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BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

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THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR LITTERARUM ET PHILOSOPHIAE

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in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

PROMOTER: PROF.H.G PRETORIUS

NOVEMBER 2013
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work and that recognition has been given to the references used. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.


Matilda Molefe

01 November 2013

Date
DEDICATIONS

This study is dedicated to the following women:

Roseline Mathole, a Black South African Woman who was educated and employed as a professional nurse and who was brutally murdered and decapitated by her husband. Up to this day, her head was never found.

Lebohang Motshweneng, a Black South African Woman who was educated and employed and was about to receive her Doctoral degree at the North West University, who was gunned down and murdered by her husband in front of her children.

This study is also dedicated to all destitute and illiterate women in rural areas who will not even be able to read this thesis.

“Igama lamakhosikazi malibongwe” (Give praise to women).
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My sincere gratitude goes to the following people:

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- My husband Nsizwa for life lessons well taught.
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- My siblings, Themba, Lindiwe and Mabatho for your unconditional love.
- The following women of courage, strength, resilience and wisdom who touched my life in the most amazing way are remembered: My mother (Christina Nanisi Phukwane), My mother in law (Rose Ntombiyokuthula Molefe),Malekhona Koto, and Regina Khalsesi Masoka. May the souls of all these courageous women rest in peace. Above all, to God be the glory, power and dominion.
- Len Kotzé and his team for language guidance and technical support, appreciated.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”

______________________________Psalm 23: 6
ABSTRACT

This research sought to investigate the phenomenon of Black South African Women and their experiences of abuse. Focus was particularly on Black Women who are educated and employed but still stay in abusive relationships.

This study which was motivated by the desire to describe how Black South African Women experience abuse was conducted using phenomenological approach, which ensured that Black South African Women gave descriptions of their lived experiences. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. For inclusion in the study, participants had to meet the following criteria:

- They should be Black South African Women.
- They should be married for three or more years.
- They should be in an abusive relationship.
- They should have passed Matric and/or have a tertiary qualification and should be employed.

Unstructured Interviews were used as a method of data collection and data was analysed using Colaizzi’s methods of data analysis which were integrated with Husserl’s rule of description and the rule of horizontalization.

Findings of the study indicated that despite being educated and employed, women in this study suffered all kinds of abuse such as physical, emotional, verbal, financial and sexual abuse. The study also revealed that the abuse had negative physical, psychological and social effects on these women and also affected their significant others. It was further evident that male domination brought about by gender inequality and issues of power and control are still a challenge amongst Black Women. Finally, it was noted that even though these women had tried several strategies to curb the abuse, it still persisted. This shows that there is a great need for women empowerment programs which include skills development, raising awareness regarding abuse and counselling provision for abused women in communities.
This study was successful in providing an in depth description of the experiences of abused Black South African Women who are educated and employed and yet suffer from abuse by their partners. However, the results of this study cannot be generalised on the total population as it was conducted on only seven participants who were teachers and nurses. Further similar studies are required to explore the experiences of abused educated women in other fields of work, for example, doctors, psychologists, parliamentarians and so forth.
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CHAPTER 1:
ORIENTATION, MOTIVATION AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.1 Orientation of the study

The abuse of women has existed almost since the beginning of time and occurs throughout the socio economic spectrum (Augustine, 2002; Nussbaum, 2012). There is often a misconception that the abuse of women only happens in poor, disorganised and dysfunctional families and not in middle class wealthier homes (Coltrane & Collins, 2001; Thio, 2007). According to Hutchings (1998), the abuse of women exists with about the same frequency in rural and urban areas among Blacks, Whites, Asians, in all religious groups, among the poor, middle class, very wealthy, in young adults and elderly. It occurs at all class levels (Coltrane & Collins, 2001). The abuse of women is a social problem of enormous magnitude (Tiff, 2001) and it is a social problem affecting millions of women (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004). Tshesane (2001), concurs that the abuse of women is a global problem and is more prevalent in families and intimate relationships. According to Lee, Thompson and Mechanic (2002), the increasing rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence are similar and do not vary between urban and rural locations.

Women are exposed to various forms of violence or mistreatment, and the most common and most severe forms of violence against women are, namely; intimate partner violence, sexual abuse by non-intimate partners, forced prostitution, women trafficking, and exploitation of labour, physical and sexual violence against prostitutes, female infanticide and the deliberate neglect of girls and rape in war (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The researcher acknowledges the existence of abuse among same sex intimate partners, however since this study is about the abuse of Black South African Women by their intimate partners, more focus in this discussion will be on heterogeneous intimate partner abuse and the focus will be on Black South African Women.

Tiff (2001), asserts that the abuse of women has always been “an instrumental foundation of men’s power” (p.15). Tiff (2001), further states that patriarchal norms have played an integral part in the overall system of male dominance. The seeds of wife beating or abuse, as several authors have mentioned, lie in the subordination of females and in their subjection to male authority and control (Dobash & Dobash, 1980; Hepker, 2000; Musson-Seedat, 2008;
Women abuse by their intimate partners has become a common occurrence across all sectors in South Africa (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). It is one of the shockingly under-reported crimes and its prevalence is most likely higher than what is suggested in the statistics (People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), 2010). Nussbaum (2012), mentions that wherever women are mostly gathered, they tell stories of humiliation and violence at the hands of their lovers or husbands.

Under-reporting of abuse is said to happen because women are commonly stigmatised and blamed for the abuse (Gartia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2006). According to POWA (2010) and NISAA Institute for Women’s Development (NISAA) (2012), many women are still not aware of their rights when reporting the abuse and those who know their rights, are unlikely to be assertive and insistent on their rights when traumatised.

NISAA (2012), points out that violence against women in South Africa has reached alarming proportions and affirms that one in every four women is in an abusive relationship. It further postulates that every twenty three seconds, one woman is raped. In addition, fifty eight children are raped every day, of which 15% are under the age of eleven and one woman is killed every six days by her intimate partner. Statistics further indicate that one in every four women in South is assaulted by their boyfriend or husband every week and 80% of violence that women suffer occurs in their homes at the hands of the men who claim to love them (Gartia-Moreno et al., 2006). According to POWA (2010), one in every six women who die in Gauteng are killed by their partners. Research conducted by the Medical Research Council revealed that one in four women in the South African population has experienced physical violence at some point (POWA, 2010).

Statistical evidence shows that post-apartheid South African women are more likely to be raped murdered or mutilated than women anywhere else in the democratic world, including the rest of Africa. Their assailants are the very South African men with whom they live in intimate relationships (Mama, 2000).
1.2 Motivation for the study
The abuse of women by their intimate partners is well documented (Motsei, 2007; Musson-Seedat, 2008; Seletswana, 2007; Stevens, 2007) and there is a growing amount of research that is beginning to offer a global overview of violence against women (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). According to Sorenson (1996), factors such as ethnic differences and commonalities are rarely focused on when conducting such research. There is vast literature on women abuse in South Africa, a lot of which focuses on gender inequality and generalises women abuse across all races (Bazilli, 1991; Bennet, 2003; Bonnin, 1991). Very few studies conducted about women abuse are race specific (Bennet, 2003), Mohamed (2003) and Dixon (1998) being among the few researchers who were race specific in conducting women abuse studies, focusing specifically on Coloured women. Mabena (2002), is amongst a few researchers who conducted a study of women abuse specifically on Black South African Women. Other studies conducted looked at specific phenomena such as the emotional abuse of professional women (Barkhuizen & Pretorius, 2005).

Another fact is that most of the recorded literature about women abuse in South Africa has been recorded in the Western culture (Hutchings, 1998). Most researchers seem not to give attention to ethnic or race differences in experiences of abuse, instead they focus on Black and White differences in incidence of woman abuse (Hutchings, 1998). There is also a dearth of research based in South Africa that focuses on Black South African Women in particular. It is therefore, against this background that this research will investigate the phenomenon of Black South African Women and their experiences of abuse.

The focus will be on Black Women in particular who are educated and employed but still stay in abusive relationships. This study is motivated by the desire to describe how Black South African Women who are educated and employed, experience abuse in their relationships. The researcher hopes that the in-depth descriptions of these Black South African Women’s experiences will raise public awareness and generate a greater understanding into the plight of Black Women who are educated and employed and yet suffer and choose to endure abuse. The researcher also hopes that the study might promote the continuation of social activism and advocacy against the abuse of women. The study will attempt to make an original contribution to knowledge in that it might
facilitate thinking, and form the basis for theories based on the experiences of Black South African Women.

1.3 Aims of the study
The aims of this study are threefold, namely: (1) To provide an in depth description of the lived experiences of abused Black South African Women who are educated and employed; (2) To elicit the central and significant themes which characterise the experiences of Black South African Women who are in abusive relationships; and (3) To create awareness of the nature and depth of women abuse amongst women themselves, the South African society and the helping professions including the discipline of psychology.

In order to achieve these objectives, the phenomenological approach will be used as an overall orientation in doing this research. The phenomenological approach will ensure that Black South African Women give descriptions of their experiences and that those experiences become the focal point of this study.

1.4 Epistemological framework
The study will be qualitative in nature and it will use phenomenology as the research methodology. Phenomenological research in psychology is concerned primarily with the first person account of experience. The focus of phenomenological inquiry is that “what is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world” (Patton, 1990, p.69). Phenomenologists’ focus is on how people put together the phenomena they experience in such a way as to make sense of their world, and in so doing, to develop their own world view (Patton, 1990). A phenomenological investigation seeks to describe these accounts and arrive at an understanding of the meanings and essences of phenomena (Langdrigde, 2007).

According to Valle, King and Halling (1989), phenomenological research provides a deeper and clearer understanding of what it is like to experience something. Employing the phenomenological research method will enable the researcher to arrive at a rich, clear description of the phenomena of experiences of abuse suffered by Black South African Women.
1.5 Outline of the study
The study will be captured in eight chapters which will be structured as follows:

**Chapter 2:** A literature review will be done in this chapter where a brief and general description of women abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships will be given. Since the study is on Black South African Women, the abuse of women in the South African context will be discussed. Issues such as patriarchy and the socio-political and economic factors (gender, race and class) which contributed to the abuse of women in the South African context will also be engaged, educated women as victims of abuse will be highlighted. This will be followed by a discussion on the different types of abuse, signs of abuse, the effects of abuse on the victim and her significant others. Further discussion will be done on what hinders the abused woman from leaving the abusive relationship. Intimate partner violence and the South African law focusing on the response of the law and the judiciary to the abuse of Women in South Africa will be discussed. Theoretical perspectives for the abuse of women by their partners will conclude this chapter.

**Chapter 3:** A literature review on the historical and traditional influences including how Black traditional marriages are conducted and the custom of *lobola* (bride price) will be discussed in this chapter. This will be followed by an analysis on how the traditional upbringing of children contributes to the abuse of women. A discussion on the interference of in-laws and how the family and cultural prejudice play a role in the abuse of Black Women will follow. Cultural factors affecting the woman’s decision to stay in an abusive relationship will also be discussed. The chapter will be concluded by discussions about Black Women’s fight against abuse and how democracy has tried to address the plight of Black South African Women.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter will focus on the research methodology. An explanation of what phenomenology is and how the phenomenological system of inquiry developed will be presented. A discussion on the transition of phenomenology to existential phenomenology will follow. Different concepts used in a phenomenological study will be outlined. This will be followed by a discussion on what motivated the researcher to conduct the study. How the researcher bracketed her biases (*epoche*) will be outlined in this section and again later in this chapter. An outline of the aims of the study, selection of participants, data gathering procedure
of which in this case is phenomenological interview will follow. A discussion on data analysis, validity and ethical considerations will conclude this chapter.

Chapter 5: In this chapter the seven participants will be introduced and an attempt will be made to explore and analyse the main themes of the experiences of being a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed and still stays in an abusive relationship. An intra-individual analysis of each of the participant’s interviews will be presented in an attempt to gain an in depth understanding and insight into the phenomenon under investigation. The participants’ biographical details will be captured in a tabular form. The identified themes of individual participants will then follow.

Chapter 6: Inter-individual analysis of each participant’s results using clusters of themes which characterise the experience of abuse by Black South African Women who are educated and employed will be provided in this chapter.

Chapter 7: In this chapter an attempt will be made to integrate and link the results of the inter-individual analysis of the participants with relevant literature.

Chapter 8: Conclusion, limitations, strengths, personal reflections of the researcher on the research process, recommendations of the study, and a final conclusion will be provided in this chapter.

1.6 Definition of terms

Black South African Women: The term “Black Women” is used as an umbrella term to include women of colour such as African, Indian and Coloured women (Musson-Seedat, 2008). Gcabo (2003), mentions that a black person is someone who classifies himself or herself as such. It is a self-perception or self-classification. However, in the present study the term Black South African Women will be used to describe women whose ancestors come from Africa and have a history where their descendants or themselves were regarded as third class citizens and were confined to the townships during the apartheid government. The capital letter B will be used as a
construct wherever the word Black is used when referring to Black women in this study, and the capital letter W will also be used when referring to Black Women in this study.

**Educated and academically empowered:** According to The Concise Oxford dictionary (2003), to educate means to provide schooling or to give intellectual and moral training whereas academic means belonging to a college or university. The terms 'educated' and 'academically empowered' will be used frequently and for the purpose of this study, these two terms will mean Black Women who have completed Matric or tertiary education, who are employed and earning a salary irrespective of their remuneration.

**Abuse:** The Concise Oxford dictionary (2003), definition of abuse is to misuse or maltreat. There are a number of different ways in which a woman can be abused or violated in an intimate relationship. Some ways are obvious such as in physical abuse whereby there are bruises and scars as evidence, whereas others are subtle and leave emotional scars such as verbal, financial and emotional abuse. Acts of violence between intimates, according to Tifft (2001), may range far beyond physical violence to include sexual, psychological, emotional and spiritual violence. They may involve an attempt as Tifft (2001) puts it, to destroy the partner’s voice and presence, to wear down or deconstruct her sense of self and reality. Abuse will therefore, for the purpose of this study, be defined according to Section 1 of the new Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, and it will mean domestic violence against women which includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, economic abuse, harassment, intimidation, stalking, damage to property, entrance into the complainant’s property without consent, or any other behaviour that is controlling or abusive (Government Gazette, 2 December 1998). For the purpose of this study the terms 'emotional' and 'psychological' abuse will have the same meaning. This will also apply to the terms 'economic' and 'financial abuse' which will be used interchangeably. It is difficult as Gelles (1986), purports to separate the terms abuse, violence, and battering, because all encompass anything from a victim being slapped or beaten. According to Gelles (1986), abuse could be a slap, psychological damage or both. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, women abuse, intimate partner abuse or violence, domestic violence against women, women battering will be used interchangeably. The word 'husband' as pertaining to the participant’s husband will
be used interchangeably with the word 'partner', and the terms 'marriage' and 'relationship' will also be used interchangeably in this study.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the orientation, motivation, and aims of the study were described and the epistemological framework of the study was highlighted. The outline of the study and definition of terms were also captured in this chapter. Following in the next chapter is a discussion on the abuse of women in intimate relationships.
CHAPTER 2:
THE ABUSE OF WOMEN IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

2.1 Introduction
In this chapter a brief general description of women abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships will be provided. Since the study is on Black South African Women, the abuse of women in the South African context will be discussed and issues such as patriarchy and the socio-political and economic factors (gender, race and class) which contributed to the abuse of women in the South African context will be discussed. Professional women as victims of abuse will also be highlighted. This will be followed by a discussion on the different types of abuse, signs of abuse, and its effects on the victim and her significant others. Barriers to leaving an abusive relationship will be explored. The intimate partner violence with reference to the South African law, including the response of the law and the judiciary to the abuse of Women in South Africa, will conclude this chapter.

2.2 A brief description of abuse in heterosexual relationships
Kinds of abuse which women experience in heterosexual relationships include physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse (McOrmond-Plummer, Eastel, & Levy-Peck, 2013; Mullender, 1996). Barkhuizen and Pretorius (2005), assert that although emotional, psychological and financial abuses are not considered criminal behaviour, they are forms of violence and can lead to crime. Chaney (2013), Vogelman and Eagle (1991), emphasise that women abuse is a universal phenomenon and has been with us for the duration recorded in history. It still persists despite movement towards gender equality and women emancipation. The abuse of women is so prevalent and widely tolerated that it has almost come to be perceived as normal and is to a large extent accepted rather than challenged (Mama, 2000). The big question is why do women stay in abusive relationships? According to Amanor-Boadu, Messing, Stitch, Anderson, O’Sullivan and Campbell (2013) and Mwamwenda (1999), women continue to stay in abusive relationships for reasons among others such as fear of losing their security, fear of being alone, fear of losing their families, economic dependence, satisfaction with sex, and/or lack of self-refuge.
Alternatives to curbing women abuse have been systematically obstructed in many ways as Nussbaum (2012) and Pagelow (1981) assert, and these ways include: agencies that remained quiet and unresponsive to the needs of abused women while tax payers poured billions into such agencies to address community needs; psychiatrists who treated patients’ symptoms for years without discovering that some patients were victims of spouse abuse, medical doctors who kept on prescribing tranquillisers; medical personnel healed wounds and sent victims back home without giving the kind of help needed; police insisted that crime in the home was a private matter; Clergymen advised a prayer; and counsellors emphasised communication; and parents coerced daughters into lying in the beds they made. This state of affairs made it difficult or almost impossible for women to escape abuse. It seems abused women were left in the lurch and no one understood their ordeal. It will be revealed in later discussions that gender discrimination amongst other factors plays part in the particular forms in which abuse is expressed in South Africa. This brings us to a discussion on women abuse in the South African context.

2.3 Women abuse in the South African context

Women abuse is not a new phenomenon. It has its roots in the historical oppression of women by men. The socio-cultural explanation of women abuse is that causes of abuse are located within the social structures, traditions, norms and ideologies of the culture. Women abuse is condoned by our cultural mores and values, and is legitimised within legal and religious institutions (Gelles, 1980; Musson-Seedat, 2008). Mama (2000), states that it is not an exaggeration that violence against women and its gender based manifestation has become an integral feature of Africa’s post-colonial societies. According to Mama (2000), Africa’s newest democracies which include South Africa are particularly dangerous places for women. In South Africa, gender based violence is accepted as a normal aspect of daily life and as previously stated, the existing laws and policies have done little to address the situation.

Johnson and Ferraro (2000), in their article titled Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s mention that for people to understand partner violence or abuse, they need to make a distinction between types of abuse, motives of perpetrators, and the social location of both partners and the cultural context in which the abuse occurs. Various researchers (Hutchings, 1988; Pagelow,
1981; Walker, 1984) describe patriarchal dominance as the root of female subordination. This leads us to the discussion of patriarchy in the South African context.

2.3.1 Patriarchy in the South African context

Patriarchy, also called the rule of the father, is a social system where men play the dominant role and women take a subordinate role. Most societies in South Africa have a patriarchal system (Seletswana, 2002). According to Parker, Fedler, and Dangor (2000), the society is structured in such a way that the social, economic and political systems allow men to be aggressive. Men’s dominance over women in a patriarchal system is regarded by Walker (1984) as an important factor in the abuse of women. Walker (1984) further states that in homes where the man is more dominant, the woman is more likely to suffer serious abuse. According to Parker et al., (2000), patriarchy reinforces the subordinate status of women through various systems and these systems are: the economic system, religious system and the political system. Patriarchy in the South African context will be discussed according to the aforementioned systems:

2.3.1.1 The economic system:

In the economic system, men are regarded as breadwinners and are therefore paid more than women. Women perform duties such as child rearing and keeping families intact which they are not paid for, which are not even acknowledged when the domestic product of the country is added up (Parker et al., 2000). Women who manage to enter the world of employment hold less paying positions or work part time to accommodate domestic responsibilities. As a result, by far and large, they remain dependent on their partner’s salaries for survival and consequently endure abuse. On the other hand, when women become competent in both the work force and at home and happen to earn more than their partners, they obviously become threats. As a result of being threatened by changed roles, partners often become rejecting and use abuse as a way of putting the woman back to her role (Parker et al., 2000).

O’Brien (1971) and Moore (1979), posit that frustration arising from situations where the husband does not have resources to fulfil his traditional role leads to wife abuse. Men or husbands tend to fall back on the ultimate resource of physical force to maintain their superior position (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980). According to Straus et al., (1980), when the
husband fails to fulfil his leadership role, two processes set in. Firstly, tension and dissatisfaction build up within the marriage. Subsequently this reduces inhibition for possible disruptive acts. Secondly, the husband who lacks financial resources is more likely to use physical strength in an attempt to maintain his power.

A study conducted in Ecuador between 1992 and 1998 showed a correlation between economic difficulties and domestic violence (Dangor, 1999). The study revealed that women were abused less if they had a regular income, and women who had a low or less regular income experienced abuse on regular basis. However, on the other hand women’s economic success does not necessarily reduce violence, instead it may increase it. To illustrate this, Smaoun (1998), cites an incidence in which a woman was beaten by her husband the very day she received a promotion at work. Her husband justified his behaviour by blaming drunkenness but later he abused the woman physically twice in public and continued to insult her in the presence of her family and friends. This shows how a husband’s feelings of inferiority can lead to the abuse of his partner.

2.3.1.2 Religious system:
Boonzaier and De la Rey (2004), argue that religious values and ideals also contribute to the reinforcement and sanctioning of strict adherence to stereotypical gender roles. Religious institutional practices sometimes advocate for a husband’s violence against his wife through adherence to gender stereotypical ideals. For example, women have to be submissive to their husbands, divorce is discouraged and often women are encouraged to return to their abusive partners (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2004; Mohamed, 2003; Musson- Seedat, 2008). Fredericks and Davids (1995), view religion, tradition, family, marriage and culture as institutions that often promote the gender role stereotypes in the sense that they position women as subordinates, home makers and child minders, or even without role at all, while men are seen as bread winners and heads of households, providers and protectors.

Motsei (2007), writes that Christianity, Judaism, Islam and African traditional religion are the kinds of religions that are unjust to women but at the same time proclaim their respect for them. Motsei (2007,) mentions three theological assumptions on which gender discrimination in religion is based, and these are the assumption that man is God’s primary creation, women are
therefore, not only secondary but are derivation of a man since they are created from his rib. A woman is blamed for the expulsion of man from the Garden of Eden and as a result all her descendants are treated with suspicion and contempt, a woman was not only created from man, but she was also created for him, meaning that her existence is only meaningful if it is measured in relation to that of a man. Even to this day, Eve is synonymous with women. Eve/woman stands accused of vanity, moral weakness and sexual frailty, while Adam/man’s role in the transaction can be summarised by the familiar defence “she led him on” (Norris, 1998). This therefore, confirms how patriarchal religions contributed to the perception of women as non-entities in this world and tools which can be used and abused by men.

2.3.1.3 Political system:
Marxist theory explains the source of women abuse from an economic and political perspective. According to this perspective, women are an oppressed economic class deprived of economic control, political power and status. As a result, women are victimised by the patriarchal capitalist system which fosters control of the oppressed class by their oppressor. In this sense, violence is seen as the male mechanism of controlling females (Oyekanmi, 2000).

According to feminists’ ideals, the patriarchal structure encourages and supports the abuse of women in relationships by assigning them a second class citizen’s status. The second class citizen status makes women more likely to be economically dependent and unable to leave an abusive relationship (Crawford & Unger, 2004). During the apartheid years African women were regarded as legal minors, were assigned the subordinate status and could not enter into any contractual arrangements without permission from their fathers, husbands or sons (Government policies guide, 2006). In the apartheid era, the oppression of Black Women was rife and the position of women was that of economic weakness and dependency. Women used to have little power and control in the political domain and in both parliamentary and other forms of political organization (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). Most political parties were dominated by men even in the anti-apartheid organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) women were in the minority and were marginalized (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). Vogelman and Eagle (1991), blame this situation on the lack of political control
which has resulted in ensuring that women’s concerns and perspectives on how society should be structured are not given enough weight.

Professor Mama mentions in her article, titled: *Transformation Thwarted: Gender-Based Violence in Africa’s New Democracies*, that she had hoped that after the establishment of the new and rapidly modernized African states, that the derogation of women would stop, however, this was not the case. Instead, there is growing evidence that Africa’s newest democracies including South Africa and Nigeria are particularly dangerous places for women in the sense that in both these countries, gender based violence is still perceived as a normal aspect of daily life (Mama, 2000).

In reviewing the gender based violence in South Africa, Mama (2000), points out that the ANC government has attained the Beijing target of at least 30% representation of women in parliament, “an achievement in gender equity that places the country in the top ten of the world’s democracies” (Mama, 2000, p.4). However on the contrary and simultaneously, South Africa tops another chart as one of the most deadly environments for women (Mama, 2000).

There is, according to Ramphele (in James & Busia, 1993), a marked tendency to explain the oppression of women in terms of autonomous patriarchal, reproductive and ideological structures. Ramphele’s argument is that while sexual and gender relations are critical to understanding the oppression of African Women, these relations do not give an explanation of historical limits, changes and differences for the society as a whole. James and Busia (1993), concur that the study of African Women’s exploitation and oppression requires that we understand the trans-historical nature of patriarchy as an ideology. This study also requires that we understand how patriarchy as an ideology and not as a mode of production shaped the construction and reproduction of women’s oppression.

### 2.3.2 The socio-political context of woman abuse in South Africa

Vogelman and Eagle (1991), point out that in the South African context, violence against women has to be viewed against the socio-political background of apartheid, race, class and gender
relations. The researcher will therefore take the reader through the socio-political context of women abuse, particularly Black Women in South Africa.

The former apartheid system had serious implications for the social conditions of Black people in South Africa and has contributed to poverty, hardships, and ill-health and divided families of which all are conditions under which violence flourishes (Segal & Lubbe, 1990). Lau (2008), suggests that in South Africa a culture of violence is an all-encompassing feature of post-apartheid legacy which forms a backdrop for violence against women. Lau (2008), and Segal and Lubbe (1990), agree that in a historic context of overwhelming oppression and state sanctioned violence, a culture of violence usually develops. This culture of violence over time becomes accepted as a norm and becomes a primary means of conflict resolution between intimate partners. In other words, people tend to only know violence as a way of making their voices heard.

Ramphele (1984), comments about the South African socio-political situation by stating that “it has impacted on the working class black men in a way that brings out the worst aspects of chauvinism in them” (p.394). As far as Ramphele (1984), is concerned, Black Women serve as the only cushion against these men’s powerlessness that was created by the apartheid system, and any suggestion of equality serves as a threat to their egos. Oppression has to be seen as “a totality that impinges on the lives of people. Oppression is multi-dimensional, because its operation in the one domain serves as a paradigm for another” (p.394). By this, Ramphele means that the oppression men suffer in the wider society serves as a platform for their domination of women. This state of affairs is reinforced by an appeal to ‘tradition’ to legitimize practices which are referred to as ‘central to African culture’ (Ramphele, 1984). According to (Human Rights Watch, 2008), within our racially and ethnically divided society, all women have a lower status than men of the same group in both law and practise, and as with racism, the disadvantage imposed on them ranges across the political, economic, social, domestic and cultural spheres.

2.3.2.1 Race, class and gender

Tshesane (2001), purports that race, class, sex discrimination and other forms of oppression are a deadly combination that denies women rights to life and liberty throughout the world. Race in
South Africa contributed a lot to the oppression of Black Women. Colonial and apartheid governments, in addition to oppressing Black Women because of their race, also introduced laws that relegated them to third class citizens (Tshesane, 2001).

In her paper titled *Predicting physical and psychological abuse for White, Black, and Hispanic married women*, Sloane (2007), mentions two ways in which research on intimate partner violence falls short, namely: (1) It has not compared predictors of physical versus psychological abuse; and (2) It has also not compared the experiences of women in different race/ethnic statuses relative to both physical and psychological abuse. The paper examined the influence of race/ethnic status on intimate partner violence (IPV) in a sample of married Black, White, and Hispanic women who said they experience no abuse as adults or were abused by their husbands. Findings showed an indication that a woman’s race or ethnic status cannot predict physical abuse, but it can predict psychological abuse. Higher levels of psychological abuse were reported among Black Women than White women. Sloane’s (2007), results showed that women who were abused as children suffer more physical and psychological abuse and college educated women reported less psychological abuse (but not less physical abuse). Tests for interactions showed that Black Women who are employed full time reported more psychological abuse than Black Women who are not employed full time, a pattern that did not show for white women. Furthermore, household incomes which were high predicted more psychological abuse among Hispanic women and a slightly diminished amount of psychological abuse among non-Hispanic women.

In the South African political economy, the majority of black men occupy low paying jobs. They therefore, experience themselves as oppressed and impotent, as a result they are likely to take out their frustrations by dominating another domain, for example their women (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). According to Vogelman and Eagle (1991), women experience dual oppression. “Indirectly they are subjected to men’s anger in relation to their race, and directly they become the focus of such anger due to patriarchal structures” (p.11). Men’s experience of racism and economic deprivation often causes a reactionary back lash within the family to the detriment of women, rather than opening up the space for resistance to race and class oppression (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). On the other hand, White women’s history of race privilege has served to affirm
rather than undermine the dominant culture’s definition of appropriate roles of women (Chow, Wilkinson, & Zinn, 1993).

James and Busia (1993), argue that for Black Women, issues of gender and race are always connected and therefore, Black Women cannot choose between feminism and the struggle with their men for racial justice. Race, class and gender are described as basic principles of social organisations and the human interaction process. These principles also constitute systems of meaning that influence social institutions that in turn, affect individual identity, consciousness and behaviour. Race, class and gender are regarded as inseparable determinants of inequality (Chow et al., 1993). According to Chow et al., (1993), race, class and gender tend to form interlocking patterns that serve as the bases for “developing multiple systems of domination that affect access to power and privileges, influence social relationships, construct meanings, and shapes peoples’ everyday experience” (p.1).

Researchers who study the psychology of women make a distinction between the concept of sex and gender. They define sex as biological differentiation in genetic composition and reproductive anatomy of human beings, such as one sex is labelled male and the other female based on the appearance of their genitals at birth (Crawford & Unger, 2004). Gender refers to the social system which governs the relations between men and women. It involves the different roles that societies prescribe for men and women. According to Crawford and Unger (2004), gender is what the culture makes out of the biological sex in the sense that societies recognise biological differentiation and use it as the basis of social distinction. They further, state that gender has aspects which include norms about how a person of a given sex is supposed to behave, think and feel. Before the advent of the feminist movement and the development of feminist theories around women abuse, the abuse of women by men was to a large extent rooted in biological sex differences (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). These biologically determined differences described men according to masculinity which is characterised by dominance, competitiveness, and aggression. Women were described according to their femininity characterised by passivity, dependence, irrationality, emotionality, masochism, and contradictory qualities of seductiveness, women were always considered to embody madness (Nussbaum, 2012). As a result of these biologically determined differences, men were always excused for
their abusive actions because their behaviour was regarded as the natural masculine response to extreme situations (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991) and they were positioned on the side of reason, culture and mind. Women were held responsible for provoking men and as a result they had to always assume the victim role (Nussbaum, 2012).

Psychology seems to have a role to play in discriminating against women. Weisstein, a feminist psychologist in a paper called “psychology construct the female” posits that the psychology of the time, characterised women as emotionally unstable inconsistent, lacking in a strong conscience or super ego, weaker, “nurturant” rather than productive, intuitive rather than intelligent and if they are at all “normal”, suited to the home and family (Kitzinger, 1998). In short, psychology also contributed in giving women a stereotype of inferiority. Weisstein criticised mainstream psychology’s misrepresentation of women and she blames gender discrimination on psychology. Her argument is that, mainstream psychology has insufficient scientific rigour and concentrates on inner traits of women at the expense of their social context (Kitzinger, 1998). Weisstein’s conclusion is that psychology says nothing about what women are really like, what they need and what they want, because psychology does not actually know what women are really like (Kitzinger, 1998).

Mckenry and Price (1994), argue that gender is a social construction in that, the meanings and implications of gender are developed through intimate interactions with others. What it means to be male or female is therefore socially constructed and must be understood primarily within its social context. Chow et al., (1993), state that the structures of racial privileges and racial oppression that have determined the historical experiences of Black and White women created distinct cultural legacies.

The home, school and the educational systems particularly in South Africa are primarily responsible for promoting violence against women by prescribing specific rules and roles for boys and girls (Seletswana, 2002). Boys in our societies are usually encouraged to be aggressive performers and achievers whereas girls are expected to be subordinate, lenient, warm, caring and nurturing. These differences in roles are set by our own societies with the aim of preparing boys
to be the heads of the families and girls to be mothers, thus perpetuating patriarchal societies (Seletswana, 2002).

Gender oppression is everywhere rooted in a material base and is expressed in socio-cultural traditions and attitudes all of which are supported and perpetuated by an ideology which subordinates women (Human Rights Watch, 2008). In South Africa it is institutionalised in the laws as well as customs and practices of all our people. Oyekanmi (2000), also agrees that the existing gender inequalities in society, together with beliefs enforced by patriarchal kin system, give the male members of the society supremacy over women.

According to Mama (2000), there is an existing notion that Black Women accept and tolerate gender based violence as a norm. Mama (2000), disputes that notion by arguing that this tolerance is not necessarily an African or Black thing. Pretorius (1984), affirms that White women and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are not immune to the atrocities of spousal abuse. The phenomenon of spousal abuse is reported to exist within the context of all the historically labelled groupings in South Africa, including, Black, White, Indian and Coloured (Mohamed, 2003).

There is also a common and inaccurate belief that violence occurs primarily to poor and low income families. On the contrary, being educated and financially independent seems not to exonerate women from being abused. The discussion that follows will shed a light on the fact that professional women can also be victims of abuse in intimate relationships.

### 2.4 Professional women as victims of abuse in intimate relationships

According to Weitzman (2000), professional women who have good jobs and are financially secured also find themselves in abusive relationships with men. Often these women find dealing with this problem more difficult than poor women because the violence is more unexpected, and they are often not willing to utilise social services that could help them escape from their abusers. For professional women, abuse is a silent affair, they are prisoners of their world, and they wear a mask of normalcy (Weitzman, 2000). This silence promotes the belief that educated
women are averse of abuse. Fearweather (2012), agrees that many educated and professional women do not seek help when they experience abuse because of the stigma attached to it.

Research conducted by Barkhuizen and Pretorius (2005), has indicated that even professional women who are working and contribute to the household finances, also suffer abuse in their intimate relationships and they continue to stay in these relationships. Women who are married to traditionalist husbands can be abused irrespective of their statuses or level of education. This is confirmed by one of the participants in a study called “Domestic violence can affect anyone, but professional women are better at hiding it” conducted by Edwards (In Lawson, 1992). She says “there is a myth that domestic violence only happens to weak, uneducated women, and not to successful, professional women. I can tell you that just isn’t true. Anyone can become a victim of domestic violence, and in my experience, it is the professional women who are worse-off in these situations, as they are less likely to tell anyone, feeling they should be able to control it themselves” (Lawson,1992, p.1).

Another woman by the name of Susan Dowling, coordinator of the support group, which was formed by Domestic Violence Services of Greater New Haven, a private organisation, was quoted by Lawson (1992), as having said “There is a myth that it does not happen here, in an affluent, suburban town, society does not want to believe that an educated, professional man could do this, or that an educated, professional woman would put up with it.”. In the same article Carol Arthur reiterates “Women of means are just as trapped as women of welfare” (p.1).

In their study called For Women, Breadwinning Can Be Dangerous: Gendered Resource Theory and Wife Abuse, Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005), found that a wife’s share of relative income is positively related to likelihood of abuse but this is only to traditional husbands. Although income and educational attainment reduce women's risk of physical violence and emotional abuse by husbands, Kaukinen (2004), contends that status incompatibilities between partners that favour women increase the likelihood of them being emotionally abused. Strauss et al., (1980), state that violence against women is not restricted by socio-economic class or other demographic factors but they assert that perpetrators and victims represent all racial groups, socio economic classes and occupations.
The discussion that follows refers to intimate partner abuse and how the South African law and judiciary respond to it.

2.5 Intimate partner abuse and the South African laws and judiciary

Many cultures have beliefs, norms and social institutions that legitimise and therefore, perpetuate violence against women. The same acts that would be punished if directed at an employer, a neighbour, or an acquaintance often goes unchallenged when men direct them at women, especially within the family (Heise, 1999). As a result, most abused women suffer in silence for several reasons.

Intimate partner violence or abuse often goes unreported to the police and other authorities and as a result, it becomes difficult to estimate its true incidence (Coltrane & Collins, 2001; Tifft, 2001). Fredericks and Davids (1995), corroborate that wife abuse is one of the most underestimated and under reported crimes. The reason behind this as Levi (1995), puts it, is that traditional values discourage women to reveal details of their home life and that within Black families women are reluctant to subject their men to state punishment because such acts can be viewed as betrayal by the community.

In South Africa, as in many other countries, when it comes to male abuse of women the family have been viewed as a private entity. Assault or sexual assault of women has been treated as a criminal matter only when committed by a stranger against an obviously "virtuous" woman and not when committed by her partner (Dangor, 1995). Levi (1995), points out that in South Africa there is no specific criminal law against domestic abuse because police still view domestic violence as a private matter (this was before the introduction of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998).

According to Singh (2005), the source of this indifferent police response is the common law which allows men to beat their wives. According to common law principles husband and wife were viewed as a single entity and therefore it was illogical for a wife to open a court case against her husband. Women also did not want to go to court, not because they are scared or
masochistic, but in many cases their act of seeking help is an acknowledgement that they have failed in their traditional role of wives and mothers. Dangor (1995), attests that the police and judicial system treat complaints by abused women differently from other assault complaints. The South African women who have been assaulted by their partners and turn to the police for protection and assistance often report heartless or hostile treatment at the hands of police, court clerks and prosecutors (Dangor, 1995; Tifft, 2001).

Dobash and Dobash (1980), assert that arrest and judicial processing are unperturbed in cases of assault on women within the home. This is because police officers and judicial officials are apt to see the offence either as unimportant or not worthy of attention or as a civil and a social problem that requires the services of another agency. Police employ considerable discretionary powers in making such arrests, which is very discouraging for the abused woman to put her case forward.

The above assertion by Dobash and Dobash (1980), is confirmed by a story that was published in the Sowetan (12, November 2007), about a Black South African Woman who was brutally murdered and decapitated by her husband. This happened after the woman had laid charges of assault and filed for a protection order against her husband who was physically and emotionally abusive to her. The matter received no follow up by the police until her husband killed and decapitated her. The only time the police responded was when the woman was reported dead. They arrested her husband who subsequently hanged himself in the police cell after confessing to his wife’s murder, but sadly, her head was never found.

Another woman (a financial manager) was hanged by her neck and left to die by her husband. She was, by chance, rescued by a man who was passing by. The woman was admitted in the intensive care unit and fought for her life for more than two months. Her husband got away with a very light sentence of doing community service for two months only. The couple eventually divorced. Her husband remarried and subsequently murdered his second wife in cold blood by strangling her. These two above mentioned stories confirm what Dobash and Dobash (1980), and Mama (1989), mention that in other violent situations police typically arrest the attacker regardless of the characteristics of the victim and offender or circumstances surrounding the
crime, but when it comes to an abused woman, hostility and lack of sympathy are displayed towards the abused woman and not the perpetrator, and the perpetrator escapes with a light sentence. It is indeed a worrying situation as Dangor (1995), punctuates, that the South African judicial and law enforcement system is more likely to respond promptly to property damage than to women at risk from their violent partners.

Since the early 1980s most countries have initiated domestic violence legislation but have not endorsed or considered partner abuse as a specific criminal offence, and other forms of abuse other than physical abuse were not taken seriously (Levi, 1995; Tifft, 2001). According to the South African Prevention of Family Violence Act 133 of 1993, a person could not obtain a court interdict solely to be protected against emotional and verbal abuse without including allegations of physical or sexual abuse (N’Langu Mbumba, in Mohamed, 2003). This meant that a person was not considered abused unless she could show physical evidence such as black eyes, bruises or scalds. The legislature eventually received pressure from concerned groups and had to revisit the Prevention of Family violence Act which resulted in the formulation of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 (Mohamed, 2003).

The passing of the Prevention of Family violence Act in 1993 was successful in reducing violence against women. This law made it possible for an abused woman to get a protection order or an interdict. Once issued, the protection order requires the police to arrest the abuser if he continues the abuse (Levi, 1995). However, the shortfall of this Act is that it does not cover unmarried couples who have never lived together. This according to Levi is problematic in the South African context because live in domestic workers, which mostly are females and black, can be in long term violent relationships in which they live apart from their abusers.

Apart from the criminal law, violence against women may fall under two other legal systems which govern family relations in South Africa, namely civil law, which is based on Roman Dutch law and customary law which is based on the practises of the pre-colonial African societies (Levi, 1995). Only Africans are subject to customary law. This, according to Levi, poses a disadvantage for African women since it was recorded by male colonial officials in conjunction with the male tribal elite and as a result, it reflects male vision of family law. Despite the
changes, laws regarding the rights of women and industrialization, as well as the customary law have not been revised to address the rights of women, and in many cases as Levi (1995), states, customary law still permits the husband to have sex with a sister in law if his wife is infertile. Customary law also allows a man to marry his brother’s wife should he die. Rosalle Akoulle Abbey (2011), describes customary law as a tool of control and slavery. Bride price (lobola) which is common law practise among black people and is exercised in the majority of African marriages (will be discussed extensively in chapter 3) though it was not intended to, it has also contributed to violence against women. A discussion of the different types of women abuse will now follow.

2.6 Types of abuse
The definition of abuse used in this study will be in accordance to section 1 of the new Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. It will mean domestic violence against women which includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse, economic abuse, harassment, intimidation, stalking, damage to property, entrance into the complainant’s property without consent, or any other behaviour that is controlling or abusive (Government Gazette, 2 December 1998).

Abuse can take many forms, with other types more subtle than the others. The abuser can use a combination of tactics that work for him in order to control the victim. The kinds of abuse which many South African women experience include physical, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse (Mullender, 1996). Lee (2007), states that all women who are physically abused tend to also be verbally abused and psychologically abused. According to Lee, 72% of abused women report that emotional abuse had a more severe impact on them than physical abuse. Among a group of abused women 46% of women stated that emotional ridicule is the worst type of abuse to experience.

Power and control are said to be at the centre of abusive relationships and is surrounded by all forms of abuse. Abuse is when there is a pattern of one person trying to gain power and control over how the other person thinks, feels, acts and sees the world around them (Tifft, 2001). Physical abuse is any action that physically hurts or threatens or harms someone. Because physical abuse produces visible scars, many abusers use verbal, financial, spiritual,
psychological or emotional forms of power and control (The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, 2004).

All of these kinds of abuse may lead to physical violence (as illustrated by the figure below). Forms of power and control are shown on the next page and are illustrated by the power and control wheel (Adapted from: The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, 2004):

Figure 1: THE POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL
The Power and Control Wheel is the most commonly employed model in the field of women abuse study (Hart & Jamisien, 2002). The wheel emphasises control, not overt physical violence, as the defining features of woman abuse. The segments of the wheel illustrate various manifestations of power and control (e.g. economic abuse), highlighting the fact that physical violence can co-exist with tactics of control that may indeed be more common or more dangerous overall. The wheel was developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project of Duluth, Minnesota, based on their work treating abusive men. Many women find the wheel help them to put names to the behaviour of an abusive partner and recognise that their experiences are not unique to themselves (Hart & Jamisien, 2002).

The Power and Control Wheel clearly illustrates the types of abuse similar to those faced by South African women in their homes which include: physical abuse such as hitting, stabbing, burning, choking, use of electric shock and confinement, verbal humiliation and degradation by their partners, and emotional abuse through threats of violence, economic deprivation, or restricted access to their children. Dutton and Goodman (2005), add other factors such as: withholding of necessary resources such as money or transportation, abuse of the children and other relatives, or even pets. Usually the victims of power and control have an illusion that the exercised control is proof that the abusers love them.

The abusers also justify their control over their victims by stating that it is proof that they love them. In reality however, the abusers feel the need to isolate their victims as it enhances feelings of self-security (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). They feel that any relationship be it family or friends will undermine their authority and take their partner away from them. The effect of this isolation is that the victim feels alone in her struggle and that she doesn’t have anyone with whom she can do “reality check”. The victim is ultimately more dependent on the abuser for all her needs. This serves the purpose of the abuser to a great extent (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). Forms of abuse as mentioned previously may occur in combination with one another and can be described separately in the following way:
2.6.1 Emotional abuse

Mouradian (2007), describes emotional abuse as an on-going process in which one individual systematically diminishes and destroys the inner self of another in such a way that the essential ideas, feelings, perceptions and personality of the victim are continuously belittled. According to Mouradian (2007), emotional abuse is subtle and it goes unseen in such a way that the victim does not recognise that she has been abused. This form of abuse is reported by many women as harmful and as being worse than physical abuse. They suffer because of its role in setting up and maintaining the overall abusive dynamic of the relationship (Mouradian, 2007).

Emotional abuse does not produce black eyes and visible bruises, but it is cruel and scars the soul, it is seriously damaging to the self-esteem (Engel, 2007). It includes withholding of affection by a person in an intimate relationship, verbal attacks, constant belittling, controlling behaviour, insulting behaviour, name calling, and threats to the recipient and her children or pets. Broader categories of emotional abuse include isolation and verbal abuse (Mouradian, 2007), however, Engel (2007), highlights that emotional abuse is much more than verbal abuse. He defines it as any non-physical behaviour that is designed to control, intimidate, subjugate, demean, punish, or isolate another person through the use of degradation, humiliation, or fear. Chaney (2013) and Engel (2007), give the examples of emotional abuse as humiliation and degradation, discounting and negating, domination and control, judging and criticising, accusing and blaming, trivial and unreasonable demands, emotional distancing, silent treatment and isolation.

Engel (2007), goes on to mention other forms of emotional abuse behaviour which include: withholding of attention and affection, disapproving, dismissive, disrespect or condescending looks, comments and behaviour, sulking and pouting, projection and/or accusations, subtle threats of abandonment (either physical or emotional). Emotional abuse is described as the cornerstone of all types of abuse, including physical and sexual abuse (Barkhuizen & Pretorius, 2005). It is used for the purpose of wearing the victim down, more often for a long period of time, to undermine her self-concept until she is willing to take responsibility for her abuser’s actions towards her or simply accepting it (Chaney, 2013; Mouradian, 2007).
Forms of isolation in emotional abuse include: being checked on, being accused of unfaithfulness, ensuring lack of transport or access to telephone, making family and friends feel uncomfortable when they visit, complaining, bad moods, criticism or physical abuse, demanding a report for one’s actions and conversations, as well as deprivation of freedom of movement (Mouradian, 2007). It also includes the use of mental tactics such as aggression, anger, humiliation, sabotage, manipulation, corruption, intimidation, fear, dominance, power, and control to inflict emotional damage to another person. Control is a huge part of emotional abuse and it involves anger, jealousy, accusations, and distrust (Pawlik-Kienien, 2007). As previously stated, the victims usually have an illusion that the control is proof that the abusers love them. The abusers also justify their control over their victims by stating that it is proof that they love them.

2.6.2 Physical abuse
Physical abuse can be described as any deliberate physical assault to an individual that results in harming the recipient. It is the kind of abuse that involves contact intended to cause pain or other physical harm (Bailey, 2007). Physical abuse includes kicking, hitting, slapping, choking, burning, stabbing, biting, restraining, confinement, breaking bones, assault with a weapon such as a knife, and shooting the victim (Barkhuizen & Pretorius, 2005; de Benedictis, Jaffer, & Segal, 2006). This is the most obvious, most visible and the most lethal form of abuse. It usually starts small maybe by a small shove during an argument or wrist twisting, over time it frequently becomes more severe and more frequent, and it can even result in the death of the victim (de Benedictis et al., 2006).

One of the main signs of physical abuse are bruises or cuts on the skin as a result of some type of force, which the victim often describes as an accident. Physical abuse may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly (Department of Justice Canada- Spousal Abuse fact Sheet, 2007). Physical abuse is also indicated when the abuser subjects the victim to reckless driving, throws objects at her, locks her out of the house, withholds food as punishment, abuses her at mealtime thus disrupting her eating patterns, attacks her with weapons or kills her. It is reported that some victims usually take on guilt for being physically abused as if they are to blame while
others live in denial that they are abused. Some of the victims even rationalize the abuse and others are intimidated or manipulated by their partners not to report the abuse. Many victims of physical abuse become experts at hiding the abuse from others. They also become experts at coming up with excuses for their bumps, bruises or broken bones if they are discovered and are asked about them (Department of Justice Canada-Spousal Abuse fact Sheet, 2007). The other reason that causes this kind of abuse to go unreported is that the abuser threatens to harm the children, parents or the extended family of the victim.

Physical abuse is considered the easiest abuse to notice because its clues are obvious as evidenced by scars and broken bones (Pawlik-Kienien, 2007). The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) (2007), distinguishes between two indicators (signs or clues) of physical abuse and these are: physical and behavioural indicators. Physical indicators may include injuries or bruises, while behavioural indicators are ways victims and abusers act or interact with each other. Physical indicators include: sprains, dislocations, fractures or broken bones, burns from cigarettes, appliances, or hot water, abrasions on arms, legs, or torso that resembles rope or strap marks, internal injuries evidenced by pain, difficulty with normal functioning of organs, and bleeding from body orifices as well as bruises. The following are behavioural indicators (NCPEA, 2007): unexplained injuries or implausible explanations (they do not fit the injuries observed), family members provide different explanations of how injuries were sustained, a history of similar injuries, and/ or numerous suspicious hospitalizations, victims move between different medical facilities for treatment to prevent medical practitioners from observing a pattern of abuse, delay between onset of injury and seeking medical care.

### 2.6.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is described as any physical invasion of an individual’s body that is sexual in nature which is performed against the will of the individual. This includes kissing, touching, forced oral sex, rape or being forced to perform prostitution (Mullender, 1996). Sexual abuse includes forced or unwanted sexual activities which are used to dominate, manipulate threaten, injure, corrupt or control another person (Mullender, 1996).
A woman should know that she is sexually abused if the following happen: a person knowingly exposes her to sexually transmitted diseases, she is forced to participate in unwanted sexual activities, she is subjected to sexual comments or gestures that make her uncomfortable, she is forced to have sex with a third party or in a group, forced to watch pornography, forced to wear sexual attire that she is uncomfortable with, being spied on while she baths or gets dressed, having sex with her while she is asleep or intoxicated, forced to be involved in sexual photography, being intentionally hurt during sexual intercourse, unwanted objects used on her during sex or inflicted injuries that are sex specific, sex and affection being withheld as a method of control or punishment, coerced penile penetration of any forced or coerced sex with animals, interference with birth control and coerced sex by manipulation or threats (Mouradian, 2007).

Sexual abuse is said to be the most often hidden kind of abuse, and it is one of the most difficult forms of interpersonal violence to be prosecuted because people find it difficult to believe that forced sex within marriage or relationship can be considered a sexual assault (Manabe, 2001). It can also be extraordinarily difficult for victims to talk about sexual abuse because of the ways in which this kind of violence is perpetrated. Men sometimes use sex to punish or control their women. They also use it (sex) as a way of asserting their authority and dominance over women. There is a sense of entitlement among some men that they can have sex with their women whenever they want to. When sexual abuse occurs within a marriage, a woman is often unsure as to whether she was raped or not, neither the abuser, nor the victim considers it as rape. This is partially due to cultural and religious acceptance that it is the wife’s duty to fulfil her husband’s sexual desires (Engel, 2007). Unfortunately, a marriage license does not entitle a man to use his wife’s body the way he pleases. In South Africa, forcing sexual intercourse on a woman is considered as rape (Manabe, 2001). Sexual abuse leaves emotional scars that can make even the strongest woman feel humiliated, ashamed and embarrassed. As Manabe (2001), says, sexual abuse undermines self-confidence and takes away self-respect in a victim.

2.6.4 Financial abuse

Financial abuse also called economic abuse includes coercion or limitations placed on an individual that has adverse effects on the woman or her children. This can be forcing a woman to
hand over her earnings by her husband, not allowing her to work, or drawing from her personal or a shared bank account without her knowledge or consent (Mullender, 1996). This kind of abuse means that the perpetrator uses money and money-related matters to dominate, sabotage, manipulate, control, inflict damage on or take advantage of another person. Financial abuse includes the following: controlling the family income and not allowing the victim access to money or rigidly limiting access to family funds. This may include keeping financial secrets, hidden accounts, putting the victim on an allowance or depriving her a say in how money is spent, or making her turn her pay check over to him (Mullender, 1996).

Financial abuse also includes preventing the victim from taking a job or causing her to lose a job. The perpetrator can make the victim to lose her job by causing her to be late for work, refusing to transport her to work, or by constantly calling and harassing her at work, spending money for food, rent, utilities on non-essential items such as drugs, alcohol and hobbies or having to account for every penny spent, forcing the victim to beg or commit crimes for money, spending child benefits on himself and not permitting the victim to spend available funds on her children or herself (Bailey, 2007).

In this kind of abuse, the perpetrator makes monetary or investment decisions to which the partner might object that affect both people and/or the family without consulting the partner or without reaching an agreement with the partner. Also restricting the partner’s usage of the family car or other means of transportation, and preventing the victim or forbidding her to work or attend school or skills training (Pawlik-Kienien, 2007). Financial abuse differs from other kinds of abuse in that it focuses on preventing the victim from possessing or maintaining any type of financial independence and forcing material dependence of the victim on the abusive partner (Mouradian, 2007).

2.6.5 Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse can include: yelling and shouting at a person, making threats, insulting a person and the family, being sarcastic about or criticising a person’s interests, opinions or beliefs, humiliating a person either in private or in company, sneering, growling, name calling, withholding approval, appreciation, or conversation, refusing to discuss important issues as well
as excessive blaming and shaming the victim (Engel, 2007; Stevens, 2007). People tend to think that verbal abuse is only when the abuser hurls insulting names to the victim. According to Burke (2006), there are many forms of verbal abuse like when the abuser uses critical, insulting or humiliating remarks (e.g. *you are stupid, your mind is like dish water, who do you think you are? et cetera.* ) or when he keeps the victim up all night insisting on talking when she needs to sleep.

Evans (1992), mentions that verbal abuse can either be overt (whereby there are angry outbursts and name calling) or covert (very subtle, like brainwashing). Overt verbal abuse is said to consist of blaming, accusations and consequently confusing the victim while covert verbal abuse is viewed as hidden aggression and is even more confusing to the partner. It aims at controlling the woman without her knowing it. The woman sometimes does not even know that she is manipulated and controlled (Evans, 1992).

Like other forms of abuse, verbal abuse has elements of emotional abuse and has psychological consequences. This kind of abuse is seen by Engel (2007), as causing extreme damage to a person’s self-image and self-esteem. Evans (1992), concurs that verbal abuse constitutes psychological violence in the sense that it undermines a woman’s sense of worth and self-concept by discounting her ideals, opinions or beliefs. Verbal abuse disregards, disrespects and devalues the abused woman in such a way that her self-esteem gradually diminishes without her even noticing it, she may even be brainwashed subtly without noticing it (Evans, 1992).

