vandenburg, 2009; Brennan, 2006). This resonates with patriarchal notions of a white dominant femininity where Black females are marginalized and constructed as sub-human, deviants incapable of appropriate femininity (Roberts, 1997). We must however, remain cognisant of the fact that these depictions of violent Black American women do not consider their lived experiences and the forces behind their violence. (Africa, 2010; Pollock, Mullings & Crouch, 2006). When females defy gender appropriate norms, they are demonized, constructed as deviants (Ringrose, 2008). Although Black and White women share a common purpose in resisting the good, bad feminine

dichotomy, their experiences of oppression are greatly different (Crenshaw, 1991). Black women or women of colour face subordination based on their gender, race and sexuality and have been historically marginalised through patriarchy as well as white feminism (Crenshaw, 1991). Sexualised and violent images of a 'mad, black women/matriarch', are sensationalised whenever Black women become violent and yet White women's violence is almost excused and justified (Crenshaw, 1989). Racism is linked to patriarchy as they both marginalise and pathologise Black people, more especially those Black people who engage in violence. In a sense, they are victims of racist systems, victimised because of their colour and gender. Contextually female violence makes us aware of how structural inequalities like race, gender, and class merge to further marginalise violent females. These structural inequalities not only complicate an already volatile and complex situation but they also reproduce notions of otherness in terms of their violent behaviour and their sexuality (Butler, 1993). Butler's (1993) discussion of abjection in relation to the production of properly gendered beings sheds light on the processes of othering involved in making sense of female violence. Abject bodies that do not conform to prevalent ideas of gendered subjecthood are 'othered' ("unintelligible"). Non-conforming genders as well as violent females are subordinated, cast as 'other' to proper femininity through masculinisation and sexualisation processes (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008).

Turning to a local context, South Africa's violent legacy of political resistance saw many people living in fear. The racist, oppressive Apartheid regime 'created' socially disintegrated communities where violence, crime, unemployment and social ills were rife (Boonzaier & Van Schalkwyk, 2011; SACE, 2011). Many Black females became dysfunctional and lived in constant fear of the brutal forces of Apartheid and of violence within their families and communities (Field, Onah, van Heyningen & Honikam, 2018; Gasa, 2007). People became desensitized to the violence and accepted it as part of a collective resistance. Racism and inequality as well as issues of power and control create the atmosphere and potential for violent conflict (Barash & Webel, 2009). Some women had to assume roles that were previously occupied by men, taking up arms in active resistance against a racist government (Gasa, 2007; Bonin, 2000). They also had to play the role of breadwinner especially where many of their partners were either dead, imprisoned, exiled or unemployed (Boonzaier & Van Schalkwyk, 2011). The lived experiences of these young women (IPV, violence, unemployment, historical injustice) meant that many of them had to navigate the field by becoming active agents of violence (Field, Onah, van Heyningen & Honikam, 2018; Gasa, 2007). Despite these challenges, access to power remained hierarchical which meant that male domination remained

ever present (Shephard, 2010). In times of unrest, crisis and war, females generally had to reconstruct their gender roles. The history of resistance against the Apartheid Regime, forced many females to construct their femininities in ways that transgressed patriarchal gender norms (Gasa, 2007). Patriarchy legitimizes and normalizes masculine violence while simultaneously chastises female violence. In terms of race politics many females had to resort to violence, violating their traditional passive roles in order to survive (Gasa, 2007; Bonin, 2000). Racism and patriarchy intersect in ways that marginalize certain groups of people. Given the stresses that Black women face (racism, unemployment, poverty, poor education), an intersectional analysis is the only way to fully understand their engagement with violence.

Colonization is characterized by racial and cultural inequality and oppression, political domination and exploitation over a population. Many countries who were colonized by foreign nationalists experienced an often-violent period in their history. The influences of history cannot be ignored in our analysis of female violence. Colonization brought confrontations between two kinds of patriarchy – the indigenous people and the Colonizers (Morrell, 2003). Violent confrontations between these two groups resulted in the perpetration of violence within families and communities. Morrell (2001) observes that the violence between these two powerful patriarchies still exists today. The relics of colonialism remain evident in the post-colonial violence of today (Donnington, 2019). The subjugation of African people through colonialism and slavery left families destitute, in turmoil and disintegrated (Waita, 2013). Colonialism saw dominant notions of femininity as associated only with white patriarchy. White females were epitomized as the ultimate form of femininity while Black women were regarded as deviant, hypersexual and incapable of femininity (Roberts, 1997). Black women adopted dominant notions of femininity and were not afraid to assert their power and authority. As a result of oppressive, racist regimes, many Black people were pathologized as violent and dangerous (Crenshaw, 1991). An intersectional approach is necessary in order to trace the ways in which patriarchy and racism have shaped Black women's identity (Crenshaw, 1991).

According to Connell (1995) and Morrell (1998), gendered practices that legitimize male hegemonic violence are the affirmation of manhood and it is through these gendered practices that we become aware of the harm that is caused by the normalization of heterosexuality and the marginalization of homosexuality. Discrimination and violence against females and non-conforming genders are deeply rooted in patriarchal cultures (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Jackson, 2006). Patriarchy espouses heterosexuality in ways that are damaging to

'others' (Butler, 1990). Butler (1990) asserts that heterosexuality is maintained through the violent 'policing' or denigration 'othering' of 'abnormal' ('unintelligible') homosexuality by 'normal' genders ('intelligible'). It is within this dominant patriarchal construct, that lesbians are threatened with corrective rape (Msibi, 2009; Soudien, 2008). This violent intolerance towards lesbians is what led to the brutal rape and murder of a South African lesbian soccer captain (Msibi, 2009) and no doubt there are countless others who face the same fate on a daily basis. Violent lethal homophobic attacks are highlighted in the media across the globe, despite constitutional guarantees of freedom and protection (Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010). So, when there is violence within these lesbian communities it remains shrouded in a veil of silence. Crenshaw (1991) amongst others believes that the fear of embarrassment of these already ostracized as deviant is what leads to this secrecy. In many cultures, like the deeply patriarchal isiZulu culture in South Africa, homosexuality is considered un-African (Epprecht, 2013; Gontek, 2009). Non-hegemonic masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1995) are violently policed as a result of their perceived transgressions (Bhana, 2014; Msibi, 2009; Kimmel, 2008; Connell, 2005; 1995).

These overlapping dynamics of patriarchy, race and sexuality intersect to further marginalize females. What this suggests is that violence perpetrated by females is a complex phenomenon and may not be understood as purely one-dimensional issue. The nexus between, contextual factors and oppressive structures cannot be over emphasized in the construction of violent feminine identities as well as in their motives for violence. These intersections highlight the need to investigate and to consider the multiple identities that converge in our construction of violent females (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Chun, Lipsitz & Shin, 2013; Crenshaw, 1991).

2.2.8. Violent femininities: gangs and bullying

An earlier study by Burman, Batchelor and Brown (2001) in Scotland researched ways in which girls aged 13 to 16 years conceptualize, experience and use violence. Their study sample comprised of +/-800 girls from diverse socio-economic and class backgrounds. The findings revealed multiple disclosures regarding the context of their experience and use of violence. These included domestic violence, self-harm, bullying, attempted suicide, torture, rape as well as physical and social abuse. The girls in this study spoke vividly about their own violence. Young girls are increasingly becoming involved in a culture of gang violence (Mullins & Miller, 2008; Burman, Batchelor & Brown, 2001). This international research points to shifting

social expectations and cultural constructions that celebrate the violent femme and normalize 'ladette' culture as well as social networking that normalizes, rewards and incites girls' fights – these two socio-cultural shifts could be impacting on the rising rates of girls' crime and violence (Mullins & Miller, 2008; Burman, Batchelor & Brown, 2001). Brown's (2003) study of 421 American young girls and women also from different backgrounds in respect of race, class and geographic location illustrated girl-on-girl aggression. This study found several motivations for the girls' aggression which included sexual harassment, bullying, jealousy, fights for power, boys and for visibility, which were connected to cultural denigration of femininity. Jones' (2008) ethnographic study of violence among American Black inner-city girls and women illustrates how violence has become embedded in street codes that offers survival tactics. Both Jones' (2008) and Brown (2003) show the subterfuge of females' aggression and other forms of horizontal violence carried out by these females in previously subordinated positions.

Violent female offenders are to a great extent absent from feminist analysis as they are pathologized as monstrosity (Morrissey, 2002; Edley & Wetherell, 2001). Violent women are frequently positioned as the 'other' in relation to desirable femininity (Scharff, 2012; Morrissey, 2003). Post feminism idealizations of women's assertiveness and agency may on some level appear to diminish the contradiction between violence and femininity; the perceived changes in the way in which acceptable femininity is defined may also institute new ways of polarizing femininity and violence in public discussions (Chesney-Lind, 2006). Ringrose (2006) focuses on post-feminist portrayals of teenage girls suggesting that the rise of post-feminism and the gendered anxieties attached to it generates divisions between normalized 'mean girl' and the deviant 'violent girls' through which femininity is constrained and continues to be disconnected from violence.

What is considered as socially acceptable femininity is constantly changing, resulting in different femininities which may not only transform in line with historical, societal and cultural changes, but may co-exist (Gill & Arthurs, 2006). Several feminist researchers posit that, in recent decades valuable femininity has been increasingly shaped in accordance with a post-feminist sensibility (Gill, 2008). Post-feminism draws upon both feminist and anti-feminist influences and is based on the idealization of women's agency and their assumed capacity to choose to act in contemporary social contexts in ways not limited by traditional ideas of gender-appropriate behaviour (Scharff, 2012; Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2004).

2.2.9. Violent Femininities at School

Both local and international literature shows that schoolgirls may be just as violent as schoolboys (Bhana, 2018; 2008; Espelage & De LaRue 2011; Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Morojele 2009; Jackson, 2006; DeSouza & Ribeiro 2005; Brown 2003). By actively participating in violence, they transgress gender norms of female passivity and non-violence. However, categorizing females as a homogenous group of passive non-aggressors would in effect contradict empirical research that shows that schoolgirls physically, verbally and sexually assault their peers, as well as engage in bullying (Bhana 2018; Espelage, Basile & Hamburger, 2012; Ringrose & Renold 2010; Jackson, 2006). Girls who are not afraid to violate the normative feminine construct and who are not afraid to violently challenge gender boundaries, risk been labelled gender 'deviants' (Ringrose & Renold 2010). These so-called gender 'deviants' (Ringrose & Renold, 2010), precipitate new and alternate femininities (Holland 2004) that challenge long held perceptions of females as solely victims and males as solely perpetrators of gender violence. A plethora of research on male-centred gender violence perpetration has largely rendered female perpetration invisible, adding to the misperception that females are incapable of such violence. Violence has become a common occurrence for schoolgirls as they actively involve themselves in cultures of violence (Bhana, 2008; Jackson, 2006; Ringrose, 2006; Brown 2003).

Turning our attention to international literature on schoolgirl violence, Jackson's (2006) explorative study on ladette culture in six secondary schools in England found that girls displayed behavioural patterns that were in line with what the media defined as 'ladette' behaviours. These included behaving aggressively smoking, screaming, fighting, drinking, disrupting lessons, being rude, loud and openly speaking about (heterosexual) sex (Jackson, 2006). This type of behaviour is commonly associated with 'lads' rather than young girls. The ladettes' behaviour in this study transgressed gender boundaries as they entered what is stereotypically defined as 'masculine' territory. In doing so, these ladettes were 'demonized' by some of their teachers, who ironically, may have dismissed the same behaviour in the boys (lads) as 'typical boy' (Osler & Vincent, 2003). Reay (2001) found that the teachers labelled ladettes as 'cows/bitches/bad influence for exhibiting behaviours that contradicted traditional feminine norms. But Harris (2004) argues that young females are now more confident, assertive and eager to take advantage of opportunities. Connell (2000) posits that females who defy the boundaries imposed by femininity are making 'excursions' into masculine territory and are thus laying claim to social power. In this way their construction of femininities and ways of

performing femininity have notably shifted as they are no longer prepared to accept their submissive status.

Simmons (2002) argues that girls' repressed anger and aggression may result in them struggling with the desire to be independent and forthright whilst simultaneously maintaining gender norms and identity. This internal tussle and repression may result in girls committing violent acts of aggression such as bullying. Brown's (2003) American study of 421 young girls and women from diverse backgrounds found that bullying, girl-on-girl aggression and jealousy was motivated by the desire for respect, visibility and social power through public platforms. Brown (2003) found important variations where girls spoke about their victims in relationally complicated ways, by appearing to be 'concerned' and 'nice' and sympathizing with them. Normative aspects of femininity contribute to the myth that all girls are non-violent, when in actual fact girls are capable of extreme aggression. These idealized aspects of femininity may contribute to repressed anger boiling over that leads to bullycide (Renolds, 2005; Twohey, 2004). Girls may gang up and collude to provoke, humiliate and belittle other girls (Jackson, 2006; Adler & Worral, 2004). This collaboration amongst girls who bully others was also noted by Espelage, Holt and Henkel (2003) who found that girls who kept the company of girls who engage in bullying, were more likely to become bullies. Similar findings were made by Bhana (2008) in a local context as well as Jennings, Maldonaldo-Mollina and Komino (2010). The suggestion here is that the peer groups are powerful and influential in maintaining aggressive, hostile behaviours especially in adolescence. Both Espelage, Basile and Hamburger (2012) and Espelage and De La Rue (2011) studies of 1300 American middle schools found that 22% of the girls disclosed making unwanted sexual comments to others. The suggestion here is that girls do perpetrate sexual violence even at a young age. These findings correlate with an earlier Brazilian study by DeSouza and Ribeiro (2005) who found that both high school girls and boys who self-reported bullying perpetration were more likely to sexually harass their peers.

Technology has enabled the extension of bullying into Cyberspace. Cyberbullying takes place where girls and boys use the internet, mobile phones or other electronic technologies to insult, harass, spread rumours, damage peoples' reputations and distribute videos and pictures that harm them. Both girls and boys are likely to be victims as well as perpetrators of cyberbullying. American studies by Kowalski, Limber and Agatson (2008) and Mason (2008) found that girls were twice as likely to be both victim and perpetrator. This may be attributed to the fact that girls use of online social networking is much higher than boys and that girls are likely to post

more personal information online than boys (Chang, Kazdin, Hogan & Ibanga, 2008). Li's (2005) Canadian study on cyberbullying in schools found that 60% of the victims of cyberbullying were females and that female cyberbullying is very often directed at other females. Posting of personal information can be misused to issue insults to reputations (Daly, 2008; Jones 2008) and this in turn, may lead to conflict that may very well spiral out of control and lead to violent extremes. In some cases, so-called 'hit-lists' were created where girls post online the identity of their next target (Oliveiro, 2004; Batheja 2004).

Switching to a local context, most of the research on female violence in South Africa is more school-related gender violence showing female learners are also agents of gender violence (Morojele, 2009; Bhana, 2008). These earlier studies show that young girls are neither not afraid to use violence nor are they afraid to respond with violence. However, the research shows that these girls are in the minority (Morojele, 2009; Bhana, 2008; Leach & Humphreys 2007; Woods & Jewkes 2001). According to Bhana (2008, p.408) "violence inheres the everyday life of school girls as they avoid it, negotiate it and indulge in it". Violence has become commonplace in schools and it is sometimes difficult to escape from it. Even non-violent schoolgirls are somehow caught in the violence as they try to avoid it. Girls' aggression and bullying may lead to dastardly consequences. This was evident in the recent bullying of a Limpopo schoolgirl who committed suicide after allegedly experiencing repeated bullying by other girls (Mayeza, 2021). This shows that girls' aggression can lead to dangerous and violent extremes if left unchecked. It further highlights the fact that some girls are just as belligerent as some boys. The use of violence by girls aged 7-8 in a South African working-class context was examined in Bhana's (2008) earlier ethnographic study. Bhana (2008, p.402) argues that viewing girls as perpetual victims "fragments our knowledge about their school experiences". In other words, we do not gain the full picture or extent to which girls are actively involved in violence simply because we have these preconceived notions that all girls adhere to strict feminine norms of passivity. We need to resist this homogenizing impulse because it not only reduces girls to rigid binaries but it also overlooks the possibility for multiple femininities, just as there are multiple masculinities (Bhana, 2008; Connell, 1995). The paper therefore, argues that primary school girls who come from the African working class are also active agents of violence too, albeit shaped by material and social deprivation (Bhana, 2008). The girls in this study used violence for material gain as they struggle to survive, and secure power and friendships with both boys and girls. Bhana (2008) reaffirms the complexity through which power is deployed by girls, its context being the rigid binary definition that separates girls and

boys. In a later study Bhana and Pillay (2011) continue to argue against the homogenizing impulse of girls because it obscures the possibility of multiple femininities. In their research on South African schools, Bhana and Pillay (2011) highlight the girls' testimonies in the study that point to the presence of violence and conflict contests. According to Bhana and Pillay (2011) although the girls did not claim to be violent, their accounts and experiences of violence point to alternate forms of femininities which are disruptive of gender norms. The girls castigated transgressive femininities, and this points to a binary logic of heterosexuality operating (Bhana & Pillay, 2011).

Butler (1990) posits that girls actively participate in sexual cultures and as they challenge each other for power and status, vying for power, body policing, they *'police'* other girl's sexuality and behaviour. The girls in Bhana and Pillay (2011) produced forms of femininities that hurt, violate and marginalize others; they are sexual agents asserting their sexuality, claiming their stake in the heterosexual network through violence. The girls constructed competitive and violent femininities as they fought for boys, this shows that the girls are agentic as they shape and police gender sexual relations. In a more recent study Bhana (2018) explores girls' investments in heterosexual cultures in primary schools and examines how gender power inequalities and violent relations manifest (Renold, 2005). Schools are key sites where inequalities, sexual harassment and violence are produced and played out (Bhana, 2018; 2016; Paetcher, 2017; Renold, 2005). The 'cool femininities' take on violent expressions to reconstruct heterosexual desirability for boys (Bhana, 2018). The girls in this study also fight for boys and in this way, they are perceived as transgressors of 'respectable femininity'. The paper shows girls understand their place in gender relations, they mediate rather than passively accept or acquiesce to male power (Bhana, 2018). Bhana (2018) offered insight into the way in which femininities were produced in a primary school context. What the research on schoolgirl violence argues is that while girls are positioned as innocent, passive and without agency, they are certainly not all innocent and peace-loving, rather they are complicit and agentic in playground violence (Bhana, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2011; Bhana, 2008; Leach, 2002). The female violence in schools and in the communities' filters to university. Female students reproduce their learned violent behaviour as they use violence against their fellow students.

It is important that we shift our mindsets regarding violence and females, failure to do so results in us perpetuating gender norms that narrow our perceptions. The research illustrates that while

girls' engagement in violence at schools is not as great as boys, it nevertheless does occur. Violence is part of a schoolgirls' repertoire. Locally, with the exception of Bhana (2018; 2011; 2008), there is very little research on schoolgirl violence, however internationally, there is a much research in this field (Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Jackson, 2006; Renold, 2005). Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, (2012) reiterate that "a violent social context breeds violence" (p39). Violence at school is endemic and this reflects the broader South Africa where violence becomes the order of the day (Botha, 2014; SACE, 2011).

2.2.10. Violent femininities at Universities

The lack of research presents a challenge in estimating the magnitude of the problem of female student violence, while the focus has largely been on female students and those who identify as victims of this scourge, there has been a gradual shift in recognising and acknowledging that violent femininities are ever present at campuses across the globe (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Hill, 2005). As the focus of the current study is on female student violence, I will highlight the gender violence statistics of each study as it pertains to female students. While most of the research focuses exclusively on male students as perpetrators, there are some who include both females and non-conforming genders as well (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Porter & Williams, 2011). However, there is scant research both locally and abroad, focusing solely on female students who engage in all forms of aggression. In South Africa, research on gender violence at universities focuses on female students as victims and male students as perpetrators of this scourge.

Commissioned by the American Association of Universities (AAU), Hill (2005) reported findings from the nationally representative survey of undergraduate students that shows that not all males are aggressive and not all females are passive and non-violent. Hill (2005) found that female students harassed both male and female students with less than 10% of females who were harassed by a single female student while 6% of females were harassed by a group of female students. Most notable was that 23% of male students were harassed by both male and female students, with 20% (one-fifth) of male students being harassed by female students only. Hill (2005) also found that one third (⅓) of female students admitted to sexually harassing another student. What these findings suggest is that while males are by far the largest perpetrators of gender violence at campus, they are by no means the only aggressors – female students are just as capable. Research shows that there are some students who regardless of their gender and sexual orientation physically aggress other students (Fisher & Pina, 2013;

Porter & Williams, 2011). Hill (2005) also found that 80% of students have been harassed by their peers. This suggests a culture of tolerance of such behaviour.

An empirical study by Luthra and Gidyez (2006) evaluated the model of dating violence by Riggs and O'Leary (1989) using a sample of 200 American students (100 males and 100 female), also completed an assessment battery concerning the occurrence of violence in their dating relationship. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years with 64.5% of them enrolled in first year, while 98.5% were heterosexual. At least 52.5% of the students dated casually, with 44 % of them in a relationship for longer than six weeks. The remaining students had never been in a dating relationship and therefore their responses were removed from the analysis by the researcher. Using the 18-item Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996), the researchers assessed the perpetration of dating violence. Of great significance was the fact that the dating model was more effective and accurate in predicting violence for female students (83.3%) compared with male students (30%). With regard to perpetration of violence, 25% of females, while 10% of male students admitted to this act. Luthra and Gidyez (2006) found distinct predictors of dating violence for females. Firstly, that females were 108 times more likely to perpetrate violence as a result of their partners use of aggression. This was the single largest predictor of female dating violence and it was consistent with research that shows that female victimisation as the primary reason for their perpetration of violence (Swan & Snow, 2006; Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). Secondly the use of alcohol has proved to be a major risk factor at universities with regard to gender violence and this study is no different with both male and female reporting alcohol use were five times more likely to perpetrate violence against dating partners. Thirdly, female students whose fathers were violent were almost three times more likely to perpetrate violence against their dating partners. These findings highlight an important issue in the social learning model which explains the intergenerational nature of domestic violence (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 2006). Children who are exposed to violence in their family are more likely to act out in a dysfunctional manner. Male students were not part of this dynamic and this suggests that females may be more psychologically affected by the violence and they may battle to maintain proper interpersonal relationships. This conclusion is evident in other research of a similar nature by Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz (2006) who conclude that when a female assaults her partner, it 'models' violence for their offspring and this contributes to the increase in violence in the next generation. Luthra and Gidyez (2006) found that both alcohol use and exposure to violence in childhood have largely been cited as reasons for female violence and

this resonates with other research (Russell & Oswald, 2002) What does emerge from this study is that female students do engage in physical aggression and violence at university and that the motivation for their physical aggression may be similar to male students. The result of Luthra and Gidyez's (2006) research lends credence to the overall goal of the current study.

Similar research on physical aggression amongst dating partners at universities was conducted by Straus and Ramirez (2007), however they focused on gender symmetry in prevalence, severity and chronicity of physical aggression against dating partners. Straus and Ramirez (2007) report results from the analysis of four international university samples of 1446 students of the International Dating Violence study. The revised conflict scales (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996) was used as a measuring instrument. It has been expanded and modified measuring tool used by numerous schools worldwide and offers the opportunity to explore relations among the subscales. The results provide overwhelming evidence of gender symmetry in respect of violence against a dating partner in all four samples. However, and more importantly, what needs to be highlighted as it is pertinent to the current study, is the intricate details regarding the actual statistics. Among the 553 couples where one or both partners were violent, there was gender symmetry in 71.2%, but when only one partner was violent, it was twice as likely to be the female partner (19,0%) compared with male partner (9,8%). Among the 205 couples where there was an act of severe aggression there was gender symmetry by 56.6% of the cases, but when only one partner was violent, it was again twice as likely to be the female partner (29.8%) compared with the male partners (13.7%). These findings are in line with other research find that shows that female violence was not used solely for defence purposes (Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003; Archer, 2002) and it also reveals that like males, females do perpetrate unilateral violence (Ehrensaft, Moffit & Caspi, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2003). In addition, it is consistent with research that females are just as capable of committing severe violence within their intimate relationships (Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). Furthermore, an exception to these findings was that in all four samples among the subgroups who committed one or more severe acts of violence males in all four samples committed more acts than females. This exception to the broad findings of the study is consistent with other empirical research that males perpetrated more acts of violence (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs et al. 2016; Cantor et al., 2015). The strength of these analyses lies first in that the sample was culturally and socially diverse and that the study provided additional aspects of partner violence such as severity, chronicity and gender symmetry. The parallel result in all four samples suggests that the revised CTS2 was the appropriate measuring tool in

the study. Based on the findings of this paper by Straus and Ramirez (2007), it is evident that gender symmetry in physical aggression among dating students is prevalent in different cultural contexts. The empirical findings illustrate that not all females are passive as they are prepared to exercise their agency in violent ways. These findings are in keeping with the aims of the current study.

Hines and Saudino (2003) investigated the gender differences in aggression using the revised Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996). Hines and Saudino (2003) American sample of 481 students (female = 302; male = 179) had to have been in a dating relationship within the previous six months in order to be part of the study. What is important to mention is that Hines and Saudino (2003) included a question on the gender of the respondent's partner, this is critical in research of this nature as it cannot be assumed that all perpetrators are male and all victims are female. With respect to perpetration of aggression, 86% of the females and 82% of the males reported psychological aggression; 35% of females and 29% of males reported physical aggression; 6.5% of females and 6.1% reported inflicting injury. There was no significant gender difference in these three categories. Females and males reported similar perpetration rates and this is in line with other research findings that both sexes perpetrate approximately similar physical and psychological aggression (Straus & Ramirez, 2007; Archer, 2002). However, there is one notable exception in the category of severe physical aggression and that is that a significantly higher percentage of males (12.5%) than females reported (4.1%) receiving severe physical aggression. Females reported that they perpetrated these acts when they were victimised by it. The finding contrasts with previous reports of perpetration. Firstly, the suggestion is that males may not want to divulge that they are physically aggressive or violent as this is anti-social behaviour. Secondly it could be that the females were not dating the same males in the study. With respect to sexual coercion, males (29%) were significantly more likely to report this compared to females (13.5%), therefore the gender difference was significantly higher. These findings are consistent with research evidence that males are primary perpetrators of sexual coercion. (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs et al. 2016; European Union Commission, 2012). The findings, despite the differing rates, also reaffirms other research that illustrate that females sometimes display sexually coercive behaviour and that they do use verbal threats or insults to obtain sex (Russell & Oswald, 2001). An important aspect that needs to be mentioned is the issue of victimisation as there is more often than not, a relationship between these rates and the rates of perpetration. Hines and Saudino (2003) found that there was a significant gender difference with respect to physical

aggression, with females reporting 4.5% victimization and males reporting 12.5%. These findings suggest that females are sometimes the primary perpetrators of physical aggression, debunking the long-held assumptions that females commit violence solely as a result of their own victimization or in self-defence (Wesley, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2006; Dasgupta, 2002). Hines and Saudino (2003) found no significant gender difference in the remaining three victimization categories with males and females experiencing similar rates. This resonates with researchers in the gender symmetry field where it was illustrated that males and females commit similar rates of aggression (Straus & Ramirez, 2007). Another important aspect to highlight in this study as it is closely connected to the current study is the issue of females exercising their agency as they report their own aggressive behaviour within their relationships. In the context of aggression, the female respondents disclosed that they were the sole perpetrators of physical aggression (8%); psychological aggression (14%); Injury (3.5%) and sexual coercion (3%) in their intimate relationship. The male respondents also reported that females were the sole perpetrators of psychological aggression (4%); physical aggression (10%); injury (5%) and sexual coercion (2%) in their relationships. What these findings suggest is that not all females are stereotypically non-aggressive and non-violent and this correlates with research evidence that shows that females do commit unilateral violence and aggression (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018; Lattu, 2016; Archer, 2000). The overall results of Hines and Sandino's study (2003) were consistent with previous research that assessed aggression within intimate partner relationships where females perpetrated higher rates of psychological aggression and similar or equal rates of physical aggression by males and females (Straus & Ramirez, 2007; Archer, 2000). The weakness of the study is that they did not address the context of the aggressive behaviour and this perhaps is a fault of the CTS2 that does not have a category for this aspect. Another shortcoming of the study was that the relationship type – i.e. heterosexual or same sex relationship – was not specified. Using the revised CTS2 (Koss, Abbey, Campbell, Cook, Norms, Testa, et al., 2007), Hines and Saudino (2003) were able to obtain a deeper level of analysis by using several subscales that were previously lacking in the old CTS2 scale.

The first two studies by Luthra and Gidyez (2006) and Straus and Ramirez (2007) researched physical aggression by students within their dating relationships. The third study by Hines and Saudino (2003) investigated dating aggression using the revised conflict tactics scale. The following research focuses on sexual aggression victimization and perpetration among male and female students. A broad definition of sexual aggression by Cook, Gidyez, Koss and

Murphy (2011) as well as Krahé (2013) refers to a range of sexual activities such as sexual intercourse, oral sex, kissing and touching imposed on a person without their consent; it involves the use of physical force and verbal pressure as well as the exploitation of the victims' inability to resist.

Empirical studies show that while male sexual aggression has been studied by several scholars over a long period of time, there has been an almost dismissive attitude towards female sexual aggression. A few studies address the issues, highlighting that sexual aggression occurs in same-sex as well as opposite sex individuals (Fisher & Pina, 2013; Martin, Fisher, Warren, Krebs & Lindquist, 2011; Peterson, Voller, Polusny & Murdoch, 2011; Anderson & Savage, 2005). As I previously stated, research that focuses solely on female students' violence is scant. Most of the literature includes males and other non-conforming genders. Hence the current study attempts to fill this gap, especially in a university context. The following international studies have all focused on sexual aggression victimisation and perpetration among first year male and female university students. This was specifically avoiding the age spectrum of 14 or 15 for two reasons, firstly as this was the legal age of consent (still is in some countries) it was to exclude any incidents, secondly to avoid the issue of childhood trauma.

At a Brazilian university, D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013) measured the prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization amongst first year students since the age of 14. The sample of 742 students at the University of Sao Paulo included 411 females, 329 males and two participants who did not indicate their sex. As a result, their evidence-based high-risk status, this group is particularly vulnerable to unwanted sexual experience and therefore, the researchers chose to focus solely on them. The Sexual Experience Survey (SES) (Koss, Abbey, Campbell, Cook, Norms, Testa, et al., 2007) was used as a standard measuring tool and is the most widely used instrument for assessing sexual aggression and victimization with behaviourally specific questions and has been thoroughly revised to measure both victimization as well as perpetration in men and women. The Portuguese version of the short form of the Sexual Experiences Survey was used to measure both sexual victimization (SES – SFV) and sexual perpetration (SES – SFP) of both men and women using in same-sex or heterosexual relationships using gender neutral language. Despite D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013) adding a single question about the reported incident occurring in a current relationship, acquaintance or stranger with multiple responses, the SES (Koss, et al., 2007) proved to be an excellent tool as it yielded rich data. Although the study confirms that significantly more males reported perpetrating all forms of

sexual aggression, there were females who also engaged in this negative behaviour. The high rates for male sexual perpetration (33.7%) are consistent with research that males are largely the perpetrator of gender violence (Krebs et al., 2016; Cantor et al., 2015). Although the female rates of perpetration are at 3%, holistically in the light of the fact that 3.7% of the female victims were assaulted by another female student (using verbal pressure, that and use of physical force as well as exploitation of a victim's inability to resist) shows that gender is not solely to blame for violence. The low rates of female sexual perpetration may be as a result of traditional gender roles and idealised socialization pressures that cocoon females into a passive role (Motz, 2008; 2001) and therefore females may not readily admit to sexual aggression. According to D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013) the female respondents may have underreported their sexual aggression because the very idea of a female coercing a male into sexual activities conflicts with traditional sex scripts of males as initiators and females as gatekeepers of sexual intimacy (Krahé, 2000). It is primarily for this reason that society tends to overlook female perpetrated sexual aggression and violence as promiscuous, rather than criminal (Oswald & Russell, 2006).

Krahé and Berger (2013) conducted a similar study that also examined the prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization of 2149 first year students in heterosexual and same-sex encounters from 10 different universities. Just like D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013), Krahé and Berger's (2013) also used the revised version of the SES (Koss, et al., 2007), but they also added an assessment based on the role of alcohol in the reported incidents, which differed from D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013), as well as clarification on the forms of coercive strategies, sexual acts and the victim-perpetrator relationship. The online data survey allowed for participants to press a button if any of the questions triggered powerful memories, counselling support was readily available if needed. The online survey allowed Krahé and Berger's (2013) to streamline the appropriate questionnaire to the participants in terms of sex and their sexual engagement with opposite or same-sex people. This screening process was extremely useful in terms of analysing data relating to victimization amongst bisexual individuals. Bisexual males (had sex with male and female) had a higher rate of victimisation with the use of force by a female perpetrator (8.1%) than men who only had sex with women (3.4%). The study also found that women with bisexual contacts perpetration rates were substantially higher among bisexual contacts (10.7%) than among women with only heterosexual contacts (5.3%). Similar perpetration rates were found in exclusively heterosexual and bisexual males' behaviour (11.2% and 13.0% respectively), thus reaffirming male dominance. Additional analysis concerning sexual behaviour patterns revealed that when women who had sex with both men

and women they had the highest victimisation rate (39.7%) compared to women who only had sex with men (31.1%) and followed by men who had sex with both women and men (25%) and men who only had sex with women (14.6%). The data also showed that the rate of men's victimisation by women was 17.1% for men who only had heterosexual contacts and 19.8% for men who had sex with both men and women. The heterosexual perpetration rates for males (11.6%) and females (5.9%) is in line with other research findings (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003; Krahé, Waizenhöfer & Möller, 2003). Although the female perpetration rate is much lower, it still shows us that females do perpetrate sexual aggression. A different picture emerges in Russell & Oswald (2002) study of university students where high rates report of sexual victimisation of male students (43.9%) by female students. The use of alcohol was involved in 73.8% of the reported victimisation incidents and 68.8% of the perpetration incidents. These findings are in line with other research that corroborates alcohol consumption and sexual aggression and violence (Abbey, 2011; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton & McAuslan, 2004). However, the level of intoxication was not assessed, only the number of incidents using alcohol was assessed. The strength of Krahé and Berger's (2013) study lies in the fact that it provided data from a large-scale German student population that proved to be comparable to research in the USA. The study also used the same participants to obtain both victimisation and perpetration reports which was broken down by different strategies, relationship status and lifestyles. The limitation of the study was that there were fewer participants who had same-sex contacts compared to those with heterosexual and bisexual experiences, so the rates for this group needs to be looked at continuously. The analysis of reporting disparities for victimization and perpetration was not based on reports from couples, rather on individual reports therefore the level of underreporting cannot be fully determined. The overall results of the study reaffirm the widespread belief by scholars that individuals who have sexual contact with both opposite and same sex partners are at a heightened risk of experiencing and perpetrating sexual aggression (Edwards et al., 2015; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013).

Moving to Poland, Tomaszewska and Krahé (2015) examined prevalence of sexual aggression and victimisation and perpetration in heterosexual encounters since the age of 15. The slight difference was that while Krahé and Berger (2013) and D'Abreu, Krahé and Bazon (2013) chose first year students, Tomaszewska and Krahe (2015) chose second year students. The sample consisted of 565 Polish students (365 females and 201 males) from two different universities. Like Krahé and Berger's (2013) study, Tomaszewska and Krahé (2015) examined

the role of alcohol in the sexually aggressive incidents broken down by victim-perpetrator relationships and sexual acts. The Sexual Aggression and Victimisation Scale (SAV-S) (Krahé and Berger, 2013) that was inspired by SES (Koss, et al., 2007) and has been successfully used at an international level was used in this study. The SAV-S examines three coercive strategies: i) The use of threat or physical force ii) exploitation victims incapacitated state iii) the use of verbal pressure with each of these categories, broken down into victim-perpetrator relationships (current or former partner, friend or acquaintance, stranger) and further broken down into sub-set types and parallel items addressing 36 items for victimisation and 36 items for perpetration. The Polish version of the SAV-S was carefully developed and translated (Krahé, Berger, Vanwesenbeeck, Bianchi, Chiaoutakis, Fernandez, Feuntes, et al., 2015) and the validity was addressed through a qualitative internal study in nine European countries (Krahé, Haas, Vanwesenbeeck, Bianchi, Chiaoutakis, Feuntes, et al., 2016). The participants were given questionnaires (pencil-and-paper version) during their lectures to complete together with a list of professional counselling centres should they require their services. A consistent finding with other similar research (Krahé and Berger, 2013; Kolivas & Gross, 2007) shows that the rates of victimisation are significantly higher than the rates of perpetration in both males and females (victimisation of females was 34.3% and males, 28.4%; perpetration by females was 6.5% and males, 11.7%). Tomaszewska and Krahé (2015) found little difference between the victimisation rates of both males and females which is contrary to other research that shows huge disparities between men and women's victimisation (Weiss, 2010). The reported high rates of male victimisation are also contrary to general assumptions that males are reluctant to disclose their victimisation especially at the hands of a female (Fisher & Pina, 2013). Part of the success of this research lies in the fact that the victim-perpetrator relationship was also examined and this was crucial, considering that violence within interpersonal relationships is rife on campuses. Tomaszewska and Krahé (2015) were able to draw out the various coercive strategies involving perpetrators who were known, either current or former partners, friend or acquaintance. The study reported victimisation of males by someone known to them stood at 27.4% while females stood at 31.8%. Added to these was the female reported perpetration rate against a current or former partner at 5.1%, 2.8% against a friend or acquaintance, with a further 1.4% against a stranger. What the findings suggest is that females are more likely to perpetrate sexual aggression against a known person rather than a stranger. The use of alcohol is once again highlighted as a risk factor for sexual aggression and violence by several scholars (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton & McAuslan, 2004; Abbey & McAuslan, 2004. Given that 70% of males reported perpetration incidents of sexual aggression and 33%

of female reported perpetration incidents; together with reports by 71.1% males and 50% females that alcohol was used by one or both parties – the role of alcohol in the context of sexual aggression and violence cannot be overestimated. These findings corroborate other research findings about the relationships between alcohol and anti-social behaviour on campus (Abbey et al., 2004). The use of alcohol especially amongst male students during sexual activity, has been found to significantly increased the likelihood of perpetrating sexual assault (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004). However, the percentage for female reported perpetration rates, under the influence of alcohol, needs to be interpreted with caution as there were only five females who fell into this category. Close ended questions limit the participants' responses, had these been open-ended it would have allowed them to elaborate further allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of the data. Also, as universities are diverse institutions in terms of gender identity and sexual orientations, research that concentrates solely on heterosexual relationships limits our understanding of same-sex students' experiences.

Turning our attention to Chile, Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca, Baeza and Muñoz-Reyes (2016) examined the prevalence of sexual aggression, victimization and perpetration since the age of 14 (legal age of consent) in a sample of 1135 students (male = 250; female = 885) aged between 18 and 29 years from five Chilean universities. The researchers focused on heterosexual students as they believed that this group reported a higher age at first sexual intercourse compared to lesbian and gay students and a lower number of sexual partners compared to bisexual students, however both these groups also differed in their sexual behaviour. Like the study by Tomaszewska and Krahé (2015), this study also examined the extent to which alcohol was involved in the reported incidents of victimisation and perpetration. Both studies used the Sexual Aggression and Victimisation Scale (SAV-S) (Krahé and Berger, 2013) to assess the prevalence of sexual aggression victimisation and perpetration in male and female students. The SAV-S has been widely used in 10 countries and has been validated by cross-cultural research conducted in several countries (Krahé, et al., 2015, 2016). By providing a detailed picture of relationship context of sexual assault the SAV-S (Krahé & Berger, 2013), assesses specific coercive strategies, the sexual act as well as the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator; it is more comprehensive than Sexual Experience Survey Short Form (SES-SF, Koss et al., 2007). The data was collected in an online survey after the participants were told about the study during lectures where interested students were sent a link to the survey. Similar to the previous study, Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca Baeza and Muñoz-Reyes (2016) provided specialised counselling services with a push of a button if students required this.

Krahé and Vanwesenbeeck (2016) recommend this as part of good practice in research on social aggression. A consistent picture emerges regarding the role of alcohol in sexually aggressive behaviour. With respect to perpetration the findings reveal that 48.6% of females and 53.7% of males reported that alcohol was used by one or both parties; while 63.6% of victimised females and 70.0% victimised males reported alcohol use by one or both parties suggesting yet again that alcohol is a problem for both. The overall rates of victimisation were 51.9% for females and 48.0% for males who reported at least one incident of sexual victimisation. Research evidence shows that males are also victims of sexual aggression (Peterson, Voller, Polusny & Murdoch, 2011) contrary to a plethora of research that there is not much of a difference in gender with respect to victimisation which shows higher victimisation rates for females than males (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Bruce, et al., 2015; Breiding, Smith, Basile, Walters, Chen, Merrick, 2014). Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca, Baeza and Muñoz-Reyes', (2016) findings are consistent with cross-cultural research that also found not much difference in gender with respect to victimisation (Tomaszewska and Krahé, 2015; D'Abreu, et al., 2013; Schuster et al., 2013). With respect to sexual aggression perpetration since the age of 14,16.6% of females and 28.8% of males reported at least an incident. By comparison, perpetration rates for females are generally lower for females, but what it does show, is that females are also capable of perpetrating sexual aggression. These findings resonate with other research that females, while fewer in number, are perpetrators of sexually aggressive behaviours (Fisher & Pina, 2013). What is important to note is that 6.3% of females and 19.4% of males reported being sole perpetrators of sexual aggressive behaviour. These findings suggest that females do actively pursue sexual activity and that is in line with other research evidence that found that females, whilst a smaller number than males, use several coercive strategies to force males to engage in sexual intercourse (Hines, 2008; Banyard, Ward, Cohn, Plante, Moorland & Walsh, 2007; Russell & Oswald, 2001). Research in the field of sexual aggression victimisation and perpetration in Chile is relatively new. The employment of the SAV-S assessment allowed the researchers to provide extensive insight into the extent of sexual aggression victimisation and perpetration amongst students. The exclusion of same sex orientated students overlooks the experiences of an already vulnerable groups (Rothman, Exner & Baughman, 2011).

The previous four studies in Brazil (D'Abreu, Krahé & Bazon, 2013), Germany (Krahé & Berger, 2013), Poland (Tomaszewska & Krahé, 2015) and Chile (Schuster, Krahé, Ilabaca Baeza & Muñoz-Reyes, 2016) all focused on the prevalence of sexual aggression victimisation

and perpetration amongst university students. Some also examined the extent to which alcohol played a role in these incidents. Where the findings support the widespread belief that males are largely the perpetrators of this form of aggression and violence, it debunks the general assumption that females are solely victims and not perpetrators. While female student perpetration rates may be low, it still however shows that sexual aggression and violence is part of their repertoire. Despite the low rates of female perpetrators of sexual aggression, it does contradict traditional sex role scripts that only males are seekers of sex and that females are "gatekeepers" who deny (or allow) sexual advances from males (Krahé, 2000).

Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson and Anderson (2003) investigated women and men's reports of experiencing and using tactics of post-refusal sexual persistence since age 16 in two American universities. The sample comprised of 656 students (females = 381 and males = 275) with an average age of between 20 to 21 years. The participants were given a survey during lectures, with separate survey forms for females asking about their experiences with males and males asking about their experiences with females. The researchers excluded same-sex experiences as they presumed that all students, regardless of their sexual orientation could experience some form of sexual coercion from the opposite sex. Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson and Anderson (2003) defined the art of pursuing sexual contact with a person after they have refused initial addresses as 'post refusal sexual persistence'. The use of structured and open-ended questions to assess relationships between receivers and perpetrators, the manner in which the tactics were employed and the impact of the incident on the participants was effective as it allowed participants to openly describe their experience holistically and in detail. The researchers organised tactics based on their own previous research into four categories that reflect increasing levels of sexual exploitation with respect to gender differences (Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). Level one includes non-verbal sexual arousal tactics, level two consists of emotional manipulation and lies (verbal or psychological pressure), level three is related to alcohol and drug use (deliberate intoxication or incapacitation) and level four (physical force and harm). In the receivers' category 58% of the males (159) and 78% of the females (297) reported been subjected to at least one tactic of sexual pressure. Chi-square tests were conducted to assess differences in each specific category. In the perpetration category 26% of the females (101) and 43% of the males (118) reported having employed at least one tactic of sexual pressure. Five responses to open-ended questions were analysed according to the most exploitative tactics that were used in the incidents and it was found that nearly 70% of the participants had been subjected to at

least one tactic of post refusal sexual persistence since aged 16 with one third reporting to have used at least one tactic. However, these findings also suggest that while males are to a lesser extent victim of this form of aggression, they too also experience it (Turchik, 2012; Russell & Oswald, 2002). Examining the relationship between college men's sexual victimisation experiences engagement in health risk behaviours and sexual functioning Turchik (2012) found that 48.4% of male students reported their victimisation by female students and 3% by both sexes. Thirdly, although the rate of difference in the perpetration category is large, (26% female, 43% male) it still suggests that females are quite capable of using a range of coercive tactics to get what they want. The study highlighted a disparity between the large numbers of reported receivers compared to the lower numbers of reported perpetrators. Had the numbers included a question on who was committing the sexual persistent act, it may have addressed the disparity in some small way. However, male victims may not want to disclose their victimisation as this may call their masculinity into question. (Turchik, 2012).

2.2.11. Violence within non-normative gender relationships: Lesbianism and IPV (within the community and at university)

Although stereotypical gender roles of male dominance and aggression may render them powerful and they may sometimes use this preponderant power to subordinate females and to brutalise non-conforming genders (Bhana, 2014; Msibi, 2012; Pascoe, 2007), gender is not the only source for such abuse in relationships. Feminist post-modernist insist that power relations and their intercorrectiveness provide other sources for violence in intimate partner relationships (Daly, 2011). There are other fields of power such as cultural norms, ethnicity, status and sexual identity that intersect to provide particular contexts of IPV especially where females may be perpetrators (Daly, 2011). Empirical research on same sex relationships shows that some lesbians may feel powerless and that they use violence to achieve dominance in their intimate relationships (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009; Poorman, Seelau & Seelau, 2003; Renzetti, 1998). A Canadian study by Nielson (2004) discussed rates of violence amongst separating and divorcing couples in same-sex relationships. The study found that 40%-55% of all the couples had reported abuse (Nielson, 2004). The data also revealed that control, degradation, intimidation and domination were all elements of their abusive relationships. IPV in lesbian relationships suggests that gender violence is an abuse of power, and that there are other sources for such abuse in any relationship. Miller, Greene, Causby, White and Lockhart (2001) undertook a survey at a music concert with lesbians about the nature and experiences with violence and aggression in their relationships. The findings of their study showed that 46% of

the 284 respondents indicated they or their partner had threatened a mild form of physical aggression and only 14% reported being subjected to physical violence by a partner (Miller, Greene, Causby, White & Lockhart, 2001). Rohrbaugh (2006) found that violence occurred as frequently in same-sex (lesbian/gay) relationships as it did in heterosexual relationships. Turell (2000) found that violence was frequent in lesbian relationships. The violence perpetrated by the lesbian participants included physical (55%), sexual (14%) and emotional abuse (84%) (Turell, 2000). Other research on IPV within same-sex relationships shows that they identify similar rates of IPV (Messinger, 2011; Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009). Furthermore, a national survey of same-sex and opposite sex adolescent relationships indicates that women in same-sex relationships reported higher levels of IPV than men in same-sex relationships (Halpern, Young, Walden, Martin and Kupper, 2004).

Research on violence within lesbian relationships is scant with very few research studies having examined violence in lesbian relationships. This is similar to the research on female perpetrated violence within heterosexual relationships. Both these fields are under-researched largely due to the construction of female as passive and non-violent. Female violence is real, we can no longer shroud this phenomenon in a veil of secrecy simply because it makes us feel uncomfortable. Many researchers in IPV have not studied IPV within lesbian relationships because it questions the feminist premise that sexism and unequal gender relations (patriarchy) leads to violence (Costa, Machado & Antunes, 2011). In addition, lesbian relationships are subject to double invisibility; "negative attitudes veiled by society towards homosexuals, combined with the social legitimization of violence within intimate relationships, lead to violent behaviour within homosexual relationships being a socially invisible phenomenon (Antunes & Machado, 2005, p184). Feminist and women's liberation movement lead to a greater awareness and increase in research on gender violence against females with improvements in legal and policing reform, prevention and reduction. However, there was less research on violence against males and members of the LGBTQI+ community as well as little to no research on females as perpetrators of violence (Turchik, Hebenstreit & Judson, 2016). Reluctance to draw attention to the problem of IPV in lesbian relationships may jeopardize their struggle for equal rights (Messinger, 2017; Brown, 2008).