### 2.7 Signs of an abusive relationship

According to de Benedictis et al., (2006), there are many signs of abuse, but the primary sign of abuse in a relationship is fear of one’s partner. Other signs include a partner who belittles you or tries to control you, feelings of self-loathing, numbness, helplessness and desperation (de Benedictis et.al.,). de Benedictis et al., (2006), compiled a list of questions that can be used to determine an abusive relationship. They state that if the victims answer is “yes” to ten of those questions, then that person is likely in an abusive relationship. The questions are classified in the following way (Bailey, 2007; de Benedictis et al., 2006; Pawlik-Kienien, 2007; Pytel, 2006):

- **Inner feelings and thoughts:** What is explored here is whether: the victim fears the partner most of the time, avoids certain topics out of fear of angering her partner, feels
that she cannot do anything right for her partner, thinks that she deserves to be hurt or mistreated, feels afraid that her partner will kill her, feels afraid that her partner will take her children away, feels emotionally numb and helpless, and thinks that domestic violence is normal.

- **Partner’s violent or threatening behaviour:** In this case what is explored is whether the partner has episodes of bad and unpredictable temper, and whether he makes everyone else responsible for his feelings, whether the partner has hurt the victim before or has threatened to kill her, has threatened to take the children away if the victim tries to leave, has forced her to have sex when she does not want to, or has destroyed the victim’s belongings or household objects

- **Partner’s controlling behaviour:** What is determined here is whether the partner tries to keep the victim from seeing her family and friends, limits her access to money, the telephone and or the car, acts excessively jealous and possessive, or whether he tries to stop the victim from going where she wants or doing what she wants, checks up on the victim, including who she has been with.

- **Partner’s belittlement of the victim:** Here it is established whether the partner verbally abuses the victim, humiliates or criticises her in front of the others, often ignores her or puts her down her opinions or contributions, blames the victim for his own violent behaviour, objectifies or disrespects those of the victim’s gender, sees the victim as property or a sex object, rather than a person.

There are also warning signs that a core worker is a victim of abuse. A cluster of the following warning signs in a core-worker according to de Benedictis et al., (2006) and Bailey (2007), is an indication that she is abused: bruises and other signs of impact on the skin, with the excuse of “accidents”, depression, frequent and sudden absences, crying, frequent lateness, frequent harassing phone calls to the person while they are at work, references to the partner’s anger, decreased productivity and attentiveness, isolation from friends, insufficient resources to live like money, credit cards and a car.
Effects of abuse on the victim, children and significant others

According to various studies conducted, any form of abuse by an intimate partner can have serious immediate and long term effects including health consequences on the victim (Campbell, Abrahams & Martin, 2008; Ruiz-Perez, Plazaola-Castallo & del Rio-Lozano, 2007). These effects not only affect the victim but also the children and the significant others such as family.

Frey (2003), mentions that the cognitive and emotional after effects of abuse have a powerful impact on educational, social and occupational functioning. In adult life, abuse survivors are at risk of repeating childhood patterns through forming relationships with abusive spouses, employers or professionals. According to Frey (2003), even though a survivor may consciously want to avoid being re-abused, the individual is often unconsciously attracted to people who remind him or her of the family of origin. Abused adults are also likely to fail to complete their education, or they accept employment that is significantly below their actual level of ability (Frey, 2003).

Literature from the disciplines of medicine, nursing, and psychology has provided a profile associated with effects of abuse (Ratner, 1998), and a discussion about effects of woman abuse on the victim will follow. Effects on the children and significant others will also be discussed.

2.8.1 Effects of abuse on the victims

Abuse does not need to be physical or sexual to be harmful, psychological abuse puts victims at equal risk of developing physical and mental health problems (Tharp, 2013). Abuse, irrespective of the type, affects every dimension of human development and existence (Frey, 2003). Different effects of abuse on the victim will be discussed hereunder.

2.8.1.1 Psychological effects

Many authors put more focus on the effects of physical abuse on women’s health and ignore the fact that psychological abuse such as put downs, controlling behaviour and threats also affect the women’s health (Chronholm, Ismailj, & Mettner, 2013; Davidow, 2006). Amy Bonomi, a senior research associate at the Centre for Health Studies once wrote “We need billboards that say ‘Being called names by a partner is hazardous to your health’” (Davidow, 2006). This statement
emphasises that psychological abuse should also be taken as serious as physical abuse in the way women’s health is affected. Abused women usually experience trauma which result in the disruption of their psychic balance. Trauma disturbs the normal haemostatic functioning and changes the optimal levels of psychological functioning. Abused women will often feel helpless, fearful, terrorised, vulnerable and at the mercy of fate (Seletswana, 2002).

Woman abuse often leads to victim depression, suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse in addition to the pain inflicted through the acts themselves (Hegadoren & Coupland, 2006; Smith, 1999; Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). Hitti (2006), and Davidow (2006), point out that women who are abused are more likely to report poorer health and depression, and the longer they have been experiencing abuse, the worse their health tends to be. Those who have a history of mental disorders are particularly vulnerable to depression and anxiety. According to a study conducted by Davidow (2006), women who had been abused in the past five years were four times more likely than other women to have symptoms of severe depression in addition to other physical symptoms such as nausea, back pain, chest pain and headaches.

Abuse inhibits opportunity to realize the sense of self, to realize one’s potential. It prevents one from becoming productive and independent and can even lead to one’s death (Dangor, 1995). Psychological disorders arising from sexual abuse include somatoform, multiple personality disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hutchings & Dutton in Seletswana, 2002). Post-traumatic stress disorder has been found to be more prevalent particularly amongst women who have been sexually and physically assaulted (Doyal, 1995). According to Thompson, Kaslow, Kingree, Puett, Thompson and Meadows (2004), physical abuse and not non-physical abuse were associated with increased risk for PTSD.

According to Frey (2003), repeated trauma alters the neurochemistry of the brain that affects memory formation. Frey (2003) mentions that instead of memories being formed in the normal way, which allows them to be modified by later experiences and integrated into a person’s on going life, memories related to trauma are said to be stored as chaotic fragments of emotion and sensation that are sealed off from ordinary consciousness. These traumatic memories may
according to Frey (2003), then erupt from time to time in the form of flashbacks manifested in PTSD.

Most abused women are incapacitated by anxiety about the next attack (physical or emotional) and remain shocked, upset, angry and bitter about being damaged by someone who claim to love them (Doyal, 1995). Low self-esteem is another issue faced by abused women. Campbell (1989) discovered that abused women scored lower than normative groups on measures of self-esteem. Most abused women tend to blame themselves for the abusive situation. The abuse lessens the woman’s sense of control and she may internalise blame or stop struggling to free herself from the abuse (Roberts, 1996).

Studies have shown a correlation between victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and eating disorders (Alwan, 2005). Victims of abuse are said to find comfort and safety in their eating disorder whether it is anorexia, bulimia or overeating. They tend to block out or repress the painful memories of the abuse by overeating or denying themselves food, and in a way numb out the feelings and emotions that come along with the experience. Alwan (2005), purports these women develop a facade for the abuse (not on a conscious level) by developing an eating disorder.

2.8.1.2 Physical effects
A study conducted by Coker, Smith, Bethea, King and Mckeown (2000), on the physical health consequences of physical and psychological intimate partner violence, revealed that women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to report their physical and mental health as fair or poor. Apart from broken bones or ruptured internal organs these women tend to have more physician visits presenting with ailments such as irritable bowel syndrome and frequent dyspepsia, chronic pain, migraine and other frequent headaches, sexually transmitted diseases, bladder, kidney and other urinary tract infections (Coker et al., 2000; Frey, 2003). There is also prevalence of headaches, chronic pain, and sleep problems (Dienemann, Boyle, Baker, Resnick, Wiederhorn & Campbell, 2000).
Intimate partner violence or abuse during pregnancy can lead to fatal effects on the mother and the child. Parsons and Harper (in Seletswana, 2002), mention some complications which may occur and these include: pre-term labour, placenta abruptio, or death of the foetus. Abuse tends to also affect the woman’s sexual health. A study conducted by Raj, Liu, McCleary-Sills and Silverman (2005), to assess relationship between intimate partner violence and sexual health among South Asian women in Boston, revealed that abuse reduces sexual autonomy, increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancy and multiple abortions.

2.8.2 **Effects of abuse on children and the significant others**

There is no current research on the effects of intimate partner abuse among Black South African Women specifically, although it is not solely the purpose of this study, the researcher hopes that such effects will be elicited in the current study.

Any form of domestic violence has complex effects on children and their mothers. Children of abused woman tend to live in a state of fear and uncertainty and they are often deprived of the joys of childhood. Abuse or violence in their homes disrupt their sense of safety and security and threaten their well-being (The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2004). These children often end up with problems in their emotional, behavioural, social, and physical development. Others may subsequently exhibit aggression, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and below average academic performance, delinquency and other emotional problems (The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2004).

Witnessing violence increases the chances that boys will grow up to act violently with dating and/or marital partners. For girls, it increases the chances that they will accept violence in their dating and/or marital relationships (Peel Committee against woman abuse, 2005). Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence are more likely to become abusers themselves because they learn that violence is an acceptable way to cope with stress or problems or to gain control over another person (Peel Committee against woman abuse, 2005).

Children in abusive relationships exhibit behavioural problems which include: Inability to concentrate in school, learning disabilities, violence and aggressiveness, and stress-related
physical symptoms. Children who witness abuse are 50 times more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs, and six times more likely to commit suicide than children in the general population (Matthews, 1999).

An article in the Women’s Rural Advocacy Programmes (2007) titled: The effects of domestic violence on children gives a long list of effects of woman abuse on children. In this article, it is postulated that in the homes where domestic violence occurs, children are at high risk for suffering physical abuse themselves. Regardless of whether children are physically abused, the emotional effects of witnessing domestic violence are very similar to the psychological trauma of being a victim of child abuse. Children in homes where domestic violence occurs may experience cognitive or language problems, developmental delay, stress-related physical ailments (such as headaches, ulcers, and rashes), and hearing and speech problems. They are said to have difficulties in school, including problems with concentration, poor academic performance, difficulty with peer interactions, and more absences from school. These children often end up taking responsibility for the abuse and self-blame can precipitate feelings of guilt, worry, and anxiety (Matthews, 1999).

Children may become withdrawn, non-verbal, and exhibit regressed behaviours such as clinging and whining, also eating and sleeping difficulty, concentration problems, generalised anxiety and physical complains such as headaches. Adolescents are at risk of academic failure, school drop-out, delinquency, substance abuse, and difficulties in their own relationships (Women’s Rural Advocacy Programmes, 2007). Newton (2001), however mentions that, this cannot be regarded as the absolute truth because children have different levels of resilience or hardiness and different personality attributes, so different children may respond differently to similar abusive situations.

Volpe (1996), mentions that for some children and adolescents, questions about home life may be difficult to answer, especially if the individual has been "warned" or threatened by a family member to refrain from "talking to strangers" about events that have taken place in the family. Volpe (1996), asserts that the first step in assisting children or teens in need of support is by referring them to the appropriate school personnel. When there is suggestion of domestic
violence with a student, considerations should be made to involve the school psychologist, social worker, guidance counsellor and/or a school administrator (when indicated). Although the circumstances surrounding each case may vary, suspicion of child abuse is required to be reported to the local child protection agency by teachers and other school personnel. In some cases contact with the local police department may also be necessary. When in doubt, consult with school team members.

The extended family tends to also suffer effects of partner abuse in the sense that they are continuously estranged as the abuse intensifies. They may be alienated by the abused woman herself who breaks off from family and friends in an effort to please the abuser or in an attempt to camouflage the abuse. Extended family may also pull out from the abused woman because of their feelings of debilitation, frustration, bewilderment and/or because of the abuser’s threats, or acts of violence towards them (Mashishi, 1998). What follows is a discussion on the barriers to leaving abusive relationships.

### 2.9 Barriers to leaving the abusive relationship

Women are frequently blamed for staying in abusive relationships without considering the barriers they face in leaving such relationships. A frequently asked question is: why do women stay in abusive relationships? Why don’t they just leave? Another question which is frequently asked is: why do women return to their abusive partners after they left? Research has shown that 60-70% of women who seek help in shelters eventually return to their abusive relationships (Makofane, 2002), and the big question is 'why'.

Several authors like Choice and Lamke (1997), Dangor (1995) and Singh (2005), have written about this phenomenon and the consensus amongst them is that factors which create a conducive environment for abuse include women’s social, economic and political dependence on men. In this case one may ask the question: What about women who are not financially dependent on their male partners, those who earn more than their counterparts? The answer is, according to (Weitzman, 2000), it is hard for professional, highly paid women to believe that abuse is happening to them. More often, professional women are trapped by fear of exposure and being
emotionally blackmailed by their partners. Again professional women usually worry about what they will lose if they leave the relationship. This includes fear of losing an expensive home in an exclusive suburb, their social standing in the community, their financial security and a superior education for their children (Weitzman, 2000). Another barrier is that women who try to divorce wealthy men typically find themselves in unending court battles because these men are able to manipulate the judicial system (Weitzman, 2000). Weitzman (2000), further points out that, women with professions have an advantage over poor and blue collar women in terms of job skills, and education. However, they are like all other women in terms of becoming sucked into the psychological and emotional abuse that traps them.

Wilson (1997), groups barriers faced by women when they want to escape into four categories and these include among others:

- **Personal barriers**: Shame, fear and lack of emotional support.
- **Relationship barriers**: Being denied access to money, transportation and physical abuse itself.
- **Institutional barriers**: Immigration policies, cultural insensitivity, lack of services, discrimination, sexism and other forms of abuse
- **Cultural barriers**: Language differences, beliefs about marriage and the family, gender roles and religious beliefs.

For Choice and Lamke (1997), the essential aspect of women’s stay or leave decision seem to revolve around two central questions: “Will I be better off”? And “Can I do it?” These writers suggest that abused women’s stay or leave decisions occur in a stepwise fashion i.e. a woman may wish to leave but be prevented from doing so because she feels she has no control over her circumstances. Conversely, she may have the necessary resources for leaving but may wish to remain in the relationship.

Stevens (2007), sees low self-esteem, denial, a feeling that ‘things will get better,” fear for the children etc. as the reasons women stay in abusive relationships. Other psychological, socio-psychological and social factors such as traditional sexual ideology, fear, poor self-image, hope that husband will change or reform (Dobash & Dobash, 1980) and the impact of the husband’s
expression of love or sorrow, doubt that they can get along alone, stigma attached to divorce, they have children who need father’s support and the difficulty for a woman who has children to find a job have been considered as influences on decisions women make either to stay or leave relationships (Gelles, 1986). A study conducted by Gondolf and Eisher amongst the Hispanic community in America found that the superior role of the man plus other realities such as a woman marrying at a young age, having large families, being economical dependent and less educated proved to be factors that locked them in abusive marriages (Singh, 2005).

2.9.1 Traditional/ Cultural factors
Singh (2005), argues that before people can judge the abused woman’s actions of staying as reasonable or unreasonable, clinical or pathological, they have to position her race and cultural reality. The results of a study called Gender, Control and Marital Commitment conducted by Stets and Hammons (2002), showed that cultural meanings and social structure meanings combine to produce outcomes for commitment in marriage. According to Singh (2005), differences in marital norms which are shaped by cultural standards do affect a woman’s decision to remain or leave an abusive relationship. These will be discussed extensively in the next chapter.

2.9.2 Religious factors
Many women succumb to abusive relationships because of their religion. Motsei (2007), mentions that religions such as Christianity, African traditional religion, Judaism and Islam always proclaim the respect for women and yet remain unjust to them. The Bible contains verses which state that women have to be submissive to their husbands (The Holy Bible, Ephesians 5:22). This statement puts pressure on a woman to endure all forms of abuse within the marriage. According to (Makofane, 2002), abused women in prominent church positions may feel obliged to protect their partners and therefore do not disclose their abusive relationships.

Women still remain loyal to their religion despite the fact that it promotes patriarchy and oppression. Makofane (2002), mentions that a study conducted by Alsdurf, revealed that abused wives are more likely to consult the clergy than any other professional after the first battering. The results from 5700 questionnaires mailed to ministers in the United States and Canada were
as follows: 26% of the pastors agreed that a wife should submit to her husband and believe that God will honour her action by either stopping the abuse or by giving her the strength to endure it, however, 50% of the pastors expressed concern that the husband’s aggression should not be overemphasised and used as a justification for the breakup of the marriage, further on the other hand 33% of the pastors mention that the abuse has to be severe to justify a Christian wife leaving her husband. Again 21% of the pastors felt that no amount of abuse should justify a separation. Only 17% of the pastors believed that seldom expressed physical violence would compel a woman to separate from her husband. Generally, according to Makofane, pastors’ beliefs reflect the society’s acceptance of patriarchal practices of dominance and abuse.

2.9.3 Economic factors
Most of the women become trapped in abusive relationships because of lack of economic independence. In South Africa, most women are still occupying low paying jobs such as nursing, education, clerical jobs, domestic work and child minding, whilst men are occupying most executive well-paying jobs which render them breadwinners.

Leaving an abusive relationship entails a lower standard of living for the woman and her children (Dangor, 1999). This is still due to traditional and structural positioning of women in our Black societies. Some of the respondents in a study called Professional women as victims of emotional abuse within marriage or cohabiting relationship conducted by Barkhuizen and Pretorius (2005), gave financial loss as a reason for staying in abusive relationships. This was particularly evident where children attended private schools. These women stayed because they wanted to maintain the same standard of living for their children.

2.9.4 Learned helplessness and personal factors
Many women tend to channel themselves into a position of accepting rather than challenging the abuse. This is what Walker (1984), calls learned helplessness and it is another reason why abused women do not attempt to leave abusive relationships. According to Walker’s theory of learned helplessness, after several attempts to control the violence in their relationship, women tend to produce learned helplessness and depression. According to Walker (1984), an abused woman becomes de-motivated when her efforts to curb the abuse do not yield her expected outcomes.
She then loses motivation to emit new responses and consequently she comes to believe that there is nothing she can do to change the situation, so she stops trying.

Learned helplessness contributes to low self-esteem and psychological paralysis on the part of a woman which leads to her enduring abuse and maintaining the victim status. Walker (1984), mentions that if a woman has to escape learned helplessness, she has to: experience anger rather than being depressed and blaming herself, be active rather than passive, and be more realistic about the chances of the relationship continuing on its aversive course rather than improving.

Women sometimes feel that they have invested a great deal in the marriage in terms of time and energy, as well as bearing children (Dangor, 1999). This causes women to be committed despite the destructiveness of the abusive relationship. Dangor (1999), emphasises that even many professional women with a decent standard of leaving struggle to quit abusive relationships as a result of factors such as internalised oppression, cultural norms, fear and self-blame.

Other common reasons given by women for staying in abusive relationships include socially determined reasons which involve utterances like “it’s part of marriage”, “it’s better than to raise children alone”, “he promised to change” (Makofane, 2002). Other women even go to extents of rationalising by stating that “at least he takes good care of the children financially”. Makofane (2002), maintains that women are often brainwashed into believing the aggression of males is innate and inevitable. This happens because of gender roles in our societies which prescribe that men are supposed to be in charge, cannot help being violent or have the right to discipline women. The woman may believe that it is expected of her to try and keep her man happy. Sometimes the partner blames the woman for his abusive behaviour and part of the woman may believe this. Often the abused women do not see the abuse as the abuser’s problem but instead they take the blame for being failures and not good enough mothers and partners (Musson-Seedat, 2008).

Other women become loyal and feel the right thing to do is to stick with their partners no matter what. In other instances the woman thinks she can change, fix or heal her partner if she stays, this is what Matthews (2004), calls the Rescue complex. Hope that her partner will change also
causes the woman to stay. This hope is brought about by many memories of happy times, and hope that those will return. The partner may also promise to change (Matthews, 2004).

2.9.5 Traumatic bonding and Stockholm syndrome

The other factor that keeps women in abusive relationships is that of traumatic bonding. The traumatic bonding theory postulates that strong emotional ties develop between two people where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses or intimidate the other. The abused person tends to be physically and emotionally exhausted from the abuse and is most likely to develop a corresponding need for support and affection. She then becomes vulnerable to the abuser’s apologies and promises. The couple may once again become loving until the next violent attack. This cycle explains the victim’s reluctance to leave or persecute the abuser (Roberts, 1996).

A study conducted by Christman (2009), found that women leave and return to their partners because of traumatic bonding. In this study forgiveness was found to partially mediate the relationship between traumatic bond and the intention of the abused to return, and traumatic bond mediated the relationship between preoccupied attachment to the abusive partner and intention to return to the abusive relationship. In this case Christman (2009), suggests that interventions in the case of women who experience traumatic bonding should address variables regarding the individual’s emotional attachment to the relationship and not only look at variables such as income, employment and child care. Traumatic bonding is comparable to the Stockholm syndrome where the abused is always grateful for small displays of kindness from the abuser. The abused rationalises acts of violence and denies her own anger (Ramashia, 2009). When the abused woman is asked the question “Why do you stay in an abusive relationship? It is usually answered “Because I love him”. This is referred to as the Stockholm syndrome (Dixon, 1998).

2.9.6 Lack of community resources

Gelles (1986), sees lack of resources as another factor that traps a woman in an abusive relationship. Lack of resources tends to strip a woman off her power, and as a result she becomes entrapped in the abusive relationship. The decision for a woman to leave is often a complex one because there is little support for her except through outside intervention which is mostly
unavailable (Dobash & Dobash, 1980). “Thus the woman feels that she is trapped in a relationship in which she is brutalised and humiliated and there are a few people or agencies who are willing or able to help” (Dobash & Dobash, 1980, p.161).

The researcher agrees with Dangor (1999), who mentions that despite the great deal of rhetoric and some new legislation put up for violence against women, there has been no implementation of domestic violence services by the government, and the government falls short on providing state subsidised shelters for abused women. The researcher knows of only one shelter for abused women in her vicinity except NISSA Institute for Women’s Development which is about 75km away from the researcher’s place of residence. The researcher also knows of no counselling services for abused women provided by the state in her vicinity. Dangor (1999), further comments on the following shortcomings of the state regarding services for abused women. According to the minister of Welfare and Population Development, the current welfare budget does not have funds for shelters. NGO’s take the primary responsibility to provide services for abused women and children with minimum or no assistance from the state. Government is doing little to address violence against women or to support religious and charity organisations in providing services for abused women.

As discussed previously, leaving an abusive relationship is not a simple matter. Over and above barriers to leaving, a woman can be faced with other factors which she needs to weigh carefully before she considers leaving. The crucial factors and the dilemmas a victim tends to consider when thinking of leaving an abusive relationship, especially if she has children, is outlined in Table 1 below (The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2004).
Table 1. DILEMMAS IN LEAVING ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible risks if she stays</th>
<th>Possible risks if she leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Physical injury**: He can continue to hit and injure her.  
**Death**: He might kill her or the children.  
**Health risks**: STDs/HIV: she might have no choice regarding safe sex practices. He might sexually assault her. | **Physical injury**: He might continue to injure her. He also might be inclined to escalate the violence after she leaves.  
**Death**: Leaving does not ensure that he will not find her, and it might increase the chance she or the children will be killed.  
**Health risks**: STDs/HIV: Unsafe behaviour may continue. He might sexually assault her. |

**CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible risks if she stays</th>
<th>Possible risks if she leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Physical injury or psychological harm**: Children can witness violence, be targets themselves or be hurt trying to protect others.  
**Loss of children**: He could make false allegations of child neglect or abuse about her. Failure to protect arguments could be used to remove children or terminate parental rights. | **Physical injury or psychological harm**: Children can witness violence, be targets themselves or be hurt trying to protect others. They might be at great risk during visitation.  
**Loss of children**: He could legally gain custody or just take the children. He could make false allegations of child neglect or abuse. |

**FINANCIAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible risks if she stays</th>
<th>Possible risks if she leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Standard of leaving**: He might control the money and give her little to live on. He could lose or quit his job.  
**Loss of income/job**: He could keep her from working or limit how much she works. He might sabotage her efforts to find a job or her success in a job or training program.  
**Loss of housing**: She could be evicted because of property damage he has done.  
**Loss of or damage to possessions**: He might destroy things of importance or of value to her. | **Standard of living**: She might now have to live on less money, relying solely on her own income. She might have to move out of her home and community.  
**Loss of income/job**: She might have to quit her job and raise her children as a single parent. He might sabotage her efforts to find a job or her success in a training program.  
**Loss of housing**: She might have to move out, leave town or go into hiding. She might lose her home in a divorce.  
**Loss of or damage to possessions**: He might destroy things of importance or value to her. She might have to leave things behind if she flees. |

**PSYCHOLOGICAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible risks if she stays</th>
<th>Possible risks if she leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Psychological harm**: Verbal, emotional and physical attacks will continue to affect her.  
**Substance abuse**: She might use drugs or alcohol to help her cope with emotional and physical pain.  
**Suicide**: He might threaten or commit suicide. | **Psychological harm**: He might have continued access to her particularly if they have children in common.  
**Substance abuse**: She might use drugs or alcohol to help her cope with her new situation and past abuse.  
**Suicide**: He might threaten or commit suicide. |

Source: The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 2004
The table above depicts that indeed the decision to leave an abusive relationship is not as straightforward as it might seem. It is almost like women get caught between the devil and the deep blue sea because of the dilemmas mentioned above. However, some women do eventually manage to leave, but with varying intentions of the permanency of that act (Dobash & Dobash, 1980). Some women have at some time left but with every intention of returning, and sometimes with the intention to make a permanent break. What needs to be considered, according to Dobash and Dobash (1980), “is the part that temporary leaving plays in the relationship, as well as the personal and material factors associated with a woman’s decision to leave permanently, and her ability to implement such a decision” (p.145). Decision making in terms of staying and leaving, poses a great challenge to abused women.

2.10 Efforts by abused women to curb the abuse and coping mechanisms
A study conducted by Burke, Denison, Carlson, Mcdonnel and O’Campo (2004), found that women in abusive relationships do take action to survive, cope with it and eventually have the abuse ended. In their study, Burke et al., (2004), used the trans-theoretical model to prove that women can take control of their abusive situations. The trans-theoretical model also known as the stages of change model addresses a person’s readiness to change behaviour (Burke et al., 2004; Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). This model states that with regard to chronic behaviour pattern an individual can be characterised as belonging to one of five stages which are:

- **Pre-contemplating** stage whereby the woman does not recognise the abusive behaviour and is not interested in change.
- **Contemplation**: the woman recognises the abusive behaviour as a problem, and has increasing awareness of the pros and cons of change.
- **Preparation**: The woman recognises the abusive behaviour as a problem intends to change and has developed a plan.
- **Action**: The woman is actively engaged in making changes related to ending the abusive behaviour.
- **Maintenance**: The abusive behaviour has ended and the woman is taking steps to prevent relapse.
These stages are used in conjunction with Prochaska’s processes of change to produce change in abused women. The processes are namely: consciousness raising, self-revaluation, environmental revaluation, social liberation, helping relationships, stimulus control, decisional balance and self-efficacy (Burke et al., 2004). These processes will not be extensively discussed as they are beyond the scope of this study. The researcher will however, highlight what this combination of the 5 stages and these processes yield in abused women.

According to Burke et al., (2004), these processes lead a woman to seeking information and gaining better understanding regarding the abuse, to start looking at important things in life, to confront the partner about the abuse, accepting that one cannot change a person, but herself. These processes mentioned above make a person to start becoming liberated socially and subsequently not needing validation from a man. A woman also starts to seek helping relationships such as talking to family, seeking and accepting help from institutions and going for counselling. Self-liberation occurs when an individual chooses and commits to changing the problem behaviour. Self-liberation includes setting some boundaries and sticking to them. Once a woman has initiated action, she needs to have confidence in her ability to both end the abuse and to stay free from it and this is called self-efficacy (Burke et al., 2004; Salazar, Hogberg, Valledares & Ohman, 2012).

The trans-theoretical method of understanding women’s experiences of ending abuse has been criticised by authors such as West (2005). West argues that the model is just used as a security blanket for researchers and clinicians. He feels there are other decision-making models which can be used in effecting behaviour change such as the health belief model and the theory of planned behaviour. In the light of this the researcher recommends that further studies that compare the effectiveness of such models in changing the behaviour of enduring abuse in abused women should be done.

In their study: Coping with an abusive relationship: How do women stay? Herbet, Silver and Ellard (1991), found that women who remain with abusive partners appear to employ cognitive strategies that help them perceive their relationship in a positive manner. The discussion that follows will be on the theoretical perspectives of intimate partner abuse.
2.11 Theoretical perspectives of intimate partner abuse

In this section an attempt will be made to discuss different theories that explain the existence of abuse in intimate relationships. These theories are important in the sense that they inform our understanding of prevention, prediction and treatment of such abuse (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, Dick, Malla, Mazaheri, & Poissin, 1998). Theories discussed in this chapter are psychological theories, feminist theory, sociological theories, systems theory and coercive control theory.

2.11.1 Psychological theories

For the purpose of this study the psychological theories which will be used to explain the existence of spousal abuse are the psychodynamic, psychopathological and social learning theories.

2.11.1.1 Psychodynamic theories

The psychodynamic theories include psychological theories that see human functioning as based upon how drives and forces within a person interact, particularly the unconscious, and how the interaction between different structures of the personality occur (Avis, Pauw & Van der Spuy, 2000; Mcleod, 2007). Central theorists within the psychodynamic school include Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Melanie Klein, Otto Rank, Erik Erikson, Alfred Adler, Donald Winnicott, Bowlby, and Margaret Mahler to name a few (Avis et al., 2000). Within the psychodynamic approaches, Freud, Klein, Fairban and Bowlby’s theories will be used to explain spousal abuse. For the purpose of this study the discussion of these theories will be limited as applying to the abuse of women by their spouses.

i. Freud’s psychodynamic theory

In his theory Freud (1921), mentions constructs that are taking place within the individual which are the conscious, unconscious and the subconscious. The conscious mind according to Freud (1921), consists of all mental processes which people are aware of, and the unconscious mind contains the biological instincts for the urges of sex and aggression. The unconscious mind according to Freud keeps all the material which people need to keep out of awareness.
In his approach Freud (1938), sees phenomena as the manifestation of unconscious drives, wishes and fantasies that come about as a result of poor defence mechanisms within the personality structure and inability to suppress these unconscious impulses. According to Freud’s theory, the unconscious is constructed in childhood out of a person’s earliest desires and losses. According to Freud, the systems of frozen meanings are kept in the unconscious and these then influence everything people do irrespective of age without them being aware. Freud believed that the influences of the unconscious reveal themselves in a way of dreams, random slips of the tongue, in jokes or in neurotic symptoms such as anxiety, guilt, depression, obsessions, phobias or sudden emotional outburst which are unexplainable (Mcleod, 2007; Minsky, 1996). This, according to Freud’s theory accounts for the anger outbursts that are evident in abusive relationships (Minsky, 1996). According to this theory it could mean that abusive people have been subjected to childhood pain or losses which became frozen and stored in the unconscious only to reveal themselves later in a form of anger outbursts seen in abusive men.

Freud’s theory also focuses on the development through the psychosexual stages which according to Freud are the oral, anal, phallic, latency and the genital stages. According to Freud, experiencing trauma and failure to resolve conflicts may cause problems in the completion of these stages leading to problems in one developing into a fully functioning adult (Freud,1938). Freud also developed the a concept of the id which is governed by the pleasure principle and has no regard for responsible behaviour, the ego which is governed by the reality principle and allows a person to make rational and appropriate decisions, the super ego also known as the conscience or the source of guilt and governs ethical standards. A deficiency in the development of the ego and superego was thought to be the source of deviant behaviour, including family abuse. According to this theory it therefore, means that abusive people are unable to make rational and appropriate decisions since their ego is not sufficient, they also lack conscience and lack ethical standards as evidenced by their deficient super ego, hence they do not see anything wrong in being abusive towards other people.

Repression is another factor that Freud indicates as having a contribution to how people behave. According to Freud (1921), repression is a defence mechanism that keeps unacceptable or unpleasant experiences at an unconscious level. These unpleasant experiences, according to
Freud, occur during a person’s developmental process. According to Freud (1921), if a person fails to confront the unpleasant situation, he or she keeps it in the unconscious. This then results in aversion and hostility which accounts for the anger outbursts a person has. The repression according to Freud, causes most long lasting relationships to end up in some kind of distaste in the end, particularly emotional relationships. Freud (1921), indicates that almost every emotional relation between two people which lasts for some time like marriage, friendship, the relations between parents and children, leaves a sediment of aversion and hostility which only escapes perception as a result of repression. Repression results in a person being hostile according to Freud (1921), and could account for the abuse in intimate relationships.

ii. **Object relations theory**
In the object relations theory Klein (1975), focused on the first few months of the relationship between mother and child. According to Klein, conflicts and anxieties experienced by children are as a result of their relationship with adults. Klein states that the child associates the mother as part object of the breast and can perceive the mother as a good breast or bad breast. The mother is said to be good when the needs of the child are met through feeding, and the mother is perceived as bad when the child’s needs are not met. With time the child perceives the mother as a whole object and begin to understand that good and bad can co-exist. However during stressful times such as when a person is traumatised, he may revert to his or her childhood understanding that people can either be good or bad, this is called 'splitting'. This according to the object relations theory may affect a person in adult life. Problematic intimate relationships therefore, according to this theory, result from failure to integrate contradictory aspects of the self and the other (Bennet, 2000).

Fairbairn's (1952), secular object relations theory of the development of the human personality put emphasis on the power of the environment to form inner ego structures. This theory puts forward that there are ensuing tragic results for all human infants who are faced with an environment which is not nurturing. According to Fairbairn’s theory, every act that children take to ensure their continuing attachment to a frustrating, yet tormenting object undermines their developing ego structure.
The consequence of the severely compromised ego structures according to the objects relation theory results in the repetition of certain compulsions in adulthood as illustrated by the battered-woman syndrome (Celani, 1999). Fairbairn’s object relations theory maintains that each of the engorged and unrealistic part-ego structures seeks out external objects to re-enact the original relationship that created them. Therefore, according to this theory, lack of proper nurturance in childhood can lead to an individual being abusive in adulthood (Fairbairn, 1952).

iii. **Attachment theory**

Attachment theory provides an understanding about the nature of human relationship throughout the life span (Bowlby, 1969). The primary assumption of the attachment theory is that humans form close emotional bonds in order to survive. According to this theory, these bonds facilitate the development and maintenance of the self and others or what Bowlby (1969) calls the internal working models that help people predict and understand their environment, engage in survival promoting behaviour and to establish a psychological sense of security (Pietromonaco & Barnet, 2000). According to Bowlby (1969), the mental representations of the self and others or the internal working models formed in the child-caregiver relationship can influence thoughts, feelings and the way a person behaves.

According to the attachment theory children who have readily available, responsive and reliable attachment figures tend to develop a representation of the self as acceptable and worthwhile whereas those who have inconsistent or unresponsive attachment figures are assumed to develop a view of self as unacceptable and unworthy (Pietromonaco & Barnet, 2000). A review of the attachment theory by McClellan and Killen (2007), revealed that men who are prone to abusing their partners are those who were insecurely attached as infants and as a result their internal working models of attachment relationships include the use of violence or aggression to gain power and control over other people. According to this theory, these internal working models are brought to their adult relationships, particularly with their partners (McClellan & Killen, 2007). Gillard and James (1997), confirm that there has been some evidence of relationship between spousal violence and the number of separations and loss events experienced by abusers and their families of origin and the erratic care giving patterns of abuser’s parents.
iv. **Psychopathological theory**

Psychopathological approaches regard abusive men as suffering from psychological problems. They regard abusers as uncontrollable, insecure people with low self-esteem. Abuse in the psychopathological approach is explained in terms of women being masochistic and men being mentally ill. However, there is no empirical evidence to support this claim (Dangor, 1999; Hepker, 2000; Musson-Seedat, 2008). The idea of masochism considers women as victims of violence and it implies that women derive pleasure from being abused (Bograd, 1988). The fallacy in masochism is that these women actually lust for suffering, they are said to be particularly weak, dependent individuals who frequently work their way out of one battering situation into the next (Pagelow, 1981). A common assumption of masochism is that women choose to be victimised by selecting men who will batter them (Pagelow, 1981). Masochism considers a woman as psychologically deviant rather than the man (Mullender, 1996).

A popular myth about wife abuse is that someone who assaults his wife must be suffering from some kind of mental illness. Bancroft (2002), puts it this way, “When a man’s face contorts in bitterness and hatred, he looks a little insane. When his mood changes from elated to assaultive in the time it takes to turn around, his mental stability seems open to question. When he accuses his partner for plotting to harm him, he seems paranoid. It is no wonder that the partner of an abusive man would come to suspect that he was mentally ill” (p, 38).

Alcohol is another factor that influences intimate partner abuse. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013), there is evidence to support relationships between alcohol and
intimate partner abuse. According to WHO, *Intimate Partner Violence and Alcohol Fact Sheet*, alcohol use directly affects cognitive and physical function, reducing self-control and leaving individuals less capable of negotiating non-violent resolution to conflicts within relationships. It has also been noted that excessive consumption of alcohol by one partner, can worsen financial difficulties, child care problems, infidelity and other family stressors. WHO (2013), states that individual and societal belief is that alcohol causes aggression, can encourage violent behaviour after drinking, and the use of alcohol is an excuse for violent behaviour. Experiencing violence within a relationship can lead to alcohol consumption as a method of coping or self-medicating. Children who witnesses violence or threats of violence between parents are more likely to display harmful drinking patterns later in life. Studies showing the magnitude of alcohol related intimate partner violence differ from country to country. In South Africa, according to WHO (2013), 65% of women experiencing partner abuse reported that their partners always or sometimes used alcohol before the assault. A study conducted by Leonard (2001), also showed evidence regarding the relationship between alcohol and domestic violence. Based on this review, it was concluded that alcohol does contribute in domestic violence, but it was found to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause.

Psychopathological theories propose that certain kinds of people are wife abusers, that they are different from other people in skills, temperament, personality, life histories or even physiologically and that they may be identified by some combination of special characteristics (Mashishi, 1998). According to Bancroft (2002), there is no particular mental health condition that is typical of these abusers. Abusers can have a range of diagnoses including psychosis, borderline personality, depression, antisocial personality, obsessive compulsive disorder and others (Bancroft, 2000). Bancroft (2002), does not think that all these different mental illnesses can cause such similar behavioural patterns and his argument is that mental illness does not cause abusiveness, but rather the man’s psychiatric problem interacts with his abusiveness to form a volatile combination.

The value of mental illness, as far as explaining wife abuse, is of limited scope. According to Gelles (1995), the psychopathological explanations of wife abuse give a picture of a mentally deranged, violent abuser and they focus attention on only extreme cases of an abuser who is
stereotyped as psychotic and an innocent victim. In other words, pathological theories view the perpetrator as a victim and not the other way round. Gelles (1995), argues that approximately 10% of abusive incidents are caused by mental illness and the rest cannot be explained by a psychopathological model. Bancroft (2002), states that it is the men’s value system that is unhealthy and needs to be explored not their psychology.

v. Social learning theory

Bandura’s social learning theory is the most used theory in the literature of women abuse (Okun, 1986). According to Bandura (1973), people learn behaviour through observing others. Bandura (1973), postulates that if people observe positive and desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, they are more likely to model, imitate and adopt the behaviour even if it is bad behaviour. According to social learning theory, both perpetration and acceptance of abuse, is learned behaviour which is learned through childhood models in the family or community (Musson–Seedat, 2008). According to social learning theory children who are either exposed to violence or experience violence in their homes are more likely to use violence when they grow up. This finding supports the fact that violence is learned (Gelles, 1995). The family is the institution and social group where people learn roles such as husband and wife, parent and child (Gelles, 1995).

The home is a primary place in which people learn how to deal with things such as stresses, crises and frustrations. It also is a place where a person is first exposed to models of violence and submission, which can be adopted later in life in relationships (Musson–Seedat, 2008).

Social learning theory postulates that violence in the family may affect children in one of three ways, namely; (1) Observing violence could lead to new patterns of behaviour; (2) It could weaken inhibitions against violence that were previously learned; and (3) Witnessing violence may prompt similar behaviour in the observer (Avakame, 1998). These effects might occur because violence in the family context leads a child to associate love with violence, to attribute a moral rightness to violence, or to believe that important things justify the use of violence. These arguments suggest that there is a direct violence intensification effect in families where violence occurs (Avakame 1998). From the social learning perspective, children observe the consequences
of the behaviour of significant others and learn which behaviours, even socially inappropriate ones, achieve desired results without drawing a negative sanction (Cunningham et al., 1998).

According to Packota (2000), social learning focuses on messages in the larger society such as violence or oppression. According to this theory, the boys may learn from their homes that girls and women are objects of oppression and that society sees women's physical and emotional well-being as unimportant. Boys are socialized to violence and repression of their emotions and to use anger as the primary outlet (Packota, 2000). It is purported by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2003), that boys who witnessed domestic violence and grew up to be batterers, learned more than just violence, they learned and thus can unlearn lessons about the respective roles of men and women that contribute to their abusive behaviour as adults. Klein (1997), is against the notion that boys who witness violence in their homes grow up to be abusers. Klein argues that although research does show that boys who witness abuse in the home are seven times more likely to batter, many men who witnessed violence as children vow not to use violence and do not grow up to be batterers (Klein, 1997).

Cunningham et al., (1998), assume that violence is transmitted from generation to generation and interventions based upon the social learning perspective should therefore focus on efforts to prevent the exposure of children to negative role models and the promotion of skill development in those who have been so exposed. Criticism of social learning theory is that, in isolation from other theories, it does not explain why the intergenerational transmission of violence is not universal and conversely, why some batterers do not report histories of exposure to violence in their families of origin. Another criticism of learning theories is that they have not specifically addressed marital or intimate partner violence, but they have looked at aggression and violent behaviour in general, with the exception of Walker’s theory of learned helplessness (Okun, 1986).

Developing a sense of helplessness can also be learned. Seligman (1975), discovered that when dogs were repeatedly shocked, they were unable to escape from their painful situation even if they were given an opportunity to do so. This gave a meaning that these dogs have learned to be helpless and could not utilise the opportunity even if it availed itself. Seligman (1975), likened
the helplessness to a kind of human depression and showed that both have cognitive, motivational and behavioural components. Walker (1984), conducted a similar study on human subjects who were battered and discovered that humans exhibited the same symptoms as the shocked animals and these are: negativity, pessimistic beliefs about the efficacy of their actions and the likelihood of obtaining future rewards. On the basis of Walker’s clinical work with battered women, the hypothesis was that women’s experiences of their non-contingent nature to control the violence would over time produce learned helplessness and depression. The theory espouses that some women lack problem solving skills, and as a result perceive their situation as inescapable and consequently they learn to be helpless (Boonzaier, 2003). Like repeated shocks delivered to the dogs, continuous battering diminishes the woman’s motivation to respond (Seligman, 1975). As stated previously, Walker (1984), recommends that if a woman is to escape the tendency to learned helplessness, she has to learn survival techniques by becoming angry rather than depressed and self-blaming, active rather than passive, and be more realistic about the relationship continuing on its aversive course rather than hoping that it will improve.

2.11.1.2 Summary of psychological theories
The psychological theories used in this study in an attempt to explain the abuse of women by their partners included psycho dynamic theories, psychopathological theories, attachment theory and social learning theory.

The psychodynamic theory considered men who abuse their partners as suffering from some form of psychological deviation which is either brought about by their personality traits or their developmental patterns. This theory does not only address the developmental patterns of the victim but also that of the perpetrator. The psychodynamic approach, also explained how the inability to suppress the unconscious impulses within a person and repression, lead to anger outburst and consequent abusive behaviour. The psychopathological theory explained women who are victims of abuse as being masochistic that is, as deriving pleasure from being abused, being weak and dependent. Psychopathological theories further explained abusive men as suffering from some form of mental illness.
The object relations theory explained the abuse as resulting from an adult who experiences what Klein (1975), called ‘splitting’ particularly when the particular person is traumatised or stressed. This episode of splitting is said to happen when the adult revert to his childhood understanding of that people can either be good or bad. According to this theory problematic relationships are results of failure to integrate contradictory factors of the self and the others. Fairban’s theory emphasised that the children who grow up in non-nurturing environments experience compromised ego structures which result in repetition compulsion, as seen in battered woman syndrome.

The attachment theory emphasised the importance of the internal working models formed in the child - caregiver relationship in influencing thoughts, feelings and the way a person behaves. According to this theory, men who are prone to abusing women are those who were insecurely attached as infants. As a result their internal working models of attachment in relationships include the use of violence or aggression to gain power and control.

The social learning theory suggested that both perpetration and acceptance of abuse are learned behaviour which is learned through childhood models. According to this theory children who grow up experiencing violence and abuse in their family themselves tend to be abusive towards their partners when they grow up. This theory suggests that children even learn different roles and status which are assigned to men and women where men are given superior status over women. Within the theory of social learning, learned helplessness espouses that women lack problem solving skills, as a result perceive their situation as inescapable. Consequently they learn to be helpless in the situation of abuse.

The psychological theories of women abuse tend to focus more on the perpetrator and why they are abusive and less is written as to why the victims, such as women, endure the abuse except with the theory of learned helplessness and the psychopathological theory which considers women as masochistic.

Psychological theories such as the social learning theory could include the fact that girls can also learn that abusive relationships are endured as learned from their mothers, and this kind of
endurance can end up being passed from generation to generation. In breaking this kind of learning, necessary skills such as problem solving or taking control, should be imparted to young girls and even boys as a way of empowering them and changing their mind-set with regard to abuse.

Feminism which will be discussed here-under, focused on how gender roles support male domination and control of women.

### 2.11.2 Feminism

Feminism, through focusing on gender and power, has been regarded as the major theoretical force in understanding the dynamics of violence against women. Feminist analysis focuses on how traditional ideas about marriage, family and gender roles support patriarchy, male domination and abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1980). Feminist literature asserts that partner violence or abuse is basically a problem of men using violence to maintain control over women, a control to which they feel they are entitled and that is supported by a patriarchal culture (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Mirchandini (2006), concurs that both the patriarchal social and family systems are characterised by a hierarchical structure and patriarchal ideology in which men are regarded superior to women and women are given positions of subordination.

Beasley (1999), mentions two ways in which women’s accepted subordinate status has been presented by the mainstream thought. The first view involves an account of women as partial help mates. In this view, women are defined in terms of men’s needs regarding pleasure, provision of services, children and so on. This perspective is largely evident in Judea, Christian theology and Greek philosophy. One example of this account of women is found in the works of Aristotle. According to him, women are not rational beings but they are things in need of care and are morally unstable (Beasely, 1999). According to Bryson (1999), liberal, socialist/Marxist and radical feminism were the three main branches of feminism in the 1980’s. Other categories that have been identified since then include black and post-modern feminism, lesbian feminism, cultural feminism, disability feminism, power feminism, global feminism, victim feminism, anti-racist feminism, stand point feminism and new feminism. Competing ideas of different feminist approaches are beyond the scope of this study and will therefore not be discussed.
Up to the nineteenth century it was generally accepted that women were not capable of benefiting from education, exercising political judgement and women could have no respectable role outside the home. It was also accepted that wives should be seen as the property of their husbands (Bryson, 1999). Early liberal and liberal democratic theorists denied women the right to own property or make any decision regarding who should govern. It was argued that only men can exercise those rights because they are rational beings and are capable and entitled to make their own decisions. Women were regarded as biologically incapable of the full development of reason. They are the group most victimised by sexist oppression. Male supremacy make women believe that they are valueless and obtain value only by relating (Bryson, 1999).

Early feminists, such as Mary Astell (in Bryson, 1999; 1666—1731), took a stand and argued that women are able to reason, they have the same worth as men, that women should be educated equally and should be able to live independently and should not be property of men through marriage. Mary Wollstonecraft (in Bryson, 1999; 1759-97) and other eighteenth century feminists continued to advocate for women rights. They claimed that women’s equal worth entitled them to the same rights as men in terms of education, employment, property and the protection of civil law. In the second half of the twentieth century, feminists insisted that women were entitled to participate in politics and paid employment, and they were also entitled to make decisions whether or not they chose to get married and have children (Bryson, 1999).

Although its objectives of ending the subordination of women are not yet fully achieved, feminism seems to have played a major part in the changing role and status of women in South Africa and around the world (Bryson, 1999). Since the wave of feminist demands that started in the late 1960’s women in many parts of the world have gained a whole range of legal rights, opportunities and protections. There is a near global movement of women into paid jobs and a movement of women in areas of work previously monopolised by men. Many women have achieved successful careers and full economic independence and the earning gaps between women and men are gradually declining. Women are now able to control their fertility and they also have freedom of sexual choice and expression.
Violence against women is now widely recognised as a serious political issue rather than a joke or a natural state of affairs (Bryson, 1999). Many women have moved into positions of political power, women are making their voices heard in the media and throughout academic and cultural life.

Since this study is on Black South African Women experiences of abuse a brief explanation on womanism which is a Black feminist thought will be alluded to.

2.11.2.1 Womanism

Historically many black women experienced white women as the supremacist group who most directly exercised power over them, often in a manner far more brutal and dehumanising than that of racist white men (Gunew, 1991). Black women often worked in situations where the immediate supervisor, boss or authority figure was a white woman. Many black women perceived the women’s liberation movement as outlined by bourgeois white women as serving their interests at the expense of poor working class women, many of whom were black (Gunew, 1991). It was at this stage that womanism started.

In 1983 Alice Walker, a Black American novelist, poet and activist, coined the synonyms womanist and womanism and defined them as 'Black feminist' or ‘feminist of colour’. Walker (in Steinem, 2007, p.2) further described a black feminist as: 'a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non–sexually, who appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility and women’s strength’. Walker further describes a Black feminist as: “a woman who sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually, who is committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, both male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically for health” (Steinem, 2007, p.2).

In an interview with Elaine Salo, Professor Amina Mama spoke about womanism in Africa. In this discussion, it was mentioned that Alice Walker invented the term as a critique of and in response to White dominated feminism. Whilst feminism, widely a White middle class movement was fighting oppression based on sexism, they ignored oppression based on race and class. It was at this point that womanists retaliated and put forward that Black women
experienced different and more intense kinds of oppression from that of White women (Salo, 2001).

Feminist’s argument is that violence and abuse against women can only be eradicated through a fundamental change in gender relations, which will involve the dismantling of patriarchy in our societies (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). However, Professor Amina Mama argues that even Western feminists have agreed with what womanists say about different women being oppressed differently, and the importance of class and race and culture in configuring gender relations (Salo, 2001).

Since a womanist is necessarily concerned with issues of gender and race, she is therefore dedicated to the empowerment of both men and women (Baderoon, Wittenberg, Hermann, & Roper, 1996). The theory of womanism commits itself to the survival and wholeness of all people both men and women, rather than supporting separatism, it promotes universalism. According to Dove (1998), the significant differences that arise from the two cultural orientations (European and African) are: the debasement of women in one culture and the respect for women in the other. These distinctions, according to Dove (1998), should not be ignored when analysing the contemporary difficulties for African people.

The concern of womanists with issues of gender, race and the empowerment of both men and women, is translated by Wicomb (in Baderoon et al., 1996, p.5) as a “rallying cry for Black women to support Black men” mimicking White patriarchy’ or as Lewis (in Baderoon et al., 1996), puts it “a call urging women in their conventional supportive roles to assist in male centred struggle against White oppression” (p.5). Baderoon et al., (1996), suggests that both Wicomb and Lewis not only believe that womanists privilege race over gender, but that “womanists indeed have no consciousness that patriarchy oppresses women”(p.5). In defending womanism, Baderoon et al., (1996), negate the notion that womanism privileges race over gender by stating that womanism instead, “centres on Black women, women of colour, women who are always simultaneously both”(p5).
2.11.2.2 **Summary of feminism and womanism**

The objectives of both feminism and womanism are to fight against the oppression and abuse of women. Feminism on one hand focuses on how traditional ideas about family and gender roles support patriarchy, male domination and abuse. Feminists believe that partner violence or abuse is a problem of men using violence to maintain power over their women, the power that is supported by prevailing patriarchal structures in the societies. Therefore, the aim of feminism is to eradicate gender inequalities in all races, which includes assuring that women are entitled to the same natural rights as men and not be assigned the status of subordination.

On the other hand womanism is not necessarily concerned about gender issues but is dedicated to the empowerment of both men and women. Womanists believe that Black women are not only victims of gender inequality but also victims of race and class inequality. The argument of womanists is that Black women are not just abused by their men but they are also abused by other women who are White supremists who happen to employ them. Womanism was formed in retaliation to White dominated feminism, their argument being that Black women experienced different and more intense kind of oppression from that of White women. Womanists believe that different women are oppressed differently and they put forward the importance of class, race and culture in configuring gender relations.

Whereas the theory of feminism commits itself to eradication of gender inequalities, the theory of womanism commits itself to the survival and wholeness of all people both men and women.

2.11.3 **Sociological theories**

For the purpose of this study the culture of violence and the resource theories will be discussed to conceptualise the reasons why men abuse their wives from a sociological perspective.

2.11.3.1 **Culture of violence theory**

Theorists who wrote about the culture of violence theory (Gelles, 1986; Levinson, 1989; Viano, 1992), maintain that this theory suggest that some cultural groups develop norms and values that emphasise the use of violence to a greater extent than is deemed appropriate by the bigger culture. According to this theory, wife and child abuse is more prevalent or common and is
considered more appropriate in certain groups than in others (Levinson, 1989). Violence against women in South Africa reflects the general culture of violence which is endemic in South African society (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). The former apartheid system as discussed in the previous chapter, had a serious impact on the social conditions of South Africa’s historically disadvantaged people and has contributed to poverty, ill health, hardships and divided families, the very conditions under which violence flourishes (Segal & Lubbe, 1990).

Vogelman and Eagle (1991), postulate that in a historical context of overwhelming oppression and state sanctioned violence, a culture of violence usually develops over time. Randal (2008), stresses that part of the blame for domestic violence against women is attributed to the alleged culture of violence in modern Africa, whereby violence is accepted as a way of resolving disputes. According to Randal (2008), this is linked to colonialism where Africans were treated coercively and violently by their colonisers. The culture of violence became accepted as a norm and became a primary means of resolving conflicts including between domestic partners (Segal & Lubbe, 1990). This partially gives an account of why other societies are more violent than others.

2.11.3.2 Resource theory

Resource theory was suggested by William Goode (1971). According to the resource theory, the decision making power within a family derives from the value of the resources that each person brings into the relationship. This may include financial, social and organisational resources (Loue, 2001), and the more resources like social, personal, and economic a person can command, the more force that person can muster (Gelles, 1995). Gelles (1995), suggests that the more resources a person has, the lesser he will use force in an open manner, and a husband who wants to be dominant in the family but has little education, a low paying job and lacks interpersonal skills may choose to use violence to maintain the dominant position. The resource theory suggests that women, who are economically dependent on their spouses, have children to take care of, have a difficulty in leaving abusive relationships because leaving the relationship will increase their financial burden. Dependency means that these women have fewer resources to help them cope with or change their spouse’s behaviour (Loue, 2001). This theory can prove to
be true particularly among Black Women who even though employed, still by and large are economically deprived and are mostly dependent on their spouses for extra financial support.

According to Loue (2001), couples who share equal power experience lower levels of conflict, and when the conflict does arise they are less likely to resort to abuse. However if one of them desires control and power, the spouse may resort to abuse. This may include coercion and threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, isolation, blaming, using children and so forth. A criticism of this perspective is that it ignores cultural variables and takes for granted that married men want to be breadwinners, particularly in comparison to their wives. In other words, rather than accurately reflecting the variability in men's gender ideologies, such arguments assume all men to be traditional (Kaukinen, 2004).

2.11.3.3 Summary of sociological theories
The culture of violence theory attributes the abuse of women to the culture of violence that existed particularly among Black South Africans. According to this theory, apartheid regime that was brought about by colonisers led to Black people using violence as a way of solving disputes and addressing dissatisfactions. As a result, the behaviour of using violence to settle disputes became a way of life that extended even to their homes. Most literature written about the culture of violence theory does not say much about this theory except attributing violence to women, and to cohesion and violence which came as a result of colonisation.

The resource theory postulates that the more resources a partner brings in the relationship in terms of financial, social, and organisational resources, the more power the person exerts in the relationship. On the same token this theory postulates that the more resources the partner brings into the relationship the lesser the chances of that person using force in an open manner because he is under no pressure to defend his ego. However, according to this theory a man who wants to be dominant but has no resources such as education, money and interpersonal skills may choose to use violence to maintain his dominance. This theory also postulates that if both partners have resources but the man is power hungry, abuse will still occur.
The resource theory seems to be self-contradictory and unconvincing. It appears as though whether a woman has resources or not, she will be abused anyway, because this theory postulates that couples who share equal power will face a problem of abuse if the spouse is power hungry and men, who have better resources than their wives, still continue to abuse them anyway. In this sense, it therefore means that power and control supersedes the availability of resources within the relationship as far as abuse is concerned. Bancroft (2002), affirms that lack of resources is not an excuse for men to abuse their partners. Bancroft also mentions that the majority of abusive men are educated and economically privileged.

2.11.4 Systems theory

Previous research has approached wife abuse from two different perspectives which are namely the linear-causal explanations for the question why abuse occurs, and the systems theory approach which focuses on the process of conflict and how wife abuse occurs (Giles-Sims, 1983). The researchers who used the linear-causal approach searched for preceding causes of wife abuse and found them to include: intra-psychic phenomena such as instincts, inborn biological drives, psychological frustrations, social phenomena such as socialisation, power relations and so forth (Giles-Sims, 1983).

The systems theory, which is a social system approach was developed and applied by Murray Straus and Jean Giles to explain family violence and as an attempt to challenge the linear-causal approaches and move towards emphasis on whole entities or systems (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997). The systems approach highlights the interactional patterns that are formed through the relationships between parts instead of looking for linear causality (Fitch, 2004). It concerns itself primarily with problems of relationships, of structure and of interdependence, rather than with the constant attributes of objects (Fitch, 2004).

In the systems perspective, violence is viewed as a product of a system rather than the result of individual pathology and is characterised by power struggles (Gelles, 1995; Seletswana, 2007). According to this theory a relationship of abuse is co-created between the abuser and the abused (Nathoo, 1997) and operations in the family according to Gelles (1995), can maintain, escalate, or reduce levels of violence in the family.
According to Gelles (1995), the systems theory explains the use of violence in the family interactions and it gives an explanation of how violence is managed and stabilised. Levinson (1989), mentions that in order for people to enhance their understanding of family violence and be able to control it, they need to view it as the product of a positive feedback social system that operates at individual, family, and societal levels. This theory, according to Okun (1986), is helpful in assisting people studying conjugal violence to realise and recall all major influences instead of concentrating upon some type of partial analysis.

Researchers in the systems theory developed a cybernetic flow chart that indicates processes by which conjugal violence either escalates, or is maintained at a stable level or is diminished over time. A key feature here is the inclusion of a feedback mechanism which increase, decrease and/or maintain the level of a system (Okun, 1986). According to Okun (1986), the use of a feedback mechanism recognises that a couple or family is dynamic by nature.

According to Straus (1973), factors accounting for high incidence of wife abuse are high levels of conflict inherent in the family, high levels of violence in the society, family socialisation in violence, violence integrated into personality and behaviour “scripts”, cultural norms legitimising violence between family members, sexist organisation of the society and its family system, wife putting up with abuse because of factors such as economic dependence on husband, denial of public assistance, hope that the husband will change and so forth. All the above mentioned factors tend to lead to high a level of wife abuse in all family relations and work in positive loops that maintain the system. Feedback loops refer to changes which can take place as a result of circular information patterns that result from the interconnections between living systems (Kozlowoska & Hanney, 2002).

Levinson (1989), postulates that the systems theory is big, complex and has a tendency towards abstraction and that it is yet to be tested in its fullest form. According to Okun (1986), Straus’s model obscures rather than clarifies in the sense that it includes all major factors affecting the system products, which makes it very difficult to execute in practice due to a multitude of factors involved in the midst of their countless interrelationships.
Another criticism is that Straus’s cybernetic model is very complicated (Okun, 1986). According to recent writers, such as Fitch (2004), systems theory has been criticised in the social work literature for being too deterministic, not useful, or simply outdated.

2.11.4.1 Summary of systems theory

In explaining wife abuse, the systems theory highlights the interactional patterns that are formed between the parties in the relationship. This theory sees abuse as part of a system and not of individual pathology. According to the systems theory, the relationship of abuse is co-created between the abused and the abuser and the theory postulates that the operations within the relationship can be maintained, escalated or reduced through a feedback mechanism. According to this theory the abused person can contribute to the perpetuation of abuse by feeding the behaviour of the abuser through a positive loop mechanism.

This theory does not look at the linear causation of abuse or what causes the abuse to happen but rather it looks at how the behaviour is sustained or reduced. The systems theory received criticism that it is complicated, deterministic and outdated.

2.11.5 Coercive control theory

Coercive control is alternately referred to as coerced persuasion, conjugal, patriarchal or intimate terrorism, emotional or psychological abuse, indirect abuse (Stark, 2007). The coercive control theory postulates that people who are in the coercive control situation are often brainwashed as it occurs in concentration camps, prison programmes, hostage situations and religious cults (Okun, 1986).

According to this theory, coercive control is said to be on going and the perpetrators use various means to hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate and dominate their victims. This includes threats, withholding of resources such as money or transportation and abuse of children, other relatives or even pets (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). Coercive control also called brain washing, or mind control is said to be an attempt to force people to change beliefs, ideas, attitudes or
behaviours using psychological pressure, undue influence, threats, anxiety, intimidation and/or stress. This is done to force the victim into succumbing to the perpetrator’s control (Stark, 2007).

Okun (1986), mentions that abused women who are in a coercive control situation usually have common features with the concentration camp prisoners and these features are: feelings of guilt with a sense of deserving victimisation, loss of self-esteem, emotional detachment from incidence of severe violence, extreme emotional reactions, difficulty planning for the future and delayed gratification, fear of escaping the coercive control situation, childlike dependency on the controllers and identification with them, imitation of the controller’s aggressiveness and adoption of their values, maintenance of the hope that the controller is kind and just (Okun, 1986). Okun postulates that abusers employ many techniques in brainwashing their victims and these include: social isolation, beatings, torture, and starvation, sleep deprivation, threats of murder or torture, random and unpredictable leniency coupled with unpredictable punishment, humiliation and revilement, prescription of time and space manacling or other forms of bondage, coerced false confession and other methods of directly inducing guilt such as accusation of the victim to authorities or significant others.

Coercive theory eludes conclusions that blame the victim or portray her as inviting abuse (Okun, 1986), ‘the effect of the victim’s isolation and of the induction of fear in the victim is to increase the victim’s suggestibility to behave as dictated by the coercive controller’ (p.88). However, like other theories it is not without shortcomings. Criticisms of this theoretical approach to conjugal violence, is that it does not encompass social and cultural influences upon violent couples and their individual members (Okun, 1986).

2.11.5.1 Summary of coercive control theory

According to this theory the abuser uses different tactics to exercise control over the victim. The tactics the abuser uses include many techniques in brainwashing their victim such as social isolation, beatings, torture, and starvation, sleep deprivation, threats of murder or torture, random and unpredictable leniency coupled with unpredictable punishment, humiliation, prescription of time and space, coerced false confession and other methods of directly inducing guilt such as accusation of the victim to authorities or significant others. The abuse isolates the victim and
induces fear so as to increase his chances of abusing the victim and to coerce the victim into behaving in the manner dictated by him.

Coercive control is likened to brainwashing or controlling another person’s mind. Psychological pressure is used by the abuser to force the victim to succumb to his control. The coercive control theory avoids blaming the victim, however its shortcoming is that it does not encompass social and cultural influences upon violent couples in the sense that there might be cultures that embrace male domination and not perceive it as control but a norm.

2.11.6 Towards an integrative model
McKenry, Julian, Gavazzi and Stephen (1995), recommend the development of the bio-psycho-social model which will attempt to understand health and illness through an appreciation of how biological, psychological, and social elements persist in affiliation with one another. From this perspective, all theoretical, empirical, and clinical efforts will have to account for the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social facets of a given intra-psychic or interpersonal dysfunction (McKenry et al., 1995).

McKenry et al., (1995), postulate that other studies even though not fully bio-psycho-social in their conceptual underpinnings, have within the spousal violence literature, generated data that directly support the interactive nature of certain biological, psychological, and social phenomenon. Dabbs and Morris (1990), found that relationships between testosterone and antisocial tendencies in a sample of males were moderated by their socio economic status. Julian and McKenry (1993), reported that men's intimate relationship quality and depression levels predicted male violence toward female partners, although alcohol usage and testosterone were not significant predictors in this study. Leonard and Blane (in McKenry, 1993), in a national sample of young men, found that the relationship between alcohol use and marital aggression was moderated by both the male's level of hostility and level of marital satisfaction. It is evident therefore, that looking at various factors rather than only one in the causation of spousal abuse, researchers can perhaps come up with a working model which integrates the biological, psychological and sociological factors in explaining spousal abuse. Cultural factors also need to be integrated in the model which will look at factors such as upbringing, patriarchy and gender.
domination and how these contribute to the abuse of women. Having integrated the cultural factors in the bio-psycho-social model, the researcher hopes that a model such as bio-psycho-socio-cultural model could be useful in an attempt to search for factors leading to spousal abuse. Cultural factors contributing to spousal abuse will be expanded on in the next chapter.

2.11.7 Conclusion
The abuse of women is still continuing in all its forms and its impact does not only affect the victim but also her significant others. Gender stereotypes, power and control are still rife despite the rhetoric of women’s emancipation and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). Traditional, cultural, religious, economic, personal factors and lack of resources still continue to lock women in abusive relationships. In this chapter, different theories that explain the existence of spousal abuse were discussed. Looking at all the preceding theoretical perspectives one can conclude that no matter what the cause is, the common link in the abuse of women is power and control of women by men. An element that has been missing from all of these theories except for the coercive control theory was recognition of the abuser’s intent to gain control over their partners' actions, thoughts and feelings as espoused by Fredericks (1997). According to Mullender (1996), men’s abuse of women can only be understood through the context of gender and male sexuality which are synonymous with power and control and are socially constructed to be oppressive.

In view of all the theories discussed above, it can be concluded that in order for women to free themselves from abuse, they need to break from, and overcome cultural and social barriers that subject them to abuse by their spouses. Again, empowerment programs will be a necessity for abused women to help them take control of their abusive situation. The chapter that follows will be a discussion on historical and traditional influences on the abuse of Black South African Women.
CHAPTER 3:
HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE ABUSE OF
BLACK AFRICAN WOMEN

3.1 Introduction
In the previous chapters broad issues of women abuse were discussed. In this chapter the researcher hopes to bring an African perspective regarding the predicament of Black Women in marriages. In order to achieve this, focus will be on historical and traditional influences on the abuse of Black African Women. This will include a discussion on Black marriages and the custom of lobola (bride price). The researcher will attempt to highlight the process of Black marriages and the initial good intentions of the lobola custom, and how it became abused consequently leading to the abuse of Black Women. A discussion on how the family and cultural prejudice has played a role in the abuse of Black Women in their marriages will also be captured. The chapter will be concluded by a discussion on Black Women’s fight against abuse and how democracy has attempted to address the plight of Black South African Women and how it is failing.

3.2 Historical development of African marriage and the custom of lobola
Marriage, also called lenyalo in Sesotho and umendo in IsiZulu, is seen by Mbiti (1969), as a focus of existence for African people. According to Mbiti (1969), “marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate” (p, 133). One who does not participate in marriage is regarded as a curse to the African community and he or she is regarded as a rebel and a law breaker. Not getting married is a serious philosophical concern among traditional African people. Failure to get married is seen as rejection of the society, and the society therefore, rejects you in return (Mbiti, 1969). People who are not married at a specific age are labelled as mafetwa ‘those who have been passed by’ (Schapera, 1939). In some societies marriages are arranged by parents. For instance, if there is a boy in one household his parents will go to a household where there is a young girl to make an ‘application’ for the girl to be a potential wife to their son. Sometimes the ‘application’ is made while the mother is still pregnant, however, the children get married when they are old enough (Schapera, 1939; Mbiti, 1969). Preparation of marriage among African people is a long process
which involves some rituals such as initiation rites. Initiation rites involve the incorporation of young persons to full adult life in their society and it is after this initiation that a person is socially born into manhood or womanhood. At this stage a person is introduced to all secrets, responsibilities, privileges and expectations of manhood or womanhood. The other purpose of initiation is to introduce people to sex matters, marriage, procreation and family life. It is seen as a ritual sanctification and preparation for marriage (Mbiti, 1969).

The initiation rites ritual is not necessarily practised by all African societies. Those who do not practise it gradually educate their children about marital affairs such as teaching girls how to cook, to behave towards their husbands, how to care for their children, how to look after their husbands and other domestic affairs.

Boy children are taught roles such as looking after cattle, how to behave towards their mother in law, how to acquire wealth which one would give to potential in laws, and how to behave as a head of a family (Mbiti, 1969). Before marriage can take place, lobola (bride price or dowry) has to be paid to the potential bride’s parents. Lobola, (bride price) is a characteristic of sub-Saharan Africa which involves the groom giving money or cows to the bride’s family (Mashishi, 1998). It is a practice that determines the formation and validity of marriage among African people. The importance of its application in determining the existence and validity of marriage differs from country to country and from one ethnic group to another and from one family to another (Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA, 2002). The historical symbolism of lobola is that it is a token of appreciation on the part of a groom’s family for raising their potential bride.

Lobola has different names and meanings depending on the language and practises of a particular nation. For instance, in Botswana, lobola is called bogadi and it is seen as a gesture of thanks from the groom’s family to the bride’s family, it is also seen as compensation to the bride’s family for the loss of their daughter’s services. It is again paid to transfer the rights of the children from their mother’s family to their father’s side. In Lesotho it is called bohadi and it used to validate the customary marriage. In Zimbabwe they call it lobola, and it symbolises unity between the two families (WLSA, 2002). South Africa is a multicultural country and therefore,
the names lobola, bogadi and bohadë are used depending on the ethnicity of the group. Reuter (1963), attests to the fact that there are different languages spoken by South African Natives therefore, there are various terms for this custom.

Historically lobola was paid as cattle to the bride’s parents. These cattle were in turn used to pay lobola on behalf of males in the family of the woman for whom lobola was paid. Cattle received as lobola could not be used for anything else. The father receiving lobola for his daughter could not sell the cattle and build himself a bigger house. Lobola cattle were earmarked for lobola use (Schapera, 1939). The lobola proceeds were usually used to purchase goods or gifts that would then be given to the groom’s family, and this process was called ukuphahla in isiZulu and ho phahlisa in Sesotho (gifts to the groom’s family from the bride’s family which include various utensils). A bride who did not fulfil the requirement of ukuphahla/ho phahlisa was not taken seriously and would usually be denied usage of utensils in the new family because she did not bring any. It was the duty of the bride to see to it that this requirement of ukuphahla/ho phahlisa was fulfilled. It was therefore, for this reason that the bride’s family could not enrich themselves with the lobola proceeds. Lobola used to consist of ten herds of cattle and one special cow for the bride’s mother. The cattle were given to the family as a way of buying the girl’s reproductive rights and in turn the girl’s father would perform various rituals to his ancestors to guarantee fertility of his daughter (Kriege & Camaroff, 1981). Through payment of lobola, relationships and a network of rights and obligations was created between the two families. The woman on whose behalf lobola was paid was bound to stay in the marriage, her decision to leave would disturb the network of obligations and duties (WLSA, 2002).

Mvulamlomo (mouth opener), is a small payment allowing the groom’s party to open negotiations (WLSA, 2002), and without mvulamlomo no negotiations will proceed. After lobola negotiations have been completed a cow, sheep or goat is usually slaughtered as a sign of blood bonding between the two families and their ancestors. It is a sign of appreciation by the husband’s family to the wife’s family for the wife’s productiveness potential (Mashishi, 1998). Another ritual called hlabiso ya bohadi/ukuhlabisa abakhwenyana (slaughtering a cow for the groom’s family) is done after the lobola settlement. This ritual is done to acknowledge
*abakhwenyana/ bakgwenyana* (the groom’s family) and this is performed at the bride’s home where gifts are exchanged between the two families.

According to Maqutu (1992), the main ceremony comprises of three cattle which are named according to the duties they fulfil; *Khomo ya seboko* (the cow for the surname) is the cow which transfers the procreative duties of a woman being married. *Khomo ya thari kapa ya letswele* (the cow of the breast) is given to the mother of the bride in recognition of the role she played in nurturing the woman up to the marriageable age. *Khomo ya thebe* (the cow for protection) is the cow given to the father of the bride to protect her in case her marriage fails. On marriage the bride is now called *umakoti/ngwetsi* (daughter in law) and the groom is called *umkhwenyana/mokgwenyana* (son in law), the parents of the wedded couple call themselves *abakhozi/bakgotsi* (friends). The newly wedded couple is given rules in a ritual called *dithlobogano* (leaving one’s own family) which is done by older members of the family. The instructions are oriented towards family care (Phiri, 2012). The bride is given rules and instructions over respect and how she should carry herself around her in laws and her husband. She is also given instructions regarding what she should or should not eat. *Umakoti/ngwetsi* (bride) will be allowed to eat some foods after a ritual has been done to allow her to do so (Kriege & Camaroff, 1981).

Marriage in the African tradition is connected to sexuality with the purpose of procreation, which in the African mind is the purpose of marriage (Phiri, 2012). Phiri (2012), puts it this way: “the importance that Africans give to sexuality in marriage springs from the purpose of human sexuality. Since human sexuality in the African scope is primarily for transmitting life, discussing it without linking it to procreation is robbing it of its value and proper place” (p.27). This means that it is expected of *umakoti/ngwetsi* (bride) to bear children in her marriage. Failure to produce children may lead to rejection or being called names by the family or the community.

Verbal traditional knowledge must not be allowed to disappear. Therefore, the researcher as a Black South African Woman will hereunder give a personal account of the process of marriage which is not written up. The process of being given *instructions* is called *ukuyalwa/ho lawuwa*. 
Some of the instructions given to umakotl/ingwetsi include facts such as monna ha a botswe which means that the bride is not at liberty to question her husband. The other instruction given to the bride is that mosadi o ngalla motsheo meaning that a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage, no matter how difficult it is. The woman is also taught that monna ke mokopu oa nama (a man is a pumpkin that spreads in the whole garden) which means that a man can have as many relationships as he wants without being questioned. The woman is also made to understand that a man is allowed to sleep out with other women and utterances such as monna ke selepe o lala a kadimilwe are used, here a man is likened to an axe which can be lent to other people. A woman has to adhere to these instructions and make them part of her life in order to be regarded as mosadi oa sebele (a real woman). Not too many instructions are given to the groom though. The chief instructions given to the groom is ho hlokomela le lapa meaning to take care of the family, and to respect his in laws. All these utterances and instructions seem to lead to the abuse of women as they are expected to adhere to them without questioning. A woman who questions or violates these instructions is viewed as being disrespectful by the society. In other African traditions such as Xhosa, a woman can be coerced to marry her husband’s younger brother should her husband die. This practice is called ukungenelwa/ho kenelwa (widow inheritance). This form of marriage is aimed at providing continued family life and support to the family of the deceased. The woman might be unwilling to accept the widow inheritance practise but only does it for fear of rejection by the family, or does it in the name of culture.

It is important to note that lobola in the southern African context historically reflects the communal nature of African life and it also reflects the traditional values in a way that in most societies an individual belongs to an extended family. The biological parents are not directly involved in the process of negotiation lobola, nor do they benefit from it, rather it goes to certain members of the wider family. The people who receive lobola do not only receive it but are obliged to assist the woman on whose behalf it has been received. In the event of divorce they are obliged to refund the bride groom and his family where this is demanded in cases where the woman is considered at fault, for example due to barrenness or adultery (WLSA, 2002). The custom however evolved and ended up being abused. The next discussion is how the practice of lobola evolved.
3.2.1 How the custom of lobola evolved: A historical account

*Lobola* is still practised in urban African marriages, but the nature and function has changed. Whereas in the traditional families *lobola* was transferred in the form of cows (which were the primary source of wealth in African societies) in the urban areas it is transferred in the form of money. The aim of the custom was to bring the two families together and to foster mutual respect, but most modern bridal families see it as a compensation for the expenditure which parents of the bride incurred in educating her and the loss of financial contributions she would make were she to remain at her home (Mashishi, 1998, New World encyclopaedia, 2011). Unfortunately in this way, *lobola* got abused and it was used as a platform to bully or undermine women (Motsei, 2007). In the olden days this practise was initially done in a true spirit of *ubuntu* (kinship) and it served as a form of protection against the abuse of women in the sense that if a husband ill-treated his wife, he could lose his *lobola*.

People perceive *lobola* in different ways. There are those who feel that it should be abolished because of the way it has evolved and because they think it enforces gender dominance, others feel that it is a valuable custom that need to be preserved but treated with respect. Mawere and Mawere (2010), conducted a study titled *The changing philosophy of African Marriage*. The aim of the study was to investigate the perception of the Shona people (in Zimbabwe) towards the practice of *lobola* (*kukumbira*) in Shona language. The majority of participants in this study cited that hefty *lobola* charges amongst other things, has daunted this custom. However, the participants still wanted *lobola* to continue on the grounds that they still saw it as valuable part of culture that respects women and their human rights and also reinforces family ties. The participants were however against the commercialisation of *lobola* because they thought it would lead to women being perceived as commodities that can be bought with money. The minority of participants saw the practice of *lobola* as being against gender equality that modern-day women are fighting for. They also perceived other forms of marriage where *lobola/kukumbira* was paid as institutions of gender dominance intended to serve men rather than women. In conclusion of the study, participants viewed the custom positively, although they noted that it can be abused by parents who charge hefty amounts and husbands and in laws who abuse the bride’s rights on the grounds that she was bought at a price.
Motsei (2007), mentions a study which was conducted by Tanzanian Media Women Association (TAMWA) in 2006. The study revealed that the practice of *lobola* has become one of the factors contributing to sexual abuse and women battering and denial of women’s rights to inherit property and land. The study also revealed that some parents took bride price as a form of financial investment and demanded exorbitant amounts of cash in exchange for their daughter. This practice tends to leave the woman vulnerable and open to abuse because it feels like she was bought with a high price and therefore, she is someone’s property.

Some of the traditional practices serve a good purpose if they are not exploited. For instance, as stated previously *lobola* was initially used to facilitate bonding between the two families and to give a woman a sense of value, not to make a woman a man’s property and slave. Ramphele (1984), sees the manipulation of tradition as a resource for the social control of women by men. She further notes that “tradition denotes a reconstruction of the past as representing a reality that is unchallengeable and used to legitimate the perpetuation of certain behavioural patterns favourable to men” (p.394).

As previously stated, *lobola* is viewed differently by different Black African people. There are those who criticise it, and those who are its supporters. For instance, Owomoyela (1996), is an advocate of the lobola custom. He criticised the actions of King Khama who once abolished *lobola*, called *bogadi* in Setswana (bride price) because he considered it to be backwards. The result of this was the destruction of marriage as a social institution. Further consequences were that women lost an important form of social security, and men lost their strength of character and sense of responsibility (Owomoyela, 1996). Commenting on King Khama’s action of ending *lobola/bogadi*, Head (in Owomoyela, 1996) said “The misguided King looked at *bogadi* with Western eyes and saw a system of purchase, not the simple appreciation for the parents of the bride that it was” (p.140). Head criticised Khama’s actions of abolishing *lobola* and he argued that *bogadi* is an African concept and should not be looked at through Western eyes. *Lobola*, if not abused, is a good African concept that binds the two families. Owomoyela (1996), discourages the error of criticising African sensibility without an adequate understanding of African formations, an error that we unfortunately received from our late colonisers.
Ramphele (1984), points out that the concept of marriage is a changing variable among Africans. In some cases it involves the full process of bride’s wealth, a wedding ceremony in front of the magistrate or priest, the woman being taken to the home by her relatives and the final incorporation into the man’s family. In some relationships people simply live together without going through the above procedures. The obligations of men and women differ in African marriages. A woman marries into the family whereas the man remains unattached to the woman’s family. Ramphele (1984), notes that “the fact of marrying into a family is at the very basis of bringing the woman into a system of control that ensures the perpetuation of patriarchal family relations” (p.401). The woman is even given a new name to signify the family’s expectations of her contributions (Ramphele, 1984).

Whereas lobola served as protection against the abuse of women in traditional African families, its commercial nature in urban areas yielded the opposite effect. It gave men a sense of ownership over women. Even though traditionally lobola was used to protect women, it was however still largely abused by traditional men. This is asserted by Ramphele who states that the system of bride price is the cornerstone of ‘traditional’ control of women by men among Africans in most parts of South Africa (Ramphele, 1984). For example the payment of lobola or bride price among Black people is carried with a notion that the bride belongs to the husband and therefore, she has to be submissive to him (James & Busia, 1993), this applies to both traditional and urban marriages.

3.3 How patriarchal system has influenced the traditional upbringing of children and its contribution to the abuse of women

From the domestic sphere of influence among Black some people, females are at the disadvantaged position even before they are born, in the sense that male children are being more preferred and celebrated by all parents than female children. The two genders even receive different treatments as they grow up, the male being groomed to become a responsible family head in the future, he is also assured of his father’s inheritance and status, while the female is simply held in waiting until she is old enough to be delivered to her husband in return for lobola. As a wife, the female must bear and rear her husband’s children, do his laundry, cook his food, keep his house clean, pamper him, share him with other women, only to be rewarded with
varieties of abuse by her man (Owomoyela, 1996). Black African Women pass through the control of different men throughout their life time namely; her father, husband, father in law, uncles and so forth. It is as Ramphele (1984), attests, control that stretches from birth to death. This system, according to Ramphele, which has been reinforced by the legal provisions of successive white governments, continued to promote the status of a perpetual minor upon African Women. In the traditional African context, men’s responsibility was to provide and protect. The men used to perform more strenuous and more dangerous tasks while the women were left with the safer and less strenuous tasks (Owomoyela, 1996). This tells us that women were regarded as naturally weak and delicate and men as strong, intelligent and capable.

The cultural mores and traditional practices still perpetuate the abuse of African Women, even today. Motsei (2007), puts the plight of Black Women very clearly by stating that Black Women have since inception been objects to men. She submits that throughout infancy, puberty and adulthood, girls and women remain in the cultural and legal custody of their fathers, lacking their own identity. Later this responsibility of custodianship is transferred to their husbands, who dictate and control them. In adulthood, these women are faced with unequal access to educational, political and economic opportunities. They are exposed to sexual harassment and marital rapes which predispose them to HIV/AIDS. In old age writes Motsei (2007), they are scorned for no longer being receptacles of men’s sexual desires. If their husbands happen to die before them, they are more often accused of bewitching them, and as widows, they suffer further abuse from their husbands’ relatives.

3.4 Interference of in-laws and cultural prejudice as contributing to the abuse of Black African Women

The modern Black South African woman is faced with dual responsibility, one of being a home maker, and that of being a career woman who has to leave her home and go to work. Her roles include that of being a traditional wife, a mother, a daughter in law and at the same time she has to cope with the demands of her job or career (Oyekanmi, 2000). From the first day a woman is married into a family she starts her life under the watchful eye of her mother in law (Human Rights Watch, 2008) and before she knows it, she has to be a ‘breeding machine’ for the
cherished male heir to the lineage. If she produces girls only or no children at all, she becomes ostracised and she becomes a ridicule of the family (Motsei, 2007).

A woman’s roles as umakoti (daughter in law) are to meet everybody’s needs in the family including all the household chores. Most of the time there is no appreciation for all her efforts and sacrifices but instead she is met with all kinds of criticisms particularly by her mother in law. Dangor (1995), affirms that a woman is a woman’s worst enemy most of the times. Dangor (1995) further purports that, when a woman’s transition passes from daughter in law is complete and she becomes the mother in law, she inflicts the same pain and tribulations on her daughter in law perhaps as a way of avenging what she had gone through as a daughter in law. More often as Dangor (1995), illustrates, petty squabbles, and being jealous over trivial matters, fuels the dislike between mother and daughter in law.

There is a Sesotho phrase that says “Mosadi o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng” (a woman holds the knife at its sharpest point) which means that a woman can do anything including self-sacrifice for her family’s survival. Despite this, the Black African Woman does not get the appreciation and the honour she deserves. Customs and traditions have reduced her to nothingness. Whether a woman is educated or not, the present day interpretation of African culture continues to equate her with cows or land that a man owns. An African Woman is accorded no respect and is perceived to be of lesser value than a man. As Motsei (2007), states “her role in the world is limited to catering to men’s basic human needs, including giving birth to children (preferably male) as a means of contributing to the multiplication and survival of the race” (p. 158).

Tribalism also contributes to the abuse of Black Women. For other parents, the tribe from which their son marries is a matter of concern. For instance, the fact that the bride is not of a specific approved tribe can lead to her abuse particularly by her in-laws. This brings the researcher to a moving story of a Black Woman who was not only abused by her husband, but also by her in laws because she belonged to a different tribe. The researcher felt it imperative to add this story in order to create awareness as to how cultural stereotypes and tribalism can contribute to the abuse of women. The abuse of this Black South African woman had dire consequences and story reads like this:
A Black South African Woman by the name of Nompumelelo Manyaapelo is currently serving thirty years imprisonment for murdering her husband who abused her continuously. In her article Born to Suffer, Manyaapelo (2005), tells a moving story about her ordeal in an abusive marriage which started as a caring and loving relationship. In the eyes of the community, this woman appeared as though she had everything a woman could ask for and this is how she puts it: “In the eyes of the community, he was a successful businessman, a caring doctor who looked after his wife and children. I was driving around in ‘top-of-the-range’ cars and with all the comforts money could buy, but it was all an illusion” (p.2).

What the community did not know was that behind the expensive cars and money, was a woman who was suffering all kinds of abuse. A woman who was overdosing herself with sleeping tablets to get away from emotional pain, a woman who attempted suicide several times, a woman who endured countless extra marital affairs by her husband and a woman who would one day become tired of the abuse and end her husband’s life.

Her mother in law also added to her misery by treating her like an animal. She was ostracised by her in laws because she was a Letebele (the word used to describe people from a Nguni origin) and her husband often warned her that his parents will not accept a Letebele in their home. Over and above the emotional abuse she was experiencing, tribal bias also put pressure on their marriage and her husband condoned it. Manyaapelo could also not leave the abusive marriage because according to Black culture, it was taboo to do so as and she says “But it is taboo in our culture for a woman to leave her husband because she can’t cope with the difficulties in a marriage. So, I stayed on. “I had to do what was right in the eyes of my family and culture, even if it was torture” (Manyaapelo, 2005, p. 12). Despite all the torture, this woman was not even allowed to see a psychologist because her husband did not want to be exposed. Her husband could not even be arrested because he knew people in ‘higher places’. He used money to buy the judiciary and he was a friend to most policemen. This made the woman to feel trapped in her marriage and the only way to her freedom was to kill her husband. Sadly, this is what Manyaapelo has to say “I am serving a 30-year sentence for my actions, substituting the prison of abuse for a prison of bricks” (p. 12).
Bester (2008), conducted a study to uncover the psychological factors that contribute to the killing of an abusive partner. Development of post-traumatic stress disorder, experience of coercive control, inter-relational conflict and substance abuse were found to be the primary psychological factors leading women to kill their abusive partners. Secondary factors found included cultural perceptions and lack of resources. Among other factors, culture was found to have a prominent influence as it informs the manner and acceptance of means to deal with domestic abuse.

3.5 How traditional factors affect women’s decision to stay in abusive marriages

Traditional and cultural practices seem to contribute to women’s decision to leave abusive marriages. Singh (2005), postulates that in communities which embrace loyal motherhood and where the status of women is based upon her role as a wife, mother and house keeper, leaving the abusive relationship means losing her respect within the community. The fear of women to leave abusive relationships is also brought about by the negative labels used to describe female headed families such as “broken”, torn,” or “not normal” (Makofane, 2002).

According to Dobash and Dobash (1980), women become entrapped in the patriarchal values of marriage and family, thus sacrificing everything to save their homes and families. These women are taught to accept blame if the marriage does not work (Dangor, 1999). This corroborates with the Sesotho phrase “mosadi o ngalla motsheyo” (a woman endures and does not leave her home). All other cultural stereotypes and utterances which were mentioned earlier in the chapter seem to trap Black South African Women in abusive marriages. These cultural stereotypes and utterances according to Dangor (1999), encourage women to be silent in the interest of ‘saving face’ for the sake of the family. Lobola also plays a role in the women’s leave or stay decision in the sense that a woman feels she has been bought at a price and therefore cannot leave the marriage. Men also feel they have bought these women and therefore they have to remain their property to use and abuse as they wish (Motsei, 2007).

Adherence to these normative values, according to Singh (2005), are totally unrelated to the level of education, profession, or wealth, as they are cultural standards that must be maintained, no matter what. This means that no amount of education or affluence can exonerate a Black African
Woman from cultural norms. According to Makofane (2002), women who have been socialized to believe in traditional roles are more likely to stay in abusive marriages than those who have not.

Feminist scholars mention interplay between cultural constructions of femininity and structural conditions in analysing why women do not leave abusive relationships (Anderson, 2002). Dominant notions of femininity emphasise: nurturance, women’s attempt to “heal” abusive men through giving them love, understanding and patience. Yet women also stay in abusive relationships because of their limited economic and social resources (Anderson, 2002). Patriarchal practices within society, namely the church and criminal justice as previously stated, have created gender imbalances and have removed power from women. The next discussion will be on how Black South African Women challenged gender imbalances and women abuse.

### 3.6 Black South African Women’s fight against women abuse

Brave women became tired of being abused at all angles (including issues of gender inequality) and in the 50’s they decided to fight against all the injustices that were imposed on them and became the major source of resistance. On the 9nth August 1956, women mobilised a historic march where more than 20,000 women marched to protest against the imposition of pass laws while demanding the fundamental rights of justice, equality and freedom. This resistance against oppression and discrimination of women was nothing new, it actually started centuries ago with the origination of feminism, sisterhood and womanism to name a few (Human Rights Watch, 2008). Black Women did not only fight political injustices, male domination and oppression, but they also had to fight against oppression by women of different colour (White women). Hence later, there was a movement or split from feminism towards the formation of sisterhood and womanism and these groups had different ideologies. The significant differences that arise from the two cultural orientations (European and Black) namely; (1): the degradation of women in one culture; and (2) the respect for women in the other. These distinctions, according to Dove (1998), should not be ignored when analysing the contemporary difficulties for African people, especially African Women living in Western oriented societies.
African Women who were genuinely concerned made a call for African women to break the yoke of silence. These women include: Bonlale Awe, Helen Khuzwayo, Charlotte Maxeke, Helen Joseph, Rebecca Njau, Lillian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu, Adelaide Tambo, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, Micere Mugo, Nina Emma Mba and many more (Kolawole, 1997), Professor Amina Mama, and most recently in South Africa young women such as Mmatshilo Motsei (The executive director Agisanang domestic abuse prevention and training). These women continue to fight the scourge of women abuse. All these women have different ideologies but the crux of their fight is the condition and needs of Black African women. Their fight seems to have benefited their struggle to liberate women to an extent that women can now play a role in changing the imbalances of gender.

The women’s fight for liberation yielded results such that almost half of President Jacob Zuma’s cabinet currently consists of women. For example, 14 Ministers and 12 Deputy Ministers are women; this puts the representation of women in the cabinet at almost 42%. In South Africa, there was an increase by 45% of women representation in the cabinet, putting South Africa third in the global rankings of countries with women in parliament. This puts the country firmly on course to achieve the goal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of empowering women (Women’s struggle in South Africa: Post-apartheid review, 2005). These were few changes by the post-apartheid government in an effort to change the predicament of women and empower Black South African Women. After a long struggle and tolerance of the abuse of women, women in government assisted in bringing about new legislation in South Africa which does not apply to Black Women only but to all women (Augustine, 2002). These acts are explained extensively in the government gazette and their detailed discussion will not form part of this study. The researcher will just mention these acts and they are:

i. The Domestic Violence Act (passed Nov. 1998, in operation Dec. 1999) which protects women against all acts of domestic violence.


3.7 Democracy and Black South African Women

In the Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the emancipation of women in South Africa (1990), it was noted that the majority of South African Women, who are Black, are the most oppressed section of the population suffering under a triple yoke of oppression which is race, class and gender. It was also noted that the liberation of women is central to the Black people’s struggle for freedom. In the new South Africa women will not immediately have the education, skills and resources to claim the rights provided in the constitution and laws. It was mentioned in the statement that it is the duty of the state to take appropriate measures to ensure the principle of gender-equality and that Women’s right to democratic participation in all decision making must be there in principle and in practise. The Statement included the Charter of Women’s Rights which states that men and women alike should take the responsibility for eliminating gender oppression. However, it suggests that women should take the lead in creating a non-sexist South Africa. This statement promised a new era for Black South African Women. The abolishing of apartheid policy in 1994 together with other discriminatory laws also marked the beginning of a new era for Black people in South Africa including women (Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the emancipation of women in South Africa, 1990).

After 1994 the South African Government ratified several international instruments related to domestic violence which aimed at achieving an integrated response to violence against women (Groenewald, 1996). One of the international instruments was the United Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW emphasises that violence against women must stop and that no husband, father, boyfriend, or family member may hit a woman or abuse her in any way. It also stresses the importance of the availability of shelters, trained health workers, rehabilitation and counselling services for abused women (Groenewald, 1996).

In 1996, after the Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing and a lot of consultations with South African women bodies, the government adopted the platform for action. The aim for this action was for Government departments to identify tangible actions to be employed to assist the process of achieving gender equality and advancement of women socially and economically.
As a result, the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) was established in the Presidency. In seven of nine provinces similar offices were set up. The Beijing Conference was the last major conference that dealt with violence against women (Groenewald, 1996). The National Commission on Gender equality was formed in 1997 to address and promote gender empowerment and equity. The task of this commission is to ensure that government and other non-statutory bodies adhere to their commitment to gender equality. There is also the Joint Monitoring Committee for Quality of Life and Status of Women which is located in the Parliament of South Africa. This body focuses on the quality of life and status of women in particular where legislation is concerned. The Human Rights Commission is another development that plays an important role in the protection of the rights of women. Also various laws which ensure the rights of women are protected were passed by Parliament (Women’s struggle in South Africa: Post-apartheid review).

The Expanded Public Works Programme was launched in 2004 to fight poverty in South Africa and its role was to empower women particular those in the rural areas. It also ensures recognition and participation of women in non-female traditional roles, for example, entrepreneurship, construction and so on. Through these programmes together with the National Skills Initiative headed by the Department of Labour, government is seeking to improve the lives of women (Women’s struggle in South Africa: Post-apartheid review, 2005). Democracy seems to have brought with it very attractive and promising changes especially with regards to improving the lives of women. However, in the researcher’s opinion, this is only attractive on paper as Dangor (1999), suggested that some of them have never culminated into action. Nothing seems to have benefited women at grass roots level. Every change that occurred in the new Democratic South Africa, (including the Black Economic Empowerment [BEE] projects), benefited the rich and affluent Black Women of this country and not the poor and destitute.

Despite the new government’s pledge to prioritise the problem of violence against women, an enormous gap, according to Human Rights Watch (2008), still exists between policy and practise. Staggering numbers of South African Women of all races and income levels face violence daily as Mama (2000), concurs, at the hands of men they know and on whom they rely. It should be remembered that human rights are also women’s right, therefore women have the
right to equality. These rights should not only be attractive on paper but should be fully implemented to ensure the end of women’s struggles. Women need to continue to push the conceptual boundaries and the possibilities of ensuring that these rights are taken seriously.

In his State of the Nation Address, the president of the Republic of South Africa, President Jacob Gedleyihleksisa Zuma discussing his programme action for 2013, urged all South Africans to work together in fighting the scourge of women abuse including children. President Jacob Zuma reiterated that the brutality and cruelty meted out to defenceless women is unacceptable and has no place in South Africa. Zuma (2013), mentioned that last year the National Council on Gender Based Violence was established and it comprises government, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, academia, research institutions, government, men’s groupings, and representation from women, children and persons with disabilities. Zuma urged this coordinating structure to make the campaign of fighting violence against women an everyday campaign. He further applauded all sectors for the campaigns that have taken place already, highlighting that acts of violence against women will not be tolerated. Zuma (2013), mentioned that he has directed law enforcement agencies to treat these cases with the utmost urgency and importance. He emphasised that the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units, which were re-established in 2010, have increased personnel, and he further stated that during the last financial year, the units secured over 363 life sentences, with a conviction rate of 73% for crimes against women above 18 years old and 70% for crimes against children under 18 years of age. Zuma further stated that, Government is adding other mechanisms to protect women, such as the Protection from Harassment Bill. He says while the Domestic Violence Act also provides protection, it only applies to persons who are in a domestic relationship. The Protection from Harassment Bill, according to Zuma will also deal with harassment by persons who stalk their victims by means of electronic communications (Zuma, 2013).

In commenting about Jacob Zuma’s endeavours to control the scourge of women abuse, one woman highlighted to Zuma that despite all the promises, the above mentioned organisations are still struggling in terms of accessing funds from the government. President Zuma promised to look into the matter. As stated earlier in this discussion, despite the government’s pledge to
prioritise the problem of violence against women, there has always been an enormous gap between policy and practise.

3.8 Conclusion
The above discussion served to bring into this study an African perspective regarding the abuse of women. An insight was created into how the historical and traditional practises influenced the abuse of African women. It was noted in the above discussion that traditional practices such as lobola, even though they were well intended, evolved and became misused, consequently leading women to be abused by their partners and be trapped in abusive marriages. The traditional stereotypes and the way of bringing up children and how these lead to regarding women as inferior were also alluded to. The role of the in-laws and cultural prejudice as contributing to further abuse of Black Women was also highlighted. Black South African Women’s fight against abuse and how democracy attempted to change the plight of women in South Africa was captured in this chapter. As attractive as they appear on paper, women’s rights are still pure lip service and rhetoric. Gender dominance and sexism are still rife, particularly in the Black societies. If these so called rights were respected, there would be a vast difference in the lives of women today, particularly Black South African Women. Women have continued to fight against abuse in some ways, and the government has put forward some legislation in an attempt to fight violence against woman as noted in the above discussion, but the abuse of women still remains a thorn in the flesh. Culture and tradition still plays a major role in the abuse of Black Women.
4.1 Introduction
An explanation of what phenomenology is and how the phenomenological system of inquiry developed will be presented in this chapter. A discussion on the transition of phenomenology to existential phenomenology will follow. Different concepts used in a phenomenological study will be outlined in this chapter. The specific research methodology used in this study will be discussed. A discussion on phenomenology as a qualitative research method will be covered as well as the justification of using phenomenology in the domain of Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse. This will be followed by a discussion on what motivated the researcher to conduct the study and how the researcher bracketed her biases (epoche) will be outlined in this section and again later in this chapter. An outline of the aims of the study, selection of participants, data gathering procedure of which in this case is by phenomenological interview will follow. A discussion on data analysis, validity and ethical considerations will conclude this chapter.

4.2 What is phenomenology?
Old paradigm psychological research can be characterised by its positivistic stance that relies on experimental methods and the tendency to treat the human participants of research as “subjects”. This means that humans are regarded only as passive data sources (Dyer, 2006). For the past fifty years or so, psychology has been following the direction of that which is known or unusual to us will be accounted for by natural sciences in general (e.g. physics, chemistry and biology) and by the methods and techniques they employ in particular (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). Psychology has traditionally been embedded within natural sciences which embraces a positivistic approach to the pursuit of knowledge (Neuman, 2000).

The natural scientific approach makes three most crucial assumptions and these are, namely: (1) the phenomenon must be observable; (2) the phenomenon must be measurable; and (3) the phenomenon must be such that it is possible for more than one observer to agree on its existence and characteristics (Valle et al., 1989). “Psychology, formed by individuals embedded in this
same natural science world was therefore, fashioned as a natural scientific psychology” (Valle et al., 1989 p.5).

In the mainstream psychology, the most important thing is to formulate hypotheses and test them. This hypothesis is a prediction about the cause effect relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. According to Chessick (2002), natural sciences tend to reduce everything to ‘methods and objectification and testing’ (p.2). From the 1960s a paradigm shift occurred in psychology. The shift was brought about by the dissatisfaction with the old paradigm. The concerns were about its validity, sampling, the experimental procedure (whereby people are only used as data sources) and research ethics (Dyer, 2006). However, psychology today, as Dyer (2006), puts it, “is a methodologically diverse discipline that draws on eclectic range of methods and approaches in its quest for insights into the causes of human behaviour” (p.25), and phenomenology, a human science, is one of these methods.

The following approaches that is, the empirical approach, the phenomenological approach (descriptive), and the hermeneutic approach (interpretive) have been identified as the three main systems of enquiry in the human sciences and each of these systems of enquiry is able to elicit a particular knowledge about human beings (Mohamed-Patel, 2005). The empirical approach comes from the natural sciences or positivistic tradition, which quantifies data and falls under quantitative research. The phenomenological method is qualitative and seeks to describe human experience. The hermeneutic approach is interpretive and examines texts of conversation or dialogue to establish meaning embedded within the text (Mohamed-Patel, 2005). It is one of the alternatives to mainstream psychology (Klein, & Westcott, 1994).

Phenomenological enquiry has increasingly become popular in recent years, however it is still one of the most philosophically and theoretically complex research traditions, many aspects of which remain poorly understood (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). It began as a philosophical movement in the work of Brentano, whose seminars were attended by Freud and Husserl, and was later expanded and transformed in various directions by pioneers of philosophy such as Heidegger, Sarte, Merleau-Ponty, and numerous other thinkers (Chessick, 2002).
Chessick (2002), mentions that phenomenology should not be seen as a rival of scientific research, but its main function should be to serve as a collaborator to scientific endeavour. The functions of the natural sciences and the human sciences are according to Chessick (2000), fundamentally different in the sense that the former behaves in an objectifying way and the latter involves participation. This does not mean that objectification and methodological approach are valueless in humanistic disciplines and for that matter, as Chessick (2002) stated that, the cultural sciences do have scientific methods available to them. The emphasis is that “we cannot ignore the value of our mutual participation in our involvement in the tradition and life of culture in which both we and the individual whom we study are immersed” (p.3). Phenomenology evolved as an effort to recognise this important aspect of human science. But what is phenomenology?

Phenomenology comes from the Greek words *phainomenon* and *logos* and it means “the study of human experience and the way in which things are perceived as they appear to consciousness” (Langdridge, 2007, p.10). Phenomenology is used to study and learn about phenomena that are difficult to observe or measure (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Phenomenology, as Chessick (2002, p.1) propose, attempts to capture the intrinsic nature of one’s experience exactly as it occurs to a person and without any exaggeration, explanation, extrapolation, interpretation, inference, or attribution to any theory, for example what it feels like to experience dizziness, grief, hunger or pain.

Phenomenological inquiry focuses on what people experience and how they interpret the world (Patton, 1990). Phenomenologists focus on how people put together the phenomena they experience in such a way as to make sense of the world, and in so doing, develop the world view (Patton, 1990). The purpose of a phenomenological research is to produce a clear, precise and systematic description of the meaning that constitutes the activity of consciousness (Valle et al., 1989). According to Valle et al., (1989), phenomenological research provides a deeper and clearer understanding of what it is like to experience something. It is about the description of lived experiences. What makes a phenomenological description different from other kinds of descriptions is that phenomenological descriptions aim at explaining lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). According to Van Manen, a good phenomenological description is an adequate clarification of some aspects of the live world. “It resonates with our sense of lived life” (Van
Manen, 1990, p.27). Phenomenology embraces a post-positivism stance which asserts that there can be no all-embracing explanation or generalisation about experience and that research can only describe and every description should be regarded as valid (Neuman, 2000).

A newer review of phenomenology suggests that phenomenology is not a philosophical system, but rather a practise that attempts to get at the truth of matters (Moran, 2000). In Husserl’s words it is an attempt to direct attention to the things themselves, to revive our contact with the actual lived world and the living subjects (Chessick, 2002).

4.3 The development of the phenomenological system of enquiry

The phenomenological movement originated in Europe in the late nineteenth century where it gradually expanded (Mohamed-Patel, 2005) and philosopher Edmond Husserl is said to have been credited with its initial development. Martin Heidegger, a pupil of Husserl, went on to develop Husserl’s ideas to form his own version of phenomenology (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Although Husserl has been credited with the initial development of phenomenology, literature indicates that early phenomenology emerged under the three separate phases and the preparatory phase emerged under the influence of Frans Brentano (1838-1917). The middle phase was represented by Edmond Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and the third phase included Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961 and Sarte (1905-1980) (Chessick, 2002; Warnock, 1970).

What is to follow is the discussion that traces the historical development of these three phases which will eventually lead to the discussion of the transition of phenomenology to existential phenomenology.

4.3.1 Brentano’s contribution

Phenomenology began with the work of Franz Brentano (1838-1917). In his work, Brentano attempted to develop a descriptive psychology which was considered as the first and most important intellectual stimulus for Husserl’s development of phenomenology (Chessick, 2002). Brentano questioned the essential difference between the objects of empirical psychology and the objects of other kinds of sciences (Luijpen, 1966). His contention was that if psychology is to be
counted as a science, something must distinguish it from other sciences. Brentano discovered that a binding factor between natural science and other sciences is that they all study phenomena namely physical phenomena (Chessick, 2002). And according to Brentano, all phenomena are appearances, not things themselves, appearances he says, are mental entities, but not all mental entities are mental phenomena. For Brentano, the subject matter of physics does not exist in itself, and we can indirectly infer anything about its causes (Kraus, 1995). Brentano’s inclusion of both mental and physical phenomena redefined the focus of psychology as separate from positivistic goals of reducing experience to physical phenomena (Polkinghorne, 1983).

The phenomena with which psychology is concerned are ideas or acts of conceiving. This, according to Luijpen, (1966), implies that every psychological phenomenon is characterised by intentional existence of an object or a tendency toward an object. This thinking brought about the notion of intentionality which is too often cited as the main discovery of phenomenology (Kockelmans, 1967). Every psychic act is intentional in the sense that it is directed towards an object. The intentional object is described as always immanent, it is something unreal or insubstantial, though it may be said to exist, it exists in itself to the extent that the thinker has it as his intentional object (Muller, 1995). Intentionality involves a pair of correlates of which one is real and the other is not real, for example; seeing and what is seen, presenting and what is presented, loving and what is loved, willing and what is willed (Muller, 1995).

According to the present view, those things which are objects of sensation are intentional objects. They exist as insubstantial correlates of experience. This means that experiencing is something real, whereas the object of experiencing is something unreal (Kraus, 1995; Muller, 1995). It is suggested by Muller (1995), that Brentano later changed to saying that there is nothing that is insubstantial, therefore Brentano’s final view was that the individual things which are the objects of sensation do not exist and he stated this example: If one says he feels the red patch, it will be evident that one feels the red patch, but it will follow that the red patch does not exist (Muller, 1995).
4.3.2 Husserl’s contribution

The philosopher Edmund Husserl is credited with the initial development of phenomenology and he was as a result known as the father of phenomenology (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Husserl’s philosophical development was influenced by Franz Brentano who gave him “a decidedly psychological perspective on philosophical problems” (Solomon, 1970, p.147). Husserl, unlike other philosophers of the nineteenth century, had little interest in the history of philosophy. Instead, he directed his efforts towards problems initially contracted outside philosophy and he had only peripheral concern for their philosophical origins (Solomon, 1970).

Husserl (whose early studies and doctoral work were in mathematics) initially developed the method of phenomenological psychology for purposes of epistemology. His aim was to find a basis for principles of mathematics and logic (Klein & Westcott, 1994), and he also sought to establish the meaning of the basic concepts employed in different sciences (Langdridge, 2007). To achieve this, Husserl identified the vital structures of experience that distinguished the sciences and determined the concepts on which they relied, for example there would be phenomenological physics, geography, psychology et cetera. The aim here was to firmly establish the basic concepts of these disciplines through a rigorous analysis of the way the objects of study appeared to us in our own experience of them (Langdridge, 2007).

In 1887, in his work named Habilitaionschrift, Husserl argued that the principles of mathematics could be grounded on a descriptive psychology of the concept of numbers and he called this notion psychologism. This notion can be illustrated by an arithmetic fact; such as 3+2=5. The psychologistic view would be our human tendency to believe the fact that 3+2=5 (Klein & Westcott, 1994). Husserl later recognised the inadequacy of psychology as a basis for mathematics by noting that the role of descriptive psychology is actually to provide an initial point of entry into the underlying structures of logic and mathematics which could be refined through rigorous reflection. Therefore, according to Husserl, following the example given above it is the intuition after a process of rigorous reflection, of the necessity of 3+2=5 which is the basis of truth (Klein & Westcott, 1994, p. 1).
Husserl described his phenomenology as a science of consciousness and concluded that natural scientific measurement is not a suitable vehicle for understanding the human being because man cannot be reduced to a measurable object (in Kruger, 1979). He proposed that in order to understand one’s fellow human being, one needs to look at the quality of experiences and he therefore placed great emphasis on consciousness. Husserl from the onset rejected the reductionistic tendencies of the natural sciences. Like Brentano, he denied that the natural science was the only form of science that existed (Giorgi, Barton & Maes, 1983). Husserl believed that the suitable vehicle for in depth understanding of human experience should be based on description of it rather than reducing man to measurable objects as suggested by natural sciences (in Moustakas, 1994).

According to Husserl, a phenomenon is whatever appears to us in experience and therefore, no reduction is allowed, meaning that no selecting out of experience of such items as things, objects, feelings, entities etc. should be done (in Chessick, 2002). For Husserl, phenomenological statements cannot be called empirical because according to him empirical sciences already assume “things” (Chessick, 2002).