At universities interpersonal violence within same-sex relationships was often shrouded in silence especially with universities where heterosexuality is often valorised (Jagessar &Msibi, 2015). Sexual minority students encompass a diverse group of people which includes lesbian,

gay, bisexual, transgender male, transgender female, intersex, queer. An already marginalised group, sexual minority students remain on the fringes of research, intervention and support programmes (Edwards, Sylaska, Barry, Maynihan, Banyard, Cohn, Walsh & Ward, 2015). IPV within minority students' relationships may not be as widely researched, but it does nevertheless take place (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Messinger, 2011; Turell, 2000). Research shows that facets of minority stress like sexual identity concealment, internalised homonegativity, sexual orientation related victimisation and sexual minority stigma have a direct impact on the rates of same sex partner violence (Edwards, Sylaska, Barry, Moynihan, Banyard, Cohn, Walsh & Ward, 2015; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013). Edwards and Sylaska (2013) found that 20% of their student sample reported experiencing violence and victimisation within their current relationship and that internalised homonegativity was related to domestic violence perpetration and victimisation.

A pioneer study that explicitly focused on sexual minority students (SMS) and multiple forms of victimisation within their dating relationship, Edwards, Sylaska, Barry, Moynihan, Banyard, Cohn, Walsh & Ward (2015) found that SMS reported increased risk for victimisation compared to non-SMS. The purpose of their study at eight New England universities was to determine the six-month incidence rates of physical domestic violence, sexual assault and unwanted pursuit victimization among SMS with comparison data from non-SMS using 6030 university students (non-SMS = 4961; SMS = 1069), ages ranging from 18 to 24 years from eight New England universities. The sample comprised of 65.9% females' students. Interested students were given an email link. While some of the data was collected on-line, other data was collected through paper-and-pencil surveys. Data was analysed using various tools that were previously used in other research like the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Breiding, et al., 2014). Within a six-month period rates of interpersonal victimization-SMS females reported significantly higher rates of physical domestic violence (30.3%) than non-SMS females (12.9%). SMS females also reported higher rates of sexual victimisation (26.4%) and unwanted pursuit victimisation (55.5%) compared to their non-SMS females (13.7% and 39.9% respectively). These findings are consistent with other research evidence that found that minority stress was directly related to physical domestic violence victimisation and perpetration (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013). Minority stress, defined as "a multifaceted construct that includes experiences specifically related to one's sexual minority status such as: identity concealment and confusion; experienced and anticipated rejection; victimisation and discrimination; and internalised homonegativity". (Lewis, Milletich, Kelley & Allen, 2012,

p.251) may explain why SMS are at increased risk of high levels of interpersonal violence as well as isolation and victimisation by others (Duke & Davidson, 2009). According to Frost and Meyer (2009) minority stress may negatively impact the quality of the relationship which increases the risk of interpersonal violence. The weakness of the study was that the sample was largely homogenous, geographically and ethnically with 92.7% Caucasian and therefore cannot be generalised to more diverse students. The study did not include a specific category for bisexual students and therefore it was difficult to assess the students' specific experiences with regard to SMS students, also it did not include measures to assess factors that place them at increased risk of interpersonal violence. However, the study does highlight the urgent need for future research on SMS and the factors that place them at increased risk of victimisation and perpetration of interpersonal violence. The findings of the study provide evidence for the current study, showing that female students do engage in violent behaviour, with SMS females reporting higher rates of physical domestic violence that non-SMS females.

Drawing from a survey of 391 American university students in same-sex relationships, Edwards and Sylaska (2013) reported on the rates of IPV among LGBTIQ+ students. The sample comprised of 49% male, 44% female, 5% gender queer, 2% transman/woman, and 1% other (self-identified). Further, 72% identified as gay or lesbian, 15% as queer, 6% as bisexual; 5% pansexuals and 2% other (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013). The participants were recruited online and completed an online survey with open-ended questions. These open-ended questions are extremely helpful in gathering sensitive information for example reasons for non-disclosure of IPV. Almost one third (⅓) of LGBTIQ+ male and female victims did not tell anyone about their abuse and according to the researchers the victims who did not tell anyone about their experiences of physical victimisation reported higher levels of stress as a result of concealing their identity out of fear of rejection as well as overall homophobic attention (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013). These findings are consistent with other research evidence that shows that same-sex orientated people experience greater internalised homophobia (Msibi, 2012; Taulke-Johnson, 2010). Overall 43% of LGBTQI+ students reported that they experienced violence in their intimate partner relationship, while one third of the students reported perpetuating violence (mainly physical) against their partners. The weakness of Edwards & Sylaska (2013) study was that there was no clear distinction made (gender specific details) between the violence for all types of same-sex relationships and no separate statistics were given in respect of violence within lesbian relationships. Edwards and Sylaska (2013) found that abuse does occur in same-sex relationships and this challenges the assumption that all perpetrators are

males and all victims are females. It also reaffirms the belief of some scholars that violence is about power relationships.

Porter and Williams' (2011) study in the United States also found that gay, lesbian and bisexual students were more than five times as likely to experience sexual abuse, three times as likely to have experienced physical abuse and twice as likely to report psychological abuse. These findings resonate with other research findings on violence within same-sex relationships that shows that the rates of violence or dating violence (IPV) is slightly higher (Browne, 2008) or more or less the same as in heterosexual intimate relationships (Edwards et al., 2015; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Messinger, 2011). However, these findings contrast with research by Jones and Raghavan (2012) who found that the frequency of dating violence (IPV) for same-sex as well as heterosexual couples were similar. Porter and Williams' (2011) findings also add weight to the current study as it reveals that females do possess the propensity for violence. Looking at Race, the study found no significant variance between ethnic minority students and white students for attempted rape and sexual abuse, psychological or physical abuse by a partner. These findings illustrate that belonging to ethnic minority groups or non-white groups does not really mean that one is more violent as some narrow-minded people may want to believe. A further finding by Porter and Williams (2011) is that both male and females report abuse at similar rates and this contrasts with other empirical research that shows that females are the overwhelming victims of gender violence (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015). As previously noted, studies in this field are few as many focus on lifetime experiences while the present study focuses on university experiences. The data was obtained by self-report and therefore the responses should be viewed with caution, furthermore the extent of the physical abuse injuries was not assessed, it was based only on abuse within the dating relationship, therefore experience of violence outside a relationship was not considered (Porter & Williams, 2011). The findings cannot be generalised beyond the study sample. Another important limitation is that there was no distinction between the alleged perpetrator's sexual orientation and auditory status (deaf and hard of hearing). Porter and Williams' study (2011) amongst underrepresented student groups, highlights the importance of future research in this field that would illustrate the dynamics of violence within ethnic and racial, sexual and disabled minority students. Porter & William's study illustrates that university strategies aimed at reducing gender violence on campuses need to also consider the underrepresented groups of students and effect culturally appropriate interventions.

2.2.12. Female Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence, an expression of gender violence, is a global phenomenon that can be perpetrated by all people, regardless of their gender identity and sexuality (SIDA, 2015; WHO, 2013). Intimate partner violence is violence that occurs between people who are in heterosexual or same-sex relationships (SIDA, 2015; WHO, 2013). The violence can be physical, sexual, verbal (emotional and psychological) and economical violence. Stalking by current and former partners is also part of intimate partner violence (Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-Sa, Peterson, Planty, Langton & Stroop 2016; Cantor, Fisher & Chibnall, 2015).

A plethora of literature shows that within the gender framework intimate partner violence is largely perpetrated by males (Dutton, Hamel & Aaronson, 2010; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Dobash & Dobash, 2004). However, empirical research also shows that females do perpetrate this form of gender violence within heterosexual as well as homosexual relationships (Messinger, 2011; Blosnich &Bossarte, 2009; Straus & Ramirez, 2007; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). This contradicts the historical feminist view that only women are victims of intimate partner violence (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007). According to feminist scholars female perpetrated violence within intimate partner relationships is purely self-defence or retaliatory (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007; Dasgupta, 2001).Other scholars posit that there are other motivations for female perpetrated intimate partner violence which are not defensive or reactive, but are characterized as active or goal-orientated motives (Walley-Jean & Swan, 2012; Hamberger, 2005; Archer, 2000).Categorizing female perpetrated intimate partner violence as only reactionary or differently motivated, not only renders the pain and suffering of the victims invisible, but it also highlights the argument that achieving real gender equality lies in the fact that we are all capable of perpetrating violence (Byrd & Davis, 2009; Ajzenstadt, 2009; Motz, 2008). Perpetually assigning victimhood to females obscures our real understanding of violence and the dynamics at play.

The concept of gender symmetry contends that both males and females perpetrate similar rates of violence, and that violence is bi-directional (Straus, 2011; Straus & Ramirez, 2007). Straus and Ramirez (2007), proponents of gender symmetry, researched physical aggression against dating partners from four international universities in Mexico and the United States. The International Dating Violence Study administered questionnaires to 1554 students in

introductory sociology and psychology classes. Straus and Ramirez (2007) used the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) to measure physical assault, injury, sexual coercion, psychological aggression and negotiation (Straus, Hamby & Warren, 2003; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996). The Conflict Tactics Scales has been used widely in many studies of both married and dating partners and there has been extensive evidence of reliability and validity (Straus, 2004). The results were consistent with the gender symmetry in intimate partner relations (IPV) found in other international studies. Straus and Ramirez's (2007) findings indicate that women and men have similar prevalence rates for severe assault and for chronicity of minor assaults and that although the pattern of gender symmetry was evident in all assault types, males perpetrated it more often than females. Lastly, it was also evident that when only one partner was violent, it was twice as likely to be the female partner than the male (29, 8% versus 12, 7% respectively) (Straus & Ramirez, 2007). A meta-analytic review on gender and violence in heterosexual relationships by Archer (2000) revealed that females were more violent than males, but they also revealed similar injury rates by males. Both these studies showed similar rates of perpetration of IPV from both partners. However, feminist activists expressed concerns about these research methods used to examine female violence which cannot be understood in context of patriarchal power and control (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Wesley, 2006; Miller, 2000;). They argue that some scholars who study female offenders do not consider issues of gendered power that are systemic within our patriarchal society (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Wesley, 2006; Miller, 2000). The feminist argument is the existence of a causal relationship between female perpetration and their violent life experiences (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007; Miller, 2000). This is supported by other scholars like Browne (2008) who found that 70% of women who kill their partners were motivated by their long suffering and abuse. Contrary to early socio-political explanations which purported that females used gender violence in self-defence in their relationships, other studies show the opposite. Spidel, Nicholls, Kendrick, Klein and Kropp's (2004) study of Canadian undergraduates, found other reasons for the abuse by female students. These include high rates of personality disorders such as obsessive compulsive, anti-social, passive aggressive and the fact that the respondents understood violence as a choice. Spidel, Nicholls, Kendrick, Klein and Kropp's (2004) study challenges the conventional view articulated by gender paradigms that females do use violence as an offensive act rather than just a defensive mechanism.

"Intimate Terrorism" is used to define relationships that are characterized by a pattern of coercive control and severe violence (Johnson, 2006). Research shows that females use

coercive control and serious violence to control their partners' movement, sexuality, social relationships and access to resources (Straus, 2011; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Stark, 2007). Society is male dominated and for men to admit that they are victims of abuse by their female partners may be a source of embarrassment. Many may feel stigmatized and emasculated. This is evident in a local study by Thobejane, Luthada and Mogorosi (2018). The qualitative study was conducted in Limpopo in South Africa where data was generated from interviews with male victims of domestic violence. By examining the experiences of the male participants, the data revealed that the male victims were reluctant to speak out about their abuse due to fear of being ridiculed by society (family, community, and the police) (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018). The findings also revealed that the form of female perpetrated violence was not new and that females do target their male partners (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018). The fact that many males do not speak about their abuse at the hands of their female partners is that society tends to dismiss this phenomenon by trivializing it compared to male perpetrated IPV (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Seelau & Seelau, 2005; Addis & Mihalik, 2003). In some cases, the fear of shame, embarrassment and ridicule leads to many male victims remaining silent as they struggle with maintaining the masculine ideal of dominance, strength and power. The current societal attitude about so-called masculinity creates a huge barrier for males to admit their abuse at the hands of their female partners. However, other empirical evidence which involved reviewing two years of English Police Service for 3000 cases of IPV, found that police were less likely to charge the female offender and that the prosecutor was less likely to pursue charges as well, (Brown, 2004). A study by Henning and Renauer (2005) who examined the rates of arrest by gender found a similar result that indicated that the authorities were reluctant to press charges and to prosecute. The suggestion is that male perpetrated IPV is found to be more lethal or serious than female perpetrated IPV. This disparity in terms of the response from the relevant authorities further highlights the fact that male as well as female victims of female perpetrated IPV are rendered invisible. Conversely research also shows that females who kill their partners are treated more harshly than their counterparts (Barron, 2000). What this suggests is that females who use violence are still perceived as aberrant. Female perpetrated IPV contradicts the widespread notion that this form of violence can only happen to females and that females are largely the victims.

2.2.13. Some reasons offered for female violence

Paradigmatic gender constructions of females as non-violent and non-aggressive and males as violent and aggressive has been debunked by several scholars as failing to consider the myriad of determinants that may cause individuals to act in a violent way (Buttell, Powers & Wong, 2012; Straus, 2011; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Archer, 2000). Female do engage in violence but this violence needs to be understood within a complex contextual framework of historical inequalities (Wesley, 2006). Female violence in particular, is a complex phenomenon that is noted in social and gender inequalities, and economic hardships amongst other dynamics. There are other motivations for female perpetrated violence that do not fall into the self-defence plea. These will be discussed below. What is undeniable is that females do perpetrate violence within their interpersonal relationships. To fully understand this complex phenomenon, we need to acknowledge that the decision to use violence is not always simplistic.

Gender inequality facilitates the violence amongst all genders. However, for females, gender inequality and social oppression permeate all facets of their lived experiences in ways that may sometimes further marginalize them. Apart from gender there are other social inequalities and structures that are linked to race and class that are also highly significant in relation to females' use of violence (Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). It is for this reason that scholars like Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez (2006) amongst others call for a more nuanced focus on female violence. These will be discussed in the section on intersectionality. Patriarchy rewards masculine aggression (Connell, 1987) while simultaneously constructing femininity as weak, passive and subordinate (Connell, 2005). These constructs not only reinforce gender stereotypes and violence myths, but also create conditions for more violence (Lombard & McMillan, 2013; Alder & Worrall, 2004). While violence remains the acceptable masculine norm, more females are now making 'excursions' into this path (Connell, 2005; 1987).

Botha (2014) suggests that children who come from abusive homes, where violence was often used as a problem solver, model their relationships on this destructive scenario. They learn that violence is an appropriate way to end conflict, and this learned behaviour is perpetuated in their adult lives (a glimpse into these females' contexts is evident in the analysis sections). However, not all children who come from violent homes will become violent (Conradi, Geffner, Hamberger & Lawson 2012; Langa, 2010). Childhood trauma and exposure to family violence may lead to psychological issues. The impact of childhood exposure to violence may result in a host of psychological problems (Graham-Kevan, 2009). Graham-Kevan (2009) posited that

females as well as males who perpetrate violence as adults, were likely to have a history of oppositional and aggressive behaviour which include personality disorders, control and coercion, substance abuse, anger issues and jealousy. A seminal typology study by Babcock, Miller and Siard (2003) used multiple methods to assess females' motives for violence against their partners. They found that in both these categories 70% of the generally violent women and 59% of the women who used violence against partners only, had reported experiencing high rates of physical and sexual abuse while some respondents reported that they had witnessed their mothers use violence against their fathers (Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). The study concluded that similar to their male counterparts, the female abusers are a heterogenous group. The study showed that childhood exposure to violence is a predictor of adult perpetrated violence (Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). Henning, Jones and Holdfold (2003) focused on the rising number of females arrested for domestic violence in the UK and found that many were suffering from mental health issues. They also found that the women were more likely than the men to have been prescribed psychotic medication, attempt suicide and were in serious distress (Henning, Jones & Holdfold, 2003).

Empirical research shows that childhood trauma like physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as neglect, have been cited in several studies as risk factors and predictors of adult female perpetrated violence and coercive control (Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure & Snow, 2005). Coercive control is conceptualized as a pattern of coercion characterized by the use of threats, intimidation, isolation, emotional abuse as well as control over sexuality, social and economic life (Start, Moore, Gordon, Ramsey & Kahler, 2006). Research by Russell and Oswald (2001) and Krahé, Waizenhöfer & Möller (2003) also found a correlation between childhood sexual abuse and sexual coercion in adulthood. Hines and Douglas (2009) showed that 33% of the females in their study used physical and verbal aggression to coerce their male partners into engaging in sexual intercourse. This was also the case in Swan and Snow (2003) who found that 30% of the female respondents threatened violence in order to get them to do what they had wanted. Similar coercion was also illustrated in Start, Moore, Gordon, Ramsey and Kahler (2006) who had 22% of the female respondents reporting the same coercive tactics.

Other motivations for female perpetrated violence include jealousy and anger, alcohol abuse, cheating, substance abuse (Walley-Jean & Swan, 2012; Straus, 2011; Caldwell, Swan, Allen, Sullivan & Snow, 2009; Start, Moore, Gordon, Ramsey & Kahler, 2006; Hamberger, 2005).

The issue of "angry temperament" was found to have emanated from early childhood experiences of both male and female participants in the Follingstad, Bradley, Heff and Laughlin (2002) study where they generated of a model for predicting violence in students. They found anxious attachment resulting from earlier childhood which led to an "angry temperament", resulting in control and abuse. This "angry temperament" in a way is closely associated to borderline personality traits found in Hines' (2008) study. Hines (2008) found that traits associated with borderline personality, for example instability in relationships, fear of abandonment, anger and manipulations, self-harming behaviour, impulsiveness and emotional volatility were all predictors of violence and sexual aggression against intimate partners for female students. The suggestion is that these borderline personality traits may cause a general propensity to behave violently. Self-harming is violence that is directed towards oneself (inwards), victim and perpetrator become one. Self-harm is associated with mental illness and therefore it is often pathologized (Fincham, Langer, Scourfield & Shiner, 2011) Females are more likely to self-harm as a result of trauma (NICE, 2011). Violence fulfils multiple personal and interpersonal psychological purposes and violence directed at oneself is perceived as a sickness or a cry for help (Pickard, 2011; Motz, 2008). Mental illness has long been cited as a plausible explanation for some female's extreme violence. (Comack & Brickey, 2007; Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002;). In this context violence is perceived as a result of a flawed biological and psychological genetic make-up (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Naylor, 2001; Verona & Carbonell, 2000). This linking of female violence to mental abnormality provides a reasonable explanation for their dysfunctional behaviour (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Naylor, 2001). The media often sensationalises narratives of violent females in ways that highlight their transgressions of appropriate feminine behaviour as pathological and deviant (Jewkes, 2004; Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002). The automatic assumption that the violent female is sick stems from our gender role socialisation and the belief that no 'normal' female would wilfully perpetrate violence. The media portrayals sometimes cause us to homogenise all violent females as wilful participants in violence and this may be unjust to those females who are truly mentally ill (Lazar, 2008).

Mentally ill people may sometimes display borderline personalities disorders (Dutton, 2012) causing them to experience intense mood swings and their behaviour may be impulsive and self-destructive. Their psychotic-like behaviour may sometimes render them violent towards others as well as their own person. The image of an irrational, violent and unstable female is a direct contradiction of a rational, non-violent mentally stable female and it is this image that

causes us to pathologise female violence as a sickness (Pickard, 2011; Motz, 2008; Lamb, 2001). Self-harm is an unnatural response to psycho-socio-economic adversity and trauma and may need medicalised intervention (Pickard, 2011; Motz, 2008), self-directed violence is largely associated with females (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002). Studies show that females are five to six times more likely to self-harm as males (Hawton, Linsell, Adeniji, Sariaslan & Fazel, 2014; NICE, 2011). This violence directed towards self is perceived as contradictory to ideal self-contained femininity (Motz, 2008; Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). However, there are others who posit that females who self-harm are rational agents and not just victims of their violence (Pickard, 2011; Motz, 2009a; Holton, 2006). Researchers in the field of younger femininities and violence found other motivations for girls' violence that include the fight for boys, power, visibility and survival (Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Bhana, 2008; Jackson, 2006; Brown, 2003). Their active engagement in violence rendered them as 'gender deviants' as they transgressed stereotypical gender norms (Ringrose & Renold, 2010).

Turning to the issue of victimization, the historical feminist view is that there is a causal link between female perpetration of violence and their victimization (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007). This belief is based on feminine constructions of passivity and eternal victimhood. When females use violence as a defence mechanism, they in turn become both victim and perpetrator. While victimhood may in some way minimize and rationalize their use of violence, violence is an abhorrent activity regardless of the context and gender identity of the perpetrator. Wesley (2006) describes violence by females as part of a cumulative victimization wherein they occupy multi-marginalised positions. Wesley (2006) suggests that in disadvantaged contexts, females may often become violent in order to cope with a multitude of negative issues. Thus, violence may become a normalized. Wesley (2006) further suggests that where females turn to violence as a last resort, there is a possibility of them turning to crime and hence, they intensify their marginalised position. Dasgupta (2002) identifies female victimization as well as personal histories and the societal contexts of the violence as major determinants in their use of violence. Dasgupta's (2002) and Wesley's (2006) emphasis on victimhood as the strongest predictor for female perpetrated intimate violence is supported by several other researchers in the field of gender and violence (Miller & Meloy, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2006; Frieze, 2005; Felson & Cares, 2004). Self-defence has been noted as the primary reason for violence by females against their partners (Orcutt, Garcia & Picket, 2005). Babcock, Miller and Siard (2003) found that 28% of the females in their study used violence in self-defence. Browne (2008) found that 70% of females who killed their partners

were also motivated by self-defence. These findings support the feminist argument that feminine violence largely stems from their previous abuse. This research on victimization as a motive for retaliating with violence positions females as victim and perpetrator. This ambiguity is largely the result of years of long suffering at the hands of their partners and this claim is supported by a plethora of literature that males are largely the perpetrators of IPV (Browne, 2008; Swan & Snow, 2006; Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003).

However, there are females who use violence in the absence of provocation or victimization (Byrd & Davis, 2009; Swan & Snow, 2003). Examining imprisoned females' accounts of their experiences and interpretations of violence in Finland, Lattu (2016) observed that the females committed violence not only in response to victimization by their male partners but also on their own initiative. The participants in Lattu's (2016) study spoke about the contradiction between violence and womanhood and they also positively attached violence to power. The contradiction between violence and females reaffirms stereotypical notions of female passivity and masculine aggression. Halberstam (2012) affirms the ambiguous nature of empowered females' masculinities whenever females possess the physical features and aggressive strength and power they are not afraid to exert their agency in violent ways. The attachment of violence to power reaffirms that gender violence is about power over others. Foucault's theory of power (1983) highlights a shift in power from one person to another, regardless of gender and sexuality. This fluidity of power explains how in some instances different people and differently gendered people may be appear powerful. Similar studies by Kruttschnitt and Carbone-Lopez (2006) found that violence committed by their female participants were linked to various contexts and motivations. Ajzenstadt (2009) points out that while victimization may largely justify females' use of violence, this does not wholly erase the fact that some females are active agents responsible for their behaviour. The suggestion here is that violence is a choice for some females. Research by Spidel, Nicholls, Kendrick, Klein and Kropp (2004) of female undergraduates at a Canadian University found that a large number of these females found that their participants understood violence as a choice. Similar research findings by Archer (2000) revealed that females may also commit severe violence against non-abusive partners. These finding contradicts early socio-political explanations which proposed that females use violence purely as a self-defence mechanism. Although the figure of a violent female may symbolize a threat to the gender order (Chesney-Lind, 2006), we must not lose sight of the fact that many females do associate positively with masculinity. Halberstam (2012, 1998) suggests that renouncing femininity thus becomes an act of renouncing powerlessness which gives rise to

endless possibilities and alternate femininities (Holland, 2004). Females who purposefully initiate violence are often distinguished from 'normal' women (Ballinger, 2000) and pathologized (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Morrissey, 2003). However, Motz (2008) asserts that by denying female agency in their violent acts, we effectively deny them their humanity. Normal females are capable of acting violently if and when the need arises and they should not be pathologized. In holding female perpetrators responsible for their violence, we also need to be cognizant of the difficulty that some females may face in controlling the impulse to react with violence, especially in the context of repeated victimization and extreme abuse (Ajzenstadt, 2009; Wesley, 2006; Dasgupta, 2002).

Sexual symmetry contends that males and females have similar or comparable rates of aggressive perpetration or victimization. Violence within lesbian relationships debunks the gender paradigm assumption that associates females with non-violence. Research concluded that violence within gay and lesbian relationships have similar rates to heterosexual relationships (Messinger, 2011; Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009). A nationally representative survey by Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin and Kupper (2004) on heterosexual and homosexual adolescent relationships found that females in homosexual relationships reported higher levels of IPV than males in homosexual relationships. Within lesbian relationships the motivations for violence were similar to the motivations within heterosexual relationships. These include childhood abuse, alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and borderline traits (Fortunata & Kohn, 2003) imbalance of power, jealousy, substance abuse (Renzetti, 1999), dysfunctional conflict resolution (Dutton, 2012) and domination, power, control, intimidation (Nielson, 2004). The research findings highlight that violence is essentially about power and the abuse thereof.

Understanding the motivations behind females' use of violence is not a straightforward issue. Whilst female perpetrators may share similar reasons for their violence with males, their violence needs to be understood within an intersectional framework. The victim position is outdated as the literature shows females do possess aggressive traits. While self-defence and victimization may in some way justify female violence, it places them in the dual role of perpetrator as well as victim thus resulting in further violence. Other motivations like power and agency force us to acknowledge that just like their male counterparts, females are capable of committing a range of violence.

2.2.14. Toxic Femininities

Despite the justifications, violence in all its forms is toxic. As humanity we need to disavow violence in all its manifestations. Cultural acceptance of gender violence, especially within the context of relationships, is partly the root cause for the vicious cycle of violence that exists in our society.

Connell's theory of masculinity (2005; 1995) deals with gender power where hegemonic masculinities wield power over all other forms of masculinity and females. Connell's theory of gender power and masculinity (2005; 1995) is pertinent to this study as it illustrates that gender violence includes all acts of violence because it occurs between male and female; female and male and members of the same sex-orientation. Violence within homosexual relationships highlights gender power at play where the perpetrator's violent and aggressive tendencies embodies toxic masculinity and toxic femininities. Toxic femininity is rooted in the dominant notions of gender where masculinity assumes power and control over others (Savin-Williams, 2017; Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). In this way female masculinity is not only seen as a form of toxic femininity, but it also exemplifies gender-power relations within same-sex relationships (Taulke-Johnson, 2010; Msibi, 2009). Foucault (1983) maintained that power circulates and that everyone, including the oppressed and the oppressor are caught up in this fluidity of power. Foucault's (1983) theory highlights how power can shift from one person to another regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. Foucault's theory of Power (1983) is relevant to this study as it demonstrates that gender violence is about control and power.

Violent females are considered unfeminine and pathologized as toxic. Culturally, masculine violence and aggression is accepted, however it is equally condemned; however feminine violence is not accepted, but it is culturally suppressed and condemned (Rossner, 2013). Females who defy cultural and feminine notions of passivity and who are not afraid to express their power indirectly or in violent ways are perceived as toxic femininity (Ringrose, 2006; McRobbie, 2004). Females who express desire, ambition and agency and who move outside of their stereotypical role are stigmatized and vilified. According to Ringrose (2006) when girls publicly display overt aggression and violence their negative behaviour is attributed to feminist gains and therefore feminism becomes directly or indirectly implicated in their violent outburst. It is this negative behaviour that pathologizes females and renders some females' toxic, manipulative, catty, bitchy and cruel. Similarly, Schippers (2007) posits that when females refuse to acknowledge and accept hegemonic masculinity as superior, it disrupts the hierarchal

relationship between hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity, in other words, it disrupts normal social relations. Schippers (2007) further posits that these females are then labelled and sanctioned as 'bitches', 'sluts', 'dykes' and they are therefore socially excluded as toxic. Their refusal to adhere to emphasised femininity renders them unfeminine (Connell, 2000).

Toxic femininity and toxic masculinity both normalize traditional patriarchal perceptions of female subordination (Collins, 2013). Both toxic femininity and toxic masculinity devalue, exclude and police all individuals who do not conform to the gender and sexuality binaries (Ringrose, 2006).What makes toxic femininity particularly and potentially destructive, is that it functions cohesively with toxic masculinity in order to police others (Hunter & Robinson, 2018; Snorton, 2017; Lugones, 2007).Toxic femininity is shaped by patriarchal gender scripts that adhere to heterosexuality and in this way, they operate as a tool to exclude or eradicate all those who subvert these gender norms (Hunter & Robinson, 2018; Snorton, 2017; Lugones, 2007).

Toxic femininity classifies transgender women and lesbian women as 'not real women' in the way in which it shapes practices of gender policing that define who should be considered human or female (Collins, 2013). This is further complicated by intersections of race, sexuality and class which are informed by heterosexual dominance (Collins, 2013). This discrimination is pervasive particularly in Black American communities but also in some Black African communities where homosexuality is considered un-African (Collins, 2013; Epprecht, 2013; Reddy, 2002). Discreet gender norms 'humanize' and punish those who subvert them as they are labelled deviants for not performing their gender correctly (Butler 1999, p140). Toxic femininities are everywhere, not all females are non-aggressive, tolerant and respectful in their interaction with others. In Black American communities they are particularly pervasive where docile people are forced to construct their sexual and gender identity within oppressive frameworks of white supremacy (Richardson, 2013; Collins, 2013). Black 'queer' people are sometimes ostracized, and they are forced to internalize their abuse. This internalized homophobia leads to pain and suffering (Msibi, 2012; Yost & Gilmore, 2011; Taulke-Johnson, 2010). Toxic femininities may sometimes encourage acceptance of gender violence which causes a great deal of suffering. Toxic masculinity and toxic femininity may ridicule and marginalize those who do not conform to their gender norms. Just like toxic masculinity, toxic femininity is rooted in the systemic by-products of colonization and patriarchy which have

shaped socio-cultural perceptions of Black people, constructing them as sexually deviant and violent (Collins, 2013). Not all Black lesbian females are toxic, similarly not all non-Black people are toxic.

2.2.15. Female Agency and violence

Stereotypical notions of females as the passive, nonviolent gender is slowly waning as research shows that females are not afraid to express their agency in violent, aggressive and destructive ways (Morrissey, 2003; Alison, 2003). In order to fully understand the complexity of female violence, we need to adopt a multi-faceted approach to the issue of agency. Agency needs to be acknowledged in our conceptualisation of violence. Agency refers to an individual's capacity to act freely; to make conscious decisions; to act in a certain way in order to accomplish their goals (McNay, 2008; Barnes, 2000).

The power of agency refers to an individual's ability to act independently of any present social structures that may constrain or limit their decision or movement (Campbell, 2009). *''People's choices are neither completely independent of context (reactively autonomous) nor entirely involuntary (dependence), but somewhere in between, where they maintain identity independence but decide in a socially constrained world … no choice is completely independent either of its chooser or its context''* (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008, p.18). The power of agency is not always present, especially in the context of victimization within interpersonal relations. However, some several scholars argue that even within this context, the victim who may be paralysed by the narrow concepts of freedom, may either choose to remain in an abusive relationship or respond sometimes with violence (Dunn & Powell-Williams, 2007; Yoshihama, 2002). Narrow concepts of freedom relate to identifiable agents who make it physically impossible for the victim to act as well as those barriers (verbal and physical threats) that may preclude them from making choices or taking actions (Alonzo, 2015). The absence of agency, does not imply that there is no agency (Alonzo, 2015). Women who choose to remain in their abusive relationships are exercising a form of agency. They may develop alternate aggression like relational aggression (hurt others' feelings or ignore their punishment or use their relationship as a weapon) and indirect aggression (self-harm) in order to cope with their situation (Motz, 2008; Richardson, 2005 & Simmons, 2002). We must not lose sight of the fact that the ability to exercise agency may be restricted (constrained) by social, cultural and economic forces beyond their control, especially in context of developing nations (Campbell

& Mannell, 2016; Bajaj & Pathmarajah, 2011). Wider structural constraints like poverty, education and culture very often renders females incapable of making free choices.

Being a victim does not imply that a person is weak and incapable of expressing their agency (Marway, 2011; Skeggs, 2010). However social pressure and cultural oppression can impact on our personal agency to make rational, moral choices free from any threat or coercion (Marway, 2011). The suggestion is that while these constraints may limit us, it does not wholly diminish our agency. In the context of IPV females sometimes do make the conscious decision to fight violence with violence, however this may not be the ideal way of enacting agency. Violence that emanates from fear, anger and coercion is not the result of rational deliberation or agency. Within the Battered Women's Syndrome framework, women who kill their partners are perceived as acting agentically in reasonable self-defence (Lazar, 2008; Morrissey, 2003). The basic premise is that their victimization affects the capacity to interpret their situation and to understand the magnitude of their violent response (Walker, 2000). Lazar (2008) and Morrissey (2003) claim that these stereotypical categorizing of women who use violence produce otherness in minimizing their agency, pathologizing females who kill their partners even in self-defence. In this way, the females become both victim and agent (Ajzenstadt, 2009; Motz, 2008; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008). Empirical research not only shows that some females are the primary or sole aggressors, but that in some instances their attacks are unprovoked (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Ehrensaft, Moffit & Caspi, 2006; Archer, 2000). We have to acknowledge in such instances that females make a deliberate choice to use violence, and in doing so, they become active agents who are responsible for their actions (Ajzenstadt, 2009). Their use of violence may be agentic in that way they set out to achieve a clear and distinct goal (Campbell, 2009) and that is to maintain power and control in their relationships. While patriarchy imbues males with power and dominance and renders females disempowered and subservient, scholarships maintain that these views are not static as females actively challenge and resist male dominance (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Ajzenstadt, 2009).

2.2.16. Female Sexual Violence: Accommodation and resistance

Cultural and other sexist stereotypes perceive the sexually aggressive female as promiscuous (Oswald & Russell, 2006) while some sexual aggression in males is accepted and tolerated. Perceptions and labels of promiscuity denies female sexual agency. These attitudes and perceptions perpetuate gender inequalities as females are expected to be sexually passive or to

be "gatekeepers" and to deny male sexual advances (Krahé, 2000). These stereotypical attitudes, sex roles and perceptions not only relegate females to the role of consent, but it also highlights the archaic notions that females do not actively and aggressively pursue sex. These notions are partly responsible for female-perpetrated rape being met with disbelief as it fails to meet the 'real rape' scripts of the physically stronger male aggressor (Chapleau, Oswald & Russell 2008; Anderson, 2007). Perceptions that female sexual aggression does not fit 'real rape' scripts and is not as serious as male perpetrated rape ignores the pain and suffering of the victims, regardless of their gender and sexual orientation (Russell, Oswald & Kraus 2011). These perceptions also fail to acknowledge that some females' behaviour is toxic and borders on criminality. Females who are sexually aggressive and assertive (behaviour, dress) women are perceived as demonized and abnormal (Ferraro, 2006; Chesney-Lind, 2006). This implies that even though women are free to make choices, their agency is constrained by the perceptions of others. Research into sexual aggression comparative disapproval ratings within same-sex relationships found that participants' disapproval ratings were lower when a female was sexually aggressive towards a male partner and that male participants blamed the male victim more if the perpetrator is a female (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006). Similar research found that sexual aggression in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships found equal disapproving ratings for male and female perpetrated aggression (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). Females no longer accept their stereotypical passive status as they defy these gender scripts and exercise their agency directly and indirectly in violent ways. Research shows that females do commit unilateral aggression against a non-abusive partner (Ehrensaft, Moffit & Caspi, 2006) and in this way they threaten existing power relationships and are labelled toxic.

2.2.17. Rape and Sexual Harassment perpetrated by females

Female perpetrated rape has received less attention compared to male perpetrated rape (Buttell, Wong & Powers, 2011; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). It seems almost inconceivable that females are capable of this extreme form of sexual aggression and assault; but they are, and they do commit this heinous crime (Buttell, Wong & Powers, 2011; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Graham, 2006). Research on male rape and aggression uncovers part of the problem because females do commit such offences against men and against other females in same sex encounters (Fisher and Pina, 2013; Martin, Fisher, Warner, Krebs & Lindquist 2011; Peterson, Voller, Polusny & Murdoch 2011; Anderson & Savage, 2005). Research on female sexual offending has not been considered a viable avenue and therefore it has been neglected (Lambert & Hammond, 2009; Davies, 2002). This could be attributed partly to the fact that traditional

beliefs are that a female cannot force a male to have sexual intercourse (Graham, 2006). This view is also supported by feminist theory that claims that only females are victims of rape and that the perpetrators are always male (Ward & Beech, 2005). These rape myths have only recently been placed under the spotlight (Graham, 2006) with very few efforts made to understand this type of female offending (Gannon, Rose & Ward, 2008). Gender-based stereotypes and assumptions about aggression and rape are also reasons for the lack of attention given to female perpetrators of sexual aggression (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Ross & Babcock, 2010). Female perpetrated rape can no longer be considered an enigma shrouded beneath prevailing gender norms of male perpetration and female victimhood (Buttell, Wong & Powers, 2011).

Female perpetrated rape does not meet traditional sex scripts which include stronger male, stranger or physical force (Russell, Oswald & Kraus, 2011). Rape by women is less likely to be viewed as meeting the minimum elements for a rape conviction (Russell, Oswald & Kraus, 2011). Rape by women is interpreted differently and, in many instances, it is considered less severe, it is therefore reduced to mere sexual assault (Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Graham, 2006; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). In some instances, the female perpetrator may be viewed as someone who is 'romantically interested' (Osman 2011). It is this perception that minimizes the impact of the assault on the victim. Failure to acknowledge the sexual assault or rape by females has great psychological consequences for victims (Randle & Graham, 2011). While female perpetrators are likely to frame their motivation for the sexual attack as a loss of control or mental illness, males were considered to have encouraged their attack for pleasure (Beech et al. 2009). Rape and sexual aggression by females may conflict with idealized social representation of femininity and motherhood (Motz, 2001), however we need to acknowledge that sexual aggression is part of some females' behavioural repertoire in sexual relations with males and females (Hines, 2007; Fischer & Pina 2013). Sexual aggression in same sex relationships receives even less attention (Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009; Sivakumaran, 2005).

Female perpetration of rape is often met with resistance and disbelief (Chapleau, Oswald & Russell, 2008; Anderson, 2007). Unfortunately, it does happen as research shows that female sex offenders report abuses against males (Krahé, Waizenhöfer & Möller, 2003). This study by Krahé, Waizenhöfer and Möller (2003) investigated strategies used in females' sexual aggression against men, using a sample of 248 women, they found that the female perpetrators

incapacitated men with alcohol and they used verbal and physical force to conduct sexual activity with the males against their will. This admission by female offenders was also evident in similar studies where self-reported rates of female sexual perpetration generally range between 2% and 24% (Fisher & Pina, 2013; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003). Hines and Saudino (2003) found that 33% of the females used some form of physical aggression to coerce males into engaging in sexual activity. Research by Breiding et al. (2014) for the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) conducted the National Intimate Partners and Sexual Violence Survey reported that seven million males were "made to penetrate" someone else against their will. Just like there are females or those who identify with femininity who may also actively pursue sex, there are also males or those who identify with masculinity who may also decline the sexual advances offered to them.

Graphic exposure of systematic sexual terrorization of male prisoners by female personnel at Abu Ghraib military prison in 2004 highlighted the fact that females are equally capable of a range of abuse. A feminist scholar, Ehrenreich's (2004) response (*Los Angeles Times*) reflected her horror: "What we have learnt from Abu Ghraib, once and for all, is that a uterus is not a substitute for a conscience. This doesn't mean gender equality isn't worth fighting for, for its own sake. It is. If we believe in democracy, then we believe in a woman's right to do and achieve whatever men can do and achieve, even the bad things." What this incident shows is that it can no longer be denied or dismissed that sexual aggression can be natural for females as it is for males; that females are not only capable of violence and aggression but that the propensity for violence exists in us all. Even though this statement was made in context of the military crime, it has direct relevance to this study which aims to highlight that females can be just as violent as males. Females are capable perpetrating rape and sexual assault against males, and this directly challenges our attitudes and beliefs about masculinity and power. Feminist theorists argue that rape is motivated by the desire to assert power over women (Brownmiller, 1975). Feminist theory on rape dominates research literature resulting in a lack of research that focuses on female perpetrators (Graham, 2006).

A focus solely on females as victims and not perpetrators of rape effectively erases their agency and contributes to the ideological stereotypical views of gender. Rape should be a gender-neutral concept in all countries because the little research on the phenomenon of female rape shows that they are capable of perpetrating rape and sexual assault. In many countries the legal definition of rape is gender neutral and this is a step in the right direction because perpetrators,

regardless of their gender, need to be punished (Marway, 2011). Rape is a crime of power, so what happens when rape is perpetrated by a female? Here we are reminded about Foucault's (1980) notion of power circulating and moving from the oppressed to the oppressor and then back again.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of both local and international literature relating to females and their use of gender violence. The review began with a short discussion on the lack of research into female students' use of gender violence as well as a brief discussion on gender relations and the construction of masculinity and femininity. The phenomenon under study is violent femininities and so therefore much of the literature presented pays particular attention to females and in particular female students' use of gender violence. The literature shows that some females, including some female students, engage in gender violence and while the contexts may vary, they ultimately challenge gender norms that stereotype them as eternal victims. Bearing in mind that the current study aims to understand the ways in which female students construct their violent identities, it was necessary to review literature that would provide a foundation for achieving a nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon under investigation. A review of the literature reveals different perspectives of female violence in general. In some instances, female violence is largely overlooked or dismissed as less serious, whilst in other instances females who engaged in violence are perceived as abnormal. The literature shows that female students use violence in their heterosexual and lesbian relationships as well as in their interactions with other students. The literature draws on concepts such as toxic femininity, female masculinity, gender power and female agency in order to provide a nuanced analytical interpretation of the complexities of femininities and gender violence. The chapter therefore draws attention to the ways in which violent females construct their identities in ways in which contradict stereotypical feminine notions.

In the next chapter I discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Chapter Three

Theoretical framework

3.1. Introduction

This section presents the theoretical framework of the study. Theories are used to guide, interpret, predict and integrate research (White, Klein & Martin, 2014). A theoretical framework plays a pivotal role in research by providing a context for examining a problem (Henning, van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). Using an eclectic approach to analyse the data draws on theories that underpinned this in order to provide a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the critical research questions. The theories are as follows:

- Raewyn Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 2000; 1995; 1987)
- Michel Foucault's Theory of Power (1984; 1983; 1980)
- Judith Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998)

The rationale behind using an eclectic theoretical approach is because these theories are useful as they focus on gender, power, sexuality, female violence and issues of heteronormativity and non-normative genders as it pertains to my study. The enduring appeal of these theories is that they provide the framework that is so crucial to research of this nature. Using these theories facilitates possibility of critically examining and analysing the copious amount of data, thus gaining deeper insight into these students' perceptions, behaviours and exposure to female violence. I chose to employ an eclectic theoretical and conceptual approach that will also include the phenomenon of violent femininities which is emerging in the scholarship. An eclectic approach is based on a judicious selection of theories that recognises the complexity of the phenomenon of female violence at universities. The three theories that form part of the eclectic framework namely Connell's theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995; 1987); Foucault's theory of Power (1984; 1983; 1980) and Halberstam's theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998) come together to complement each other as useful analytical lenses as they focus on issues relating to gender, sexuality, power and violence which are all pertinent to the very complex phenomenon under scrutiny, which is female violence. While each theory has its own unique framework to analyse the generated data, they are used simultaneously in the analysis and discussion to show the ways in which they galvanize one another in order to achieve a more nuanced in-depth insight and understanding of the complexities relating to violent femininities at a university campus.

This section will therefore provide a discussion of the theories used in the study that were utilised as analytical tools to interpret the data.

3.2. Connell's Theory of Masculinity and Gender Power Relations (2005; 2000; 1995; 1987)

Connell's (2005; 1995) theoretical works have been profoundly influential in the field of sociology. Her theories of Masculinity and Gender Power are crucial to our understanding of masculinities and its relationship with power and violence. Connell's (2005; 1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity has been widely used globally to conceptualise violent and patriarchal societies. Within patriarchal cultures, not all males and females' experiences are similar in terms of oppression. This oppression will be discussed further on in this section. There is a constant element of conflict not only within masculinities but also between masculinities, patriarchy and femininities. Connell's (2005; 1995) theory is particularly important to the current study as it highlights how hegemonic masculinities are elevated while simultaneously subordinating other non-hegemonic masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is therefore the key driver of gender violence that is legitimised by implicit patriarchal norms and unequal power relations (Connell, 1995).

Gender violence must be understood in the ways in which unequal power dynamics are maintained (Anderson, 2006; Bhana, 2000; Vetten, 2000) whether the balance of power is in favour of males or females is largely irrelevant as all violence is gendered (Bhana, 2014, 2008; Connell, 1995). What this basically means is that everyone, regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation, is capable of engaging in violence (Bhana, 2014; 2008; Connell, 1995) Contextual factors will dictate the very enactment of violence by exercising one's agency and engaging in violence does not necessarily imply that one is acting out of the binary – it implies that violence and aggression can be as natural for females as it is natural for males: "unless we subside into defining masculinity as equivalent to men, we must acknowledge that sometimes masculine conduct or masculine identity goes together with a female body. It is actually very common for a (biological) man to have elements of 'feminine' identity desire and patterns of conduct" (Connell, 2000, p.16). The data analysis chapters will show that some of these university female students in the current study readily engage in violence.

Although gender norms define patterns of conduct as either masculine or feminine, masculinity can be expressed in both males and females, therefore violence and aggression is not a fixed

masculine trait and by the same token nonviolence and passivity is not a fixed feminine trait (Connell, 2000; Halberstam, 1998). This theory is pertinent to the current study as the data analysis chapters will show that not all males ascribe to 'masculine' violent traits, neither do all females ascribe to 'feminine' traits of docility. Therefore, Connell (2000) notes that without concepts of masculinity and femininity we would be unable to discuss concepts of gender ambiguity that are relevant in cultural structures as well as psychoanalysis. However, in order to fully understand the categories of 'men' and 'women', and the many forms of practice through which they are embroiled in the world of gender, we will require concepts that go beyond these two categories (Connell, 2000).

Connell (2000) posits that gender is much more complex than an individual trait connected with bodily difference, it is instead "a complex and powerfully effective, domain of social practice" (p.18) Connell (2000) is therefore critical of the sex role theory and categorical theory that have previously been used to account for gender. For Connell (2000, p.18) the sex role theory which is "based on 'expectation' or norms gives no grasp on issues of power, violence, or material inequality. It misses the complexities within the femininity and masculinity". Essentially speaking, prescriptive behaviour norms are constraining as they reinforce gender inequalities that oppress non-hegemonic others. In this way individuals who choose to perform their gender differently are oppressed by individuals who espouse heternormativity (Connell, 2000; 1995). The data analysis chapters will show how the female students in the current study may sometimes oppress other non-hegemonic students and sometimes they may also be victims of this oppression by other students. According to Connell (2000) sex role theory (role theory) is limited in the strategies that may change the status quo. Connell (2000) is also critical of what she calls 'categorical theory' because it treats women and men as biologically predestined categories. Although categorical theory addresses issues of power, it too has shortcomings in terms of grasping the complexities of gender with regard to gendered violence (Connell, 2000). Categorical theory therefore serves to perpetuate gender binaries that attach males to positions of power and dominance while firmly placing females in subservient positions. "Biological differences are therefore used to underpin and explain social supremacy of men over women" (Connell, 1985, p.266). The data analysis chapters will show that these female students are not afraid to violently challenge their subservient positions by behaving aggressively and by using violence to achieve their goals. Connell (2000) goes onto highlights post-structuralist and materialist or post-modernist theories of gender where issues of complexity, ambiguity and fluidity are central issues as alternative to sex-role theory and catergoricalism. However,

Connell (2000, p.20) points out that post-structuralists like Butler (1990) who posits that gender is performative, is not able to account for important aspects of gender like "child care, institutional life, violence, resistance (except as individual choice), and material inequality". Connell's (2000; 1985) theory also resonates with Foucault (1980) who advocates that it is only historically recent that there has been a need for everyone to have a distinct, fixed sexual identity. Connell (2000) argues however, that the history of the social relations of gender is far more comprehensive and complex as interpreted by Foucault (1980) but the essence of the theory is relevant. Connell (2000) suggests a more relational approach to gender as this will not only move beyond individual personalities and investigate the power dynamics between men and men or between men and women, but it will also illuminate the many different structures of masculinities and femininities and this is why both Connell's theories of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995; 1987) and Foucault's theory of Power (1983; 1980) are pertinent to the current study.