For Husserl, as well as for Kant and Descartes, knowledge that is based on intuition and essence precedes empirical knowledge; and any phenomenon represents a starting point for investigation (Husserl, cited in Moustakas, 1994). Husserl’s emphasis is that “what is given in our perception of a thing is its appearance, yet this is not an empty illusion (Moustakas, 1994). It serves as the essential beginning of a science that seeks valid determinations that are open to anyone to verify” (in Moustakas, 1994, p.26). Husserl’s phenomenology is based on subjectivity that is the way in which all our experiences takes place and it does not reduce a person to a thing (Chessick, 2002).

### 4.4 Fundamental concepts of phenomenological psychology

The discussion that follows is about the key concepts in phenomenology and these include: intentionality, what is experienced (*noema*) and the way it is experienced (*noesis*), *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and essences.
4.4.1 Intentionality

Intentionality is considered one of the most important concepts in this branch of philosophy (Langdrigde, 2007). In Aristotelian philosophy, the term intentionality means the orientation of the mind to its object (Kockelmans, 1967), or directedness toward an object (Klein & Westcott, 1994). This implies that the object exists in the mind in an intentional way (Kockelmans, 1967). According to Husserl (in Moustakas, 1994) intentionality refers to consciousness, that is, to the internal experience of being conscious of something, thus the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related. The term intentionality indicates that there is the inseparable connectedness of the human being to the world (Van Manen, 1990). Husserl advanced Brentano’s contention that intentionality is the basic characteristic of ‘psychic phenomena’. Brentano and Husserl differed only in the sense that Brentano believed that when an individual perceptually experiences an object, the object always exists, while Husserl’s contention was that the object may be imaginary and not exist at all. Both men however were in agreement that directedness is a fundamental feature of intentionality, that the mind is directed toward some entity whether that entity exists or not (Moustakas, 1994). In Husserl’s sense, intentionality does not mean an intention to something such as for example washing dishes, going for shopping or taking a bath, but it refers to the fact that whenever we are conscious or aware of something, it has to be conscious, or aware of something, “there is always an object of consciousness, whether that is your cat, another person or an idea” (Langdridge, 2007, p.13). This means that when a person sees something, it is not appearing as a projection of our brain, but the object is actually there in the world. For Husserl, intentionality was the key feature of consciousness (Langdridge, 2007) and it provided the one unifying theme which Husserl sought. Husserl took this directedness to be the definitive feature of the mental: “All consciousness is consciousness of something “(Klein & Westcott, 1994, p.5).

The focus of intentionality is according to Langdrigde (2007), in the way consciousness is turned out on to the world as it intentionally relates to objects in the world. It is this consciousness of the world or the relationship between a person’s consciousness and the world that is the object of study for phenomenological psychologists (Langdridge, 2007). Moustakas (1994), asserts that knowledge of intentionality requires that we be present to ourselves and to things in the world and we should also recognise that the self and the world are inseparable components of meaning.
Kockelmans (in Moustakas, 1994), points out that “consciousness in itself cannot be anything other than openness, directedness to other, in this way consciousness appears to be not pure interiority, but should be understood as a going-out of itself” (p.29).

According to Langdridge (2007), phenomenological psychology does not concern itself with understanding cognitions or looking inside people to try and understand what is happening inside their heads as it is done in traditional mainstream psychology. Instead, the intentional correlation leads to a focus on the experiences of things in their appearing and the way in which they appear to us as we focus our attention on them in consciousness. Every intentionality is therefore, comprised of a noema (what is experienced) and the noesis (the way it is experienced) (Moustakas, 1994). These will be discussed in the next topic.

4.4.2 What is experienced (noema) and the way it is experienced (noesis)
The central role of intentionality in the theory of phenomenology should become clearer if we understand the two terms: noema and noesis (Langdridge, 2007). Noema refers to that which we orient ourselves and it is the object reference of noesis, the noetic act (Van Manen, 1994), it is what is experienced (Langdridge, 2007). Noesis is the act of interpreting that which is directed to an intentional object, that is, the noematic object, it is the way the object is experienced (Langdridge, 2007; Van Manen, 1994).

Traditional philosophy, contemporary psychology and everyday thinking, make a distinction between objects and subjects. The subject is the person that comes to know the object, the subject is the person who thinks, acts and makes perceptions, while the object is a ‘thing’ for example a tree, a hair, a car etc. (Van Manen, 1994). If we have to make a clear distinction between the noema and the noesis we can say that the noema is not a real object, but it is a phenomenon. For instance, if one sees a tree, the noema (what is experienced) is not the tree but the appearance of the tree (Moustakas, 1994). The object that appears in perception varies in terms of when it is perceived, the angle from which it is seen, the background of experience, the orientation of wishing, willing, or judging, always from the vintage point of a perceiving individual (Gurwitsch, in Moustakas, 1994).
The *noema* is therefore objective and it is the perceived, in this case the tree as seen. If we take a reflective stance towards the process of perceiving (*noetic* or subjective) and the perceived (*noema* or the objective) we become aware not of two separate poles but a complex affair: the process of consciousness with its specific object (Valle et al., 1989). “This then means that from whatever angle one views an object, that is front, side, or back, the synthesis of perception means that a tree will continue to present itself as a tree the tree is out there present in time and space while the perception of the tree is in consciousness” (Valle et al., 1994, p.29).

According to Moustakas (1994), every intentional experience is also noetic. This means that every experience has its reference or direction towards what is experienced and on the contrary, every experienced phenomenon refers to or reflects a mode of experiencing to which it is present (Langdridge, 2007). The *noema-noesis* relationship constitutes the intentionality of consciousness in the sense that for every *noema* there is a *noesis* and for every *noesis* there is a *noema*. On the *noematic* side is the uncovering and illumination, the unfolding and becoming distinct, the clearing of what is actually presented in the consciousness. On the *noetic* side is an explication of the intentional processes themselves (Moustakas, 1994).

This idea of interrelatedness or “correlation” is apparent and is explained by Zaner (1964), in that it is by consciousness that objects are made present (intended) yet it is by the objects that the consciousness is revealed, without consciousness through which they can show themselves, there can be no objects, similarly without objects revealing themselves, there can be no consciousness. These two (*noema and noesis*) have mutual intentionality (Zaner, 1964). The *noetic* is only possible though the possibilities provided by the *noema* (Langdridge, 2007).

### 4.4.3 Epoche’

The *epoche’,* also called 'bracketing', is the Greek word used by Husserl which means the processes by which we attempt to abstain from our presuppositions that we have about what we are investigating (Langdridge, 2007). It is an act through which it becomes possible to stand aside from one’s subjective experience and world view to more objectively understand a given phenomenon (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). In the *epoche’,* our prejudgements, biases, and preconceived ideas about things are set aside (Valle et al., 1989). In *epoche*, all commitments
with reference to previous knowledge and experience are invalidated, inhibited and disqualified (Schmitt, 1968).

Wilding and Whiteford (2005), mention that within phenomenology, as with other qualitative approaches, there is no methodological tenet. Instead, the data itself should guide the nature and form of the study for the researcher. This reflective and holistic stance, as Wilding and Whiteford (2005), put it, allows the words of the research participants to speak for themselves, thus providing the best possible basis for new understandings to emerge. By allowing the data to speak for itself, the researcher becomes a naïve inquirer to the process of research (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Husserl (in Langdrigde, 2007) argued that human existence was characterised by a natural attitude which is our basic way of experiencing the world with assumptions in operation. According to Husserl, in this natural way there is no time to critically examine our experience but instead we simply get on with life and live it through the natural attitude (Langdrigde, 2007).

This natural attitude tends to also be used by the researchers, particularly mainstream psychology researchers, who simply adopt quantitative methods and little critical awareness of the way in which this will simply present experience through the natural attitude rather than revealing what is hidden beyond the natural attitude. Application of phenomenological method seeks that we put aside the natural attitude and rather become aware of it and therefore gain a greater critical understanding of the assumptions at play in a persons’ lived experience (Langdrigde, 2007). The aim of *epoche*’ therefore is to enable the researcher to describe the things themselves and attempt to set aside natural attitude or assumptions we have about the world. *Epoche*’ is what makes a distinction between Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology. Although Husserl suggested a process of *epoche*’ or bracketing, Heidegger maintained that such a ‘transcendental ‘act is not possible (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Heideggerian phenomenology suggests that we acknowledge and place on the foreground our own particular horizon of understanding in approaching phenomena. Heideggerian phenomenology acknowledges that researchers bring pre-understandings to their work and although attempts are made to identify these, to put them aside to see the research phenomenon in with fresh eyes, there is an understanding that they are actually never transcended (Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). Such subjectivity should not be seen
as an indicator of poor research, but 'pre understandings' should be celebrated because they enable rather than constrains the researcher (Hasselkus, 1997).

4.4.4 Phenomenological reduction

The process of bracketing and re-bracketing is the manner in which one moves from the natural attitude towards the transcendental attitude. This process of adopting the transcendental attitude is called 'reduction' (Valle et al., 1994). Phenomenological reduction continues the process started with the *epoche* (Langdridge, 2007). It is called 'reduction' because it literally reduces the world as it is considered in the natural attitude relative to the world of pure phenomena. In the reduction one does not deny the existence of the natural world, but rather one puts in abeyance one’s belief that the world is independent of each individual person (Valle et al., 1994).

In this process of phenomenological reduction, each experience is considered in its singularity, in and for itself. Here, the phenomenon is described in its totality, in a fresh and open way. A complete description of essential elements, variation of thoughts, perceptions, feelings, sounds, shapes and colours is given (Valle et al., 1994). Phenomenological reduction seeks to bracket the common sense assumption that the perceived external world exists entirely independently. It does not doubt or disbelieve that assumption; it simply neutralises it and then describes the resulting appearances as open-mindedly as possible without presuppositions (Schroeder, 2005). Langdridge (2007), mentions three key elements which are involved in the process of phenomenological reduction and these are: description, horizontalization and verification. Once we have begun to see things as they appear, having bracketed off our preconception, we must now describe what we see, not only in terms of perception but also in terms of our consciousness (Langdridge, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Schmitt (1967), mentions that ultimately, through this process of phenomenological reduction, we derive a textural description of meanings and essences of the phenomena, the constituents that comprise the experience in the consciousness from the vantage point of an open self. From this perspective, “the content of experience is dependent on myself as a subject and experience presents to me its claim to validity: I must certify the claim I as a subject (am) not only the source of validity of experience, but also of its significance” (Schmitt, 1967, p.67).
4.4.5 Imaginative variation

The imaginative variation follows the Phenomenological-Reduction. It is the process of approaching the experienced phenomena from a different angle or perspective by imaginatively varying features of the phenomena, the aim being to allow the essence to come to the fore and the contingent to fade away (Langdridge, 2007). The aim of Imaginative variation is to grasp the structural essence of experience (Moustakas, 1994). Langdridge (2007), gives this example to describe imaginative variation: For instance one might ask a person to describe the experience of being a patient in a hospital and vary the doctors and nurses such that the doctors become nurses and vice versa. The question is how would this change the experience of being a patient enable the participant to perceive the essence of this particular aspect of the experience. This, according to Langdridge (2007), will not only show the participant how the profession is gendered, but also how patients give up power differently to doctors and nurses. Patients in this regard, become passive recipients of treatment acted upon them with doctors but more active participants in their own care with nurses. For the patient, it is also likely to show up the way in which nurses appear to operate collectively and doctors singularly, leading to further embodiment of power in the doctor figure. There are endless possibilities in these case scenarios, because imaginative variation allows one to move away from simply naturalistic variations and instead move into the realm of fantasy, while at the same time, retaining that which is perceived. Imaginative variation is a powerful technique for enabling us to uncover the layers of meaning and invariant properties of an experience (Langdridge, 2007).

This, therefore, means that phenomena reveal themselves in different ways depending on how they are looked at from varied perspectives and life situations. Therefore, regardless of which of the phenomenon's particular characteristics are revealed at any given time, a phenomenon is seen as having the same essential meaning when it is perceived over time in many different situations. The structure of the phenomenon is then the commonality running through the many diverse appearances of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The function of the Imaginative Variation is to arrive at a ”structural differentiation among the infinite multiplicities of actual and possible cognitions, that relate to the object in question and thus can somehow go together to make up the unity of an identifying synthesis“ (Husserl, 1970, p.63).
4.4.6 Essences

In phenomenology, the focus is on the essence or structure of experiences (Mohamed-Patel, 2005). Essences focus on developing a complete and articulate description and understanding of a particular human experience (Bruad & Anderson, 1998). This move to identifying essences in phenomenology represents a shift from description of individual experience to exploring the structure of an underlying experience (Kruger, 1979; Langdridge, 2007).

Eidetic intuition is the name given to the process of moving from the individual to the universal and Husserl thought this to be a spontaneous process in everyday life. Essences can be identified through the use of *epoche*, phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation (Langdridge, 2007). Essences too, according to Valle et al., (1989), need to move further from the essence of the phenomena to the psychological meaning of the phenomena. Therefore, through description, the pre-reflective life-world is brought into reflective awareness where it is manifested as psychological meaning.

4.5 The transition of phenomenology to Existentialism

The precise meaning of phenomena differs for different phenomenologists. The basic division is between transcendental and existential phenomenologists (Schroeder, 2005). Transcendental phenomenologists seek certainty and they believe that a special procedure that requires bracketing in the existence of the external world will facilitate achieving that certainty. Existential phenomenologists on the other hand embrace the complexity of lived experience and they believe that bracketing is artificial and inimical to clarifying lived experience (Schroeder, 2005). The significant change in the philosophy underlying phenomenological psychology has been in the form of existentialism and subsequently hermeneutics (Klein & Westcott, 1994). According to Langdridge (2007), Husserl prefigured the existential turn in phenomenological psychology through the concept of the *life world*, which he considered as the basis of all human science research. The 'life world' is seen as the world we concretely live in. Husserl contended that experience should not just be seen as the focus but it should be noticed how experience is grounded in everyday experience (Langdridge, 2007). He further, argues that to cover the meanings of the experience, we require phenomenological methods such as reduction to enable us to set aside natural attitude. Husserl later contradicted himself and said that it is possible to
stand outside of lived experience and experience things as they are. Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology was later criticised by the philosophers who were his own students and this led to the existential turn in phenomenology, and Martin Heidegger is said to be the most significant of the existential critics (Langdr ridge, 2007).

Although Martin Heidegger was the most important philosopher to follow Husserl, and the first real existentialist, the foundations of existentialism can be traced back to the work of Soren Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (Solomon, 1970). Crotty (1996), points out that existentialism has its roots in the nineteenth century in the writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Doytoyevsky.

There are many significant figures in existential thinking. However, this discussion will be limited to the transition of phenomenology to existential phenomenology as adopted by Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. The aim is to produce a sufficient theoretical understanding of existentialism, so that we should appreciate the existential development of phenomenology and its relevance to phenomenological phenomenology.

4.5.1 Heidegger’s contribution

Martin Heidegger is said to have played a central role in the transition of phenomenology to existential phenomenology (Klein & Westcott, 1994). While the subject matter of phenomenology began with consciousness, it expanded to the human life-world by Heidegger and to human actions by Sartre. For Heidegger, pure consciousness was no longer the object of investigation. Instead Heidegger formed the foundation of existential phenomenology and proposed that consciousness was not separate from the world but rather a formation of historically lived human experience. Heidegger conceived the essential structures as the basic categories of 'being in the world' rather than pure consciousness. In his conception the individual’s personal feelings were taken as evidence of how things are for him in the world (Valle et.al., 1989).

Heidegger’s work reflects a merger between phenomenological and existential themes and thus forms a bridge between the two philosophies to form the discipline of existential phenomenology. The merging of phenomenological and existential thinking was an attempt to
understand the lived experiences of human experience and behaviour (Valle et.al, 1989). This was further developed in the dialectical direction by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre (Kvale, 1996). Heidegger complains that Husserl’s phenomenology similarly neglects the individual *Existenz*. Like both Kierkegaard and Husserl, Heidegger argues that conceptual analysis is not enough to give us knowledge of what actually exists and what does not. Unlike Husserl, Heidegger refuses to neglect “being” by bracketing existence and by concerning himself with essences. Heidegger’s phenomenology challenges the standpoint from which all philosophical truces have been written. This standpoint involves rational contemplation which surveys the world in a cool, objective manner. He notes that instead of neutral, indifferent objects, the world consists of tools organised in complex relations with one another, and instead of passive observers, persons are active participants in transforming the world (Schroeder, 2005).

One of the important concepts that Heidegger developed is the *Dasein*, translated as being in the world or existence, literally meaning being there (Langdridge, 2007). Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* instead of 'man' so as to allow us to look with 'fresh eyes' what it means to exist, a uniquely human problem, and also to emphasise a number of features of existence that may be obscured when using a term such as ‘man’,’ person’ or ‘subject’ (Langdridge, 2007, p.30). Although Husserl (originally a mathematician and physicist) attempted to make philosophy a 'rigorous science', he did not however reach an absolute factual consciousness. The contribution of his successors was necessary for the development of a valid phenomenological theory of consciousness and the establishment of a phenomenological method as is described by life-experiencing-the-world (Tevenaz, 1962).

Heidegger’s work as previously discussed, formed the foundation for what was to be called existential phenomenology. Jean-Paul Sartre, Simon de Beauvoir Sartre and Merleau –Ponty built on his work and further focused attention on understanding existence: hence the term ‘existential', and the two strengthened the bridge between the existential and phenomenological philosophies (Langdrigde, 2007). The next topic will be on the contributions of Sartre which will be followed by Merleau–Ponty’s contribution.
4.5.2 Sartre’s contribution

In Sartre’s ontology, the thing that differentiates human beings from all other beings is precisely nothing, or to be more accurate, it is nothing. In other words human beings are not the same as the rest of the beings but are distinguished from them by a separate nothingness (Barnes, 1992). In his book 'Being and Nothingness', Sartre proposes to examine this notion of being, but purely from a human position. He begins by exploring the aspect Nothingness, which firstly reflects a gap between a man and the world or man’s consciousness and the world of which he is conscious, and secondly it suggests the vanishing of objects in the world (Warnock, 1970). According to Sartre (in Barnes, 1992), consciousness and nothingness are dependent on being but they are not being. Sartre argued that where there is nothingness, there is consciousness, but the two are not synonymous (Barnes, 1992). He introduced a reflexive and pre-reflexive consciousness to phenomenology and believed consciousness to be ahead of itself, and as such capable of being aware of it. Sartre further thought of consciousness as being an action where individuals become aware of their experiences and consciousness merely by referring on consciousness (Spielberg, 1965).

For Sartre there were no essential qualities to consciousness, and human existence is freedom itself. The ‘nothingness’ of Being and Nothingness, refers to the emptiness or no-thingness of human existence. Sartre’s assertion is that we are not objects or rather things to be studied and measured as we may do that in natural sciences, instead (in Langdrigde, 2007) “similar to Heidegger’s notion of Daisen, consciousness (the self) is not a thing that we are or have but something we constantly create through our lived experience: that is, we do not have freedom but we are freedom embodied. We are free to choose who and what we want to be within limits of the facticity of our existence” (p.34).

Sartre’s ontology is a phenomenological description of the relation of this 'no-thing' which is consciousness, to the being on which it depends. In Sartre’s view, “being is the condition of all revelations and for anything to be revealed, for it to be there, it must be. Consciousness reveals being. Both the revealed and the revealer have a certain transphenomenality” (Barnes, 1992, p.13).
Sartre stresses the embodied nature of this freedom, since it is only through our bodies that we are able to act on the world. He also stresses that we are conscious of our freedom and constantly faced with the anguish that this entails. Subsequently we tend to make efforts to hide ourselves from the anguish which follows from our freedom and responsibility through the use of what he calls bad faith (Langdrigde, 2007).

4.5.3 Merleau-Ponty’s contribution
In spite of the fact that Sartre received fame and great philosophical reputation, Merleau-Ponty is considered to be the one who had the greatest direct impact on phenomenological psychology. This is according to Langdrigde (2007), because he was not only a philosopher, but also a psychologist. Merleau-Ponty extended Heidegger’s correction to emphasise the relationship between the structure of experience and the embodied condition of human existence. He remained committed to Husserl’s phenomenological reduction where bracketing of preconception was emphasised. This existential turn moved Husserl's realm of pure consciousness into the realm of contingencies of history and embodiment (Polkinghorne, 1983).

For Merleau-Ponty phenomenology was, just as Husserl its founder had described it, the study of essences (Matthews, 2005). He believed that the perception of individuals has an original relationship to the world since individuals do not perceive their world, but instead their world is what they perceive. This therefore means that the individual coexists with his world and this coexistence is made possible by consciousness and thus without human consciousness there is no world (Luijpen, 1966). Merleau-Ponty’s belief is that perceivers complete the perceived world but they follow the lead of an existing order which is itself ambiguous and can be completed in various ways (Schroeder, 2005). The following is a review of additional concepts and modifications that existential philosophy brings to phenomenology.

4.6 Existential phenomenological concepts
This section highlights the existential-phenomenological concepts each of which originates from phenomenological and existential thinking. Although the origins of these concepts and ideas differ, they do complement one another to form the rich view underpinning existential
phenomenology. These concepts will include the discussion about: Being in the world, the life world, authentic existence, intentionality, ontological anxiety and guilt and thrownness.

4.6.1 Being in the world

The emphasis of existential phenomenology is on total, indissoluble unity or interrelationship of the individual with his or her world (Valle et al., 1989). The person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from the person. Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another. Furthermore, it is through the world that the very meaning of the person's existence emerges, and conversely, it is each individual's existence that gives his or her world meaning. Thus in existential-phenomenological thought, existence always implies that being is actually being-in-the-world. According to Heidegger, being in the world precedes all of our thinking of the world and as such man being here (Daisen) should be a starting point for all questions about being (Giorgi et al., 1983). In this view the person is seen as having no existence apart from the world and the person has no existence apart from the world (Valle et al., 1989).

There are three broad categories in the concept of being in the world and these are: The Umwelt translated literally as the “world around” and refers to the biological drives, needs, instincts and physical world around the individual. It constitutes the individual’s subjective awareness of his or her relationship with the environment (Maddi, 1989). Considered alone, umwelt corresponds to what we mean by 'environment' and it can continue to exist even if one were totally out of self-awareness (Dryden, 1996). The Mitwelt refers to the individual’s social world tharis, the people with whom the individual interacts the meaning one makes out of the relationship with others and the meanings which the others design into the relationship (Valle et al., 1989). Eigenwelt or ‘own world’ is the mode of relationship with one’s self. It represents the internal processes and dialogue that one has with one’s self. It represents the spiritual dimension wherein we relate to the unknown (Dryden, 1996).

4.6.2 The life-world/Lebenswelt

The life world or lebenswelt denotes the world as lived by the person every day in direct and immediate experience (Valle et al., 1989). It is the world lived by a person and not an entity
independent of him. Lebenswelt is co-created in the dialogue of the person and the world. It is not a construction of consciousness but rather happens prior to any reflexive thought process. Being the starting point for all knowledge, scientific knowledge could not exist without pre-reflective knowledge (Valle et al., 1989)

4.6.3 Authentic existence
To be authentic means to be true to oneself by being true to life or one’s existence, and within this existence, we are limited in our possible choices in some way, but however, each of us have possible choices which we make in the world. Authentic living is about becoming increasingly capable of following the direction that one’s conscience indicates as the right direction and thus becoming the author of one’s own destiny. Quite simply, as said previously, being authentic is being true to oneself (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1976). Being unable to make choices is termed 'inauthentic existence' (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1976). This means that an individual does not realise his own possibilities and instead follow the masses. Authentic existence begins by realising who we are and that each of us has our own possibilities (Warnock, 1970).

4.6.4 Intentionality and the concept of choice.
Intentionality, as discussed in section 4.4.2, is one of the key concepts in phenomenology. It is believed that what an individual encounters in his or her life requires choices or decisions to be made and this is part of striving towards becoming an authentic being (Kruger, 1979). Since this concept has been already discussed, it can only be added to it that according to Maddi (1989), people are essentially "condemned to choice". Everything in life is a situation requiring decision or choice and as there is no envisaged alternative to decision making, every moment in life expresses intentionality (Maddi, 1989). Thus each person is said to have "situated freedom", the freedom of making choices within given limitations that the world has presented. The person experiences neither complete freedom nor complete determination by the environment: the only "choice" he cannot make is the choice of not choosing, which in fact is really choosing not to.

4.6.5 Ontological anxiety and guilt
According to Maddi (1989), all decisions or choices pose two alternatives for the individual: that which pushes the person into the future, the unknown and the unpredictable, and the other which
pulls the person into the familiar and comfortable surroundings of the past. The former option, that is the future, offers challenge and growth, its concomitant uncertainty is often anxiety-provoking. Although the latter, which is the past, may provide comfort and security, opting for the past may involve sacrificing the opportunity for development which creates guilt (Maddi, 1989). This anxiety and guilt is referred to by existentialists as ontological, and the inherent conflict which exists between them is viewed as an inevitable part of being. While persons must accept some accumulated ontological guilt, avoiding denial, they must also minimise it by choosing often on the side of realising future possibilities. Achievement of authentic being is only possible by choosing the future and persisting in the face of ontological anxiety. There is much dignity in confronting the ontological anxiety because it enables one to reach the point in humanity of creating one’s own life (Maddi, 1989).

4.6.6 Thrownness
According to Maddi (1989), we are not free from conditions but we are free to take a stand against restrictions. Maddi postulates that we are often thrown into circumstances, but in that thrownness, we can choose to free ourselves by taking responsibility for our situation. According to this notion, one can create one’s own world through mental activity. One needs to know that there are limits to this freedom.

These limitations or givens of life have been called 'facticity' by Sartre (1967), and the 'ground' or 'thrownness' of existence by Binswager (1958) (In Solomon, 1970). This means that in the same way that the individual must accept ontological guilt and anxiety as inherent aspects of living, he or she must also accept the biological and social limits set on the possibilities of his existence, in order to pursue those possibilities that are available to him. Because one can never know what is given (facticity) and what is up to him to decide (his transcendence), one can never settle for any characterisation of himself or of man generally (Solomon, 1970).

Human beings must remain honest to themselves: the more we oppose our limitations, the more thrownness gains in influence. The existentialist notion of absolute freedom means that nothing is simply given. However the existentialists do not mean that a person is always free to do anything he or she likes. It means at most that a person has freedom to decide to do anything,
though even this must be tempered with Sartre’s thesis that a man can decide to do only what he believes he can actually try to do (Solomon, 1970).

Existentialists postulate that people are responsible for their lives, actions and for failures to take action. Sartre’s perspective is that people are condemned to freedom and therefore have a commitment of choosing for themselves, he points out that “we are our choices” (Corey, 2005; Sharf, 2004; Snyder & Ingram, 2000). Change does not just happen, but it requires a person to take a stance, to take action and to make meaningful decisions. Responsibility is seen by existentialists as a basic condition for change (Corey, 2005). May (1983) mentions that every existing being has the character of self-affirmation, that is, every existing being has the need to preserve his or her centeredness. This self-affirmation is called ‘courage’. May (1983), further states that in humans, “being” is not given automatically but depends upon the individual’s courage, and without courage he says an individual loses being.

Another fundamental assumption of existentialism is that of the intrinsic flexibility of human nature. It postulates that however people are guided by circumstances, they always retain the ability to determine how they will respond, “Whatever the ‘given’ factors of a person’s life, she will still to a large extent determine personally whether she is going to make or break herself given these conditions” (Van Deurzen-Smith, 1976, p.7). It is always possible to turn a situation around to one’s advantage or disadvantage. Van Deurzen-Smith (1976), further states that it is possible to go under or rise above adversities. It is also possible to respond to favourable conditions by growing weak or by moving ahead. According to Corey (2005), finding meaning in life is a by-product of engagement, which is a commitment to creating, loving, working, and building. Frankl (1984), says that life holds- potential meaning under any conditions, even the most miserable ones. We can say ‘yes’ to life in spite of all aspects of human existence.

4.6.7 Conclusion
In conclusion, one can therefore say as Wall (2005), submits that in our thrownness, be it gender, culture, etcetera we have a responsibility to turn our situation around and choose to live life authentically. We are condemned to freedom. We experience our freedom as absolute, as not
conditioned by the time or place in which we live, or by social, economic, psychological, or even genetic forces.

The above discussion served to discuss phenomenology and the role played by phenomenologists such as Brentano and Husserl in its development. It was noted in the discussion that even though Husserl has been credited with the initial development of phenomenology, literature indicates that early phenomenology emerged under three separate phases. The preparatory phase emerged under the influence of Frans Brentano (1838-1917). The middle phase was represented by Edmond Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and the third phase included Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961 and Sarte (1905-1980). The contributions of each phenomenologist relevant to this study and the concepts underpinning their beliefs were discussed.

It was clear in the above discussion that most of Husserl’s students were the ones who eventually criticised him leading to the birth of existential phenomenology. Heidegger emphasised the nature of existence which was what formed a bridge between philosophising about human existence and understanding lived experiences as adopted by Husserl. Today, existential philosophy forms a solid basis for many endeavours to understand human existence from all angles. In the next section, phenomenology as research method and its application to the experiences of abuse by Black South African Women will be discussed.

### 4.7 Research methodology

Methodology according to Van Manen (1990), refers to the philosophical frame work, the basic assumptions and characteristics of human science perspective. Methodology includes the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge and the sense of what it means to be human which is associated with or implied by a certain research method. Methodology can be described as theory behind the method, including the study of what method one should follow and why. While methodology means the pursuit of knowledge, method means a certain mode or way of enquiry (Van Manen, 1990).
In this section specific research methodology used in this study will be discussed. The section will commence with a discussion on phenomenology as a qualitative research method and will cover the justification of using phenomenology in the domain of Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse. This will be followed by a discussion on what motivated the researcher to conduct the study. How the researcher bracketed her biases (*epoche*) will be outlined in this section and again later. An outline of the aims of the study, selection of participants, data gathering procedure of which in this case is phenomenological interview will follow. A discussion on data analysis, validity and ethical considerations will conclude this section.

### 4.7.1 Phenomenology as qualitative research method

As previously stated in Chapter 1, this study will be qualitative in nature and it will use phenomenology as the specific research method. The phenomenological approach provides an alternative way of acquiring knowledge and it is situated within an umbrella of qualitative method.

Morse (1997), mentions that the study of subjective meanings and everyday experience are essential in the social sciences and psychology in order to understand the nature of certain phenomena such as the uniquely human experience. Experience requires addressing the question of ‘what’ which is beyond observable position and it requires methods that transcend the linear cause and effect situation, methods which do not reduce participants into single variables, but take into consideration the context in which participants find themselves (Flick, 1998; Neuman, 2000). Qualitative research method takes into account different subjective perspectives, related social backgrounds and the diverse viewpoints and practices that exist in the participants (Morse, 1997).

Qualitative research believes that the real world can only be understood through our personal experiences, it also believes that if we are to understand phenomena, we need to look at it through the eyes of those who experience it and try to understand it from their point of view (Rees, 1997). This qualifies the qualitative research method as the method of choice in the study of Black South African Women's experiences of abuse.
More specifically, the research approach in this study is based on Husserl’s phenomenology. Husserl’s phenomenology concluded that our experience in the world is a unique intentional construct that contains both the directional (noema) and the referential (noematic) foci. On this basis, Husserl argued that the task of phenomenology is to find means to strip away, as far as possible, the plethora of interpretations added to the unknown stimuli of our experience in order to arrive at a more adequate knowledge of things themselves. In order to achieve this, Husserl proposed a phenomenological method of investigation which could be applied to all analyses of experience (Spinelli, 2005).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, phenomenology provides the method for understanding our experiences in the world since the phenomenological tradition perceives participants as beings-in-the-world. It is through the world that the meaning of an individual’s existence emerges and the life world of individuals are considered to be a significant starting point in attempting to understand human experience. Employing the phenomenological research method will therefore enable the researcher to attain a rich, clear description of the phenomena of experiences of abuse by Black South African Women.

The phenomenological method is composed of three interrelated steps, namely the rule of epoche’, the rule of description and the rule of horizontalization (Spinelli, 2005). These will be discussed later in this section though not under the same heading. These will be slotted in according to their relevance in a particular heading.

4.7.2 Motivation of the study

The abuse of women in various forms has been with us for many years and according to studies it is still continuing. There is also a myth that abuse by the intimate partner only happens to the poor and uneducated women. The researcher became concerned about this myth because in her social engagements and counselling situations the researcher frequently had a lot of discussions with educated and employed Black South African Women who are experiencing emotional, financial, physical, verbal and sexual abuse in their marriages.
As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study was inspired by limited studies which focused on Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse. The researcher acknowledges the fact that the abuse of women by their intimate partner is well documented and there is a growing amount of research that is beginning to offer a global overview of violence against women. However, factors such as ethnic differences and commonalities are rarely focused on when conducting such research (Motsei, 2007; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The study is motivated by the fact that very few of the studies about women abuse by their intimate partners involve a description of their experiences and very few studies conducted about women abuse are race specific (Bennet, 2003). This study is also motivated by the desire to describe how Black South African Women experience abuse, the psychological, social, and physical impact of the abuse, what keeps these women in such abusive relationships, how are they left feeling and how do they deal with it.

As stated in Chapter 1, the researcher hopes that the in-depth descriptions of these Black South African Women’s experiences will raise public awareness and generate greater understanding into the challenge of Black Women who are educated and employed and yet suffer and choose to endure abuse. The researcher also hopes that the study might promote the continuation of social activism and advocacy against the abuse of women. The study might also make an original contribution to knowledge in that it might facilitate thinking and form the basis for theories based on Black South Africans’ experiences.

### 4.7.3 Application of the rule of epoche

The rule of *epoche* (also called *bracketing*) urges the researcher to set aside her initial biases and prejudices of the things she knows about the abuse of Black South African Women. The researcher does this in order to suspend her expectations and assumptions temporarily so that she can focus on the primary and immediate data of the experiences. Since the researcher has spoken to some Black South African Women about their experiences of abuse in their intimate relationship, she acknowledges that she has built some expectations about the responses of the participants in this study. However, she will attempt to *bracket* these biases as far as possible so that she can have an open mind about the participants and so that her subsequent conclusions would be based upon her immediate and unbiased experience of the participants rather than upon her assumptions and expectations. The researcher needs to also *bracket* the fact that she is a
Black South African Woman and that she may have preconceived ideas about the culture and traditions and economic factors that keep Black African Women in abusive relationships. Also as a Christian, the researcher is aware of the patriarchal prejudices that exist in the Christian religion and that perpetuate the oppression and domination of women. The researcher is also a proponent of the feminist theory and she should therefore guard against her inclinations influencing the study.

4.7.4 The role of the researcher in the current study

Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2000), mention that a qualitative research study is interpretive in nature, and the researcher becomes typically involved in a continued and intensified experience with the participants. The phenomenological approach also acknowledges that the participants are presented with both a past and an intended future and that the interactions with the researcher include the researcher’s own set of intentions and subjective interpretations (Giorgi, 1980). According to Locke et al., (2000), this brings a range of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process.

However, Giorgi (1980), argues that no research can be purely phenomenological since the researcher possesses preconceived notions that motivated her to conduct the study in the first place. The researcher therefore, needs to explicitly identify her biases, values, and personal interests about the research topic and process and also to allow openness to new and unexpected phenomena so as to remain true to the phenomena (Creswell, 2003). This idea is what the existential phenomenologist called transcendental attitude and Husserl first called it the natural attitude (Moustakas, 1994).

4.7.5 Aims of the study

The aims of this study are threefold, namely; (1) To provide an in depth description of the experiences of Black South African Women who are educated and employed but suffer abuse in their relationships. (2) To elicit the central and significant themes which characterise the experiences of Black South African Women who are in abusive relationships. (3) To create awareness of the nature and depth of women abuse amongst women themselves, the South African society, the helping professions and the discipline of psychology.
In order to achieve this objective, the phenomenological approach will be used as an overall orientation in conducting this study. The phenomenological approach will ensure that the Black South African Women interpret their experiences and that those experiences become the focal point of this study.

4.7.6 Selection of participants in phenomenological research
Phenomenological research always emphasises the meaning of lived experiences. Its purpose is to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole experience (Van Manen, 1990). Participants in a phenomenological research study need to give a rich description of the experience as they lived through it. Participants need to describe the experience from inside as it were almost a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, the emotions, etc. and they need to focus on a particular incident of the object of experience: describe specific events as they were happening, or a particular experience and they need to attend to how their bodies felt, how things smelled, how they sounded etc. (Van Manen, 1990). Participants should also be linguistically competent in order to fully express their experiences (Cohen, Kahn & Stevenson, 2000).

According to Moustakas (1994), the essential criteria for selecting research participants is that they should have experienced the phenomenon, they should be interested in understanding the nature and meanings of the phenomena, they should be willing to participate in a lengthy interview, be willing that the interview is tape recorded and that the data is published in a dissertation or other publications. Within the phenomenological research method there are no pre-set criteria for locating and selecting the research participants. General considerations include age, race, religion, ethnic and cultural factors (Moustakas, 1994) and participants in a phenomenological study need not be random as in quantitative studies. In qualitative studies, purposeful sampling can be used to select participants (Van Manen, 1990).

4.7.7 Selection of participants in this study
For this study purposeful sampling was done. According to Patton (1990), the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in the selection of information rich cases for in depth study. Seven
participants were used in this study and they were selected in the following manner. Three participants were sourced from a local psychologist whose name will not be mentioned to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Four participants were introduced to the researcher through word of mouth by other participants who they were acquainted to.

In phenomenological research, the number of participants to be used in a study depends on the purpose of the study and the criterion for determining the number of participants is the intensity of the contact needed to gather sufficient data (Van Manen, 1990). Therefore in this study the number of participants was determined by the saturation of data.

The participants in this study were selected according to the following criteria:

- Participants should either be married for three or more years. The qualification in terms of time is important because according to Munro (2001), emotional abuse is made up of a series of incidents or a pattern of behaviour that occurs over time, unlike physical or sexual abuse where a single incident constitutes abuse.
- Participants should still be involved in an abusive relationship. In accordance with Section 1 of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 intimate partner abuse or domestic violence may refer to: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, stalking, and damage to property, entrance into a woman’s property or residence without consent, or any other behaviour that is controlling.
- They should have passed Matric and/or have any tertiary study qualification and should be employed. There are misconceptions that educated women do not experience abuse from their partners (Barkhuizen & Pretorius, 2005). A new study from a University of Arkansas professor, revealed that Black Women with tertiary qualifications are more likely than other women to suffer emotional, physical, sexual or other abuse (Steward, 2006). The researcher should seek to gain insight into the lived experiences of such women.
- They should be Black South African Women. For the purpose of this research 'Black South African Women' will mean women who come from a history where their descendants or themselves were regarded as third class citizens and were confined to the townships by the apartheid government.
• They should express a willingness to be open with the researcher even though it might mean revealing painful feelings.
• Each participant was contacted via telephone and a brief explanation of the purpose of the study was given in order to obtain their consent. An appointment was set with each participant and venues were confirmed. It was disclosed to the participants that an open ended interview would be conducted and that the interviews would be tape recorded.

4.7.8 Data Gathering
In phenomenological research the usual purpose of data gathering is to collect naïve descriptions of the experience under investigation. The descriptions provide specific instances from which the researcher can create the structure of consciousness that constitutes the experience to be out there (Kvale, 1996). The way the researcher frame questions can help the participants to report their experiences rather than to give worldly depictions. For example by asking questions like: 'what did you experience?' or, 'what was it like for you?' instead of 'what happened?', the researcher is more likely to elicit experiential data (Kvale, 1996). Therefore, a long interview is the typical method through which data was collected in this phenomenological research.

4.7.8.1 Procedure
Individual interviews were scheduled. Five of the interviews were conducted in the psychologist’s rooms. These participants displayed discomfort at being interviewed in their homes for fear of being questioned by their partners. The other two participants were interviewed in their homes, but they ensured that there was nobody present at their homes so that they would be able to express themselves freely. The purpose of the study was outlined to the individual participants and an informed consent document was signed. Thereafter, open-ended interviews were conducted.

4.7.8.2 Phenomenological interview as a data gathering tool
The phenomenological interview was used as a data gathering tool. The interview is an interaction between two people who react in relation to each other and influence each other reciprocally. This interaction may be characterised by positive feelings of curiosity or reciprocal
respect, or it may be anxiety provoking and evoke defensive mechanisms in both parties (Kvale, 1996).

According to Kvale (1996), the focus of the interview is on the life-world or experience of the interviewee and it is theme oriented, not person oriented. The interview according to Kvale (1996), seeks to describe and understand the meaning of the central themes of the experience being investigated. In interviews, the researcher conducts a face to face interview with participants and these involve unstructured and generally open ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2003). Open-ended or unstructured interviews are described as responses to questions that allow participants to freely express feelings behaviour and thoughts (Van Manen, 1990). Open-ended interviews allow participants freedom to express their feelings in their own words and language and as such to be as close to reality as possible (Kvale, 1996). The interviews require enough time to explore the topic in depth, usually from half hour to an hour. The length of the interview depends on the amount of self-reflection and on whether the participant feels comfortable with the topic of study (Moustakas, 1994). Often the phenomenological interview begins with a social conversation or a brief go between in between activities aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. Following this opening, the researcher suggests that the participant takes few moments to focus on the experience fully.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975), state that sometimes the interviewee can respond in a manner she believes is socially desirable or in a way she believes the researcher would want her to respond. It is therefore, the responsibility of the interviewer to create a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively (Moustakas, 1994). According to Langdrigde (2007), if the participant becomes engaged in a conversation naturally, there is a real possibility of rapport and thus more open and honest responses along with greater richness.

Bryman (1989) points out that, sometimes the participant goes off at a tangent or chooses to speak about issues that he or she believes to be important. When this happens the researcher needs to go along with the drift of the discussion and ask questions that seem to be of interest
(Bryman, 1989). Certain statements of an interviewee may appear ambiguous or contradictory, implying several possibilities of interpretation. In this case the interviewer should clarify as far as possible the extent to which these ambiguities are due to failure of communication in the interview situation or whether they reflect real inconsistencies, ambivalence and contradictions (Moustakas, 1994).

4.7.8.3 Phenomenological interview as a method of data collection in the current study

The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and uses open-ended comments and questions (Creswell, 2003). Although the researcher may in advance develop a series of questions aimed at evoking a comprehensive account of the participant’s experience of the phenomenon, these will be varied, altered, or not used at all when the participant shares the full story of her experience of the bracketed question (Moustakas, 1994).

The bracketed question was: “How do you as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?” According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research is emergent rather than prefigured and several aspects emerge during a qualitative study. The research questions may change and be refined as the researcher learns what to ask.

Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim with the permission of the participants. Audio taping the interviews makes it possible that the words and their tones, pauses and nuances are recorded in a permanent form so that they can be listened to again. Transcribing involves translating data from oral language to written language and these transcriptions become useful in the process of analysis of data (Kvale, 1996). The English language was used to interview the participants.

4.7.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process whereby the researcher moves away from a collection of naïve descriptions to a structural description. This process is what Husserl called the eidetic epoche’ (also called reduction), and it differs from the phenomenological epoche’ where the question about the independent existence of the contents of consciousness is suspended. The eidetic
’epoche’ is the bracketing of interest in the particular and specific instance of an experience in order to grasp its structural principles (Moustakas, 1994). Steps that were used to analyse data or structural description will now be discussed.

4.7.9.1 Steps in data analysis
For the purpose of this study, the structured method devised by Colaizzi (1978) was used. Spinelli (2005), mentions that even though this method provides an approach he believes to be containing the key methodological characteristics of phenomenological research in general, he stresses the importance of noting that there exists no one phenomenological means to enquiry. Spinelli (2005), writes that an assumption of a method is a fallacy and he asserts that each phenomenological researcher employs unique descriptive approaches derived from phenomenological methods. Again as Collaizzi argues, “each particular psychological phenomenon, in conjunction with the particular aims and objectives of a particular researcher, evokes a particular descriptive method” (In Spinelli, 2005, p.136). Other methods of data analysis include those used by Van Kaam (in Moustakas, 1994), and those used by Giorgi (in Polkinghorne, 1983). However, the researcher felt comfortable with Paul Colaizzi’s method of data analysis as outlined by Spinelli (2005).

After the researcher had collected data from the participants, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and the researcher then followed Colaizzi’s method of data analysis which was integrated with Husserl’s rule of description and the rule of horizontalization as recommended by Spenelli (2005), and these methods are as follows:

Step1: Reading of transcribed interviews: This step involved the careful reading and re-reading of the participant’s transcribed descriptions in order for the researcher to acquaint herself with them. The rule of description is applied at this stage. The rule of description urges the researcher to remain initially focused on the immediate and concrete impressions and to maintain a level of analysis with regard to these experiences which takes descriptions rather than theoretical explanations or speculations as its point of focus.

Step 2: Extracting significant statements: In this step the researcher returned to each individual transcription and extracted phrases or sentences that directly pertained to the phenomenon of abuse by the intimate partner. Several transcriptions contained meaningfully similar statements,
and such repetitions were eliminated. Statements that contained particular specifics were transposed to more general statements. Unique statements that appeared nowhere in the researcher’s transcribed descriptions were not excluded but they were included in the list and were presented in the final statement. This is in accordance with the rule of horizontalization or the equalisation rule. This rule requires that having stuck to an immediate experience which the researcher seeks to describe, the researcher is urged to avoid placing any initial hierarchies of significance or importance upon items of her descriptions, instead to treat each item as having equal value. This rule therefore enabled the researcher to examine experiences with far less prejudice and with much degree of adequacy.

**Step: 3 Formulating meanings:** Here, the researcher extracted the meanings contained in each significant statement. This movement from what is said to what is meant, is according to Spinelli (2005), the most unsafe interpretative part of the phenomenological research process and requires the researcher’s creative insight to both remain true to the participant’s statements while at the same time seeking to draw out of its embedded, often implicit meaning.

**Step 4: Extracting clusters of themes:** Having formulated meanings from all the significant statements derived from all the transcribed descriptions, the researcher organised the aggregate formulated meanings into clusters of themes that may be shared by one, some or all of the participants. The themes were sometimes contradictory or unrelated and required the researcher’s tolerance for ambiguity. Further, there were formulated meanings that did not fall into clusters of themes (those that stood alone). These were added to the final list of thematic elements.

**Step 5: Exhaustive descriptions and formulation of statements:** In this step, all of the formulated meanings and thematic clusters were integrated so that an exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon and a clear statement of identification of its formal structure could be generated.

**Step 6: Participants’ verification:** In this final step, the researcher returned to each participant with the exhaustive description so that the participants can respond to it in terms of its verifiability as a statement that captures the experiential structure under investigation. This step sought to verify from the participants that the researcher’s statement captured adequately their statements. It also sought to ensure that nothing was left out by error, to verify if there was anything of significance that they have not considered or stated before which emerged via
reading of statements. On the basis of the participant’s comments, amendments, corrections and novel additions the researcher needs to produce a further final exhaustive description of the phenomena. Out of seven participants, the researcher managed to reach five for verification of data. Since there were no amendments to be done, the study was concluded.

4.7.10 Validity and reliability of the study in phenomenological research

Validity relates to what is measured and is an attempt to ensure that the research tool is really measuring what the researcher believes it is measuring and reliability relates to the method that is being used to collect the data and refers to the accuracy and consistency of the measurements generated by this method (Rees, 1997). In the 1980’s reliability and validity were rejected in qualitative studies and this resulted in problems in ensuring rigour, especially with regard to the researcher’s actions during the research process (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olsin, & Spiers, 2002).

According to Morse (1997), this became a concern that by refusing to acknowledge the importance of reliability and validity in qualitative methods, qualitative researchers have fostered the idea that qualitative research is unreliable, invalid and unscientific. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985), viewed trustworthiness and authenticity as the only viable stance on the question of validity and reliability, since the researchers have no stance on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability. Morse et al., (2002), suggest that strategies for ensuring validity should be built into the qualitative research process rather than be regarded as an issue to be considered at the end of the study. This brings us to what Creswell (2003), mentions as strategies with regard to the validity of qualitative research and these are:

Triangulation: Triangulation requires that research should find convergence among sources. Different sources of information were triangulated by examining evidence from sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.

Member checking: Member checking was used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the analysed reports back to the participants (this was to determine whether the participants felt the reports were correct).

Use rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings: Rich, thick descriptions were used to convey the findings. This, according to Creswell (2003), may transport the readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experience.
**Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study:** In order to describe the phenomenon of Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse as clearly as possible, the researcher attempted to *bracket* her preconceptions through the process of *epoche*’. As part of the process of *bracketing*, the researcher’s pre-existing knowledge and assumptions regarding the experiences of abuse by Black South African Women were made explicit (refer to the discussion regarding the *epoche*’ in section 4.4.3).

**Presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes:** Because life is composed of different perspectives that do not always combine, discussing opposing information adds to the credibility of an account for a reader. The opposing information was not discarded but was also included in the analysis of data.

**Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account:** The researcher did this by assigning a colleague (peer debriefer) to review and ask her questions about the qualitative study. This was done so as to assess whether the account will resonate with people other than the researcher.

**Use an external auditor to review the entire project:** The external auditor in this study was the researcher’s promoter who provided an assessment of different stages of the project throughout the process of the research.

To add to the above validity steps, the researcher kept on going back and forth to the analysed data so as to ensure that all the themes and quotations were included and that they are as described by the participants. Appendices of the participant’s interviews were also attached for free perusal and critique by the reader. This is in accordance with what (Morse et al., 2002) suggested, that a good qualitative study moves back and forth between the design and implementation of the study so as to ensure congruence among the questions asked, data collected and analysed. It is therefore evident that the researcher took every possible step to ensure the validation of this study.

Ethics have grown over recent years in the social sciences, and this is because as Langdrigde (2007), contends, psychology in particular is “littered with ethical abuses that will make your hair stand on end” (p.61). In the topic that follows, ethical considerations in this phenomenological research project will be discussed.
4.7.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher attempted as much as possible to maintain ethical standards while conducting this phenomenological study. Participants were informed of the aims and nature of the study and this was also presented to them in a written form. An informed consent document was obtained and the participants were given a choice to consent or to refuse to participate in the study.

The participants were all consenting adults (above 16 years of age and not disabled), they were therefore eligible to sign their own consent form. Participants were made aware that they would always retain the right to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research process. Confidentiality was ensured by allowing the participants to remain anonymous and to ensure such anonymity, pseudo-names were used.

Care was taken as much as possible not to cause psychological harm by being sensitive and by not being judgemental towards the participants. Those participants who showed signs of breaking down emotionally were advised to seek psychological help. Deception was not present at all in this study, this was avoided by giving a full explanation of the true nature of the study and the results were communicated to the participants as promised. However, had deception occurred, strong grounds for such deception could have been given and the participants would have been given full debriefing following the deception.

Being a therapist brought a challenge in the sense that the researcher sometimes carried the process as though she was conducting therapy in the way that she reflected.

4.7.12 Conclusion

Phenomenology as a qualitative research method was outlined in this chapter as the method used to obtain rich descriptions of the phenomena of Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse. The phenomenological method of enquiry provided a suitable method for understanding Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse, particularly those women who are educated and employed and still choose to stay in their abusive marriages. The participant’s experiences of being in the world were elicited, since the phenomenological tradition perceives participants as *beings-in-the-world*. Employing the phenomenological research method enabled the
researcher to attain a rich, clear description of the phenomena of experiences of abuse by Black South African Women. These experiences were obtained through conducting phenomenological methods of data gathering and analysis, validity and ethical considerations were also captured in this chapter. Individual analysis of participant’s interviews will follow in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5:
INTRA-INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 Introduction
In this chapter the seven participants are introduced and their biographical details are captured in a tabular form. All the participants in this study used fictitious or pseudo- names to protect their identity and to ensure confidentiality. Intra individual analysis of the participants’ experiences is presented using Colaizzi’s method of data analysis which was integrated with Husserl’s rule of description and the rule of horizontalization as suggested by Spenelli (2005). In this chapter, steps 1 to 3 of the data analysis process, as described in Chapter 4, were used to explore emerging themes in the experiences of the Black South African Women in abusive marriages. Steps 5 and 6 of the data analysis process will continue to be explored in the next chapter.

To follow is the table of participants’ biographical details, including the intra-individual analysis of the participants’ interviews. The interviews were conducted in English and were transcribed verbatim. Where the participant used incorrect grammar this was italicised. Significant emotions and non-verbal gestures were put in brackets. The transcriptions were true and the language was not changed.
### Table 2: Table of Participants’ Biographic Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and age</th>
<th>Qualifications and salary</th>
<th>Marital status, Contract and duration of marriage</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Husband’s occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| DP 38        | Teacher
Salary not disclosed | Married in community of property for 11 years | 3                  | Sotho       | Christianity | Teacher             |
| Tebogo 47    | Professional Nurse-Diploma in Nephrology
Salary R11 900 per month | Married in community of property for 24 years | 2                  | Sotho       | Christianity | Labourer            |
| Nomfundo 39  | Teacher-Bachelor (BA), BA(Hons) (HDE), Salary R8000 per month | Married in community of property for 11 years | 3                  | Southern Sotho | Christianity | Teacher             |
| Salamina 42  | Enrolled Nurse-Matric
Salary R5000 per month | Married in community of property for 18 years | 2                  | Southern Sotho | Christianity | SAPS Sergeant       |
| Darky 42     | Teacher-BA(Ed).
Salary R9000 per month | Married in community of property for 7 years | 2                  | Tswana      | Christianity | Principal           |
| Neo 46       | Teacher- HED
Salary R10 200 per month | Married in community of property for 24 years | 3                  | Tswana      | Christianity | Labourer            |
| Diks 39      | Health promoter
Studying social work.
Salary R5000 per month | Married in community of property for 23 years | 2                  | Southern Sotho | Christianity | Teacher             |

### 5.2 Intra-individual analysis of DP’s experience of being in an abusive relationship

A brief researcher’s impression of DP will be given followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of DP’s interview can be found in Appendix A.

#### 5.2.1 Researcher’s impression of DP

DP is a tall lady with average weight. She was formally dressed and had neatly manicured nails. She appeared as a friendly and outspoken person who talks freely and openly. As a result a very good rapport was established between her and the researcher. She was very relaxed and was enthusiastic and looking forward to the interview. It appeared to the researcher as though DP
wanted to ventilate about her experiences. During the interview DP spoke confidently and was very loud. Sometimes she spoke with an angry tone which reflected her prevailing emotional state.

5.2.2 Analysis
A phenomenological analysis of DP’s life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from DP’s transcriptions.

5.2.2.1 Alienation
DP’s treatment by her husband makes her feel like she is alienated, she feels like a sister to her husband and not a wife.

_I can say I feel my husband is not treating me like his wife. I feel he treats me, like, I don’t know….his sister._

5.2.2.2 Lack of communication
There is no communication in DP’s marriage. Her husband goes in and out of the house without telling her where he is going.

_He is not the kind of a person that you can discuss anything with…He does not communicate anything with me._

_When he goes to a function or to his home, he does not tell me anything. He just packs his things and goes without saying anything._

5.2.2.3 Neglect
DP mentions events where she had to use taxis to commute with her children whereas her husband has a car. She would travel long distances struggling with two children, one on her back and carrying bags and going to use public transport.