Masculinity and femininity can only exist in relation to one another; the science of masculinity will always be the science of gender relations for Connell (2005). (Connell, 2005) asserts that masculinities are therefore a relational term which is always defined in opposition to femininity, *"This relation is not 'a confrontation between homogenous, undifferentiated blocs' of individuals, it is a relation between masculinities and femininities"* (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985, p.590). Gender is therefore a set of cultural roles that is defined as the structure of social relations that is concerned with how society deals with human bodies and the many consequences of these actions (Connell, 2000). Connell (2000) points that gradual changes in gender relations has led to far reaching changes in practices of masculinity – violence by non-hegemonic, marginalised masculinities has now become a form of rebellion which threatens the patriarchal ideologies. The current research points to this violence by non-hegemonic, marginalised masculinities who may become rebellious as they violently challenge and threaten patriarchal notions that position them as subordinate. Previously Connell (1987) suggested an analysis of gender had to recognise three structures, but later suggested a four-structure model of gender relations. Connell (2000, 1987) suggests that this framework will identify culturally specific structures for the social analysis of gender.

- Firstly, power relations which are their prime axis of power (Authority) in contemporary western cultures. This has to do subordination, control, coercion in relation to gender, in other words 'patriarchy'.

- Secondly, production relations (division of labour) which focuses on the gendered division of labour turns capital into a gendered form where the accumulation of this capital is related to a field of reproductions of labour and gender. Connell (2000) asserts that equitable attention should be paid to the gendered division of labour, specifically where men reap rewards of unequal shares of this labour. This is termed the 'patriarchal dividend' because it advantages men while simultaneously subordinating women.

- Thirdly, Cathexis is (emotional relations) is defined by Connell (1995, p.74) "as emotional energy attached to an object". This holds true for both heterosexual as well as homosexual desire where sexual desire is sexually constructed along with gender. For Connell (1987) Cathexis is the structure that constrains and shapes people's emotional attachment to each other.

- Fourthly, Symbolism deals with the process of communication which is vital in social processes where practices of gender are evident in the manner in which gender subordination is subtly reproduced.

All these structures are linked to gender as they involve all social processes, "gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practices reduced to the body" (Connell, 2000, p.27). Gender is not an isolated subject, it is present in all aspects of society and therefore all social practices are constructed through gender. Masculinity, for Connell (2000; 1995) intersects with other power relation systems like race and ethnicity and thus masculinity and gender cannot be understood in isolation. Hegemonic masculinity is not just hegemonic masculinity in relation to all other masculinities but in relation to the gender order as well. Hegemonic masculinities enjoy power and privilege which is registered through a complex web of race, class, sexuality and religion (Connell, 2000, 1995). Masculinity studies concerns issues of power relationships. Understanding masculinities requires us to look beyond sex roles and to examine masculinities as a wide set of practices that reflect the gendered nature of power, which includes all spheres of life, politically, economically, and socially (Connell, 2000, 1995).

Connell (1995; 1987) argued that gender has been constructed throughout history, a view that is consistent with Butler (1990) that gender is performative. Masculinities therefore change with time and place, creating a multitude of masculinities, they are dynamic phenomena (Connell, 1995; 1987). Connell (2005; 1995) holds that one should not talk about masculinity

but rather about masculinities. The plurality of masculinities suggests that there are different practices of masculinities within a community. Connell (2005, p.76) posits that recognising this plurality is "only a first step", the more important task is to "examine the relations between them". Connell (2005; 1995) offers four types of masculinities that help us to understand the multiplicity of masculinities in relation to one another. These will be discussed below.

The four types of masculinities are hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordinate masculinity and marginalised masculinity. Complicit masculinities which are, "organised around acceptance of the patriarchal divide, but not as militant in defence of patriarchy" (Connell, 2000, p.31). Complicit masculinities benefit from being male, however they do not embody hegemonic states and they are not change agents (Connell, 2000; 1995). Marginalised masculinities are discriminated against on the basis of their class, race, ethnicity and they cannot aspire to hegemony (Connell, 1995; 1987). For the purposes of the current study, I will focus on the two relevant masculinities which are hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form of masculinity but the data will show that this form of masculinity is fluid and can be dismantled. The female student violence removes male power and dominance. The second form of masculinity is subordinate masculinity and as the data will show that the female students use violence to dominate and control males who are effeminate and non-violent.

Connell's (2005; 1985) theory of masculinity has been widely used as an analytical instrument to identify masculine practices, attitudes and behaviour. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant masculinity "culturally exalted form of masculinity" (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985 p.592). It takes precedence as the ideal type of masculinity and assumes the alpha role for all non-hegemonic masculinities to emulate (Connell, 1987; 1985). Hegemonic masculinity invokes males to be dominant and aggressive in their social relations with females and non-hegemonic masculinities and so in this way, gender inequalities are perpetuated, therefore legitimising patriarchy, the "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (Connell, 2005, 1995, p.77; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Based on the hierarchal structure of masculinities, hegemonic masculinity is culturally authoritative and its core element being heterosexuality, it is therefore intolerant of homosexuality and non-conforming genders (Connell, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity therefore dominates all other non-hegemonic masculinities and females by "cultural consent, discursive centrality, institutionalisation, and the marginalization

or delegitimation of alternative," (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.846). Hegemonic masculinities show how gender power operates at multiple levels. Violence and oppression by hegemonic masculinities against other males, females and other non-conforming genders is just but one example of these multiple levels or sites. Hegemonic masculinity is the key driver of gender violence that is legitimised by gendered practices and unequal power relations, it therefore deals with gender power where hegemonic masculinities wield power over all non-hegemonic masculinities and females (Connell, 2000, 1995). Gendered practices that legitimise male hegemonic violence are the affirmation of manhood and it is through these gendered practices that we become aware of the harm that is caused by the normalisation of heterosexuality and the marginalisation of homosexuality (Morrell, 1998; Connell, 1995). Non-hegemonic masculinities and females experience violence at the hands of hegemonic masculinities in the broader society as well as at universities.

Subordinate masculinities are *"symbolically assimilated to femininity and these include females, effeminate males, homosexuals and non-conforming genders"* (Connell, 2000; 1995). Subordinated masculinities are the third type of masculinity and they are constructed as inferior, deviant and abnormal and are often oppressed and brutally violated because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Their sexual orientation and gender identity are perceived as a form of subversion and they are very often physically and verbally attacked. It is in this context that non-conforming genders are often violently policed by both male and female students at universities. Universities mirror society and very often violence and homophobia are rife at campuses. This violent intolerance of non-conformist behaviour is what motivates Connell (1995) to suggest a degendering strategy to dismantle hegemonic masculinity and to pursue gender justice for all. Connell (1987) calls for the formation of coalitions that will oppose patriarchal, race and class oppression as male as the negative, pervasive effects of hegemonic masculinity.

The current study will show that females adopt 'masculine' practices as they engage in aggression and violence at university. In this way, they choose to identify with 'masculine' notions of power, strength and violence. Focusing on gender relations among men "is necessary to keep the analysis dynamic, to prevent the acknowledgement of multiple masculinities collapsing into a character typology" (Connell, 1995, p.76). Masculinities are not static; they are continuously constructed and reproduced (Connell, 1995) in social structures as well as within cultural expectations.

Not all femininities compliment hegemonic masculinity as they display behaviour that is in direct opposition to traditional feminine norms (Schippers, 2007; Connell, 1987). The data analysis chapters will show that some of the female students in the current study display behaviour that contradicts traditional feminine norms of docility and thus they construct their identity as resistant. Their non-compliance is viewed as a form of resistance and rebellion to hegemonic masculinity (Schippers, 2007; Connell, 1987). Females who defy the boundaries of emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity are criticised in more ways than one. Femininities who threaten hegemonic masculine dominance are defined as 'pariah femininities' (Schippers, 2007). Those femininities who are perceived as sexually assertive or who display masculine ambitions are regarded as "lesbian … slut … cockteaser … bitch" (Schippers, 2007, p.95) simply because they dare to defy their traditional feminine prescriptions. Their perceived acts of rebellion elicit retribution (Schippers, 2007; Connell, 1987). The female students in the current study who are sexually aggressive and who engage in violence, as the data will show, are perceived and labelled as whores, masculine and lesbian. Females' acts of non-compliance signifies that they have reclaimed their agency. Worthy contenders? Yes – signalling that women have not 'arrived', they have always been present.

Femininities, like masculinities undergo changes and new forms may emerge depending on specific contextual factors. These alternate femininities are largely constructed in their subordinate positions to masculinity (Schippers, 2007; Connell, 1987). It is for this reason that Connell (1987) asserts that there can be no hegemonic femininity because females are left with limited power "to construct institutionalised power relationships over other women" (Connell, 1987, p187). Research shows that females do engage in violence at school and universities but that this violence is not as great as that of male violence (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs et al., 2016; European Union Commission, 2012). Connell (1987) notes that it is possible that femininities are more diverse than actual masculinities. However, Connell's (1987) concept of emphasised femininity does not leave space "to analyse the hierarchies of femininities and the statuses of women who practice them" (Finley, 2010, p.361). In other words, there are females who choose to take the dominant, aggressive role and engage in violence. Their engagement in violence, which is assumed to be a masculine trait, does not necessarily mean that they are acting as men – they could just be naturally violent. Within Connell's (1987) framework, it is evident that emphasised femininity is the epitome of compliance to with traditional femininity that submits to the dominance of male hegemony (Connell, 1987). Adherence to Connell's (1987) emphasised femininity is not part of some females' repertoire. Some of the female

students in the current study, as the data will show, do not adhere to stereotypical gender norms. Females who identify with 'masculine' traits of violence and aggression may signify a new gender order of femininities that are ready to challenge hegemonic masculinity and destabilise patriarchy.

Masculinity exists in relation to femininity, it is not "a confrontation between homogenous, undifferentiated blocs" of females and males, it is between multiple femininities and masculinities (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985, p.590). Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity is used as a theoretical framework to describe a position in the system of gender relations and as an ideology that shapes the way gender practices are consensually and forcefully produced and reproduced by individuals, Connell (2000; 1987) notes that changes in gender relations throughout history, have resulted in far-reaching changes in the practices of both masculinity and femininity and that any gender-orientated analysis must critically take these changes into consideration.

3.3. Foucault's Theory of Power (1984; 1983; 1980)

Foucault's (1984; 1983; 1980) theoretical works have been profoundly influential in the field of social sciences. The issue of power is central to Foucault's theory as he critically explores its relation between individuals, groups, institutions and society. He propounds a more complex understanding of power as both a negative and a positive factor that is not only "ever present" but "which circulates" so that everyone, regardless of their gender, sexuality, status and race are both subjects and agents of power (Foucault, 1980, p.91). The shifting of power suggests that power does not lie solely in the hands of the powerful but that the meek are just as capable of exercising power, "by power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another" (Foucault, 1980, p.92). This helps us understand that Foucault's theory highlights how power is not attributable to any individual or institution, but it is diffuse throughout society. He changes the way we think about power and that is that power belongs to no-one infinitely. Foucault perceives power as relational, describing it as traversing through a "multiplicity of force relations … the moving subtracts of force relations … having no "inner" or "outer" domain" (Foucault, 1980, p.93). This means that we are all part of some form of power relation and hence; we cannot escape, but we do have the ability to change the dynamics of that relation.

Power comes from *"innumerable"* parts, radiating as a force field of negative or positive energy in our lives. Foucault challenges us to rethink our personal notions of power and inertia, reminding us of our power to change our situation – and that power is everywhere and not immutable. The current study shows that these female students are not afraid to violently challenge their subordinate status and in doing so, they not only reverse gender power norms that previously positioned them as powerless but they also illustrate that power is not immutable (Foucault, 1980).

We are all caught up in a complex set of relations that we cannot escape because power is "omnipresent" (Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1983; 1980) moves away from the oppressive nature of power, where the powerless are at the mercy of the powerful and instead focuses on how it operates in the interactions between people and institutions. Power is fluid and permeates every facet of our lives.

Foucault (1980, p.93) asserts that power is impersonal and is not possessed by anyone, "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere." In other words, power is a relationship that exists between people; it is not an object to possess. Foucault (1980) posits that power is not just a negative, coercive or repressive thing that forces or manipulates us to act against our will. Both the positive and negative aspects of power are present in Foucault's (1983; 1980) conception of power. Foucault's (1983; 1980) notion of power can be applied to social relations because it deals with issues of domination, submission and resistance. All these issues are present in unequal power relationships where power may sometimes be exercised through violence in order to control someone. One form of power is coercive power that involves physical, verbal, emotional and psychological threats, aggression and violence. In the context of IPV, both parties within heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships are capable of exerting coercive power over each other. In the analysis chapters, I will show that these female students are capable of exerting coercive power not just over their intimate partners but also against other male and female students, including non-conforming genders. In this context power is oppressive because violence is a form of power over the vulnerable.

Foucault (1980) criticises the top down traditional sovereign model of power that is structurally repressive as the state-imposed laws that restricts individuals' behaviour and thus debunks it by introducing a post-structural theory. In this discursive model, power was oppressive with the state exercising total power and control over its subjects, often through overt, public

violence (Foucault, 1980). In this context of state oppressive power, many countries still maintain repressive laws that discriminate against same-sex relationships and marriages as well as non-conforming genders. In some instances, these non-conforming individuals are violently oppressed and imprisoned. This form of absolute power transforms the individual into someone, who out of fear, does exactly what the authorities command them to do; there is no room for negotiation and dissidents are violently punished into submission. This is the very nature of dominant, oppressive power that Foucault (1980, p.98) opposed because he believed that "power must be analysed as something which circulates as something which only functions in the form of a chain … power is employed and exercised through a net like organisation … individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application,". Here power is understood to be a network of relations between the oppressed and their oppressor. In this case heterosexuals have power over homosexuals as the heteronormativity ethos continues to prevail in the broader society as well as at universities. The data analysis chapters will show that female students engage in interpersonal, heterosexual and homophobic violence – it is their ways of reclaiming any power that may have been lost or where they felt a sense of helplessness. Power is exercised coercively, creating new productive and disciplined subjects (Foucault, 1980). The compulsory heterosexual identity is therefore used by these female students to exert power over non-normative genders and this is the integral part of the analysis which will demonstrate the ways in which non-conformity has dire consequences for homosexuals who are non-conformists. Every individual is not only the recipient of power they are at the very epicentre of the enactment of power as well as the point of resistance to it (Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1980) theorises the relationality of power between people as well as the role they play in power relations, whether they are oppressed or actively involved in their relations with others.

Foucault's (1980) theory highlights how individuals are not powerless but that power is diffuse throughout society. In order to fully understand power, he urges us to base our analysis of power on the techniques and tactics of domination (Mclaren, 2002). This allows us to see that power is dynamic and ever changing (Foucault, 1980). In this way we will see in the data analysis chapters that the female students in this study are infused with 'masculine' attributes of power, strength and aggression as they engage in violence. Thus, these female students use their power and agency to dominate other students. This is the very complex nature of power that Foucault (1980) has so richly articulated in his philosophy. He has revolutionised our understanding of power as a force field that radiates all around. His theorising of power is relevant to the current study as it discusses the ubiquitous nature of power, how it circulates

and involves everyone. Foucault's (1980) theory highlights how power can shift from the oppressor to the oppressed thereby reversing the unequal power relations. The data analysis chapters will show that these female students are not afraid to challenge their stereotypical subordinate status as they may sometimes exercise their agency through violence. In this way, they reverse unequal power relations in their favour. Historically females have largely been cited as victims of gender violence; by focusing on females as agents of violence; the current study in no way attempts to erase their suffering. Rather the current study uses Foucault's (1980) approach to power as a way of analysing the power inherent in power relations as well as the reversibility and fluidity of the power dynamic.

Social norms regulate our actions and behaviour in a myriad of ways. Foucault (1980) is critical of norms, shedding light on the ways in which norms can marginalise certain individuals. For Foucault (1980) power operates through disciplines to normalise behaviour. These normalising practices embedded in the social sciences shape the body and constitute subjectivity (Foucault, 1984c; 1983; 1980). Foucault's (1980) criticism of gender as exclusionary resonates with feminists who assert that norms overlook diversity. Foucault (1980) articulates the damaging effects of some norms in his genealogical work and he speaks of "dividing practices" that typecasts individuals into normal or abnormal (Mclaren, 2002). Foucault (1980) asserts that discourses of sexuality became the focus of scientific enquiry where new categories of deviant and pervert emerged, criminalizing those who transgressed sexual norms (Mclaren, 2002). Here disciplinary power is negative and repressive as it punishes those individuals who do not conform to sexual norms. Norms are imposed on individuals and this then becomes a form of surveillance that is internalised, thereby forcing individuals to act accordingly. Individuals who do not conform to sexual norms then self-regulate as they believe that their sexuality is a perversion. For Foucault (1980) these 'dividing practices' were the collective efforts of disciplines who used power to oppress and dominate those individuals who they perceived as transgressors. In this sense power is intentional because it has goals, aims and objectives, that is to consign non-conforming individuals to inferiority status. In addition, Foucault (1980) shows us how power sometimes operates in ways that are beyond our control and yet we continue to participate in the power relations, making conscious decisions that inevitably happens on the larger social and cultural scheme of things. "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does" (Foucault, Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.178). Thus, power for Foucault is non-subjective because it not only supersedes any individual or group, but also that is it relational because it

exists only between people, institutions, discourses and objects. Power is therefore ever shifting, unstable and thus belongs to no one – we instead participate in it, but it can never belong to us (Foucault, 1983; 1980). The data analysis highlights how these female students are positioned differently in relation to the male students in terms of power and violence as they engage in IPV and inter-relational violence and by doing so, they demonstrate the shifting nature of power and the fact that power does indeed belong to no-one.

Foucault (1983; 1980) uses the concept of Bio power to show the regulation of population and the control of their bodies. Bio power operates through the characterisation of norms where the government uses data to help encourage or discourage certain developments and sexuality, where limited 'deviant' behaviour was accepted. For Foucault (1984a, c; 1983; 1979) norms dominate because they are controlled by knowledge produced by disciplines that stipulate identities. These disciplines had a collection of tenets and techniques that Foucault (1984c; 1983) refers to as normalisation, where individuals were judged according to norms. Bio power operates at a main level of regulation by networks of institutional authority which seeks to control individuals by regimes of knowledge that monitor, evaluate and normalise bodily behaviour and sexuality (Mclaren, 2002). In this context of institutional authority, individuals are classified according to strict gender binaries and this filters to institutions of higher learning. The female students demonstrate their homophobic tendencies as they denigrate and police the sexuality and behaviour of non-normative genders. These female students also challenge the ways in which they have been constructed as subordinate, submissive feminine beings as they readily engage in what is stereotypically perceived as 'masculine' violent behaviour. A series of techniques, the technologies of self, allows individuals to manage and control their lives through an acquisition of norms. We subsequently become objects of scientific knowledge. Norms enforce a form of implicit power over the body and mind as we internalise the 'gaze' and simultaneously become the oppressed and oppressor "s/he becomes the principle of her/his own subjection" (Foucault, 1979, pp.202-203). Foucault (1980) urges us to be critical of social norms not only because they have a normalising effect but also because they may disempower, ostracize and justify, reducing the individual to obedience. Foucault (1984a, c) illustrates how norms operate in more insidious ways on the body through constant surveillance, self-surveillance and self-monitoring. Foucault is also critical of the increasingly dominating and disciplinary techniques that produce "docile bodies" that are transformed and "improved" according to norms (Foucault, 1980, p.130).

Foucault's (1984a, c) conception of relations of power is that power is not always exercised as a repressive force against the powerless; it is reinforced and involves those who struggle against it. Relatives of power are not universal "they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses on instability, each of which has its risks of conflicts, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of power relations" (Foucault, 1984a, p.75). Essentially speaking, we are all agents and subjects of power because power is 'omnipresent', all interactions among individuals are therefore never outside power (Foucault, 1984a, c). I chose to use Foucault's conception of power in this study because his notion of power as fluid highlights the ways in which everyone, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation is capable of asserting power in ways that subvert particular gender norms. If feminists are serious about achieving gender equality in all facets and in our lifetime, then we must also acknowledge that power and agency resides in us all and therefore the propensity for violence exists in us all. In this way, the individual is simultaneously the effect as well as the 'vehicle' of that power (Foucault, 1980) The Foucauldian approach to power is not only revolutionary but it is also pertinent to the current study. Foucault (1980) acknowledges that where power is pervasive, it is not always distributed or exercised equally, Foucault (1979/1984a, p.99) calls for an "ascending analysis of power" that "moves from the local and particular to the more general in order to capture the myriad forms and techniques of power".

To sum up, subjects play an active role in the production of power in their social relations whilst disciplinary power may sometimes constrain through norms, it may also enable individuals to acquire strength and courage to subvert the very gender norms that marginalise them (Foucault, 1984a, c; 1980). By engaging in violence, the female students in this study reject stereotypical gender norms. They use power to subvert traditional feminine notions as well as the ideal of patriarchal heterosexuality. Foucault's (1984a, c; 1980) rejection of gender norms is a way of accepting diversity in all social relations, and he provokes thought to interrogate non-normative ways of existence and in this way, we liberate ourselves from subjection thereby opening up other possibilities of being (Mclaren, 2002). That all violence is gendered is not new, neither is it debatable. Foucault's (1984a, c; 1980) omission of gender despite its importance in his analysis of power, is not only in keeping with his non-normative theoretical framework but it also paves the way for a world where patriarchy is a term that exists only in theory and not practice. If we "cut off the head of the King" as Foucault (1984c; 1980; 1979) suggests then we no longer give patriarchy the power that it occupies in our lives, and in the broader society. What is also important to note is that power simply is a network of

power relationships, it is not invested in leaders or men alone; females and non-conforming genders are also agents of power who exercise this power in both negative and positive ways.

3.4 Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998)

Halberstam is scholar in Gender studies, English and Ethnicity. Halberstam is both a 'masculine' female and a gender theorist whose work is highly influential in the fields of gender and queer theories. Halberstam's theory of Female Masculinity (2012b; 1998) has pioneered the deconstruction of the links between masculinity and maleness, essentially illustrating the myriad of forms masculinity produced by females.

Halberstam (2012b; 1998) compels us to look at masculinity as not the exclusive property of males, but also that of females who embody stereotypical masculine notions of power and strength; dominance, authority and aggression. Halberstam (1998) rejects the idea that masculinity is the sole expression of males by chronicling the historical and contemporary plurality manifestations of masculinity by both males and females. Halberstam (1998) uses a perverse presentism method (this method will be discussed further on in this section) to buttress her argument that masculinity is legible and valid outside of maleness and in so doing illustrates the complexities of masculinities as it is produced and expressed by females. Halberstam's (2012b; 1998) theory of Female Masculinity is pertinent to the current study as it debunks the widespread notion that it is impossible to study masculinity without focusing on men and boys. Masculinity can be examined and produced through the lens of female masculinity as they exercise their agency, challenging patriarchal notions of femininity and violence (Halberstam, 1998).

Halberstam's (1998) Female Masculinity is premised on the belief that masculinity is not essentially tied to a male body; that masculinity exists and is valid especially when it is manifested by non-normative and alternate masculinities. Alternate masculinities are defined by Halberstam (1998) as all masculinities that are non-white, middle-class, heterosexual and male. These non-dominant alternate masculinities are often labelled as dangerous, derivative and pathological by privileged white "dominant masculinities" (Halberstam, 1998, p.2). Masculinity, just like femininity, becomes complicated by intersections of class, race and sexuality. Halberstam (1998) therefore criticizes the conflation of masculinity with white maleness as the refusal to separate "the patriarchal bonds between white maleness and privilege" (Halberstam, 1998). The assumed non-performativity of hegemonic male-derived

masculinity makes masculinity inaccessible to non-males. If masculinity is a natural manifestation of white-males, then all non-white, non-masculinity is a derivative and inferior "white men derive enormous power from assuming and confirming the non-performative nature of masculinity" (Halberstam, 1998, p.232). She deconstructs the apparent dominance of white male masculinities as the natural exemplar of masculinity by emphasising that masculinity is a trait or combination of traits which can manifest naturally from an array of individuals "Masculinity … becomes legible as masculinity where and when it leaves the white male middle class body" (Halberstam, 1998 p.2). Halberstam (1998) notes that masculinity is conspicuous when it is recognised in non-normative masculine individuals. Masculinity is socially and culturally associated with males and it is this perception that reinforces the gender binary. Masculinity that is clearly evident in non-male individuals or "ambiguously gendered bodies" is often perceived invalid or pathological (Halberstam, 1998). Halberstam (1998) introduces the "Bathroom Problem" where the gender binary is strictly enforced to illustrate that these dichotomous notions of "male" and "female" is "outmoded". Halberstam (1998) notes that androgynous or masculine females may often face threats of physical violence simply because they are perceived to have "violated a cardinal rule of gender: one must be readable at a glance" (p.23). Halberstam (1998, p.25) uses the "Bathroom Problem" to not only show us the "violent enforcement of our current gender system" but also to remind us of the constant danger that is faced by individuals who do not fit within the rigid structures of binary gender. Halberstam (1998) notes the variance between gender policing in the male and female bathrooms, highlighting that only non-males are criticised in the male bathrooms while all gender non-conforming individuals are openly scrutinized in the female bathrooms. The public bathroom therefore, frequently becomes a site for gender repression where "gender-deviant 'women' are mistaken for men … suggest that a large number of feminine women spend a large amount of time and energy policing masculine women" Halberstam (1998, p.25). The Bathroom Problem highlights two key issues. Firstly, abuse and harassment that many masculine females regularly face and secondly, that it is very often females who are sometimes verbally and or physically abusive to other females who they perceive as gender deviants. The data analysis chapters show that same-sex desiring females are not only subjected to violent abuse within their intimate partner relationships but they are also violently abused by other female students who perceive them as deviant.

Tomboys are perceived by society as masculine girls who have not yet reached adolescence. "She belonged to no club and was a member of nothing in the world. Frankie was an unjoined

person who hung around in doorways, and she was afraid," (Halberstam, 1998, pp.6-7). Halberstam (1998) describes masculine women as "unjoined" to convey to us how they become dislocated from society that refuses to accept their masculinities as valid. Tomboyish girls who grow up are then denied access to mature masculinity, which may contribute to the assumption that masculinity can only be manifested in males and is thus non-performative. This then renders all other manifestations of masculinity especially by females and non-whites to alternate masculinity which is assumed to be the derivative of white male masculinity (Halberstam, 1998). Halberstam (1998) argues that these alternate masculinities are valid and freestanding and are not derivatives of dominant masculinity. Halberstam's (1998) asserts that as masculinity can and does manifest naturally from females so too can femininity manifest naturally from males. According to Halberstam (1998, p.6) *"gender conformity is pressed onto all girls … girls are remodelled into compliant forms of femininity"*. Tomboyism appears to be socially acceptable during adolescence, but it tends to be frowned upon once the girl exits this period. For Halberstam (1998, p.7) childhood is a period of "unbelonging", then once the tomboyish girl enters adulthood her "unjoined" status may render her vulnerable to "social violence and opprobrium". However, female childhood violence is not necessarily a part of tomboyish behaviour. The data analysis chapters will show that female violence emanates from a number of sources.

Society treats masculinity as the exclusive embodiment of males and femininity as the exclusive embodiment of females. These archaic gender notions are what drives homophobic violence. Non-conforming genders are often brutalised by both hegemonic masculinities and hegemonic femininities (Connell, 2000; 1995; 1987). Stereotypical gender traits of masculine, power, strength and dominance should be extended to femininity as well, not only in the context of sport but in all avenues of life. Halberstam (1998, p.272) argues for these traits not to be simply "human" but to "allow them to extend to women as masculinity". Females are generally associated with being passive, weak and subordinated so when they contradict these traits by engaging in violence and becoming aggressive and assertive, they are perceived as acting like a man (Vandenburg, Brennan & Chesney-Lind, 2013; Chesney-Lind, 2006). Halberstam's (1998) Female masculinities is premised upon the notion that one should not assume that only males can be masculine or that only females can be feminine; societal restrictions placed on adult females to adhere to feminine norms and not act upon their masculine inclinations is stifling. However, due to violence being predominantly associated with males, it appears that females do not have as much claim to masculine traits, as a result of societal constructs.

In considering gender, Halberstam (1998) argues that while gender has aspects of performativity, it is ultimately inherent to an individual's being, like their sexuality. Halberstam's (1998) view of gender contrasts with Butler's (1990) argument that gender is performative. Here Halberstam (1998) argues for the validity of non-normative identities, that these identities are just as natural as any other gender. Furthermore, Halberstam (1998) argues that butch/femme relationships (stone butch) are not performances of heterosexuality or female self-hatred. Masculinity therefore exists and is produced by masculine females, gender deviants as well as lesbians (Halberstam, 1998). Butler (1990) defines gender as construction and performance. According to Halberstam (1998, p.119) this means that "we are embedded in gender relations and gender relations are embedded in us", to the point where gender feels inescapable; because gender and its effects are inescapable, a degree of what has been called 'gender dysphoria' characterises most embodiments although this 'syndrome' has been used to describe only pretransexual forms of gender discomfort." Butler's (1990) 'gender dysphoria' manifests from the conflicts between internal and external experiences of gender (Halberstam, 1998). Halberstam argues that 'gender dysphoria' manifests from the perceived conflicts between masculinity and femaleness. According to Halberstam (1998, p.119) when female masculinity is considered valid, the dysphoria can "produce new and fully functional masculinities".

"Despite feminist and queer rearticulations of the meanings and effects of gender and sexuality, we continue to live in an age of gender conformity and therefore heteronormativity." Individuals who do not conform to the heteronormal matrix are consigned to realm of perversion, "gender becomes a battleground at this time, it is worth asking who fights the battles, who receives the wounds and bears the scars, who dies? The gender struggle, furthermore, has a way of collapsing gender and sexuality because for gender outlaws, their bending is often read as an outward sign of an aberrant sexuality." (Halberstam, 1998, pp.118-119)

The theory of gender inversion was based on the "cross-gender identification" where masculine identities were expressed through a female form (Halberstam, 1998; Butler, 1990). Inversion theory sustains the gender binary, in that it not only assumes that all females are feminine and that all males are masculine but that femininity and masculinity belong exclusively to their gender (Halberstam, 1998). Thus, masculine females and feminine males are pathologised. Halberstam (1998) rejects the inversion theory as her goal is to create a space for masculine

women who have agency in creating their own masculinity. Halberstam (1998) argues against the assumption that all masculine women desire to be men. Halberstam (1998) notes that the assumption that women must be masculine in order to be lesbian was fought against by the LGBTIQ+ movement. Many years later, lesbian feminists rejected the inversion theory as an explanation for same-sex sexuality as well as the categorization of female masculinity as lesbianism "putting in her place the women-identified women" (Halberstam, 1998, p.82). I draw on Halberstam's theory (1998) to show that these female students take on socially constructed male roles of violence as a way of reclaiming power. The female students do not necessarily want to be male, but they rather occupy female masculinity roles as a way of subverting historic male gender roles of violence and in doing so, they stake their role in gender power relations.

Halberstam (1998, pp .53-54) uses a "perverse presentism" method of historical analysis that seeks to "avoid the trap of simply projecting contemporary understandings back in time," through actively questioning and denaturalising "what we think we know about the present," Halberstam (1998) argues against applying modern definitions of lesbianism to historical homosexual desire in females while also recognising the dearth of historical accounts of such desires. Halberstam (1998) notes that as masculinity exists against a backdrop of assumed masculinity, the assumption is that only males have contributed to the making of masculinities, overlooking "what difference the masculine women might have made to the development of such masculinity" (Halberstam, 1998, p.48). Halberstam's (1998) theories about historical female masculinity is almost exclusively derived from Foucault's (1980) methods of conceptualising sexuality. Foucault's (1980, 1983) theories also influence Halberstam's (1998, p.53) perverse presentism methodology, by insisting that history should be written *"in terms of the present"* and that modern perceptions should not define the perceptions of the past. The Foucauldian (1983) theory of "reverse discourse" in which one transforms a debased position into a challenging presence" also directly applies to Halberstam's (1998) "perverse presentism" – while female masculinity has been previously oppressed it can be harnessed as an empowering identity.

Halberstam (1998, p.268) attempts "to make masculinity safe for women and girls" by destabilising the linked contemporary understandings of gender and current taxonomies that will create new taxonomies for understanding and for making legible the multiplicity of both past and present female masculinity. Halberstam (1998) emphasises the importance of not

applying the modern label of 'lesbian' to historic masculine females or same-sex relationships as it would erase the complexities of and the difference between these gender non-conforming women. The data analysis chapters will show that there is intimate partner violence within lesbian relationships where the females use violence in order to dominate and control their partners and this reinforces the belief that females are not a homogenous group and that they are capable of assuming violent roles.

Sexual and physical aggression is also evident in the violence within lesbian relationships and this aggression signifies unequal power relations that are ever-present in heterosexual relationships, with misogyny being part of these relationships. Violence is therefore used to maintain power and in the context of same-sex relationships, it is possible that females can be both victims and perpetrators.

Halberstam's female masculinities (2012b; 1998) refers to a range of masculine inflected identities and identifications that present a shift in social control where females are not afraid to violently assert their agency, neither do they shy away from being sexually, physically and verbally aggressive. Halberstam (1998) explicitly shows how masculine female, in particular butch and predatory butch women, have been negatively portrayed in the media. Halberstam (1998) discusses "the Positive Image Debate" that refers to the struggles between attempts to downcast negative queer stereotypes while nevertheless exposing the harsh realities of queer people and avoiding the erasure of other minority identities through the use of positive stereotypes. Masculine, non-conforming females are often portrayed in a negative light and may therefore hide their sexual orientation in an attempt to escape the negative attention that they are so often subjected to. Halberstam (1998) posits that there are females who also identify positively with masculinity and that they deserve to be treated as human.

The "predatory butch" was portrayed as the overly negative, aggressive, rough, and sexually dominant woman with the penchant for violence; she appears to be the female version of the aggressive, violent heterosexual male protagonist who readily asserts his authority. What Halberstam (1998) argues is that while these actions are not in themselves negatively perceived, when these actions come from a female and are directed at another female, they then become socially unacceptable. The implication is that society continues to normalise violence when it is carried out by males, but appears socially unacceptable when the same actions are exhibited by females. Masculine females are then perceived as acting just like men. To allow Tomboyishness to filter into adulthood is regarded as a threat to one's presumed

heterosexuality and femininity. Girls who portray or exhibit masculinity well beyond their childhood are socially stigmatised and presumed homosexual. However, Halberstam's (1998) female masculinity is premised upon the notion that one should not assume that masculinity is exclusive to males or that femininity is exclusive to females. "Excessive conventional femininity" is associated with "passivity and inactivity", as well as the "sexualisation" of female bodies and according to Halberstam (1998, pp.268-269) to keep their female children from the pitfalls associated with femininity, parents have tried "to hold femininity at bay." Boxing is used to illustrate masculine strength and power and power over other subordinate masculinities. Halberstam's (1998) describes how critics were concerned that boxing could reduce femininity – this explains why the boxers were so quick to assert that "their physical toughness is not accompanied by a depletion in femininity" (p.270). This assertion is pertinent to Halberstam's (1998) argument that female masculinity is not yet a comfortable identity to hold sway in society. Society is sometimes too quick to assume that if a female engages in so-called masculine activity, that she is a lesbian. Halberstam (1998) posits that distancing oneself from stereotypical femininity is a step to claiming power and thereby rejecting the disempowerment that comes with it. Halberstam (1998) further argues that "it seems to me that at least early on in life, girls should avoid femininity" (pp.268-269). For Halberstam (1998), renouncing femininity thus becomes an act of renouncing powerlessness and claiming power for oneself.

Halberstam (1998) asserts that female masculinity is equal to male masculinity, that it is not unnatural, inferior or derivative. Halberstam (1998) further adds that female masculinity has played a pivotal role in the contemporary formation of masculinity and therefore, masculinity cannot be fully understood unless female masculinity is considered. Halberstam (1998) believes that masculinity is not simply a privilege, but also a burden to males in different ways. Because of the possible physical violence to their self as well as violence directed at others – masculinity is often expressed through violence, so if masculine females express violence then it is innate. Halberstam (1998, p.109) posits that "As long as masculinity is annexed in our society to power and violence and oppression, we will find some masculine women whose gender expression becomes partially wielded to the worst aspects of a culturally mandated masculinity". Patriarchal cultures sanction the use of violence by males against their female partners as well as non-conforming genders. Their gender non-conforming is perceived as a threat to the gender order and to patriarchy as an institution (Msibi, 2012; Kimmel, 2008; Connell, 1995).

Halberstam (1998) advocates female masculinity so as to give female forms of masculinity pride and power and she does this recognising and validating the diversity of masculine expression, particularly in lesbian women. However, Halberstam (1998) almost excludes heterosexual women. "I concentrate on queer female masculinities to the exclusion of heterosexual masculinity. I have no doubt that heterosexual female masculinity menaces gender conformity in its own way" (Halberstam, 1998, p.28). The data analysis chapters will show that it is not only heterosexual female students but also same-sex desiring female students who engage in 'masculine' violence and in so doing they subvert gender power norms and destabilise gender power relations. There are 'masculine' females who identify with subordinate masculinities and who have produced powerful, progressive alternative masculinities. Halberstam (2012b; 1998) affirms the ambiguous nature of empowered female masculinities wherein females possess the physical and aggressive strength and power while simultaneously identifying as female. In this way they hold the master key to a more powerful, transgressive version of masculinity that is not afraid to use violence. According to Halberstam (1998, p.28) there are examples of "oppressed masculinity". Cultural intolerance towards masculine women has meant that many masculine women are marginalised and denigrated especially when they identify with non-normative sexuality. "I personally experienced adolescence as the shrinking of my world." (Halberstam, 1998, p.267). Firstly, this indicates the fact the female masculinity is only accepted in adolescence, but not in adulthood. Secondly, this statement is poignant as it highlights her personal experience as a masculine female and the painful public reactions to her gender ambiguity. Halberstam uses this theory "to make my own female masculinity plausible, credible, and real" and to begin a "discussion on masculinity for women in such a way that masculine girls and women do not have to wear their masculinity as a stigma but can infuse it with a sense of pride and indeed power" (Halberstam, 1998, pp.xi, 19).

3.5. Conclusion

This section discussed the eclectic theoretical framework that underpinned the study. In order to achieve a more nuanced analysis, the eclectic approach was therefore pertinent to the current study which focused on the complex phenomenon of female violence, in particular violent female students at a university. All the theories focused on issues relating heteronormative and non-normative genders, gender, power, sexuality and female violence as it pertains to the current study.

Connell's Theory of Masculinity and Gender Power Relations (2005; 2000; 1995; 1987) highlights the gendered nature of gender violence and therefore her theories are crucial to our understanding of masculinities and its relationship with power and violence. Although hegemonic masculinity is the key driver of gender violence and dominates all other non-hegemonic masculinities and females through legitimised gendered practices and unequal power relations; not all hegemonic masculinities are violent and aggressive (Connell, 2000; 1995). Connell (2000) asserts that masculine conduct or identity may also be found in a biological female body and so therefore, when females engage in gender violence it may not necessarily mean that they are acting out of the binary, but that contextual factors may have dictated their engagement in violence. Connell (2000) is therefore critical of narrow concepts of gender and sex norms that are used to account for the complexities regarding gender, power and gender violence. Connell (2000) suggests a more relational approach to gender that will not only move beyond individual personalities and power dynamics between individuals, but will also illuminate the many different structures of masculinities and femininities. Connell (2000) points out that constant changes in gender relations has led to far-reaching changes in practices of masculinity and that violence by non-hegemonic, marginalised masculinities including females has now become a form of rebellion against oppressive patriarchal ideologies. Females who defy traditional feminine norms (emphasised femininity) and who may sometimes exercise their agency in violent ways, pose a threat to gender power relations (Connell, 2000; 1987). Connell (1995) suggests a degendering strategy to dismantle hegemonic masculinity and to pursue social justice for all. Similarly, Halberstam (1998) and Foucault (1983; 1980) suggest a rejection of gender norms that places individuals in silos and therefore, open to marginalisation and violent oppression.

Foucault's theory of Power (1983; 1980) changes the way we think about power, that power belongs to no-one infinitely. Foucault's (1983; 1980) notion that power is omnipresent, dynamic and not static suggests that everyone can be agents of power, the oppressed as well as the oppressor and in this way unequal power relations can be reversed. Foucault (1983; 1980) perceives power as relational and therefore we cannot escape power as we are part of some power relation. However, Foucault (1983; 1980) asserts that power is both positive and negative. Here, Foucault (1983; 1980) is critical of social norms because they not only have a normalising effect, but also because they disempower, ostracize, marginalise and justify their oppression of certain individuals sometimes through the use of violence. Foucault (1983; 1980)

prompts us to reject historic gender norms and to accept diversity in all social relations in order to liberate ourselves from subjection.

Halberstam's theory of Female Masculinity (2012b; 1998) is premised on the notion that one should not assume that masculinity is exclusive to males or that femininity is exclusive to females as these binary notions are stifling. Halberstam (2012a, b; 1998) has pioneered the deconstruction of links between masculinity and maleness, essentially illustrating the numerous forms of masculinity that females may produce. Halberstam's female masculinities (2012b; 1998) refers to a range of masculine inflected identities and identifications that present a shift in control where females are not afraid to violently assert their agency, neither do they shy away from being physically, verbally and sexually aggressive. Halberstam (2012b; 1998) posits that females also embody stereotypical masculine notions of power, strength and aggression and argues for these traits to be extended to women. Halberstam (2012a, b; 1998) argues for the validity of non-normative identities to be perceived as natural as any other gender and so therefore female masculinity should not be pathologized. Halberstam's (2012a, b; 1998) perverse presentism calls for a contextualised definition of past and present perceptions in terms of non-normative identities. In other words, we must not apply modern definitions of lesbianism to past homosexual desires in females as these definitions only serve to oppress female masculinity instead of harnessing them as an empowering identity, deserving of recognition (Halberstam, 1998). Halberstam (1998) asserts that female masculinity is equal to male masculinity and is not unnatural or derivative and that masculinity cannot be fully understood if female masculinity is not considered. Although Halberstam (1998) focuses solely on non-normative female masculinity, she does maintain that there are heterosexual female masculinities who identify positively with masculinity and who have produced powerful, progressive alternative masculinities. Halberstam's (1998) goal is for women to wear their masculinity without fear of stigmatization and oppression.

Through this eclectic theoretical framework, I was able to critically examine and analyse the complex phenomenon of student female violence at a university. The eclectic approach will have allowed for a more nuanced understanding and in-depth analysis of the research questions that guided the study.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology of the study. The methodology not only reflects the methodological approach that the research took but it also provides a logical description and explanation of the selection of the research design which is typical of qualitative research that is located within the interpretivist paradigm such as the present study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In addition, it provides the rationale for the choice of the research design which sets out to provide an understanding of, and to analyse the phenomenon of female student gender violence at a university campus from the perspectives of the participants (Cresswell, 2014; 2012). Furthermore, the chapter offers an explanation and discussion of the research processes which includes research design and research methodology comprised of sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, validity, trustworthiness and the limitations of the study. The chapter also includes my own reflexivity which is crucial as it presents my position and reflections on how the study impacted me as student and researcher. The discussions and detailed explanations are important and necessary as they map out the path taken in order to fulfil the aims of the research and address the research questions and objectives.

4.2. The Research Design

A research design is a strategic framework that outlines the processes that researchers will undertake in order for them to answer the research questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Kumar, 2011). The research design is tailored according to the nature, purpose and context of the research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In addition, the research design also includes other procedural claims like data collection methods as well as data analysis techniques (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsh & Cook, 2011). In order to answer the research questions guiding this study, I employed qualitative research within the interpretivist paradigm.

4.2.1. The qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is concerned with the social world as it attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences within the social and cultural context in which

they occur (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The qualitative approach focuses on understanding social phenomena from the participants' perspectives which includes beliefs, feelings and actions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). An important feature of qualitative research is that it provides an avenue for the researcher to gain systematic compilations of data that reflect the lived realities of the participants as they attempt to make meaning of these experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The current study employed a qualitative approach as it set out to achieve in-depth understandings of female students' engagement in gender violence at a university campus. One of the reasons I chose the qualitative approach is to gain deeper insight into the reasons for these female students' provoked and unprovoked violent behaviours. This approach provided me with an opportunity to understand the reasons behind the multiple constructions of femininity as male and female students provided justification or other reasons for the use of female gender violence. The qualitative approach was particularly useful to the study as it afforded the opportunity for both male and female students to freely speak about their experiences and perceptions of female students' engagement in violence as they offered a multiplicity of insights into this often 'muted' phenomenon at university. The qualitative approach also afforded the opportunity to gain a holistic picture into the precarious world of university life. This was achieved by paying careful attention to the language used by participants' as well as other nuances like socially constructed versions of male and female experiences and exposure to female gender violence as well as verbal and non-verbal cues.

This study was therefore, grounded in the qualitative approach and located within the interpretivist paradigm, which sets out to understand the individual's interpretation of their world and their experiences as they strive to make sense of the phenomenon they encounter (Braun & Clark, 2013; Creswell, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

4.2.2. The interpretivist paradigm

Undertaking research of this nature meant the interpretivist paradigm was the most pertinent choice as it allows researchers to interpret the generated data to understand human agency, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The current study focuses on violent femininities in a university context and this required a close interpretation and analysis of the qualitative data generated through individual interviews. Since the study focused on the very sensitive issue of gender violence it made sense to work within the interpretivist paradigm, using face-to-face interviews as the participants offered their

perceptions, experiences and behaviour (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) of violence within an environment that is supposed to be a safe space. Within the semi-structured interview, I chose to use the narrative inquiry as it proved fruitful in the way the participants responded, giving their accounts and narrating their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A distinct feature of this type of interpretivist approach is that the data has to be treated as evidence of beliefs and desires and therefore, it is important that a narrative style of explanation is needed (Bevir & Rhodes, 2012). In this way a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences was achieved. The interpretivist approach recognises and acknowledges the social world and reality as multi-layered and complex (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Humphreys, 2013). It was therefore crucial that I employed this interpretivist approach as it allowed me the ability to achieve a more nuanced analysis (of the complex phenomenon of female students and their engagement in violence) due to the level of interaction with the participants and the subsequent interpretation of the data.

4.2.3. Narrative inquiry approach

The narrative approach creates a space for the participants to give first-hand accounts of their experiences as they make connections between events in a causal sense (Herman, Jahn & Ryan, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as well as creating a space for them to reflect on the events that shaped their actions, re-assessing fragmented and [un]bearable memories (Riessman, 2008). Research into female students' engagement in gender violence is largely silent and it is within this silence that I positioned my narrative inquiry. My intention of this narrative inquiry was to listen attentively to the participants' stories and this was possible using the semi-structured open-ended individual interviews which allowed the participants to give detailed accounts of their lived experiences as well as their observations of, exposure to and engagement in violence. Given the nature and sensitivity of the research focus, it was logical that I use this type of inquiry as it was possible for the participants to reconstruct, recall and reflect critically on their own experiences (Herman, Jahn & Ryan, 2008) of being victims, as perpetrators and observers.

4.3. The Research Process

This section focused on the various steps and the detailed discussion of these steps that were implemented in order to address the research questions. This section is discussed in three stages below.

4.3.1. Stage One: Preparation and Planning

4.3.1.1. Gaining permission: Human Social Sciences Ethics Committee and Registrar

The study was conducted at the UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU – NATAL (UKZN) in 2020. After successfully defending my research proposal with minor adjustments and completing the revisions, I was then able to proceed with the next step and that was to apply for ethical clearance. Permission was granted to conduct this research on campus. Full Ethical approval was granted from the Human Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee with the protocol reference number being: HSSREC/00002102/2020. A gatekeepers' letter was also applied for and permission was granted by the Registrar of UKZN.

4.3.1.2. The research site

The research was conducted at one of the university sites at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The UKZN comprises of five campuses, namely: Edgewood, Howard College, The Nelson Mandela Medical School, Pietermaritzburg and Westville Campuses. The campus on which I conducted my fieldwork is one in which I am a postgraduate student. I have not only forged many friendships with my younger fellow students but as a more mature student I often found that some of the younger students would call on me for assistance and guidance. In this way I was able to develop a good rapport with other students and this in turn made it easier to access my participants'. While working towards my Honours and Master's degrees I became aware of the scourge of gender violence that plagued the university. It was also for this reason that I decided to select this campus as my research site. The proximity to my place of residence also meant that it was more convenient and accessible and that I would be able to access my participants as and when they were available and this included weekends and evenings.

Despite the diverse student population, this campus has a largely Black student population followed by Indians, Coloureds and Whites. There are also foreign national students from countries in Africa who are also students at this campus. The campus specialises in educator training, offering undergraduate studies as well as postgraduate courses, namely Doctoral, Masters, Honours and Post Graduate Diplomas (PGDip). The UKZN was ranked number one in Africa in 2019 according to the Young University Rankings (UKZNDABA online, 2019). In 2021, UKZN claimed the top spot in South Africa and it was placed at number 61 out of the 475 global universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) Young University rankings (UKZNDABA online, 2021).

This campus is 'home' to about 875 students who reside in 13 on-campus residences and about 3837 students who reside in 20 off-campus residences. The on-campus residences are separated into undergraduate and postgraduate residences. The undergraduate residences are divided into female and male only residences as well as mixed residences for those who prefer to cohabit. The postgraduate residences have male, female and non-normative genders. There are also tunnels which are situated on the ground floor to cater for students with disabilities. Students have the choice to live alone in a single room or they may share a double or larger room with other students. There are communal ablution and kitchen facilities as well as communal television lounges. The majority of the students living in the residences are Black. There are also indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, a huge library, as well as computer facilities (LANS). Security is provided by an external service provider, known as Risk Management Services (RMS).

The students at this campus come from diverse backgrounds and many of them are recipients of bursaries and grants. Many of the students in the residences are completely dependent on monthly food allowances and many have financial challenges and are often unable to pay fees and sustain themselves. Many students face social and economic challenges and this not only has a ripple effect on their studies but as the data will show later it may also contribute to the high rates of gender violence at university residences.

4.3.1.3. Sampling

My sampling strategy is purposive as the main selection method. This study required thick, rich information that would not only provide in depth data pertaining to the phenomenon of female student violence but it also aims to address the gap in the literature. Purposive sampling targets a specific group of participants who may have the ability to speak to the research aims (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Sarantakos, 2005). In this case the participants were undergraduate or postgraduate residents or day students at this particular campus. My initial intention was to have 25 male and 25 female students, however my final sample comprised of 32 females and 19 males. Students also included heterosexual and non-normative genders. Being a student at this campus made it easier for me to speak to my fellow students, some of whom have become close friends with me while others would often see me around campus. I visited fellow students at the residences as well as other places on campus and I explained the nature and purpose of my study. While some were somewhat hesitant to respond, there were also many who were interested as to the focus of my study. This topic both appeared to seem

daunting as well as intriguing to the students. The topic of violent femininities at the university at which we were studying seemed to create much curiosity amongst the students I approached as some felt the discussion would be quite risky and invasive. However, there were many who felt that this was an important issue that was largely overlooked at this campus and as two participants succinctly articulated: "The ones that a lot of noise is made about are male perpetrators" (Cane, M5) and "not something that is put up there but it is always about male violence" (Rita, F4). After carefully explaining the purpose of my research, many were eager to participate and there were some who volunteered to assist me to get other interested students to be part of this research. Thus, using the snowballing technique (Braun & Clark, 2013; Sarantakos, 2005) I was able to get more female participants to become part of my study. The final number of female participants was 32 and there were 19 males. Therefore, the snowballing technique which involves getting participants and fellow students to enquire from other students about their willingness to participate in my research (Braun & Clark, 2013; Sarantakos, 2005) proved successful. There were heterosexual males and females as well as self-identified non-normative gender students who were willing to participate in this study.

4.3.1.4. Profile of Participants

Table A below gives a brief profile of each of the 32 female students who were interviewed.

Race = A – African

       C – Coloured

       I – Indian

Table A: Profile of 32 female participants

No.	Name	Age	Hometown	Parents	Race	Religion	Sexual orientation	Gender identity	Year of study	Travel	M/F	Cohabiting
F1	Lilly	24	Pmb	Single	A	C	Heterosexual	F	4th			√
F2	Lyne	22	Jozini	Parents	A	Doesn't believe	Heterosexual	F	4th		F	
F3	Leah	24	Pmb - rural area	Grandparents	A	C	Heterosexual	F	P/grad Hons			√
F4	Rita	23	Durban	Divorced	A	C	Heterosexual	F	4th	Off campus	F	She is a ra
F5	Ruth	28	Inanda village	No parents	A	C	Bisexual	Bisexual	4th	√		
F6	Rose	21	Tongaat	Dad & stepmom	A	Not religious	Didn't want to reveal	F	2nd	Private off campus	F	
F7	Dawn	32	Gauteng	Single	A	C	Asexual	F	3rd		F	
F8	Denise	23	Umlazi	Single	A	-	Heterosexual	F	4th			√
F9	Dora	23	Ntuzuma	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	F	3rd		F	
F10	Jill	20	Newcastle	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	F	P/grad PGCE		F	
F11	Jane	20	Vryheid	Single mom	A	None	Bisexual	Bisexual	3rd		F	
F12	Joan	20	Port shepstone	Single mom	A	C	Heterosexual	F	3rd		F	
F13	Milly	20	Umzimkulu	Both dead - orphan	A	Shembe	Heterosexual	F	3rd		F	
F14	Martha	21	Escourt	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	F	4th		F	

F15	Maya	21	Duduxantu	Both	A	C	Asexual	F	4th		F	
F16	Faye	22	Pongola	Both	A	-	Heterosexual	F	3rd		F	
F17	Fran	24		Single	A	-	Heterosexual	F	4th		F	
F18	Ferral	25	Empangeni	Single	A	-	Heterosexual	F	4th		F	
F19	Sylvia	26	Newcastle	Granny	A	C	Did not know what to say	F	P/grad Hons	√		
F20	Sally	25	Swaziland	Single dad	A	C	Bisexual	Bisexual	P/grad Hons		F	
F21	Sarah	23	Eastern cape	Single dad	A	C	Homosexual	Lesbian	P/grad PGCE	-		√
F22	Patty	24	Gauteng	Both	C	C	Heterosexual	F	P/grad	-		Off campus
F23	Penny	21	Ladysmith	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	F	3rd	-	F	
F24	Petunia	21	Asherville	Both	A	C	Asexual	F	4th	-	F	
F25	Kitty	26	Port Shepstone	Orphan	A	C	Bisexual	Lesbian	P/grad Hons	-	F	
F26	Kay	19	Nkandla	Both	A	No	Bisexual	Lesbian	2nd	-	F	
F27	Kate	20	Ladysmith	Both	A	C	Bisexual	Bisexual	2nd	-	F	
F28	Nelly	20	Kokstad	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	F	3rd	-	F	
F29	Nora	21	Chatsworth	Both	I	-	Heterosexual	F	3rd	Daily	-	
F30	Nessa	20	Phoenix	Single	I	H	Heterosexual	F	3rd	Daily	-	
F31	Tilly	19	Newlands east	Both	C	Anglican	Heterosexual	F	3rd	Daily	-	
F32	Tina	21	Verulam	Both	I	-	Homosexual	Lesbian	P/grad PGCE	Daily	-	

The female sample comprised of 32 individuals whose ages ranged from 19 to 32 years. Two participants came from Gauteng province, one from the Eastern Cape, one from Swaziland and the other 28 live in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Fifteen of them still have both parents who are alive, ten of them have a single parent, two are orphans, two have been raised by a grandparent, while one indicated that her parents are divorced while another was raised by a step-mother and father. There were three coloured females, three Indian females and twenty-six of the females identified themselves as Black. The religious denominations were Christian, Zionist, Nazareth, Shembe, Hindu and while some followed their traditional ancestry beliefs there were some who stated that they had no religious beliefs.

In terms of their year of study, this ranged from undergraduate (2nd-4th) to postgraduate (Honours, Post Graduate Certificate in Education - PGCE). There were three who resided in off-campus residences, six who travelled daily from home and the other 23 all resided on-campus residences. What proved to be interesting during the interview process was that the students who did not reside in the on-campus residences and the day students were not really aware of or exposed to the female violence that occurred at campus.

The female sample was also diverse in terms of sexual orientation. In terms of sexual orientation: 6 self-identified as bisexual; 19 self-identified as heterosexual, 2 did not want to divulge; 3 self-identified as asexual and 2 self-identified as homosexual. In terms of their relationship status, at least two were married, one was, using her words in a 'kind of' relationship', twenty were in a relationship (either same-sex or heterosexual), three were not in any relationship and six did not answer the question. Of the six who self-identified as bisexual, five of them were involved in relationships.

Table B below gives a brief profile of each of the 19 male participants who were interviewed.

Table B: Profile of 19 male participants

No.	Name	Age	Hometown	Parents	Race	Religion	Sexual orientation	Gender identity	Degree Year of study	Travel	Residence Male/Female	Cohabiting	Single (S) or in a Relationship (R)
M1	Alan	23	Bizana	Orphan	A	C	Heterosexual	M	4th	-	M		R
M2	Adam	21	Ulundi	Orphan	A	C	Heterosexual	M	4th	-	M		R
M3	Alwin	25	Inanda	Single	A	-	Heterosexual	M	4th	-	M		R
M4	Cody	23	Eshowe	Single	A	C	Homosexual	Gay	2nd	-	M		R
M5	Cane	29	Chatsworth	Single	I	C	Heterosexual	M	P/grad phd			√	R
M6	Cowen	23	Stanger	Single	A	An g	Heterosexual	M	P/grad hnrs			√	S
M7	Errol	22	Empangeni	Both	A	C	Did not want to reveal	M	P/grad hnrs		M		-
M8	Ethan	21	Pmb	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	M	3rd		M		-

M9	Edwin	19	Port shepstone	Granny	A	C	Homosexual	Lgbtiq+	2nd		M		-
M 10	Gareth	22	Pmb	Single	A	-	Heterosexual	M	5th		M		-
M 11	Gerome	20	Newlands west	Single	A	-	Homosexual	Gay	4th		M		R
M 12	Henry	24	Richards bay	Single	A	-	Asexual	M	4th		M		-
M 13	Harold	21	Pmb	Both	A	C	Heterosexual	M	4th		M		R
M 14	Horatio	21	Ladysmith	Single	A	-	Did not want to answer	Did not want to answer	4th		M		R
M 15	Ben	21	Ladysmith	Both	A	C	Homosexual	Straight	4th		M		R
M 16	Bill	21	Timbeza	Both	A	C	Homosexual	M	3rd		M		R
M 17	Barry	21	Bergville	Single	A	-	Homosexual	Gay	3rd		M		R
M 18	Oliver	22	Chatsworth	Single	I	C	Heterosexual	M	3rd	Daily			-
M 19	Otis	30	Sydenham	Single	I	M	Heterosexual	M	P/grad pgce	Daily			-

The male sample comprised of 19 individuals whose ages ranged from 19 to 30 years. One participant came from the Eastern Cape province; one from Gauteng province and seventeen live in KZN. Two of them are orphaned; five have both parents; 11 have single parents and one is raised by a grandparent. In terms of race there were three Indian and sixteen Black male students. The religious denominations were Christian, Anglican, Muslim and there were a few who did not identify with any religion. In terms of their year of study, this ranged from undergraduate (2nd to 4th) to postgraduate (PhD, Honours, PGCE). Two participants travelled daily and 17 resided on-campus. Just like the female sample, the male sample was also diverse in terms of gender identity and sexual orientation.

As is evident from the above, the sample population was diverse in terms of sexual orientation; religion, age, year of study and background. This diversity allowed me the opportunity to achieve a nuanced analysis in terms of their understandings, perceptions, experiences and exposure to female violence.

4.3.1.5. Ethical Considerations

Before any research is undertaken, all ethical principles and rules must be strictly adhered to. To this end, an ethical application was made for this study to be conducted through the University of KwaZulu-Natal Human Social Sciences Ethical Committee (HSSREC). The study was granted an ethical certificate number: HSSREC/00002102/2020 (see appendix one). A gatekeepers' letter was also applied for from the Registrar of the university and it was granted (see appendix two). Given the sensitive nature of the research phenomenon which focused on female students' engagement in gender violence, it was absolutely crucial that all ethical issues were thoroughly adhered to. As this research was conducted at a university, all of the students were young adults over the age of 18 so parental consent was not necessary. The nature of the research was explained in detail and the participants were given assent forms (see appendix three) containing detailed information of the study. Once they had carefully read the assent forms and they understood that their participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw at any time, they signed the assent forms. Participants were also assured that they could refrain from answering any questions that they were not comfortable with. They were also reassured that their identity and details would remain confidential as they would be assigned pseudonyms (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Due to the sensitivity of the

study I also reminded them that the details of the university's psychologist were included on the assent form should they need to consult with one.

The participants were also asked permission for their interviews to be audio-recorded and they had to tick the necessary box on the assent form if they agreed. Once I explained the rationale behind recording their interview and they understood and acknowledged that this would help to ensure that there was no misrepresentation of the data, the interviews commenced. The audio-recorder was used in order to enhance the credibility of the generated data as verbatim data of the participants were used. They were informed that all the audio-recordings would be deleted once transcribed and transcripts would be kept in a locked cupboard or safe for the stipulated five-year period, thus no-one else would be privy to the data. This also reassured them that their information would remain confidential. The authenticity is therefore established as the verbatim audio-recordings were accurately transcribed. Thus respect for the participants' and their experiences was maintained (Cresswell, 2012). The authenticity in this research is also reflected in the myriad of lived experiences of the participants, as many of whom openly spoke about their own use of violence and the detailed narratives of their reasons for this violence.

Confirmability demands that an audit trail is undertaken (Cresswell, 2012) and therefore the transcripts were given to the participants for verification (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Cresswell, 2012). Transferability refers to an external validation wherein the findings can be generalised or whether it can be applicable to similar research in other contexts (Cresswell, 2012). The qualitative nature of this research set out to understand the phenomenon of female students' engagement in violence and cannot be generalised to other universities due to the specificity of these participants' experiences and observations.

4.3.2. Stage Two: Data Collection

4.3.2.1. Individual in-depth interviews

Given the sensitivity of the research, I chose individual semi-structured open-ended interviews to allow students the privacy to speak openly. This type of interview which took the form of a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the students' understandings and perceptions regarding female students' engagement in gender violence. The individual semi-structured open-ended

interview gave the participants the opportunity and freedom to speak candidly about their experiences which may have contributed to them using gender violence (Dwyer & Davies, 2017) or from the males or other females and non-normative gender perspectives of being victims. This narrative style approach proved to be gainful as many participants felt more relaxed as they reflected on the events that shaped and informed their actions and attitudes (Riessman, 2008). Two participants spoke about how their experiences of being raped had contributed to them behaving aggressively and often violently. The participants' narrative within the semi-structured interviews gave the participants the space to share very personal and private information that they may not have shared had this been a rigid, closed-ended structured interview (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews focused on understanding the experiences of the participants and victims as they narrated their stories which allowed a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of female violence at this university. There were a few students who chose not to answer certain questions, while some had asked me to go to the next question as they would come back later in the interview to answer the previous one as they struggled to articulate what they wanted to say. There were a few participants who did become a bit emotional especially those students who spoke about their traumatic experiences of either being a victim or perpetrator of gender violence.

All the interviews lasted longer than 45 minutes with some going over an hour and a half. Of the 51 interviews that I conducted, 45 were conducted face-to-face while the remaining six were conducted telephonically. These six participants were daily travellers and they were not able to remain at campus after lectures. They requested telephonic interviews. All the students who had virtual interviews were reimbursed for their data costs. Those who were interviewed face-to-face were provided with a light refreshment, masks and hand sanitizers were made available to them. These face-to-face interviews took place when the students were allowed back on campus with permits. COVID-19 presented its own challenges, however all COVID-19 protocols were strictly adhered to during the interviews. Many students opted to be interviewed in their private rooms on campus as they felt more comfortable to speak about sensitive issues in a familiar environment. Most of the interviews were conducted on weekends and some took place in the early evenings after students had attended their last lecture for the day. It was easier

to read non-verbal clues during the face-to-face interviews than it was to listen for subtle changes in the tone of the voice in the telephonic interviews. What I did learn was that research of this nature is more effective when face-to-face contact is used.

Not all the participants were victims of female violence and not all the female participants had engaged in gender violence. There were many students who had merely observed female students engaging in violence. There were a few male students who spoke about their experiences of gender violence at the hands of their female partners. There were also several students who spoke about witnessing female as well as male students engaging in violence. While some students were filled with shock and horror at having to witness females engaging in violence, others seemed to accept it as a norm on campus. This was evident when many participants spoke about their shame, guilt and embarrassment of having used gender violence against their intimate partners or fellow students. Such is the purpose of this retelling or narrating a personal experience as it may sometimes offer the possibility for the participants to search for new ways of understanding and perhaps responding in different ways (Phillion, He & Connelly, 2005). By allowing the participants to narrate their personal accounts of gender violence, I gained a deeper understanding of why some of them may resort to violence. As the researcher, I also had to ensure while I accommodated the participants who, at times, deviated from the topic or question, I also had to navigate, ensuring that the questions I prepared on the interview schedule were answered so that I was able to address the research questions. This was achieved by encouraging and prompting the participants to speak openly but also focus on the interview questions. Their narratives which are themselves interpretative, meant that as a researcher, I had to interpret these qualitative responses, making inferences within a theoretical framework (Riessman, 2008). As is known, females are not a homogenous group. Whilst they may have similarities, they also differ in many ways. Whilst the responses of violence intersect in many ways, their stories are different, therefore, the interpretations differ. The narratives that emerged from this qualitative, narrative approach ranged from power inequalities to issues of female agency. This interpretive approach not only meant that as a researcher, I had to ensure that my personal biases and views did not taint the data but I was careful to let the data speak for itself (Kelly, 2002); but it also created the potential to achieve an in-depth nuanced understanding into the world of the participants (Phillion, He, Connelly, 2005).

4.3.2.2. The interview schedule

The purpose of an interview schedule is to ensure a consistent line of inquiry that will offer a detailed picture of the participants' perceptions, understandings and experiences (Patton, 2002). The standard, predetermined individual, semi-structured open-ended questions were aimed at facilitating in-depth responses from the participants with the intention of understanding their lived realities. The semi-structured open-ended questions allowed for a more probing, in-depth analysis of the phenomenon (See Annexure Four for the interview schedule). The questions were set out in a logical manner, with biographical data collected first and then the graded questions from basic to more complex and subjective questions were addressed. This arrangement of questions allowed for a more relaxed easing into the more difficult and complex line of questioning. This line of questioning also included demographic questions that were important for not only 'breaking the ice' but also for understanding their backgrounds and important biographical information that assisted in understanding the participants and how their backgrounds may or may not impact on their lives on a university campus. The semi-structured, open-ended questions were designed to answer the research questions and to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon of female violence at university campuses.

4.3.3. Stage Three: Data Analysis

The study employed the qualitative approach as the aim of the study was to gain in-depth understanding and perceptions of female students' use of gender violence. A qualitative approach was therefore appropriate for the study as it set out to understand this complex social phenomenon of female student violence from the perspectives of the participants (Cresswell, 2014; 2012; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Qualitative analysis is grounded in 'thick description' (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Patton, 2002) and using the semi-structured, open-ended interview, which took the form of a narrative style inquiry. The verbatim data was used to analyse and discuss the findings of this research, hence addressing the objectives. The narrative style and analysis ensured that the originality of the participants' experiences as verbatim data was used to enhance the credibility of the data (Riessman, 2008). Using the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study together with the literature review, I was able to gain a more nuanced interpretation of

the contextual factors, together with attitudes, behaviours and experiences that result in the construction of violent femininities at this university campus.

To begin the analysis, I transcribed all the recorded interviews into verbatim textual data. Thereafter I read all the transcripts several times in order to familiarise myself with the data. This familiarisation and immersion in the data is part of the initial steps in the data analysis process that is suggested by several scholars (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Hennings, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). I then began to code and categorise the data in order to develop preliminary themes. It was at this stage that patterns or themes began to emerge from the data, using the participants' voices. Analysing the data manually allowed me to gain an in-depth interpretation and understanding of these participants' observations and experiences.

Interpretive research seeks to understand the individual's interpretations of their world and their lived experiences as they try to make sense of their world (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Hennings, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Common threads and patterns became more visible in the participants' responses. Using the inductive approach or a 'bottom up' approach where we move from the specific to the general to analyse the qualitative data, I was able to organise and categorise the several emerging themes (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Using the suggestion by De Vos (2002) I identified broad themes and subsequently further categorised them into sub-themes using the research questions as a guide. This made the large amount of generated data become a little more manageable. Identifying, analysing and reporting themes as they emerge from the generated data (Braun & Clark, 2013) made the task a lot easier. By using Silverman's (2013) approach of identifying 'push' and 'pull' factors, I was able to correlate the generated data and influential and contextual factors with the aims of the research in order to attempt to add to the scholarship around female student gender violence at university. I also drew on hermeneutics in order to analyse the data for 'hidden' and 'apparent' meanings in order to gain a deeper, in-depth analysis of the context and meaning for the participants' behaviour, beliefs and experiences (Niewenhuis, 2010). The narrative approach allowed for a more uninterrupted flow of responses from the participants, in that I allowed participants to relay their responses and experiences in an uninterrupted manner. This also presented the space for me to note and interpret other

non-verbal clues like hesitation, eye movement, fiddling of the hands, amongst other gestures. An interpretivist is cognisant of the individual's behaviour is context-driven.

Trustworthiness

Issues of trustworthiness are matters relating to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Cresswell, 2012). In order to enhance the credibility both during the data collection and the data analysis, I used an audio-recorder to record the verbatim responses and this ensured that there was no misinterpretation of the participants' responses. Confirmability demands that an audit trail is taken and, in this regard, I made the transcripts available to the participants for verification (Cresswell, 2012). The authenticity was established as the participants' experiences were reported in an unbiased way and in this way, respect for the context of the data was maintained (Cresswell, 2012). The trustworthiness of this study is established as the findings reflect the meanings exactly as described by the participants (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

4.4. Reflexivity

Throughout this study, I kept a reflective journal in which I documented every step of the research process. This reflective journal was useful when I needed to capture all the dynamics of the interviews, my own feelings, the way the students responded, the hurt, anger, pain and issues I may have overlooked as the research proceeded.

I was 50 when I registered to fulfill a lifelong dream of achieving my Doctoral degree. However, this journey was punctuated with moments of joy and happiness, challenges with my health and pain, grief and sorrow. Everything seemed to pale in significance with the loss of my Mother in June 2020… I fell apart.

It took all my strength, courage, and determination to defend my research proposal in that very same month and year and I did. Having been told at my research proposal defense that I was attempting to undertake research that had not been conducted at universities, I knew then that I was on the right path. I knew then that I was going to fulfill my dream and in so doing, would contribute to the larger body of research on university violence. My research into female student violence, a phenomenon that is largely 'hidden', and not often spoken about, would certainly add to the scholarship around gender violence that has become so endemic at Higher Education Institutions. It

is at this point that I feel it absolutely necessary and apt to share the responses of three participants in my study regarding the focus of my research:

> *Rita (F4):* *I definitely believe that the university still has a long way to go regarding female violence ... swept under the rug ... not something that is put out there ... its always about male violence.*

> *Cowen (M6):* *Universities are not much aware of the females being the perpetrators to violence ... not denying there is female violence at our campus.*

The above articulations showed in a little way that, indeed there is female violence in universities but there remains a paucity in the research and furthermore, it is not as publicised like male violence. By acknowledging that female student violence does occur at universities, we not only move one step closer to alleviating the scourge but we become part of the solution. The issue of female student violence has to be part of all university discussions around gender violence or else, male violence alone will be at the centre of discussions, awareness programmes and attempts to end this scourge. What better place, than at a place of higher learning to begin to narrow the gaps between words and actions; policy and practice.

As an older and more mature student, I earned the respect of my peers and this affinity resulted in the formation of my friendships with both young and older students. In order to make them feel comfortable and at ease to answer my interview questions, I spoke to them about how I never gave up on my lifelong dream of achieving my Doctoral degree. I also asked them to speak about their backgrounds and family life. Perhaps as an older student some of the female and male students felt a lot more comfortable around me. These bonds of friendship, respect and trust made it easier for me to get participants who were willing to be interviewed. There were many more who were willing to be part of the study, however, due to time constraints and other challenges, I had to settle on 51 students. I am eternally grateful to my participants for their candidness, because without them, this research would never have been possible.

Research of this nature does not leave you 'unscathed'. There were times when I felt emotionally, psychologically and physically drained. There were times when I drove back home after conducting some interviews, feeling completely numb and sometimes I

sobbed searching for ways to help these students, both male and female. Despite feeling deeply saddened, I knew that I had to continue if I was truly serious about wanting to highlight the plight of males, females and non-normative genders who are victims of female gender violence.

During some of the interviews, it was very difficult to keep my emotions hidden, but I did as I was reminded that my role as a researcher demanded that I not only remained neutral but that I had to set aside my own sentiments around female students' acts of gender violence. Some of the participants were still deeply traumatised by their experiences that were still very raw. Before and after every interview, I reminded the participants that they could access counselling using the university's psychologist.

The interviews with the male participants ranged from slow and ordinary to shy while some were absolutely candid and open about the abuse they endured. Still haunted by his version of his toxic relationship with an abusive female partner, Alan's (M1) voice broke and his eyes welled. This was my very first interview and it no doubt forced me to acknowledge that males are also traumatised by IPV. Sadly, this would be an experience that was common to quite a few male participants who were open and honest about their experiences. The interview with Ethan (M8) who shared his coerced sexual experience with a female student jarred me in a sense that I had to recalibrate my notions on female perpetrated sexual assault.

There were few male participants who did not shy away from discussing their experiences and exposure to female student gender violence at campus. They were quite vocal and sincere as they articulated their concerns about the fact that female student violence is largely perceived as a 'laughing matter'. This filled them with feelings of hopelessness. I too felt despair as many male participants were sometimes visibly embarrassed; their faces turned red, they clasped their hands and lowered their heads. These were the awkward moments that compelled me to reassure them that it was okay to feel emotional and to take a moment to compose themselves before continuing with the interview. Yet again, I was reminded that gender violence is a faceless, genderless, iniquitous act.

At this juncture I return to another of my female participant's interview, one which re-affirmed the importance of my research and that was to give a voice to my participants:

> *Sylvia (F19):*   *I think meeting you was a blessing; I don't regret coming here … I like how you listen to me and able to show that you acknowledge or hear what I'm saying … Your experience (me interviewing her) like makes me feel free.*

I implore the relevant stakeholders (Minister of Higher Education, University Management and staff; entire student body and SRC) to generate enough conversation by working with as many students as possible; create a space and a platform to hear all voices and to confront the issue of female student violence that lurks in the shadows of the university's portals. Overlooking the phenomenon of female student violence not only serves to sustain the notion that female violence is a 'laughing matter' but it also shows the victims of female student violence that the university is also concerned about female students' victims.

4.5. Limitations of the study

Silverman (2013) refers to the limitations as the constraints that are imposed on the study and the context. These are the factors that the researcher may have little or no control over (Wiersma, 2000). The COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique set of challenges. However, I was able to surmount these limitations. With access to campus being denied to all students, no-one was allowed to access the university during COVID-19. This meant that all students and staff were restricted from entering campus and hence I had to make alternative arrangements to interview the participants. I had to conduct some of the interviews telephonically while the university remained on lockdown. With the fall in COVID-19 cases, some students had to apply for permits to return to campus. I was therefore able to interview some students on campus. I had to observe all the strict COVID-19 protocols. The wearing of masks created a barrier, and this became frustrating because, at times, I had to ask students to repeat their responses as their voices were muffled at times. Research of this nature necessitated face-to-face interviews with my participants so that I could observe their facial expressions and non-verbal gestures. Due to the time constraints and COVID-19, I was not able to meet with the participants for a second time even though I would have liked to. I also had to reschedule some interviews for the early evenings and on weekends when the students were available. I made myself available when it was convenient for my participants.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter consists of two parts. I first explained the research design which was a qualitative research design within the interpretivist paradigm. Because of the focus of this research, it was inevitable that some form of narration was necessary from participants so that I could get a comprehensive picture of my area of inquiry. This was also briefly discussed here. The second part of this chapter focused on the research process. This part was further divided into three stages namely, preparation and planning; data collection and data analysis. In the preparation and planning stage I firstly discussed the process of gaining permission in order for me to conduct the research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I also described the research site in great detail. In addition, I discussed the sampling procedures and I also provided a comprehensive profile of all the participants. Further, I discussed all ethical issues. Stage two focused on the data collection processes. Here, I discussed the individual in-depth interviews as well as the interview schedule in detail. In the third stage I discussed the data analysis. The chapter also included a section on reflexivity. The chapter ended with a brief discussion on the limitations of the study.

The next chapter is the first of three data analysis chapters.

Preface to the Analysis Chapters

(Some contextual backgrounds)

This section of the study is a preface to the analysis chapters. The purpose of this preface is to include important biographical information as well as some of the contextual background of many of these female university students which could have played a role in their propensity for violence. Gender as a social construct brings to attention the ways in which children are socialised. This preface presents some of the ways in which violence in the homes, communities, schools and university comes to influence the ways in which these female university students respond, react to violence or even engage in violence in provoked and unprovoked ways. The participants' responses, as will be evident in the analysis chapters, offer a glimpse into the ways in which students converge at university with a variety of perceptions and understandings of violence that they may or may not have been exposed to which ultimately shapes their beliefs and behaviour.

What is evident in the biographical information is that there is a common assumption that females are 'fragile' and socialised into believing that they do not pose a threat of violence. It is these assumptions and perceptions that are partly to blame for society turning a blind eye and trivialising female violence. This perception was shared by several participants who stated that the police and society trivialise male victims of female perpetrated violence. The participants spoke about the male victims being ridiculed and emasculated. This points to the analysis chapters that shows that some male students do not want to speak about or report their abuse at the hands of their female partners. The biographical information also illustrates how females subvert gender power by engaging in violence. The participants' responses also highlighted that there are double standards that prevail especially when a female is reported to have perpetrated IPV against her male partner. This is illustrated by many participants who stated that there is always 'a cover story' or justification for the female violence but when it is the male who is violent, then there are serious, legal consequences. Some of the participants believed that society is 'brutal' and 'unfair' to men because their perpetration of gender violence is always amplified in the media whereas society does not seem to be as concerned to get justice when the perpetrator is female. There were also double standards expressed by a few participants who stated that while culture condones male violence it simultaneously forbids female violence. Evident in the biographical information was the way in which society has shaped and moulded the students' understandings that violence

is a predominantly male domain; however, the ways in which these females have been subjected to violence does not exempt some of them from engaging in violence that is unprovoked or provoked.

The biographical information showed that some of these female students have been exposed to, observed or experienced IPV which was imposed on their family members. A few participants spoke about how their mothers were abused by their intimate partners and they expressed the ways in which this IPV also shaped the ways in which they engaged in violence. The biographical information shows that the students were accustomed to many forms of female violence as either observers or victims. Female perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was quite common in both heterosexual as well as same-sex (lesbian) relationships and this illustrates that these particular females do not conform to societal expectations of females as weak, non-violent and submissive. It is evident that violence is about power and control, as these females use extreme violence which in some instances resulted in the hospitalization of their victims. The biographical information also shows that females engage in interpersonal violence which ranged from physical assaults, bullying, verbal abuse and other relational forms of aggression. There were also participants who admitted to bullying and assaulting other females as well as males. Also evident in the biographical information was that females engage in cyberbullying where they body shame, denigrate and threaten by posting 'hit lists' of their next victim. One of the participants spoke about how a female student physically assaulted an educator, suggesting that some females do not respect authority or that they may be socialized to resort to violence when things do not go their way. The analysis chapters will also show that some female students also resort to extreme forms of violence when things do not go their way. The biographical information shows that females actively engage in all forms of violence as they destabilise gender power norms and relations.

The biographical information offers several reasons for females' engagement in violence. Retaliation for insults and abuse was given as a possible reason for the female violence and there were comments by several participants that some females may also be provoked into acting violently. One participant spoke about a female beating 'the hell out of the boy' for teasing her. There were some participants who believed that females respond with violence as a result of their constant abuse and victimization and this was supported

by a participant who stated that she retaliated with physical violence after her continuous abuse at the hands of her male partner. In this way the female inhabits forms of violence and aggression that is stereotypically perceived as masculine. The issue of learnt behaviour was also apparent as several participants spoke about the fact that some females come from violent backgrounds where they are socialized with violence and therefore violence becomes a normalized way of life for them. However, there were also some participants who stated that some females are just naturally violent and they do not need a reason to engage in violence against others. Females' engagement in crime (loan sharks; drug dealing) was also cited as a reason for their violence especially when they do not get their money from their illicit activities, they then resort to violence. Jealousy featured prominently in the background information as several participants spoke about female jealousy simply because others may be in a better position (physically, financially, socially) and in one instance a female spoke about other females calling her 'a fucking bitch' because she was intelligent and they felt that she was favoured by the educator. The Pull-Her-Down (PHD) syndrome was also evident especially where some of the females are disapproving and envious of other females' achievements, 'other women when they see you doing good in your life, they bring you down'. The biographical information also shows that females fight other females for the attention of boys with some even resorting to extreme violence such as stabbing. With regard to infidelity, some participants spoke about the physical attacks by some females against other females who were dating their boyfriends. This shows that despite the boyfriend cheating in their relationship, these females fight with the other female. In other words, they blame the other female for their male partner's infidelity, they do not hold their boyfriends responsible. Gossip was also offered as a reason for the female violence and one participant spoke about how other females dealt with an alleged gossiper by burning her with boiling water. These extreme forms of female violence were also evident when the participants spoke about how intoxicated females engaged in a fight and one of the females stabbed the other female fatally.

This section serves as a preface to the three data analysis chapters. Crucial background and contextual information was briefly highlighted which provided us with a window into the ways in which these students' lived experiences shape their understandings and perceptions of gender violence. It also provided some of the forms of gender violence that females engage in outside of university. In addition, it offered some reasons for the

female's engagement in violence according to the students in the current study. This preface is important as it shows that the female student violence did not just occur at university and that it happens everywhere.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This is the first of three chapters that presents the data findings of the study. In this chapter the findings are discussed.

The recorded interviews were transcribed into verbatim textual data. The data was coded and categorized into preliminary themes, using the inductive approach, several themes subsequently emerged from the data. Drawing on hermeneutics I was able to achieve a deeper analysis. The eclectic theoretical framework was used as an analytical tool to analyse the rich data generated in the interviews. This chapter provides data that deals with students' general understandings and perceptions of gender violence. The analysis uses the verbatim responses of the students and provides in-depth discussion that draws on the different theories as an analytical lens, while also integrating the discussion with literature that either supports or refutes the findings of the current study.

This chapter will focus on the first critical question and objective that guides this study:

The question is: What are university student's perceptions and understandings of female students' use of (gender) violence?

The 11 themes that emanate from the data that focuses on the presentation and interpretation of the research data as it responds to the students' general understandings and perceptions of gender violence are listed below:

- Students' understandings of gender violence.
- Students' understanding of female gender violence: Culture and Religious beliefs
- Students' perceptions of female student gender violence: It is not feminine.

- Female students who are violent: "we can call them men"

- Female student violence is sometimes perceived as less of a threat

- Female student violence is perceived as a cumulative process

- Some violent female students are perceived as controlling

- Violent female students are perceived as toxic: "She is a ticking time bomb"

- Sexually aggressive females are "labelled as whores"

- Female students' use of violence: "It just demeans you"

- Responding with violence makes the situation more volatile: "Putting petrol in a fire"

5.2.1. Students' understandings of gender violence

Gender violence is a primordial form of power inherent in patriarchal cultures that destines females to second class citizens (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015; Bhana & Anderson, 2013). The propensity for males to use violence stems from patriarchal power that affords them preponderant power. However, there are some individuals who do not identify with masculinity, that is females and other non-conforming genders, who also engage in this human rights abuse (WHO, 2013). South Africa is in an unenviable position in that it has one of the highest rates of gender violence globally (NSP-GBVF, 2020; WHO, 2013; Machisa, Jewkes, Morna & Rama, 2011).

The responses below illustrate that students have a clear understanding of the concept gender violence in all its manifestations 'being multi-dimensional, physical, psychological, and emotional' (Cane, M5) and it also 'includes rape, sexual assault, all to maintain structural gender inequality' (Tina, F32). Their understanding of this scourge is that it is broad and that everyone can be violated, illustrating that they acknowledge that gender violence is a social problem for everyone. One participant succinctly states that gender violence 'is a form of violence or destruction against women or against any individual regardless of his or her sexual status or gender' (Horatio, M14). Below are a few more students' understandings of gender violence.

> *Maya (F15):*   *Gender violence is common in South Africa.*

> *Fran (F17):*   *Serious case in South Africa with high levels it can cause many lives to be destroyed.*

Petunia (F24):   *It's inhumane because people are so violent now, it's trending it has become a national disaster way too serious in South Africa especially for women, kids and LGB.*

Dora (F9):   *Gender violence is like the biggest issue currently in South Africa we facing.*

Sylvia (F19): It's like a norm it's happening all over. We see it on the news, we live it, we breathe it.

Joan (F12):   *Can also affect men, but due to the state of South Africa however the majority is all about women.*

Jill (F11):   *African patriarchy you have to follow the rules even if the rules don't favour you here in South Africa its (gender violence) taken so lightly and people dying so he'll go to jail or she'll go to jail and get bail it's like a slight thing.*

Evident in the above responses is that gender violence has reached very high levels and has become a 'natural disaster' (Petunia, F24) in South Africa. The participants' understandings are evidence that there is a sense of being inundated with reported cases in the media, which the annual crime statistics as well as research on gender violence highlights (NSP-GBVF, 2020). The comment by Sylvia (F19) is a poignant one and attests to the fact that gender violence has become a common daily occurrence in South Africa. The students' comments are consistent with research that shows that gender violence has become normalised in our homes, communities and in the broader society (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Machisa, Jewkes, Morna & Rama, 2011). Jill (F11) alludes to the unequal gender norms inherent in patriarchal cultures that advantages masculinity. Extending this notion to Connell's theory of gender power and masculinity (2005; 1995) it illustrates how gender violence is fuelled by toxic forms of hegemonic masculinity thus perpetuating unequal power relations. Joan's (F12) articulation reflects the fact that in South Africa females are predominantly victims of gender violence in comparison to males.

A common understanding illustrated in the responses below is that gender violence resides in the power males have over females.

> *Ethan (M8):* When domestic partners, I see it as a power thing because males like to emphasise dominance through gender-based violence.

> *Gareth (M10):* It is basically using your powers or mental powers to overpower someone or to control or abuse them.

> *Patty (F22):* Males are always treating females in a bad way because of the whole patriarchy. It still hasn't gone away. Men feel they should be superior and women are inferior and they should be submissive.

> *Rose (F6):* It is mostly about power, males recognise their power females must obey their rules.

> *Lynne (F2):* Taking advantage of one's gender they believe that women have no power.

> *Leah (F3):* Someone uses their power over another person it could be emotional, physical. It is never an issue that fades away.

The data is clear on the ways in which these participants express their understanding of who the perpetrators of violence predominantly are. These male and female students express their understanding of gender violence in ways that show male dominance and female subordination which often manifests as power. This power as expressed in these extracts escalates to violence predominantly with females as victims. The link between patriarchy, violence and the enactment of masculinity is evident in the articulation by Patty (F22). Drawing on Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1995) it shows how hegemonic masculinity manifests as power in ways that are physical, emotional and psychological. However, the fact that both Gareth (M10) and Leah (F5) make no reference to gender illustrates the ways in which violence extends to anyone and that the use of violence is pervasive.

> *Alan (M1):* Most of the time its women, females who feel gender-based violence; they are abused by males, mostly in relationships especially here on campus.

> *Cody (M4):* The males are the big perpetrators.

> *Alwin (M3):*   *It is not only an attack on females, but goes both ways because females can attack and a lot of students who go through violence they end up not being able to cope with their studies.*

In the above extract Foucault's (1983; 1980) theory of power is pertinent to the current study as it shows how notions of power within social relations deals with issues of domination and submission within unequal power relations. However, this theory also provides the lens to see power as fluid, shifting, dynamic and not immutable and this is evident in Alwin's assertion that females are also violent when they need to.

> *Dora (F9):*   *People have an understanding that gender-based violence affects all genders.*

> *Faye (F16):*   *More gbv based on females. I've never seen a male person suffering from gbv. I mean they do, but it's really rare it's always the females.*

> *Cowen (M6):*   *My understanding may tend to differ but society has placed it so that it only occurs between male and female but usually the perpetrator is the male against the female and it can be anyone who sees himself superior and that why it can be from male to male or female to female and heterosexual genders to LGBT group.*

> *Barry (M17):*   *I believe it is so wrong defining it as only violence against women and children, they are leaving away men in that definition because men they can be victim of gender-based violence.*

> *Patty (F22):*   *The main perpetrators of violence would be men and a handful of women but some women have the strength to do that to a man they have capability but maybe just repressed.*

> *Penny (F23):*   *Females are not as violent as males in my experience but if you done this to me they sometimes they apologise and move, sometimes they fight.*

The responses are varied in the above extracts. Dora's (F9) comments that gender violence affects everyone indicates a heightened awareness around this scourge. Both

males and females are cited for perpetrating GBV (Gender Based Violence). Their understandings of GBV is that it is not only males and female who are victims but also non-normative genders. However, females are disproportionately the victims. The responses by Alan (M1) and Cody (M4) is consistent with literature that shows that females and non-conforming genders are largely the victims while males are largely the perpetrators of the gender violence (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Jagessar & Msibi, 2015). This highlights Foucault's (1983; 1980) notion of power as 'circulating' and that any individual can become a 'vehicle' of that power. It further highlights that anyone can subvert gender power norms by engaging in stereotypically 'masculine' behaviour. Barry's (M17) remark suggests that gender violence myths may often result in male victims of gender violence at the hands of any perpetrator being minimised. Patty (F22) expresses that some females are capable of inflicting violence on men because some females possess the physical strength even though it may be repressed by stereotypical gender norms that position females as weak. Extending this notion to Halberstam's (2012, 1998) theory of female masculinity it is evident that there are some females who possess 'masculine' traits of power, strength and aggression even though they may be 'repressed' by cultural and societal perception, appropriate femininity and in this way, masculine traits can also be exhibited by females who choose to violently exercise their agency. The response by Penny (F23) is reflective of historical, cultural notions that positions females as less violent. In other words, there are some females who choose to defy these stereotypical notions as they engage in violence. While these notions may be expressed as part of their personal experiences or observations, given the utterances of the other students, these personal views cannot be generalised.

5.2.2. Students' understanding of female gender violence: Culture and Religious Beliefs

Gender violence against females is a structural form of oppression upon which male identity includes the acceptance and the normalization that basic power involves a male (Gordon, 2017; Gqola, 2015; Bhana & Anderson, 2013, Hames, 2009). However, the recent literature shows that males too are victims of this structural violence at the hands of females albeit to a lesser extent (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018). Historical, cultural notions of female subservience, passivity and non-violence and masculine notions of dominance, aggression and violence continues to remain in place despite females making in-roads into stereotypical male territory (Connell, 1995; 2005).

Constant exposure to violence may result in a culture of violence that becomes a normalised way of life and this is evident in the response by Milly, (F13) that she got used to the violence and abuse and she decided to fight back.

The responses from the two participants below highlights the way in which societal and cultural perceptions have influenced their understandings of the perpetrator-victim phenomenon of gender violence. It is evident that double standards are prevalent.

> *Cane (M5):* *If a female is violent it is something really extreme, if a male is violent, it's one of those things that comes with the male characteristics, where violence and strength and dominance is natural so it's even required of a male to protect females. But when a female does it, culturally it's one of the highest forms of disrespect. They call it uncouth.*

> *Oliver (M18):* *When we see a male being abusive so especially in our culture then it's one of those things so just let it slide because he's a man, he will do that, when it comes to a female its quite bitter and distasteful and constantly talking about it so in a state of shock it's a social issue, like saying men are allowed to do but females aren't.*

The comment by both Cane (M5) and Oliver (M18) that male violence is acceptable in society and within certain cultures. Their utterances sanction and justify stereotypical violent masculine behaviour while, on the other hand, they are scathing of the same behaviour by females. Their responses illustrate that society is still locked into the binary mode of gender norms that reinscribe different behaviours and expectations for males and females. The comment by Oliver (M18) about females whose abusive behaviour shocks society to the point where it is constantly spoken about is reflective of the broader cultural and societal's responses to female violence as disturbing and something that is inappropriate and unacceptable. This resonates with research that shows that females who engage in violence are 'othered' and are perceived as an aberration of our cultural archetype of the ideal woman (Scharff, 2012; Motz, 2008; Boyle, 2005; Morrissey, 2003). Butler (1990) posits that perceived transgressors, be it gender or sexual norms, are regarded as 'disruptions' to the 'echo-chains' and so therefore these females who engage in violence are perceived as being disruptive of gender specific behaviours.

The perception by several participants below is that in terms of culture and religion respectively, isiZulu and Christian females should be stereotypically submissive humble. Additionally, Xhosa women are expected to be peaceful and not engage in violence. These character traits are important so that they can be well groomed for marriage due to expectations of obedience and submission to husbands. This extends to Islam as well where Muslim women are forced to be obedient and somewhat out of sight as well as quiet and if they do not conform there are consequences. These notions of a typical female are in keeping with patriarchal culture that continues to consign females to second class citizens (Bhana & Anderson, 2013).

> *Kelly (F25):*   *A Zulu girl supposed to be humble and submissive.*
>
> *Patty (F22):*   *Christianity the bible says that females should be submissive.*
>
> *Adam (M2):*   *In a Zulu culture the wives must obey whatever husband says.*
>
> *Sarah (F21):*   *In a Xhosa culture a girl is a girl and violence is just a no more specifically for females.*
>
> *Otis (M19):*   *Females are meant to be reserved (Muslim) not loud, you don't see them around; it's got to be like drastic. You wouldn't expect that from girls and so from a religious and cultural point of view, girls are obviously timid and not violent people.*

From these extracts one can deduce that when females use violence it is perceived as the epitome of disrespect and this notion highlights the continued subordinated positioning of females. The overall perception continues to position females as passive and docile and further perpetuates unequal power relations. The cultural legitimising of male violence and the chastising of similar violence by females is characteristic of a society that has not achieved complete gender equality. Otis' (M19) comments highlights gender specific norms and expectations that are deeply embedded in patriarchal cultures that position females as docile.

> *Barry (M17):*   *My culture sometimes confuses me because we are told not to question culture so that confuses me. We are told that men shouldn't hit women, then what about women? It leaves a space if*

> *you question that, so do not question because it's just the way it is.*

> *Nessa (F30):* *No because it's not what we are taught you should not be violent whether you are a male or female.*

> *Gerome (M11): Not appropriate for anyone to be violent.*

> *Oliver (M18): I don't think it's appropriate for anyone to be violent not even females.*

Barry (M17) expresses his thoughts around the way in which he has been socialised into understanding that males should not be violent towards females, yet there is a relative silence around females as perpetrators of violence towards males. The other participants' responses to this state that violence by males and females should not be tolerated nor acceptable.