_I was already having my second born child. My husband was staying in Qwaqwa and I was staying in Natalspruit. He has a car but when the children and I have to commute between Qwaqwa and Natalspruit, we had to use public transport. My kids are two years apart; can you imagine me with the small child and the baby on my back, the bags, baby bottles and all...going to a public transport? He would say ‘No, I won’t be able to transport you with my car, go to a public transport._

Sometimes DP would be taking her three year old child to crèche in the rain and her husband would not show any interest whatsoever in her struggles.
At some stage I did not have a helper. My three year old was not attending crèche. I would be carrying the baby in the rain going to drop him off where I leave him. He would not even ask where I leave the baby. He was just not interested.

5.2.2.4 Cruelty

DP mentions ways in which her husband makes unreasonable demands from her, for example, making her iron clothes which he would not even wear. It is as if her husband makes these demands in order to deliberately put physical strain on her.

The other thing is…let’s say we are going to work the following day and I have to prepare clothes for example ironing…..he will take out about three trousers for me to straighten. When I ask why he does that his responds will be “I’ll choose in the morning which one I want to wear.” He will then choose one trousers and mess up the rest. The following day he repeats the same procedure. Then he will take the brown trousers and take the rest of the trousers back to the wardrobe, the following day he takes out another three and I have to iron them.

She has endured experiences of being denied access to the house by her husband. At some point she had to sleep in the garage. Her husband switched off his phone and only let her into the house at six o’clock in the morning.

The other incidence is that this one day I had to take my kids home to my parents. When I came back, he had already locked the doors. I could not gain access into the house and I had to sleep in the garage. But if I was with the kids, he could have opened only for their sake. Worst of all, he switched his phone off. He only opened at six o’clock in the morning. He did not even bother to phone and ask where I was and where did I sleep.

Her husband does not care whether his actions hurt her or not. He would rather please his friends than her, for example, her husband would rather give his friends a lift to work and leave her and the children stranded. When she insists on getting a lift from her husband, he displays actions of cruelty and irritability such as starting the car engine roughly and banging the doors.

For instance we would be both going to town, I would for example ask him to give me a lift, and he will become so irritable. I would come running; he would start the car roughly and bang the doors.

Sometimes DP would also walk to work in the rain and her husband would not offer her a lift. According to DP, the unfair part is that her husband would leave her behind and collect his friends from the comfort of their homes.

Sometimes it would be raining and I have to go to work, he wouldn’t care how I get there. He won’t even offer me a lift in that car. I will have to fend for myself and he passes at my place of work. But funny enough he is able to fetch his colleagues and give them a lift to work. His colleagues would be sitting comfortably
in their houses waiting for him to come and pick them up, but I would be left behind with umbrellas to protect myself against the rain.

5.2.2.5 Lack of support
DP speaks of how non-supportive her husband is. She feels she would rather seek help from the police than him when she happens to be in trouble. In other words, she cannot rely on him in times of trouble or desperation.

Even if I have a problem I know that he is the last person I can contact….Ja, I better contact the police if I can find myself involved in a car accident, or my car has jammed.

5.2.2.6 Financial abuse
DP feels burdened financially because her husband does not assist her with money matters. She mentions that her husband refuses to support her financially, instead, he drains the little money that she has.

Like financially…it is difficult, I cannot even ask him for two rand…. He will say he does not have it even though he does have it.

5.2.2.7 Disrespect
DP’s husband seems not to respect her and how she feels about certain things such as his abuse of alcohol.

Even the rate at which he drinks. I feel he does not respect me. He knows how I feel about alcohol; he knows I don’t like it...

What puzzles DP is that when her husband is with his parents, he does not drink alcohol. This shows that he gives more respect to his parents than her.

He is not able to give me the same respect he gives to his mother; he does not take me seriously

…eh when he is at his parents’ house he does not drink at all, and even if he can stay for five days he does not drink.
5.2.2.8 Enforced gender roles

DP’s husband seems to be using his gender to exercise power and control over her. He overworks her with an excuse that he has a wife and therefore does not need the services of a domestic helper in the house.

At some stage he mentioned that he has a wife and does not need a helper, so I am supposed to be the helper.

DP remarked that she and her husband are both professionals and are both working and become tired equally but she has to sacrifice her schedules and has to do all the house work without assistance from him.

He is teaches like me, we are both always tired, we have schedules....this and that to do...you see? My schedules have to stop not his.

She mentions that her opinions are not taken seriously just because she is a woman. She says she cannot tell her husband anything because “he is a man”

He uses his manhood to control me, a typical Sotho man!

You cannot tell him anything because he is a man you see.

5.2.2.8 Patriarchal control

She speaks of how her husband controls her movements and chooses friends for her. He comments about what she wears and decides on places to go or not. DP feels that it is an infringement of her rights.

Yes! He controls my movements. I realised that is not good. In life everyone has his/her own rights...but no one can tell him anything....When I go to town, if for example I said to him I was going to the bank and then decide to go to Checkers, he will make a big issue out of it... He would say “but you said you were going to the bank! How did you end up going to Checkers?

He even chooses friends for me.

According to DP’s husband, a woman is not supposed to have a voice in the relationship, and a man is never wrong.

He once said to me that since he was born, he has never been told what to do by a woman. No woman will tell him that he is wrong. You understand that since he was born he has always been right. I don’t know that is possible.
5.2.2.9 **Isolation**

Her husband isolates her and seems to be deriving pleasure from seeing her being around the house wearing night dresses midday. For him it is an indication that she has been in the house the entire day.

*He always wants to isolate me. You know what? When my husband arrives midday and finds me wearing night dresses, he becomes so happy, so fulfilled. It makes him happy that I am around, I did not go anywhere.*

DP’s husband prevents her from attending social events or mixing with people. She states that for nine years she has never had any kind of entertainment. Not that she is not interested in having such entertainment, but because she is scared of her husband’s reaction.

*Mh...like when I am invited to a party, I would not go. ... I would deny myself mixing with people. Believe it or not, since 1998 almost nine years ago, I have never gone to a music festival. All my friends have gone. I was scared to ask him. Not to say that I don’t want to go. I would always make excuses just to make myself feel better.*

5.2.2.10 **Physical abuse**

DP has also experienced physical abuse in her relationship. She mentioned that her husband once assaulted her.

*One day he assaulted me ....*

5.2.2.11 **Depression**

The abuse in her relationship tends to bring about negative emotions such that she experiences symptoms of depression. She speaks of how she tends to make an issue out of nothing such that she is branded a “screamer” at work.

*I feel bitter; I get so irritable and make an issue out of nothing... Even at work, I am very irritable; they even call me a “screamer”.*

DP has developed a lot of anger within her and can no longer take jokes from other people. She says she has changed in a manner that she has developed a tendency of blowing things out of proportion, and she overreacts with the slightest perceived provocation.

*I have a lot of anger, I am always stressed. I don’t take jokes anymore. Even if a person says something in a jokeful manner, I take it seriously and blow it out of proportion. I overreact. I remember an incident when I*
snapped on someone unnecessarily, I accused her of racism then I regretted afterwards and I went and apologised.

She tends to derive comfort from eating unhealthy food when she is upset, as a result she ends up gaining weight. She sometimes suffers from persistent headaches to a point of being admitted to hospital.

*Obesity! Obesity……:* Because “eke eet en le (meaning that she eats and sleeps). When I am stressed I eat a lot. I eat everything from snoek fish to atchar then I sleep. I also suffer from persistent headaches to a point of being admitted into hospital.*

5.2.2.12 Confused identity

DP feels that she has changed a lot because of the abuse in her relationship. She seems to have lost her sense of self and she seems to lack inhibitions and tends to do wrong things deliberately. She also states that she lacks a sense of belonging. DP attributes all this to a lack of appreciation from her husband.

*I feel like I don’t belong, (sobbing) I end up doing wrong things deliberately because there is no appreciation whatsoever, I am not me, I am not what I am supposed to be…. I have changed.*

5.2.2.13 Frustration

She has developed a tendency of being noisy, snaps at her children and overreacts as a way of venting out her anger. She says this kind of behaviour leaves her feeling guilty.

*When it comes to my children, I always overreact; I am always angry and noisy. Sometimes I feel guilty because I get angry unnecessarily. My kids even know that I always snap at them.*

The abuse in DP’s relationship does not affect only her, but it also extends to her significant others such as her family and friends. She points out that her friends spend sleepless nights thinking about her because she usually phones them when she is having problems with her husband.

*It affects my friends negatively, I always relate my experiences to them and they end up being stressed because of my issues. You will hear one of my friends saying “I did not sleep well that night after you told me what happened”*

Her family becomes equally affected by the abuse. This includes her mother and her siblings. She mentions that her family no longer asks her about her experiences because it angers them. They are just happy that she is alive.
It also affects my parents. When my mother hears about these experiences, her blood pressure as well as her blood sugar rises. My brother will be furious. They don’t even ask me anymore because it angers them. They are just happy to see me alive. They feel that what they know about this relationship is enough; they don’t want to hear more.

5.2.2.14  **Hopefulness**
DP had a belief that age brings maturity in a person and she has been hoping that her husband would change as he grows older and that he would be less abusive. She had also hoped that her husband would change and become a different person with the children growing up.

You know what? I have thought that maybe this man will change. I had this English notion that life begins at forty and thought that he was being abusive because he was still young and did not know what he was doing and that when he is forty he would be a different person; and that children are growing maybe he will change and be a different person.

5.2.2.15  **Helplessness**
DP seems to be caught up in a state of helplessness as she mentions that she still loves her husband despite the abuse, but hates his behaviour.

Another thing is, I still loved him but hate his behaviour
The helplessness concerning her abusive relationship is also evidenced by the fact that she no longer questions anything or fights about anything in her relationship. She no longer complains about anything. She says that she just lives. It seems she has reached emotional numbness.

I don’t even ask anymore, I just look at him. I’ve been asking for too long. I am tired (laughing).....I don’t ask anymore.

I don’t fight anymore, I don’t complain. I am just me. I just live.

5.2.2.16  **Indecisiveness**
DP has mixed feelings regarding her love for her husband and this tends to trap her in the abusive marriage

I am no longer sure whether I still love him or not, because just now I would feel I love him, suddenly I feel I don’t want him anymore.
5.2.2.17  **Self protection**
DP comes from a divorced family and this affects her decision to leave her marriage because she is afraid that her husband will use her parent’s divorce against her.

   *Another thing is I am from a divorced family; I didn’t want people to say it is hereditary when I also divorce him. I am afraid that he would say that he is not surprised that I am divorcing him because my parents are divorced. Such words haunted me.*

5.2.2.18  **Putting the children’s best interests first**
DP seems to put her children’s best interests first. She says that she is staying in the abusive relationship because her children prefer to stay at their own home over staying at any other place. She sacrifices her happiness for the sake of her children.

   *My children as well, especially the older one. For example, I once hinted to them that I want to take them to my parent’s home, he was not happy at all. They had a lot of complains. They felt that we will become an inconvenience. They do not want to start a new life, they can’t live their home. Basically I am staying for their convenience.*

She would like to divorce her husband but her children feel that it would be inconvenient for them to stay with their grandparents. As a result she finds herself staying on for her children’s convenience.

   *I want to divorce him. But my children feel they are comfortable at their home.*

5.2.2.19  **Financial reasons for staying in the relationship**
DP does not earn enough money to help her survive independently. Her salary is not enough to cover the cost of a car and a house. When she thinks about leaving, she considers the inconveniences of having to cancel her insurance policies so as to cut out financial demands. Much as she is staying on for the convenience of the children, it appears she is staying in the relationship for her own convenience as well. Although her husband does not provide enough financially, he does however provide for the shelter which serves as convenience for her and the children.

   *Another thing I look at my salary and think how will I survive? I can’t do anything. I won’t be able to buy a car; I will have to cancel my policies. I am sure he knows that I cannot even afford a roof over my head*
5.2.2.20  

Convenience as a reason for staying

DP feels that going back to her parent’s house will be another inconvenience which will cause her even more stress. She says that her parents will welcome her back for the first three months after which they will obviously feel crowded by her presence.

*Going back home is another stress. They will be happy to have me back for the first three months, thereafter they will feel crowded. I will be fighting with my siblings. I have heard people talking about such experiences.*

She is torn between wanting to leave or stay in the abusive relationship. At times she feels like she wants to leave despite the inconveniences that may arise, but the conveniences seem to outweigh her decision to leave. The main issue seems to be her low salary and she thinks her husband is aware of her situation and he is taking advantage of it.

*But now I feel like I want to move out though it will be inconvenient for the children. Because I have noticed that my husband is beginning to take advantage, he is aware that I won’t leave because of the children. I think about their school, how will they travel? Sometimes I look at my salary.......and think how will I manage? (Silence)... I don’t know whether he discusses with them regarding their feelings about moving out.*

5.2.2.21  

Submissiveness

DP states that she has tried different ways to curb the abuse in her relationship which include being submissive to her husband and compromising.

*I tried to be submissive, you see, doing other things against my will.*

5.2.2.22  

Leaving the marriage and going back

She has walked out on her husband for four years to avoid the abuse but she later came back thinking that her husband would improve. She even suggested to her husband that they should cohabit just for the sake of the children.

*I once left him four years ago and I came back thinking that things will improve. I suggested to him that we should just cohabit just for the sake of the children.*

5.2.2.23  

Retribution

As a coping mechanism, DP overspends on clothes using her credit card. She does this as a form of retribution and she says she feels good after doing it.

*I spoil myself buy clothes, spend with my credit card, and after that I feel good.*
5.2.2.24  Cultural and traditional matters

DP believes that her husband’s ethnic background plays a role in him becoming abusive and controlling. She mentions that even if she can try to ‘fix things’ in her relationship, her husband won’t notice because he is a traditional and domineering “Mosotho” man.

Even if I can try to change myself, perhaps look at my own faults, try to fix them, because he is a Sotho man he will not even notice or change.

Her husband’s excuse for the lack of peace in their family is that the ancestors are not appeased because no rituals were performed by DP’s in-laws in order to accept her as “umakoti” (daughter in law) into the family. In this way DP’s husband does not take responsibility for the existence of abuse in the marriage, but blames her and justifies it with culture.

He makes excuses that the reason there is no peace in the house is that no rituals were made for me as a “umakoti” and therefore the ancestors are fighting.

DP feels that the other reason that could be perpetuating the abuse could be the interference by her mother in law. She mentions an instance where her husband assaulted her, instead of reprimanding him, her mother in law took her husband’s side.

One day he assaulted me and I retaliated. His mother took his son’s side.

5.2.2.25  Husband’s upbringing

DP thinks her husband’s upbringing has something to do with his abusive behaviour. She mentions that her husband was brought up in rural areas and her understanding is that children from rural areas become adults at an early age, meaning that they assume adult responsibilities at an early stage of development. As a result of this they do not enjoy being children.

I think it's his upbringing. He is from rural areas, my understanding is that children from rural areas become adults at an early age, they don’t enjoy being kids.

She attributed the abusive behaviour from her husband to the fact that her husband’s father was also abusive to his family.

I heard from other people that his father used to drink a lot and was very abusive, that’s why he does not drink in front of his mother.
Summary of DP’s experience

DP described her experiences of being in an abusive relationship. The kinds of abuse she is experiencing in her relationship are emotional, physical and financial abuse. She says that her husband neglects her and makes unreasonable demands. She describes how her husband shows disrespect towards her by humiliating and degrading her. She also shares how he conveniently ignores her and accuses her of unfaithfulness and how he isolates her and uses his gender to exercise power and control over her.

Although DP is working as a teacher, she notes that her income is not enough to cover all the household expenses. She asserts that her husband does not assist her financially and he also restricts her use of the family car. The abuse in DP’s relationship has resulted in her experiencing psychological, physical and social effects. She now feels she has changed into a bitter, irritable and angry person. She also experiences stress. She notices physical changes such as weight gain and persistent headaches as a result of the abuse. This has impacted negatively on her children. Her children have become victims of the abuse as she tends to take out her anger on them, which leaves her feeling guilty. DP notes that the abuse also affects her significant others such as her friends and relatives who are left with feelings of anger and negative attitudes towards her husband. DP states various reasons for staying in the abusive relationship and these are: the hope that her husband will change, loving her husband despite the abuse, mixed feelings regarding her love for her husband, previous history of divorce in her family, lack of adequate finance, convenience for her and the children particularly in terms of shelter. Learned helplessness seems to be the other reason which keeps her trapped in the abusive relationship. She states that she tried submissiveness and compromising as a strategy to curb the abuse but to no avail. She stated that she once left her marriage and she came back after being manipulated by her husband. Her coping mechanism is overspending on clothing.

Cultural and traditional matters seem to play a role in DP’s interpretation of the abuse. Her perception of the cause of the abuse in her relationship is that her husband is using his gender, ethnic stereotypes and culture to control her. She also attributes the abuse to the way her husband was brought up. Her mother in law seems to perpetuate the abuse because she does not give her any support but instead she takes her son’s side and fuels further abuse. DP’s future
plan regarding the abuse is to divorce her husband but she is prevented from doing so by the fact that her children are comfortable in their home. She seems to give her children’s comfort the first priority at the expense of her own comfort.

5.3 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Tebogo’s experience of being in an abusive relationship

The impression of Tebogo is given in this section. This will be followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Tebogo’s interview can be found in Appendix B.

5.3.1 Researcher’s impression of Tebogo
Tebogo is a medium built woman who appears neat and well groomed. She has short and neatly combed hair. The researcher experienced Tebogo as a very warm and sensitive person who however seems to be overwhelmed with unresolved anger and bitterness. The researcher was also struck by Tebogo’s resilience and her spirit of endurance. She spoke openly about her experiences without fear of being judged. The researcher could notice that she has got nothing to hide in the way she related her experiences.

Tebogo spoke loudly with a high pitched voice particularly when talking about experiences that seriously annoy her. Whilst relating her experiences, she would become extremely emotional and tearful. There were moments during the interview where Tebogo had a good laugh, especially when talking about experiences which seemed to be ridiculous and stupid to her. Despite the intense emotions that the interview evoked, Tebogo gave a detailed description of her experiences of the abuse in her relationship.

5.3.2 Analysis
In this section, the phenomenological analysis of Tebogo’s life world is presented as it exists for her. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Tebogo’s transcriptions.
5.3.2.1 Unfaithfulness

Tebogo indicated that her husband had an extra-marital affair in the neighbourhood which resulted to her husband having a child outside of their marriage.

The affair was just in the neighbourhood and I didn’t know. I used to pass there, ignorant of the fact that my husband is having an affair in that house..... One day my friend came and told me that my husband is having an affair and a child in the neighbourhood. I was so shocked!

What traumatised her was that all along she was running after her husband apologetically. Little did she know that he had an affair and even a child outside of their marriage. The experience left her feeling like a fool and she could not sleep at night. Tebogo was so heartbroken and devastated by the affair that she ended up filing for divorce. The same week that she filed for divorce, she received summons that her husband had filed for divorce. Her husband’s aim was to divorce her unknowingly. He continued with his affair even after receiving divorce summons.

I could not believe it. I could not even think. I felt like a fool because I was running after him apologising, not knowing that he has impregnated someone. I was so traumatised; I could not even fall asleep. I was so heartbroken. To think that I saw that girl the very same day....God is great..... He was exposed.. I called the girlfriend just for a chat. I had bought clothes for my sister’s child and I wanted to give them to this girl, I was surprised to notice that she is pregnant. Little did I know that it was my husband’s pregnancy; I was mad! I went to seek a lawyer in Johannesburg to claim for a divorce. The same week that I claimed a divorce, I found his sermons in the post box; my husband has filed for a divorce as well.

He continued meeting with the girlfriend in secret..... He continued with his unfaithfulness.

He is unfaithful even with simple things

5.3.2.2 Harassment

Tebogo suffered harassment from her husband’s girlfriend who used to phone and insult her, yet her husband did not stop being unfaithful to her. Instead, he continued supporting his girlfriend and buying the girlfriend’s child bicycles.

The girlfriend would phone and insult me. He continued buying bicycles and stuff for his “extramarital child”. The money was still not coming home.

This girl married someone else but my husband continued with the maintenance.
5.3.2.3 Humiliation and degradation
Tebogo speaks of how her husband turned her into a laughing stock. At some stage he even left her. She says she used to run after him in an attempt to win him back.

*He left me, and I would run after him..... He made me a laughing stock.*

Her husband did not show any remorse about impregnating a girlfriend, instead he would do things openly and go to his girlfriend’s house without hiding himself, and he would hold his child openly without being ashamed.

*When I started fighting the affair, he started doing things openly without remorse. He would go to the girlfriend’s house in brought day light. He would hold his child openly without feeling ashamed.*

5.3.2.4 Lack of communication
Tebogo mentions that her husband does not communicate even the simplest things. She interprets this as a defence mechanism on the part of her husband of not wanting to solve issues.

*Even the smallest thing that you think you can solve he is not able to talk about it. I think it is his defen...*...There is no working together; no communication between us.

5.3.2.5 Mistrust
Her husband does not trust her and accuses her of having affairs with small children.

*Tebogo: He accuses me of having affairs with small children.*

5.3.2.6 Enforcing gender roles
Tebogo’s husband seems to use his gender to control and dominate her. Her husband would bring visitors expecting her to cook and serve them while he would sit doing nothing. Tebogo always had to do all the hard work in the house.

*He used to bring friends in the house and I would be the one who cooks and serve them whilst he sits and does nothing. He used to like the ‘get together’ thing; and I would always have to work hard.*

5.3.2.7 Financial abuse
Tebogo says that her husband leaves the entire financial burden on her because he misuses money. She incurred debts because her husband does not assist her financially. She reports that at some stage she was under serious financial pressure such that she even thought of looking for
a job overseas. She ended up resigning her job as a nurse so that she could get a lump sum which would help pay off all her debts, including those of her husband.

I am in debts; he does not assist me financially. I was under so much pressure that I even thought of going overseas..... I resigned from my job as a nurse in a provincial hospital so that I could have money to pay off my debts, even his.

The couple constantly fight over the use of money regarding who should pay for what, and her husband is not co-operative. Tebogo also speaks of how her husband has even taught their children to lie about money.

You know we always argue about money, that who should do what and so on....he does not cooperate, he even teaches my child to lie about money related issues.

She remarks about her husband’s irritability when he has to pay his dues in the household. This is despite the fact that Tebogo is taking a huge responsibility of paying for the house.

I pay for the house and he has to pay for electricity, he becomes so irritable when he has to pay his dues.

Her husband misuses money and does not give account of his expenditures. This results in putting unbearable financial strain on her. Her husband is into compulsive gambling like horse betting and spends all his bonuses on himself alone. He also hides his salary slips.

He once bet horses for R2000.00. How can a sane person bet horses with such a big amount of money? It was tough. He always eats his bonuses; he does not discuss or share his money with me.

I don’t know what he does with his money. He loses his salary, always comes home penniless after pay day. I don’t know what he does with his money!!! He hides his salary slips.

5.3.2.8 Verbal abuse

Tebogo says that her husband calls her names and uses strong language with reference to her private parts.

He is very abusive even verbally....He insults me with my private parts.

He calls her names and pulls her down by uttering words such as she is ugly, a whore and a slut. These utterances hurt her and lower her self-esteem.

He says I am ugly and I am a whore.....Even now you see.. I am going to arrive late at home? He will be telling me that I was busy with men because I am a slut. ......He always pulls me down, saying that I am ugly; he tries hard to lower my self-esteem. He hurts me with words.
Tebogo had a child at the age of fifteen before she met her husband. The child was raised by her aunt. When they got married her husband knew about the child but when they fight he uses the child to insult her and says that she is a slut who had a child at the age of fifteen.

*At the age of fifteen I had a child, I did not raise the child, and I kept him a secret because I was still young. He stayed with my aunt who could not bear children, now my husband always insults me with the child; and when he married me he knew that I was having a child but he continues to insult me. He says I am the same age as my son, meaning I’ve since been a slut. He hurts me; he has a lot of different things.....*

5.3.2.9 Physical abuse

Tebogo’s husband does not only abuse her emotionally, financially and verbally but physically as well.

*He used to assault me. He is very abusive.*

5.3.2.10 Sexual abuse

Tebogo experiences sexual abuse in the form of coerced sex by her husband. She indicates that at times her husband would come back from wherever he was and demand sex. Tebogo says she would retaliate by insulting him and chasing him away.

*Sometimes he would come and demand sex, forcefully. I would chase him away, insult him.*

5.3.2.11 Anger and hatred

The abuse has caused Tebogo to develop feelings of anger and hatred towards her husband. She mentions that she has even moved out of her bedroom because she cannot stand the sight of him. She resents her husband so much that she becomes despondent when she comes home and finds him in the house.

*I have anger, hatred towards him.... I hate him! I’ve even moved out of the bedroom. I am now sleeping with my daughter.*

*I become so fed up when I find him in the house. I feel like turning back. That’s how I feel about him.*

5.3.2.12 Confused identity

Tebogo feels that she has changed and that she has developed into a cruel person. She feels she is no longer herself.
I feel like I have developed into this cruel person. I am not myself.

5.3.2.13 Resentment towards men
The abuse in her relationship has caused her to develop a general hatred towards men. She sees men as arrogant beings that cannot take care of their wives. Her hatred for men has affected her so much that she vows, never again to be in a relationship with a man, should she decide to divorce her husband.

I hate men! I don’t want them, I hate them! They like pretending and they can’t even take good care of their wives. I hate them! (banging). They are pretenders. Even if I can divorce, I will never have a man in my life again.

5.3.2.14 Depression
Tebogo suffers from stress that has led to depression. She noted that she seems to find happiness at work instead of at home. She mentions that in the presence of other people her husband likes pretending that they are a happy family.

I suffer from stress......... he likes pretending. When we have visitors, he likes giving an impression that we are a happy family, I don’t fall into that trap because I can’t pretend; if I hate you I hate you. You know what the only time that I am happy is when I am at work.

She further mentions that she is a loner, has cut her social ties and prefers to be all by herself.

Actually I don’t go anywhere and I don’t want visitors, I always want to be alone.

Tebogo acknowledges the hurt she experiences in her marriage and she states that the worst that can happen to her is death because nothing will surpass the hurt she is going through.

No other pain will surpass the pain that I’ve experienced in this relationship. The worst that can happen now is death.

5.3.2.15 Lack of trust
Tebogo states that she has lost trust in her husband.

I never trusted him

He is not someone you can trust.
5.3.2.16  Emotional apathy
Tebogo has reached a state of emotional apathy in a way that she no longer loves her husband. She says she started hating her husband when she became aware that he was abusing her financially.

*I don’t have any love for him….I have cut him off completely.

*His money used to “eat” mine. I eventually told him to keep his money. That is when I started falling out of love with him; I don’t know whether I was becoming wise or what.*

She also attributes the loss of love for her husband to the verbal abuse and to the fact that perhaps she has had enough of the abuse.

*I have stopped loving him, or is it because of the insults, or is because I’ve had enough, I don’t know.*

5.3.2.17  Pleasing
After mentioning that she has stopped loving her husband, Tebogo contradicted herself and stated that she still loved her husband despite his mistakes, and she further stated that she bought her husband clothes so that he looked decent. This was done as an attempt to earn his love. Tebogo emphasises that she did everything for her husband including supporting him financially, in order to buy peace.

* ……..the thing is I used to love him very much. You know how it is like when a woman loves her husband, even when I was in town I would buy him something to make him happy, I did this to make him appear decent. Have you noticed how we working women are? We always want nice appealing things for our families, so I used to do everything, everything for him. Ja! I did everything for him even supporting him financially.*

5.3.2.18  Cultural and traditional matters
Tebogo loved her husband to such extent that she even went to the witchdoctors to get some ‘muti’ (traditional medicine) to lure him back. She kept on loving her husband even after he betrayed her by having a child outside of their marriage.

*Sometimes I would go to the witchdoctors and use ‘muti’ to lure him back home. I would scream at night…calling his name. Hee….eh….. (Laughing) a person who does not know marriage knows nothing.*
5.3.2.19  Developing headaches and high cholesterol

Tebogo reported that she has developed high cholesterol levels and suffers from headaches because of the abuse in her relationship.

*I have developed high cholesterol levels and I have changed my diet; I have headaches.*

5.3.2.20  Frustration

The abuse in Tebogo’s relationship also affects her on a social level. She seems to take out her frustrations on her children and as a result, the children are also victims of the abuse. Sometimes she feels guilty that she is ill-treating them because most of the time she is irritable and finds herself shouting at them unnecessarily. She sometimes finds it difficult to reprimand her children because her husband interprets it as a way of getting back at him.

*I am irritable towards my children. I like shouting at them, then correct myself afterwards. Sometimes I feel like I am ill-treating them, but you know how these things are. But sometimes even I reprimand the child genuinely; my husband will always say that I am trying to get at him by shouting at the child.*

*My children are affected especially the girl.*

Her daughter is aware that her mother is abused and is affected to the point that at some point she wanted to move out and leave with her brother. She even asked as to why Tebogo does not divorce her father. The abuse has caused Tebogo’s daughter to vow that she will never get married.

*She wanted to move out and go and live with her brother. I told her to mind her own business. She even asks why we don’t divorce.*

The older child is in a state of emotional apathy and seems to have accepted the abusive situation.

*The older one was also affected, but it seems like he has accepted the situation, but he has come out strong, he always comforts his little sister.*

5.3.2.21  Self blame

Despite the abuse, Tebogo mentions that she feels sorry for her husband to the extent that she accepts the blame and perceives herself as the one who is cruel.

*What hurts me is that I feel sorry for him. I sometimes think that I am the one who is cruel (sobbing).*
I think I feel pity for him……. He annoys me. I become happy if he is not in the house I sometimes feel like moving out and buy myself a house, but I feel sorry for him.

5.3.2.22 Guilt
Even though Tebogo has developed feelings of hatred towards her abusive husband, she finds herself staying on, because she perceives herself as the abuser.

I hate him, yet when I have to move out I feel guilty.

He makes me feel guilty….Yes, M….It seems like I am abusing him….I feel guilty as if I am the one who is wrong.

I feel guilty as If I am the abuser husband.

5.3.2.23 Fear
When Tebogo thinks of leaving her husband, she finds herself being caught up between fear of abandonment and feeling pity for him.

I have this fear of being abandoned…but at the same time I want him to leave…I don’t know.

Fear of loss of property seems to be another factor trapping Tebogo in her abusive relationship. She is married in community of property, and for her leaving the marriage would mean that she would have to share her possessions with her husband. Her fear is that she will lose everything she worked for. Leaving the abusive relationship would be a drawback to her.

I have this fear of loss. I have fear; I have invested a lot.

I don’t know….. I am protecting my property. Because, I don’t love him, I have no feelings for him…. I just have fear; I don’t know where it comes from.

Tebogo’s future plan for the abusive relationship is to leave the marriage but she is being prevented from doing so by the fact that she fears for her children. This is despite the fact that her children are wondering why she is still in the abusive marriage.

My plan is to quit, but like I’ve said, I have fear, and I feel for my kids. Even though they aware that I don’t know why I am still in this marriage.

5.3.2.24 Indecisiveness
Tebogo seems to be struggling with mixed feelings when she has to make a decision to leave her husband.
It's a double bind situation. I hate him and yet at the same time I feel sorry for him (laughing)....I have never seen such a thing! Maybe it's because he once moved out, so I still have that fear that he may repeat the same thing. But I don't love him. I don't even want him to touch me.

5.3.2.25  **Hopefulness**

She endured the pain of being abused hoping that with time her husband would change.

*I've been hoping he will change.*

5.3.2.26  **Putting the children’s best interest first**

Although her children are aware that she is being abused and are wondering why she is still in the abusive marriage, she still uses them as an excuse for staying on.

*I feel for my kids. Even though they aware that I don’t know why I am still in this marriage.*

5.3.2.27  **Convenience as the reason for staying**

Tebogo noted that she is staying in the abusive relationship because of convenience. She feels that having to start afresh in life is an inconvenience for her.

*I think I am staying for convenience, having to start afresh is another thing.*

5.3.2.28  **Helplessness**

It seems like Tebogo has learned to be helpless in her abusive relationship. She mentions that she is staying because she has got used to the situation. She feels that there is no pain that will ever surpass the one she feels in her marriage. She points out that her tears have dried up and she no longer cares. Tebogo acknowledges that the relationship is dead and nothing can repair it. She asks herself as to why she is tolerating the abuse, but she stays on anyway, and still continues to mention that she loves her husband despite his mistakes.

*My tears are dry; I don’t have time to cry anymore. I don’t care anymore.*

*I am staying because I’ve gotten used to the situation, but as far as the relationship is concerned, it is dead and nothing will repair it. I sometimes ask myself what is finally going to be the solution.*

*I ask myself why I have am I tolerating all this?*

*I loved him despite all that. Even though I was insulting him, I still loved him.*
5.3.2.29  **Submissiveness**

Tebogo recounts that she used to be apologetic even if she did not commit any mistake in an effort to maintain peace in her relationship.

*I would apologise even if I am not mistaken.*

5.3.2.30  **Developing assertiveness**

Tebogo realises that she started to become strict and more open and she developed assertiveness as a way of curbing the abuse in her relationship.

*I’ve become stricter, being open about issues, if he is wrong, if he borrows money from me I refuse, unlike before. I just tell him straight. If I was not open I would be ill. It relieves me.*

*Yes! I just tell him not to touch my things.*

5.3.2.31  **Developing coping mechanisms**

There are various strategies she employed in order to cope with the abusive situation in her relationship and these include: keeping herself busy, being open about issues and loving her husband despite him abusing her.

*I keep myself busy with my work.*

5.3.2.32  **Husband’s upbringing as the cause of abuse**

She perceives the bad upbringing of her husband as the cause of abuse. She divulges that her husband was a spoilt child who was seen as a hero by his mother and was never reprimanded, instead his mother used to embrace all his wrong doings. For Tebogo the fact that his mother was never married seems to have contributed to her husband having different family values.

*Wrong upbringing from his home. He was badly brought up.*

*His mother used to hero worship him. He was spoilt as a child. He is the only boy. He comes from a wrong family. His mother was never married. His mother embraces every wrong doing my husband does. She does not reprimand him.*
5.3.2.33  Cultural and traditional matters
Sometimes Tebogo is tempted to think that the abuse comes as a result of witchcraft.

*I sometimes ask myself what is finally going to be the solution, or was I bewitched?*

5.3.2.34  Husband’s feelings of inferiority
It seems Tebogo’s husband sometimes feels threatened by the fact that she earns more than he does and she is able to do things that he could not do, for example home improvements.

*The other thing that annoys me is his comments. He likes saying that I don’t take him seriously because I earn more than him. He always tries to make me feel guilty. You know what; I worked very hard for that house. I’ve built an outside room and a garage.*

5.3.2.35  Incompatibility
Tebogo and her husband seem to display some degree of incompatibility in that they seem not to agree about anything. Tebogo even thinks that they met by mistake.

*My husband and are do not click at all. When he says blue I say red, if he says green, I say yellow, and if he says white I say black. It’s like we met by mistake.*

5.3.2.36  Summary of Tebogo’s experience
Tebogo described her experiences of being in an abusive relationship as emotional, financial, verbal and sexual. Her marriage is typified as having all sorts of problems which include extramarital affairs, husband having a child outside wedlock and unbearable interference of her mother in law in her marriage. Although Tebogo is the one who is abused in the relationship, she often blames herself and thinks that she is the one who is abusive and not the other way around.

The abuse in her relationship has a negative impact on her and her significant others, particularly her children. She says that she has tried several strategies to curb the abuse in her relationship including a threat of divorce, but nothing seems to help. Tebogo also declares that she kept on loving her husband despite the abuse. She states her reasons for staying on in the abusive relationship as feeling sorry for her husband and feeling guilty that she is the one who is abusive. Tebogo also has a fear of losing everything she has worked for. She also cites convenience and learned helplessness as the reasons of staying in the abusive relationship. Cultural and
traditional matters seem to play a role in her interpretation of the abuse, for example, the belief that she is bewitched. She seems to have mixed feelings about leaving. Her future plan regarding the abusive relationship is to leave her marriage but she fears for her children.

5.4 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Nomfundo’s experience of being in an abusive relationship

This section covers the researcher’s impression of Nomfundo which will be followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Nomfundo’s interview can be found in Appendix C.

5.4.1 Researcher’s impression of Nomfundo

Nomfundo is a medium built, dark skinned woman with neatly kept dreadlocks. She is a friendly person and always wears a smile. She talks very slowly and has a great sense of humour. Although Nomfundo wears a big smile one cannot help noticing the hidden pain inside of her. Behind the pain there is noticeable stubbornness that was created by endured abuse. She seems to have turned into a carefree person who has developed a thick skin. She was talking freely and laughingly during the interview.

5.4.2 Analysis

A phenomenological analysis of Nomfundo’s life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Nomfundo’s transcriptions.

5.4.2.1 Disrespect

Nomfundo experiences disrespect in her relationship. She notes that her husband has no regard for her. She points out that her husband is condescending and resentful when he talks to her.

*He talks to me as if I am a child or his enemy.*

Her husband comes and goes as he wishes without any explanation, but he has a problem if she does the same.

*Sometimes he comes in the morning without giving any explanation of his where abouts, but if I can come home later than usual, say 5pm, he will shout and moan, you see that? So I think in that regard, there is a lot of emotional abuse.*
5.4.2.2 Patriarchal control

Patriarchal control seems to be a problem in Nomfundo’s marriage. According to her husband she has to continuously do the house chores as it is fitting for a woman. Her husband exercises power over her in such a way that he monitors the time she arrives home and complains about every little thing she does.

*He is full of farm life mentality, you know in the farms women work like slaves….so he is still holding on that. He would complain that I don’t do house hold chores. He would complain about dirty dishes, dirty curtains, and to think that I do all those things........ According to him I have to work non-stop in the house.*

Nomfundo seems to be living a different kind of life from what she always wanted because she is always worried about her husband’s petty complaints.

*I am not living the kind of life I wanted. I am always worried about his complaints. I cannot even be comfortable with putting my bag anywhere I want to, because I know he is going to complain.*

Her husband controls her, he chooses who should visit her and who she should or should not befriend whereas she cannot do the same.

*He controls who is supposed to visit me and who is not supposed to. He chooses who I or should not befriend. He says I am getting bad influence from my friends, but I don’t control who he should or should not befriend.*

Nomfundo believes that her husband copied the abusive behaviour from his father because he comes from a family where the father is domineering.

*The other meaning I attach to this is that he comes from a family where the father is domineering?*

*Yes, he took that from his father, it is rooted in him.*

During their dating period Nomfundo misinterpreted her husband’s control as caring.

*At times you misinterpret control as caring.*

5.4.2.3 Unfaithfulness

Nomfundo’s husband is unfaithful. She reveals that her husband has one extra marital affair after the other.

*He has an extramarital affair, actually one after the other. I find romantic messages from his girlfriends in his phone.*
5.4.2.4 Financial abuse
Her husband deprives her of control over her own money, he does not assist her financially, and he misuses money.

*Even financially he would want to tell me what to do with my money. ..... I did not have freedom to use my money*

Her husband does not fulfil his role as a breadwinner and as a father; as a result Nomfundo pays for all household bills except the housing bond. She states that she has no idea what her husband does with his money as he does not give account for his finances.

*Financially, he is not there. I do everything in the house. He would tell me that he is paying the bond and I must do the rest. So I have to pay for electricity, pay school fees and transport for the children, pay for my own transport, buy clothes for me and the children and even for him. Literally I have to do everything else...You would think there is no father in my house because he does not fulfil his role as a breadwinner.*

*I don’t know what he does with his money.....Financially.....mmh (frowning).... it’s sickening. He is the kind of man who does not account for his finances.*

5.4.2.5 Physical abuse
She says her husband used to beat her up for no reason. Physical abuse stopped after she exercised her rights and obtained a restraining order against her husband.

*He used to bit me up...but he does not do that any longer because I exercised my rights and obtained a restraining order against him..........He used to bit me up for very petty issues.*

5.4.2.6 Verbal abuse
Nomfundo experiences verbal abuse in her relationship. Her husband shouts at her and calls her names in front of the children.

*He talks too, much he complains, he calls me names, he shouts at me in front of the children, saying all bad things.*

5.4.2.7 Sexual abuse
She is also subjected to sexual abuse in her relationship. She feels abused because her husband infects her with sexually transmitted diseases.

*Sexually I am abused as well. ........he gives me sexually transmitted diseases. I am always suffering from vaginal thrush.*
5.4.2.8 Mistrust by husband

When she questions her husband about the sexually transmitted infections he becomes defensive and shifts the blame on her for the disease.

*When I try to address that issue, he becomes defensive and tells me that I know where I got it from, and to think that I don't have an affair... that makes me sick.*

5.4.2.9 Isolation

Nomfundo’s husband prevents her from mixing with other people for fear that she will discuss her frustrations with friends. She says that succumbing to her husband’s demands leaves her with feelings of isolation and inertness.

*It affects me because at the end of the day it interferes with my happiness, because I have to succumb to his demands and at the end I find myself not having a social life. He is aware that if I have social contacts, I will be able to share my frustrations, he does not want that. So I find myself isolated and stuck.*

5.4.2.10 Lack of communication

She acknowledges that sometimes she and her husband can spend the whole week not talking to each other and this causes a lot of emotional strain on her.

*At other times we can take the whole week or two not talking to each other. That is very strenuous emotionally.*

5.4.2.11 Depression

The abuse has produced depressive symptoms in Nomfundo such as being irritable, angry, and grumpy. She also tends to seek comfort from food and ends up gaining weight.

*I am always irritable, angry and grumpy. And at times I don’t want to talk to him.*

*Anger, frustration...should I elaborate?*

*I eat a lot and as a result I gain a lot of weight. I was not this big.*

5.4.2.12 Resentment

Sometimes she feels hatred for her husband to such an extent that she sometimes wishes bad things to happen to him.
5.4.2.13 Christian convictions

Hatred for her husband leaves her feeling guilty because she feels she is violating her Christian values.

At the same time I feel guilty that I am a Christian and I am not supposed to hate.

5.4.2.14 Palpitations and chest pains

Nomfundo experiences physical changes such as palpitations and chest pains as a result of the abuse.

I am sickly, I get palpitations and chest pains because of anger.

5.4.2.15 Frustration

Her children become victims of the abuse because Nomfundo tends to take her frustrations out on them. She yells and screams at them and consequently the children become miserable and irritated.

My children get very irritated with these continuous fights and misunderstandings, because sometimes I take my frustration out on them; I shout and scream at them. They become aware of the fights and end up being miserable.

The abuse does not only affect Nomfundo and her children, but it also affects other significant people in her life. She discloses that the relations between her family and her husband seem to be strained because of what is happening in her marriage. She states that her husband hates her family and friends and he detests their visits.

My family does not favour him especially my sister. He hates my family but I am supposed to be supportive towards his family.

5.4.2.16 Discrimination

The abuse also extends to the child that Nomfundo had before she got married to her husband. He treats this child differently by abusing him physically and emotionally and he always threatens to throw him out of the house.

In the house he discriminates against the children. I have a child that I had before marrying him. The child is not his. He makes the child feel that he is not his own. He abuses the child physically and emotionally.
He always threatens that he will chase him out of the house. How am I supposed to feel? His own children are treated differently.

Nomfundo is even scared that her child will end up developing psychological problems because of the abuse.

I am even scarred that my child is going to develop psychological problems because he is always shouted at and he is always reminded that this is not his home.

5.4.2.17 Fear

Nomfundo is fearful that her children will perpetuate their father’s behaviour when they grow up. She reveals that the girl will grow up thinking that abuse is a way of life.

I am living a life of fear and I am afraid that my children are going to copy that. My young girl is going to think that this is the way a wife has to be treated.

5.4.2.18 Convenience as a reason for staying

Staying on in the abusive relationship seems to be convenient for Nomfundo in terms of shelter. She says she would rather make herself comfortable in the abusive environment than struggle without accommodation.

It’s convenient for me. Having to start afresh and look for shelter is a mission. Things are sky rocketing, I cannot go out on my own and seek accommodation. I feel I will stay there and make myself comfortable.

5.4.2.19 Financial reasons for staying

Nomfundo does not necessarily want to stay in the abusive marriage but her reality is that she cannot afford a housing loan. She reports that if she had financial means she would leave immediately.

You know what? My main problem is accommodation; I can’t afford to have a bond. If I had financial means….I would leave today.

She sees herself stuck in the in the abusive relationship until she can afford her own place.

So it means I am stuck, until I can afford my own place.

5.4.2.20 Helplessness

Nomfundo seems to be minimising the extent of the abuse in her relationship. This is evidenced by the fact that she is still looking for a better excuse to leave, which could be a sign that she is becoming helpless in the abusive relationship.
At times I ask myself this question: “what am I waiting for that will give me a platform to move out, what I am waiting for?

5.4.2.21 Hopefulness

She thought that she could fix her husband, sometimes she kept on hoping that he would change with time, but she eventually came to realise that no one could change another person.

I thought that I would fix him. It is now that I realise that you cannot change a person.

Sometimes you keep on hoping that things will be fine.

5.4.2.22 Confrontation

Nomfundo has tried confrontation and communication in efforts to suppress the abuse in her relationship but it seems the abuse continues relentlessly.

Sometimes I confront him to solve issues particularly those that are consistently emanating, but at times it does not help.

5.4.2.23 Retaliation

She ends up resorting to verbal abuse as a way of defending herself. She says it works for her, because it hurts her husband and in that way it numbs him. Nomfundo calls this ‘returning the favour’, which affords her a sense of self satisfaction.

Sometimes I end up insulting him as well. I now also resort to verbal abuse too, it becomes verbal to verbal abuse (laughs loudly).

5.4.2.24 Talking to people as a coping mechanism

Nomfundo’s coping mechanisms include talking to people she trusts. At times she confides and ventilates to strangers and she finds that it relieves her of stress.

Talking to people I trust, even if I don’t trust a person, I just confide, ventilate anywhere, it removes the baggage. I feel lighter, I talk even if I don’t know a person, I just talk, I don’t care who you are as long as you will listen to me.

I go out and see people; I chill out and talk to people.
5.4.2.25 Retribution

She says she also finds comfort in over spending the very money she lacks, and in turn, she reports that this action boosts her self-esteem.

*Pauses and laughs.* ....buying clothes and feeling happy about it. It boosts my self-esteem...... .. Buying a car and taking my children to the movies. I don’t have money.

**But I use the little that I have to make myself feel better.**

5.4.2.26 Positivity

Since she cannot leave the abusive marriage, Nomfundo has decided to use the negative situation to benefit her in a positive way. She says she is going to do things that make her happy.

*Yes and whatever situations that may be negative, I’ll use it to my benefit.*

*I have learned that though this situation is negative, I have to change it and make it positive.*

*By just making myself happy... in many ways. If buying clothes makes me happy, I will do that, if I want to buy a car, I’ll do that. As long as whatever I’m doing brings happiness and contentment in my life, then I’ll do it that way.*

5.4.2.27 Ignorance

Nomfundo had clues pointing to the fact that she is being abused but she ignored them. During their dating her husband gave her a hint regarding marrying a woman who has a child but Nomfundo ignored it.

*At other times as people we don’t read the situation that might come up. There are other things that give you a clue, but you don’t take them seriously until it is too late.*

*During courtship he stated that he won’t marry a woman who has a child that is not his. But I continued to stay in that relationship despite that. At the time I saw it but I ignored that fact.*

5.4.2.28 Self blame

The only thing Nomfundo does now is to blame herself for condoning the abuse.

*I blame myself ... I should not have condoned any form of abuse from the start. I allowed it to happen.*
She acknowledges that she made wrong choices and she is reaping the consequences of her choices.

*I am saying that I made my bed so I have to lay on it (Laughing)....and I am still laying on that bed even now.*

5.4.2.29  **Husband’s upbringing as the cause of abuse**
Nomfundo attributes her husband’s abusive behaviour to the way he was brought up. She acknowledges that her husband lacked parental love because he was moved from one relative to another. Nomfundo’s interpretation is that her husband was deprived of stability in his childhood, hence his abusiveness.

*The other thing is lack of parental love. He was moved from one relative to another....I think somewhere that creates a gap in terms of stability.*

5.4.2.30  **Leaving the marriage as a future plan**
Nomfundo stated that she wants to leave her marriage but she is unable to do so because of lack of finance. She says she will be stranded in the relationship until she can afford her own place.

*....to leave...but I am stuck, until I can afford my own place.*

5.4.2.31  **Summary of Nomfundo’s experience**
Nomfundo described her experiences of abuse. She reveals that she experiences humiliation and degradation in her relationship. Her husband uses his gender to exercise power and control over her and he is also practising infidelity and he controls her money. She mentioned that her husband used to beat her up and abuse her sexually, thus infecting her with sexually transmitted diseases.

The abuse seems to impact negatively on her. The effects of the abuse on her are that she experiences feelings of isolation and has a sense of limbo. She goes through feelings of irritability, anger and frustration. She notices physical changes such as persistent headaches and weight gain. The social effects of the abuse are that her children have also become victims of the abuse and the abuse has also affected her significant others.
Nomfundo stated her reasons for staying on in the abusive relationship as convenience, lack of adequate finance, learned helplessness and hope that her husband will change. She revealed that confronting her husband and resorting to verbal abuse has been her way of trying to curb the abuse. She described her coping mechanisms as talking to people, retribution, and turning the negatives into positives. She boldly acknowledges how she ignored the signs of abuse from when she dated her husband. She blames herself for making wrong choices. Nomfundo also blames the abuse to gender domination and her husband’s upbringing. She plans to leave her marriage but lack of adequate finance prevents her from doing so.

5.5 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Salamina’s experiences of being in an abusive relationship

A brief researcher’s impression of Salamina will be given followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Salamina’s interview can be found in Annexure D.

5.5.1 Researcher’s impression of Salamina

Salamina is a tall, well groomed lady who is dark in complexion. She struck the researcher as a bold but very warm and approachable person who is easy to talk to. A rapport between Salamina and the researcher was easily established such that she felt comfortable even talking about the most sensitive issues. There were times during the interview where Salamina would raise her voice in anger and annoyance, but she did not shed a tear. The only gesture she repeatedly expressed was frowning when she wanted to emphasise a point.

5.5.2 Analysis

A phenomenological analysis of Salamina’s life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Salamina’s transcriptions.

5.5.2.1 Neglect

Salamina mentions that her husband burdens her with all the chores. He does not even assist with children’s homework.

*He burdens me, he shifts everything to me, be it children’s homework or whatever.*
5.5.2.2 *Enforced gender roles*

Her husband has a tendency to always want to dominate her in the sense that he does not want to lose an argument because he is a man. According to Salamina’s husband, a woman cannot have the last say in an argument.

*The problem is that men do not want to lose. If I bit him in an argument he wants to be the one who ends.*

5.5.2.3 *Verbal abuse*

Salamina experiences verbal abuse in her relationship which includes being insulted, being yelled and shouted at. Her husband uses abusive language, bears grudges, makes a lot of noise and never admits his mistakes and he shouts at her whenever she has made a mistake.

*Verbal abuse…..He uses abusive language, he insults me.*

*When he has made a mistake, He makes a lot of noise.*

5.5.2.4 *Physical abuse*

Salamina once experienced threats of being killed with a gun by her husband. Instead of showing remorse, her husband became even more abusive.

*Last year December he chased me with a gun and he got arrested. Till to date he has not asked for forgiveness for pointing a gun at me, instead he became more abusive.*

5.5.2.5 *Sexual abuse*

She also experiences sexual abuse in the form of being deprived of sex by her husband. Salamina feels deprived sexually because the husband is always drunk. She says that if they happen to have sex, most of the time during sexual intercourse, her husband remains emotionally uninvolved because of his drunken stupor.

*He deprives me of sex because he is always drunk. Sometimes he tries to have sex with me but most of the time he doesn’t know what he is doing because he is drunk.*

5.5.2.6 *Depression*

The abusive relationship affects Salamina to the extent that she experiences mood changes such as sadness and irritability. She mentions that when she sees her husband her mood changes from happiness to sadness.
Sadness and irritability. God gave us happiness, but I am not happy. When I see him, I shift from being happy to being sad. She becomes angry particularly when her husband is drunk and she chooses to avoid him.

Anger, I become very angry especially when he is drunk. I avoid him.

5.5.2.7 Headaches and weight gain
Salamina also encounters physical effects such as weight gain and headaches as a result of the abuse. She seems to seek comfort from food when she is frustrated, hence she gains weight.

I have gained weight. When I am frustrated...I eat

Salamina: It affects me a lot. I suffer from headaches

5.5.2.8 Abuse affecting children and significant others
Abuse also extends to the children because Salamina’s husband does not insult her alone but also involves the children. The abuse affects the children so much that they want to leave their home. Salamina says her children run away when their father enters the house.

My husband insults my kids.

It affects my children terribly so much that they want to leave. The children run away when he gets into the house.

Her family hates her husband because of his abusive behaviour. His relatives are angry with him and have withdrawn from him.

My family hates him.

His relatives are also angry with him. They have withdrawn from him.

5.5.2.9 Cultural and traditional matters
Salamina’s mother told her to endure the abuse because according to their culture a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage.

But my mother always says that I cannot leave my home, I have to endure.
She once moved out of the house as an effort to stop the abuse. Her husband’s family convinced her to come back home.

In 1997 I moved out, his family convinced me to come back
5.5.2.10 Helplessness
Salamina seems to be helpless in the relationship. She feels sorry for her husband despite the fact that he abuses her. She asserts that she still loves her husband despite the fact that he abuses her. She further makes excuses that the children love their father because he is a good father when he is sober.

*I feel sorry for him.*

*I think I still love him...I love him. His children love him, he is ok, and he is good when he is sober.*

5.5.2.11 Emotional apathy
Salamina seems to have reached a stage of emotional apathy as she no longer cries.

*I don’t cry anymore, no more tears.*

She is enduring the abuse because she has come to accept that her husband will not change. It seems she has learned to live with the situation.

*I did self-talk. I told myself that he is like this and he won’t change.*

5.5.2.12 Going for therapy as a coping strategy
Salamina and her husband went for counselling as a way of curbing the abuse, but it never worked. She also advised her husband to go out and see how other people live, but he did not listen.

*I also advised to go out and meet people and see how other people live. He does not listen*

*We also went for therapy but it did not work.*

5.5.2.13 Positivity as a coping mechanism
Salamina copes with the abusive situation through doing self-talk and meeting with people who keep her busy. She also copes by looking at the bigger picture. She focuses more on the good that her husband does than the bad. Assertiveness is one of her coping mechanisms.

*Self talk. I tell myself that I have a job; I meet with people that keep my mind busy.*

*He cleans the yard, he irons for the children, and he cleans their shoes. I see more good than bad. I look at the bigger picture.*
The other thing is that I am assertive. When I say no I say no.

5.5.2.14 Religion as a coping mechanism
Salamina uses her religion to cope with the abuse in her relationship.

I am also a strong believer in God.

I’ll keep my burden with the help of God.

5.5.2.15 Compromising
She compromises and apologises even if she is not at fault in order to survive.

To survive, I apologise and forgive.