5.2.3. Students' perceptions of female student gender violence: It is not feminine.

Historically females who perpetrate violence are cast as 'other' to the 'normal' feminine women through processes such as masculinisation and sexualisation (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008). Females who engage in violence are perceived as transgressors of stereotypical, feminine behaviour that traditionally positions them as passive, non-violent individuals. Their engagement in violence is therefore perceived as unfeminine and as Halberstam (2012b; 1998) theorises it, as female masculine behaviour.

> *Petunia (F24): Females engaging in violence, I don't think it's a female behaviour. I don't think being violent is feminine and I don't think it's good for a woman.*

> *Nora (F29):* *You should only see them as not being feminine that you not feminine because females do not turn to violence in a hurry.*

> *Maya (F15):* *I don't believe that females should be acting violent because we should be sensitive, trying by all means to stop it.*

> *Patty (F22):* *As a female you should not be prone to violence.*

> *Kay (F26):* *If a female is being abusive that is not right they have to be a warm person.*

Qualities of being warm and sensitive are expected from females and therefore engaging in violence transcends the stereotypical feminine qualities, which these female participants perceive as incorrect.

> *Dawn (F7):*   *Haibo! It's a female who's doing this.*
>
> *Ben (M15):*   *We don't like seeing females fight. When girls fight we end up seeing private parts and that respect goes right out.*

The above extract shows the ways in which some females still conform to traditional, stereotypical notions of female passivity and docility in spite of the attempts made by women's liberation organisations to achieve equality in all facets of society. The expression of shock and surprise by Dawn (F7) that a female is engaging in violence shows a level of disapproval. The participants' perceptions that female students' who engage in violence are 'unfeminine' reflects those of Chesney-Lind (2006), Motz (2008) and Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) who posit that feminine violence is a perversion of traditional femininity. However, engaging in violence does not necessarily imply that one is acting out of the binary. There are multiple reasons for female students becoming violent and this will be further discussed in the final analysis chapter. It is therefore imperative that we acknowledge that females may possess elements of conduct and behaviour that were previously perceived to be the domain of males (Connell, 2000). Neither females nor males are homogenous groups and they should therefore not be treated as such. This reflects the fluidity of power as it circulates from person to person (Foucault, 1980).

5.2.4. Female students who are violent: "we can call them men"

Historically violence has been constructed as accepted masculine behaviour; conversely it is constructed as unacceptable behaviour for females (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007; Chesney-Lind, 2006). Inherent in traditional and feminine notions is the perception that females' engagement in violence is abhorrent, transgressive of gender norms and masculinist (Carrington, 2013; Connell, 2000, 1995; Vandenberg, Brennan & Chesney-Lind, 2013). These perceptions that associate females who engage in violence as masculine emerges from the participants' responses below:

> *Tina (F32):*   *They resort to violence which makes themselves look masculine.*

> *Kay (F26):*   *We have that feeling or the belief that it's the men who are abusive.*

> *Cane (M5):*   *They are seen to be more masculine, if I can use the term like a tomboy, we can call them men, and we don't see them as normal. Because normal female behaviour they colour, paint, playing with dolls, being soft and cooking. When a female portrays these kinds of behaviour (violent), we either see them as being lesbian, wanting to be more masculine or abusive or abnormal the way they behave.*

The above comments re-affirm the belief that violence is associated with masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Tina's (F32) remark suggests that when the females engage in violence they exhibit traits that are associated with masculinity. Halberstam (1998 p.109) posits that "As long as masculinity is annexed in our society to power and violence and oppression, we will find some masculine women whose gender expression becomes partially wedded to the worst aspects of a culturally mandated masculinity." In other words, if violence is an inherently masculine trait and females chose to engage in violence then women too can be viewed in problematic and toxic ways that are associated with culturally accepted masculine behaviours. By engaging in violence these females destabilise constructions of violence as being purely masculinist. Kay's (F26) belief that it is the males who are abusive almost normalises particular constructions of toxic masculinity that readily asserts their power aggressively resonates with Savin-Williams' (2017) findings. The response by Cane (M5) touches on a few critical issues. Firstly, his comparison of a female who engages in violence to a tomboy and then a lesbian resonates with Halberstam's (1998) female masculinity. Halberstam (1998) posits that girls who exhibit masculinist behavioural traits or tomboyish behaviour well into their adulthood are presumed homosexual. Halberstam's (1998) theory is pertinent to the current study because she illustrates the ways in which society sometimes assumes that a female is lesbian simply because she engages in 'typically' masculine behaviour. There is also a further suggestion in Cane's (M5) utterances and that is that lesbians are violent individuals and this perception is reflected in a nationally represented research by Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin and Kupper (2004) who found that females involved in lesbian relationships reported higher levels of IPV and likewise with Turell (2000) who found that violence was frequent in lesbian relationships. However other research by Blosnich and Bossarte (2009) and Messinger (2011) on IPV within same-sex

relationships concluded that the rates of violence were similar to heterosexual relationships. The myth associating violent females with lesbianism is rather unfortunate as not all lesbians are violent, neither are all heterosexual females violent (Gilbert, 2002). Secondly, Cane's (M5) perception of normal female behaviour is in keeping with stereotypical feminine roles of non-violence and further reminds us of the participants' adherence to heteronormativity. Thirdly, his implicit association of masculinity to abusiveness – and therefore aggression – resonates with Connell's theory of masculinity (2005; 1995) where hegemonic masculinity is often associated with violence and aggression. Cane's (M5) perception that behaving violently is 'abnormal behaviour' resonates with research by Addis and Mihalik (2003) and Chesney-Lind (2006) who found that females who perpetrated violence were perceived as non-normative and masculine. What emerges from the responses shown in this section as well as the previous in (5.3.1), is that there is a perception amongst many of these students that violence in inherently masculine and females who engage in violence are not only making 'excursions' into this path (Connell, 2005; 1987) but they are also perceived as 'other' (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2008; Morrissey, 2003). These notions are however simplistic and they only serve to maintain and uphold stereotypical gender binaries. By readily engaging in violence these females cement their power and position in gender relations, as they are not willing to accept their stereotypical subordinate role.

5.2.5. Female student violence is sometimes perceived as less of a threat

Not perceiving the violence that some females engage in within their intimate relationships as violence is influenced by hegemonic masculine notions of strength, power, violence and aggression (Connell, 2000; 1995). These attributes are associated with hegemonic masculinity of dominance and aggression in their social relations with females and non-conforming genders (Connell, 2000; 1995). Deeply embedded in traditional patriarchal societies is the belief that females are weak, vulnerable and incapable of committing violence. It is this conviction that may sometimes result in society dismissing female violence as violence. The excerpts below illustrate this perception.

> *Cane (M5):*   *His girlfriend just pulled him outside and started slapping him and the guy tried to retaliate but we told him not to become a man is not supposed to hit a woman. But no-one really spoke to her and*

the way she was behaving. She was tearing his clothes and beating him and swearing him. We didn't really look at it as violence; we saw it as maybe she was right in the way she was reacting because of what he did. But then again I said in hindsight that I could have done something about it, 'coz it was wrong, the female was perpetrating violence on him but we kept blaming the guy we were seeing him being beaten up yet we weren't restricting the female we were restricting the male.

Joan (F11):   *Girls think they do not violate other people like boys and they think boys are strong enough to take it, they do not think, if I do it to him and if he does the same thing I'd call it like gender-based violence but if I'm the one doing it, I do not call it that, I was angry, I'm an aggressive person, they do not understand.*

Harry (M12): *I experienced gender violence but I choose to leave her because this is South Africa, whenever a female hits a male its self-defence but whenever a male hit a woman its gender-based violence.*

Dora (F9):   *Some of them are in denial of the fact that they are actually do perpetrate, some of them don't acknowledge the fact that they are perpetrators of violence.*

Alan (M1):   *To be honest there are female perpetrators. It's just that we take those things lightly; we don't see them as perpetrators. It's like girl's stuff, they like to fight and, in some relationships,, you will find that the girls will want to fight a guy and the guy will just keep quiet and do nothing about it then they just leave those girls.*

Ethan (M8):   *There can be instances where a female will inflict violence, but not perceived the same specifications as male coz of the whole difference in gender.*

Cane's (M5) response that males are not supposed to assault females not only disrupts particular 'masculine' notions of violence and aggression but it is also a reminder that not all males are violent which is also re-affirmed by Joan's (F11) utterances that some females believe that males are strong and therefore they can handle the abuse. Similar

sentiments are echoed by Alan (M1) who states that a male will not respond even when a female attacks him. Both Cane's (M5) and Alan's (M1) remarks are consistent with research findings by Archer (2000) and Ehrensoft, Moffit and Caspi (2006) who found that females may also commit severe violence against non-abusive partners and that further highlights that not all females are in unequal relationships (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Mantell, 2009). Drawing on Connell's theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1987) which focuses on the hierarchal structure of masculinities where non-hegemonic masculinities are sometimes violated by hegemonic masculinity and some females, the data shows how some females align themselves with negative 'masculine' stereotypes. Furthermore, it also illustrates how hegemonic masculinity can transcend gender constraints resulting in females engaging in violence (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorisi, 2018). Cane's (M5) utterances that they continued to blame the male can be seen as a normal reaction or response especially in light of the fact that research shows that males are largely the perpetrators of violence including IPV (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Gordon, 2017; Jagesar & Msibi, 2015; Swan & Snow, 2006).

Another important comment was that Cane (M5) and the other people who were present at the time of the incident did not attempt to stop the female from hitting the male while they prevented the male from attacking the female, which suggests that they did not see the female's violence as serious enough simply because it was a female who was inflicting the violence and aggression on her male partner. These attitudes and perceptions are consistent with research findings by Henning & Renauer (2005) and Brown (2004) who found that the authorities were reluctant to press charges against a female offender because they did not perceive her as a serious threat. This perception is further illustrated in Joan's (F11) nonchalant response. The participants' response can be attributed to the traditional and feminist notions that females are largely the victims of this scourge (Gordon, 2017; Singh, Mudaly & Singh-Pillay, 2015; Katz & Moore, 2013). Her comments can be perceived as hypocritical in the sense that both of them inflict violence within their relationships but when the male is the perpetrator she calls it gender-based violence and when she is the perpetrator she rationalises it, she almost 'excuses' it by saying that she was 'angry.' This dismissive attitude is also illustrated in Alan's (M1) response that female violence is treated lightly. Furthermore, Henry's (M12) perception highlights the conflicting way that South Africa perceives violence that is perpetrated by females and similar violence that is perpetrated by males. His choice to walk away and

not to respond with violence shows us that he is well aware of the serious repercussions involved in retaliating with violence. It also shows that some males reject hegemonic displays of masculinity inherent in gender violence against females. Both Dora (F9) and Alan (M1) explicitly expressed that some females are indeed perpetrators of violence. This is clearly shown in Joan's (F11) comment that even though she engages in intimate partner violence occasionally, she does not label it as such. This refusal to label her behaviour as violence is echoed by Dora (F9) that some females do not acknowledge that they are perpetrators of violence, they deny that they are perpetrators. Cane's (M5) acknowledgement that he was wrong not to have done something to stop the female redeems his earlier dismissive attitude. Ethan (M8) highlights that gender is a critical aspect to consider especially in the light of societal perceptions of female perpetrators of violence. There is a suggestion that we automatically assume that female violence is less serious and does not warrant further attention. It is evident that violence by females is often taken 'lightly' and that in a way contributes to the lack in acknowledging that female violence is a real phenomenon at university campuses. The gap in research on violent student femininities at university is what this study attempts to address.

5.2.6. Female student violence is perceived as a cumulative process

The perpetration of violence especially within intimate partner relationships can be attributed to socialisation processes that are mired in violence and abuse. Research shows that some females witnessed their mothers use violence against their fathers and thus they perceived it to be a 'normal' way of life (Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). A common perception amongst all the participants below is that females do not become violent overnight. Their journey into violence is linked to their socialisation as well as their backgrounds. This is articulated in the responses below:

>Cowen (M6): *You do not become a devil in one day; you don't become violent in one day. There are things that happen to you.*

>Henry (M12): *I think a person doesn't just become violent that there is something that drives a person at first to be violent and then violence keeps on occurring because once you start something you don't become afraid to continue doing this thing because you got away with it.*

Adam (M2):   First look at where people come from the main cause of being violent is that some females go through a lot of pain it lets them be insecure or violent.

Ethan (M8):   I'll say maybe products of homes that abuse is prevalent.

Edwin (M9):   A person is coming from a rough background or way of living it is normal.

Martha (F14): Family background also plays an important role in how the child turns out to be.

Kitty (F25):   I think they have been exposed and it's their way of healing by doing the same thing 'coz at a certain point I felt like maybe if I do the same thing will actually work for me.

Dora (F9):   It comes from way back because they grew up in a place or environment where they were bullied or violated.

Joan (F12):   The way they are raised, with violence.

Sarah (F21):   It could be from their point or they previously abused their partners or issues that are not dealt with.

Nelly (F28):   What they experience at home.

The responses by Cowen (M6) and Henry (M12) suggests that exposure to frequent episodes of violent altercations as a possible explanation for female students' perpetration of violence. Joan (F12) and Adam (M2) allude to the socialization of some females that may shape the way they may interact within their intimate relationships and this may lead to them becoming violent, insecure individuals (Adam, M2). The comments by several participants about their backgrounds attest to the fact that family is a key social support structure that should provide love and care and instil in their children proper morals, values and principles in order for them to function as good citizens. Some children who come from violent homes may become violent adults. These comments resonate with Botha (2014) who suggests that some children who come from abusive homes especially where violence was used to resolve conflict, may sometimes model their relationships on these destructive scenarios. This also resonates with research by

Dutton (2012) that dysfunctional conflict resolution is what may sometimes motivate the violence.

The response below by Sally (F20) touches on IPV, which suggests that girls may have witnessed their mothers being abusive towards their fathers and they may sometimes mirror their behaviour within their own intimate relationships.

> *Sally (F20):*   *Most of the time it has to do with how you grew up and what happened to you in the family, maybe the mother was being abusive to the father.*

> *Cane (M5):*   *Usually exposed to and learnt behaviour they are socialised to think it (violence) works.*

Added to this is the comment by Cane (M5) that alludes to Botha's (2014) assertion that violence by females is 'learned behaviour' which further highlights just how exposure to violence can often lead to dysfunctional relationships. Both these responses concur with research by Babcock, Miller and Siard (2003) who also found that their female respondents reported witnessing their mothers use violence against their fathers in their attempts to regain control. The response below shows that this particular participant felt that females may contribute to the violence.

> *Barry (M17):*   *I think they (females) somehow do contribute to violence, the way that we grow up. We need to treat the roots of gender violence. Women believe that since men shouldn't hit women then they as women should hit a man and they believe that women should be aggressive towards men they address you in whatever way. The background they come from contributes to the violence.*

He speaks about going back to the 'roots' of gender violence. He also alludes to the misguided belief by some females that because males should not hit a female, then they are allowed to hit the male. This perception links violence to intimate relationships that may be characterised by volatility. The gender-based violence and domestic awareness programmes have conscientised these students about violence against women and simultaneously allude to these female students using this to their advantage and hence becoming the perpetrators of violence against males. Ultimately, Barry (M17) expresses

the ways in which context impacts upon some female students' use of violence by alluding to learnt behaviours.

5.2.7. Some violent female students are perceived as controlling

The responses below highlight issues of power and control. Drawing on Foucault's (1980, 1983) theory of power which focuses on the shifting nature of power, it is evident that female students who engage in violence within their intimate partner relationships are perceived as controlling and power hungry. The 'softening' of the ground is evident in the fight for control and power in the sense that some females challenge their stereotypical submissive roles in their relationships as they do not submit to male power.

> *Cane (M5):*   *It's not always retaliating and they try to show their dominance early in the relationship, that they not weak, that they are strong so they can fight, beat you up, then they believe that the relationship will go on and things will be under control. Some females are controlling, they want to control relationships with males and if they have a relationship with a female, they want to control other females and violence is a way of controlling them I think they take back some kind of dominance or perhaps power that was taken away from them. It could have been taken away in a different way but they believe that violence is a way to take back to show their dominance, my friend's dad also told me about ways of their relationships is controlled by women or females.*

> *Sarah (F21):*   *Both lesbian and the girlfriend, the one who's more male she was controlling the relationships she was not allowed to have male friends and so if she goes beyond that it's a fight. Everywhere she goes, she's there. She controls everything.*

> *Ethan (M8):*   *My perception is this thing about gender-based violence is power. Power can be with males and also with females so I feel like, those females who act violently they probably have or like having power over males with words.*

> *Gareth (M10):*   *They need to control and by attacking you to prove that they are physically stronger.*

> *Faye (F16):*   *I think it comes from within. It's being a bully therefore they are just bullies.*

> *Kay (F26):*   *They were bullying, calling some words they were cheap and fighting.*

> *Dora (F9):*   *It starts by bullying and it grows then it becomes worse so the perpetrators of violence can become murderers there are some are in denial of the fact that they are actually perpetrators they don't acknowledge that they are perpetrators of violence.*

What is evident in the response by Cane (M5) is that the female students' violence is not always 'retaliatory', rather it is used as a measure to assert their dominance and control both within their heterosexual and homosexual intimate partner relationships. The violent behaviour within same-sex (lesbian) relationships is not only disruptive of gendered norms of 'masculine' dominance, control and violence but it also shows that power is fluid, power is in a constant state of flux (Foucault, 1980) and that these females are capable of readily asserting their power and control through violence. This response is consistent with the literature on IPV that female's motives for their use of violence is not always reactive or retaliatory and that it is characterised by goal-orientated motives (Walley-Jean & Swan, 2012; Caldwell, Swan, Sullivan & Snow, 2009; Hamberger, 2005). The above responses reaffirm that female perpetrated IPV is about power. The statement by Cane (M5) draws on Foucault's (1983) theory that power circulates and that everyone at some point is caught up in this chain of power. Cane's (M5) perception that power can be reclaimed by the females through violence in order to assert their dominance resonates with Foucault (1983) who asserts that power can shift from the oppressed to the oppressor. Ethan's (M8) perception also illustrates that power is continuously shifting as power can be in the hands of anyone.

The response by Sarah (F21) firstly re-aligns control and violence with masculinity when she states that the lesbian female appears to be more male. This statement illustrates that society continues to rely heavily on traditional gender norms that position females as passive and non-violent. The associated enactments of gender may sometimes cause us to perceive aggressive or assertive females as toxic. Secondly, Sarah's (F21) response highlights the issue of violence within lesbian relationships, reminding us that gender is not the only source of abuse in intimate partner relations. The perceptions of the

participants that the females fight for power and control within their intimate relationships correlates with research by Nielsen (2004), Renzetti (1998) and Blosnich and Bossarte (2009) showing that IPV within lesbian relationships is motivated by the desire to control and have power over their female partners. Halberstam (2012b, 1998) posits that some females embody masculine traits of power, control, violence and aggression and that these traits can be reproduced through violence. In this way, the female students who engage in violence within their intimate relationships challenge static gender notions by exercising their agency in violent ways (Halberstam, 1998). The perpetration of violence within lesbian relationship is also perceived as transgressive and subversive of gender and sexual norms that disrupt eco-chains (Butler, 1990). They construct their femininity within a framework of power. The comments by Dora (F9) that some females deny the fact that they are perpetrators of violence draws on Halberstam's (1998) assertion that some masculine females' gender expression does "become partially wedded to the worst aspects of a culturally mandated masculinity" wherein violence has become an acceptable masculine activity. The suggestion is that they do not consider their engagement in violence as wrong. The female students' use of violence within the intimate relationships is perceived as an attempt to prove that they may be physically stronger (Gareth, M10) and in this way they transgress conventional gender boundaries that have marginalised them for centuries. The desire for power and control is not necessarily a bad thing, it is only when that desire is accompanied by the use of violence that we perceive the threat heternormativity poses.

5.2.8. Violent female students are perceived as toxic: "She is a ticking time bomb"

A violent female is perceived as a threat to the gender order and they are therefore regarded as deviant 'other' or toxic (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Morrissey, 2003; Butler, 1993). Females who engage in violence are pathologized and socially excluded as they choose to defy stereotypical notions of non-violence and non-aggression (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Morrissey, 2003). Their aggression is therefore perceived as a toxic form of femininity.

> Petunia (F24): She will want to hit you if you made her angry so she was a ticking time bomb every time they go out they come with an incident that she's fighting, she's in a fight, I don't know how but she is always in a fight. A woman that is violent is bad and she is feisty.

> *Jill (F10):*   *She used to act psycho she started acting crazy she started the whole thing (the fight).*

> *Gerome (M11): There are some who just think wow she is crazy but why would she do that?*

> *Alan (M1):*   *Not good at all, its toxic because she would spit out hurtful words, yes it was toxic or maybe I have a soft spot for females, coz I once had a girl who was psycho and I left her. It (abuse) wasn't physical but she will speak all hurtful things and insult me.*

The collective responses above illustrate that female students can be just as violent as their male counterparts. Their violent behaviour is perceived as 'toxic', 'psycho', 'crazy' and they are compared to a bomb that is about to explode. What this suggests is that 'violence inheres' (Bhana, 2008, p.408) within their lives and that they are absorbed in violence (Petunia, F24). The perception by Petunia (F24) that a violent woman is 'bad' correlates with research constructions of females who engage in violence as bad (Quintero-Johnson & Miller, 2016; Brown, 2011; Morrissey, 2003). This perception of violent females as bad is typical of unequal gender assumptions that chastise violent females while on the other hand they accept and tolerate violent males. Violent females may not necessarily be bad, it could just mean that they are naturally violent (Halberstam, 2012). Also, the perceptions of Jill (F10), Gerome (M11) and Alan (M1) that female students who perpetrate IPV are 'psycho' correlates with research that constructs violent females as mentally ill (Comack & Brickey, 2007; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Both these perceptions of badness and mental illness are linked to the 'othering' of females in relation to idealised non-violent females (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Morrissey, 2003).

Society needs to resist the categorizing impulses where females who engage in violence are classified as abnormal and mentally ill simply because females are liminal beings and there are some females who make deliberate decisions to engage in violence. The verbal abuse that Alan (M1) highlights is perceived as 'toxic'. These abusive female students defy traditional feminine notions of docility, violently challenging their gender constructs in direct and indirect ways. Toxic femininity just like toxic masculinity wields power over all non-hegemonic masculinity and other females (Connell, 2005; 1995). The female students' engagement in violence disrupts their stereotypical subservient and passive roles.

5.2.9. Sexually aggressive females are "labelled as whores"

The participants' response below illustrates that females who are sexually assertive and aggressive are generally perceived in a negative light. The response reveals a deeply embedded patriarchal notion of sexual morality that privileges males while simultaneously maligning females.

> *Gareth (M10):* *If girls are sexually aggressive, they get labeled as whores because they should only have sex when they get married and a girl shouldn't have many boyfriends.*

This participant's perception is consistent with research findings that sexually assertive females are perceived as abnormal and they are demonized (Chesney-Lind, 2006; Ferraro, 2006). Connotatively, the label 'whore' implies that these sexually aggressive females are cheap prostitutes. The suggestion here is that sexually aggressive, assertive females' agency is constrained by the perceptions of others, despite the fact that freedom of choice is a given in a democratic society. The double standards in terms of sexual morality is evident in the participants' utterance that females should not have many boyfriends. Connell (1995, p.77) posits that hegemonic masculinity is "culturally exalted" and this gives credence to the fact that while females are not expected to be sexually experienced or have more than one sexual partner, males on the other hand are expected to be sexually experienced and they may have more than one sexual partner. Females who defy these archaic cultural and sexist stereotypes and embrace sexual liberty are very often perceived as unfeminine (Connell, 2000). Furthermore, their disruption of normal social relations renders them 'bitches' (Schippers, 2007). The irony of the situation is that males are often expected to be sexually experienced and are even lauded for this.

5.2.10. Female students' use of violence: "It just demeans you"

The responses below illustrate that traditional and cultural stereotypes of feminine passivity, non-violence and submissiveness still exist today despite numerous strides made by women's liberation movements to achieve equality in all avenues of life. Those females who attempt to disrupt these patriarchal notions of femininity stir up feelings of contempt and disapproval that is likely to see them gain notoriety.

> *Rose (F6):*   *Stoned by society because we are brought up in that manner that if a female act in a certain way, they are like a low-level female and they shouldn't be barbaric.*
>
> *Faye (F16):*   *It means you don't reason, you're just an animal.*
>
> *Fran (F17):*   *You don't love yourself enough so you lack respect and you might try to solve a problem by using violence and end up being a murderer.*
>
> *Patty (F22):*   *Putting yourself at their level is making yourself less when you are not that.*
>
> *Penny (F23):*   *It damages a lot of things so think first but sometimes you (they) got to make a statement, so people will respect.*
>
> *Nelly (F28):*   *I think they are arrogant in a certain way.*
>
> *Gerome (M11): They have a small thinking capacity for violence and there is a word in isiZulu to explain a woman who behaves like a dog when engaging in violence it just demeans you, umdlembe, a woman who engages in violence.*
>
> *Otis (M19):*   *Getting name tarnished.*
>
> *Sylvia (F19):*   *Violence doesn't necessary earn you respect because they are afraid of me.*
>
> *Tina (F32):*   *I think they don't know how to carry themselves have no way of expressing themselves.*

The engagement of female students in violence in their interpersonal relationships is considered 'barbaric' and deserving of draconian measures according to Rose (F6). The suggestion is a harsh one especially in light of the fact that the same behaviour in males is valorised (Connell, 1987). This further highlights the unequal gender power relations at play and the fact that some females are prepared to destabilise these relations. The comment by Faye (F16) and Gerome (M11) comparing violent females to animals emanates from cultural and societal notions of females as subservient and as second-class citizens (Bhana & Anderson, 2013) and highlights the ways in which norms can sometimes be used to discipline some (Foucault, 1980). The collective responses also

allude to the important issue of reputational damage that occurs when the females engage in violence. The statement by Sylvia (F19) that violence does not earn you respect and that people were afraid of her as a result of her violence reinforces the idea that violence is repugnant and threatens the moral fiber of society. Her statement also reaffirms the notion that violence is violence, it doesn't matter who the perpetrator is. Furthermore, it also debunks the myth that females are incapable of unleashing fear and violence against others. Violence can never be used as a tool to earn respect; it only instills fear and terror over the weak and vulnerable.

5.2.11. Responding with violence makes the situation more volatile: "Putting petrol in a fire"

There was an overwhelming perception amongst the interviewees that violence is never the solution to any challenge or difficulty. When female students resort to violence in order to resolve issues they are in fact, exacerbating the situation, this is expressed in the following extracts:

> *Cody (M4):* *I'll say that they are putting petrol in a fire, so they are adding to violence because instead of resolving the problem, they are adding to the problem.*

> *Alan (M1):* *You can't stop violence with violence so sit down and talk.*

> *Edwin (M9):* *Hurting a person, hurts you the most you could have a better life out of making friends than beating people to solve a problem.*

> *Penny (F23):* *Violence is never the answer; it damages a lot of things so just think first.*

> *Ruth (F5):* *It's not a good thing and people normally fight or beat other people in solving problem, unfortunately it's not helping, the problem became more.*

> *Denise (F8):* *It's not right and it doesn't help, using violence always makes the situation worse.*

> *Horatio (M14): Violence breeds violence.*

> *Fran (F17):*   *Violence is never good way because it might turn out into a serious situation. You might try to solve a problem by using violence and end up being a murderer or wasn't your intention.*
>
> *Cane (M5):*   *I would pity them because there are other ways to resolve disputes not violence it isn't going to end well it's gonna hurt someone and could be serious.*
>
> *Milly (F13):*   *No form of violence fixes problems.*
>
> *Dawn (F7):*   *It's not right because we are here to make our lives better.*
>
> *Barry (M17):*   *They need to be educated about how they can stop using violence to address their issues so violence is never a solution.*

The notion that 'violence breeds violence' (Horatio, M14) resonates with the views of Ngakane, Muthukrishna and Ngcobo (2012) while Morrell (2002) argues that violence at universities is reflective of the socio-economic conditions in society. The expression of 'pity' for those female students who use violence in order to solve problems suggests that female violence continues to be aligned with feelings of disappointment for females who engage in negative, destructive behaviour that is linked to toxic masculinity. Engaging in violence is retrogressive and the response by Dawn (F7) serves as a reminder to all students who contemplate using violence "we are here to make our lives better." The need "to be educated about how they (students) can stop using violence to address their issue" is an extremely important one especially in light of the fact that these are student educators who will one day educate future leaders. Using violence in order to 'solve' a problem only exacerbates the situation that is likely to become more volatile and explosive according to the participants. The problem does not go away, instead it leaves greater pain and scars that will definitely last much longer. All of the above comments were particularly critical of the use of violence as a method to resolve issues.

5.3. Conclusion

What can be gleaned from the data analysis above is that the students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of violence varied. While some perceived female students' engagement in violence as unfeminine and masculine others perceived it to be toxic and controlling. There were a few who understood it to be a direct result of one's

socialization process. The overall perception and understanding was that the use of violence by female students was demeaning and that violence is never an option. The chapter also focused on students' understandings of female gender violence according to culture and religion. It was found that while male violence was culturally tolerated and excused, female violence was regarded as culturally inappropriate and unacceptable. There was also evidence that religiously, females are expected to be submissive and subservient. The next chapter deals with the different forms of gender violence that female students engage in at universities.

Chapter Six

Data Analysis

6.1. Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter this analysis chapter will focus on the second research question: What forms of violence do female students engage in?

The recorded interviews were transcribed into verbatim textual data. The data was coded and categorized into preliminary themes, using the inductive approach, several themes subsequently emerged from the data. Drawing on hermeneutics I was able to achieve a more in-depth analysis. The eclectic theoretical framework was used as an analytical tool to analyse the rich data generated in the interviews. This chapter provides data that deals with the forms of gender violence that the female students engage in. The analysis uses the verbatim responses of the students and provides in-depth discussion that draws on the different theories as an analytical lens, while also integrating the discussion with literature that either supports or refutes the findings of the current study.

Despite universities being progressive institutions of higher learning and liberalism, research shows that gender violence has reached epidemic proportions (Davids, 2020; Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Moletsane & Theron, 2017). As the literature shows gender violence manifests along a continuum and at universities we see all forms of this scourge (Davids, 2020; Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Collins, Loots, Meyiwa & Mistrey, 2009). The violence at HEIs includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological, verbal, economic as well all intimate partner violence (Davids, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-sa, Peterson & Planty, 2016). The data shows that some of the females engage in brutal and severe assaults both within their intimate relationships as well as in their interpersonal relations with others.

The data will be presented and analysed according to themes listed below.

- Female students as perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within heterosexual relationships.
- IPV within same-sex (lesbian) relationships

- Other forms of violence
  - homophobic
  - physical violence
  - verbal (emotional and psychological)
  - sexual harassment and assault
  - social media violence

6.2. Female students as perpetrators of IPV within heterosexual relationships: "I beat him to a pulp"

An intimate partner may be a companion in a formal (marriage) or informal relationship (dating and unmarried sexual relationships) in both heterosexual as well as same sex relationships (WHO, 2013). Intimate partner violence includes all forms of negative behaviour within the intimate relationship and can manifest as physical, verbal, psychological, sexual abuse, economic violence, femicide, as well as coercive controlling behaviours. The extracts below illustrate that some female students engage in more than one form of intimate partner violence within their heterosexual relationships.

Milly (F13):   *She said, hey I can beat up anyone, I fought with my boyfriend, beat him to a pulp. I even peed (urinated) on his face*

Sally (F20):   *The Resident Assistant (RA) beat the guy for cheating on her, she laid her hand on her boyfriend.*

Sarah (F21):   *She's the one who initiated the fight. There were broken glasses everywhere, she was violent and she wanted to fight because she saw her boyfriend with other girls and then she lost it she just slapped the other girl and she wanted to beat the boyfriend (she hit her boyfriend).*

Cane (M5):   *There was a res party in one of the rooms – where students were having a party and a guy got a call or message and then his girlfriend just pulled him outside and she started slapping him, then she was tearing his clothes and beating him up and swearing him.*

Henry (M12): There was this girl who I used to love but that girl used to fuss and
fight and then later she used to slap me and this kept on happening.

Intimate partner violence is a global problem with at least one in three females or 35% of females experiencing some form of IPV (World Bank Group, 2014; WHO, 2013). Research shows that South Africa has very high rates of gender violence which includes intimate partner violence, femicide, rape and interpersonal violence (NSP-GBVF, 2020; Matzopoulos, Abrahams, Bowman, Shai, Prinsloo, Salau, Bradshaw & Gray, 2019; Wilkinson, 2017; CSVR, 2016; Vetten, 2014). IPV takes on many forms at universities. These include stalking, physical assault, verbal abuse, emotional and psychological violence, sexual harassment, rape and murder (Mutinta, 2022; DHET, 2020; Krebs et al., 2016; SVTT, 2016; Cantor et al., 2015; NUS, 2010). The data below illustrates forms of violence that the students in this study where female students were implicated in and in particular to IPV. Milly's (F13) recount of her friend's behaviour shows the types and forms of IPV females inflict on their male partners. Beating her boyfriend to a 'pulp' suggests that she may possess the physical strength to overpower her boyfriend and hence destabilise the polarised notion of male strength and female weakness. It also highlights the discrepancy between feminine notions of fragility and non-violence in the female's brutal assault of her intimate partner. In this way, the female student destabilises power relations that position males as perpetrators of violence and females as recipients or victims of violence (Connell, 1987). This female student thus reverses unequal power relations by engaging in extreme violence (Foucault, 1983). Her wilful act of violence as well as her dehumanising behaviour of urinating on her boyfriend's face illustrates that humiliation and emasculation of the male partner is part of some females' repertoires. Her violent behaviour also suggests alternate embodiments of femininity that disrupt normative gender assumptions. It is evident that 'masculine' traits of violence and aggression can be replaced by non-hegemonic forms of subordinated masculinity. The responses from the other participants also show that female students' violence inflicted on their partners are attempts at publicly asserting their power by physically beating their partners and tearing their clothing in public spaces where other students are privy to this violence. Their violent behaviour transcends boundaries between what is considered as appropriate femininity and what is not, particularly in Sarah's (F21) statement that the female had initiated the fight. The various forms of female violence reported in these extracts include slapping, tearing clothing, verbal abuse and breaking glass. All the

participants' responses illustrate that the females violate traditional gender norms in the ways in which they demonstrate power within the context of brute force by 'beat[ing] him to a pulp' (Milly, F13). The violence emerging from these intimate partner conflicts illustrates that power is fluid and dynamic and by making choices to engage in physical violence the females in this context have exercised power over their intimate partners.

> *Dawn (F7):*   *I saw it happening here in varsity a girl verbally abusing her boyfriend but the boyfriend was standing still not wanting to hit her and then she just destroyed every electronic gadget (the cell phone, laptop), we even saw her hitting the guy then the PC was thrown outside the window then she threw the cellphones. The girl was hitting her boyfriend.*

> *Faye (F16):*   *His girlfriend was beating him up and messed his whole room and then she started hitting him. He said that she is used to doing that and that she always hits me, that it is not the first time. Then she took out his clothes and poured bleach on them. She got all the food in his room and it was flying over (She was throwing the food around).*

> *Jane (F11):*   *Let's say you dating a guy and then you find that the guy is cheating. Even the girl taking his phone and slamming it on the door or wall, that's violence. Even the girl like pushing him.*

The above comments show that female students engage in destructive behaviour whereby they destroy the belongings of their partners. These participants reported that the female partners wilfully destroyed their male partners' electronic gadgets. Important gadgets required for academic work are destroyed by female partners, as well as modes of communication, for example the cellphone is destroyed where females suspect that their partner is cheating. One of the participants expressed that being beaten by his partner is a regular occurrence and his comments sound defeatist as if he has accepted the status quo. This is consistent with research in gender symmetry in intimate partner relationships by Archer (2000) and Straus & Ramirez (2007) who found that females use of violence within their dating relationships at more or less similar rates and chronicity as that of their male partners. The actions of these violent and destructive females illustrate that power is fluid and everyone is capable of unleashing power in ways that are destructive

and damaging to others (Foucault, 1980). This destructive behaviour challenges widespread notions of feminine docility and passivity. While masculine identity is entwined with the notion of power, these specific incidents show us that the female students subvert gender power norms by engaging in violence and destruction. In this way the abusive females' power is intentional (Foucault, 1980) because their objective is to humiliate and punish their male intimate partners. The statements that the male did not retaliate shows that not all males identify with violence and aggression.

> Martha (F14): Some of them (females) do get violent with their boyfriends but it's just that boys are not comfortable to speak about it but I've seen a guy being a victim, his girlfriend got angry, they were fighting and she slapped him.

> Maya (F15): She attacked the baby daddy (The father of her child). I don't want to say they had a fight coz he didn't fight her back only she was fighting him and beating him up.

> Penny (F23): This is pretty embarrassing because a friend of mine, he's not tiny so he's big, has muscles and we heard stories that his girlfriend beats him up so his girlfriend came and then started beating him. Imagine a grown man with muscles and everything, but experiences violence from his girlfriend. How can you not push her from you?

> Alan (M1): In some relationships you find that the girl will want to fight a guy and the guy will just keep quiet and do nothing and they just leave those girls, thinking that if I respond, then I might find myself in trouble so I take it lightly and I don't react. I once had a girl who was abusive but it wasn't physical – she will speak out in hurtful ways and insult me, belittle me but I took it lightly. I did not talk about it.

> Cane (M5): We told him not to retaliate then we told him a man is not supposed to hit a woman.

> Ben (M15): Yes, I've been a victim, my girlfriend because I told her I'm cheating on her and she didn't take it lightly. She like put a few

> *slaps on me but I deserved it and took it like a man because I'm strong and stand the pain.*

> Henry (M12): *It happened once, I thought it would never happen again but it kept on happening, so I chose to leave her because this is South African, whenever a female hits a man its self-defence, but when a man fights back, its gender violence. I felt so under-rated, but I didn't fight back.*

The above responses illustrate that not all males subscribe to masculine traits of violence and aggression as they did not retaliate because 'a man is not supposed to hit a woman' (Cane, M5). This awareness that male violence against a female is unacceptable can be attributed to the national as well as the university's anti-gender violence programmes and activism that largely target female victims and male perpetrators. There are no anti-gender violence programmes that support male victims and this fundamental failing on the part of the university allows female student perpetrators of gender violence to act with impunity. Implicit in Martha's (F14) statement that the males may not be comfortable to talk about their abuse highlights that female-on-male violence is a relatively unarticulated phenomenon as it is laden with embarrassment and humiliation. Males who are beaten by their female partners prefer to remain silent as their pleas and concerns are not taken seriously, which is why female perpetrated IPV is under-reported (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018; Seelau & Seelau, 2005). This is consistent with research that shows that males remain silent about their IPV experiences at the hands of their female partners because they not only fear shame, embarrassment and ridicule, but that they may also feel emasculated (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosi, 2018; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Seelau & Seelau, 2005). The comments by Penny (F23) highlight some males fear of retaliating because they may be charged with gender violence and this may prevent them from protecting themselves. It also shows that masculine traits of strength and power do not belong solely to a male body, but females, despite appearing less tough, can also possess elements of 'masculine' identity (Connell, 2000; Halberstam, 1998). It further shows that the males reject hegemonic displays of masculinity that tolerate violence against females. These females who beat their intimate partners construct their femininity in resistant and defiant ways. Ben's (M15) utterances that he 'deserved it' places the burden of being violated and becoming a victim of violence on the males and they remain silent about any form of abuse. When Ben (M15) states that he 'took it like

a man' it shows that despite his treatment by his girlfriend, he still believes that as a man, he ought to endure the violence and pain. While both interviewees' behaviour is incompatible with stereotypical gender notions it highlights that power can emanate from 'innumerable' points (Foucault, 1980). It also speaks to societal constructs of violence and gender, that males are not expected to show emotion or feel pain but that they should endure their pain and suffering. Henry's (M12) comments that "this is South Africa, whenever a female hits a man its self-defence, but when a man fights back its gender-violence'" is evidence of the widespread common assumption that it is only males who are the perpetrators of gender-based violence and as one participant (Bill, M16) earlier stated that "in South Africa we have not tackled this issue of female violators". Females' engagement in violence not only defies images of normal femininity but it also shows how power can be repressive (Foucault, 1980).

Cane (M5):   *If you speak to a guy, he would tell you that although this time I did hit her, there were maybe 7 or 8 other times where she did hit me. But like I said it's not spoken about amongst my teammates, we talk about how females treat us and how they perpetrate emotional and psychological violence. At times certain males experience gender violence that cannot be explained. When the topic comes up about how a female maybe hit one of us we usually dismiss it as guys only to find out that out of 10 or 11 of us there are 7 or 8 who have similar experiences to share.*

The above response illustrates that females are capable of perpetrating repeated violence and abuse against a non-abusive partner. This is consistent with the literature showing that females do engage in IPV against their non-violent partners (Hines & Douglas, 2009; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Ehrensaft, Moffit & Caspi, 2006). This unilateral violence shows that these female students' behaviour is aligned with power, violence and aggression as they use violence to control their male partners and in this way that subvert gender power norms that construct them as submissive. The fact that 'it's not spoken about' highlights the fact that violence by females is often dismissed, trivialised or shrouded in silence. This silence suggests that violence by females is not normative behaviour and therefore, their male partners cannot even begin to explain their abuse. The participant's statements show that female students perpetrate emotional and

psychological abuse and violence within their intimate relationships that may sometimes leave their victims so deeply traumatised that they may be unable to speak about it. This is consistent with research that shows that gender violence may sometimes have a disturbing and detrimental impact on the victims' academic endeavours and their mental health (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Chauke, et al., 2015; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013). Furthermore, the fact that the male partners do not want to speak about their abuse at the hands of their female partners re-affirms cultural perceptions that males are regarded as the embodiment of power and strength. The statement that the females perpetrate emotional and psychological violence shows that some of the female students may choose to engage in less physical forms of gender violence against their intimate partners.

> *Ruth (F5):*   *I fought with my boyfriend, I almost killed him but I think after what happened to me (rape) (stammers and stutters) therefore I like to fight a lot, I'm very emotional so if you touch me, I'll fight you and so he (boyfriend) came with this thing (another girl), we had an argument. I almost killed him so I was holding his neck, I was strangling him then a friend came into the room and rescued him.*

The above response illustrates how power can be used to punish others into submission. It is not only in the context of prior trauma, but also in the context of cheating and betrayal that this female student constructed her violent and brutal identity. The utterances by the participant (Ruth, F5) shows that females can and do embody forms of violence and aggression could be potentially fatal in holding her male partner's neck and almost strangling him. The females' behaviour constitutes an act of reclaiming power albeit it in a negative way.

> *Lilly (F1):*   *But the way she will respond as she raises her voice and wanna grab you to be quiet or else, you'll get beaten up.*

> *Jane (F11):*   *The girl threatened him to mess up his life and to destroy everything also even his degree she had his details to log into his university account and deregister everything.*

The above responses illustrate that females engage in verbal abuse and threats which may also lead to physical violence or a beating. This is a form of 'intimate terrorism' where intimate partners use threats to coerce and control their partners (Johnson, 2006). The threat to 'mess up his life' shows that females engage in intimidation and in this way, they construct their femininity in a context of power that defies normative feminine notions. By threatening her intimate partner with further harm, she constructed herself as passive aggressive. These female students' acts of gender violence within their intimate partner relationships constitutes a display of toxic femininity that is potentially destructive (Lugones, 2017; Snowton, 2017).

6.3. IPV within same-sex (lesbian) relationships: 'the girlfriend used to beat her girlfriend'

IPV within same-sex lesbian relationships suggests that violence is more about power than about patriarchy (Daly, 2011; Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009; Renzetti, 1998). The data below shows that female students' engagement in violence within their lesbian relationships is aligned with power and control in ways that brutalise their female partners.

> Cane (M5):　There was this lesbian couple, who were arguing and fighting it was also more of emotional and psychological abuse but we don't know how to react because they were both females and both were abusive and violent towards each other. Same sex relationships so there was this couple fighting and it should be shocking but it's become normal just one of those things.
>
> A first-year student who got involved with another female student who was a senior, 4th year. So she says her girlfriend (the 4th year student) does beat her up sometimes and swears her and calls her names. But she (first year student) perceived it as her partner being maybe more loving and caring because she doesn't want to lose that person. Her girlfriend swears her for talking to other girls or maybe guys.

> *Ethan (M8):* Her friend who is also gay, actually fought with her then girlfriend and she told me it was bad, a bad scene because their demeanours, how they were talking and shouting but I didn't involve myself.

> *Sally (F20):* I'm a bisexual, so I know it was wrong as I was dating my baby daddy, I was also having a girlfriend so I was caught with my baby daddy when I was with her (dating her) she took my phone and she threw it on the wall then she slapped me and she did it again. When I was about to leave the room, she grabbed me and put me on the bed but because I'm also fit then I was able to hold her down but she slapped me twice but I pushed her down hard and I then realised that I'm gonna kill her, then I leave her and go. But she used to tell me that she used to beat her ex-girlfriend and I did talk to her that she needs help. So even the girlfriend after me, she beat her too. The girlfriend used to beat the girlfriend, they used to fight, you could hear inside your house (residence room) once the girlfriend woke up with a black eye.

> *Sarah (F21):* Fighting as a lesbian so they become too sexual and they want to show their manpower just to prove it. They are too short-tempered. So she was beating her (girlfriend) sometimes. The girlfriend was not allowed to have male friends, the other girlfriend who's more of a male she was controlling. So if she (the other girlfriend) goes beyond then that it's a fight. So they were fighting and they were drunk and then boom, the other one was hitting the girlfriend.

The above responses by Cane (M5) illustrate that violence within lesbian relationships at university has 'become normal'. The statement that both lesbians were violent and abusive suggests that females are not afraid to exercise their agency in violent ways and in this way; they challenge static and artificial gender binaries (Halberstam, 2012, 1998). Their engagement in violence shows that females can also possess 'masculine' traits of violence and aggression. The comments by Cane (M5) and Sarah (F21) that the lesbian partners did not want their intimate partners to have male friends illustrates possessive, jealous and controlling behaviours that often leads to violent confrontations. The

comments by Sally (F20) who is bisexual correlate with research by Edwards, Sylaska, Barry, Moynihan, Banyard, Cohn, Walsh & Ward (2015) that shows that sexual minority students (SMS) do experience multiple forms of abuse within their intimate partner relationships. The participants' utterances illustrate that IPV within lesbian relationships can be just as toxic. When Sarah (F21) states that the lesbian wanted to show her 'manpower' it shows how notions of power and control are still aligned to masculinity and in this way, as long as females engage in 'masculine' activity their behaviour will continue to be characterised as toxic and masculine. By engaging in stereotypical masculine terrain, they claim power albeit in a negative context (Connell, 2000). Furthermore, it is evident that despite the same-sex relationship we still see the adherence to heterosexual norms that continues to marginalise those who choose to perform their gender in non-normative ways (Butler, 1990). By engaging in violence within their lesbian relationships they may be perceived as doubly transgressive as they dare to challenge heterosexual norms as well as feminine norms of non-violence. Violence within lesbian relationships is about power and control and it shows how female non-normative genders engage in physical, verbal and emotional aggression within their intimate partner relationships.

6.4. Female homophobic violence

Homophobic violence is rife at universities where non-conforming genders are 'othered' and denigrated by students who espouse heternormativity (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Butler, 1990). Powerful male and female hegemonies unleash violent (physical, verbal, psychological and sexual) assaults against those who they perceive to be transgressive of heterosexual norms (Butler, 1990).

> *Alwin (M3):   Lesbians were actually attacked by other females saying that why are they lesbians and stuff because at the end of the day they are all females, they have breasts.*

> *Henry (M12): I have two friends who were bisexual and so my female friends don't accept the fact and they make nasty comments such as they act as girls today and boys tomorrow.*

> *Gerome (M11): The girls using derogatory term, like faggots.*

The comments by Alwin (M3) illustrate that female students who are homophobic questioned the non-normative gender identities and sexual orientation saying that 'they have breasts' and therefore that they are female. The comment by Henry (M12) that his bisexual friends experience nasty comments from other female homophobic students shows how so many gender and sexual non-conforming students are policed and denigrated by heterosexual students who are intolerant of diversity (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Bhana, 2014; Msibi, 2012). In keeping with Connell's theory of masculinity (2000; 1995) where subordinate masculinities are oppressed and subordinated, these non-normative genders experience denigration at the hands of some female students who are also verbally abusive, calling them 'faggots' (Gerome, M11). The term faggot is a derogatory term for same-sex desiring people (Pascoe, 2011; 2007). It is evident that these abusive female students use their power in oppressive ways as they render same-sex orientated individuals as 'abject' bodies (Butler, 1993). By refusing to acknowledge or accept that some students may not identify with heterosexuality, they construct their own identities as hostile, intolerant and homophobic. These females' homophobic behaviour shows that everyone is caught up in some form of power as they discriminate and oppress others in an effort to 'discipline them' (Foucault, 1980).

6.5. Physical Violence

6.5.1. Fighting with other girls

Research shows that females engage in extreme forms of physical violence in their interpersonal relations with others (Jones, 2008; Bhana, 2008; Ringrose, 2006; Burman, Batchelor & Brown, 2001). Not all the violence is defensive or retaliatory (Walley-Jean & Swan, 2012; Caldwell, Swan, Allen, Sullivan & Snow, 2009; Wesley, 2006). Females actively participate in cultures of violence and in doing so, they challenge historical perceptions that extreme physical violence is solely a masculine domain (Bhana, 2018; Espelage, Basile & Hamburger, 2012; Ringrose & Renold, 2010).

> Leah (F18): *I always knew that he had a girlfriend and he was buying alcohol for us. We were having a good time. Then these girls (I think one may have been his girlfriend) they started coming to towards us aggressively. We ended up fighting. We had some bottles in our hand. We wanted to stab them (they were aggressive towards us).*

Rita (F4):   *The fight was between two girls who were dating the same boy so they waited for the bash. Then the friends and the females (one of the girlfriends) started attacking the (the other girlfriend) girl. They were hitting her and pulling her hair, they physically beat her.*

Denise (F8):   *She was dating the other girl's boyfriend so she beat her up so bad which left her walking on crutches. She was sent to hospital. Beating up other girls is also violence.*

Dora (F9):   *A girl just pop ups at your door and just beats you up because you are dating her man. She gets all physical with you.*

Maya (F15):   *There were two girls, one was the girlfriend of my baby daddy. Their intention was to beat me up because she found out I was pregnant. But she was not beating me on the face she was focusing on my stomach.*

Ferrial (F18): *They (female students) fight a lot. They have physical fights. Then I found a group (female students) they were pushing each other and fighting.*

Sarah (F21):   *She (his girlfriend) initiated the fight. There was broken glasses everywhere. She was violent and wanted to fight with them. She beat other girl and she hit him (her boyfriend)*

Kitty (F25):   *Her squad (group of female friends) did this to a certain girl (student) on res. This girl was actually hospitalised. The group of female students ganged up and beat the girl.*

Ben (M15):   *Don't know what they (the females) were fighting about. There were some females who had torn clothes trying to cover their body parts. They were ripping each other's clothes, we saw panties.*

Henry (M12): *They (the females) were fighting and hitting each other they used bottle to stab the other one.*

The above responses illustrate that female students engage in extreme forms of violence as they 'stab', 'beat', fight', each other, including 'ripping clothes' using 'bottles', 'ganging up' resulting in the hospitalisation of the victim. They become ferocious especially in light of the fact that they had knowledge of the girl being pregnant and the possible repercussions and danger of beating a pregnant woman. This is illustrated by the fact that she focused "on my stomach," which meant that there was intention to harm or even kill an unborn child. When some of them used bottles to stab other girls or gang up to beat others it shows the clear intention to harm, to oppress and to humiliate. The utterances by several participants indicate that these females use brutal and extreme violence in their fights over males. The violence that emanates from the dating of the same male shows that female-on-female aggression is quite a common occurrence at university as they gang up with other females to punish, humiliate and brutualise other females. In this way they demonstrate their social power, highlighting the way in which power can be negatively used to brutualise the vulnerable (Foucault, 1980). The intensity of these female fights is illustrated when some of the females' bodies were exposed as well as in the hospitalisation of another student. Just like their schoolgirls counterparts (Bhana, 2008; Jackson, 2006; Alder & Worral; 2004; Brown, 2003) these female students actively participate in a culture of violence at university in ways that defy their traditional feminine status. By violently challenging the other females for sole dating rites to the male, they demonstrate their power over both parties. Their violent behaviour contradicts the feminine notions of the ideal female (Motz, 2008). Their behaviour constitutes a display of toxic femininity that is rooted in dominant notions of masculinity that assumes violent power and control over others (Savin-Williams, 2017). Their violent behaviour illustrates their feminine identities as toxic and destructive.

> Rita (F4): *She would retaliate in a way that made you feel sick in the stomach. She would like pass you and hit your shoulder and not say sorry and she swears a lot and is always around boys. I don't know if it has an effect on her. She smokes, uses vulgar language and also drinks together so she knows she will be protected with back up (maybe from the boys).*

> Sally (F20): *One of the ladies was violent. Whenever she was drunk, she was just like that, she would start a fight and poke your eye.*

> *Denise (F8):*   *They (girls) were hitting each other, punching, slapping and beating up other girls. She would just beat people up, if someone did something or said something she doesn't like then she would get angry and aggressive towards that person and Ja, just slaps them. Everyone knows, she is very aggressive and she'd get angry (snaps her fingers)*

> *Petunia (F24): My friend, she was violent, to such a point that she was suicidal. She was very violent if she was angry. She would punch things and hurt you. She was always fighting and she will want to hurt you if you made her angry. She was a ticking time bomb.*

The responses above also illustrate further physical violence where some females behave aggressively towards others for no apparent reason and they keep the company of males, sometimes behaving in a vulgar manner and using obscenities simply because she knew that her male friends would protect her. The female students' reliance on male support whilst simultaneously engaging in relational oppression shows why the eclectic framework that deals with issues of power, gender, and violence is so crucial to the current study. All the above responses illustrate that the females would actively engage in violence because it was in their nature to be violent, 'a ticking time bomb' (Petunia, F24). These females construct their femininity as erratic and unpredictable and are inconsistent with stereotypical notions of appropriate femininity.

6.5.2. Physical (political) violence perpetrated by female students: 'they choose to use violence'

Research shows that many females were forced to become involved in politics and to take up arms (Field, et al., 2018; Gasa, 2007). However, despite their navigation of previously male dominated territory, many females were denied access to power and this forced them to engage in violence (Shepherd, 2010; Gasa, 2007). The extracts below illustrate how these female students were prepared to use extreme violence in order to achieve their goals.

> *Ruth (F5):*   *A lady stabbed another student, it was a girl from SASCO. This lady stabbed a boy from the fighters (EFF) she stabbed him with a knife.*

> *Sally (F20):*   *I saw it with my own eyes, one of the girls beat another girl till she went to hospital. She took a brick and hit her with a brick.*

> *Kate (F27):*   *They (the females) choose to use violence, physical violence.*

The above responses illustrate that violent altercations by female students are triggered by political events at the university. We see that a female student who belonged to a different organisation used a knife to stab a male student from another organisation. While another female student used a brick hit another student which resulted in her being admitted to the hospital. These students chose to engage in violence as a way of resolving political differences. This illustrates the presence of the power of agency as the females 'choose to use violence'. They have become active agents who are responsible for their violent actions (Ajzenstadt, 2009). These female students choose to use extreme forms of violence in order to achieve their desired outcome and in this context, the violence could be used in a way to threaten their political opponents. This also suggests that they may have been socialized into using violence as a problem solver (Botha, 2014). Their engagement in extreme violence points to a disruption in gender norms as they shed their powerless status.

6.6. Verbal abuse and threats: 'It leaves scars in the heart.'

Verbal abuse (emotional and psychological abuse) includes acts to cause embarrassment and humiliation, and disrespect in the form of name-calling and belittling of another individual or partner (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005). The impact of this form of abuse may have a devastating impact on the mental well-being of the victim which may never heal (Gordon, 2017; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013; Steenkamp, 2010).

> *Cane (M5):*   *Females have become more outspoken but not that they should be oppressed but the feminist movement at times is misunderstood. Instead of bringing some form of equality, females now take it to achieve some kind of dominance over males. They shout at males there is also the psychological violence that I personally experienced because of the requirements they have from you, if you can do for them financially. They always bring up that there are other men out there that can do it. Then psychologically psych your mind. She keeps mentioning to you that you are not good*

enough that you not taking care of her the way you should but you both are students and probably have the same form of income, if any.

The above comments linking feminism to the increase in these female students' engagement in violence corroborates with research by Chesney-Lind (2006) who posits that females engaging in violence and crime are often attributed to women's liberation movements that frequently causes them to behave violently. Brown and Tappan (2008) as well as Boyer (2008) further suggest that increased media coverage of violent females is sometimes attributed to the rise in feminism. In the extract above, Cane's (M5) expression of the psychological abuse he endures as a result of not being able to provide financially for his partner is consistent with research by Stark (2007) and Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan and Snow (2008) who found that females are capable of inflicting emotional and psychological abuse on their intimate partners, threatening to end the relationship as a result of their partners perceived inadequacies. Given the fact that both the participant and his partner are both students and have a limited income (Cane, M5), the demands made by his female partner therefore appear to be unreasonable. But more importantly is the contradiction of the female students' financial demands on her partner inferring that she embraces the patriarchal and traditional notions that position males as the providers. However, her emotional and psychological abuse of her male partner is transgressive of traditional feminine notions of sensitivity and warmth as expressed earlier by other participants.

> *Kitty (F25):*   *It's verbal violence they say brutal words to the person which leaves scars in the heart.*

> *Milly (F13):*   *My friend was confronted by three girls. She stood for herself and they ended up not beating her but verbally, they were abusive.*

> *With both genders (male and female) there is a lot of violence towards PGCE students (Postgraduate Certificate in Education students). As student teachers we feel they are stealing our jobs because now they are done so they come in with qualifications, they only study for one year, there is lots of hate towards them (the PGCE students).*

Cowen (M6):   She talks in such a way that you would only keep quiet when you are in an argument with her some girls, they are violent.

              The Resident Assistant (RA), she was afraid of chasing a female student living here on residence without a permit. The student promised her (RA) that if she dares touches her then she will see who she is. That student is really a problem even to a woman security because they cannot do anything about her. She's selling alcohol. So it's either her way or there's no other way. She slapped her RA. She talks in such a way, she is violent and she behaves aggressively.

Rita (F4):   There is female verbal bullying.

Dora (F9):   Badmouthing each other (girls).

Fran (F17):   Females gossip.

Jane (F11):   The girl attacked the aunty (RA), she started fighting and insulting her and if it wasn't an older person, she was gonna fight.

Ferrial (F18): They (the females) would gossip and sometimes I overhear and because I have a skin problem so they look at me like I'm an animal.

Jill (F10):   She always said things and commented on her body or her clothes. She was just rude, saying that she don't have perfect thighs and that she slept with her boyfriend. It was a toxic friendship also she spread rumours.

Cane (M5):   I experienced that, where the females will decide about what you eating or when you going to write, read … eish or when you will come over to spend time and if you refuse you going to get sworn.

The above responses illustrate that verbal abuse and violence can be just as 'brutal' as physical violence and that it leaves the victims emotionally scarred for a very long time. Not all girls are able to defend themselves when they are confronted by verbally aggressive females like Milly's (F13) friend. From the above responses we see that

female students do engage in bullying, gossiping, badmouthing and spreading rumours and this is consistent with the literature that shows that girls engage in relational aggression (Bhana, 2008; Renold, 2005; Brown, 2003). These female students construct malicious identities as they verbally attack and express even hatred towards PGCE students, gossip about another student who has a 'skin problem', and make inappropriate comments about their friends or swear at their boyfriends. Cowen's (M6) comments illustrates that some female students even engage in threatening behaviour towards the security and the residents' assistant (RA) who try to get them to obey the university rules. This female student constructs her femininity as belligerent as she appears to have little or no regard for authority. The collective responses not only illustrate that these female students exert their agency and power in violent, aggressive and toxic ways but it also shows that power can be negative (Savin-Williams, 2017; Ringrose, 2006, Foucault, 1983). Rooted in dominant notions of masculinity, these females destabilise gender power relations as they assume a form of female masculinity that is not afraid to use power, violence and aggression (Connell, 2000; Foucault, 1983).

6.7. Sexual harassment and assault perpetrated by female students: 'I told her no, just stop'

Research shows that females are capable of perpetrating sexual assaults against males (Breiding et al., 2014; Chapleau, Oswald & Russell, 2008; Anderson, 2007; Krahé, Waizenhofer & Möller, 2003). Females were also found to have used some form of physical aggression in order to coerce males into engaging in sexual activity (Hines & Saudino, 2003; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson & Anderson, 2003).

> Fran (F17):   Males do report females. So there is also a resident assistants, males, and females sometimes knock on the door of an RA. The female student would wear a towel and then go to the guy's door saying RA I need your help, can I please get inside but it is fake acting. She says RA hug me. I have friends who are RAs so I heard stories like that about females saying that you are here to comfort me or she maybe wants you to comfort her wearing a towel then she might say you raped her or that you tried to force her.

> *Ethan (M8):*   *There was this girl who didn't know her well. I was drinking alcohol with one of my friends. I saw her in corridors (residence) so I talked to her and she had wanted to come over later and when I walked in the room, she locked the door. One thing led to another and I told her I didn't have condoms but she was okay and we decided to relax. Then she rolled on top of me, I told her no, just stop but she just kind of, she overpowered me. And so like I said no so many times but if I push her away she is going to feel embarrassed then we had unprotected sex and fortunately she didn't get pregnant and I'm still HIV negative. I don't know how I could define that coz I did feel pressurised coz I said no multiple times. After sex you have like a good feeling and happier. It just wasn't like that, I didn't wanna talk to her anymore so we stayed away from each other.*

> *Tilly (F31):*   *There are women who rape and who harass and assault men so it's not just directed at females. Men are also pressured.*

The above comments illustrate that female students engage in sexual harassment and assault. Having to deal with females who present themselves as needing 'comfort' can be tricky and complex. This is clearly evident in Fran's (F17) utterances where a female student who was only wearing a towel wanted to be 'comforted' by a male RA. Firstly, her clothing is provocative and secondly, it is unclear what she means by 'comfort'. The suggestion here is that she is deliberately misleading; she may be speaking of comfort as in emotional support or comfort as in sexual activity. There is also the suggestion that her ulterior motive is to get the male into trouble and thereafter accuse him of rape. She uses coercive tactics, 'fake acting' in order to manipulate the situation so that the male RA will be perceived as a rapist. Ethan (M8) discloses his sexual experience as something that he is unable to define simply because he 'said no multiple times'. There is a strong suggestion that his experience may be categorized as sexual assault or even rape. The female students' intention was made clear as she had locked the door and thereafter she had climbed on top of the male student despite his several protestations. Both Fran's (F17) and Ethan's (M8) comments are consistent with research that shows that females do actively and aggressively pursue sex (Anderson, 2007; Oswald & Russell, 2006; Krahé, 2000). Their sexually aggressive behaviour destabilises widespread notions that

sexual aggression and dominance is the sole domain of masculinity. The females construct their femininity in ways that challenge patriarchal notions of feminine sexual passivity as "there are women who rape and who harass and assault men" (Tilly, F32). This statement is consistent with research by Oswald and Russell (2006) and Krahé (2006) that shows that females can be sexually aggressive. In this way they deconstruct notions that positions females only as victims and not as perpetrators of sexual assault. By ignoring the several appeals by the male student to stop, the female student demonstrated her agency and power to get what she had wanted and that was sex. This incident not only illustrates the ways in which power can be used in a negative way in order to achieve a clear goal but it also illustrates that power emanates from 'innumerable' sources (Foucault, 1980). In addition, this incident also reaffirms the belief that sexual assault and rape is about power. This assumption of power (sexual and physical) by these female students destabilises historical notions of what is considered masculine and feminine appropriate behaviour (Halberstam, 1998). Furthermore, their refusal to submit to male power threatens hegemonic notions of masculinity and they may be labelled as 'bitches' (Schippers, 2007; Halberstam, 1998; Connell, 1987). In light of the fact that South Africa has been dubbed the 'rape capital' of the world and that more males have been cited as perpetrators of this crime (Human Rights Watch, 2010), the statement by one participant (Tilly, 31) that men are also pressurised into engaging in sexual activity against their will, once again highlights the ubiquity of rape in South Africa as well as the fact that sexual assault is about power over the vulnerable. It further illustrates the shifting dynamics of power as it moves from the perceived oppressor to the perceived oppressed (Foucault, 1980). The utterances of these students are a reminder that society can no longer continue to attribute violence, strength, aggression and power solely with masculinity and that the reconceptualising these archaic ideologies is critically important if complete gender equality is to be achieved.

6.8. Social media: 'it's violence on its own'

Whilst technology can be used as a powerful positive tool for communication and in education, it can also be used in ways that can be harmful. There is a dark side to technology where social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram have been used by university students to cyberbully other students (Rentschler, 2015; Fairbairn, Bivens & Dawson, 2013; Catalano, 2012). This is an attempt to exercise power

over others (Rentschler, 2015; Goodno, 2011; Oliviero, 2004). In the following extracts the participants' responses show the ways in which female students use social media to cyberbully others.

> Kitty (F25): She (the perpetrator) created a facebook account and she was calling me names. I recruited as many people as possible to report for my account to be deactivated but she will use another name. Social media is something that doesn't dry up, it just keeps trending. It's violence on its own.

> Gerome (M11): Some made jokes and not in a nice way. There was a trend called smash or pass on YouTube video where. this girl did a video with her friend and took a screen-shot of her laughing. She turned it into a meme and it spread like wildfire.

> Martha (F14): Social media is that one platform that's very brutal. The girl was in politics and other girls called her names and bullied her all over facebook and WhatsApp. She went into depression and she was in and out of hospital, taking anti-depressants. She passed away because she was very vulnerable.

> Patty (F22): Because that's how they (the ones posting) feel they would get heard. The incident I was telling you about (where the lecturer had sex with three female students and then gave them marks to pass) and so the one girl came out on social media and that's how it got back to the university because everybody was sharing the post.

> Barry (M17): Students (both female and male) post university matters. They will behave violently towards each other and the social media posts, that thing just stays there, it can ruin reputations and reveal your secrets.

The above responses illustrate that once something has been posted and shared on social media it does not go away and that it continues to trend. Using social media platforms to make fun of others or insult them may not seem harmful to the individuals who post such things but to the victims 'it's violence on its own' (Kitty, F25), it is humiliating simply

because these posts spread very quickly, cyberbullying can also have fatal consequences as we see where Martha (F14) speaks about a victim who suffered with depression and eventually passed away as a result of her bullying online. This shows that no-one is immune to cyberbullying and the devastating consequences it can have on one's mental health and wellbeing. Many students feel that posting on social media platforms is attention seeking and the purpose is to denigrate other females. This is a form of horizontal oppression and highlights the ways in which the cyberbully exercises power over their victim. In the context of cyberbullying, physical strength is not necessary and this highlights the ways in which power is dynamic (Foucault, 1980) as the mere touch of a few buttons can violently alter an individual's life. Patty (F22) highlights the exposure of a university lecturer who had sexual intercourse with three female students and then gave them marks to pass. The intention was to expose both the male lecturer and female students and it also speaks to the reputational damage that is a consequence of inappropriate online comments about individuals and their private lives. This outing in the form of sharing potentially damaging information shows us how detrimental female power can sometimes be when it is used to expose, humiliate and denigrate those that they have *'issues'* with. The participants' responses highlight the destructive nature of social media and the emotional and psychological consequences of posting harmful information. The fact that these female students took the time to create a fake facebook account, took a screen shot and create a meme, illustrates that these cyber-attacks were deliberate and well-planned and it resonates with Litwiller and Brausch's (2013, p.676) definition of cyberbullying as the "intentional and repeated aggression that involves a disparity of power between the victim and the perpetrator".

> *Horatio (M14): By them maybe calling someone ugly. I think females do post more.*
>
> *Bill (M16):   I have been shouted at by a female violently saying that you guys are just assholes.*
>
> *Milly (F13):   There is lots of cyberbullying they (the girls) say nasty things about you on Facebook, they are body shaming you.*
>
> *Cane (M5):   There was an Instagram post that someone put up and then another girl commented in a way that was unacceptable, it was more like body shaming another girl and then they confronted*

> *each other on the netball courts and it became physical. She was*
> *commenting on lesbians, they were being targeted and then they*
> *do react so then there are altercations where they are confronted*
> *by the lesbian, one of the partners. The females usually do the*
> *bullying and harassing online.*

The above comments about female students and social media posts correlates with research that shows that females post more than males on social media (Chang, Kazdin, Hogan & Ibanga, 2008). The response by Cane (M5) shows that girls engage in *"body shaming"* and this form of denigration may sometimes lead to physical altercations. Power shifts from the oppressor (bully) to the oppressed (victim) as the victim confronts the bully (Foucault, 1980). The females' behaviour exemplifies a form of toxic femininity with a clear intention to cause harm to and suffering for their victims. They construct their femininity as toxic as they vilify, berate and physically attack their victims. Foucault's (1984) account of power shows how agents of power can sometimes use their power in negative ways and this is clearly evident in the cyberbullying of these females.

Denise (F8):   *She beat up her boyfriend because she sent him nudes (pictures of herself naked) and then he sent the nude pics to a group and she got angry and beat him up.*

Dawn (F7):   *She's even a mentor. She faked an instagram account and used her details to post. She stole nude pictures of her friend and then posted that her friend is a sex worker.*

Ruth (F5):   *The girl told me that her (female) friend posted something on social media, that she posted pics with her number saying she is a prostitute if you guys need sex.*

Rose (F6):   *A female, she had beef (had a problem) with another girl and then she gave a sugar daddy, she sent screenshots saying that the girl is a sex worker, made videos with insults.*

Cody (M4):   *There was this girl, I'll say it was human trafficking because her (female) friend used her number to search for blessers. On Instagram, the lady asked a guy to screenshot all the*

> *conversations and then she knew her (female) friend was behind all this.*

Jane (F11):   *They (the females) were friends and then they started fighting and then one went on Instagram and created a fake account and started giving out blessers (older richer males, not students) her number offering to have sex with them.*

The above responses illustrate cyberbullying in the form of sexting which involves sending nude photographs and videos which may sometimes be accompanied by suggestive sexual messages (Badenhorst, 2011). Sending private images such as nude photographs may not be a correct decision simply because nothing remains private on social media, as is evident when the boyfriend, as well as the female friend, shared these posts with others. Humiliating other students by sharing these naked photos appears to be a trend that only causes pain and suffering to the victim. Furthermore, it is evident that female students also impersonate others by stealing their identity to create fake social media accounts in order to sell sex (*prostitute' 'sex worker'*) by offering their details to 'sugar daddies' and 'blessers'. This form of public humiliation may lead to low self-esteem, depression, academic failure and suicidal thoughts (Goodno, 2011). The above responses illustrate that bullying and in particular cyberbullying is about power and the fact that the bully exercises this form of negative power over their powerless victims.

Maya (F15):   *I found a lot of messages on the group, there were voice notes with arguing girls. They were insulting each other and talking personal things.*

Faye (F16):   *Ja, they (females) wrote bad stuff about her saying she slept with so many men and that she has blessers. They called her sick and said that, she is gonna pass on the sickness to boys who are in first years and she was also manipulating the boys to be her friend.*

Sylvia (F19):   *They say they are full of themselves it is mainly girls, there were a few boys which commented. It was the girls who said that she is a prostitute and that if you haven't 'hit' (slept with her) your time will come.*

> *Jane (F11):*   *She started texting me and she was saying I should leave this guy because she's going to kill me and beat me up.*

> *Cowen (M6):*   *Also fights on social media. They create fake facebook accounts and call me names, they drag my name with people laughing. They have done it to the SRC and to some staff members. The violence takes place in our student groups (WhatsApp), they will post a picture, photoshop it and then make a disturbing caption.*

The responses above also illustrate relational aggression such as name-calling, spreading rumours, threats and insults with the clear intention to cause harm. This type of female violence is characterised by an imbalance of power in the cyberworld where the victims are unable to escape, and that power is everywhere 'omnipresent' (Foucault, 1980) subjecting its victims to pain and humiliation. Maya's (F15) comments shows that female students use public platforms to share private information as a way of insulting each other. In the case of Faye (F16) and Sylvia (F19) social media is used to share defamatory information that is intended to damage reputations. The disclosure of offensive and derogatory comments by the female students is not limited to other students, some members of the university staff have allegedly fallen victim to cyberbullying: "done it to the SRC and some staff members so they post and photoshop it and make a disturbing caption" (Cowen, M6). There is no escaping this form of negative, repressive power as advancements in technology have meant it is globally pervasive. While the cyberbullies are faceless, the scars they inflict on the victims are by no means invisible. The victims of this new form of violence continue to suffer with some even taking their own lives.

6.9. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the different forms of gender violence that female students engage in at university. The data was presented and analysed according to themes. What emerged from the data is that female students engage in a range of forms of gender violence within their intimate partner relationships as well as within their interpersonal relations with others. The data also showed that the students were exposed to these forms of violence prior to them attending university. These include physical violence in the form of beatings, stabbings, and damaging the personal property of others; sexual harassment and assault; homophobic violence; verbal, emotional and psychological violence as well as

violence perpetrated via social media. There was also evidence of violence within same-sex relationships (lesbians) as well as heterosexual relationships. The forms of female gender violence constitute a display of toxic femininity, agency and masculinity that are destructive. Their engagement in extreme forms of violence and abuse destabilises historical, cultural notions of feminine non-violence and passivity. Their violent nature and actions further challenge the notion that only masculinity is linked to violence and aggression. Their embracing of violence illustrates that 'masculine' traits of power and control can be imbibed by all and in this way, they subvert gender power norms.

The next chapter also deals with data analysis.

Chapter Seven

7.1. Introduction

The recorded interviews were transcribed into verbatim textual data. The data was coded and categorized into preliminary themes, using the inductive approach, several themes subsequently emerged from the data. Drawing on hermeneutics I was able to achieve a deeper analysis. The eclectic theoretical framework provided analytical tools to analyse the rich data generated in the interviews. This chapter presents data that deals with the reasons for the female students' engagement with violence. The analysis uses the verbatim responses of the students and provides in-depth discussion that draws on the different theories as an analytical lens, while also integrating the discussion with literature that either supports or refutes the findings of the current study.

This chapter focuses on the third critical research question: Why, according to students, do female students engage in acts of gender violence?

The data will be presented and analysed according to several themes that emerged from the data. It has been established that these female university students' involvements in violence, whether interpersonal with male or female students or IPV, is complex and arises from a multiplicity of reasons. The following themes will provide a glimpse into some explanations for the violent behaviours they engage in. The 20 themes that emanated from the data are listed below:

- Female interpersonal violence: Jealousy, gossiping and name calling
- Female students fighting for boys: 'I saw you eyeing my man'
- Some reasons offered by students for female perpetrated IPV
- Peer Pressure: A need to be accepted and be part of the crew
- Female university students need to prove that females can also fight
- Power, politics and control: 'I want to live by my own rules'
- The socialisation process: 'As females, we were told that we have less power'
- The effects of alcohol and drugs usage cited as a reason for female violent behaviour
- Provocation: According to students the female students provoke other students

- Female student agency

- Accommodating and resisting violence

- Victim - perpetrator cycle of violence

- Theft by female students: 'then you see your things and someone else is wearing it'

- Pressure, privacy and COVID-19

- Lack of counselling: An important catalyst to alleviate violent behaviours

- Anger Management: "They let all that out, their anger and rage on other people"

- Blaming the victim: 'What did you do to get treated that way?'

- "I'm a female, they not going to do anything to me …"

- Campus parties (bashes): Drinking, drugs and fighting

- Some advice, it is best to just remain calm: "You cannot see your reflection in hot water"

7.2. Female students engaging in violence: Some reasons offered by students

Research shows that students engage in acts of gender violence for a myriad of reasons (Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Krebs, Lindquist, Berzofsky, Shook-sa, Peterson & Planty, 2016; Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016) and that female students are motivated by similar motivations and desires as that of their male counterparts (Hines, 2008; Spidell, Nicholls, Kendrick, Klein and Kropp, 2004; Follingstad, Bradley, Heff and Laughlin, 2002). As will be illustrated in this chapter, the participants' statements illustrate that some female students defy prescribed gender norms and show their agency by claiming power over males, other females and non-normative genders. The reasons offered in this chapter offers us a glimpse into the lives of diverse feminine constructs as they pertain to female violence as discussed in the themes below.

7.2.1. Female interpersonal violence: Jealousy, gossiping and name calling

Research shows that jealousy, insults and perceived humiliation are all motives for female perpetrated gender violence (Graham-Kevan, 2009; Kruttschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). The extracts below illustrate that some of the female students engage in violence as a result of jealousy, gossiping and insults that are intricately intertwined with heterosexual relationships, phenotypical features and material possessions. Beauty, the ability to look good, or being more financially stable, have been presented as reason

enough to fight. These female students are guilty of horizontal oppression as they oppress other females. Connell (2000; 1987) theorises subordination and oppression and this applies to these female students who subordinate and oppress other female students as a result of their inferiority complex.

> *Leah (F3):* It is also female jealousy because your guy starts flirting.
>
> *Fran (F17):* It is also female jealousy because they (the other females) are not in same position and maybe because you are beautiful or maybe they are dating your crush.
>
> *Sarah (F21):* Sometimes the other girls think you're better than them and so they feel jealous then they start the fight.
>
> *Cane (M5):* It has to do with issues of jealousy amongst females.
>
> *Martha (F14):* She thinks she is better or because she thinks she's a slay queen.
>
> *Dawn (F7):* Maybe just because you (as a female) are wearing a nice thing, you always love yourself, they (other females) would hurt you for that.

What is clearly evident in the females' comments is that the jealousy stems from a variety of sources. These include jealousy over your male partner 'flirting' or the fact that someone else is in a relationship with the person that you like. The violence that emanates from these instances could be directed at the partner or the other person and this may result in physical altercations between these females. Also evident is that being a 'slay queen' has its own ramifications which includes jealousy and possible insults as others may believe that the slay queen thinks that she is superior to her peers simply because she has been showered with money and expensive material items. The term slay queen was initially a unique slang term in the LGBTIQ community and the drag world that was used to positively affirm those around them (Selisho, 2019). Slay queen was originally used as a compliment that was given to a good-looking person who was impeccably dressed with make-up and a good hairstyle (Selisho, 2019). However, the term has been misappropriated to define a female who uses her body to gain the attention of older, wealthier men (Blessers or Sugar Daddies) who are able to support her financially (Selisho, 2019). These students live a lavish lifestyle, dressing in the finest clothes, despite being from a poverty-stricken background. This type of jealousy often leads to

female students fighting which could result in someone getting hurt and in this way the females try to reclaim the pride inspite of their deprivation through violence.

Research shows that females engage in more relational aggression such as name-calling, gossiping, swearing, manipulation and exclusion (Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Brown, Chesney-Lind & Stein, 2007; Bowie, 2007). As a result of the social construction of women and the normative gender assumptions of girls as less violent and aggressive, girls are said to gossip more rather than boys, who are constructed as violent and aggressive (Hustin, Zulu & Basson, 2014; Boyer, 2008; Jones, 2008; Artz, 2004). However, research also shows that girls do engage in violence and aggressive behaviour and in this way, they challenge their subordinate position and re-create their feminine identity (Carrington, 2013; Brown & Tappen, 2008).

Lyne (F2):   *When the girls hear that another female gossiped about them, they are going to come at you.*

Fran (F17):   *The gossip I think is one of the main causes of violence with females.*

Faye (F16):   *The violence is because of name-calling or they (the females) are fighting for what another female has said about you or who gossiped.*

Sylvia (F19):   *So the females tend to fight because they think that you gossip about me.*

Henry (M12):   *Maybe the females heard that another female was gossiping about her, that is what they (girls) fight for.*

Cane (M5):   *Maybe something that was said on social media by another girl who commented, was unacceptable and it became physical, the girls were swearing, name-calling.*

Milly (F13):   *The girl started swearing another female calling her a fat ass.*

Martha (F14): *This girl said something bad about another girl so they ended up fighting.*

Dawn (F7):   *The girls spread rumours and therefore they fight.*

The above responses identify gossiping as a reason for some of the female perpetrated violence and suggest that when females become aware that they are the topic of the gossip, they may often confront the gossipers. This form of confrontation often leads to physical violence and aggression which may follow an 'unacceptable' comment on social media. This correlates with research showing that cyberbullying often becomes physical as the female students confront each other. (Oliveiro, 2004; Batheja, 2004). This physical confrontation is illustrated in Cane's (M5) comment and it shows the shifting, dynamic nature of power from the oppressor to the oppressed (Foucault, 1980). By confronting their cyberbully face-to-face these females illustrate that power belongs to nobody (Foucault, 1980). Cyberbullying is a form of female violence that appears in the data and this was discussed in detail in chapter six, section 6.8. Name-calling is extremely hurtful, calling someone a 'fat ass' is humiliating and insulting. These responses suggest that some females engage in a form of verbal aggression that can become volatile and violent. When the victims of the gossiping retaliate, there is a shift in power that highlights that power belongs to no one and that power is everywhere and fluid (Foucault, 1980). All of the above responses illustrate that while female students engage in verbal and social media forms of aggression, it is evident that it escalates at times into more aggressive and harmful forms of violence, up to physical violence. It also illustrates that power is fluid because everyone is caught up in some form of power dynamic at any given time. By retaliating with violence, these females challenge their normative gendered polarised position that they only engage in relational forms of aggression.

7.2.2. Female students fighting for boys: 'I saw you eyeing my man'

Research shows that females use physical and verbal aggression as they fight for boys (Bhana, 2018; Jackson, 2006). Their engagement in violence is transgressive of normative femininity as prescribed by societal expectations. The extracts below illustrate that these female students harass other females as they fight to secure the attention of male students.

> *Sarah (F21):*   *Yes, because they (the females) will say that I saw you (another female) eyeing my man and then that's how it (fights) starts.*

> *Milly (F13):*   *They (both females) became verbally abusive simply because she was dating her friend's boyfriend.*

> *Denise (F8):* She was dating her (another girl's) boyfriend and then she beat her up.

> *Dora (F9):* A girl will randomly pop up at your door and she will beat you up and tell you that you are dating her man and she will tell you to back off.

> *Martha (F14):* The females always have competition for boys it is the centre of conflict.

> *Ferrial (F18):* They (both females) were in love with one guy so the friends of the other girl saw him with another girl and they beat the girl.

> *Sylvia (F19):* Two girls were dating the same boy and the other girl heard so she took her friends (other females) there, they beat her up, the girl who was dating her boyfriend.

> *Kitty (F25):* They (the females) beat the one (female) who was actually sleeping with the (another girls') boyfriend.

> *Kate (F27):* It was both females because one girl found out that this girl is dating her boyfriend and she went to her room and she asked about it then they ended up fighting, physically fighting.

The above responses resonate with research that illustrates that female students, fight each other for boys (Bhana, 2018; Bhana & Pillay, 2011). The reason for the female violence here is that they compete to secure the attention of males and this is clearly the sources of the conflict. By engaging in verbal and physical aggression and violence, these females demonstrate a form of female masculinity that does not shy away from gaining what they desire through violence. The response by Dora (F9) and Sylvia (F19) that illustrates that there is a clear intention to threaten and to cause harm to the other female in a tripartite 'relationship'. By engaging in this type of aggression and violence, these females construct their identity as belligerent. What is interesting about the above responses is that all the females attacked their female partner and not their intimate partner. The suggestion here is that they perhaps perceive the females as an easier target to attack rather than their male intimate partner who are actually the one who is complicit. It also suggests that these females understand and accept their subservient status in their intimate relationship. This further reinforces the stereotypical notion that it is okay for

males to cheat on their intimate partners and that these female students do not hold their male partners responsible for their infidelity. A common occurrence, as evident in the data, is the relationship females develop with males whom they know have partners. In this context the females use their power to engage in multiple relationships. The response by Milly (F13) shows that anger and resentment emanates from the deception of friends. The lack of loyalty is illustrated when female students date their friend's boyfriend. The issue of loyalty is also highlighted when a group of females accompany their female friend to beat another female who is dating their friends' boyfriends. Connell (2000; 1995) theorises a form of horizontal oppression where individuals are subordinated and oppressed and this applies to the female students in this context. These female students physically fight with each other and in this way, they demonstrate their power and agency, albeit in a negative sense.

7.2.3 Some reasons offered by students for female perpetrated IPV

Research shows that there are several reasons for female perpetrated IPV within their heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships. These include angry temperament and borderline personality traits like the fear of abandonment (rejection), anger, manipulation, emotional volatility (Hines, 2008); victimhood and self-defence (Wesley, 2006; Dasgupta, 2002; Swan & Snow 2006); unilateral violence (Swan & Snow, 2003; Lattu, 2016); substance abuse, imbalance of power and control, jealousy, dysfunctional conflict resolution and intimidation (Dutton, 2002; Fortunata & Kohn, 2003). The following student responses illustrate that these female students engage in IPV for different reasons.

7.2.3.1 Intimate partners cheat on each other

Research shows that females engage in violence and aggression as a result of provocation from their intimate partners (Hines, 2008; Ross & Babcock. 2012). Power shifts from the oppressed to the oppressor when these females respond violently to their abusive partners (Foucault, 1980). The following participant (Milly, F13) speaks of her indignation as a result of her intimate partner's provocation.

> *Milly (F13):* *He knew what to say to get me to that point so I will lose my temper. He would do things and make me mad and then I start fighting.*

Sally (F20): One of the Resident Assistants (RA) beat her boyfriend for cheating on her.

When I came to her, she told me that they fought, she had asked him (her boyfriend) why are you cheating on me.

Jane (F11): Because of cheating, you find your guy is cheating on you and you take his phone then you slam it against the wall and push him.

Sarah (F21): She saw her boyfriend with another girl and that's where it (fight) started. She just lost it and then she slapped the other girl and thereafter she wanted to beat the boyfriend.

Cane (M5): The violence was again the relationship dimensions and infidelity, maybe she saw a message from another girl on his phone it was issues of mistrust.

The above responses illustrate that cheating is also a reason for female violence at university. The female students resort to violence in the form of physical assaults and the destruction of property when they discover that their male intimate partner has violated their trust. These responses illustrate to us that these females are not afraid to violently challenge their male partner's betrayal and in so doing, they construct their identity as violent. It further illustrates that these females are not afraid to challenge historical notions of feminine docility.

Jane (F11): It was a bash and this friend of mine, she had a boyfriend but then at the same time she had another boyfriend so she left with the other boyfriend and left the one (boy) she promised to be with and then he slapped her. She had two boyfriends.

Then the aunty (security guard) she didn't know that the girl had another boyfriend inside her room. So aunty let him in to the residence then when the guy comes in, he finds his girlfriend with another boyfriend. Now this girl is attacking the aunty (security guard). She was asking why did you allow him inside. The aunty didn't know anything, then she started fighting.

Sally (F20):   *The masculine (lesbian) one was always cheating on the feminine*
                        (lesbian) one and so they would physically fight.

The above responses illustrate to us that some female students also cheat, both within their heterosexual as well as within their same-sex relationships. Jane's (F11) response shows us that the female student became angry with the security simply because she was inadvertently exposed for cheating while her behaviour may be perceived as transgressive of feminine notions of fidelity, it shows that some females are not afraid to attach themselves to negative aspects of 'masculinity'. Jane's (F11) comment highlights the double standards that evident in certain cultures allowing males to have more than one sexual partner while similar practices are strictly prohibited for females (Duma, 2016; Adams, Mabusela & Dlamini, 2013). These extracts highlight the ways in which some of these female students, who choose to have multiple concurrent relationships, resist traditional gender norms. Sally's (F20) observation that the 'masculine' (lesbian) would 'always' cheat reinforces hegemonic markers of masculinity but it also continues to position females as submissive. This extract illustrates that even within same-sex relationships there are power relations where one lesbian partner uses violence and aggression to dominate and subordinate the other lesbian partner. These female students illustrate a form of female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998) whose appropriation of violence reifies gender constructs (Bhana & Anderson, 2013).

In addition to the reasons above, the fear of rejection (abandonment) as well as instability in a relationship was cited as a reason for females' use of violence (Lewis, Millitech, Kelley & Allen, 2012; Hines, 2008). The females used violence in order to get their partners to remain in the relationship (Hines, 2008). Coercive control characterised by the use of threats and violence is noted in the extract below.

Cane (M5):   *It could be the fear of heartbreak, of rejection, so they use*
                    violence to control.

The response above correlates with research that found that female students may engage in violence out of fear of rejection and abandonment (Hines, 2008). Using violence in order to control their intimate partners illustrates that these females reject traditional feminine gender norms and embrace 'masculine' traits. The fear of rejection which may result in 'heartbreak' is what precipitates the female violence as they struggle to keep their partner in the relationship.

7.2.3.2 Intoxication and aggression

Research shows that university students use alcohol and drugs and this often leads to violence where they may become a victim or perpetrator at campus (Abbey, 2011; Abby, et al., 2004). The extracts below illustrate that intimate partner violence within lesbian relationships occurs as a result of substance abuse.

> *Sally (F20):*   *Either, the female is drinking or taking marijuana even my ex-girlfriend (self-identified lesbian) was smoking marijuana and then she fights with me.*

> *Sarah (F21):*   *They (lesbian) couple were violent towards each other only when they were drunk and then boom, the other one (lesbian) was hitting the girlfriend.*

Both Sally (F20) and Sarah (F21) mention the violence between inebriated lesbians and this is consistent with the research which shows that there are other sources of violence other than gender within intimate partner relationships (Daly 2011; Blosnich & Bossart, 2009; Renzetti, 1998). The following responses illustrate that females become violent and aggressive towards their intimate partners when they engage in substance abuse and not only shows that power is fluid (Foucault, 1980) but that violence and aggression can also be feminine traits (Connell, 2000; Halberstam, 1998).

7.2.3.3 The lack of respect and communication

Female violence is sometimes motivated by the desire for respect (Brown, 2003). Brown (2003) found that girl-on-girl aggression was a result of the females wanting to be publicly acknowledged and respected by other girls and in this way, they increased their visibility and social power.

> *Ferrial (F18):*   *They are not respecting each other; the female also lacks respect.*

> *Petunia (F24):*   *They (partners) are disrespecting each other.*

> *Horatio (M14):*   *The disrespect by the males towards them (the females), it will control them to a point that they become aggressive.*

> *Cody (M4):*   *The lack of respect leads to hitting and raping of the females who are violent it's because the males don't give them the respect they want.*

The responses above illustrate that a lack of respect may cause females to *'become aggressive'*. When female students feel their partners are disrespecting them, they may allow this to 'control' their attitude and behaviour towards them in ways that may result in them engaging in an aggressive manner. While this type of aggressive response may appear as normal to the disrespected party, it is important to remember that respect cannot be gained through violence and that an individual cannot control the way others respond to them. By responding aggressively, these females construct their identity as volatile.

Some individuals who come from abusive homes where violence was used to solve problems rather than effective communication, may sometimes model themselves on their parents' violent behaviour (Botha, 2014). This learned behaviour is perpetuated in their adult lives and it may result in dysfunctional conflict resolution simply because they do not know how to effectively communicate their feelings (Dutton, 2002). Violence then becomes a way to communicate with each other, as is evident in the extracts below.

> *Kate (F28):*   *It is as a result of poor communication, sometimes they don't know how to communicate with each other.*

> *Tina (F32):*   *The violence is also because of depression, unable to communicate their feelings so they (the females) feel they have to let it out so they are perpetrators of violence also because they don't have no-one to help them express themselves and no-one at home so they build up this pressure in them and then the violence.*

> *Cody (M4):*   *I believe that communication holds the relationship together if there's broken communication, obviously the person also is angry and then there will be violence.*

The responses above illustrate that poor communication within intimate partner relationships may lead to violence. Communication is at the heart of any relationship as Cody (M4) succinctly articulates. According to the participants several issues may arise in an intimate relationship as a result of partners not being able to properly communicate with each other. These include depression, anger, physical and sexual assault. Not having

anyone to talk to is what may also result in these females becoming violent. Cody (M4) also mentions the issue of respect and the fact that some females believe that their male partners do not show them respect, and this may bring about violence. All of the above responses correlate with the literature that shows instability in intimate relationships, impulsiveness and emotional volatility may cause a general propensity for females to behave violently (Hines, 2008). In resorting to violence, the females not only attempt to claim power but they also violate normative feminine constructs of non-violence and non-aggression. The engagement of these females in violence highlights the fluidity of power (Foucault, 1980). All of the above students' responses are consistent with research that shows that females engage in IPV for many different reasons.

7.2.4. Peer Pressure: A need to be accepted and be part of the crew

Peers may sometimes influence their friends to engage in anti-social behaviour like bullying, harassing and fighting in order to be part of their group (Bhana, 2008; Jackson, 2006). These peer groups are sometimes so powerful that they may influence an individual to engage in hostile behaviour that may not be in keeping with their character. The data below shows that these female students, despite being older than their schoolgirl counterparts, are, nevertheless, still vulnerable to negative peer pressure.

Alwin (M3): *It is because of peer pressure, the females wanting to fit in to a certain group, also feeling the need to look down upon another female.*

Otis (M19): *Peer pressure they (females) want to form part of the so-called crew and they have a group of girls; you have to be part of the fight to play along with them to show that you are a part of them you have to do what they want you to do or they push you to do.*

Ruth (F6): *The influence of friends and being around with them (girls), you have to prove yourself for that friendship to work, they (the group of girls) dare you, it is like I dare you to fight like her.*

Sylvia (F19): *Peer pressure is the pressure from friends. They (the females) will mock you and drive you to a fight, saying this person can't do this to you so you must teach them a lesson, you must do this and that*

The above responses illustrate just how powerful peer pressure can be as it may influence them to do things that they would not normally do in order to be a part of that peer group (Alwin, M3). By pushing other females to physically fight simply to let the friendship work suggests a form of manipulative behaviour that feeds on the 'weaker' female's insecurities and her ability to make friends. Constructing their identities as manipulative they 'mock' and taunt their peers, insinuating that they should teach the other females a lesson. This type of coercive behaviour resonates with research on younger femininities who engage in violence at school that shows that girls who keep the company of girls who bully other girls, may also in turn, become bullies (Bhana, 2008; Espelage, Holt & Henkel, 2003). All of the responses above illustrates that it doesn't matter whether the females are in school or at university, they remain vulnerable to powerful toxic female peers who may influence them to engage in violence. Their engagement in violence not only signifies their intention to challenge each other for power and status but it also highlights that power can emanate from 'innumerable' sources (Foucault, 1980).

7.2.5. Female university students need to prove that females can also fight

Not all females acquiesce to male power as they violently defy gender norms that position them as passive and docile (Bhana & Pillay, 2018; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Mantell, 2009). Some females do possess the physical strength, power and aggression, exerting their agency in ways that contradict their stereotypical femininity (Halberstam, 2012b). The extract below illustrates that this female student's use of violence symbolises a threat to the gender order (Chesney-Lind, 2006) as she stamps her authority, proving that she is capable of standing up for herself.

> *Martha (F14): One of the females who got into a fight she was actually the perpetrator then she said I have to prove a point that I can fight because men think they are smarter or stronger than us so I'm proving I can stand for myself then she pushed him hard and everyone was clapping for her. I asked her why did you push him, he's a guy, weren't you scared he was going to hurt you? All she*

said was, he needed it, I had to prove that I am not scared of guys and us women can fight for ourselves.

It is evident from the data that this participant felt a strong desire to prove that females can fight and protect themselves. This is fuelled by her perception that society constructs males as 'stronger' and 'smarter' which is internalised and normalised by females (Martha, F14). Martha's (F14) response demonstrates that some females are not afraid to physically challenge males and this can be attributed to historical gender power imbalances of male domination and female subordination. Halberstam (1998) affirms the ambiguous nature of empowered female masculine behaviours, which is evident in the extract that shows where females possess the physical strength, they are not afraid to exert their agency in violent ways. According to Martha (F14) the female was the perpetrator, however it not clear whether her and the male victim were in a relationship or not. Her engagement in violence in order to exert control shows that power can come from 'innumerable' sources (Foucault, 1980). This particular incident draws on Foucault's (1983) theory of power as the female demonstrates that power does indeed shift from person to person. It is also not made clear who 'everyone' referred to (in this instance it would be other students) who clapped is, but their reaction would suggest that the females overpowering and being the perpetrators of violence is symptomatic of a student society that sanctions violence.