5.5.2.16 Husband’s upbringing as the cause of abuse
The sense that Salamina makes of the abuse is that her husband was also abused as a child and hence he is also abusive. She states that her husband’s parents got divorced and he used to stay with relatives who ill-treated him.

He was also abused as a child.

His mom and Dad got divorced and he used to stay with all the relatives who ill-treated him.

5.5.2.17 Familial pattern of divorce
The other meaning which Salamina makes out of the situation is that her husband is abusive because there is a pattern of divorce in his family. She says that her husband’s family does not know how to keep the family together.

I think there is a pattern here. His parents got divorced, his aunts. It seems like divorce runs in his family. They do not know how to keep the family together.

Salamina believes that her husband’s bad upbringing contributed to his lack of direction in life.

…this guy did not have good upbringing. He doesn’t know what to do in life. I always tell him that he has got issues and he needs to deal with them.

She believes that people who come from abusive families and were never loved tend to think that abuse is correct.
I always search why people do that and I realised that others come from abusive families, they were never loved. They think that abuse is the correct thing.

5.5.2.18  Husband’s abuse of alcohol
Salamina attributes the abuse to her husband’s abuse of alcohol. She says that her husband is not helpful in the house because he is always drunk. Her husband also has a tendency of wanting to address issues only when he is intoxicated.

He drinks four days in a week. He doesn’t know how to express himself, he screams and shouts.

When he is not drunk, he is ok, but he processes everything I say so that he can talk about it when he is drunk.

It started in 1999 after the birth of my first child. He would come home drunk, talk this and that. When you ask him tomorrow he denies everything.

It is evident that her husband refuses to take responsibility for his drinking habit as he did not follow the advice to go and seek help.

He was advised to go to Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) because he seemed to have issues and he handles them with abusing alcohol.

5.5.2.19  Resilience
Her plan is to stay in the abusive relationship and raise the children together with her husband despite the abuse.

I am going to stay with this man and we are going to raise these children. I am going to stay here.

5.5.2.20  Summary of Salamina’s experience
Salamina is experiencing all kinds of abuse in her relationship and the most prevailing one is verbal abuse. She blames alcohol as the cause of abuse in her relationship. She points out that her husband drinks alcohol four days in a week. It appears as though her husband cannot communicate when he is not intoxicated. Salamina even feels sexually deprived because her husband is always drunk.
She brought up that her husband once pointed a gun at her threatening to kill her and she got him arrested. She experiences symptoms of depression such as sadness and irritability, emotional apathy and a sense of helplessness. She also encounters bodily changes such as headaches and weight gain. She stated that the abuse has extended to her significant others, however Salamina thinks she still loves her husband despite the abuse and she plans to stay on with him and raise the children in that abusive situation. She has tried to cope with abuse by seeking external intervention such as counselling, talking to people and by staying positive.

The sense she is making of the abuse is that her husband was badly brought up, has a history of divorce in his family, and he was ill-treated as a child. Cultural and traditional matters seem to play a role in her leave or stay decision. She remarked that her mother told her that a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage. She once left the abusive marriage but the family convinced her to come back.

5.6 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Darky’s experience of being in an abusive relationship
An impression of Darky is given in this section. This will be followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Darky’s interview can be found in Appendix E.

5.6.1 Researcher’s impression of Darky
Darky is significantly short in stature, dark in complexion and has short and neat hair. She appears a reserved and a shy person. A day before the interview Darky had a verbal fight with her husband and he had thrown her clothes out of the house. She had to sleep at the neighbour’s house. She was very angry and talking strongly about leaving her husband if she could find accommodation.

Darky had a serious and sad face which made it obvious that she was angry and hurting. Besides her hurt, there was confusion too as to what she really wants to do with the situation. She is a soft spoken person but her “soft spokenness” could not conceal her anger, pain and bitterness. When Darky spoke, the researcher could pick up that she was tired of her situation but seemingly trapped within it.
5.6.2 Analysis

A phenomenological analysis of Darky’s life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Darky’s transcriptions.

5.6.2.1 Alienation

Darky complains that her husband does not listen to anything she says. When she chooses to keep quiet to avoid conflict she is accused of being arrogant.

If I decide to be quiet, he would ask for my opinion. He thinks I am arrogant when I don’t answer, but it does not feel right to say something knowing that it won’t be taken seriously.

5.6.2.2 Lack of support

Darky feels unsupported in most things. She cannot share any information with her husband because when she does, her husband later uses it against her when they fight.

I don’t feel supported in many things.

Sometimes we will talk about things happening at work, when we have a quarrel or a misunderstanding, he refers back to the problem and use it against me....he scrutinizes everything.

5.6.2.3 Mistrust

Darky’s husband displays acts of jealousy and mistrust like monitoring her phone calls and accusing her of having affairs.

I don’t know whether to call it jealousy or what? ...Sometimes we fight over phone calls. He accuses me of having affairs......The swearing and the accusations of having affairs.

5.6.2.4 Patriarchal control

Darky and her children miss out on a lot of things because their movements are always monitored by her husband. Her husband controls her movements whereas he has the freedom to go wherever he wants. She is not allowed to have visitors and is always checked on by her husband.

Another thing he does not want me to go out. He wants me to stay in the house but he does not stay in the house. Sometimes when I have visitors he fights, he checks up on me. I don’t visit people. Most of the time my children miss out on a lot of things, we are always monitored, I can’t take them out as much as I would love to.
Her husband wants things to be done his way, meaning he does not take any advice from her. He even fights with her when she buys herself clothes.

*He wants to do things his way. He does not take any advice from me his wife...He fights when I buy things for myself.*

Darky thinks that patriarchy reigned in the family where her husband was brought up. She mentions that according to her husband, a woman is supposed to do everything in the house without receiving any help from the husband.

*Like sometimes when I am studying or I am ill, he won’t cook, he will say his father never cooked for his mother. According to him a woman has to work, cook and wash for her husband. I am not supposed to rest.*

5.6.2.5 Financial abuse

Darky has no control over her own finances as her husband controls her money and wants her to account on how she uses it.

*He controls the budget. Sometimes he would ask me what I have done with the money and I have to explain.*

5.6.2.6 Verbal Abuse

Darky experiences verbal abuse in a way that she is degraded and called names by her husband even in front of other people.

*It is verbal abuse.... calling me names even in front of people.*

5.6.2.7 Disrespect and humiliation

She says her husband disrespects and humiliates her by calling her names.

*Darky: He does not respect me. He would say I am a “Jimmy comes to Jo’burg”, “this thing” meaning I am stupid.*

5.6.2.8 Husband’s abuse of alcohol

Darky says her husband comes home drunk and starts swearing and screaming at her.

*Most of the time my partner comes home drunk and abuses me verbally, saying all sorts of things that he is not supposed to say, swearing, and screaming at me.*

5.6.2.9 Physical abuse

Her husband does not only abuse her financially and verbally but he used to abuse her physically as well in the past.
In the past he used to assault me..... He was physical.

5.6.2.10 Ignorance
Darky became aware of the abuse very early in the relationship but decided to ignore and endure it.

Very early in the relationship, almost immediately...It happens always.

5.6.2.11 Depression
She has developed feelings of anger, frustration and sadness and yet she seems to be struggling with a decision regarding her abusive marriage.

Feelings of anger, frustration, sadness. I ask myself why I don’t sort this out once and for all.

She says she finds more happiness outside her home. She admits that she laughs a lot more when she is with other people than when she is with her husband.

I am no longer happy. When I am with people, I don’t enjoy, I enjoy myself more at work than at home because I have people I can talk to. I laugh a lot when I am with other people than I am with him.

Darky tends to over eat when she gets frustrated. As a result she ends up gaining weight.

I eat a lot, and this happens mostly when I am frustrated, as a result I gain weight.

5.6.2.12 Abuse affecting children
The abuse does not affect her alone but has a negative effect on her children in such a way that her daughter’s school performance has dropped. She also worries that her children will grow up thinking that abuse is the right thing to do.

I don’t like it because he does it in front of my children, and all those things affect my daughter, her school work has dropped...My children will grow up thinking that it is the right thing to swear. I don’t think my children will have respect for me because the things he says are degrading.

Mh...This is affecting my daughter. She will scream when we fight.

5.6.2.13 Hopefulness
One of her reasons for staying on in the abusive relationship is because of her love for her husband and the hope that he will change.
Initially it was out of love, but I don’t have love anymore.....I don’t....(pause). I would stay if he could change, but I don’t think that will happen at any stage.

5.6.2.14  Convenience as a reason for staying
Darky is staying on in the abusive relationship because of convenience for her and the children. She finds it awkward and inconvenient for her and the children to use public transport, so she is staying on because she does not have a car.

The car is a problem, I don’t have a car. Last year I was staying with my sister and I had to use public transport, with the children, it was awkward.

5.6.2.15  Putting the children’s best interest first
Darky mentioned that she is staying in the abusive marriage for the sake of her children.

I think I am staying for the sake of the children.

5.6.2.16  Talking and going for counselling as a way of curbing the abuse
She has tried to talk to her husband as a way to stop the abuse in her relationship. She has also gone for counselling hoping that things will change.

I tried to talk to him about it.

I went for psychological counselling

5.6.2.17  Involving parents
Involving parents was another strategy she used to curb the abuse. She thought by doing that her husband would change.

I involved parents, thinking that he will change.

She says she nearly ended it all last year but her husband persuaded her to stay.

Last year I nearly, nearly, nearly.... ended it all. I felt I could not take it anymore. I did not want to live with him anymore...He persuaded me to stay, he apologised.

5.6.2.18  Reading as a way of coping
She uses reading as a way of dealing with her stress.

Mostly when I am stressed I read a lot and I pass my exams.
5.6.2.19  Getting support from her family

She also gets support from her family and her husband’s mother, and the support keeps her going.

I also get support from my family, my mother, and my sisters and from his mother, it keeps me going.

5.6.2.20  Husband’s jealousy, insecurity and low self esteem

Darky thinks that her husband is abusive because he is jealous, insecure and has a low self-esteem.

I think he is jealous and insecure. He has a low self-esteem.

5.6.2.21  Enforcing gender roles

Her husband expects her to work all the time without rest just because she is a woman. Darky says she does not expect such behaviour from her husband because he is educated.

When I sit down he would complain and say that I am sitting and doing nothing. I always have to work.... work.... in the house and he is the boss. And he is educated; I don’t expect such things from him.

Darky describes her husband as ‘bossy’. She cites that her husband is of the thought that a man is supposed to go wherever he pleases without being questioned or challenged. Things have to be done his way.

Recently he told me that I cannot ask a man where he goes or where he comes from I should be happy that he is back.

He is bossy, and he wants things to be his way.

5.6.2.22  Husband’s abuse of alcohol

Darky sees alcohol abuse as the cause of verbal abuse in her marriage. She says her husband does not talk when he is sober and the abuse only starts when he is drunk.

When he is not drunk, he does not communicate, it’s only when he is drunk when he will start saying all sorts of things...... He would come home drunk and start fighting.

5.6.2.23  Divorce as a future plan

Darky says she wants happiness and she will do anything to achieve it. She sees divorce as the final option that will set her free even if she has to struggle.
I want to be happy. I am prepared to do anything that will make me happy…. I want to be the person I was before, I want to be myself. I think divorce will be the best solution, once and for all. Even if I can struggle, it will be for the better.

5.6.2.24  Cultural and traditional matters

Darky seems to be confused regarding her future plans about her abusive marriage. In one statement she says she wants to quit, in the other she states that a woman has to endure marital difficulties. The Sesotho phrase influences her to stay, which says mosadi ongalla motsheyo (a woman endures difficulties and never leaves her marriage no matter how difficult it can be).

*Darky: You know what they say”* Mosadi ongalla motsheyo” *It will be fine.*

5.6.2.25  Summary of Darky’s experience

Darky experiences emotional, financial, verbal and physical abuse in her relationship. The most prominent kind of abuse in her marriage is verbal abuse. She reiterated that her husband lacks respect for her and he calls her names in front of other people and even in front of her children. This happens mostly when her husband is under the influence of alcohol. She states that in the beginning the abuse would start as verbal and proceeded to physical. She notes that the physical abuse has stopped but verbal abuse is still continuing. She says her husband does not only abuse her verbally but also controls her finances and monitors her movements. She reveals that her husband is jealous and accuses her of having affairs. There are evident negative effects of the abuse on Darky, her children and her significant others. She mentions that she is happier at work than at her house because of the abuse she is experiencing.

Darky became aware of the abuse early in her relationship but decided to endure it in the hope that her husband would change. She says she has tried various methods to curb the abuse which include trying to talk to her husband about it, going for counselling, involving parents but nothing seems to help. She once left her husband but she came back because of putting the children’s best interests first. Darky accepted various reasons which keep her in the abusive relationship and lack of adequate finances seem to be the major reason for staying, however she appears to be confused regarding her future plans about the abusive marriage. On one hand she wants to leave, on the other hand she believes that a woman has to endure difficulties. Cultural and traditional matters seem to have an influence in her decision to stay. She states that
according to Sesotho culture ‘mosadi ongalla motsheyo’ (meaning that a woman endures
difficulties in marriage and does not leave.

5.7 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Neo’s experience of being in an abusive
relationship

An impression of Neo is given in this section. This will be followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Neo’s interview can be found in Appendix F.

5.7.1 The researcher’s impression of Neo

Neo is a lady of average weight and height. She presented herself as a formally dressed lady with neat and short hair. She appeared as a warm person. The interview took place at her house. She chose a time when there was no one at home so that she would be able to express herself freely. She also chose the interview to take place in her house because she prefers to stay indoors.

Neo was enthusiastic about the interview as though she was looking forward to vent out her emotions. During the interview she was very honest and she spoke freely about her experiences. She has a good a sense of humour but she can be very emotional as well, she could move from a jovial to a sad and tearful mood. She expressed her emotions genuinely.

5.7.2 Analysis

A phenomenological analysis of Neo’s life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Neo’s transcriptions.

5.7.2.1 Humiliation and degradation

Neo speaks about how her husband ridicules her in front of her friends calling her degrading names such as ‘granny’. He humiliates and criticises her saying things like she is a teacher but she cannot budget. Her husband calls her a failure and as a result Neo ends up leaving all decisions to him.
He ridiculed me in front of her, calling me a granny...He would mention things such as “what kind of a teacher are you who can’t even budget.

He calls me a failure. So I leave everything to him.

5.7.2.2 Alienation
Because she is alienated and not given a chance to express herself, she ends up doing stupid things.

It’s because he does not give me a chance to express myself, as a result I do stupid things.

5.7.2.3 Enforcing gender roles
Her husband uses his gender to exercise power and control over her to such an extent that she calls him “the mastermind” of her life.

You know what? I cannot prioritise any more. He is the “mastermind” of my life, he controls everything.

She feels like a child in the relationship because her husband controls her finances. As a result she tends to lose focus particularly on how to manage her debts.

I don’t have ownership of anything. I am like a child. I buy furniture in my name; I cannot even pay for it properly because he controls my money. I end up losing focus as to how I should manage my debts.

5.7.2.4 Dependency
Although she is working and earns her own salary, she still feels dependent on her husband. She admits that she is not free, she is not independent and she feels lost. Her husband is never satisfied about anything and he is always looking for mistakes. She says that in their relationship her husband’s words are final. To emphasise the extent to which she is controlled by her husband, Neo even used a metaphor of “being in the box.”

I am still in the box, I am not free, and I am not independent. I feel lost... That is why I am dependent on him.......He is always looking for mistakes and his word is final.

5.7.2.5 Financial Abuse
Neo experiences financial abuse in her relationship in a way of being forced to hand over her earnings to her husband, lack of financial assistance from her husband and her husband controls the family income. In the beginning of their marriage Neo used to hand over all her earnings to her husband. Her husband would go to the extent of buying her shoes and Neo would have to
wear that only pair of shoes “sparingly”. She says sometimes she would walk bare footed to save the only pair of shoes she possessed. Her husband controls all her finances and when he happens to buy something for the children, he demands his money back from her. If she does not have money, she has to go and borrow so that she can pay her husband back for buying clothes for his own children.

...Eh... at the beginning of our marriage, I used to give him my salary. I would ask him to buy me a pair of shoes. I would have to wear that one and only pair for a long time. I would have to wear the same pair at home, at work...everywhere. Sometimes I would walk bare footed to save the shoes.

He said we rather play a stokvel (laughing) how do you play a stokvel with your husband? He annoys me. He monitors my money. When he happens to buy for the kids, I have to pay him back.

If I don’t have money, I have to go and borrow it so that I can pay him for buying clothes for his own children. I am not part of his budget.....

5.7.2.6 Pleasing
Neo says she allowed the financial abuse to happen because she wanted to please and satisfy her husband. She even borrowed money from cash loans to satisfy her husband. She did all this to show him that she cares.

I end up going to the cash loans to borrow money, just because I want to satisfy him. I want to show him that I care, but despite that he is never satisfied.

In her endeavour to please her husband Neo ends up in serious debt.

I try to please him to an extend that I end falling in to bad debt traps...long term debts...loans caused by him because I was trying to please him.

I allow this financial control to happen because I want to satisfy him. If I don’t do that I feel guilty. As a result I am always out of budget. Actually I cannot budget.

5.7.2.7 Self blame
Neo blames herself for not making good decisions and she sees herself as a useless mother or wife. She also blames herself for not making good financial decisions which lead to her being in debt. She feels that she is the cause of whatever is happening in her marriage. Neo seems to be taking responsibility for the abuse in her relationship.
I don’t want to blame him. I want to blame myself….I did not make good decisions……I fell into debts. I am trapped, and I don’t know how to come out….I see myself as a useless mother.

I blame myself, I feel like I am not the ideal mother or wife. I don’t see it as abuse; I think all this is happening because of me. I feel like crying.

5.7.2.8 Verbal abuse
She experiences being called degrading names like ‘setlatla’ (fool) and ‘bitch’ by her husband. He puts Neo down by calling her hurtful words like she hails from the Free State which means Neo does not know anything. Her husband says she think she knows too much.

Verbal abuse, calling me names.....things like...”you can’t cope; you can’t do this and that, ‘Setlatla towel (you fool)…..”You come from the Free State; you think you know too much”. This is verbal abuse, and it hurts.

Now of late he called me a ‘bitch’.

He said I am foolish, I am a follower......I can’t stand on my own...

5.7.2.9 Sexual abuse
Neo’s husband sleeps around and ends up infecting her with sexually transmitted infections. Neo mentions that whenever she has sex with her husband she experiences itching. When she tries to address the issue with her husband, he insults her and Neo mentioned to her husband that he slept with the wrong person. He retaliates back with verbal abuse and mentions that she smells and she must go and bath. Neo says she no longer enjoys sex with him.

We had a small dispute, he wanted us to have sex and I refused and told him that I have a bad vaginal smell after having sex with him. When I have sex with him I itch, and he would tell me to go and bath, I smell. I told him that he must be sleeping with a wrong person because the itching was continuing. I have a bad smell.

5.7.2.10 Changed Identity
Neo has become a different person because of the abuse in her marriage. She mentions that she has started having extra marital affairs, not because she wants to, but she is forced by circumstances in her marriage.
I even started having extra marital affairs. I am now having extramarital affairs. They make me sad, this is not me...I don’t want to have affairs but I am forced by circumstances.

Neo has changed from a quiet person who had patience to an irritable and talkative person. She thinks that talking saves her.

I am irritable. I had patience and I was quiet, now I have lost all that. Now I am talkative, but talking saves me.

5.7.2.11 Depression

She speaks of how the abuse causes a drawback in her life. She says that she does not prosper. She feels her husband has shut down her reasoning capacity and as a result she feels withdrawn. She is experiencing a sense of “stuckness” as she reveals that her life is a drawback and she does not know where she will end up with this kind of life.

My life is a drawback. I want to prosper, but I can’t...He has even shut down my reasoning capacity...
(Crying)....I became withdrawn.

I don’t know where I will end with this life

My life is a drawback.

Neo is so disturbed by the abuse in her relationship that she is unable to finish her studies. She keeps on asking herself what went wrong in her marriage and why it has to be her who suffers abuse.

I can’t finish my studies; I don’t finish the things I started. I keep on asking myself why me? What went wrong?

5.7.2.12 Weight gain and heart problems

Neo notices physical changes in her as a result of the abuse and these are weight gain and heart problems. She tends to over eat and as a result she gains weight. She also emphasised that she has developed heart problems because of the abuse.

It’s either I don’t eat or I over eat. I have a heart problem.

5.7.2.13 Low self esteem

Neo mentions that she developed a low self-esteem because of being called names. Her relatives even advised her to do a makeover so as to boost her self-esteem.
Calling me names has lowered my self-esteem; it has caused me to take stupid decisions.

5.7.2.14  Mistrust
Neo has lost trust in people in such a way that she thinks that people will play games with her, meaning that people may take her for granted. This mistrust has made her to choose friends.

I choose friends. I don’t want people who will play games with me.; I want people I can trust.

5.7.2.15  Abuse affecting the children
Neo’s children would rather go to relatives than being at their own home. They have even named their home a solitary camp. They describe the atmosphere in their home as too rigid. Their performance at school has also dropped, they are withdrawn, they choose friends and they have also dropped their sporting activities.

My children call my house a solitary camp, they always go out to relatives, and they say the atmosphere in the house is too rigid.

My children have dropped performance at school, they become withdrawn, they choose friends, they no longer play sport.

5.7.2.16  Putting children’s best interest first
Neo is staying in the abusive relationship because she feels for her children. She says she wants her children to grow up in a family that has both parents.

It’s just that you feel for the children. I want children to grow into a family that has both parents.

5.7.2.17  Helplessness
It seems Neo is helpless in the abusive relationship. She justifies her helplessness by stating that it is better to stay in her marriage and be abused by her husband than getting out of it and being abused by other men.

I am also afraid that if I get out of this marriage, I will be open to abuse by other men. I don’t want that, it’s better if I am abused by this one.
5.7.2.18 Pleasing
Neo tries hard to please her husband by reassuring him of her love and showering him with false praises like appreciating him for giving her beautiful children. She hopes by doing so the abuse will stop. After a quarrel Neo would be the one who apologises in an effort to make peace.

*Telling him that I love him, thanking him for giving me such beautiful children.*

*After a quarrel I will try hard to make peace.*

5.7.2.19 Loyalty
She remains loyal to her husband despite the abuse. She acknowledges that if she divorces her husband she is going to hurt other women by taking their husbands and breaking their families.

*Because if I divorce, I am going to take another woman’s husband and I don’t want to break families.*

5.7.2.20 Confrontation
In an effort to curb the abuse in her relationship Neo has tried talking to her husband and writing him letters to express how she feels but nothing seems to help.

*Talking to him…… I’ve written letters to him expressing how I feel.*

5.7.2.21 Taking control
Neo once took action and obtained a restraining order after her husband assaulted her son.

*At some point I took a protection order against him after he bit my son terribly.*

She also became aware that she has been neglecting herself and started budgeting for clothes and make up.

*I then became aware that I have been neglecting myself. I changed. I started budgeting for makeup, buying clothes.*

5.7.2.22 Reading, talking and praying as coping mechanisms
Neo’s coping mechanisms include reading motivational books, talking to people and praying.

*I read motivational books, I talk to people who inspire me, I pray.*
5.7.2.23   **Retribution**  
Neo started stretching her budget in pursuit of loving herself.  

*My budget stretched because of all those things.*

5.7.2.24   **Positivity**  
Neo resorted to loving herself in a way of doing things that make her happy.  

*I started falling in love with myself.*

5.7.2.25   **Marrying at a young age**  
Neo mentions that marrying at a young age and not being given space to explore is the cause of the abuse in her marriage. She says she was young and naïve when she got married and probably did not know what she was doing.  

*He married me young; he did not give me space. I did not explore.*

5.7.2.26   **Enforced gender roles**  
Neo reveals that her father in law used to have the final say in his marriage and now her husband seems to continue with the same behaviour. She stresses that dominance is a pattern in her husband’s family as her mother in law was also abused.  

*His father was a “my word is final” kind of a person; he says he has learned from his father, he says his father has taught him life. Dominance is a pattern in his family, he is like his father. Her own mother was abused by his father.*

5.7.2.27   **Fear**  
She wants to move forward with her life but she seems to have fear and uncertainty about her future.  

*I want to move forward but I can’t. I do not know where I will end up.*

5.7.2.28   **Summary of Neo’s experience**  
Neo goes through all kinds of abuse in her relationship, with verbal and financial abuse being the dominant ones. She says her husband calls her names and degrades her in front of other people. He does not support the children and he controls her money. Neo admits that she allows the financial abuse to happen because she wants to please her husband. She also proclaims her love
for her husband despite the fact that he abuses her. She says that the abuse has affected her in such a way that she started having extramarital affairs. She notes that her financial situation has gone from bad to worse because of the efforts she is making to change her image. The abuse has affected her children and her significant others negatively. She says she has tried various strategies to curb the abuse but to no avail.

The sense she makes of the abuse is that her husband suffers from low self-esteem and he uses his gender to exercise power and control over her. Neo also attributes the abuse to her husband’s abuse of alcohol. She seems to be confused about her future plans regarding her abusive marriage. On one hand she wants to divorce her husband but on the other hand she wants to change and become a responsible mother. The confusion could be brought about by the fact that Neo frequently blames herself for the abuse.

5.8 Intra-individual analysis and discussion of Diks’ experience of being in an abusive relationship
A brief impression of Diks will be given followed by an analysis of her interview. A detailed transcription of Diks’ interview can be found in Appendix G.

5.8.1 Researcher’s impression of Diks
Diks is a short lady with average weight. She presented as a warm but very talkative person and she seemed very keen on discussing her experiences. She did most of the talking and the researcher was just reflecting on what she was saying. Some of the information was irrelevant to the research question and was duly discarded. It appeared as though Diks has long been waiting for this opportunity so that she could vent out her emotions. Although she struck the researcher as a brave and confident woman, it appeared as though there is a lot of confusion and indecisiveness going on in her life, particularly with regards to her abusive marriage.

5.8.2 Analysis
A phenomenological analysis of Diks’ life world as it exists for her is presented in this section. The emerging themes are identified with extracts from Diks’ transcriptions.
5.8.2.1 Emotional abuse
Diks describes what she is experiencing in her relationship as emotional abuse. The emotional abuse is so intense that she doesn’t even know where to start describing it.

*I feel abused emotionally.*

5.8.2.2 Cruelty
She spoke about an incident where she was mugged and instead of comforting her, her husband told her that she is stupid. She was comforted by a friend and her child.

*One day I got mugged and robbed, when he arrived, instead of comforting me he said I was stupid. I was instead comforted by a friend of mine and my child.*

5.8.2.3 Unfaithfulness
Diks cited that her husband had an affair which resulted in him having a child outside of wedlock. Her husband did not disclose to her that he has a child outside of wedlock. Diks was instead informed by someone she knew.

*I experienced an extramarital relationship- if I may put it that way, and there was a child that was born in that relationship. .....You know what when your partner is having an affair, you can see. I found concrete information that he is having an affair.*

5.8.2.4 Ignorance
Diks trusted her husband and never thought that he could be having an affair. She attests to the fact that she was ignorant because there were many incidences that could prove that her husband was having an affair. She stresses that even a blind person could have seen that her husband is having an affair. The reason for her ignorance was that she trusted her husband.

*I was so stupid, I didn’t suspect anything. Many incidences that I linked to the affair proved that I have been so ignorant. Even a blind person would have seen this, but I did not. But I always say when you trust a person you do not suspect anything.*

5.8.2.5 Mistrust
Her husband suspects and accuses her of having an affair. The abuse in Diks’ relationship has caused her to lose trust in people.

*He is always suspicious that I am having an affair.*
Remember I said I don’t think I’ll trust a person again.

5.8.2.6 Threats
Her husband threatens that if he catches her with another man he is going to kill her.

_He said he will catch me one day and he is going to kill me._

5.8.2.7 Patriarchal control
Diks’ husband controls her movements. Whenever she wants to go out, she gets threatened that she should leave for good. If she happens to finally go out, her husband monitors her with phone calls.

_He likes controlling my movements. When I insist to go out, he would say things like “if you set your foot out of that door, you must not come back to this house again, you must leave for good” When I am out he would phone four times, monitoring me._

5.8.2.8 Financial abuse
Diks experiences financial abuse in her marriage. She reported that she experiences a financial burden and she speaks of the time when her daughter was studying at a college and she had to carry the entire financial burden which included payment of fees, transport, the flat she stayed in and buying her food.

_My daughter is at Boston College doing media studies, now so much has happened; I pay R3000 a month, R1 500 on transport, she is staying in flat, it’s her second month in the flat. I pay R500 for her transport. I also have to see to it that she eats._

Her husband is aware that she is struggling to fend for the children but he does not make any effort to help her.

_He is aware that I am struggling with finances to support the kids, but he does nothing about it._

She likens her financial struggle to being in a “deep pit” in which she can sink any time.

_I am burdened financially. I feel like I am in a deep pit and I can sink any time._

She describes the financial situation as her feeling that she is her husband’s “ATM” machine.

_Right now I feel like I am his ATM machine._

5.8.2.9 Compromise
To avoid conflict, Diks compromises and carries all the financial responsibilities in the household and that tends to hit back at her and she ends up sitting with feelings of anger.
To avoid conflicts I put everything on my shoulders, and that hits back on me and I become angry.

5.8.2.10 Helplessness
It appears as though Diks has learned to be helpless in her marriage. She mentions that she has had enough of the abusive marriage, but she is struggling to understand what is still keeping her in it.

You know what, I have had enough... but I am still in the marriage. The struggle that I am having is that there are reasons why I am still in this marriage even though I feel I am enough.

Despite all the painful things Diks has experienced, she is still struggling with finding a reason to leave her abusive relationship.

Every day I find a reason why I must be out of this marriage.

5.8.2.11 Feeling sorry for the husband
Diks acknowledges that she feels pity for her husband. She worries about what is going to happen to her husband should she leave him. She says her husband is in denial that she will leave him one day because whenever they fight her husband states confidently that he knows that they will not “part ways.”

So I pity him a lot. Because he seems to be in denial that I will leave him one day, or maybe he thinks I will be held by his words because whenever we have a fight, he would say that it will never cross his mind that we should part ways.

Diks no longer relies on her husband for love but on her children.

As long as my children love me, I am ok.

5.8.2.12 Neglect
Diks mentioned that her husband is a financial mess, so much so that he hardly has money to buy food for the family. Her husband just eats and does not ask himself where the food comes from.

His in a mess financially, he is indebted. He does not have money to buy food; he does not ask himself where the food comes from.

5.8.2.13 Verbal abuse
Diks also experiences verbal abuse in her relationship in the form of yelling and shouting. She says that her husband fights over petty issues and raises his voice unnecessarily.
He will fight for petty things and raises his voice unnecessarily.

5.8.2.14  Depression
The abuse seems to have caused Diks to lose her ability to think and as a result she tends to make stupid mistakes.

What I have noticed is that I make stupid mistakes...I don’t know.

Diks says she used to feel angry. The anger has now been replaced by sadness and all that is caused by her husband’s lack of honesty. The fact that the whole township knew that Diks’ husband was having an affair and that his girlfriend was pregnant and also the fact that she did not know about it makes her feel used and stupid.

I feel sad, I used to feel angry, asking myself why can’t he be honest, why the affairs. I’ve never accepted that when we were dating. I am not going to do miracles to make this marriage work. I felt used and stupid.

The whole township and his family knew about the girlfriend and the pregnancy. I was the only one in the dark.

Diks is also aware that she is irritable and that she snaps easily.

I don’t know. I am irritable, I snap.

5.8.2.15  Alienation
She is also no longer close to her husband’s family who seem to take his side.

I am no longer close to my husband’s family.

5.8.2.16  Self blame
Diks blames herself for getting herself in what she calls “nonsense”

I got myself in this nonsense.

5.8.2.17  Abuse affecting the children
The abuse does not only affect Diks but extends to the children as well. The children are abused by their father in the sense that he does not support them emotionally or financially.

He does not even support his children.
5.8.2.18  **Cultural matters**

Diks mentions that the abuse has a negative effect on the children but they do not express what they are feeling. She is not sure whether culture has something to do with the fear of expressing how they feel.

*I don’t think my children like what they are seeing, this situation affect them. I don’t know whether it's because of our culture, but they can’t really say how they feel.*

5.8.2.19  **Resentment**

Her husband comes late and causes havoc in the house. The children move to their bedrooms when he enters the house. When this happens Diks’ husband blames her for influencing the children. Like her children, Diks resents her husband and no longer goes out with him.

*He always comes late and causes havoc …and children would move to their bedrooms.*

*He won’t ask the kids why they are leaving when he enters the house, but he would complain that I am influencing his children to do that.*

*I no longer go out with him. When I want to socialize, I go out with my cousins.*

5.8.2.20  **Emotional apathy**

Diks speaks of the way she is at peace with whatever is happening in her marriage. She has reached a stage where she no longer questions anything. She even avoids talking to her husband because “he blows everything out of proportion”. She says the reason that she no longer asks him anything regarding his whereabouts and the misuse of money, is that she is ‘slowly taking him out of her system.’

*When he goes out I no longer ask him where he is going same applies when he comes back, it does not matter what time he comes back, and I no longer feel angry. I think he can see that I am at peace with whatever is happening, but instead of him humbling himself, he screams at me and he is the one who caused this.*

*Diks: I have decided not to ask him anything, whether he comes back late, sleeps out, waste his money, I am going to let him live his life the way he wants to. I am trying to take him out of my system.*
5.8.2.21  Fear

It appears as though Diks is staying on in her marriage because of fear of the unknown. She expresses that she no longer wants her marriage but has fears regarding where she would stay if she decides to leave.

I have fear of the unknown a lot. I don’t want to be in this marriage, but when I get out of here where am I going?

The other reason Diks is finding it difficult to leave her abusive marriage is because of fear of losing her property. Being married in community of property causes her to be stuck in the marriage because if she decides to leave, she will have to share everything with her husband.

I can’t buy a house because I am married in community of property. Should I buy anything now, we are going to share, so I have to play safely so that if I move out, I don’t lose.

5.8.2.22  Hopefulness

Diks stayed in the abusive relationship hoping that her husband would change. She says she tried everything thinking that her husband would change. She accepts that she has been trying to change her husband for three years and she has come to realise that she cannot change him.

I have tried everything thinking he will change, instead he is deteriorating. Maybe he will change if there can be a second person in his life. I’ve been trying to change him for the past three years.

She says she is aware that her husband will not change particularly because he has been having one affair after the other.

What’s going to make him change?

I’ve noticed that a person cannot change. After all this he had another affair.

This person will never change and he gives me a reason every day to leave him.

5.8.2.23  Financial reasons for staying in the relationship

Diks is concerned that if she leaves the marriage she will not have enough money to rent or buy her own place. She says it is clear in her mind that she wants to leave, but her main struggle is lack of finance and fear of the unknown. She goes on to say that if she does not sort out her finances she is imprisoned in the abusive marriage.

...And wherever I go, I will have to rent or buy myself a place,......But if I rent now, where will I get the money to pay the rent because I cannot afford financially I am not coping. For that reason I cannot get out.
I don’t know whether that is the right reason or maybe I want to make that an excuse… That’s where I am struggling. At the same when I try to be honest to myself, because I think I’ve made a decision that I want out. That one is clear in my mind, but the two obstacles are finance and fear of the unknown.

I am having that struggle that if I leave, how am I going to cope? But I don’t want my kids to suffer. If I don’t sort out my finances it means I am stuck here for the next three years because my girl is finishing school after three years.

5.8.2.24 Dependency
Dependency seems to be another reason that keeps Diks in the abusive marriage. She says that when she married her husband she was young and naïve. It seems she has learned to depend on him and she cannot imagine life without him.

To think I was sixteen when I started living with this man. I was young and naïve and I ask myself if I have to live him, will I be ok to stay alone? Will I be ok? Not financially, not physically no! But I am just asking myself this question “The day I wake up in this house that I bought and he won’t be there, is everything going to be ok?”

5.8.2.25 Confusion
Diks first mentioned that she is afraid to leave her husband because she will struggle financially. Later on she changes and says that she is anyway struggling in this relationship, she says when it comes to finance, she pushes hard to get whatever she wants particularly when it comes to money. This contradicts the fact that she is afraid to leave because of financial concerns. However, she confesses that she does not know what she is afraid of.

I don’t actually know where my fear comes from; I am trying to figure out what am I going to miss…..loneliness no! Because I am used to being alone anyway, you see, that’s why I say to you that physically, I won’t miss him. I won’t miss sex because I don’t enjoy sex even now, and financially….. …I am struggling now anyway, why must I worry about that, I am struggling now and I am pushing hard. He knows one thing about me that I am a hardworking person and I see through whatever situation when it comes to finance. I don’t care what, I push. I am pushy when it comes to getting money. He knows that financially I won’t miss him. But I cannot tell what I actually am afraid of. I know that he might feel threatened because he knows that when I commit to something I commit totally.

So he knows that financially I won’t miss him, I really don’t know what I am afraid of.
Diks discloses that her husband is busy pushing her away with his abusive behaviour. As much as her husband gives her the reason to leave, she is still doubtful. She says when she talks to other women about their abusive relationships, and none of them is showing willingness to leave their abusive marriages, to her it seems like they accept the abuse.

_He knows that I shaped and moulded him. But what makes him to treat me like this; I am not going to waste another 23 years. Whatever he is doing now he is busy pushing me away. I no longer even listen to his suggestions._

_What makes me feel angry is this question “do I have to go?” It makes me feel like I am dubious and I don’t know what I want. Every day he gives me that reason to leave. When I am with other women, we talk about the same problem concerning men and funny, no one will say “I am moving out” It’s like they are accepting their condition._

### 5.8.2.26 Compromising

Diks is not at peace with what is happening in her marriage but she still compromises herself by putting other people first.

_All this is the consequence of putting other people first. So if I show him that I care or I am worried about that child, he is going to take advantage, but honestly speaking, it does not mean that whatever is happening I am at peace with it._

Compromising herself has caused her a lot of trauma which she compares to a crack that cannot be mended.

_This thing has brought a crack which I don’t think there would ever be any kind of cement that would mend it._

### 5.8.2.27 Going for therapy

Diks attended therapy sessions to help her deal with the abusive situation but she however still experiences anger outbursts.

_I went for help...eh... I went to see a psychologist._

_I received therapy but I’m telling you sometimes I would just burst out of the blue, because I am angry._

Diks says she has tried whatever she thought would help her in dealing with her bitterness and frustration. She points out that sometimes she would wake her husband up and demand that he takes her to his girlfriend’s house where she would vent out all her anger and frustration.
Then I would fight him and demand that he takes me to the child’s mother. He would take me. I don’t know how many times he has taken me to his girlfriend, because I would wake him up at night and say to him he is asleep while I am hurting. He would wake up and take me to that girlfriend. And when I arrive I would ask whatever I want to ask and tell whatever ... then I would feel better.

So I think at that time I did whatever that I thought would help me.

5.8.2.28 Husband’s upbringing

Diks attributes the abuse to the way her husband was brought up. She says that her husband’s mother had fourteen children and because they were so many, she could not give them love.

*His mother had fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls. He is the last boy and the thirteenth child. They were so many and their mother could not give them love, so he would be given away to any family that did not have children, you see, that’s how he grew up.*

She says that her husband was given away to families who did not have children and this resulted in him being physically and emotionally abused by his care givers.

*I think the way he grew up. His past is not so good. He was given away.*

Diks noted that her husband was brought up in a family where the mother was experiencing all forms of abuse. She therefore thinks that her husband is following that pattern of abuse which he learned from his father.

*I understand his father used to abuse his mother in all respects.*

5.8.2.29 Marrying at a young age

Diks attributes the abuse to marrying at a young age. She says that her husband became a man at a tender age and had to marry young in order to escape the abuse he was experiencing as a child. She does not think that she and her husband married out of love but rather it was a matter of finding comfort in each other because she also had a difficult childhood.

*...And he became a man at an early age. That is why he got married at a tender age. I was also young and miserable when I got married. I don’t think feelings....true feelings of love were involved in us getting married. It was more of two people who were having difficulties who found comfort in each other’s arms.*
5.8.2.30  Summary of Diks’ experience

Diks is experiencing emotional, financial and verbal abuse in her relationship. She admits that emotional abuse seems to be more prevalent than other kinds of abuse. Her husband has a series of extramarital affairs of which one ended in the birth of an illegitimate child of which Diks was never told. She says Instead of showing remorse, her husband continues to humiliate and degrade her. Diks states that her husband uses his gender to exercise power and control over her.

Diks seems to carry the entire financial household burden because her husband misuses money and does not give her any financial assistance. The abuse seems to have impacted negatively on her psychologically, physically and socially. She has tried various methods including therapy to make her marriage work but nothing seems to help. Reasons which are keeping her in the abusive relationship include learned helplessness, convenience in terms of shelter, hope that her husband will change, fear of loss of property, lack of adequate finance and dependency on her husband. Diks blames the abuse on her husband’s upbringing and on marrying at a tender age. She seems confused about her future plans regarding the abuse in her relationship.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter covered the analysis of individual participants and themes for individual participants were extracted. From the themes that were extracted it was evident that Black Women in this study, although educated and employed, still suffer all kinds of abuse from their partners. The abuse does not affect only them but it also stretches to the significant others. Participants stated their different reasons for staying in their abusive relationships and they also made their own individual sense as to why the abuse is happening.

Inter-individual analysis of data will be captured in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6:
INTER-INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS’ RESULTS

6.1 Introduction
In this chapter, focus will be on the inter-individual analysis of each participant’s results. After identifying emerging themes from transcribed interviews, the researcher organised the aggregate formulated meanings or themes that emerged into clusters of themes that may be shared by one, some or all of the participants. This is the application of step 4 and step 5 of Colaizzi’s method of data analysis.

It should be noted that each participant gave unique descriptions, responses and accounts of their experiences in their lived worlds. This is expected as each participant has a unique context and set of circumstances which contribute to her experience of being in the world. It should also be noted that participants differed in terms of their ages, length of stay in their marriages, number of children, salaries they earn and their tertiary qualifications. These variations may possibly influence participants’ conceptualisation of their experience of being in an abusive relationship and how they make sense of the abuse. However, these variations impart richness in accessing the phenomenon under study and allow a fuller understanding of their experience.

6.2 Clusters of themes that have emerged in the phenomenon of Black South African Women’s experiences of abuse
Themes that have emerged from the participants’ interviews were grouped into clusters. The clusters as described below were formed. The formulated meanings or themes that emerged from data analysis and thematic clusters were integrated so that an exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon is as clear a statement of identification of its formal structure as possible.

Cluster 1: Kinds of abuse experienced by participants.
Cluster 2: The effects of the abuse on the participants and significant others.
Cluster 3: Efforts to curb the abuse.
Cluster 4: The participant’s coping mechanisms.
Cluster 5: Reasons for staying in the abusive relationships.
Cluster 6: The sense they make of the abuse.
Cluster 7: Future plans regarding the abuse in their relationships.

6.2.1 Kinds of abuse experienced by participants
The participants in this study experience abuse such as emotional, physical, financial, verbal and sexual abuse. Some participants experience all of these kinds of abuse whereas others experience some of the kinds of abuse and not necessarily all of them. Different kinds of abuse as experienced by participants will now be described.

6.2.1.1 Emotional abuse
All seven participants indicated that they experience emotional abuse in their relationships. Each of the participants described their emotional abuse which included one or more of the following forms of being emotionally abused: alienation, lack of communication, neglect, cruelty, disrespect, isolation, lack of support, patriarchal control, infidelity, harassment, humiliation, and mistrust by the husband.

i. Alienation
Four participants experienced alienation in their relationships, though in different ways, which depict being given inferior treatment by their husbands.

DP: I can say I feel my husband is not treating me like his wife. I feel he treats me like I. don’t know... His sister.

Darky: If I decide to be quiet, he would ask for my opinion. He thinks I am arrogant when I don’t answer, but it does not feel right to say something knowing that it won’t be taken seriously...

Neo: It’s because he does not give me a chance to express myself, as a result I do stupid things.

For Diks, the abuse has created a distance between her and her husband’s family.

Diks: I am no longer close to my husband’s family.

ii. Lack of communication
For three participants there is lack of communication in their relationships. Their husbands treat them as though they don’t exist. DP mentioned that her husband goes in and out of the house without telling her where he is going.
DP: He is not the kind of a person that you can discuss anything with... He does not communicate anything with me.... When he goes to a function or to his home, he does not tell me anything. He just packs his things and goes without saying anything.

For Tebogo, even the simplest things are not communicated to her by her husband. There is no cooperation in the relationship as a result of lack of communication.

Tebogo: Even the smallest thing that you think you can solve he is not able to talk about it. .There is no working together, no communication between us.

With Nomfundo, lack of communication sometimes extends to a whole week which tends to cause her emotional strain.

Nomfundo: At other times we can take the whole week or two not talking to each other. That is very strenuous emotionally.

iii. Neglect

Three participants described actions of neglect by their partners which include deprivation of necessities like usage of the car, provision of basic necessities or even being assisted or supported with household chores. DP described events where she had to use taxis to commute with her children whereas her husband has a car. She would travel long distances struggling with two children, one on her back and she’ll be carrying bags and using public transport.

DP: He has a car but when the children and I have to commute between QwaQwa and Natalspruit, we had to use public transport. My kids are two years apart; can you imagine me with the small child and the baby on my back, the bags, baby bottles and all... going to a public transport? He would say “No, I won’t be able to transport you with my car, go to a public transport.

Sometimes DP would be taking her three year old child to the crèche in the rain and her husband would not show any interest whatsoever in her struggles.

DP: At some stage I did not have a helper. My three year old was not attending crèche. I would be carrying the baby in the rain going to drop him off where I leave him. He would not even ask where I leave the baby. He was just not interested.

Salamina mentioned that she has to do all household duties without any assistance from her husband.

Salamina: He burdens me, he shifts everything to me, be it children’s homework or whatever.
Diks noted that her husband is a financial mess so much so that he does not provide for the family. She remarks that her husband just eats and does not ask himself where the food comes from.

*Diks:* *His in a mess financially, he is in debts. He does not have money to buy food; he does not ask himself where the food comes from.*

The participants experience a situation of neglect and deprivation and to them their situation is as though they don’t have husbands.

iv. *Cruelty*

Two participants described acts of cruelty displayed by their husbands. They mentioned incidences where their husbands showed no mercy towards them even in times of desperation, but instead they pulled them down and treated them mercilessly. DP mentioned ways in which her husband makes unreasonable demands of her, for example, making her iron clothes which he would not even wear. It is as if her husband makes these demands to deliberately put physical strain on her.

*DP:* *The other thing is….let’s say we are going to work the following day and I have to prepare clothes for example ironing…..he will take out about three trousers for me to straighten. When I ask why he does that his responds will be “I’ll choose in the morning which one I want to wear.” He will then choose one trousers and mess up the rest. The following day he repeats the same procedure. Then he will take the brown trousers and take the rest of the trousers back to the wardrobe, the following day he takes out another three and I have to iron them.*

Some of the actions are such that they could expose DP to serious danger but her husband did not care. DP speaks of an experience of being denied access to the house by her husband after dropping her children at her mother’s house one day. She mentions that she had to sleep in the garage. Sleeping in the garage could pose serious danger of being raped or even murdered. Her husband switched off his phone and only let her into the house at six o’clock in the morning.

*DP:* *The other incidence is that this one day I had to take my kids home to my parents. When I came back, he had already locked the doors. I could not gain access into the house and I had to sleep in the garage. He only opened at six o’clock in the morning. He did not even bother to phone and ask where I was and where did I sleep.*

Her husband does not care whether his actions hurt her or not. He would rather please his friends than her, for example her husband would rather give his friends a lift to work and leave her and the children stranded. When she insists on getting a lift from her husband, he would
display actions of cruelty and irritability such as starting the car engine abruptly and banging the doors.

**DP:** For instance we would be both going to town, I would for example ask him to give me a lift, and he will become so irritable. I would come running; he would start the car roughly and bang the doors.

Sometimes DP would also walk in the rain going to work and her husband would not offer her a lift. According to DP, the unfair part is that her husband would leave her behind and collect his friends from the comfort of their homes.

**DP:** Sometimes it would be raining and I have to go to work, he wouldn't care how I get there. He won't even offer me a lift in that car. I will have to fend for myself and he passes at my place of work. But funny enough he is able to fetch his colleagues and give them a lift to work. His colleagues would be sitting comfortably in their houses waiting for him to come and pick them up, but I would be left behind with umbrellas to protect myself against the rain.

Another participant, Diks stated that she cannot rely on her husband in terms of safety. She spoke about an incident where she was mugged and instead of comforting her, her husband branded her stupid. She was comforted by a friend and her child instead.

**Diks:** One day I got mugged and robbed, when he arrived, instead of comforting me he said I was stupid. I was instead comforted by a friend of mine and my child.

v. **Lack of support**

DP and Darky experience lack of support from their husbands. The lack of support is so serious that one of the participants even mentioned that she would rather seek assistance from the police than her husband. In other words, she cannot rely on him in times of trouble or desperation because she knows she won’t be supported.

**DP:** Even if I have a problem I know that he is the last person I can contact....Ja, I better contact the police if I can find myself involved in a car accident, or my car has jammed.

Darky feels unsupported in most things. She is even reluctant to share anything with her husband out of fear that he will use it against her.

**Darky:** I don’t feel supported in many things... Sometimes we will talk about things happening at work, when we have a quarrel or a misunderstanding, he refers back to the problem and use it against me....he scrutinizes everything.
vi.  **Isolation**

Two participants experience isolation, the purpose of which is to deny them the opportunity to share their experiences with other people. Their husbands confine them to their homes so that they cannot share their experiences of abuse with other people.

*DP:* *He always wants to isolate me. You know what? When my husband arrives midday and finds me wearing night dresses, he becomes so happy, so fulfilled. It makes him happy that I am around, I did not go anywhere.*

DP no longer attends social events or mix with people because her husband does not allow her to do so. She states that for nine years she has never attended any kind of entertainment. Not that she is not interested in attending such, but because she is scared of her husband’s reaction.

*DP:* *Mh...like when I am invited to a party, I would not go. ... I would deny myself mixing with people. Believe it or not, since 1998 almost nine years ago, I have never gone to a music festival. All my friends have gone. I was scared to ask him.*

Nomfundo’s husband prevents her from mixing with other people out of fear that she will be able to share her frustrations. She says that succumbing to her husband’s demands leaves her with feelings of isolation and inertness.

*Nomfundo:* *It affects me because at the end of the day it interferes with my happiness, because I have to succumb to his demands and at the end I find myself not having a social life. He is aware that if I have social contacts, I will be able to share my frustrations, he does not want that. So I find myself isolated and stuck.*

vii.  **Disrespect**

Three participants feel they are treated with disrespect. Their views and opinions are not taken seriously by their husbands. Their husbands relegate them to inferior status

*DP:* *I feel he does not respect me.*

Nomfundo:……He talks to me as if I am a child or his enemy.

*Darky:* *He does not respect me.*

viii.  **Infidelity**

Out of the seven participants, three experienced infidelity, of which for two of them the infidelity resulted in their husbands having children outside wedlock. This situation left the participants shocked and traumatised.
Tebogo: The affair was just in the neighbourhood and I didn’t know. I ... One day my friend came and told me that my husband is having an affair and a child in the neighbourhood. I was so shocked!.....I could not believe it. I could not even think. I felt like a fool because I was running after him apologizing, not knowing that he has impregnated someone. I was so traumatised; I could not even fall asleep. I was so heartbroken.

Diks: I experienced an extramarital relationship, and there was a child that was born in that relationship. .....You know what when your partner is having an affair, you can see. I found concrete information that he is having an affair.

For Nomfundo, the infidelity was worse as she had more than one encounter. However with her no child was born out of wedlock.

Nomfundo: He has an extramarital affair, actually one after the other. I find romantic messages from his girlfriends in his phone.

ix. Mistrust

It is ironic that the participants in this study whose husbands are practising infidelity accuse them of having affairs as in the case of Nomfundo and Diks. Their husbands fail to take responsibility for their own infidelity and tend to shift the blame and guilt to them.

Tebogo: He accuses me of having affairs with small children.

Nomfundo: When I try to address that issue, he becomes defensive and tells me that I know where I got it from, and to think that I don’t have an affair... that makes me sick.

Darky’s husband displays acts of jealousy and mistrust like monitoring her phone calls and accusing her of having affairs.

Darky: I don’t know whether to call it jealousy or what? ...Sometimes we fight over phone calls. He accuses me of having affairs.........The swearing and the accusations of having affairs.

x. Humiliation

Participants spoke of how they experience humiliation and degradation by their husbands. Three participants spoke of how they are humiliated and ridiculed sometimes in the presence of other people.

Darky: He would say I am a “Jimmy comes to Jo’burg”, “this thing” meaning I am stupid

Neo spoke of how her husband ridicules her in front of her friends calling her degrading names such as ‘granny’. He humiliates, degrades, and criticises her saying things like she is a teacher but she cannot budget.
Neo: He ridiculed me in front of her, calling me a granny....He would mention things such as “what kind of a teacher are you who can’t even budget.

Neo’s husband calls her a failure and as a result she ends up leaving all decisions to him.

Neo: He calls me a failure. So I leave everything to him.

xi. Patriarchal control

Five participants relayed their experiences related to patriarchal control which include their movements being controlled by their husbands and having no voice in their marriages. They experience being tracked, almost in a way of being stalked by their husbands or even not being permitted to leave the house at all. They are being deprived of their right to freedom of movement and the freedom to choose friends.

DP: He controls my movements. I realized that is not good. In life everyone has his/her own rights...but no one can tell him anything....When I go to town, if for example I said to him I was going to the bank and then decide to go to Checkers, he will make a big issue out of it... He would say “but you said you were going to the bank! How did you end up going to Checkers...He even chooses friends for me.

The irony, as in Darky’s case, is that her husband would trap her in the house but he would not stay with her. She remarked that she and the children miss out on a lot of things because they are always monitored.

Darky: Another thing he does not want me to go out. He wants me to stay in the house but he does not stay in the house... Most of the time my children miss out on a lot of things, we are always monitored, I can’t take them out as much as I would love to

Diks receives threats of leaving for good if she insists on going out. If she finally manages to go out, she gets monitored by phone calls from her husband.

Diks: He likes controlling my movements. When I insist to go out, he would say things like “if you set your foot out of that door, you must not come back to this house again, you must leave for good”....When I am out he would phone four times, monitoring me.

Two participants’ husbands do not just control their movements but also choose friends and visitors for them. This happens as a way of isolating them.

Nomfundo: He controls who is supposed to visit me and who is not supposed to. He chooses who I or should not befriend. He says I am getting bad influence from my friends, but I don’t control who he should or should not befriend.

Darky: Sometimes when I have visitors he fights, he checks up on me. I don’t visit people...
Two participants mentioned that they have no say in their relationships as their husbands want things to be done their way.

*Darky:* He wants to do things his way. He does not take any advice from me his wife........He fights when I buy things for myself.