7.2.6. Power, politics and control: 'I want to live by my own rules'

Control and coercion have also been cited as reasons for females engaging in gender violence (Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure & Snow, 2005). Research shows that some females are not afraid to assert their dominance through violence in order to achieve their goals (Walley-Jean & Swan, 2012). In this context, the goals are power and leadership positions within the university Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC has a powerful influence on university culture and they are involved in the administration and governance of student affairs including appointing of office bearers and committees. In the context of the university, there are some contesting student organisations that are aligned to political parties outside the university. The tension and competition for power between these political party's filters onto the university campus and this often leads to violence. Attaching violence to power and control is evident in the following extracts.

Sarah (F22):   Maybe they (the females) feel like it's the only way people will fear them. I guess maybe it's a power struggle as well. I feel like people should do what I say, like I'm in power and if you don't do that something else will happen.

Cane (M5:   It's about dominance like some kind of power. Some females are controlling and violence is the way of controlling others, to dominate.

Joan (F12):   There are fights over politics in order for that party (contesting student organisations) to win. They (some of the females) are wanting to be in power, to be the one to say no I want to live this life. I want to live by my own rules, I don't want to be told what to do so the females end up doing these bad things like violence.

Sally (F20):   For politics, they are always fighting for power, I saw with my own eyes. They are always fighting for power. And one of the girls beat that girl till she went to hospital. I don't know, she broke her bone in her leg. She took a brick down there at the edge and she threw it, but the first one (female) did hit her with a brick.

Alan (M1):   They always fight this political affiliation issue; the females take politics too seriously They (some females) align themselves to political groups.

Edwin (M9):   The politics in our school (university), the student events because they are clearly divided and that's where we see violence, those acts of (female) violence.

Penny (F23):   The females fight over petty things, politics and over positions.

The above responses illustrate the divisions caused by political affiliation which causes these females students to engage in violence. The statements by the participants show these female students are prepared to win at all costs and their competitive nature for a victory supersedes all forms of rational thinking to the extent that they end up engaging in extreme forms of violence. Constructing their femininity as defiant, they directly challenge gender power norms that have historically positioned them as peaceful. This is consistent with the research that shows that female involvement in politics is increasing

as they are not afraid to venture into previously male-dominated domains (Alison, 2003; Moser & Clark, 2007; Gasa, 2007; Bonin, 2000). Similarly, student representative councils have largely been male dominated at this particular campus and female students may often struggle to be nominated for these positions. These female students fight for positions and for power and in doing so, they deconstruct their gendered subordination, expressing their political desire through the use of violence. The female students' alignment with hegemonic power, control and violence does not simply contradict traditional feminine norms but it also shows us that those traits can be extended to femininity as well.

7.2.7. The socialisation process: 'As females, we were told that we have less power'

Entrenched in patriarchy is the subordination of females as second-class citizens as well as the normalisation of violence against them and gender non-conforming individuals (Moletsane & Theron, 2017; Bhana, 2014; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Msibi, 2012). Therefore, gender violence has to be understood in the ways in which unequal power relations are maintained (Anderson, 2006). However, research shows that not all females are powerless neither are they always in unequal relationships (Shefer, 2016; Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Mantell, 2009). The following extracts illustrate that some female students are socialised to believe that violence is a way to resolve problems and, in this highlight, why they engage in violent behaviour:

> *Kitty (F25):*   *This theory that a child learns from the outside in that we were born as an empty slate. A child learns from the societal, observations of violence growing up and that is their motive to embark on a violent experience.*

> *Ruth (F5):*   *I think people have anger issues. Personally, I think that is what contributes to violence, I think it's the way we grow up and because we as females, we were told that we have less power over males so we are trying to stand up for ourselves.*

> *Rita (F4):*   *Some females are exposed to violence; you always think that maybe it's the best way to solve a problem.*

> *Jill (F10):*   *They (the females) were taught that to get your message through you need to be violent.*

Gareth (M10): *Some females like the problems that they had like growing up, maybe like an absent father or having an abusive father or like having being raped.*

Sarah (F22): *It could be past trauma or repressed emotions because we are told as females you cannot do this, or you cannot do that, 'because society doesn't view females doing certain things as okay and then women repress those kind of emotions, strong urges to do things (like being violent) and that if they do it(engage in violence), it would be extremely bad. They (the females) go through anxiety, depression, they have anger issues and something that may have happened and maybe they take it out on somebody else instead.*

The above responses highlight the ways in which hegemonic masculinity assumes power and dominance over all social relations (Connell, 2005; 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Empowered by patriarchal norms and unequal power relations, hegemonic masculinity is therefore the key driver of gender violence and male entitlement to female bodies (Connell, 1995; Gqola, 2015). Ruth's (F5) comments shows us how females are not afraid to subvert gender power norms as they 'stand up for themselves'. Females have historically been constructed as powerless, yet it is evident that some resist previous marginalised positions of oppression and in so doing they reinforce the fluidity of power showing that power can be subverted and it is everywhere (Foucault, 1980). Other comments also highlight the subordinate constructions of femininity that place females in both oppressed and oppressor roles. The observation by the other four participants resonates with research that childhood exposure to violence may lead to many children using violence as to solve their problems (Botha, 2014; Graham-Kevan, 2009). The suggestion here is that these females perceive that they have no other option but to engage in violence and in so doing, they subvert gender power norms. The response from Gareth (M10) also correlates with research that shows that females may sometimes engage in violence later on in life as a result of traumatic childhood experiences such as rape and absent or abusive fathers (Swan, Cambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure & Snow, 2005). The responses from Sarah (F22) further illustrate issues of past trauma that may also manifest in anger and violence as they repress their emotions, as is evident in Ruth's (F5) comments earlier. These females then grow up with anger issues that manifest in violence and in this way, they reclaim their power and

agency (Halberstam, 1998). Sarah (F22) also touches on issues of assumed gender specific roles for females who are often told what they cannot do simply because they are female. Emanating from these 'repressed emotions' is an 'angry temperament' which may result in 'anxiety, depression, anger' and this correlates with research that shows these females are then most likely to become violent adults. (Hines, 2008; Follingstad, Bradley, Heff, Laughlin, 2002; Simmons, 2002). The suggestion here is that these experiences are responsible for the propensity for these females to react violently.

The literature shows that homosexuality is regarded as un-African in the deeply patriarchal isiZulu culture in South Africa and therefore many non-conforming genders are often violently policed or excluded from their families and communities (Epprecht, 2013; Gontek, 2009). This is also evident in the participants' comments below.

> *Sally (F20):* *I always think those anger issues is caused by her family and that her family was not accepting her because you know when you are a lesbian then they didn't want anything to do with her.*
>
> *Barry (M17):* *I think it's the way society teaches women to behave in a way that is similar to men or the background they come from contributes to the violence. It can be anger and the female decides to take a stand, person just responds violently.*

The comments of Sally (F20) illustrates society's adherence to heteronormative notions that are intolerant of non-conforming genders. Anger issues emanating from the non-acceptance of the females' non-normative sexuality by her family appears to be the cause for her anger. In choosing to perform her gender and sexuality differently, the female constructs her identity as transgressive of 'proper women' (Butler, 1990). Her abjection (Butler, 1990) is clearly evident in the statement that her family did not want to have a relationship with her. Barry's (M17) statement illustrates the continued association of hegemonic masculinity and violence and also illustrates the ways in which these female students are ready to assert their power through violence. He believes that as a result of their backgrounds, women are taught to behave in 'masculine' violent and aggressive ways and in so doing, they construct their identity as masculine. The observation by the participant shows that females are capable of 'masculine' behaviour and that masculinity can be produced by females (Halberstam, 1998). The females are fully aware of their power to subvert gender norms that devalue and marginalise them.

7.2.8. The effects of alcohol and drugs usage cited as a reason for female violent behaviour

Alcohol and drugs use by students is directly linked to gender violence that occurs at university (Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani & Jacobs, 2009; Abbey & McAnslam, 2004). However, while the literature shows that it is predominantly males who engage in this alcohol- and drug-fuelled gender violence, the current study shows that female students also engage in violent and abusive behaviours while under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Petunia (F24): *Females take drugs and alcohol here, straight up they do take weed, cocaine, alcohol, xanies (Xanax) are those heavy anti-depressants and there is this mixture of cough syrup and lean, they call drat (lean-purple drank and sizzurp is a mixture of codeine cough syrup, soda and hard candy)*

Alan (M1): *The females drink a lot and when they are drunk, they don't want to be told what's wrong or right end up getting angry and act violently.*

Sally (F20): *When she's drunk and when you gonna come across (walk past her) her just take another direction.*

One of the ladies, when she's drunk she wants to poke your eye with her finger

Kay (F26): *The next day after drinking she will say I didn't remember. She violates people because she knows tomorrow that she will say I'll say I was drunk.*

Denise (F8): *She was dysfunctional, she always drinking and always fighting.*

There is always alcohol involved when girls are fighting, it is always alcohol and drugs.

Milly (F13): *The drugs and alcohol can give you, the girls power and it makes you feel superior.*

Ferrial (F18): *The females drink a lot, when they drink, they start doing things ends up a physical fight.*

Ben (M15): *With the females it (the violence) is because of drugs, weed, this hookah pipes.*

> *Penny (F23):*   *She was drunk I think it was the alcohol that was driving her to attack me.*

> *Cane (M5):*   *'A person even females who are quiet and reserved and when they are under the influence of alcohol they tend to lash out all those things they keep bottled up inside, it may at times it manifests in violence.*

The responses above illustrate that female alcohol and drug usage is quite widespread on this university campus and it propels and influences their engagement in gender violence. When these females consume alcohol and heavy drugs they are perceived by other students as dangerous and troublesome, which results in other students avoiding them, because they 'violate people' (Kay, F26). It is evident that some females' consumption of alcohol is a regular occurrence on campus and this certainly poses a problem for other students who feel threatened. Penny (F23) expressed her concern about an inebriated female who tried to attack her. All of the above responses correlate with the literature that shows that alcohol and drug consumption is a direct cause of female students behaving violently at campus (Abbey, 2011). Cane's (M5) comment illustrates that alcohol does indeed cause people to do things that they would not normally do when sober. Alcohol causes them to 'lash out' in violent ways and engage in illicit activities (drug abuse), the females embody alternate forms of femininity that may be perceived as not only incongruent with normative gender norms but may also be perceived as toxic.

7.2.9. Provocation: According to students the female students provoke other students

There is a correlation between some females engaging in violence and provocation (Hines, 2008; Jackson, 2006). Some scholars maintain that there is a causal link between a female's use of violence and their lived experiences (Schauer, 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005) and in this context, as is evident in the extracts below, provocation is cited as reason for their violence. Evident in the extracts below is the fact that the violence by these female students was provoked according to the participants.

> *Sylvia (F19):*   *The females, they will mock you or they will hint things which shove or which drives you to a fight.*

Milly (F20):   She would just poke your eye and the way she would talk (very badly); she will want you to respond so that you can start a fight with her. She was just like that; she wants you to talk back to start an argument.

Ethan (M8):   Sometimes individuals (both females and males) try to provoke you even friends trying to instigate.

Leah (F3):   The guy was after me, I had no idea. The guy was buying alcohol for us. The girls (I think one was his girlfriend) started coming towards us (aggressively) we ended up fighting. We had bottles in our hands, we wanted to stab those girls.

Denise (F8):   There were girls that didn't get along with my friend just because my friend, she was dating this girl's boyfriend and they always tried to provoke my friend or me. I don't know why because I wasn't involved and they bumped me and then I asked why are you doing that to me because I'm not sleeping with her boyfriend and then she went crazy, she started shouting, she said because it's my friend, it's the same thing because I'm her friend, then I really wanted to hit her, but I didn't and I pushed her.

Jill (F10):   I'm a girl but sometimes I don't like girls very much because of the things they say and the way they act. Sometimes females just do things to get a rise (reaction) out of you, for no reason at all.

The responses above illustrate that provocation is also a reason for female students' engagement in violence. Sylvia (F19) also speaks about other's insinuations that sometimes force one to fight. These truthful acknowledgements of Milly (F13) and Sylvia (F19) reaffirms the shifting nature of power that shapes their identities. The response by Sally (F20) highlights that there are some females who are naturally violent. The suggestion here is that violence can be perceived as normal in some females suggesting that their violent tendencies are innate and this is in keeping with both Halberstam (1998) and Connell (1995) who posit that masculine and feminine characteristics can be naturally expressed by both male and female bodies. Leah (F3) alludes to an almost common practice on campus, where male students buy alcohol for females so that they can win them over and we then see how this can lead to violent

altercations between the males' intimate partner and the other females. Implicit in the females' attack of the other female and not the male partner who cheated is firstly the female's acceptance of her role in stereotypical gender relations and secondly, it highlights the female's role in the subordination of vulnerable individuals. Yet again it is evident that females are not afraid to resort to violence especially when they feel threatened. These episodes provide a glimpse into the multiple and diverse forms of female behaviours. In Denise's (F8) case, it is evident that the friends of the cuckold female provoke and attack the friend of the female who was allegedly dating the other female's partner. The suggestion here is that Denise (F8) is complicit as a mere result of her association with her friend. It is clear that one cannot escape the relational nature of power (Foucault, 1980) as one struggles to adhere to stereotypical gender norms in order to maintain a degree of respectability and this is expressed in what Denise (F8) states in that even though she wanted to physically hit her, she did not. Jill's (F10) comments are poignant in the sense that it highlights the negative aspects of some females who may engage in inappropriate behaviour, in order to deliberately antagonise other females by just doing things to get a reaction. However, the extract shows that there are female students, despite being provoked, who choose to avoid violent responses. In some instances, the females may not be violent or aggressive, rather they were in a situation where they perceived that responding with violence may be their only option to protect and defend themselves.

Provocation may sometimes result in violence and sometimes an individual chooses to walk away and according to one participant "it is a natural reaction, its either fight or flight" (Cane, M5). The excerpts below illustrate the perception by several participants that sometimes females are provoked into acting violently and sometimes they may also provoke others to react violently.

> *Sarah (F21):* *Sometimes I feel the females are pushed into it but at the same time you can control yourself.*
>
> *Horatio (M14): We know very well that people have their breaking point and when you continue to provoke them repeatedly.*
>
> *Petunia (F24):If you provoke her, then she is gonna get feisty.*

Penny (F23): It depends on the situation if sometimes you got to make a statement, just so people respect you so you need to grow a thick skin and so sometimes you have to, if you feel the situation need your touch, just do it then and sometimes you feel like, no I have to say something, I have to bring something to the table and not just allow people to walk all over me.

Tina (F32): I think they provoke, men don't complain and so they feel they have to out aloud and part of violence to get attentions therefore they are doing this and that leads to violence.

Gerome (M11): So it depends on the situation that led to them using violence, 'coz sometimes you find that they were in a corner where they needed to react.

Jill (F10): The girl started acting crazy and she was recording herself so she wanted to get something incriminating on this guy but the guy he didn't respond so she was hitting herself and throwing things in order to get a rise out of this guy.

Cane (M5): At times so when you say you not doing anything and then you are not believed and maybe a female touches or pushes you or shouts loud about the things you are talking personally about we have RMS and obviously the noise will create security personal to come and at times males is seen as perpetrators of violence so to get the person to keep quiet then you maybe try to grab her or touch them and its seen as a physical altercation so that person can retaliate or can make you want to react. It's a natural reaction, its either fight or flight.

Resisting the provocation impulse requires a great deal of self-control and Sarah (F21) believes that females can control themselves. Horatio (M14) states that by deliberately annoying someone in order for them to assault you, you may force that person to explode with anger. This suggests that no matter how hard you may try to resist the temptation to act violently, it may not always be possible. According to Penny (F23), the ability to ignore is a way of coping with the provocation but sometimes she has to respond and that may entail responding with violence. Interestingly both Tina (F32) and Cane (M5)

believes that some females provoke males. The perception by Gerome (M11) contrasts with Tina's (F32) as he believes that sometimes females may have been forced to act violently. Cane (M5) further illustrates just how it is sometimes possible for a female to provoke a male to respond with aggression, and hence they are labelled as the perpetrators. This response illustrates an element of deviance on the part of the females who may often manipulate a situation in order to get a male into trouble. This is echoed in Jill's (F10) comments about the girl who tried to incriminate her partner to provoke him into responding violently. There is a correlation between the females' manipulative behaviour here and research by Hines (2008) who found that females may manipulate the situation in order to get the desired response, we see this in the case of the girl who hit herself and then recorded it in order to manipulate the situation. Such behaviour depicts the unbalanced nature of gender power relations and reminds us that not all females who are in unequal relationships are the actual victims in that instance (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Mantell, 2009) there are some who may very well be the perpetrators of the violence.

7.2.10. Female student agency

Females no longer accept their stereotypical passive status as they challenge gender scripts and violently exercise their agency in direct and indirect ways. Research shows that some females engage in provoked and unprovoked acts of violence and in this way, they not only subvert gender power norms but they also illustrate the fluidity of power against others (Lattu, 2016; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Wesley, 2006). The data below shows that the female student violence was agentic.

> *Penny (F23):* *I think behaving like that (violently) is a personal choice.*

> *Cowen (M6):* *She's not afraid of attacking anyone and she's not afraid of getting what she wants.*

> *Denise (F8):* *She was just violent.*

> *Milly (F13):* *I just want to stand for myself all the time and sometimes I'm aggressive.*

> *'Others (girls) are bullies; they feel they can do as they please.*

> Fran (F17): *Females are also into violence, some of the females, they don't mind fighting each other.*

> Leah (F3): *I just lashed out at these girls and I crack (hit) it if I need to crack it.*

> Joan (F12): *I think it's because the females got the freedom which they always wanted so they feel they are no more under parents' guidance they're on their own, so no one will tell them what to do and what not to do.*

The responses above illustrate that the use of violence by some females "is a personal choice" Penny (F23) and that they are do not shy away, neither are they afraid of physically attacking someone in order to get what they want. The suggestion here is that their use of violence is agentic as it is clearly goal orientated (Campbell, 2009) and it illustrates the shift in power and control. It is also possible that some of the females according to Denise (F8) are naturally violent and that violence and aggression is part of their daily repertoire and they do not need a reason to be violent. This is also evident in Milly's (F13) response when she states that "sometimes I'm aggressive"; Martha (F14) "us women can fight"; Leah (F3) "I crack it, if I need to crack it". By violently challenging static notions of feminine passivity, they construct their identities as adversarial. Milly (F13) and Martha (F14) utterances also challenge artificial binaries that position them as essentially docile and hence disrupt gender norms. The articulation by Fran (F17) that "females are also into violence" shatters precarious notions of feminine non-aggression and non-violent. The collective responses suggest that these female students imbibe a form of female masculinity that destabilises existing gender norms. Joan (F12) touches on the fact that the violent females who are away from the disciplinary gaze of their parents, exercise their newfound freedom. The female students exercised their agency in ways that contradict stereotypical feminine notions. The responses illustrate that the female students' agency was not constrained by normative gender stereotypes as they did whatever pleased them.

7.2.11. Accommodating and resisting violence

Research shows that some females may retaliate with violence in order to protect themselves or as a result of perceived threats (Swan & Snow, 2006; Wesley, 2006). The

data below illustrates that these female students fought back using violence and in so doing they transgressed stereotypical feminine appropriate behaviour.

Nessa (F30):   The females retaliate, to like protect themselves, it is that which causes them to be violent.

Cane (M5):   I can say that the female violence is a form of retaliation at times.

Ethan (M8):   She's being threatened; self-defence makes females act violently.

Rita (F4):   I retaliated and I wanted to fight her because I was raging with anger and I became hysterical.

Penny (F23):   These girls were saying I said something to them but I didn't and they wanted to hit me and I was like no, I'm also a girl, I can't allow other girls to come up all over me. So I wanted to fight myself and fight back I did. I fought back, she hit me and then I hit her back and that's when I knew you have to sometimes remind people that you can also fight and that you can also be mean, aggressive and so they will respect you.

The above responses illustrate that retaliation is a reason for female students to engage in gender violence. Their violent retaliation is explicitly linked to their desire to "protect themselves" as a result of them "being threatened". The fact that some of the females did respond violently shows that they were not prepared to passively accept violent attacks. By fighting back, the females have shown their agency by resisting bullying and violence targeted at them. Furthermore, it illustrates the teetering nature of power in gender relations that threatens to destabilise gender power norms. Drawing on Foucault's (1980) notion of power as fluid, these female students demonstrate that they will not placidly accept their physical abuse but they rather retaliate with violence. Penny's (F23) comments that she is a female and that she will not allow the other females to attack her suggests that she is firstly aware of gender norms and societal expectations but in that moment of conflict she was not prepared to perceived as weak and vulnerable. By retaliating with equal measure, she transgressed traditional gender boundaries. In this way both the victim and the perpetrator maybe labelled as gender deviants (Ringrose & Renold, 2010).

7.2.12. Victim - perpetrator cycle of violence

Constant abuse and victimization may sometimes cause females to become violent as they try to protect themselves (Wesley, 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). When the oppressed becomes the oppressor and fights back with violence, power shifts and the victim may become a perpetrator (Foucault, 1983). Research shows that there is a causal link between a female's perpetration of violence and their victimization (Ross & Babcock, 2012).

> *Ruth (F5);*   *I behaved violently because I didn't want to be pushed about because I was once raped so don't want that shit.*

> *Sylvia (F19):*   *After that (boyfriend raped her anally) I became a perpetrator of another violence and at some point I thought it was a good thing because I wanna come to terms that this is not me so people are forced to respect me; they can't talk about me like that so I have to do something. So I became a perpetrator. I think the focus shifted from being a victim to a perpetrator. He (my boyfriend) was doing 4th year and I was a first year and most of the females 4th year was like why you? Why you want to ruin his reputation and females came here with him say why he never does this to us, why you? You think you special. At some point I used violence just to earn my respect and I beat her up but I'm not proud of that but the rumours stopped. I had to make an example when the rumours came back, I had to stand my ground again, man up and I had to, I stood my ground so people would understand where I come from and so maybe she will respect my privacy.*

The responses above correlate with research that shows that victimisation is also a motive for females retaliating with violence (Wesley, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2006; Dasgupta, 2002). Ruth (F5) speaks about her rape, revealing that this is the reason why she behaves 'violently' and this extreme form of sexual violence and power shaped her behaviour and attitude in the sense that she did not want to be pushed around by others. Constructing her identity as aggressively determined, she assumes power and resists in ways that may make her uncharacteristically feminine. Sylvia's (F19) heinous anal rape and abuse by her intimate partner resulted in her inflicting violence on others and in this way, she

became a perpetrator. Sylvia (F19) felt that the only way to 'come to terms' with her violent experience, was to force people to 'respect' her by using violence against those female students who were friends with her then-boyfriend who had spoken negatively about her. What is particularly sad and shocking about this incident is that these females came with the alleged perpetrator to the victim and practically accused her of wanting to destroy his reputation and insulting her. This form of secondary victimisation and denigration is disturbing and morally reprehensible especially in light of the fact that these were females who did this to a fellow female student who had experienced horrific anal rape and assault at the hands of her intimate partner. By choosing to behave in this manner towards Sylvia (F19) they construct their identities as callous. Their actions constitute a form of relational oppression as they choose to threaten an already vulnerable and traumatised female. While Sylvia's (F19) decision to use violence as a way of earning respect may not have been the correct one, it nevertheless illustrates not only the shifting nature of power in gender relations as it moves from the oppressor to the oppressed (Foucault, 1980) but it also establishes her role in power relations. Sylvia's (F19) threats to slap these females and to disfigure their faces also shows that she was prepared to transgress normative gender boundaries by using violence in order to stop the rumours and for them to "respect her privacy". Her statement that she "had to stand" her ground and "man up" illustrate the link between violence and hegemonic masculinity, making violence a key element of masculinity. In this way she assumed a form of female masculinity in order to get the other females to end their secondary victimisation.

7.2.13. Theft by female students: 'then you see your things and someone else is wearing it'

Female violence may sometimes occur as a result of economic hardships. Research shows that some females may even turn to crime in order to cope with their situation and this may result in them engaging in violence (Wesley, 2006; Dasgupta, 2002). The female students in the extracts below engaged in violence as a result of their belongings being stolen.

> *Lilly (F1):*   *The females take your weave and they start fighting.*

> *Sally (F20):*   *Some females are stealing, especially food and stuff and so they (females) fought she said I counted my meat and now it's not there and she slapped her and saying every time you steal my things.*

> *Jane (F11):* Some females, people take advantage of others left my things, my takkies then they started to fight because people are stealing our things and then you see your things and someone else is wearing it.
>
> *Henry (M12):* They (the females) were fighting over alcohol then she says that she (the other girl) drank her Savannah and they were hitting each other.
>
> *Dawn (F7):* My RA she tells me how violent some other girls are around our res. She tells me, see this one (female) just stole the key and she's abusing me and back chatting and she even tried to raise her hand.

The responses above illustrate that theft is also a reason for female students engaging in gender violence. The fact that other stuff, other than food for example alcohol is stolen is indicative of the theft not being out of desperation, but a need for social activity. In addition, the blatant lack of concern for wearing stolen items, further angers the victim who responds with violence. There is a complex interplay between gendered assumptions and females and their engagement in violence and theft.

7.2.14. Pressure, privacy and COVID-19

Many students are far away from the comfort of their homes and the protection of their parents and this may sometimes lead to them experiencing stress and pressure that may negatively impact their academics (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; Gordon & Collins, 2013). Research shows that for many young students, living at the university's residence is the first time that they may have been away from home and they may battle to take care of their needs (Anderson & Naidu, 2022; Collins, 2014). Having to share facilities with others may also be stressful for some students who may be used to having their own space and privacy. COVID-19 has also added to the stress that many students, in particular female students, may feel and experience. This is evident in the extracts below.

> *Cane (M5):* Female violence on this campus stems from different sources maybe academic frustration or the need to be wanted or to be taken care of with no parents and pressure from male partners, the females lash out violently. Especially with COVID some females feel isolated, depressed, anxious feel like they are in

> *prison and when you get an outlet which is a fight with your*
> *boyfriend.*

Cody (M4):   *With females, it is maybe the stress of academics.*

Fran (F17):   *Two female room-mates they were fighting because the one said*
that we are tired of your bringing your boyfriend here and the
other female said it is my room also, so they were fighting for
privacy and they did fight.

The responses above illustrate three reasons for female students engaging in gender violence. Firstly, the issue of academic stress and frustration. Cane (M5) states that female students needed to feel wanted. They are needy because they are far away from their home and parents who they are used to providing comfort. However, Cane's (M5) comments are aligned to historical gendered notions of males as the protector and provider and females as the needy and vulnerable. His comments allude to the subordinate construction of females who are positioned as fragile and in need of being taken care of. His comments further highlight the dominant notions of hegemonic masculinity as the protector and provider. He also mentions that the females' "male partners" may also be a source of "pressure". The suggestion here is that the male partners may place unnecessary and unreasonable demands on their intimate partners which may in turn lead to a violent response. Secondly, the extracts highlight the way in which the COVID-19 lockdown has negatively impacted female students through their isolation, and some being in isolation with their partners was an abnormal situation which caused depression and anxiety in them. The suggestion here is that COVID-19 has caused mental health problems for some female students whose only way to deal with this situation was to engage in fights with their intimate partners. Thirdly, Fran (F17) tells us that some females also fight for their privacy in their rooms at the residence. Many students share rooms with other students and this may not necessarily suit those who value their privacy. The lack of privacy for both females appears problematic as the one finds it disrespectful and an invasion of her privacy to have her room-mate's boyfriend visit while she is there but on the other hand, the roommate with the partner has nowhere else to go. This complicated situation of room space and privacy erupts in violence. That power belongs to no-one and that it cannot be captured, is evident in the fight for privacy (Foucault, 1980).

7.2.15. Lack of counselling: An important catalyst to alleviate violent behaviours

Exposure to gender violence and childhood trauma may sometimes result in individuals engaging in violence later on in life (Botha, 2014; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan & Snow, 2008; Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure & Snow, 2005). The impact of this trauma may result in a host of psychological problems that may worsen as a result of them not getting the professional intervention that they urgently require (Graham-Kevan, 2009; Wesley, 2006; Babcock, Miller & Siard, 2003). Not receiving professional help may also lead to dysfunctional conflict resolution (Dutton, 2002). The issue of receiving counselling in order to deal with previous experience of abuse was raised by quite a few participants. The importance of psychological intervention is highlighted below.

Jane (F11):   *I also think (the females) they need professional help, people to talk to.*

Sylvia (F19):   *Since I was one of them at some point (a perpetrator of violence), I saw it was not good and I seek for help.*

Sally (F20):   *The females need help, talk, it heals to talk about it.*

Nessa (F30):   *They (the females) must seek help, better way to solve problems.*

Tina (F32):   *The females are not happy with themselves with their life, they need help, they have no one else to talk to and get counselling they must try to communicate, have better communication skills.*

Cowen (M6):   *These females should be seeking help because we can't have students like this.*

Ethan (M8):   *There are people who should be helped with their violent ways.*

Petunia (F24): *Have a psychologist talk to them (the females) or a therapist so that they could manage their issues and they could be less violent.*

Bill (M16):   *They should attend some therapies so that they can see another way of solving problems, if violence was part of solving, we surely couldn't be living right now. These females need to attend counselling more especially at varsity level.*

The concern raised by several participants is that there is an urgent need for professional intervention in order to prevent the vicious cycle of violence from continuing into the next generation. Their responses highlight the need for these students to express their feelings and concerns and to talk about their traumatic experiences. Therefore, counselling can be cathartic. The confession by Sylvia (F19) suggests remorse and she expressed her desire for help. Tina (F32) states that communication is crucial to our happiness and this points to healthy conflict resolution. Universities are institutions of learning, Cowen's (M6) remark that "we can't have students like this" re-affirms the belief that as future educators these students have the moral responsibility to educate children about the evils of violence, similar sentiments are expressed below.

> *Petunia (F24):* *I think these females are gonna be disastrous in their lives, they gonna be teaching their kids to be violent. Then the violent cycle will never be ending because we have people that are violent that are gonna be teaching the next generation violence.*

> *Rita (F4):* *Female teachers being violent and not able or capable of handling students in the classroom. If you as a student teacher are ticked off by the smallest things and not seek help then every time you retaliate with violence then you going to start abusing children or learners and that is why you still find schools using corporal punishment.*

> *Denise (F8):* *They need help because the girl that I told you about who beat the girl she was always in a fight, that wasn't the first time, she is dysfunctional.*

> *Dora (F9):* *I think they need help so someone has to intervene or it might get worse, they (the females) end up being murderers.*

The above comments illustrate just how dangerous it can become if professional help is not sought. The participants' comments suggest that violence breeds violence (Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, 2012) and as future educators their violent behaviour is incongruent with their task of moulding future leaders. Dora (F9) touches on the extreme by stating that they may "end up being murderers". In the light of research by Ferraro

(2003) and Wesley (2006) where some females do murder their intimate partners, this statement is not unreasonable.

7.2.16. Anger Management: "They let all that out, their anger and rage on other people"

Issues relating to anger management were particularly prominent in the data. The responses below illustrate that female students who engage in violence are perceived as angry individuals who are not afraid to disrupt gender norms and power relations. Research shows that issues of 'angry temperament' were found to have emanated from early childhood experiences, which resulted in the females perpetrating gender violence in their adulthood (Hines & Saudino, 2008; Follingstad, Bradley, Heff & Laughlin, 2002).

> *Petunia (F24):My friend was violent. She had anger issues and if she was angry she will just react and punch things. They have anger management issues.*
>
> *Horatio (M14): You don't know how to control your anger, any sort of violence breeds violence.*
>
> *Leah (F3): Sometimes it's uncontrollable and the females don't think of principles then they just do what your mind or heart is telling you at that moment.*
>
> *Denise (F8): She got angry and beat him up.*
>
> *Dora (F9): The females were bullied or violated and now they feel they need to actually let all that out their anger and rage on other people.*
>
> *Milly (F13): These females are violent or aggressive and there are underlying issues of that anger.*
>
> *Patty (F22): Use your anger in a better way.*
>
> *Nessa (F30): They (the females) have anger management issues they need to find ways to deal with things that don't go their way and seek help to their anger issues.*
>
> *Jill (F10): These females can't control themselves.*

> *Nora (F29):   Some females lack that self-control.*

The response from Petunia (F24) illustrates that some females can also be volatile and incapable of controlling their anger. This is also expressed by Leah (F3) and Denise (F8) who allude to the angry impulsive behaviour of certain females. The tendency to lack self-control is perceived as underlying anger management issues. While this perception may justify their aggression, their behaviour may be perceived as inadequately feminine. Dora's comment illustrates how the suppression of trauma may also lead to violence. Their acts of rage and violence against others is a way recuperating some form of power that may have been violently taken away from them. Hines (2008) found that 'angry temperament' and borderline personality traits like anger and impulsiveness were predictors of violence amongst female students against their intimate partners. Acting out in anger and rage suggests these female students reject stereotypical notions of feminine passivity and calmness. They defy gender specific assumptions by engaging in violence and aggression. What is evident in the data is that some of the females use violence as a way to exercise power and control over others who may have said or done something to them which they felt was unacceptable. In this way they reinforce power inequalities by bullying, violating or attacking others and this shows that power circulates (Foucault, 1980).

7.2.17. Blaming the victim: 'What did you do to get treated that way?'

The insidious victim-blaming discourse not only normalises gender violence but it also perpetuates the low reporting levels of this crime. (Varjavandi, 2017; Gordon & Collins, 2013). Inappropriate societal norms that blame the victim, as well as the fear that they may be accused of provoking their own attack, is evident in the responses below.

> *Sarah (F21):   People always blame the victim in a way that's what you do, why did you let it happen as if it's the victim's fault.*

> *Nelly (F28):   What did you do to get treated that way?*

The above response correlates with the victim-blaming discourse that underpins gender inequality (Varjarvandi, 2017; Duma, 2016). The understanding here is that the victims are sometimes made to believe that they were responsible for their attack, that it was their 'fault' that they were assaulted. This alludes to socialization processes that perpetrates unequal power relations (Botha, 2014; Collings, 2011) where the notion is sometimes

blamed for provoking their attack. The perpetrator's personal responsibility is almost removed or denied and, in this way, the unbalanced nature of gender-power relations is reinforced.

The participant below expressed a level of self-blame that perhaps some males may feel responsible for their female partners' use of violence against them. This perception is a telling one and it needs to be dissected. Firstly, the female may have responded violently as a result of previous abuse she may have suffered within her intimate relations or secondly, she may just be the only violent partner in the relationship. Both of which correlate with the literature on IPV that females commit violence in their intimate personal relationships as a result their long suffering (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Babcock, Miller and Sjard, 2003) as well as the literature that shows that sometimes females commit IPV against non-abusive partner (Archer, 2000). The notion of self-blame is found in victim blaming discourses that normalise violence especially against females within their intimate partner relations and therefore results in many victims of all genders not reporting their abuse (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Du Toit, 2005; Kim & Motsei, 2002). The emasculating effect of female perpetrated IPV on the male partners is a poignant one and we need to be cognizant of the many victims, of all gender and sexual orientations, who continue to suffer in silence.

> *Cody (M4):*   *If a female committed violence, I think males understand somehow that it's their inner self tells them that maybe it was me (the male) that made this female to act this way.*

7.2.18. "I'm a female, they not going to do anything to me …"

Historical notions of violence as a solely masculine activity overlooks the feminine capacity to engage in such violence (Morrissey, 2008, Wesley, 2006). These stereotypical notions of non-violent, non-aggressive femininity obscure the recognition of the very existence of female perpetrated violence which often happens in the private realm (Motz, 2008) and so when females do engage in violence, there is a tendency from some quarters to overlook their violence, dismissing it as less severe. These dominant narratives of feminine non-violence and non-aggression may lead to some violent female students believing that they can get away with their violent behaviour, as is evident in the responses below.

Cody (M4): I think they have this thing in their minds of 'I'm a female they are not going to do anything to me'.

Sally (F20): I can beat my boyfriend and he will not report me so regardless of gender or sexual orientation, they must be reported.

Henry (M12): I think that those female students, a law needs to be equally enforced for males and females and then you won't have people use violence hoping to get away with it and we are finding out that there are females who are bullying boys just because they know that whenever a boy is bullied by a female, it will say how come a boy is bullied by a female.

Gareth (M10): I don't think it is different for guys being violent.

Joan (F12): I think females that do it, they also deserve the same punishment as men.

Ethan (M8): Acts of violence are crimes and even to resolve a dispute so you should be prosecuted in my opinion doesn't change because even as a female and I do understand that it could be seen differently because it's a female but then I still stand by what I said, if you act violently towards someone, you should be prosecuted.

The perception that because it is a female who is the perpetrator of the IPV therefore she will get away with it perhaps emanates from historical feminist constructions of feminine passivity and eternal victimisation (Ross & Babcock, 2012; Dekeseredry & Dragiewicz, 2007). The response from Cody (M4) and Sally (F20) that the females believe that because they are female and so therefore, they will not be punished for assaulting their boyfriends, exemplifies the attitude and perceptions of some females who perpetrate IPV. Furthermore, the remark that 'he will not report me' (Sally, F20) is linked to patriarchal socio-cultural norms that position men in dominant, aggressive roles. The implication is that because of these stereotypical notions of male strength, power and aggression the female is aware that it would perhaps be embarrassing for her boyfriend to report her abusive behaviour. This perception is reinforced in the comments by Henry (M12) that people will question how can a female bully a male. This perception correlates with research by Thobejane, Luthada and Mogorosi (2018) who found that society trivialised

and dismissed female perpetrated IPV. These narratives are aligned with force, power and control as these female students do not shy away from engaging in violence. At least five of the participants agree that the punishment for perpetrating IPV needs to be equally meted out. There is an overwhelming perception expressed that gender violence is violence, "regardless of any gender or sexual orientation, they must be reported" (Sally, F20). This is the way forward if society is serious about ending the scourge of gender violence, send the message that this abhorrent act has no place in society.

7.2.19. Campus parties (bashes): Drinking, drugs and fighting

Toxic femininities are active agents who may sometimes use threats and violence as they set out to achieve their goal of revenge (Campbell, 2009; Ajzenstadt, 2009). Their grudges are therefore a form of subterfuge that is transgressive of feminine notions of docility. The extracts below illustrate that these female students' violence is open and intentional as they plan to attack their intended targets at campus bashes. University campuses are 'liberating', sexually charged zones, free from the disciplinarian and judgemental tone of adults (Clowes, et al., 2009). The "laissez faire' campus culture tempts many students to engage in unacceptable behaviour like experimenting in alcohol and drugs, unprotected sex and gender violence (Davids, 2020; Clowes & Vergnanai, 2012; Clowes et al., 2009). While research shows that it is largely the male students who engage in gender violence at campus parties (Fisher, Daigle & Cullen, 2010; Karjane et al., 2005) the current study shows that some females engage in gender violence as they physically and verbally attack other students.

> *Sally (F20):*   *You may find girls fighting they will mention that so and so did this to me so we gonna meet at the bash and they really fight and even stab each other.*

> *Alwin (M3):*   *Some females hold grudges and they will say I will catch you at the bash so they (girls) do act aggressively towards each other.*

> *Cody (M4):*   *Females have grudges and so if we at the same party, I'll remind you of the things done to me they (also females) start fighting and use bottles and knives.*

> *Cane (M5):*   *Lights are off, its dim and then there are fights. You get females fighting as well but it's not within a relationship like maybe*

something happened while dancing or sitting. Females tend to fight a lot more from my experience on the university setting.

Rita (F4): That's where karma comes in and maybe if someone does something to me, I will retaliate only when I know it's going to be a bash when everybody is drunk and nobody will notice they will make excuses I was drunk so students plan fighting in bashe,s they plan doing that revenge they are going to meet on the day of bash some females plan it they plan to be violent.

Dora (F9): They throw bottles at each other many get all physical its sometimes girls' and boys'.

Milly (F13): There are girls who behave badly, they stand in the front row and have nasty things to say to people they push each other and there's times whereby we had problems with our RA's and they will say we are waiting for the bash. That's where most violence happens in the dark theres no evidence.

Sylvia (F19): When students don't see eye to eye (especially females) they tend not to solve it now; they wait for a bash they say we'll meet at the bash.

The responses above illustrate that some female students may hold onto disagreements and later act on grudges they have been harbouring by physically attacking their victim at bashes, which as the data shows, is the 'ideal' forum for fights. In other words, as Rita (F4) states that these attacks are planned acts of revenge by the females. The forms of revenge amongst these females are extreme where bottles and knives are used to stab each other and cause grievous bodily harm. Their engagement in extreme violence with the use of deadly weapons shows that these females inhabit a form of female masculinity that defies normative femininity. The revenge violence is not always in the context of intimate partner relationship, it can occur within other random contexts like "someone does something to me", or "problems with our RA" or "students don't see eye to eye". These females' planned violent attacks transcend traditional gender norms of feminine passivity and non-violence in serious ways where serious injuries are the desired effect. The collective responses illustrate that violence emanates from these females' desire to

exact revenge on their intended target and this shows that power is not always positive, it can be intentionally negative (Foucault, 1980).

Campus bashes or parties provides students with the opportunity to further experiment away from the disciplinary gaze of their parents. Students are exposed to university party culture where they are pressurised to consume alcohol and drugs and to engage in unprotected sex and 'one-night stands' (Armstrong, 2006; Moreton, 2002). This not only makes them vulnerable to gender violence attacks, but it may also make them to behave in an unacceptable manner as is evident in the extracts below. When some of the females do fight, it may be taken as a form of entertainment for others , as the following comments show:

Alwin (M3):   *If there is a bash, there will always be violence some people will take it as entertainment and if ever there's a (female) fight, people always chant – fight, fight ... don't stop so the girls act aggressively towards each other saying like you ugly.*

Sylvia (F19):   *A fresher bash and they (girls) tend to fight they strand your hair or bite you or throw stones or beat her and they use teeth and nails.*

Lilly (F1):   *They (females) maybe pour drinks on you while dancing and they take your weave and start fighting or clicking her fingers or scratching.' This girl came with this guy to the bash, now when a guy is drunk he starts chit chatting with other girls and she notices and then she goes straight to him and be like wena (hey you) you busy entertaining other girls here when I'm here with you I came with you and you find that some guys are not violent but they are soft and this girl is holding onto his pants and telling that we are going and dragging him out of the bash and some of them (females) slap their guy. Those girls go there with their guys have that in mind, that I'm going to hit him, I will hit you as my guy, you can't do that to me.*

Leah (F3):   *A girl was lying drunk, the things she was doing, dances, the panty, the underwear was somewhere else.*

> *Dawn (F7):* *They are all doing crazy stuff, girls too. Throwing alcohol, yes girls and guys and there are so many things like dagga and baked cakes, inside was marijuana. The female students sleeping around with guys in public spaces and (girls) behaving badly.*
>
> *Fran (F17):* *At bashes there is a lot of one night stands the females, a lot of students end up getting pregnant and some wake up in guys room being a one-night stand and not knowing what happened last night so they become a mess.*

The above responses illustrate that female violence at bashes is taken a "entertainment" as the onlookers "chant fight, fight, don't stop" (Alwin, M3). There is a suggestion here that female violence is not considered serious and this resonates with research that shows that female violence is often trivialised (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; Lambert & Hammond, 2009). The female students pass disparaging comments such as "you ugly" which often results in violent, aggressive behaviour. Lilly (F1) tells us that some of the females fight and scratch each other because someone has "poured" alcohol on them while they were dancing or that they may have stolen their weave. Lilly (F1) also alludes to intimate partner violence where the female partner responds aggressively and violently to her male partner's perceived indiscretion. Their violent behaviour threatens the cultural image of femininity as weak and non-violent as they are able to physically drag their male partner out of the bash. Embodying stereotypical masculine notions of strength, according to Lilly (F1) these female students have the mentality that they are will hit their boyfriends simply because their boyfriends were talking to other females. The female students readily subvert gender norms as they physically attack their intimate partners asserting their dominance, power and control through violence. They use power to 'discipline' their boyfriends. Lilly's (F1) statement shows that not all males align themselves with negative masculine norms. Similarly, not all females are passive and subordinate. In this way, the females inhabit a form of female masculinity that destabilises historical gender norms. Leah (F3) and Dawn (F7) comment on the inappropriate behaviour of some female students who attend bashes. The females, under the influence of alcohol and drugs do 'crazy stuff' as they engage in open sexual activity. The suggestion here is that these female students lose all sense of decency, self-respect and respect for others. Furthermore, their intoxication together with the licentious behaviour may also result in illicit sexual activity, unprotected sex and unplanned pregnancy. Constructing their

femininity as disruptive of appropriate femininity, the female students may be perceived as 'othered' (Chesney-Lind, 2006; Morrissey, 2003; Butler, 1990).

Female students engage in violence at university bashes for different reasons. Some of these reasons include alcohol and drug use; conflict between intimate partners as well as with other students; peer pressure and homophobia amongst others (Harrison, Lafreniere & Hallman 2015; Tyler, Schmitz & Adams, 2015; Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani & Jacobs, 2009). The data below illustrates that these female students engage in violence at campus parties for different reasons. These are discussed below:

> Ethan (M8): In 2019 there was a bash there were intoxicated females, I witnessed a female slap another intoxicated gentleman.
>
> Edwin (M9): I heard stories that there were fights, females against females that is what I heard.
>
> Barry (M17): The females fight over small things like over boyfriend and girlfriend issues, they fight if a homosexual person touched a non-homosexual person. They (females) fight over their boyfriends, physically and verbally at the freshers' party once this lady, she was fighting with her friend and accusing of having a relationship with her boyfriend so they fought physically such that males had to intervene.
>
> Rita (F4): Normally there are incidents where females are violent and maybe somebody being in a relationship with somebody else then they are drunk maybe a girl saw boyfriend of their friend and reported the issue and they all went there to sort it out. They started fighting with the girl.
>
> Gareth (M10): It's generally verbal, like swearing at each other the females, generally when people see girls fighting, people are quicker to stop the fight.

The responses above illustrate that female students also engage in violence against their intimate partners. Ethan (M8) tells us that he witnessed female students who were intoxicated 'slap' a male student who was also intoxicated. Barry (M17) touches on

homophobic violence where a heterosexual student may have been touched by a 'homosexual' student and this resulted in an altercation. As indicated previously, some female students are also homophobic. The homophobia resonates with Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity (2000; 1995) where non-conforming genders are oppressed, but in this instance, it is females who are the oppressors. Cheating is also a reason for the female violence at bashes and this is evident in the statements by Barry (M17) and Rita (F4). Male students had to intervene in female altercations. The female students here construct their identity as belligerent and readily resort to verbal and physical violence and aggression at the bashes. Evidently, as stated by the participants, it is normal for females to fight at the bashes, as is the multiplicity of reasons for the female violence.

7.2.20. Some advice, it is best to just remain calm: "You cannot see your reflection in hot water"

The following responses highlight the importance of maintaining a level head especially in volatile situations. The responses emphasise the important role to be played by females in putting an end to violence not only in universities but also in the broader society,

> *(Fran, F17):*   *I think as females we have the power we can prevent violence and motivate in order to be role-models.*

> *Oliver (M18):* *Violence is never the answer, probably you need to sit down because you cannot see your reflection in hot water, similarly you cannot see the truth when you are angry, so I think you should just always wait until you are calm.*

> *Cane (M5):*   *Keep your emotions in check and try to explore other ways of dealing with conflict and if there is no other way then I think they should leave the space or environment to avoid the violence.*

> *Fran (F17):*   *I think as females we have the power to convince each other how we can prevent violence, we have the power to motivate in order to be role-models.*

> *Alwin (M3):*   *I think female students should actually end violence, they are the backbones the people who can actually end violence especially in this campus come up with situations in order to end violence and*

> *to spot violence so they can actually defeat this disease of violence it's tearing us and the country apart.*

> *Kay (F26):*   *Females have a mind, they think and there is this thing 'umgogodla' female is a spinal cord, we compare it is a spinal cord in life, so when a female uses violence she don't use mind.*

> *Maya (F15):*   *We should be the ones who are trying by all means to stop it.*

The advice offered by Oliver (M18) is invaluable in the sense that nothing good can ever come from engaging with someone when you are extremely angry. Anger can sometimes hinder their judgement resulting in perpetration of harmful violence and extreme aggression. Cane's (M5) suggestion to explore other conflict management resolutions or alternatively leaving the volatile environment is sensible as it will give the angry person the space to think about the course of action and to respond in a dignified manner. Both Alwin (M3) and Kay (F26) believe that females are the nerve centre that "can actually defeat the disease of violence it's tearing the country apart". This increase in gender violence that is threatening South Africa and the concerted efforts by all relevant stakeholders to rid the country of this gross human rights violation. The mention of females being the 'spinal cord in life' (Kay, F26) is a further reminder of the stereotypical notions of femininity as nurturing, caring and instilling good values, morals and principles into their offspring and so therefore, it would make sense that the participants feel that females should be at the centre of all efforts to try to end this scourge of gender violence.