*Neo:* He is always looking for mistakes and his word is final.

Another participant Nomfundo remarked that she is not living the kind of life she always wanted because she is always worried about her husband’s petty complaints. It is almost like she is always walking on egg shells.

*Nomfundo:* I am not living the kind of life I wanted. I am always worried about his complaints. I cannot even be comfortable with putting my bag anywhere I want to, because I know he is going to complain.

During dating Nomfundo misinterpreted her husband’s controlling behaviour as caring.

*Nomfundo:* At times you misinterpret control as caring.

xii. 6.2.1.1.12 Harassment

Tebogo experiences harassment not only from her husband but from her husband’s girlfriend as well. She mentions that her husband’s girlfriend would phone her and insult her. Despite that her husband did not stop his unfaithfulness instead he continued supporting his girlfriend and bought the girlfriend’s child a bicycle.

*Tebogo:* The girlfriend would phone and insult me. He continued buying bicycles and stuff for his “extramarital child”. The money was still not coming home. ....He continued with his unfaithfulness. This girl married someone else but my husband continued with the maintenance.

All participants in this study suffer emotional abuse in their marriages and patriarchal control seems to be the most dominant form of abuse among them.

6.2.1.2 Financial abuse

Participants experience financial burden because of lack of financial assistance from their husbands. Six participants mentioned that they are financially abused in their relationships. Their experience of financial abuse varied and each participant told her own story of how she is financially abused. Participants described how their husbands misuse money and leave the entire financial burden on them. This situation leaves them in a state of financial debt.
DP: Like financially...it is difficult, I cannot even ask him for two rand.... He will say he does not have it even though he does have it.

Tebogo: I am in debts; he does not assist me financially.... He once bet horses for R2000.00. How can a sane person bet horses with such a big amount of money? It was tough. He always eats his bonuses; he does not discuss or share his money with me.........I don’t know what he does with his money. He loses his salary, always comes home penniless after pay day. I don’t know what he does with his money!!! He hides his salary slips.

Nomfundo: Even financially he would want to tell me what to do with my money. ..... I did not have freedom to use my money... Financially, he is not there. I do everything in the house. He would tell me that he is paying the bond and I must do the rest. So I have to pay for electricity, pay school fees and transport for the children, pay for my own transport, buy clothes for me and the children and even for him. Literally I have to do everything else...You would think there is no father in my house because he does not fulfill his role as a breadwinner.

Darky: He controls the budget. Sometimes he would ask me what I have done with the money and I have to explain.

Diks: I am burdened financially. I feel like I am in a deep pit and I can sink anytime.

Neo is even forced to hand over her earnings to her husband and he ends up controlling all the family income. Neo stated that in the beginning of their marriage, she used to hand over all her earning to her husband and he would make all decisions including buying her shoes. Sometimes she would walk bare foot to save the only pair of shoes she possesses. Her husband controls all her finances and when he happens to buy something for the children he demands his money back from her. If she does not have money, she would have to go and borrow it so that she can pay her husband back for buying clothes for his own children.

Neo... at the beginning of our marriage, I used to give him my salary. I would ask him to buy me a pair of shoes. I would have to wear that one and only pair for a long time. I would have to wear the same pair at home, at work...everywhere. Sometimes I would walk bare footed to save the shoes.

Neo: He said we rather play a stokvel (take turns in borrowing each other money) (laughing) how do you play a stokvel with your husband? Heannoys me. He monitors my money

Thus an overwhelming majority of participants in this study are financially abused by their partners and lack financial freedom even though they are employed.
6.2.1.3 Physical abuse

Five participants reported having experienced physical abuse at some point in their marriages. All five participants spoke of physical abuse as something that used to happen in the past.

DP: One day he assaulted me.

Tebogo: He used to assault me. He is very abusive....

Nomfundo: He used to beat me up... He used to bit me up for very petty issues.

Darky: In the past he used to assault me..... He was physical.

Salamina once experienced threats of being killed with gun by her husband. Instead of showing remorse, her husband became even more abusive.

Salamina: Last year December he chased me with a gun and he got arrested. Till to date he has not asked for forgiveness for pointing a gun at me, instead he became more abusive.

Out of the five participants who experienced physical abuse, only Nomfundo exercised her rights and obtained a restraining order against her husband.

Nomfundo...but he does not do that any longer because I exercised my rights and obtained a restraining order against him.

The majority of participants experienced physical abuse at some point in their relationships.

6.2.1.4 Verbal abuse

Six participants reported that they are verbally abused by their husbands. They described various ways in which the verbal abuse takes place. Tebogo mentioned that her husband calls her names and uses strong language towards her like insulting her with reference to her private parts, calling her a whore and a slut.

Tebogo: He is very abusive even verbally....He insults me with my private parts.... ...he says I am ugly and I am a whore.....Even now you see I am going to arrive late at home? He will be telling me that I was busy with men because I am a slut. .....He always pulls me down, saying that I am ugly; he tries hard to lower my self-esteem. He hurts me with words.

Nomfundo’s husband shouts at her and calls her names in front of the children, the same applies to Darky who is degraded and called names by her husband even in front of people.

Nomfundo: He talks too, much he complains, he calls me names ...He shouts at me in front of the children, saying all bad things.

Darky: It is verbal abuse.... Calling me names even in front of people.
Salamina also experiences abusive language and insults. When her husband has made a mistake, he becomes defensive by making noise.

*Salamina*: Verbal abuse…..He uses abusive language, he insults me…When he has made a mistake, he makes a lot of noise.

Neo’s husband calls her degrading names like ‘setlatla’ (a Sesotho word which means a fool). He also calls her a ‘bitch’. He puts Neo down by telling her hurtful words like saying that she hails from the Free State. For him the meaning of that is that Neo is stupid.

*Neo*: Verbal abuse, calling me names…..things like…’you can’t cope; you can’t do this and that, ‘Setlatla towe’ (you fool)…..“You come from the Free State; you think you know too much”. This is verbal abuse, and it hurts. Now of late he called me a ‘bitch’. …He said I am foolish, I am a follower…..I can’t stand on my own…

*Diks* experiences verbal abuse in the form of being yelled and shouted at. She says that her husband fights over petty issues and raises his voice unnecessarily.

*Diks*: He will fight for petty things and raises his voice unnecessarily.

The majority of participants in this study experience verbal abuse in their relationships.

6.2.1.5 Sexual abuse

Four participants described different ways in which they are sexually abused. Two participants Neo and Nomfundo feel sexually abused because their husbands sleep around and as a result they infect them with sexually transmitted diseases.

*Nomfundo*: Sexually I am abused as well. …..he gives me sexually transmitted diseases. I am always suffering from vaginal thrush.

*Neo*: I have a bad vaginal smell after having sex with him. When I have sex with him I itch, and he would tell me to go and bath, I smell. I told him that he must be sleeping with a wrong person.

As a result of the recurrent infections by her husband, Neo no longer enjoys sex.

*Neo*: I no longer enjoy sex, How can I?

Tebogo experiences sexual abuse in the form of coerced sex by her husband. She mentions that at times her husband would come back from wherever he was and forcefully demand sex from her.

*Tebogo*: Sometimes he would come and demand sex, forcefully.
Salamina’s description of being sexually abused is that she feels sexually deprived because her husband is always drunk and should they engage sexually, her husband is emotionally detached because of his drunken stupor.

\[
\text{Salamina: He deprives me of sex because he is always drunk. Sometimes he tries to have sex with me but most of the time he doesn't know what he is doing because he is drunk.}
\]

The majority of participants experience sexual abuse in their relationships.

### 6.2.2 Effects of the abuse on the participants

Abuse has serious effects on the participants including health consequences. The abuse has impacted negatively on the participants’ psychological, physical and social well-being.

#### 6.2.2.1 Psychological effects

All participants experience negative psychological effects which include: depression, confused identity, frustration, resentment, apathy, fear, guilt, self-blame and mistrust.

1. **Depression**
   
   All seven participants described negative emotions which characterise a state of depression. These include feelings of bitterness, irritability, anger, stress, isolation and sadness. Six participants mentioned having developed feelings of anger. The anger in some participants is coupled with other feelings such as hatred, stress, frustration, irritability and sadness. One participant has a feeling of stuckness and being withdrawn.

   - **DP:** I have a lot of anger; I am always stressed. I don’t take jokes anymore… I feel bitter; I get so irritable and make an issue out of nothing… Even at work, I am very irritable; they even call me a “screamer”.
   - **Tebogo:** I have anger, hatred towards him…. I hate him!
   - **Nomfundo:** I am always irritable, angry and grumpy. ..Anger, frustration...
   - **Salamina:** Anger, I become very angry especially when he is drunk. I avoid him… sadness and irritability.
   - **Diks:** I feel sad, I used to feel angry, I don’t know. I am irritable, I snap.
   - **Darky:** Feelings of anger, frustration, sadness.
   - **Neo:** My life is a drawback. I want to prosper, but I can’t…He has even shut down my reasoning capacity… (Crying)….I became withdrawn.
ii. **Confused identity**

Three participants feel that the abuse has changed their identity. DP feels that she has lost her sense of self and she seems to lack inhibitions and does wrong things deliberately. She also states that she lacks a sense of belonging and she attributes all this to lack of appreciation by her husband.

*DP:* I feel like I don't belong, (sobbing) I end up doing wrong things deliberately because there is no appreciation whatsoever, I am not me, I am not what I am supposed to be…. I have changed.

Neo has become a different person and seems to have violated her morals and values as a result of the abuse. She has started having extra marital affairs, not because she wants to, but she is forced by circumstances in her marriage.

*Neo:* I even started having extra marital affairs. I am now having extramarital affairs. They make me sad, this is not me….I don’t want to have affairs but I am forced by circumstances.

Neo has changed from a quiet person who had patience to an irritable and talkative person. She thinks that being talkative saves her.

*Neo:* I am irritable. I had patience and I was quiet, now I have lost all that. Now I am talkative, but talking saves me.

Tebogo has changed and has developed into a cruel person that she was not. She says she is no longer herself.

*Tebogo:* I feel like I have developed into this cruel person. I am not myself.

iii. **Frustration**

Four participants display actions of frustration by developing tendencies to snap, shout and overreact. The children become the nearest frustration outlet for three of the participants.

*DP:* When it comes to my children, I always overreact; I am always angry and noisy. Sometimes I feel guilty because I get angry unnecessarily.

*Tebogo:* I am irritable towards my children. I like shouting at them, then correct myself afterwards.

*Nomfundo:* My children get very irritated with these continuous fights and misunderstandings, because sometimes I take my frustration out on them.

Diks said her frustration came as a result of trying hard to fight her husband’s extra marital affair. In an attempt to deal with her frustration, she would wake her husband up and demand that he takes her to his girlfriend’s house where she would vent out all her anger and frustration and feel better afterwards.
Diks: Then I would fight him and demand that he takes me to the child’s mother. He would take me. I don’t know how many times he has taken me to his girlfriend, because I would wake him up at night and say to him he is asleep while I am hurting. He would wake up and take me to that girlfriend. And when I arrive I would ask whatever I want to ask and tell whatever … then I would feel better.

Diks: So I think at that time I did whatever that I thought would help me.

iv. Resentment

Three participants reported having developed resentment towards their husbands as a result of the abuse. Nomfundo feels hatred for her husband to such an extent that she sometimes finds herself wishing bad things to happen to him.

Nomfundo: You know I become so hurt that I wish bad things to happen to him.

In Diks’ case the resentment for her husband is not only felt by her but also by the children. She mentions that her husband comes late and causes havoc in the house and as a sign of resentment, the children would move to their bedrooms when he enters the house.

Diks: He always comes late and causes havoc …and children would move to their bedrooms.

Diks mentioned that she no longer socialises with her husband, instead she prefers going out with her cousins.

Diks: I no longer go out with him. When I want to socialise, I go out with my cousins.

For Tebogo, the abuse has caused her to even have a general hatred towards men. She has developed a negative attitude towards men and sees them as pretentious beings that cannot take care of their wives. Her hatred for men has affected her so much that she vows never to be in a relationship with a man again should she decide to divorce her husband.

Tebogo: I hate men! I don’t want them, I hate them! They like pretending and they can’t even take good care of their wives. I hate them! (banging). They are pretenders. Even if I can divorce, I will never have a man in my life again.

v. Apathy

The abuse in the participants’ marriages has left some of them with feelings of apathy which results to loss of love as in Tebogo’s case.

Tebogo: I don’t have any love for him….I have cut him off completely.

Tebogo also attributes the loss of love for her husband to the verbal abuse and to the fact that perhaps she has had enough of the abuse.
Tebogo:  
Mh.... And I have stopped loving him, or is it because of the insults, or is because I’ve had enough, I don’t know.

Salamina has reached a state of emotional numbness where she no longer cries when experiencing the abuse. She has accepted that her husband won’t change and it seems she has learned to live with the situation.

Salamina: I don’t cry anymore, no more tears...I did self-talk. I told myself that he is like this and he won’t change.

Diks speaks of the way she is at peace with whatever is happening in her marriage. She has reached a stage where she no longer questions anything.

Diks: When he goes out I no longer ask him where he is going same applies when he comes back, it does not matter what time he comes back, and I no longer feel angry, I think he can see that I am at peace with whatever is happening.

Diks: I have decided not to ask him anything, whether he comes back late, sleeps out, waste his money, I am going to let him live his life the way he wants to. I am trying to take him out of my system.

vi.  
**Self-blame**

Three participants blame themselves for the abuse in their marriages. Despite the abuse, Tebogo mentions that she feels sorry for her husband to an extent that she takes the blame and perceives herself as cruel.

Tebogo: What hurts me is that I feel sorry for him. I sometimes think that I am the one who is cruel (sobbing).

Nomfundo specifically blames herself for allowing the abuse to happen and not curbing it when it started. She acknowledges that she made wrong choices and she is reaping the consequences thereof.

Nomfundo: I blame myself ... I should not have condoned any form of abuse from the start. I allowed it to happen.

Nomfundo: I am saying that I made my bed so I have to lay on it (Laughing)....and I am still laying on that bed even now.

Neo blames herself for not making good decisions and she sees herself as a useless mother or wife. She also blames herself for not making good financial decisions which lead to her being in debt. She feels that she is the cause of whatever is happening in her marriage. She seems to be taking responsibility for the abuse in her relationship.
Neo: I don't want to blame him. I want to blame myself....I did not make good decisions......I fell into debts. I am trapped, and I don't know how to come out.....I see myself as a useless mother....
Neo: I blame myself, I feel like I am not the ideal mother or wife. I don't see it as abuse; I think all this is happening because of me. I feel like crying.

Diks also blames herself for getting herself into what she calls “nonsense”.

Diks: I got myself in this nonsense.

vii. Guilt
Three participants are left with feelings of guilt as if they are the abusers. For Tebogo, the feelings of guilt seem to trap her in the abusive marriage. Even though she has developed feelings of hatred towards her abusive husband, she finds herself staying on because she perceives herself as the abuser.

Tebogo: I hate him, yet when I have to move out I feel guilty.

Tebogo: He makes me feel guilty....Yes, M....It seems like I am abusing him....I feel guilty as if I am the one who is wrong. ....I feel guilty as If I am the abuser of my husband.

For Nomfundo, the guilt comes from her Christian convictions. Hatred for her husband leaves her feeling guilty because according to her, hatred violates her Christian values.

Nomfundo: At the same time I feel guilty that I am a Christian and I am not supposed to hate.

Neo seems to perpetuate the financial abuse in the sense that she feels guilty when she denies her husband control of her finances.

Neo: I allow this financial control to happen because I want to satisfy him. If I don’t do that I feel guilty.

As a result I am always out of budget. Actually I cannot budget.

viii. Mistrust
The abuse has affected two participants so much that they have lost trust in people generally.

Neo: I choose friends. I don’t want people who will play games with me. I want people I can trust.

Diks: Remember I said I don’t think I’ll trust a person again.

The abuse has negative psychological effects on the participants. Among other psychological effects, the experience of depression seems to be the most dominant.
6.2.2.2 Physical effects of the abuse on the participants

The participants are not only affected psychologically but they also exhibit physical ill-health in the form of weight gain, persistent headaches and cardiac symptoms. Six participants reported to have negative physical effects as a result of the abuse. Out of the six participants who experience physical effects, five reported weight gain as a problem. This is as a result of seeking comfort from food when they are experiencing negative emotions.

DP: Obesity! Obesity......because “eke eet en le (meaning that she eats and sleeps). When I am stressed I eat a lot. I eat everything from snoek fish to atchar then I sleep.
Nomfundo: I eat a lot and as a result I gain a lot of weight. I was not this big.
Salamina: I have gained weight. When I am frustrated…I eat
Darky: I eat a lot, and this happens mostly when I am frustrated, as a result I gain weight.
Neo: Its either I don’t eat or I over eat.

Three participants reported to be experiencing persistent headaches because of the abuse

DP: I also suffer from persistent headaches to a point of being admitted to hospital.
Tebogo: I have headaches.
Salamina: It affects me a lot. I suffer from headaches

Tebogo, Nomfundo and Neo experience cardiac symptoms over and above other physical symptoms.

Tebogo: I have developed high cholesterol levels and I have changed my diet.
Nomfundo: I am sickly, I get palpitations and chest pains because of anger.
Neo: I have a heart problem.

The majority of participants experience bodily changes which include weight gain, headaches and cardiac symptoms as a result of the abuse. Weight gain seems to be the most dominant physical effect as the participants tend to seek comfort from food when they are frustrated, hence they gain weight.

6.2.2.3 Social Effects of the abuse

The abuse in the participants’ marriages does not only have negative psychological and physical effects on them but it also impacts negatively on their children and significant others.
i. Effects of the abuse on the children and significant others

All seven participants noted that the abuse has a negative impact on their children. The children become outlets for the participants’ anger and frustration and in that way they become victims of the abuse.

*DP:* My kids even know that I always snap at them.

*Tebogo:* I like shouting at them, then correct myself afterwards.

*Nomfundo:* I shout and scream at them. They become aware of the fights and end up being miserable.

Salamina’s husband does not insult her alone but also involves the children.

*Salamina:* My husband insults my kids.

The abuse affects the children so much that they want to leave their home. Salamina noted that her children run away when their father enters the house.

*Salamina:* It affects my children terribly so much that they want to leave. The children run away when he gets into the house.

Darky experiences abuse in front of her children and as a result her daughter’s school performance has dropped. Darky is worried that her children are going to grow up thinking that swearing is the right thing, she also worries that her children are going to lose respect towards her.

*Darky:* I don’t like it because he does it in front of my children, and all those things affect my daughter, her school work has dropped….My children will grow up thinking that it is the right thing to swear. I don’t think my children will have respect for me because the things he says are degrading.

*Darky:* Mh…This is affecting my daughter. She will scream when we fight.

Neo’s children would rather go to relatives than be at their own home. They have even named their home a solitary camp. They describe the atmosphere in their home as too rigid.

*Neo:* My children call my house a solitary camp, they always go out to relatives, and they say the atmosphere in the house is too rigid.

Like Darky’s daughter, Diks’ children’s school performance has also dropped, they are withdrawn, choose friends and no longer participate in sports. Her children withdraw to their rooms when their father enters the house because of the havoc he causes.

*Diks:* My children have dropped performance at school, they become withdrawn, they choose friends, they no longer play sport.

*Diks:* He always comes late and causes havoc …and children would move to their bedrooms.
Three participants mentioned that the abuse in their marriages also affect their significant others like friends and relatives. DP described how her friends spend sleepless nights thinking about her because she usually phones them when she is having problems with her husband.

**DP:** It affects my friends negatively, I always relate my experiences to them and they end up being stressed because of my issues. You will hear one of my friends saying “I did not sleep well that night after you told me what happened”

DP’s family becomes equally affected by the abuse. This includes her mother and her siblings.

**DP:** It also affects my parents. When my mother hears about these experiences, her blood pressure as well as her blood sugar rises... My brother will be furious.

DP’s family has reached a state of apathy and no longer asks her about her experiences because it angers them.

**DP:** They don’t even ask me anymore because it angers them.

Nomfundo and Salamina’s relatives have developed hatred towards their husbands because of the abuse.

**Nomfundo:** My family does not favour him especially my sister.

**Salamina:** My family hates him. ...His relatives are also angry with him. They have withdrawn from him.

The abuse has a negative impact on all the participants’ children and their significant others and the greatest impact is felt by their children.

### 6.2.3 Efforts to curb the abuse

All participants have tried various strategies to curb the abuse which include submissiveness towards their husband, communication, leaving the marriage and coming back, compromising, and going for counselling, all to no avail.

#### 6.2.3.1 Submissiveness

Two participants DP and Tebogo tried being submissive towards their husbands as a way of curbing the abuse. Tebogo mentioned that she would apologise even if she was not at fault in order to buy peace.

**DP:** I tried to be submissive.

**Tebogo:** I would apologise even if I am not mistaken.
6.2.3.2 Communication
Three participants Darky, Neo and Nomfundo tried to improve communication in their marriages as a way of curbing the abuse, but their strategy did not work.

Nomfundo: Sometimes I confront him to solve issues particularly those that are consistently emanating, but at times it does not help....Yes even though it does not necessarily help, we would talk about particular issues that are recurrent, talk about strategies to avoid conflicts.

Darky tried communicating to her husband about the abuse and she even involved parents thinking that the abuse will end.

Darky: I tried to talk to him about it...and I involved parents, thinking that he will change.

Neo has tried talking to her husband and writing him letters to express how she feels but nothing seems to help.

Neo: Talking to him.... I’ve written letters to him expressing how I feel.

6.2.3.3 Leaving the marriage and going back
Two participants left their marriages and came back, Salamina was convinced to come back by her husband’s family and DP came back thinking that the abusive situation would improve.

Salamina: Back In 1997 I moved out, his family convinced me to come back.

DP: I once left him four years ago and I came back thinking that things will improve.

6.2.3.4 Compromise
Three participants made compromises in order to try and curb the abuse and these include doing things they wouldn’t do, apologising even if they are not at fault, and even carrying the financial burden to avoid conflicts.

DP: You see, doing other things against my will.

Salamina: To survive, I apologise and forgive.

Diks: To avoid conflicts I put everything on my shoulders.

6.2.3.5 Going for counselling
Three participants sought psychological counselling as a way of curbing the abuse hoping that things would change in their marriages.

Darky: I went for psychological counselling.
Salamina: We also went for therapy but it did not work.

Diks: I went for help...eh... I went to see a psychologist. I received therapy but I'm telling you sometimes I would just burst out of the blue, because I am angry.

6.2.3.6 Pleasing
Two participants tried to please their husbands thinking that the abuse would stop. Neo pretended that the abuse is not happening and kept on telling her husband that she loves him and thanked him for giving her beautiful children thinking that by doing that the abuse would stop.

Neo: Telling him that I love him, thanking him for giving me such beautiful children.

After a quarrel, Neo would be the one who apologises in an effort to make peace. In an endeavour to please her husband, Neo ends up being heavily in debt.

Neo: After a quarrel I will try hard to make peace...I try to please him to an extend that I end falling in to bad debt traps...long term debts...loans caused by him because I was trying to please him.

Tebogo still proclaims love for her husband despite the abuse. She described how she has tried to be pleasing towards her husband as an attempt to curb the abuse in her relationship. She mentioned that she would go to the extent of buying him nice and appealing things to make him appear decent.

Tebogo: The thing is I used to love him very much. You know how it is like when a woman loves her husband, even when I was in town I would buy him something to make him happy, I did this to make him appear decent.

She emphasises that she did everything for her husband including supporting him financially. This was her way of buying peace from her husband.

Tebogo: I used to do everything, everything for him. Ja! I did everything for him even supporting him financially.

6.2.3.7 Retaliation
In retaliation Nomfundo resorts to verbal abuse as way of defending herself. She noted that retaliation works for her as it tends to hurt her husband and in that way it numbs him. Nomfundo calls this ‘returning the favour’.

Nomfundo: Sometimes I end up insulting him as well. I now also resort to verbal abuse too, it becomes verbal to verbal abuse (laughs loudly)...Verbal ....abuse. It works for me. It numbs him. I know he likes talking nasty things about me, so I return the favour and it hurts most.
6.2.3.8 Taking control
Out of all seven participants only one participant, Neo, took action and obtained a restraining order against her husband after he assaulted her son.

Neo: At some point I took a protection order against him after he bit my son terribly.

6.2.3.9 Assertiveness
Tebogo decided to be assertive after submissiveness did not work for her. She started becoming strict and open about issues. She began to have a voice in the relationship.

Tebogo: M....I've become stricter, being open about issues, if he is wrong, if he borrows money from me I refuse, unlike before. I just tell him straight. ...I just tell him not to touch my things.

She came to a realisation that bottling up issues would end up making her ill. She noted that talking and being open brings her relief.

Tebogo: If I was not open I would be ill. It relieves me.

It is evident that all the participants made an effort to curb the abuse in their relationships but nothing worked for them. The abuse still continued.

6.2.4 Coping mechanisms
Having failed to curb the abuse, participants developed varying coping mechanisms to help them deal with it. They applied cognitive strategies such as positivity in order to cope with the abuse. Participants also used other measures such as retribution to help them cope.

6.2.4.1 Positivity
Five participants chose to develop positive ways of living within the abusive relationship. Tebogo’s coping mechanisms include keeping herself busy with work, being open about issues, and loving her husband despite him abusing her.

Tebogo: I keep myself busy with my work.....I don’t bottle up. I don’t want to suffer in silence...Yes...m....maybe if I was the kind of person that bottles up, I could be having hypertension, but because I talk, I become relieved.

Since she cannot leave the abusive marriage, Nomfundo has decided to use the negative situation to her benefit in a positive way. She has decided that she is going to focus on things that make her happy and content.

Nomfundo: Yes and whatever situations that may be negative, I’ll use it to my benefit.
Nomfundo: I have learned that though this situation is negative, I have to change it and make it positive....by just making myself happy... in many ways. If buying clothes makes me happy, I will do that, if I want to buy a car, I’ll do that. As long as whatever I’m doing brings happiness and contentment in my life, then I’ll do it that way.

Nomfundo’s coping mechanisms also include talking to people she trust. At times she talks even if she does not trust that person, just to confide in someone and ventilate as long as that person is willing to listen.

Nomfundo: Talking to people I trust, even if I don’t trust a person, I just confide, ventilate anywhere, it removes the baggage. I feel lighter, I talk even if I don’t know a person, I just talk, I don’t care who you are as long as you will listen to me...I go out and see people; I chill out and talk to people.

Salamina’s coping mechanism is doing positive self-talk and like Nomfundo, she mixes with people and in that way she is able to keep her mind busy. She focuses more on the good that her husband does than the bad as well as being assertive in certain things. She also uses her religion to cope with the abuse in her relationship.

Salamina: Self-talk. I tell myself that I have a job; I meet with people that keep my mind busy.

Salamina: He cleans the yard, he irons for the children, and he cleans their shoes. I see more good than bad. I look at the bigger picture. The other thing is that I am assertive. When I say no I say no...I am also a strong believer in God... 'll keep my burden with the help of God.

Darky deals with her stress by reading. This tends to yield positive results because it helps her pass her exams. She channels her energy into doing positive things.

Darky: Mostly when I am stressed I read a lot and I pass my exams.

Neo resorted to loving herself and focusing on things that make her happy. Her relatives also advised her to do a ‘makeover’ so as to boost her self-esteem.

Neo: I started falling in love with myself....: My relatives would even advise me to do a makeover, so as to boost my self-esteem.

Neo’s acts of acting positively include reading motivational books, talking to people and praying.

Neo: I read motivational books, I talk to people who inspire me, I pray.
6.2.4.2 Retribution

Three participants used retribution as a way of coping with the abuse. They misuse money as a way of paying revenge for the abuse and they seem to derive comfort and satisfaction in that kind of behaviour even though they are left in debt.

*DP:* I spoil myself buy clothes, spend with my credit card, and after that I feel good.

*Nomfundo:* (Pauses and laughs). ...Buying clothes and feeling happy about it. It boosts my self-esteem..... .. Buying a car and taking my children to the movies. I don’t have money. But I use the little that I have to make myself feel better.

*Neo:* My budget stretched because of all those things... I then became aware that I have been neglecting myself. I changed and I started budgeting for makeup, buying clothes.

After failing to curb the abuse in their relationships, all participants developed different mechanisms to help them cope with the abuse. The majority of participants developed positive coping mechanisms while others developed negative ones such as retribution which left them in debt.

6.2.5 Reasons for staying in abusive marriages

Participants in this study remain in abusive marriages because of various factors which include economic factors and lack of community resources such as shelters. There are also psychological factors as well as personal factors which tend to trap them in abusive relationships.

6.2.5.1 Economic factors and lack of community resources

Lack of shelter seems to trap the participants in their abusive marriages. The financial state in which they find themselves, which is caused by low salaries, makes it difficult for them to survive independently. Therefore participants find themselves enduring abuse just for the sake of their convenience and that of their children.

i. Convenience

Six participants mentioned convenience in terms of shelter and lack of finance as the reason of staying in their abusive marriages.

*DP:* Another thing I look at my salary and think how will I survive? I can’t do anything. I won’t be able to buy a car; I will have to cancel my insurance policies. I am sure he knows that I cannot even afford a roof over my head.

*Tebogo:* I think I am staying for convenience, having to start afresh is another thing.
Nomfundo: You know what? My main problem is accommodation; I can’t afford to have a bond. If I had financial means… I would leave today.

Neo: But if I rent now, where will I get the money to pay the rent because I cannot afford financially I am not coping. For that reason I cannot get out. ..Two obstacles are finance and fear of the unknown.

Diks: And wherever I go, I will have to rent or buy myself a place.

One participant, DP, feels that going back to her parent’s house will be another inconvenience which will lead to even more stress because of rejection as time goes on.

DP: Going back home is another stress. They will be happy to have me back for the first three months, thereafter they will feel crowded. I will be fighting with my siblings. I have heard people talking about such experiences.

DP finds herself caught up between wanting to leave or stay in the abusive relationship. At times she feels like she wants to leave despite the inconveniences that may arise, but the conveniences such as children’s transport to school seem to outweigh her decision to leave. The main problem seems to be her low salary and she thinks her husband is aware of her situation and he is taking advantage of it.

DP: But now I feel like I want to move out though it will be inconvenient for the children. Because I have noticed that my husband is beginning to take advantage, he is aware that I won’t leave because of the children. I think about their school, how will they travel? Sometimes I look at my salary……and think how will I manage? (Silence)…

Like DP, Darky finds it awkward and inconvenient for her and the children to use public transport, so she is staying because she does not have a car and no money to purchase one.

Darky: The car is a problem, I don’t have a car. Last year I was staying with my sister and I had to use public transport, with the children, it was awkward.

Another participant, Neo, although she is working and earns her own salary, she still feels dependent on her husband. She mentions that she is not free, she is not independent, and she feels lost.

Neo: I am still in the box, I am not free, and I am not independent I feel lost... That is why I am dependent on him……..

The majority of participants in this study are trapped in abusive marriages by convenience in terms of shelter. Lack of adequate finance relegates them to a dependency syndrome where they have to depend on their spouses for things like shelter and transport. Even though they are working, their salaries are not enough to give them financial freedom.
6.2.5.2 Psychological factors

The participants seemed to have channelled themselves into a position of accepting rather than challenging the abuse in their marriages. When efforts to curb the abuse did not yield their expected outcomes, participants lost motivation to emit new responses. They consequently believed that there is nothing they could do to change their situation, so they stopped trying. This is characteristic of learned helplessness, participants even proclaimed love for their abusive husbands, which is characteristic of traumatic bonding.

i. Learned helplessness and traumatic bonding

Six participants have learned to be helpless in their abusive relationships. Among the six, some still proclaim love for their husbands despite the abuse which is characteristic of traumatic bonding. Participants also stayed because they thought their husbands would change.

DP: Another thing is, I still loved him but hate his behaviour. I don’t even ask anymore, I just look at him. I’ve been asking for too long. I am tired (laughing)…..I don’t ask anymore…I don’t fight anymore, I don’t complain. I am just me. I just live.

Tebogo: My tears are dry; I don’t have time to cry anymore. I don’t care anymore. I am staying because I’ve gotten used to the situation, but as far as the relationship is concerned, it is dead and nothing will repair it. I sometimes ask myself what is finally going to be the solution.

Tebogo: I ask myself why I have am I tolerating all this? ...I loved him despite all that. Even though I was insulting him, I still loved him...What hurts me is that I feel sorry for him. I sometimes think that I am the one who is cruel (sobbing).

Nomfundo: At times I ask myself this question: “what am I waiting for that will give me a platform to move out, what I am waiting for?

Salamina: I think I still love him...I love him. His children love him, he is ok, and he is good when he is sober. I feel sorry for him.

Diks: You know what, I have had enough... but I am still in the marriage. The struggle that I am having is that there are reasons why I am still in this marriage even though I feel I am enough.. Every day I find a reason why I must be out of this marriage. ... So I pity him a lot.

Neo is stuck in the abusive relationship and accepts it because she feels that it is better to stay in her marriage and be abused by her husband rather than getting out of it resulting in being abused by other men.

Neo: I am also afraid that if I get out of this marriage, I will be open to abuse by other men. I don’t want that, it’s better if I am abused by this one.
Hopefulness

Five participants stayed in an abusive marriage because they were hopeful that their husbands would change with time.

*DP:* You know what? I have thought that maybe this man will change.

*Tebogo:* I’ve been hoping he will change.

*Nomfundo:* I thought that I would fix him. It is now that I realize that you cannot change a person….Sometimes you keep on hoping that things will be fine.

*Darky:* Initially it was out of love, but I don’t have love anymore…..I don’t…..(pause). I would stay if he could change, but I don’t think that will happen at any stage.

*Diks:* I have tried everything thinking he will change, instead he is deteriorating. Maybe he will change if there can be a second person in his life. I’ve been trying to change him for the past three years.

### 6.2.5.3 Personal factors

Participants are trapped in the abusive relationships because of personal factors such as putting their children’s best interest first rather than their own, fear of losing their property and loyalty to their husbands and fellow human beings.

#### i. Putting the children’s best interests first

Five participants seem to put their children’s best interest first. Most of them stay in abusive relationships for the sake of their children who prefer to stay at their own homes.

*DP:* My children as well, especially the older one. For example, I once hinted to them that I want to take them to my parent’s home, he was not happy at all. They had a lot of complains. They felt that we will become an inconvenience. They do not want to start a new life, they can’t live their home. Basically I am staying for their convenience…I want to divorce him. But my children feel they are comfortable at their home.

*Tebogo:* I feel for my kids. Even though they aware that I don’t know why I am still in this marriage.

*Darky:* I think I am staying for the sake of the children.

*Neo:* It’s just that you feel for the children. I want children to grow into a family that has both parents.

*Diks:* I am having that struggle that if I leave, how am I going to cope? But I don’t want my kids to suffer….If I don’t sort out my finances it means I am stuck here for the next three years because my girl is finishing school after three years.

One of the participants, DP, puts the best interest of her children first to such extent that she even suggested to her husband that they should cohabit just for the sake of the children.
DP: I suggested to him that we should just cohabit just for the sake of the children.

ii. Fear

Some participants feel that they have invested a great deal in their marriages in terms of time, energy, emotions and material things. This sense of having invested such a great deal, cause them to be committed despite the destructiveness of the abusive relationship. Two participants want to leave their abusive husbands but they seem to be governed by fear. Tebogo is struggling with fear of abandonment and fear of losing property since she is married in community of property. Leaving the marriage would mean that she has to share everything with her husband. She feels she has invested a lot in the marriage.

Tebogo: I have this fear of being abandoned… but at the same time I want him to leave. Maybe it’s because he once moved out, so I still have that fear that he may repeat the same thing. But I don’t love him.

Tebogo: I don’t know. I fear that I will lose everything I worked for. I seems like it will be a draw back. I don’t know……. I am protecting my property…I don’t love him, I have no feelings for him… I just have fear; I don’t know where it comes from.

Diks expresses that she no longer wants her marriage but is struggling with fear of the unknown.

Diks: I have fear of the unknown a lot. I don’t want to be in this marriage, but when I get out of here where am I going?

Like Tebogo, Diks finds it difficult to leave her abusive marriage because of fear of losing her property. Being married in community of property causes her to be stuck in the marriage because if she decides to leave she will have to share everything with her husband.

Diks: I can’t buy a house because I am married in community of property. Should I buy anything now, we are going to share, so I have to play safely so that if I move out, I don’t lose.

iii. Loyalty

Two participants are still loyal to their husbands despite the abuse. One participant mentioned that she nearly ended it all but her husband persuaded her to stay by apologising. She was fooled by her husband’s apology.

Neo: Last year I nearly, nearly, nearly…. ended it all. I felt I could not take it anymore. I did not want to live with him anymore…He persuaded me to stay, he apologised.

Darky’s concern is that if she divorces her husband she is going to hurt other women by taking their husbands and breaking their families. She is still loyal to her husband despite the abuse.
Darky: Because if I divorce, I am going to take another woman’s husband and I don’t want to break families.

It is evident that an overwhelming majority of participants seem to put their children’s best interest first at the expense of theirs, hence they find it difficult to leave the abusive marriages.

6.2.6 Making sense of the abuse

Participants gave varying reasons as to why the abuse is happening in their marriages. They attributed the abuse to the following factors: enforcing gender roles, husband’s socialisation, cultural and traditional factors, husbands’ feelings of inferiority, ignorance and husband’s abuse of alcohol. Other factors include familial pattern of divorce, marrying at a young age and dependency on the abuser.

6.2.6.1 Enforcing gender roles

Six participants noted that their husbands use their gender to exercise power and control over them. They stated that their husbands expect them to do all the household chores and work like slaves and they are not given a voice in their marriages because they are women.

DP: At some stage he mentioned that he has a wife and does not need a helper, so I am supposed to be the helper. ..I would point out to him why I need a helper…. He uses his manhood to control me, a typical Sotho man! You cannot tell him anything because he is a man you see…..He once said to me that since he was born, he has never been told what to do by a woman. No woman will tell him that he is wrong. You understand that since he was born he has always been right.

Tebogo: he used to bring friends in the house and I would be the one who cooks and serve them whilst he sits and does nothing. He used to like the ‘get together’ thing; and I would always have to work hard…. He is full of farm life mentality, you know in the farms women work like slaves….so he is still holding on that.

Nomfundo: He would complain that I don’t do house hold chores. He would complain about dirty dishes, dirty curtains, and to think that I do all those things…… According to him I have to work non - stop in the house…..he comes from a family where the father is domineering? He took that from his father, it is rooted in him.

Salamina: The problem is that men do not want to lose. If I bit him in an argument he wants to be the one who ends.

Darky: Like sometimes when I am studying or I am ill, he won’t cook, he will say his father never cooked for his mother. According to him a woman has to work, cook and wash for her husband. I am not supposed to rest.
Neo: When I sit down he would complain and say that I am sitting and doing nothing. I always have to work...work....work.... in the house and he is the boss. And he is educated; I don’t expect such things from him. ....Recently he told me that I cannot ask a man where he goes or where he comes from I should be happy that he is back, he is bossy, and he wants things to be his way.

Neo’s husband uses his gender to exercise power and control over her to such an extent that she calls him “the mastermind” of her life.

Neo: You know what? I cannot prioritise any more He is the “mastermind” of my life, he controls everything.

6.2.6.2 Husband’s upbringing as the cause of abuse

Five participants attributed the abuse to the manner in which their husbands were brought up. DP stated that her husband was brought up in the rural areas and her understanding is that children from rural areas become adults at an early age, meaning that they assume adult responsibilities at a tender age. As a result they do not enjoy their childhood. She also attributes the abuse to the fact that his father was abusive towards his wife, hence her husband is also abusive.

DP: I think it's his upbringing. He is from rural areas, my understanding is that children from rural areas become adults at an early age, they don't enjoy being kids. ...

Tebogo cites her husband’s bad upbringing as the cause of abuse. She noted that her husband was a spoilt child who was 'hero worshipped' by his mother because he was the only boy and was never reprimanded. Instead his mother used to embrace all his wrong doings. She also noted her husband comes from 'a wrong family'.

Tebogo: Wrong upbringing from his home. He was badly brought up...His mother used to hero worship him. He was spoilt as a child. He is the only boy. ..He comes from a wrong family. His mother was never married. His mother embraces every wrong doing my husband does. She does not reprimand him.

Nomfundo, Salamina and Diks attribute the abuse to the fact that their husbands never received parental love hence they are abusive.

Nomfundo: The other thing is lack of parental love. He was moved from one relative to another....I think somewhere that creates a gap in terms of stability.

Salamina: He was also abused as a child.... His mom and Dad got divorced and he used to stay with all the relatives who ill-treated him. ..This gave me an impression that this guy did not have good upbringing. He doesn’t know what to do in life. I always tell him that he has got issues and he needs to deal with them.
Salamina: I always search why people do that and I realized that others come from abusive families, they were never loved. They think that abuse is the correct thing.

Diks: His mother had fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls. He is the last boy and the thirteenth child. They were so many and their mother could not give them love, so he would be given away to any family that did not have children, you see, that’s how he grew up.

Diks stresses that her husband was given away to families who did not have children and this resulted in him being physically and emotionally abused by his care givers.

Diks: I think the way he grew up. His past is not so good. He was given away......

Diks: Some of these families used to abuse him physically. He used to sleep in the bush. The person I knew to be his mother when we got married was actually his aunt. He was abused in that house, when he was in standard five he had to leave school and he went to work in the coal industry.

Diks and DP justify the abuse by stating that their husbands were brought up in abusive families, hence they are also abusive.

Diks: I understand his father used to abuse his mother in all respects.

DP: I heard from other people that his father used to drink a lot and was very abusive.

6.2.6.3 Cultural and traditional factors

Four participants attributed the abuse to cultural and traditional matters such as ethnic stereotypes and utterances as well as superstitious beliefs. DP believes that her husband’s ethnic stereotypes play a role in him becoming abusive and controlling. She mentions that even if she can try to ‘fix things’ in her relationship, her husband will not notice because he is a “Sotho man”. Her husband justifies the lack of peace in their family by blaming the wrath of the ancestors stating that the ancestors are fighting because no rituals were made for DP to accept her as a “makoti” (daughter in law) in his family. In this way DP’s husband does not take responsibility for the existence of abuse in the marriage but blames it on the wrath of the ancestors.

DP: Even if I can try to change myself, perhaps look at my own faults, try to fix them, because he is a Sotho man he will not even notice or change.

DP: He makes excuses that the reason there is no peace in the house is that no rituals were made for me as a “makoti” (daughter in law) and therefore the ancestors are fighting.
According to DP, the other factor that could be perpetuating the abuse in her relationship is the interference by her mother in law. She mentions an instance where her husband assaulted her, instead of reprimanding him, her mother in law took her husband’s side.

DP: One day he assaulted me and I retaliated. His mother took his son’s side.

Another participant, Tebogo, had to seek the intervention of ancestors because of the belief that she was bewitched.

Tebogo: Sometimes I would go to the witchdoctors and use ‘muti’ to lure him back home. I would scream at night… calling his name. Hee….eh….. (Laughing)…. I sometimes ask myself what is finally going to be the solution, or was I bewitched?

Salamina and Darky were told by their mothers that a woman has to endure difficulties in marriage. Darky’s mother even used a Sesotho phrase “Mosadi o ngalla Motsheo” (a woman endures difficulties and never leaves her marriage no matter how difficult it can be).

Salamina: But my mother always says that I cannot leave my home, I have to endure.

Darky: You know what they say” Mosadi o ngalla motsheo” It will be fine.

6.2.6.4 Husband’s inferiority

Two participants attributed the abuse to their husbands’ feelings of inferiority. Tebogo’s husband sometimes feels threatened by the fact that she earns more than he does and that she is able to do things that he could not do, for example, home improvements.

Tebogo: The other thing that annoys me is his comments. He likes saying that I don’t take him seriously because I earn more than him. He always tries to make me feel guilty. You know what; I worked very hard for that house. I’ve built an outside room and a garage.

For Darky, her husband is abusive because he is jealous, insecure and has a low self-esteem.

Darky: I think he is jealous and insecure. He has a low self-esteem.

6.2.6.5 Husband’s abuse of alcohol

Two participants mentioned alcohol abuse as the cause of abuse in their marriages.

Darky: When he is not drunk, he does not communicate, it’s only when he is drunk when he will start saying all sorts of things……. He would come home drunk and start fighting.

Salamina: He drinks four days in a week. He doesn’t know how to express himself, he screams and shouts…When he is not drunk, he is ok, but he processes everything I say so that he can talk about it when he is drunk.
6.2.6.6 Ignorance

Two participants blame themselves for being ignorant despite the clues they had that their partners could end up being abusive.

Nomfundo: At other times as people we don’t read the situation that might come up. There are other things that give you a clue, but you don’t take them seriously until it is too late.

During their dating her husband gave her a hint regarding marrying a woman who has a child, but Nomfundo ignored that fact.

Nomfundo: M..... (nodding in acknowledgment). Yes I was aware. Let me make an example; during courtship he stated that he won’t marry a woman who has a child that is not his. But I continued to stay in that relationship despite that. At the time I saw it but I ignored that fact.

Like Nomfundo, Darky also became aware of the abuse very early in the relationship but chose to ignore it, particularly because it happened frequently.

Darky: Very early in the relationship, almost immediately...It happens always.

6.2.6.7 Marrying at a young age

Neo sees marrying at a young age and not being given space to explore as the cause of the abuse in her marriage. She mentioned that she was young and naïve when she got married and probably did not know what she was doing.

Neo: He married me young; he did not give me space. I did not explore.

6.2.6.8 Incompatibility

Tebogo feels that she and her husband are incompatible since they do not agree about most things. Tebogo even thinks that they met by mistake.

Tebogo: My husband and are do not click at all. When he says blue I say red, if he says green, I say yellow, and if he says white I say black. It’s like we met by mistake.

Salamina attributes the abuse to patterns of divorce that happen in her husband’s family. She noted that her husband’s family does not know how to keep their family together.

Salamina: I think there is a pattern here. His parents got divorced, his aunts. It seems like divorce runs in his family. They do not know how to keep the family together.

Diks noted that she has learned to be dependent on her husband because when she got married she was young and naïve. She has learned to depend emotionally on the very person who abuses her.
Diks: To think I was sixteen when I started living with this man. I was young and naïve and I ask myself if I have to live him, will I be ok to stay alone? Will I be ok? Not financially, not physically no! But I am just asking myself this question “The day I wake up in this house that I bought and he won’t be there, is everything going to be ok?”

The majority of participants attribute the abuse to the manner in which their husbands were brought up. They also attribute the abuse to gender domination as well as cultural and traditional matters.

6.2.7 Future plan regarding the abuse

Three participants consider leaving their abusive marriages as their future plan. Darky says she wants to reclaim her happiness and she will do anything to achieve it. She therefore sees divorce as the final option that will set her free.

Darky: I want to be happy. I am prepared to do anything that will make me happy.... I want to be the person I was before, I want to be myself. I think divorce will be the best solution, once and for all. Even if I can struggle.

Nomfundo wants to leave her marriage but she is stuck because of lack of finance. She says she is stuck until she can afford her own place.

Nomfundo: ...to leave... but... I am stuck, until I can afford my own place.

Tebogo’s future plan for the abusive relationship is to leave the marriage but she is prevented from doing so by the fact that she fears for her children. This is despite the fact that her children are wondering why she is still in the abusive marriage.

Tebogo: My plan is to quit, but like I’ve said, I have fear, and I feel for my kids. Even though they aware that I don’t know why I am still in this marriage.

One participant, Neo, is uncertain about the future of her marriage

Neo: I want to move forward but I can’t. I do not know where I will end up.

Salamina plans to stay in the abusive relationship and raise the children together with her husband.

Salamina: I am going to stay with this man and we are going to raise these children.

Even though DP and Tebogo feel that they want to leave their abusive marriages they seem to be struggling with mixed feelings and confusion regarding the decision to leave. The same applies to Diks who is also struggling with doubts regarding her decision to leave.
Diks: I am no longer sure whether I still love him or not, because just now I would feel I love him, suddenly I feel I don’t want him anymore.

Tebogo: It’s a double bind situation. I hate him and yet at the same time I feel sorry for him (laughing)....I have never seen such a thing! Maybe it’s because he once moved out, so I still have that fear that he may repeat the same thing. But I don’t love him. I don’t even want him to touch me.

Diks: What makes me feel angry is this question “do I have to go?” It makes me feel like I am dubious and I don’t know what I want. Every day he gives me that reason to leave.

Most participants do want to leave their abusive marriages but are prevented from doing so by various factors which include convenience in terms of shelter, lack of adequate finance, fear and indecisiveness.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the inter-individual analysis of the participants’ interviews where common themes were extracted and were organized into clusters. The results showed that participants in this study, despite being educated and employed, suffered all kinds of abuse such as physical, emotional, verbal, financial and sexual abuse like other women of low status. Emotional abuse was the most dominant form of abuse experienced by the participants. This included patriarchal control and neglect. The study also revealed that the abuse has negative physical, psychological and social effects on them. Even though these women have tried several strategies to curb the abuse, it still persists anyway.

Lack of resources such as shelters for abused women and lack of adequate finance seem to be keeping these women in their abusive marriages. These participants found themselves staying in abusive marriages because of their convenience and that of their children in terms of shelter and finance. Hoping that their partners would change, learned helplessness and fear are other factors that seem to trap the participants in their abusive relationships. In making sense of why the abuse is happening in their marriages, it was evident that male domination brought about by gender inequality and issues of power and control are still a challenge among Black Women. Most participants also blamed their husband’s upbringing as the cause of abuse in their marriages while others blamed cultural and traditional matters. For other participants the future plan regarding their marriages is to eventually leave while others seem confused about the decision to
leave. One participant has decided to stay for the sake of her children. Those participants who plan to leave are however still having fears of struggling in terms of finance and shelter.

In the next chapter the link between the inter-individual results and literature will be presented.
CHAPTER 7:
DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction
In this chapter an attempt will be made to integrate and link the results of the inter-individual analysis of the participants’ results with relevant literature. Most of the clusters of themes that are formulated in this study are consistent with literature on the abuse of women in intimate relationships and why they endure such abuse.

7.2 Cluster 1: Kind of abuse experienced
With regard to the cluster of kinds of abuse experienced by Black South African Women in this study, who are educated and employed, it was evident that participants suffered all kinds of abuse namely: emotional, physical, financial, verbal and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse was the most dominant kind of abuse experienced by Black South African Women who participated in this study. Each of the participants described their own experiences of emotional abuse which included one or more of the following forms of being emotionally abused: Most participants feel alienated and are treated like minors by their husbands. They stated that there is lack of communication in their relationships, they feel neglected and are treated with cruelty and disrespect by their husbands. These Black South African Women reported that they lack support in their marriages and they feel isolated. They also mentioned that they experience patriarchal control, infidelity, harassment, humiliation and mistrust by their husbands. What these Black South African Women in this study are experiencing is in line with what Chaney (2013) and Engel (2007), describe as emotional abuse. Chaney (2013) and Engel (2007), describe emotional abuse as humiliation and degradation, domination and control, judging, criticising, blaming, trivial and unreasonable demands and expectations, demeaning or isolating another person through the use of withholding attention and affection. According to Mouradian (2007), emotional abuse is used for the purpose of wearing the victim out and to undermine her self-concept.

Patriarchal power and control was the most dominant form of emotional abuse experienced by Black South African Women, who are educated and employed, participating in this study. An
overwhelming majority of participants in this study mentioned that their husbands control their movements, finances, the type of clothes they wear and they even monitor their phone calls. Their husbands go to the extent of choosing friends for them. These Black South African Women also experience *infidelity* in their marriages, by their husbands, who later express *mistrust* and *accuse them of having extramarital affairs*. Pawlik-Kienien (2007), states that patriarchal power and control is a huge part of emotional abuse and it involves anger, jealousy, accusations and mistrust. The participants’ husbands control them with the purpose of wanting to isolate them. Dutton and Goodman (2005), and Pawlik-Kienien (2007), attest that the abusers isolate their victims in order for themselves to feel secure. The abusers feel that any relationship, be it family or friends, will undermine their authority and take their partners away from them. The effect of this isolation is that the victim feels alone in her struggle and does not have anyone with whom she can do a “reality check”. This, according to Dutton and Goodman (2005), serves the purpose of the abuser to a great extent because the victim ultimately becomes more dependent on the abuser for all her needs and the victim consequently lacks witnesses to the fact that she is being abused and she also gets deprived of any form of empowerment.

Patriarchy is a social system where men play a dominant role and women take on a subordinate role and most societies in South Africa practise it (Seletswana, 2002). Men’s dominance over women in a patriarchal system is regarded by Walker (1984), as an important factor in the abuse of women. Walker (1984) further states, that in homes where the man is more dominant, the woman is more likely to suffer serious abuse like in the case of the Black South African Women in this study. It was evident in this study how these Black South African Women, who are educated and employed, are made to do all household chores without assistance from their husbands just because they are women. This is irrespective of the fact that they are also employed and partake in the household’s financial obligations and responsibilities. In a patriarchal system women are expected to perform duties such as child rearing and keeping the family intact and men are supposed to be bread winners (Parker et al., 2000). The Black South African Women in this study are educated and employed and take part in both household duties and expenses. Parker et al., (2000), argue that women who become competent in both the work force and at home, (like the Black South African Women in this study) tend to become threats to their husbands. As a result of being threatened by changed roles, men often become rejecting
and abuse their women as a way of putting them back in their place. Researchers, such as Motsei (2007), and Ramphele (1984), purport that traditional practices such as lobola (bride price), although it was well intended as explained in chapter 3, and the abuse thereof, led African men to exercising power and control over their partners because of the notion that they paid for them. According to Motsei (2007), lobola got abused by Africans and used as a platform to bully or undermine women. Ramphele (1984), sees the manipulation of tradition as a resource for the social control of women by men.

Feminist literature asserts that partner violence or abuse is basically a problem of men using violence to maintain control over women, a control to which they feel they are entitled to and that is supported by patriarchal culture (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Mirchandini (2006), agrees that both the patriarchal, social and family systems are characterised by a hierarchical structure and patriarchal ideology in which men are regarded superior to women and women are given positions of subordination. The obligations of men and women differ in African marriages. A woman marries into the family whereas the man remains unattached to the woman’s family. Ramphele (1984), notes that “the fact of marrying into a family is at the very basis of bringing the woman into a system of control that ensures the perpetuation of patriarchal family relations” (p.401). According to Ramphele (1984), the woman is even given a new name to signify the family’s expectations of her contributions.

The majority of Black South African Women in this study experience physical abuse in the form of being assaulted or being threatened with a gun by their husbands. The seeds of wife beating or abuse as several authors have mentioned, lie in the subordination of females and in their subjection to male authority and control (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Hepker, 2000; Musson Seedat, 2008; Nussbaum, 2012; Seletswana, 2007;). It was notable that of the four participants who were physically abused, only two of them reported the matter to the police. This leaves a question as to why other participants did not consider using this resource. POWA (2010), asserts that many women are still not aware of their rights when reporting abuse, those who know their rights are unlikely to be assertive and insist on their rights when traumatised. Fredericks and Davids (1995), corroborate that wife abuse is one of the most underestimated and under reported crimes. This could be because within black families traditional values discourage women to
reveal details of their home life and women are reluctant to subject their men to state punishment because such acts can be viewed as betrayal by the community (Levi, 1994).