7.3. Conclusion

The chapter has focused on some of reasons why these the students at this university engage in gender violence. The findings show that a multiplicity of reasons have been cited for their violent behaviour provoked or unprovoked. These include jealousy, retaliation, agency, provocation, power and control amongst others. The data points to numerous motivations for female student violence, and this correlates with the literature that female violence is a complex phenomenon that cannot be understood in a monocular sense (Wesley, 2006; Krittschnitt & Carbone-Lopez, 2006). What is clearly evident in the data is that female students do not shy away from engaging in gender violence within their intimate partner relations as well as in their relations with other students. Females

are liminal beings who may sometimes defy gender boundaries by engaging in 'masculine' activities such as violence. Gender violence has a catalytic effect in that it results in unbalanced gender power relations. Females' gender violence is a blatant rejection of historical feminine notions of subordination.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This is the concluding chapter in the dissertation titled: The construction of violent femininities at a university in KwaZulu-Natal: students' understandings, perceptions and exposure to gender violence.

The chapter firstly provides a summary of all the chapters in the study. Secondly it presents a discussion on the main findings of the study which addressed the critical research questions integral to the study. These findings arise from the individual, semi-structured open-ended interviews that generated data, was then coded, categorised and finally refined into several themes. The chapter concludes with suggestions for policy and practice as well as suggestions for future research on the phenomenon of female student violence at university.

8.2. Summary of the research

Chapter One provided the introduction and background to the study and my personal reasons for conducting this research. It also provided the focus and rationale of the study including a brief discussion of the research design, research site and methodology. It identified the gap in the body of research on female university students' violence. This chapter also highlighted the aims, objectives and critical research questions that guided the study. In addition, it considered the ethical concerns of such a sensitive study, a synopsis of the issues of trustworthiness, limitations of the study and validity. The chapter then concluded with a brief outline of the structure and organisation of the thesis from chapter one to chapter eight.

Chapter Two presented a review of local, regional and international literature on gender violence at university campuses. This thesis addresses a gap in the literature on female violence on a university campus. The paucity in studies on female gender violence at universities is glaring. Due to the paucity in literature on this topic the literature review focused on various themes relating to the broader context on gender violence and females' engagement in violence. The literature review provided the basis for a greater and more nuanced understanding into the phenomenon of female violence as it occurs in all spheres of female university students' lives.

Chapter Three presented the eclectic theoretical framework that was used to underpin this study. The eclectic theoretical framework was discussed in great detail. The first theory used in this study was Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2005; 1987) that deals with gender power and masculinity which are crucial to the understanding of masculinities and its relational connection with femininities which include power. The second theory used in this study was Foucault's Theory of Power (1984; 1980) that focuses on power as he theorizes the shifting, dynamic nature of power that can move from the oppressed to the oppressor. The third and final theory is Halberstam's (2012; 1998) Theory of Female Masculinity that has pioneered the deconstruction of the links between masculinity and males which highlights the ways in which 'masculine' traits can be embodied and performed by females. This chapter also highlights the rationale for using this eclectic theoretical framework that essentially focuses on gender, power, sexuality and female violence, which converge to provide a nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon.

Chapter Four provided a detailed explanation and discussion of the research design and methodology that was employed in the study. The qualitative research design was located within the interpretivist paradigm as it set out to understand the individual's interpretation of their world and their lived experiences as they endeavoured to make sense of the phenomenon of female violence. This qualitative interpretivist approach allowed for a more nuanced analysis of the complexity of female students' use of gender violence. The narrative inquiry approach created the space for these participants to narrate, reflect and make connections in a causal sense. The sampling was both purposive and snowballing. The data collection was in the form of individual in-depth semi-structured interviews. The individual in-depth semi-structured interview gave the participants privacy to speak openly as it took the form of a narrative inquiry. COVID-19 presented challenges and some interviews had to take place telephonically. The data analysis was also discussed in detail in this section. The recorded data was transcribed into verbatim textual data. The data was thereafter coded, categorised and placed into preliminary themes. Using the inductive approach, several themes subsequently emerged from the data. I also drew on the hermeneutics in order to analyse the data for 'hidden' and 'apparent' meanings and this approach allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon of female student violence. All ethical matters were also

discussed in this chapter. This chapter ends with a discussion on my own reflexivity, followed by a brief discussion on the limitations of the study.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven provided detailed analysis of the qualitative data generated. Using the research questions, it further sub-divided and reduced this massive quantity of data into sub-themes. The literature was also referenced in these chapter so as to support or refute the findings of the current study. The eclectic theoretical framework, namely Connell's Theory of Gender Power and Masculinity (2000; 1987), Foucault's theory of Power (1984; 1980) and Halberstam's Theory of Female Masculinity (2012; 1998), was used as an analytical lense to investigate the rich, data generated in the interviews with the male and female students. This section also provided extensive biographical details on the participants which was included in both these chapters as well as in a preface to these three analysis chapters. The preface to the analysis chapter provided a contextual background to the analysis chapters so as to provide the reader with a general glimpse into these female students' lives.

Chapter Eight provides a synopsis of the thesis structure and what each chapter discussed. It provides the main findings of the study and it concludes with suggestions for policy and practice as well as suggestions for future research on the phenomenon of female student gender violence at university campuses.

8.3. The main findings of the study

The main findings of this study will be discussed under the three research questions that are addressed in this research. The discussion will illustrate the findings as they pertain to the critical questions below.

- What are these university students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of violence?
- What forms of gender violence do these university female students engage in?
- Why, according to students, do these university female students engage in acts of gender violence?

8.3.1. Discussion of the main findings

8.3.1.1. Research question one:

- What are university students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of violence?

The students' narratives showed that they generally had a fairly comprehensive understanding of what constitutes gender violence, the ways in which it manifests and who the predominant perpetrators and victims are. The participants acknowledged that gender violence is a social problem that affects everyone, regardless of race, status, religion, age, gender identity and sexual orientation. However, there were a few participants who firmly believed that women were disproportionately the victims and that males were predominantly the perpetrators of this scourge.

The participants related the very high levels of gender violence in South Africa and that it has become so commonplace that is reflected in the high rate of almost 'normalised' violence. According to the students the high level of gender violence is trending and this has almost desensitised them to the point where they seem to tolerate and normalize it as part of their everyday lives. While many participants alluded to the patriarchal nature of society as well as its inherent unequal gender norms as a reason for the normalisation of gender violence, there were many who alluded to the issue of power. The common perceptions and understanding were that gender violence is about power. Societal perceptions and attitudes of patriarchy highlighted the ways in which femininity is subjugated and hence the propensity for male violence is pervasive. However, the findings show that females too were just as capable of wielding power and engaging in violence, thereby demonstrating their agency. There was also evidence of victim-blaming discourse and ridicule when males were victims of female perpetrated IPV. The male victims did not speak up in general about their abuse at the hands of their female partners as they feared that they would be scorned or considered weak by not being man enough to control their women. The evidence from the study shows that most of the participants were able to broadly define gender violence as destructive violent behaviour that threatens the very moral fibre of society. In addition, without being prompted or asked, they articulated that females are also perpetrators and that males are also be victims of this scourge. Furthermore, many students demonstrated their awareness of the notorious

reputation South Africa has for having one of the highest rates of gender violence in the world.

The students' perceptions and understandings while being similar in many instances, were varied as well.

The adherence to traditional femininity was widely reflected in the data and these findings show that violent females are perceived as not being feminine. Another interesting finding was that some females completely misunderstood the feminist movement, as they understand it as a way to wield power over males and their partners and other victims. This misperception is not only damaging to the women's liberation movement but it also reinforces the stereotyping repressed positioning of females. In keeping with traditional gender norms, the study found that female students were engaging in violence that could be perceived as female students behaving like men. These masculinist perceptions were quite common in the data and that suggest that violence is an inherently masculine trait. Furthermore, the appropriation of violence by female students was also perceived as some females behaving like tomboys while those who were lesbian also became violent with their partners. It is evident that females who use violence are labelled as unfeminine and are masculine, suggesting that society still maintains a strict dominant, ideological gender order that hampers gender transformation. Another finding to emerge was that some females were not afraid to exercise their agency and to use violence in order to get what they wanted and this suggests that some females use their strength and power in negative ways. It further suggests that not all females are weak and peaceful.

The findings of the study show that female violence is often trivialised and dismissed. This tendency not to label female violence as violence has its roots in the subordinate constructions of femininity wherein females are perceived as weak and incapable of committing violence. Evidently, the participants are fully aware that their violent tendencies will be trivialised due to the disproportionately high rates of femicide and violence inflicted on females in South Africa. The findings show that the participants believe that male perpetrated gender violence is condemned and treated seriously whereas female perpetrated gender violence is minimised due to the common assumption that the females who are violent act in self-defence. What is also evident is the blasé attitude and double standards that prevail around GBV, which justifies female violence

as a reaction to anger or trying to protect themselves, yet labelling male violence as gender-based violence. It was also found that some males do not ascribe to 'typical' notions of masculine violence and aggression as some males choose not to respond with violence against abusive females. The overall finding here is that females deliberately engage in violence simply because they know that their acts of violence may not be perceived as a serious, violent threat and that they will not be held accountable.

The study found diverse perceptions and understandings of gender violence amongst the participants. Some of these include that female students' engagement in violent behaviours was either provoked, unprovoked or spontaneous. The findings also showed a common perception that females who have been exposed to abuse and aggression and where violence is used to solve problems may use the same violent methods to resolve conflict. As universities are often microcosms of society, some female students appear to unleash violence and aggression on others when they do not get their way. Closely related to this is the perception that there are females who are violent because they did not receive the professional help that they needed earlier on their lives as a result of violence they were exposed to which results in the vicious cycle of violence manifesting at university. Several participants highlighted the urgent need for this professional, psychological intervention that may very well help these violent female students to avoid this vicious cycle of violence. The cumulative findings fuel some of the male and female participants' perceptions that female students who engage in violence may need professional help.

The findings reflect that some female students were so filled with rage and that they were uncontrollable and that they did not shy away from engaging in extreme violence in their intimate relationships (same-sex and heterosexual) as well as in their relations with others. Evident in the data was that the students perceived some female students as naturally violent, toxic and volatile as they defied stereotypical feminine notions of docility (a stereotype which they believe to be acceptable). Another significant finding was that female students who engaged in violence were perceived as being hungry for power, controlling and cheap. Another finding was that some of these violent females did not acknowledge or accept the fact that they were perpetrators of gender violence but rather asserting their rights to be violent, be it provoked or unprovoked. These perceptions suggest that females are just as capable of asserting their power and agency by violent means.

The finding also reflects sexual double standards and suggests that some individuals are still colonised by narrow patriarchal notions of sexuality. In keeping with these narrow socio-cultural perceptions, it was found that females who engage in violence risk being demeaned and degraded and labelled as whores. Apart from suffering reputational damage, many participants perceived violent females as being barbaric and deserving of draconian methods of punishment, such as public stoning, which is in keeping with Islamic religious beliefs.

Narratives aligned with provocation were evident in the data. Some female students who engaged in violence were perceived as being the provocateurs, while others were perceived to have been provoked into acting violently. There was also evidence of manipulative behaviour of a female student who deliberately harmed herself and then tried to get her male partner to respond while she recorded it in order to get a violent response. This suggests a form of deviancy and is a sad reminder as to how far we still have to go in the fight to achieve gender transformation.

The findings show that using violence in order to solve a problem, only exacerbates an already volatile situation. The findings show a unanimous response that violence does not solve any problems and that people needed to be educated about alternative methods to resolve issues. There were clearly echoed sentiments that females have the power to end the scourge of gender violence that is currently plaguing universities and society in general. The participants also highlighted the importance of maintaining a level head in conflict situations. The overwhelming perception was that anger diminishes the ability to think carefully and logically and therefore inappropriate action is often taken.

The findings support the view that female gender violence is violence and that anyone, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation needs to be reported. Several participants alluded to the fact that victims of female violence are treated differently and this therefore, results in them having attitudes and beliefs that because they are female, nothing will happen to them if they use violence. Evident in the findings is the notion of self-blame where the male partner may blame themselves for their intimate partner's violence and this perception suggests that the female's violent behaviour is thus justified and that may result in the under-reporting of female violence at university.

One of the findings that emerged was that of empathy and understanding. There was also mention of how historically oppressed and marginalised females have been victims of gender violence for generations and the need for society to show empathy should they (females) resort to using violence.

The above findings represent the participants' responses in relation to the first research question which focused on university students' perceptions and understandings of female students' use of violence. The next section focuses on the participants' responses to the second research question.

8.3.1.2. Research question two:

- What forms of gender violence do female students engage in?

This study found that female students engage in a range of gender violence both within their intimate relationships (heterosexual and same-sex) as well as in their interpersonal relations with others. The study explored IPV within heterosexual relationships and found that some female students perpetrate extreme forms of violence against their intimate partners by beating them so badly that they almost killed them. The forms of violence reported during the interviews by both male and female students included slapping, hitting, pushing, while there was a dehumanising experience of one male student whose female partner urinated on his face after physically beating and humiliating him. The data showed that some females use coercive tactics like verbal, psychological and physical threats as well as damaging personal property in order to dominate and control their intimate partners. There were displays of destructive behaviour where the females wilfully damaged the personal property of their male partners by pouring bleach onto their clothes, smashing their cellphones and electronic gadgets against a wall or door; throwing a PC out of a window; and messing up and throwing food all over their rooms. There were also reports of verbal threats to destroy their male partner's lives, their degree, and to use their personal details to deregister them from the university central student database system. The study also found that some female students used other forms of verbal abuse in the form of emotional and psychological insults and belittling as well as swearing, sometimes against their non-abusive partners. While the study found that that in some cases only the females were violent, it also found that in other cases both partners responded with violence. The above

findings illustrate that female students engage in a range of violent, abusive behaviours within their heterosexual intimate partner relationships.

The study focused on IPV within same-sex (lesbian) relationships and found that there was violence within a number of same-sex intimate partner relationships. An important finding was that lesbian and bisexual females do engage in physical, verbal, emotional and psychological forms of violence and aggression. Issues of power and control were evident as some of the female partners used physical and verbal abuse in order to control, intimidate and manipulate who their partners spoke to or who they associated with. There was also threats of extreme violence where one female partner threatened to murder her partner. There was one participant who stated that lesbians become sexualised and that they wanted to show their man-power when they engage in physical violence and this shows that despite this being a same-sex relationship, there still exists the adherence to heterosexual norms that not only marginalise those who choose to perform their gender differently, but it also shows that violence continues to be perceived as a masculine trait. The study reflects the presence of violence within lesbian relationships (same-sex) and in this instance it is evident that gender violence is more about power rather than patriarchy as violence.

The study also found that female students engaged in a range of other forms of gender violence in their interpersonal relationships with other students. The study reflected that homophobic violence was rife at university. Female students verbally abused lesbian and bisexual students, using derogatory terms as they denigrated them. The findings reflect that it is not only male students who are homophobic, but it is also female students who denigrate non-normative gender. This shows a strong connection with hegemonic masculinity that is based on power and subordination.

The study found that female students not only engaged in relational forms of aggression but that they also engaged in extreme forms of violence. The physical violence was directed towards other females and male students for various reasons. The relational forms of aggression included the pulling of hair; pushing and slapping each other; tearing of clothes and using a finger to poke their victims' eye. The findings also show that extreme forms of aggression and violence is pervasive on this campus with females being the perpetrators (depicted in the current study). Some victims were hospitalized after being attacked by female students. This study found that gang violence is also prevalent

where some of the female students got together in gangs as they knew they had support. One of the findings involved a female student who beat another pregnant student on her stomach. These findings not only suggest a toxic and destructive form of femininity but it also shows that female students are just as capable of using extreme violence wanting to exact the most serious consequences of violence.

It was found that some female students engaged in aggression as some of them were verbally abusive with students, security staff and resident assistants. The research has also shown that female students do engage in sexual harassment and assault. There was evidence of sexually aggressive, coercive, manipulative tactics used by some female students in order to get a male resident assistant into trouble and to be possibly accused of rape. The evidence shows that females do actively and aggressively pursue sex. The suggestion here is that society needs to look at the way female sexual aggression is perceived and to acknowledge that females are capable of perpetrating sexual assault and harassment. The findings show that some female students have been cited as also being guilty of sexual harassment as there were some female students who rape and sexually assault others, which shatters notions that only male perpetrators of sexually violent crimes.

The study highlighted a common trend where students use social media in order to harass and bully others. Cyberbullying was found to be rife at this university campus. This study found that more female than male students post on social media. Social media was a form of 'violence on its own' and this proved to be true as some female students humiliated, insulted, body-shamed other students, members of the SRC and some staff as well. The findings also show that in some instances, the online attack led to physical violence when the victim confronted the perpetrator. Some female students also used other students' details to create fake online accounts (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook) in order to humiliate them by advertising their bodies for sexual purposes (prostitutes, blessers, sugar daddies, human-trafficking). The consequences of cyber bullying on victims ranged from depression to emotional trauma and, in one instance, even death. The study also found that sexting was common and this form of humiliation continues to trend for a long time causing untold pain and suffering to the victims. The study shows that that no-one at university, where this study was conducted, is safe from the violence as social media is the seemingly 'invisible perpetrator'.

The above findings show the participants' responses to the second research questions which focused on the forms of gender violence that female students engage in at university. The study identified several forms of gender violence which included intimate partner violence both within heterosexual as well as same-sex relationships; homophobic violence; physical violence; verbal and emotional (psychological) violence; sexual harassment and assault as well as cyberbullying on social media platforms. These findings suggest that female students engage in a range of gender violence at university.

8.3.1.3. Research question three:

- Why, according to students, do female students engage in acts of gender violence?

The findings of this study show that female students who engage in gender violence are sometimes motivated by similar reasons and desires as those of their male peers. The reasons for female student violence, according to the students, were discussed and analysed according to several themes that emerged from the participants' responses. The findings illustrate that females are not a homogenous group; while some of the females' aggression and violence was purely relational, others were not.

Jealousy was identified as a reason for the female students' engagement in violence. The jealousy stemmed from a variety of sources such as females being attracted to a male who is dating someone else, jealousy over another female's looks, status and lifestyle. Gossiping and name-calling was also noted as a reason for female violence as power struggles were clearly evident, more so when the verbal aggression developed into physical aggression. The findings show that female students also fight for male affection. It was found that the female students may sometimes act alone or with friends in order to attack a female with whom their male partner was cheating. It is evident that female cheating is also rife and a female cheat attacked a female security guard for allowing her male partner into her room while she was with another male. The findings suggest that some females do cheat on their partners. However, there is a further suggestion that it was acceptable for the males to cheat. Horizontal oppression is evident as the male partner was not the object of the attack, but rather the other female. These findings suggest that negative hegemonic markers that position males as entitled to have more than one sexual partner are still firmly in place. The evidence of infidelity within lesbian

relationships where the one partner who was perceived as being more masculine was identified as the one who always cheated further serves to reinforce these notions. The study found that some female students are also vulnerable to toxic female peers who may influence them to engage in violence. Despite these females being older, the strong sentiments expressed by the participants not only indicates just how powerful peer pressure can be but also indicates a human desire for some individuals to want to fit in with a certain group of people, or to be a part of something, even if that something is not good. The collective responses above indicate that female students may sometimes engage in relational forms of aggression.

The desire for power and control was also cited as reasons for female students behaving violently. As articulated by the participants, some of the female students use violence in order to dominate and to control others and in some instances, they also use violence in order to gain political positions or to have power and to live their lives on their own terms and to make their own decisions. What is evident in the data is that notions of strength, power and control can also be inhabited by females who dare to reify gender boundaries.

The findings reflect the important role of the socialisation process in relation to female students' engagement in violence. The study shows that females who come from troubled, abusive environments may later engage in violence as a result of their childhood trauma and where they may sometimes repress their emotions it may lead to a host of problems (bullying, depression, anger, dysfunctional relationships) later on in life. In addition, the study found that some female students may also perceive that violence as a way to solve a problem. Furthermore, the study also found that some females resisted the subordinate construction of femininity placing them in the ambiguous role of oppressed-oppressor cycle. In one case, it was found that the female students' aggressive behaviour was as a result of her family's non- acceptance of her non-normative gender identity and sexual orientation. Her rejection by her family highlights the fact that many Black people in South Africa perceive homosexuality as un-African which is clearly highlighted in the scholarship. These findings suggest that there is a strong link between female students' engagement in violence and the way in which they are socialised.

This study found alcohol and drug consumption as a reason for female students' engagement in violence. The findings show that the use of hard drugs (cocaine, marijuana), anti-depressants (xanax), alcohol mixture of cough syrup (lean) and as well

as smoking hookah pipes was common at campus. The use of these substances often leads to female students behaving violently and aggressively towards their intimate partner as well as towards other students. Their behaviour suggests an alternative embodiment of femininity that is not appropriate for future educators.

Another finding to emerge from this study was the issue of provocation. The study found that some female students were either provoked or they deliberately provoked others in order to get them to engage in violence. However, there were some female students who, despite being provoked, did not engage in violence. The suggestion is that not all females ascribe to feminine notion of docility and passivity.

A significant issue to emerge was that of agency, and that some of these female students chose to use violence. The study found that some females appeared inherently violent and were not afraid to exercise their agency through violence. In addition, there were some females who felt they had to prove that they were just as capable of defending themselves as men and so they used violence in order to reclaim some sense of power. These findings suggest that for some females, violence is almost second nature and therefore this blurring of gender boundaries alters their position in gender relations.

Wanting to defend themselves was highlighted as another reason for female students' engagement for violence. The findings of this study show that some females were not prepared to passively accept violent attacks and they retaliated with violence and thus they risked being labelled gender deviants. This study found that victimization was a reason for female students retaliating equally with violence. The findings reflect that for some female students, their path to violence was fraught with pain, suffering and abuse. The participants' narratives revealed harrowing accounts of their traumatic experiences that shaped them into becoming violent and aggressive as they struggled to gain respect and some form of power and control. The lack of respect was also cited as a reason for some female student violence. It was found that some females may respond aggressively and violently when they believe that another student has disrespected them. Respect came across as a major marker of whether females chose to or not to engage in violence – in particular when it involved their intimate partner. The study also identified the fear of rejection as a reason for female students engaging in violence and that some females may turn to violence out of fear of rejection and abandonment.

Central to any relationship is good communication and the study found that poor communication within intimate partner relationships may result in violence, depression and anger. Also, the study found that not having anyone to communicate with in general, about how they are feeling, may lead to the females' students being violent. There was also reports of theft by other females (alcohol, weave, takkies, key, food and stuff) that angered the female victims who then responded with violence by physically attacking the alleged thief. These acts of criminality by some female students (theft) suggest that some university students have criminal tendencies.

The study also found that female students' violence also stemmed from frustration and stress related to their academics and this was compounded by the fact that they were far away from their homes and the care and security that was provided by their parents. In addition, the female violence also stemmed from their intimate relationships. A very significant finding to emerge from the study was the negative impact of COVID-19 on female students who experienced anxiety and depression as they felt alone and trapped in their rooms. This caused some of the females to experience mental health problems and the pressure became all too much and they therefore violently lashed out against their intimate partners. A further finding was that some females also fought for privacy in their rooms. Having to share a room with a roommate whose explicit lack of respect for their roommate's privacy is shown by the fact that she regularly brings her boyfriend to the room, was cited as a reason for the female students physically fighting.

The findings clearly indicate that female students engage in gender violence at campus bashes for several reasons. One of the reasons for the female student violence was the issue of planned revenge where some female students would actually plan violent attacks on other girls at arranged campus parties. It was found that some females (and males) held grudges and they would violently attack their intended victim with dangerous weapons such as bottles and knives with the intention to inflict serious harm. These violent and gruesome attacks paint a disturbing image of future professionals and suggests that they may not necessarily be ready to mould learners in a positive way. It was apparent that some female students engaged in violence at bashes as a result of perceived indiscretion (flirting or talking to other girls) of their intimate partner as they humiliated them by dragging them out of the bash by holding their pants and physically assaulting them. This form of public humiliation by some females was quite common at

the bashes. The female students also engaged in aggression at the bashes which included gross humiliation such as name-calling, pouring of alcohol onto targeted individuals, taking their weaves or merely talking to their boyfriends. The study also highlighted risky public sexual activity and indecent behaviour as a result of the female students consuming alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drug usage are cited as factors responsible for these inebriated female students showing their partially naked bodies, or having their underwear on display and showing a lack of respect for their own bodies. There was also evidence of homophobic violence by heterosexual females who reacted violently if a non-normative individual had touched them.

The reason for highlighting female students' violence at campus bashes was to show that some females do not shy away from engaging in violence in public spaces and this further suggests that violence is a social problem for all. As illustrated through the participants' responses, there are numerous reasons for some female students' engagement in gender violence at campus. These reasons tend to disrupt stereotypical feminine norms that position females as passive and non-violent.

The overall findings of the study show that despite the fact that female student violence is largely overlooked in research at university, it is a real problem that is deserving of attention. The study found that while students have a clear understanding of what constitutes gender violence their perceptions on female violence was varied, with some similarities and some differences. In addition, the study exposes the fact that female students engage in all forms of violence ranging from relational aggression to extreme forms of violence.

Furthermore, the study found that female students engaged in gender violence for various reasons and that while some of the reasons maybe similar to their male peers, there were also several other reasons that were relatively new. This part presented the summary of the main findings of the study. The ultimate goal of the study was to gain a deeper insight into the construction of violent femininities. The study also attempted to gain an in-depth analysis of students' understandings and perceptions of female students who engage in gender violence at a university. In addition, the study also set out to investigate the forms of gender violence as well as the reasons for female students' use of gender violence.

8.4. Suggestions for policy and practice

The study highlighted the prevalence of female student gender violence at a university campus. The study focused solely on female students' engagement in gender violence and points to an urgent need for the university to be cognizant of the fact that some female students can be violent and that they are capable of perpetrating extreme forms of gender violence. The following suggestions and recommendations are based on the main findings of the study that focused on violent femininities at a university campus. The suggestions for policy and practice have taken into consideration the participants' suggestions, the findings as well as my personal suggestions.

The serious and urgent attempts to eradicate the scourge of gender violence at university is evident in their Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual harassment policy and more recently, the establishment of a Gender-Based Violence Committee (GBVC). Comprising of the relevant stakeholders, the GBVC is tasked to work within a collaborative framework in the fight against this human rights scourge. A GBV Task Team was also established to oversee policy implementation. Despite these laudable attempts, there remains gaps in policy and implementation that threaten the progressive ethos at university. It was evident in the participants' responses in the interviews that many of them are not well informed of these policies and institutional efforts. These findings may be taken to indicate that the university is not doing enough to create a safe learning campus climate for all students. The suggestion is that the university needs to increase the awareness of all their policies relating to gender violence. This can be done as part of the University Integrated Whole Approach System and Evaluation or UNIWASE which I will discuss below.

There is the perception amongst students that whilst the university makes a concerted effort to stem the tide of gender violence incidences at campus, these attempts largely tend to focus on males as the perpetrators and females as the victims. The suggestion by several participants was that the university firstly needs to acknowledge that there are female perpetrators of violence and that the university needs to equally amplify their responses. Secondly, the participants believed that the university needs to 'broaden the conversation around female students' use of gender violence. The UNIWASE suggestion takes into account existing university structures to develop mechanisms and interventions to eliminate gender violence at campus. The Uni- which is short for University: while

eradicating this scourge and providing a safe campus for all may ultimately lie in the hands of the university, students need to acknowledge that it is not the sole responsibility of the university. Students who come from diverse backgrounds are ultimately the ones who bring this iniquitous act of gender violence to our campus and so therefore, it is the students who need to be at the forefront of all university efforts to end this scourge, especially at the level of policy making right through to the monitoring and evaluation level. To this end the IWAS – Integrated Whole Approach System will allow for a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to gender violence.

Including the students at the policy making level as well as at the implementation, monitoring and evaluation levels will allow for transparency and it will also provide the platform for further engagement. In this way the students will not only take ownership of the policies but they will also become familiar with the university procedures and practices. The university must also make these policies accessible and visible on campus in the form of notice boards, posters, programmes that support ongoing dialogues, regularly posting on online platforms and not just when something happens. Contact details of people who were readily available to assist must also be openly displayed throughout the campus. This visibility will be a constant reminder of the University's zero tolerance approach to gender violence and will form part of the ongoing awareness campaigns around gender violence. There was also a suggestion for the university to have more workshops and programmes on gender violence. One of the concerns expressed by several participants was that they were not well informed about the university's gender violence and sexual harassment policies and that these were only emailed to them when an incident occurs at campus or that they are briefly told about them in their orientation week. A further suggestion is that the university includes gender violence as a compulsory module right up to third year level as well as the inclusion of a compulsory section within other modules – both of these need to be credited modules or aspects within the curriculum in order for them to be taken seriously. This suggestion will also signal to students that the university is committed to ending gender violence and that it requires the co-operation of all stakeholders.

The Whole Approach System involves all the relevant stakeholders to be trained to deal with incidents of gender violence in an appropriate, sensitive and confidential manner. I believe that all staff need to be proactively involved. The relevant stakeholders include

all staff (academic and non-academic); RMS and security and the entire student body. Training the entire student body and not just the selected resident assistants or SRC members will not only ensure that everyone is familiar with the procedures and practices but that it will ensure that everyone's experience is important and is taken seriously by the university. In this way victims of female perpetrated gender violence will not be treated as a laughing stock at campus as was the perception of several participants. Workshopping all students, and providing them with the necessary skills may also result in a change of attitude and behaviour towards ending this scourge. The whole approach could include invitations from the university to external organisations like SACE (South African Council for Educators), teacher unions, the SAPS (South African Police Services); the CGE (Commission on Gender Equality); SAHRC (South African Human Rights Council) amongst others to present regular workshops and to work with the university in order to reduce the rates of gender violence not only at university but in the broader society. These external stakeholders have a wealth of knowledge and experience in tackling gender violence and will serve to steer and mould future professionals. These collaborative efforts can take place at least twice a month and this will further honour the university's commitment to create a campus ethos free of oppression.

The staff training needs to be made compulsory so that all staff are sufficiently educated and capacitated in order to handle matters relating to gender violence and that this must form part of their job description. This will ensure that all staff remain a part of the university's ongoing fight to end gender violence and that they too remain aware of the consequences of engaging in illicit and unprofessional relationships with students. At least more than one specialised support staff needs to be made available to assist the victims. This assistance needs to be made available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One participant spoke about receiving a phone call during her teaching practice in order to give a statement on her ordeal. This is inappropriate and insensitive and suggests that the university is not mindful of the student's state of mind and that they are only interested in completing paperwork. The staff must also be trained in terms of their human relations so that they are more approachable in the event that a student may need their assistance. All staff need clear identifiable name badges so that students will be able to recognise them. This is part of the visibility on campus. The whole approach system should also include policies on social media usage. The study identified that social media was used by female students to attack, harass and bully others and that it not only caused

reputational damage but that it also fuelled the violence at campus. It is for these reasons that the university needs to put in place clear policy on the use of social media by all students. The policy guidelines need to outline stricter consequences for the inappropriate postings that have spiralled out of control. This type of behaviour negatively impacts the positive ethos of the university. The students also need to be made aware that employers often do background checks on their future employees and their social media accounts and therefore if they have posted in appropriate content that may not align with the image of the company, they may therefore not be employed.

The study also has implications for safety and security at campuses. The findings suggest that the entire security system needs a complete overhaul. It was mentioned during the interviews that the security does not carry out security checks at the gates and that anyone is free to enter the campus. A skilfully trained security workforce is crucial in the maintenance of a safer campus and part of the job description is to ensure that the university policies are upheld. This includes ensuring that alcohol and drugs are not brought onto the university campus neither are they sold as one participant indicated that a female student was actually selling alcohol in the residence. The study highlighted the disturbing use of illicit drugs such as cocaine and alcohol abuse as well as coercive sexual practices that resulted in extreme violence. The installation of a system of cameras throughout the campus including residences, will act as a deterrent and it will enhance the safety and security alerts for immediate assistance. To this end, the university needs to include in their budget, funding for this urgent camera system installation. I also suggest a mobile panic button that is not only an app on a cellphone but one which can be carried on a lanyard for easy access. It may not always be possible for a victim to access their cellphone in an attack, but it may be possible to press a panic button that hangs around one's neck or in one's bag. An incentive system needs to be established so that individuals, regardless of their level are awarded incentives for reporting or highlighting issues of gender violence. This suggestion may encourage individuals to become champions for a gender violence free campus climate. It will also deter would be perpetrators from committing acts of gender violence. In addition, it may improve the rates at which these incidents are reported to the university.

The issue of student socialisation and campus bashes is an area that needs to be reassessed. Campus bashes create the space for students to consume alcohol and drugs,

to indulge in risky sexual activity and to engage in violence that may have disastrous consequences. This may sound a little antiquated but it is therefore suggested that campus bashes be banned altogether and that all student socialization must be strictly academically related. This will go a long way in reducing the incidents of gender violence and illegal alcohol and drugs consumption at campus. The system of Residents assistants (RA) needs to be reviewed. Currently the system in place is that some students assume these positions and many of them are at the mercy of their fellow students who may often disrespect and attack them and put them in precarious positions. There were two such incidents where a participant spoke about female students who entered their male RA's room only dressed in towels under the pretext of needing assistance and another incident where a RA was attacked by another female student. It is suggested that these roles be taken on by trained university staff who will be able to effectively deal with issues that may arise at the residences.

Homophobic violence remains a challenge at campus and to this end, the University's sexual harassment policy re-affirms the institution's commitment to taking strong action against those who discriminate or harass others on the basis of their sexual orientation. Despite constitutional efforts as well as institutional policy that re-affirms equality for all gender non-conforming students continue to be discriminated by their peers. The suggestions by a self-identified non-normative gender was to treat these individuals as normal and to respect their rights to choose how they want to perform their gender or sexuality. Given the fact that heterosexual individuals are allowed the freedom of choice, these suggestions are not unreasonable; it is all about respecting personal boundaries. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's tagline is 'Inspiring Greatness'. In light of the fact that there is a lack of respect for diverse sexualities at university, perhaps the university ought to consider inspiring greatness as well as respect in celebration of their tolerance and respect of diversity. This supportive stance will go a long way in developing a diverse and inclusive institutional structure. As many students are far away from the comfort and security of their homes and family, a system of ongoing support needs to be established so that students who may need to speak about their concerns and challenges may be able to communicate with trained, skilled support staff. COVID-19 exacerbated the loneliness and isolation that many students may have experienced and this resulted in many female students engaging in gender violence as a way to release their stress. Placing trained staff as resident assistants who will be able to identify vulnerable students who may need this

type of interaction is therefore very important. The issue of inviting visitors to your room needs to be reviewed as this creates unnecessary tension amongst roommates. This was reported by a participant who stated that females value their privacy and when they believe that it was not respected by their roommate, it often leads to violence. The university may need to put a system in place where all students, particularly female students have their own rooms.

The Integrated Whole Approach System (IWAS) will include staff, students, security and safety, relevant external stakeholders. Evaluating the university's role in the eradication of gender violence at campus begins with monitoring their policy and policy review, their integrated whole approach and systems that we put in place to enhance the safety and security for all at campus. It is here that the SRC together with other stakeholders will sit to evaluate and to provide regular feedback to the general student body. This will dispel the notion that the university is only concerned with male perpetrators of gender violence. Several participants noted that the university does not extend the same energy when female students are the perpetrators and that it is sometimes swept under the carpet. This has serious implications for university practices that may appear to overlook violent female students. Evaluating and monitoring the university's efforts to end this scourge is an important part of this whole approach as it provides the space and opportunity for the institution to improve on their policy and response mechanisms. Regardless of status, position and titles; gender identity and sexual orientation; race and ethnicity, ending gender violence at campus is an issue that should concern all who are serious about cultivating a positive, progressive ethos at this particular institution.

The UNIWASE proposal forms part of the suggestions for policy and practice to end gender violence, specifically female gender violence at university. This suggestion may appear to be modified and simplistic but sometimes that may be exactly what students may want and that is an uncomplicated, practical route. If all students are trained and workshopped on how to handle and report their gender violence experience, there should be a faster turn-around time in terms of achieving justice. Furthermore, the training of all students would mean that there are less channels of communication and this is important to individuals who prefer to keep their ordeal private. There may also be a faster turn-around time in terms of getting justice. When information is widely available and visible it not only sets the tone that the university is serious and determined to put an end to this

gross human rights violation at campus but it also empowers all students to act with a common purpose.

8.5. Suggestions for future research

Although this was a small study that focused solely on female students' use of gender violence at a university campus, it nevertheless provides valuable insights into the phenomenon of violent femininities. This may be the first study to focus on violent femininities at this particular university and therefore I suggest that there must be more research in this field. Bhana (2008) posits that looking at schoolgirls only as victims of gender violence gives us a fragmented understanding of their experience. Similarly, research at university that focuses solely on female students as victims also 'fragments' our understanding of their university experience. Although there is a plethora of research into male perpetrators of gender violence at campus, there is a paucity in research on female students as perpetrators of this scourge. This is an important issue for future research because if we are truly serious about eradicating this scourge, then it is crucial to gain a comprehensive understanding and knowledge on the magnitude of the problem first before mechanisms are implemented to address the issue. Further studies should therefore be conducted to explore and to gain a much more comprehensive understanding as to how and why some female students construct their identities in violent ways.

This final chapter of the dissertation provided a summary of the study that focused on the phenomenon of female student violence at a university campus. It also presented an in-depth discussion on the main findings of the study. The study set out to explore students' understandings and perceptions of female students' engagement of gender violence. The study found that the students exhibited a clear understanding of what constitutes gender violence and that their perceptions of female students' engagement in gender violence were variegated and also with common views. The second objective of the study was to investigate the forms of gender violence that female students engage in. The study found that female students engage in several forms of gender violence which ranged from relational aggression including female on male, female on female, IPV, Sexual harassment and assault, emotional and psychological violence as well as physical (mild to extreme) violence and homophobic attacks. The third objective of the study was to gain in-depth insight into the factors that contribute to female students' propensity for gender violence. Here the study found that the reasons for the female student violence

cannot be attributed to a single factor. The study also found that students were exposed to female violence at university, schools, communities and their homes. Furthermore, the study found that female students constructed their violent femininities in a multitude of ways at university. Looking back, it is important to mention that the research questions were answered and that the study achieved the objectives that it set out to achieve. This final chapter further provides suggestions for policy and practical as well as suggestions for future research on the phenomenon of violent femininities at university.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:   Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

18 November 2020

Mrs Charnell Ruby Naidu (216077026)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Naidu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002102/2020
Project title: Construction of violent femininities at a university in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings and exposure to gender violence
Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 30 September 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL** on the following condition:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 18 November 2021.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics

Founding Compuses: ■ Edgewood   ■ Howard College   ■ Medical School   ■ Pietermaritzburg   ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 2: Gatekeeper's permission certificate

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

3 December 2020

Mrs Charnell Naidu (SN 216077026)
School of Education
College of Humanities
Edgewood Campus
UKZN
Email: charnelln69@gmail.com

Dear Mrs Naidu

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"Construction of violent femininities at a University in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings and exposure to gender violence."

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with students at UKZN. (Taking in account the regulations imposed during the lockdown ie restrictions on gatherings, travel, social distancing etc. ZOOM, Skype or telephone interviews recommended)

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:
* Ethical clearance number;
* Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
* Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
* gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

DR KE CLELAND
REGISTRAR (ACTING)

Office of the Registrar
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 7971 **Email:** registrar@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 3: Informed assent letter for students

Dear participant

INFORMED ASSENT LETTER

I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am undertaking as part of my degree specialising in Gender and Education.

The title of my study is:

The construction of violent femininities at a university campus in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings of and exposure to gender violence.

This research sets out to understand the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of female students regarding gender-based violence as well as to gain an in-depth insight into the factors that contribute to their perpetration of this phenomenon. I would like to speak to you individually so that I may gain some information on the types of gender-based violence that is perpetrated by female students. This research forms part of my independent research project which is a requirement in the fulfilment of my PhD degree in Gender and Education. Ethical Clearance number:

The method of data collection is a semi-structured open-ended individual interview which will be conducted at a venue that is suitable to you.

Please note that:

- Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured at all times. I will use a pseudonym in place of your real name so that your identity will be protected.
- The interviews will be 45 minutes to 60 minutes long and the interview sessions will be adapted to suit your availability.
- Transcripts will be stored in a secure storage space and will be destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research at any time that you feel you no longer want to continue. You will not be penalized for choosing to withdraw. (participation is voluntary)

- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- An audio recorder will be used (of which permission will be requested from you first) for both the focus group discussions and interviews sessions. An audio recorder is useful to capture your exact words, strengthening the trustworthiness of the study.
- After collection of the data recordings and transcriptions will be validated with you by sending through transcripts of the sessions.
- A report on the findings will be emailed to you.
- The study is not designed in to create any stress or anxiety but if your participation gives rise to any anxiety or stress then I will assist you to contact the psychologist who is based at the Edgewood campus: Ms Lindi Ngubane. Her telephone number is 031 260 3653 and email address is ngubanel@ukzn.ac.za.
- For further information, you may contact my supervisor,
  Dr. Bronwynne Anderson, Tel: 031 260 2371 E-mail:

  AndersonB1@ukzn.ac.za.
- You may contact the HSSREC Research Office for any complaints and/or concerns through:
  Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

Report instances of sexual harassment through the university confidential platform at ukzn@tip-offs.com

Thank you for your contribution and co-operation in this research.

Charnell Ruby Naidu

E-Mail: Charnell69@gmail.com

DECLARATION

I…………………………………………………… (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby consent to an audio recording of the interview sessions –
please mark with an X below

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└─────────┘
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I hereby do not consent to an audio recording of the interview sessions –
please mark with an X below

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┌─────────┐
│         │
│         │
└─────────┘
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I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

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Appendix 4: Individual interview schedule

1. What is your age?

2. What race group do you belong to?

3. What is your gender?

4. [You need not answer this if you are not comfortable to do so] Which best describes your gender identity? male, female, transgender woman or transgender man; lesbian, gay, gender non-conforming, gender questioning or other; bisexual (LGBTIQ+).

5. [You need not answer this if you are not comfortable to do so] What is your sexual orientation? Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual?

6. Are you currently in a relationship?

7. Do you have religious affiliations? Explain.

8. Tell me about your life at home, your culture, home language, parents/guardians, siblings, family, hometown.

9. Are your parents/guardians employed? What is the financial situation like at home?

10. Do you live in the residence or do you travel daily?

11. Do you live alone in the residence or do you cohabit? Which section (male/female/both)?

12. What year are you in regarding your degree? Postgraduate or undergraduate?

13. What is your experience of student life?

14. What is your understanding of gender violence?

15. How do you feel about gender violence?

16. Tell me about your community and the levels of violence that may or may not occur (please give details, who are largely the perpetrators, victims, etc).

17. What kinds of violence are you exposed to in your community?

18. How does the community respond or deal with violence?

19. What do you believe were the reasons for the violence in the community?

20. Were you exposed to violence at school, if yes please explain the reasons? Who were largely the perpetrators, victims, how did this violence make you feel?

21. Were you bullied or did you bully anyone at school? If yes please give details (incident, were you a perpetrator, victim?), how did it make you feel?

22. Was there any violence at home, in your family? (if yes please supply details, incident, perpetrators, victims).

23. What do you think were the reasons for this violence in your home or family?

24. Did you witness or experience gender violence at university? If yes please give details (incident, perpetrators, victim, where did it happen, spaces).

25. Explain, if relevant, why you felt the need to respond with violence.

26. Was there pressure from anyone for you to respond with violence or to behave violently? Explain.

27. How do you think the victim of your violent act felt? How did they respond?

28. How did you feel after perpetrating violence? Explain

29. Would you describe yourself as being aggressive with violent tendencies? (please explain)

30. Can you remember a particular time when you thought about acting violently but you then decided not to? (Please explain).

31. Since you have been a student at this university did anyone tell you about their experience/s of gender violence? (Please give details).

32. Do you feel safe at university on campus? If yes, why? If no, why not?

33. Are you aware of violence in the university? Explain

34. What types of violence have you encountered? (heard about, witnessed, experienced).

35. Are females also perpetrators of violence? What types of violence? Explain.

36. What do you believe were the causes of these acts of violence especially with regard to females?

37. Have you been a victim of female violence? What form of violence? Explain.

38. What is your perception/opinion/understanding of female students who engage in violence.

39. Have you as a female ever perpetrated violence against a fellow student/member of staff etc? Why?

40. Why did you feel the need to use violence?

41. To males or non-normative genders (gay/lesbian self-identifying or those who have witnessed): Have you been a victim of female violence?

42. Was this experience in a relationship or not? Explain.

43. Have you ever witnessed females being violent? (Please elaborate). Did you intervene? Who was the victim?

44. Have you ever been sexually violated (harassed) by a female? Tell me about it.

45. Were you ever pressurised into behaving violently? Please tell me more. (Only females.)

46. What do you think/believe is the most common reasons for female students engaging in acts of violence?

47. According to your cultural, religious or other beliefs and background, do you think it is appropriate for females to be violent? (Please elaborate)

48. From your experience are female perpetrators of violence perceived or treated differently from males as perpetrators?

49. Have you witnessed or heard about any female who has been a victim of gender violence or if a female has perpetrated gender violence against another female/male because of them being gay or lesbian? If yes please explain incident, perpetrator, response of victim and your response.

50. What do you think of students who perpetrate gender violence against homosexuals or same-sex orientated people?

51. Have you witnessed or heard about a student who belongs to the LGBTIQ+ community behaving violently towards another student? If yes, please explain incident in detail (was this in a relationship or not, etc.)

52. What are your thoughts about students who resort to violence to resolve issues or problems?

53. What is your perspective/opinion of females who resort to violence? What message would you give to them?

54. Do you think alcohol or drugs play a role in any of the violent incidents mentioned earlier?

55. What about student bashes or parties, does violence occur at these events? (Please elaborate)

56. Since you have been a student at this campus, are you aware of anyone who has reported any incidents of gender violence at the hands of female students to the university authorities? What was the outcome of this report?

57. Why do you believe that some students may not want to report their experience of gender violence? Did you report your experience? Why or why not?

58. How knowledgeable are you about the university's gender violence and harassment policy?

59. What attempts do you think the university made to make sure all that all students are familiar with these policies and procedures?

60. What do you think is the role of the university in working with female students who perpetrate gender violence?

61. How can the university reduce female gender violence on campus?

62. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding female student violence?

Appendix 5: Editor's Certificate

Editor's Certificate

I, **Michael James Maxwell**, confirm that I have formatted and edited this thesis entitled:

The construction of violent femininities at a university campus in KwaZulu-Natal: Students' understandings of and exposure to gender violence.

Written by Charnell Ruby Naidu, Student Number: 216077026

I further confirm that my work has been limited to checking grammar, syntax and spelling, ensuring that APA 6th has been consistently applied to in terms of required departmental style, checking citations against references, and formatting the document.

Signed: M. J. Maxwell

Dated: **23rd November 2022**

At: **Lintfield House, 22 Clare Road, Tandragee BT62 2EY, County Armagh, Northern Ireland**

Appendix 6: Turn it in report

Thesis

by Charnel Naidu

Submission date: 22-Nov-2022 04:24PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 1961238263
File name: CHARNEL_NAIDU_THESIS_-_EDITED.docx (360.64K)
Word count: 107900
Character count: 592111

Thesis

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