Even though the Black South African Women in this study are employed and contributing financially to the household, they are rewarded with verbal abuse by their husbands. These women experience situations where they are humiliated and insulted by their husbands, sometimes in front of their children. They are being yelled at and called names, and obscene language such as “whore”, “slut”, “bitch”, “setlatla” (fool), “Jimmy comes to Jo’burg” have been used by some of the participants’ husbands to insult them. Engel (2007), and Stevens (2007), describe verbal abuse as including yelling and shouting at, making threats, insulting a person and his/her family, being sarcastic about or criticising one’s interests, opinions or beliefs, humiliating a person either in private or in company, sneering, growling, name calling, withholding approval or appreciation, withholding conversation, refusing to discuss important issues, excessive blaming and shaming. Verbal abuse tends to lower a person’s self-esteem. Evans (1992), concurs that verbal abuse constitutes psychological violence in the sense that it undermines a woman’s sense of worth and self-concept by discounting her ideals, opinions or beliefs. Verbal abuse disregards, disrespects and devalues the abused woman in such a way that her self-esteem gradually diminishes without her even noticing it, she may even be brainwashed subtly without noticing it (Chronholm, Ismailj, & Mettner, 2013; Evans, 1992).

Financial abuse also plays a dominant part in the lives of participants. All participants in this study have more than one child and their husbands are employed, but these Black South African Women still carry the financial burden in their relationships because their husbands misuse money, control their money, lie about money related matters, do not assist them financially or at most they drain money from them. This causes these women to end up in debt. Financial abuse, according to Mullender (1996), means that the perpetrator uses money and money related matters to dominate, sabotage, manipulate, control, inflict damage on or take advantage of another person. Financial abuse includes controlling the family income and not allowing the victim access to money or rigidly limiting access to family funds. This may include keeping financial secrets, hidden accounts, putting the victim on an allowance or depriving her a say in how money is spent or making her turn her pay cheque over to him (Bailey, 2007; Mullender, 1996).
the participant’s husbands are doing is to prevent them from having financial independence and forcing these Black South African Women, even though they are employed, to be dependent on them. Mouradian (2007), states that financial abuse differs from other kinds of abuse in that it focuses on preventing the victim from possessing or maintaining financial freedom. It is evident in this particular study that the perpetrators use money and money related matters to dominate, sabotage, manipulate, control, inflict damage on or take advantage of the Black South African Women in this study.

In addition to other kinds of abuse, the study revealed that the majority of participants in this study experienced sexual abuse in various ways and these include: husband forcefully demanding sex, deliberately exposing participants to sexually transmitted diseases, withholding sex and even being forced to have sex while the husband is in a drunken state. The irresponsible actions from the participants’ partners make them vulnerable to contracting HIV as some of them are forced to have sex without using protection. Mullender (1996), espouses that a woman should know that she is sexually abused if a person knowingly exposes her to sexually transmitted diseases, she is forced to participate in unwanted sexual activities, and she is subjected to sexual comments or gestures that make her uncomfortable. Mouradian (2007), affirms that coerced sex by manipulation or threats is regarded as sexual abuse. There is a sense of entitlement among some men that they can have sex with their women whenever they want to. When sexual abuse occurs within a marriage, a woman is often unsure as to whether she was raped or not, neither the abuser, nor the victim considers it as rape. This, according to Manabe (2001), is partially due to cultural and religious acceptance that it is the wife’s duty to fulfil her husband’s sexual desires. In South Africa, forcing sexual intercourse on a woman is considered as rape (Manabe, 2001). Therefore the participants who experience sexual abuse need to know that a marriage license does not entitle a man to use his wife’s body the way he pleases and they also need to know that they have a right to protected sex.

7.3 Cluster 2: Effects of the abuse
Within cluster 2, it was evident that the abuse in the participants’ relationships has caused them to experience negative psychological, physical and social effects. The psychological effects experienced by Black South African Women who are educated and employed and who are taking
part in this study include: bitterness, sadness, anger and irritability, feelings of isolation, sense of stuckness, lack of progress in life which are all signs of depression. Davidow (2006), mentions that many authors put more focus on the effects of physical abuse on women’s health and ignore the fact that psychological abuse such as put downs, controlling behaviour and threats also affect the women’s health as it is evident with Black South African Women in this study. Hitti (2006), also attests that women who are abused are more likely to report poorer health and depression, and the longer they have been experiencing abuse, the worse their health tends to be. According to a study conducted by Davidow (2006), women who had been abused in the past five years were four times more likely than other women to have symptoms of severe depression in addition to other physical symptoms. Smith, (1999); Vogelman and Eagle (1991), point out that abuse often leads to victim depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse in addition to the pain inflicted through the acts of abuse themselves. It was interesting though to note that none of the Black South African Women in this study reported to be having suicide tendencies or abusing drugs and/ or alcohol. This calls for further studies which will explore how abused Black South African Women who are educated survive the temptation to resort to suicide or substance abuse when affected psychologically by abusive situations. Some of the participants tend to blame themselves for the abuse in their marriages. This is in line with what Roberts (1996), states in that the abuse tends to lessen the woman’s sense of control, and as a result the woman may internalise blame or stop struggling to free herself from the abuse. Dangor (1999), and Dobash and Dobash (1979), concur that other women sometimes become entrapped in the values of marriage and family and tend to sacrifice everything to save their homes and families. These women are taught to accept blame if the marriage does not work as it was evident with Black South African Women in this study. Black South African Women in this study also experience confused identity in the sense that they have changed significantly from who they were before the abuse. They mentioned that they have developed tendencies to be out of control of their emotions as evidenced by their impulsive irritability and snapping. One participant even had to sacrifice her moral standards by having extra-marital affairs. Dangor (1992), espouses that abuse can change a person and it can hamper opportunities to realize the sense of self and one’s potential. It can prevent one from becoming productive and independent and can even lead to one’s death. It is clear that environmental circumstances are capable of changing a person’s behaviour as it happened with Black South African Women in this study.
The abuse in all participants’ relationships has not just caused changes in their psychological well-being, but it has also caused **physical changes** such as **weight gain** which seem to be brought about by these Black South African Women’s tendencies to derive comfort from food when depressed. Other changes include suffering from **persistent headaches, developing high cholesterol levels and chest pains**. Literature indicates that victims of abuse tend to find comfort and safety in their eating disorder whether it is anorexia, bulimia or overeating. According to Alwan (2005), victims tend to block out or repress the painful memories of the abuse by overeating or denying themselves food, and in a way numb out the feelings and emotions that come along with the experience. Headaches and heart related symptoms experienced by these Black South African Women are in line with what the study conducted by Coker, Smith, Bethea, King and McKeown (2000), on the physical health consequences of physical and psychological intimate partner violence revealed. The study revealed that women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to report their physical and mental health as fair or poor. Apart from broken bones or ruptured internal organs, these women tend to have more physician visits presenting with ailments such as irritable bowel syndrome and frequent dyspepsia, chronic pain, migraine and other frequent headaches, sexually transmitted diseases, bladder, kidney and other urinary tract infections (Coker et al., 2000; Frey, 2003). Dienemann, Boyle, Baker, Resnick, Wiederhorn and Campbell (2000), affirm that there is also prevalence of headaches, chronic chest pain and sleep problems in abused women.

The abuse of participants by their partners does not affect only them but it also has **social effects** in the sense that it extends to their **significant others** like their **children** and **relatives**. For example, children become victims because their mothers act out their anger and display acts of irritability towards them. Some participants’ children also tend to suffer academically while others even threaten to leave their homes because of the abuse which prevail in their families. It is evident in this study that children of abused mothers tend to also be resentful toward the abusive parent. The children show resentment by running to their rooms when their fathers enter the house. This shows that abuse completely changes the dynamics and order in the family. This is asserted by The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (2004), which state that any form of domestic violence has complex effects on children and their mothers. The Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (2004), state that children of abused
women tend to live in a state of fear and uncertainty and they are often deprived of the joys of childhood. Abuse or violence in their homes disrupt the children’s sense of safety and security and threaten their well-being. These children often end up with problems in their emotional, behavioural, social, and physical development. Others may subsequently exhibit aggression, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and below average academic performance, delinquency and other emotional problems. Adolescents are at risk of academic failure, school drop-out, substance abuse and difficulties in their own relationships (Women’s Rural Advocacy Programmes, 2007). The abuse in the participants’ relationships also extends to their significant others such as their family and friends. It is evident in this study that the extended families of participants tend to also suffer from effects of partner abuse in the sense that they are continuously estranged as the abuse intensifies. The significant others may be alienated by the abused woman herself who breaks off from family and friends in an effort to please the abuser or in an attempt to camouflage the abuse. Extended families may also withdraw from the abused woman because of their feelings of debilitation, frustration, bewilderment and/or because of the abuser’s threats or acts of violence towards them (Mashishi, 1998).

7.4 Cluster 3: Efforts to curb the abuse
Cluster 3 shows that Black South African Women in this study have made various efforts to curb the abuse which includes submissiveness towards their husbands, communication, leaving the marriage and coming back, compromising and going for counselling. All to no avail. A study conducted by Burke, Denison, Carison Giele, Mcdonel and O’Campo (2004), found that women in abusive relationships do take action to survive and cope. Burke et al., (2004) speak of processes that women follow that lead them to seek information and gaining better understanding regarding the abuse, to start looking at important things in life, to confront their partners about the abuse and accepting that one cannot change anyone but yourself. Being submissive to one’s partner is a cultural and religious expectation among African marriages. The majority of Black Women subscribe to Christian faith and adhere to what the Bible prescribes. For instance, the Bible contains a verse from Ephesians 5:23, which states that women have to be submissive to their husbands. This statement according to Motsei (2007), puts pressure on a woman to endure all forms of abuse within the marriage. It is also a known fact that African traditional practices
such as payment of *lobola* or bride price among black people is carried with a notion that the bride belongs to the husband and therefore has to be submissive to him (Motsei, 2007).

7.5 **Cluster 4: Coping Mechanisms**

In terms of *coping mechanisms*, Herbert, Silver and Ellard (1991), concur that women who remain with abusive partners appear to employ cognitive strategies that help them perceive their relationship in a positive manner. It was evident in this study that participants used strategies such as *positive self-talk, communication, reading motivational books, praying, turning negatives into positives and going for counselling* to cope with the abuse in their relationships. Burke et al., (2004), concur that an abused woman does sometimes follow processes which lead her to seek information and gain better understanding regarding the abuse. According to Burke et al., (2004), once a woman has acknowledged that she is abused, she may start looking at important things in life, confront the partner about the abuse, she may start accepting that one cannot change a person, but herself. These processes mentioned above make a person to start becoming liberated socially and subsequently not needing validation from a man. A woman also starts to seek helping relationships such as talking to family, seeking and accepting help from institutions and going for counselling. Self-liberation occurs when an individual chooses and commits to changing the problem behaviour. Self-liberation includes setting some boundaries and sticking to them. Once a woman has initiated action, she needs to have confidence in her ability to both end the abuse and to stay free from it and this is called self-efficacy (Burke et al., 2004; Salazar, Hogberg, Valledares & Ohman, 2012).

7.6 **Cluster 5: Reasons for staying in abusive marriages**

Participants mentioned various *reasons for staying in their abusive marriages* which include *social, psychological and cultural traditional factors*. *Social factors* contributing to Black South African Women who are educated and employed, to stay in abusive relationships include: *convenience* particularly in terms of shelter, *lack of adequate finance and putting the children’s best interests first*. It should be noted that all participants in this study are government workers and it is a known fact that government employees do not earn good salaries as compared to people working in the private sector. This particular study shows that even though the participants are working and are earning salaries, their remuneration is not enough to offer them...
independence in terms of shelter and other necessities for survival, therefore, as a result, they
find themselves staying in abusive relationships for the sake of convenience particularly in terms
of shelter. This is in line with what Choice and Lamke (1997), state that the essential aspect of
women’s stay or leave decision revolve around two central questions, namely; (1) “Will I be
better off”; and (2) “Can I do it?”. Dobash and Dobash (1980), alludes that doubt that abused
women can get along alone causes them to be trapped in abusive marriages, as it is evident with
the Black South African Women participating in this study. Anderson (2000), also concur that
women remain in abusive relationships because of their limited economic and social resources.
Authors like Choice and Lamke (1997); Dangor (1995) and Singh (2005), have written about this
phenomenon and the consensus amongst them is that factors which create conducive
environment for abuse includes women’s social, economic and political dependence on men. It
is clear that Black South African Women participating in this study, even though they are
educated and employed, do not earn sufficient salaries to earn them independence outside their
abusive marriages. Colonial and apartheid governments, in addition to oppressing Black Women
because of their race, also introduced laws that relegate women to third class citizens (Tshesane,
2001). Most Black South African Women participating in this study grew up during the
apartheid era where women were regarded as third class citizens and have subsequently adjusted
to the fact that women have to depend on men for support. The dependency was exacerbated by
the fact that even though they managed to push themselves academically, their salaries are too
low for their independent survival. This is a sad reality for government workers in South Africa
including the Black South African Women participating in this study. The other factor trapping
most participants in their abusive relationships is that, leaving the abusive marriage will mean
having to sacrifice their children’s convenience of having their own space and that of being
raised by both parents. Dangor (1999), espouses that leaving an abusive relationship entails a
lower standard of living for the women and their children. The resource theory suggests that
women, who are economically dependent on their spouses and have children to take care of,
experience difficulty in leaving abusive relationships because leaving the relationship would
increase their financial burden. Dependency means that these women have fewer resources to
help them cope with or change their spouse’s behaviour (Loue, 2001). According to Gelles
(1986), doubt that they can get along alone and the fact that they have children who need a
father’s support, have been considered as influences on decisions women make either to stay or leave their relationships.

The participants’ decision to stay for the sake of the children seems to outweigh the negative psychological impact that the abuse can have on the children if they continue to live in an abusive environment. According to social learning theory both perpetration and acceptance of abuse is learned behaviour which is learned through childhood models in the family or community (Musson-Seedat, 2008). There is therefore a risk that children who grow up in an abusive environment may grow up to be abusers themselves or endure abuse if they are girls. The abuse can impact negatively on their studies and social functioning as stated previously.

The psychological factors which trap the Black South African Women participating in this study in abusive marriages include: learned helplessness, traumatic bonding, hope that their husbands will change, fear of losing property, loyalty and loving their husbands despite the abuse. The participants seemed to have channelled themselves into a position of accepting rather than challenging the abuse in their marriages. When efforts to curb the abuse did not yield the expected outcomes, participants lost motivation to continue trying. They consequently believed that there is nothing they could do to change the situation so they learned to live with the situation. This is what Walker (1984), calls learned helplessness and it seems to be another reason why abused women do not attempt to leave abusive relationships. According to Walker’s theory of learned helplessness, after several attempts to control the violence in their relationships, women tend to produce learned helplessness and depression. Walker (1984), alludes that an abused woman becomes demotivated when her efforts to curb the abuse do not yield the expected outcome and as a result, she loses motivation to emit new responses. Consequently she comes to believe that there is nothing she can do to change the situation, so she stops trying. Learned helplessness contributes to low self-esteem and psychological paralysis on the part of a woman which leads her to enduring abuse and maintaining the victim status. Traumatic bonding seems to be another factor trapping the participants in their abusive relationships. Roberts (1996), speaks of traumatic bonding theory which postulates that strong emotional ties develop between two people where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses or intimidate the other. The abused person tends to be physically and
emotionally exhausted from the abuse and is most likely to develop a corresponding need for support and affection. She then becomes vulnerable to the abuser’s apologies and promises. The couple may once again become loving until the next violent attack. This cycle explains the victim’s reluctance to leave or persecute the abuser. This is comparable to the Stockholm syndrome where the abused is always grateful for small displays of kindness from the abuser. The abused rationalises acts of violence and is often in denial of her anger (Ramashia, 2009). When the abused women’s answer to the question “why do you stay in an abusive relationship?” they respond with “Because I love him”. This is known as the Stockholm syndrome where the victim experiences a sense of sympathy with the abuser (Dixon, 1998).

*Hope that their partners will change*, as mentioned by Black South African Women in this study, also causes them to stay in abusive marriages. According to Dawn and Matthews (2004), this hope is brought about by many memories of happy times and hope that those will return and the partner may also promise to change. Stevens (2007), sees low self-esteem, denial, a feeling that ‘things will get better,’ fear for the children and so forth, as the reasons women stay in abusive relationships. Dobash and Dobash (1980), affirm that other psychological, socio-psychological and social factors such as traditional sexual ideology, fear, poor self-image, hope that the husband will change or reform and the impact of the husband’s expression of love or sorrow, doubt that they can get along alone, stigma attached to divorce, children who need their father’s support and the difficulty for a woman who has children to find a job have been considered as influences on decisions women make either to stay or leave abusive relationships (Gelles, 1986). Most of the barriers to leaving an abusive marriage mentioned above are applicable in the experiences of Black South African Women participating in this study.

### 7.7 Cluster 6: Making sense of the abuse

In making sense of the abuse, among other things, most participants attributed the abuse to the manner in which their husbands were brought up, gender roles which are enforcing, cultural and traditional matters, husband’s inferiority, husband’s abuse of alcohol, ignorance, marrying at a young age, and incompatibility. Most Black South African Women participating in this study mentioned that their husbands are abusive because they either witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers or they lacked parental love as children, or both. Bandura’s social learning theory
is used to justify the participants’ partners’ behaviour. Social learning theory is the mostly used theory in the literature of women abuse (Okun, 1986). Bandura (1973), says people learn behaviour through observing others. He further postulates that if people observe certain behaviour in their environment, they are more likely to model, imitate and adopt the behaviour, even if it is bad behaviour. According to this theory, the abusive behaviour displayed by their husbands could have been learned from their fathers and on the same token and equally so, the participants could have learned to endure abuse from seeing their mothers allowing and enduring abuse. This theory therefore qualifies abuse as behaviour which can be learned and modelled. Later in this discussion it will be alluded to as to how culture and tradition has perpetuated the abuse of women through learning and adhering to rules and utterances that enforce endurance to abuse. Black South African Women participating in this study also attributed the abuse to their husbands’ lack of proper nurturance. They mentioned that their husbands are abusive because they never received love as children. Participants mentioned that their husband grew up in hostile environments where they were ill-treated by their care givers and were not properly nurtured. In other words the perpetrators never received love and therefore find it difficult to give love. What the participants are alluding to is in line with Fairbairn's (1952) secular object relations model of the development of the human personality which put emphasis on the power of the environment to form inner ego structures. This theory puts forward that there are ensuing tragic results for all human infants who are faced with an environment which is not nurturing. According to Fairbairn’s theory, every act that children take to ensure their continuing attachment to a frustrating, yet tormenting object undermines their developing ego structure. The consequence of the severely compromised ego structure according to the objects relation theory, results in the repetition of certain compulsions in adulthood as illustrated by the syndrome of abusing women (Celani 1999). The attachment theory also provides an explanation of abuse as postulated by Black South African Women in this study. A review of the attachment theory by McClellan and Killen (2007) revealed that men who are prone to abusing their partners are those who were insecurely attached as infants and as a result their internal working models of attachment relationships include the use of violence or aggression to gain power and control. According to this theory, these internal working models are brought into their adult relationships, particularly with their partners (McClellan & Killen, 2007). Gillard and James (1997), concur that there has been some evidence of relationship between spousal violence and the number of
separations and loss events experienced by abusers and their families of origin and the erratic care giving patterns of abuser’s parents.

The participants in this study, who are educated and employed and yet suffer abuse, perceived enforcing gender roles as one of the causes of abuse in their marriages. These Black South African Women mentioned that they are expected by their husbands to act in particular gendered ways and to carry out specific tasks because they are women. The Black South African Women’s culture and tradition has relegated them to being house mates who are supposed to carry all the household duties without any assistance from their partners. This is despite the fact that these women are employed and are subject to fatigue like their partners. These Black South African Women are expected to wake up in the morning, wash and dress the children, prepare breakfast for the family, iron and prepare clothes for themselves and their husbands, go to work and come back to another routine of cooking supper, dishing up for everyone, helping children with homework, washing dishes and preparing the children for bed. Tired as they may be, after all the heavy household chores they are still expected to provide sexual satisfaction to their husbands and on weekends they are faced with doing the laundry for the whole family. With their meagre salaries, these Black South African Women cannot even afford the services of domestic helpers. Even if they could afford such services, their husbands do not support the idea of them being assisted. Because they are African Women, they are supposed to work like slaves. After being worked like slaves without any help from their husbands, they are not given a voice in their marriages because of their gender. Their husbands continue to use gender to oppress them. In view of the above, one could say that Black South African Women’s households are like kingdoms with kings and no queens, but slaves (this refers to Women in this study). Owomoyela (1996), agrees that from the domestic domain among Black people, females are at the disadvantaged position even before they are born, in the sense that male children are being more preferred and celebrated by all parents than female children. The two genders even receive different treatment as they grow up, the male being groomed to become a responsible family head in the future, he is also assured of his father’s inheritance and status, while the female is simply held in waiting until she is old enough to be delivered to her husband in return for lobola. As a wife the female must bear and rear her husband’s children, do his laundry, cook his food, keep his house clean, pamper him, share him with other women, only to be rewarded with
varieties of abuse by her man. The above statements concur with that of Owomoyela (1996), the experiences of Black South African Women in this study who are educated and employed suffer abuse with its consequent gender discrimination and control.

*Cultural and traditional factors* were also mentioned by the Black South African Women participating in this study as the cause of abuse in their relationships. The participants in this study attributed the abuse to *cultural stereotypes, beliefs and traditional utterances* that urge women to endure abuse. These include the belief that the abuse occurs because the couple was bewitched. Other factors mentioned by participants, involved stereotypes such as the man is a *Sotho* man and therefore cannot change. This factor attests to the fact that it is difficult to change an African man’s behaviour, probably because of the domineering status assigned to them by culture and tradition. Other common reasons given by women for staying in abusive relationships include socially determined reasons which involve utterances like “it’s part of marriage” (Makofane, 2002), or *“mosadi o ngalla motsheo”* (a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage). Makofane (2002), maintains that women are often brainwashed into believing the aggression of males is innate and inevitable. This happens because of gender roles in our societies which prescribe that men are supposed to be in charge, cannot help being violent or have the right to discipline women. Even though participants did not specifically mention *lobola* as a cause of gender inequality, literature indicated that *lobola* can be abused by men and bring a connotation that women were bought at a price, therefore they are men’s property. Traditional practices after the payment of *lobola* mentioned in Chapter 3 include instructions given to a woman as to how she is supposed to conduct herself in marriage. It is evident that some Black South African Women in this study also received those instructions such as a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage. The specific instruction given to those participants was that *mosadi o ngalla motsheo*, meaning that a woman is not supposed to leave her marriage no matter how difficult it is. These traditional practises seem to perpetuate the abuse of women and they seem to be more emphasised to women than men. There are many such instructions as alluded to in Chapter 3, that are given to women, which are not written up and the researcher draws them up from her own experience as a Black African Woman. These include utterances such as *monna ha a botswe* which means that a woman is not at liberty to question her husband. The woman is also taught that *monna ke mokopu o oa nama* (a man is a pumpkin that spreads in
the whole garden) which means that a man can have as many relationships as he want without being questioned. The woman is also made to understand that a man is allowed to sleep out with other women and utterances such as monna ke selepe o lala a kadimilwe are used, here a man is compared to an axe which can be lent to other people at any given time. A Black African Woman has to adhere to these instructions and make them part of her life in order to be regarded as mosadi oa sebele (a real woman). All these utterances and instructions seem to lead to the abuse of Black African Women because these women are expected to adhere to them without questioning so as to prove that they are real women. A Black African Woman who questions or violates these instructions is viewed as being disrespectful by the society. Dangor (1999), concurs that the cultural stereotypes and traditions encourage women to be silent in the interest of ‘saving face’ for the sake of the family. This is also in line with what Singh (2005), purports, that adherence to these normative rules is totally unrelated to the level of education, profession, or wealth. They are cultural standards that must be maintained no matter what. This means that no amount of education or affluence can exonerate a Black African Woman from cultural norms and tradition. For instance, Black South African Women’s roles as ngwetsi /umakoti (daughter in law) are to meet everybody’s needs in the family including all the household chores. Most of the time there is no appreciation for all her efforts and sacrifices but instead she is met with all kinds of criticisms, particularly by her mother in law, as it was evident in this study. Dangor (1995), affirms that a woman is a woman’s worst enemy most of the time. Dangor further purports that when a woman’s role changes from daughter in law to becoming the mother in law, she inflicts the same pain and tribulations on her daughter in law, perhaps as a way of avenging what she had gone through as a daughter in law. More often as Dangor (1995) illustrates, petty squabbles and jealousies over trivial matters fuels the dislike for mother and daughters in law.

Singh (2005), argues that before people can judge the abused woman’s actions of staying on in an abusive relationship as reasonable or unreasonable, clinical or pathological, they have to position her race and cultural reality. The results of a study called Gender, Control and Marital Commitment conducted by Stets and Hammons (2002), showed that cultural meanings and social structure meanings combine to produce outcomes for commitment in marriage. Singh (2005), affirms that research also shows that difference in marital norms which are shaped by cultural standards do affect a woman’s decision to remain in, or leave an abusive relationship. This is
because in other races and cultures (like most black cultures) women are taught to fully commit in marriage and endure whatever comes with it. This is affirmed by Makofane (2002), who says women who have been socialized to believe in traditional roles are more likely to stay in abusive marriages than those who have not. The cultural mores and traditional practises still perpetuate the abuse of African Women, even today.

Motsei (2007), puts the plight of Black Women very clearly by stating that Black Women have since inception been objects to men as it is evident in this study. Motsei (2007), submits that throughout infancy, puberty and adulthood, girls and women remain in the cultural and legal custody of their fathers, lacking their own identity. Later this responsibility of custodianship is transferred to their husbands who dictate and control them. In adulthood, these women are faced with unequal access to educational, political and economic opportunities. They are exposed to sexual harassment and marital rapes which predispose them to HIV/AIDS. In old age, writes Motsei (2007), they are scorned for no longer being receptacles of men’s sexual desires. If their husbands happen to die before them, they are more often accused of bewitching them, and as widows, they suffer further abuse from their husbands’ relatives. These are the ordeals of Black African Women.

Although its objectives of ending the subordination of women are not yet fully achieved, feminism seems to have played a major part in the changing role and status of women in South Africa and around the world (Bryson, 1999). Since the wave of feminist demands that started in the late 1960’s, women in many parts of the world have gained a whole range of legal rights, opportunities and protection. There is a near global movement of women into paid jobs and a movement of women in areas of work previously monopolised by men. Many women have achieved successful careers and full economic independence and the earning gaps between women and men are gradually declining. Women are now able to control their fertility and they also have freedom of sexual choice and expression. Violence against women is now widely recognised as a serious political issue rather than a joke or a natural state of affairs. Many women have moved into positions of political power and women are making their voices heard in the media and throughout academic and cultural areas (Bryson, 1999).
Womanism as stated in Chapter 2, which was formed as an opposition to feminism, is not necessarily concerned about gender issues, but is dedicated to the empowerment of both men and women. Womanists believe that Black Women are not only victims of gender inequality but also victims of race and class inequality. The argument of womanists is that Black Women are not just abused by their men but they are also abused by other women who are White supremists who happen to employ them. Womanism was formed in retaliation to white dominated feminism, their argument being that Black Women experience different and more intense kind of oppression from that of White women. Womanists believe that different women are oppressed differently and they put forward the importance of class, race and culture in configuring gender relations (Bryson, 1999). This proves to be true with the Black South African Women in this study, who are oppressed by their spouses, their mothers in law and perhaps even more, by their employers. Whereas the theory of feminism commits itself to eradication of gender inequalities, the theory of womanism commits itself to the survival and wholeness of all people, both men and women. Despite all the organisations and movements formed against the abuse of women, this study showed that Black South African Women are still abused in their relationships.

_Husband’s inferiority_ was also mentioned by participants as one of the causes of abuse in their relationships. In the South African political economy, the majority of Black men occupy low paying jobs as is evident with the participants’ partners in this study. They therefore perhaps experience themselves as oppressed and impotent and as a result they are likely to take out their frustrations by dominating another domain, for example their women (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). According to Vogelman and Eagle (1991), women experience dual oppression: ‘Indirectly they are subjected to men’s’ anger in relation to their race, and directly they become the focus of such anger due to patriarchal structures” (p.11). According to Vogelman and Eagle (1991), Black men’s experience of racism and economic deprivation often causes a reactionary back lash within the family to the detriment of women, rather than opening up the space for resistance to race and class oppression. Ramphele’s comment about the South African socio-political situation is that “it has impacted on the working class black men in a way that brings out the worst aspects of chauvinism in them” (Ramphele, 1984 p.394). As far as Ramphele is concerned, Black Women serve as the only cushion against these men’s powerlessness that was created by the apartheid system and any suggestion of equality serves as a threat to their egos.
Feelings of *inferiority* were shown to contribute to abuse as mentioned by one participant who stated that her husband abuses her because she earns a better salary than him. In their study called *For Women, Breadwinning Can Be Dangerous: Gendered Resource Theory and Wife Abuse*, Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005), found that a wife’s share of relative income is positively related to the likelihood of abuse but this is only with traditional husbands. Although income and educational attainment reduce women's risk of physical violence and emotional abuse by husbands, Kaukinen (2004), contends that status *incompatibilities* between partners that favour women increase the likelihood of them being emotionally abused.

It was evident in this study that *alcohol abuse* is another factor that influences intimate partner abuse. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2013), there is evidence to support the relationship between alcohol and intimate partner abuse. According to WHO, alcohol use directly affects cognitive and physical function thus reducing self-control and leaving individuals less capable of negotiating non-violent resolution to conflict within relationships. It has also been noted that excessive consumption of alcohol by one partner can worsen financial difficulties, child care problems, infidelity and other family stressors (WHO, 2013).

Some participants blamed their *ignorance* and *marrying at a young age* for the abuse in their relationships. They mentioned that they were aware of the signs of abuse during dating with their partners but they chose to ignore them. de Benedictis et al., (2006), affirm that there are many signs of abuse and the primary sign of abuse in a relationship is fear of one’s partner. Other signs according to de Benedictis et al., (2006) include a partner who belittles or tries to control his partner, feelings of self-loathing, numbness, helplessness and desperation. It is clear that the participants became aware of the signs of abuse early in their relationships but chose to ignore them. A study conducted by Gondolf and Eisher amongst the Hispanic community in America found that the superior role of the man, including other realities such as a woman *marrying at a young age*, proved to be factors among others that locked them in abusive marriages (Singh, 2005).
According to Mbiti (1969), “marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate” p.133). One who does not participate in marriage is regarded as a curse to the African community and he or she is regarded as a rebel and a law breaker. Not getting married is a serious philosophical concern among traditional African people. Failure to get married is seen as rejection of the society, and the society therefore rejects you in return (Mbiti, 1969). Marriage also called lenyalo in Sesotho and umendo in IsiZulu is seen by Mbiti (1969) as the focus of existence for African people. Therefore, Black African Women usually find themselves under pressure to marry at a young age to avoid being labelled as mafetwa (the ones who have been passed). Schapera (1939) confirms that in the African culture, people who are not married at a specific age are labelled as mafetwa ‘those who have been passed by’. The risk of these Black South African Women marrying at a young age is that they are usually naïve, vulnerable and economically dependent on their men which make them susceptible to abuse.

7.8 Cluster 7: Future in their abusive relationships

Black South African Women in this study commented differently regarding their future in their abusive relationships. Some participants saw themselves continuing with the marriage despite the abuse, others were uncertain and the majority wanted to leave but they seemed to be trapped by convenience in terms of shelter and lack of adequate finances that could earn them independence. Factors which trap women in abusive marriages have been highlighted in previous discussions in this section and therefore will not be repeated.

Towards finishing the study, the researcher discovered by default through meeting accidentally with two of her participants, that these two Black South African Women, who are educated and employed, managed to leave their abusive marriages and divorced their husbands. This brought hope to the researcher that women, (though on a small scale) are gradually winning the battle of self-liberation and authenticity. One of the two participants who managed to divorce her husband resorted to lesbianism. This could be a sign of her resentment towards men and perhaps an endeavour to explore other kinds of intimate relationships with the hope that they will work out differently for her.
7.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of results which were integrated with relevant literature where applicable. It was evident that being educated and employed does not exonerate the Black South African Women in this study from being abused and from being trapped in abusive marriages. This particular study has shown that educated professional women, who are employed, can also be trapped in abusive marriages like all other women who are illiterate and destitute. Research conducted by Barkhuizen and Pretorius (2005), confirms that even professional women, who are working and contribute to the household finances, also suffer abuse in their intimate relationships and they continue to stay in these relationships. The researcher hopes that the integration in this chapter has elicited a comprehensive and rich description of the essence of Black South African Women and their experiences of abuse in their marriages.

The next chapter will capture conclusion, limitations, strengths, recommendations of the study and the final conclusion.
CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusion
It was clear in this study that being educated and employed does not exonerate women from being abused by their husbands. Black South African Women in this study despite being educated and employed, experience all kinds of abuse such as physical, emotional, verbal, financial and sexual abuse like all other women who are poor and uneducated. Unlike in the past, an increase in the living standards of the society has forced Black Women to go out and earn in order to contribute to the family income. One would think that this state of affairs has caused an improvement in educated women’s lives, but on the contrary, as evidenced by this study, the plight of some Black South African Women, educated or not, still remains the same. The study also revealed that the abuse has negative physical, psychological and social effects on them. In making sense of why the abuse happens in their marriages, it was evident in this study, that the participants experienced male domination brought about by gender inequality and issues of power and control. Literature in Chapter 2 and 3 showed that gender power and control among Black people is brought about by how children are brought up and socialized.

Even though participants did not specifically mention lobola (bride price) as a cause of gender inequality, literature in Chapter 3 indicated that lobola can be abused by men and bring about a connotation that women were bought at a price and therefore, can be controlled by their husbands. Even though these Black South African Women, who are educated and employed, have tried several strategies to curb the abuse, it still persists. This shows that there is more work that needs to be done by women in terms of curbing the abuse or deciding what they want to eventually do with their abusive situation. The study also revealed that the lack of resources such as shelters for abused women and children, lack of adequate finances, hoping that their partners will change, cultural and traditional influences, and learned helplessness are some of the factors keeping the participants in their abusive relationships. Their future plans regarding their marriages are to eventually leave, however their biggest fear is struggling in terms of finances and shelter. The financial lack could be attributed to the fact that participants in this study are
teachers and nurses who work for the government. It is a known fact that government employees do not earn much and as a result they find themselves challenged financially. Over and above lack of finance and shelters where the participants can stay temporarily while sorting out their lives, the participants find themselves trapped by other factors which were mentioned above.

8.2 Limitations of the study

The researcher recognises that she has influenced the research by choosing the topic, interview questions and all methodological aspects of the research. The study was conducted from a subjective standpoint and the researcher may have introduced some bias to the data analysis. In an attempt to avoid potential bias, the researcher adopted the following strategies:

- In being consistent with the phenomenological methods, the researcher attempted to bracket all her presuppositions and theories.
- The interviews were transcribed verbatim and the participants’ language was not changed.
- Clusters of themes were validated by justification from raw data by way of direct quotations and findings were qualified and supported by literature study where possible.

In view of the above limitation, it may be suggested that another independent researcher may have interpreted the same study with the same participants quite differently.

Identifying participants was not easy because of the sensitive nature of the topic of this study. Accordingly, the participants in this study were accessed through a psychologist and word of mouth referrals. The participants in turn referred their friends who they believed would be willing to take part within the study. Accessing participants from a psychologist posed a great deal of inconvenience on the part of the psychologist who risked bridging confidentiality. To avoid bridging confidentiality, a letter was written to participants whereby the researcher committed to handling the participants’ information with the strictest confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the participants’ anonymity. The number of participants was limited, therefore the findings of this study cannot be generalised but are limited to Black South African Women who are educated and employed but choose to remain in abusive relationships and who were participants of this study. The English language was also a limitation for both the researcher and the participants because English is not their home language. Perhaps using their
home language could have elicited far richer descriptions of their experiences and the researcher could have made a far better analysis of the participants’ data.

8.3 Strengths of the study
The study had strength in terms of culture and race in the sense that only Black South African Women were interviewed and the fact that the participants were of Sotho tribe and of Christian religion. This has a potential to evoke similar research in other African tribes.

This study was successful in achieving its three aims, that is, it was successful in:

- Providing an in depth description of the experiences of Black South African Women who are educated and employed and yet suffer abuse in their relationships.
- Eliciting the significant themes which characterise the experiences of Black South African Women who are in abusive relationships.
- Creating awareness of the nature and depth of women abuse amongst women themselves, the South African society and hopefully the helping professions including the discipline of psychology.

Furthermore, the description of the phenomenon of Black South African Women has elicited numerous relevant implications which may facilitate further research in the experiences of Black South African Women.

8.4 Personal Reflections
The nature of this study and my personal and professional involvement with Black South African Women who are educated and employed but endure abusive marriages, requires that I do a personal reflection on the research process. It seems that in conducting the study, I wanted it to answer my long unanswered question regarding what abuse entails and why women stay in abusive marriages. Like many other women, I had a misconception that if one’s partner provides her with all material things such as food, shelter, expensive cars and also provides financially for her and the children, and not attacking her physically nor verbally, one cannot say she in an abusive relationship. Little did I know that the physical and emotional presence of a husband and a father supersedes all the material things money can buy. The literature and theory came alive in this study and were given a deeply human voice and spirit through my interactions with my participants who were courageous enough to participate in this study. Most of the participants’
experiences resonated with my own such that it felt as though I was looking at myself in a
mirror. It was through my journey with the participants and through literature that I began to
reflect about issues in my own relationship. Through this research process, I was able to discover
a lot of factors encapsulated in emotional abuse which I was ignorant of. Prior to the study about
Black South African Women who are educated and employed, but choose to stay in abusive
relationships, I became curious to find out what keeps them in such marriages. It was interesting
to discover that my search for meaning in my experiences was also shared by the participants as
we took a journey in the study.

Phenomenological research requires that a researcher should “bracket” her feelings and
assumptions. Throughout the interviews I had a challenging task of having to constantly remind
myself that I am not a therapist in this case, but a researcher. It was also as though the
participants were having expectations that I would provide answers to their abusive situations as
a psychologist. At times I felt a need to rescue them from their pain but the reality of the matter
was that I had to maintain my role as researcher. The current study served as an eye opener to me
in the sense that, I began to see my relationship in a different light. I began to exercise
authenticity, to trust my own judgement and opinion and also realised that it is possible to
exercise self-love, self-reliance and self-liberation.

In conclusion, I can say that conducting the study served as a therapeutic journey for me and
completing the study made me realise that one is responsible for one’s own happiness. I have
learned that self-love, self-reliance, self-liberation and authenticity are the key factors in self-
empowerment as a woman. By the time I completed this study, I had already liberated myself by
letting go of all material things that trapped me in an emotionally abusive relationship and I
moved out to seek inner peace and reclaim my happiness. I believe that other Black South
African Women can do the same.
8.5 Recommendations

The participants in this study were all government workers who earn a small income even though they are educated. It is recommended that further studies should explore other fields where Black South African Women earn a decent salary and yet still choose to stay in abusive marriages. This will include medical doctors and psychologists in private practice, women in parliament as well as women in successful businesses. Further research should specifically focus on how economic background affects the decision of Black economically empowered women to stay in abusive marriages. Another study can explore the role of historical and traditional practices in keeping educated and well off Black South African Women in abusive marriages.

Creating awareness is the key in changing belief systems. The researcher recommends that groups of women, the general public, men, abusers, children and service providers should be constantly targeted in conducting research and imparting knowledge about issues of abuse and gender dominance. Workshops by multidisciplinary teams which include psychologists, social workers, police and other community stakeholders should be done to create awareness regarding the abuse of women. More research should be conducted about the availability of shelters for women and children. This may help in the establishment of more such shelters so that women do not find themselves trapped in abusive marriages because of the inconvenience of accommodation.

Women’s social and economic dependence on men seem to be factors which create an environment for potential abuse. It is therefore, recommended that studies should be conducted which will focus on how women can be empowered to be self-reliant and not depend on their spouses for survival. The researcher affirms that it will take women to free themselves from the scourge of abuse. A further recommendation is that more studies should be conducted which will lead to the development of models that will assist women in changing their behaviour of enduring abuse.

8.6 Final Conclusion
Finally, the Women’s bill of rights mentioned here under is a polemical declaration to conscientise and mobilise not only Black South African Women, but all women, to stand out, break the silence and challenge all forms of abuse in a male dominated society and it read as follows:

**A WOMAN’S BILL OF RIGHTS**

You have the right to be you.

You have the right to put yourself first.

You have the right to be safe.

You have the right to love and be loved.

You have the right to be treated with respect.

You have the right to be human – NOT PERFECT.

You have the right to be angry and protest if you are treated unfairly or abusively by anyone.

You have the right to your own privacy.

You have the right to your own opinions, to express them, and to be taken seriously.

You have the right to earn and control your own money.

You have the right to ask about anything that affects your life.

You have the right to make decisions that affect you.

You have the right to grow and change (and that includes changing your mind).

You have the right to say no.

You have the right to make mistakes.

You have the right NOT to be responsible for other adults’ problems.

You have the right not to be liked by everyone.

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CONTROL YOUR OWN LIFE AND TO CHANGE IT IF YOUR ARE NOT HAPPY WITH IT AS IT IS.**

(Author)
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH DP

**Interviewer:** Good afternoon and thanks for coming. We are going to start with our interview. I am going to call you DP, as we have discussed to ensure confidentiality. Our interview as I have explained, is about your experiences of abuse in your relationship.

**DP:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** Now DP, describe how you, as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship.

**DP:** I can say I feel my husband is not treating me like his wife. I feel he treats me like I don’t know... his sister. When I am out of the house, he won’t phone and ask if I am ok. Instead he will switch his phone off. Even if I have a problem I know that he is the last person I can contact...Ja, I better contact the police if I can find myself involved in a car accident, or my car has jammed. He is not the kind of a person that you can discuss anything with. Like financially…it is difficult, I cannot even ask him for two rand…. He will say he does not have it even though he does have it.

**Interviewer:** Mh...Ok. Is that all?

**DP:** No... Even the rate at which at which he drinks. I feel he does not respect me. He knows how I feel about alcohol, he knows I don’t like it…eh when he is at his parents’ house he does not drink at all, and even if he can stay for five days he does not drink. He understands his mother and his siblings. He knows that they don’t want alcohol in the home for some reasons. He is not able to give me the same respect he gives to his mother; he does not take me seriously. He does not communicate anything with me. When he goes to a function or to his home, he does not tell me anything. He just packs his things and goes without saying anything. He does not take me seriously. I hear about other things in the streets. Even a simple invitation like the unveiling of tombstone, he won’t tell me that he is leaving and that he will come back late. Many people blame me for not honouring their invitations. They don’t know that I don’t get told these things…. it is expected that when the husband is invited he should convey the message to his wife, but he does not do that.

**Interviewer:** M...mm.....

**DP:** Even when he goes out, he won’t tell me. He will just say I am coming.

**Interviewer:** Mh...... you’ll only hear when you ask?

**DP:** I don’t even ask anymore, I just look at him. I’ve been asking for too long. I am tired (laughing)…..I don’t ask anymore.
**Interviewer:** Ok, when did you become aware that your partner is abusive?

**DP:** I think I started becoming aware after two years into my marriage.

**Interviewer:** What happened? How did you become aware?

**DP:** I was already having my second born child. My husband was staying in Qwaqwa and I was staying in Natalspruit. He has a car but when the children and I have to commute between Qwaqwa and Natalspruit, we had to use public transport. My kids are two years apart; can you imagine me with the small child and the baby on my back, the bags, baby bottles and all...going to a public transport? He would say “No, I won’t be able to transport you with my car, go to a public transport. So I noticed from that that this man is abusive.

**Interviewer:** Is that all?

**DP:** The other thing is....let’s say we are going to work the following day and I have to prepare clothes for example ironing.....he will take out about three trousers for me to straighten. When I ask why he does that his responds will be “I’ll choose in the morning which one I want to wear.” He will then choose one trousers and mess up the rest. The following day he repeats the same procedure. Then he will take the brown trousers and take the rest of the trousers back to the wardrobe, the following day he takes out another three and I have to iron them. At some stage he mentioned that he has a wife and does not need a helper, so I am supposed to be the helper. I would point out to him why I need a helper. I mean.....My home is in Natalspruit, he comes from Tweeling, and we don’t have any relatives in the Vaal. What do we do on weekends when we have to attend funerals? What’s going to happen if there is no one to look after the kids? We will be stuck and..... I am also human; he is a teacher like me, we are both always tired, we have schedules....this and that to do…you see? My schedules have to stop not his. When I go to town, if for example I said to him I was going to the bank and then decide to go to Checkers, he will make a big issue out of it… He would say “but you said you were going to the bank! How did you end up going to Checkers? He controls my movements. I realized that is not good. In life everyone has his/her own rights…but no one can tell him anything. You cannot tell him anything because he is a man you see. He uses his manhood to control me, a typical Sotho man! He is always abusive, he does not change. Even if we can have a meeting with both our parents, as soon as they leave he goes back to his abusive behaviour. Even if I can try to change myself, perhaps look at my own faults, try to fix them, because he is a Sotho man he will not even notice or change. He once said to me that since he was born, he has never been told what to do by a woman. No woman will tell him that he is wrong. You understand that since he was born he has always been right. I don’t know that is possible.

**Interviewer:** So, he never gets told by a woman.
DP: No! No! No woman can tell him anything.

Interviewer: What events stand out for you in this abusive relationship?

DP: Like the one I talked about….where I had to travel with my children by taxi whereas he had a car…but when the car has problems, I’ll be expected to pop out money to help him fix it, but I don’t enjoy the benefits of the car even though I helped fixing it.

Interviewer: So he is the only one who uses the car, but when it is broken…..

DP: When it is broken, I become part of it.

Interviewer: Mh….

DP: For instance we would be both going to town, I would for example ask him to give me a lift, and he will become so irritable. I would come running; he would start the car roughly and bang the doors. Sometimes it would be raining and I have to go to work, he wouldn’t care how I get there. He won’t even offer me a lift in that car. I will have to fend for myself and he passes at my place of work. But funny enough he is able to fetch his colleagues and give them a lift to work. His colleagues would be sitting comfortably in their houses waiting for him to come and pick them up, but I would be left behind with umbrellas to protect myself against the rain. At some stage I did not have a helper, you know they come and go. My three year old was not attending crèche. I would be carrying the baby in the rain going to drop him off where I leave him. He would not even ask where I leave the baby. He was just not interested. Another thing, when I was pregnant, he did not give me the support, instead he would hurt me, telling me that the child was not his…..as if I was irresponsible! He felt that the pregnancy was not his. Can you imagine! I am pregnant and he keeps on saying that it is not his child….how am I supposed to feel. Does it mean that I am carrying a fatherless child? It seems like I am irresponsible. It’s an insult; I felt like a fifteen year old, it felt like I did not know who impregnated me. After the child was born, he came to the hospital; I did not even tell him that I was due for delivery. How would I do that because he denied the pregnancy? Anyway he did come and named the child. The other incidence is that this one day I had to take my kids home to my parents. When I came back, he had already locked the doors. I could not gain access into the house and I had to sleep in the garage. But if I was with the kids, he could have opened only for their sake. Worst of all, he switched his phone off. He only opened at six o’clock in the morning. He did not even bother to phone and ask where I was and where did I sleep. Afterwards when we talked about the incidence, he said he was not even sure that I slept in the garage, maybe I went somewhere and slept with my boyfriend.

Interviewer: How does the experience of being abused affect you?
DP: I feel bitter; I get so irritable and make an issue out of nothing…I even take out my anger on my children. I feel like I don’t belong, (sobbing) I end up doing wrong things deliberately because there is no appreciation whatsoever, I am not me, I am not what I am supposed to be…. I have changed.

Interviewer: How does the experience affect your significant others?

DP: It affects my friends negatively, I always relate my experiences to them and they end up being stressed because of my issues. You will hear one of my friends saying “I did not sleep well that night after you told me what happened” It also affects my parents. When my mother hears about these experiences, her blood pressure as well as her blood sugar rises. My brother will be furious. They don’t even ask me anymore because it angers them. They are just happy to see me alive. They feel that what they know about this relationship is enough; they don’t want to hear more. When it comes to my children, I always overreact; I am always angry and noisy. Sometimes I feel guilty because I get angry unnecessarily. My kids even know that I always snap at them.

Interviewer: What feelings are generated by this experience?

DP: I have a lot of anger, I am always stressed. I don’t take jokes anymore. Even if a person says something in a jokeful manner, I take it seriously and blow it out of proportion. I overreact. I remember an incident when I snapped on someone unnecessarily, I accused her of racism then I regretted afterwards and I went and apologized. Even at work, I am very irritable; they even call me a “screamer”.

Interviewer: What bodily changes are you aware of?

DP: Obesity! Obesity.

Interviewer: M…what causes that?

DP: Because “ek eet en le (I eat and sleep). When I am stressed I eat a lot. I eat everything from snoek fish to atchar then I sleep. I also suffer from persistent headaches to a point of being admitted into hospital.

Interviewer: What makes you stay in this abusive relationship?

DP: You know what? I have thought that maybe this man will change. I had this English notion that life begins at forty and thought that he was being abusive because he was still young and did not know what he was doing and that when he is forty he would be a different person; and that children are growing maybe he will change and be a different person. Another thing is, I still loved him but hated his behaviour. (silence). I am no longer sure whether I still love him or not. Because just now I would feel I love him, suddenly I feel I don’t want him anymore. Another thing is I am from a divorced family; I didn’t want people to say it is hereditary when I also divorce him. I am afraid that he would say that he is not surprised that I am divorcing him because my parents are divorced. Such
words haunted me. My children as well, especially the older one. For example, I once hinted to them that I want to take them to my parent’s home, he was not happy at all. They had a lot of complains. They felt that we will become an inconvenience. They do not want to start a new life, they can’t live their home. Basically I am staying for their convenience.

**Interviewer:** So it is convenient for the children to stay with both their parents even though you feel you are not ok?

**DP:** But now I feel like I want to move out though it will be inconvenient for the children. Because I have noticed that my husband is beginning to take advantage, he is aware that I won’t leave because of the children. I think about their school, how will they travel? Sometimes I look at my salary……and think how will I manage? (Silence)... I don’t know whether he discusses with them regarding their feelings about moving out. Another thing I look at my salary and think how will I survive? I can’t do anything. I won’t be able to buy a car; I will have to cancel my insurance policies. I am sure he knows that I cannot even afford a roof over my head. Going back home is another stress. They will be happy to have me back for the first three months, thereafter they will feel crowded. I will be fighting with my siblings. I have heard people talking about such experiences.

**Interviewer:** What efforts have you made to curb the abuse in your relationship?

**DP:** I tried to be submissive, you see, doing other things against my will.

**Interviewer:** Mh….things like……?

**DP:** Like when I am invited to a party, I would not go. I was like a fifteen year old. I always knew that my husband would refuse, as if I am not responsible, you see. I would deny myself mixing with people. Believe it’s not, since 1998 almost nine years ago, I have never gone to a music festival. All my friends have gone. I was scared to ask him. Not to say that I don’t want to go. I would always make excuses just to make myself feel better.

**DP:** He even chooses friends for me. He always wants to isolate me. You know what? When my husband arrives midday and finds me wearing night dresses, he becomes so happy, so fulfilled. It makes him happy that I am around, I did not go anywhere. He comments on everything I wear, even underwear. If I wear matching underwear, then for him it means I am going out with my boyfriend. He mentions things like I am comparing myself with my friends who are well to do and are driving 4*4’s.

**Interviewer:** What are your coping mechanisms?

**DP:** I spoil myself buy clothes, spend with my credit card, and after that I feel good.

**Interviewer:** What meaning do you attach to this experience of abuse?
**DP:** I think it’s his upbringing. He is from rural areas, my understanding is that children from rural areas become adults at an early age, they don’t enjoy being kids. The other thing is untruthfulness, he hides his roots. I heard from other people that his father used to drink a lot and was very abusive, that’s why he does not drink in front of his mother. One day he assaulted me and I retaliated. His mother took his son’s side. The first time he hit me I made a court order to make sure it does not happen again. I want to divorce him. But my children feel they are comfortable at their home. It will affect me because he is irresponsible, he won’t support them, and they will starve. I don’t fight anymore, I don’t complain. I am just me. I just live. I don’t try to please him anymore. I do feel I want to quit. I once left him four years ago and I came back thinking that things will improve. I suggested to him that we should just cohabit just for the sake of the children. He makes excuses that the reason there is no peace in the house is that no rituals were made for me as a “makoti” and therefore the ancestors are fighting.

**Interviewer:** Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience?

**DP:** I think so, ja.

**Interviewer:** Thanks very much for your time.
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW WITH TEBOGO

Interviewer: Hello Tebogo and thanks for coming. We are now going to start with our interview. Feel free to talk as everything will be held in confidence…. as I have explained to you.

Tebogo: Good day. Its ok we can start.

Interviewer: How do you as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?

Tebogo: What?

Interviewer: Can you describe how you experience abuse in your relationship?

Tebogo: M... (Pause). What can I say? My husband is not faithful, he lacks the truth. M….er… He had an extramarital relationship and he had a child from outside…… He likes having extramarital affairs. M…he likes affairs. He is very close to his mother. He listens to her more than me. Whatever his mother says he must do he does it, he lacks the truth, even the smallest thing that you think you can solve he is not able to talk about it. I think it is his defence mechanism. He does not communicate, I don’t know whether he is scarred or is it out of habit that he cannot discuss even the simplest thing. He does not know how to solve problems. I endured this for a long time; I’ve been hoping he will change. I loved him despite his mistakes. I used to love him very much. You know how it is like when a woman loves her husband, even when I was in town I would buy him something to make him happy, I did this to make him appear decent. Have you noticed how we working women are? We always want nice appealing things for our families, so I used to do everything, everything for him. Ja! I did everything for him, even supporting him financially. I don’t know what he does with his money. He loses his salary, always comes home penniless after pay day. I don’t know what he does with his money!!! He hides his salary slips. I wish he could be like other men. I loved him too much. I stayed with him for twenty four years. He started when my first born was about five years before he could start school you know when you begin in marriage…. I used to love him …His affair started then. He left me, and I would run after him. I would apologize even if I am not mistaken. He made me a laughing stock. The affair was just in the neighbourhood and I didn’t know. I used to pass there, ignorant of the fact that my husband is having an affair in that house. I would phone him, go to his workplace. I could not concentrate. One day my friend came and told me that my husband is having an affair and a child in the neighbourhood. I was so shocked! I could not even think. I felt like a fool because I was running after him apologizing, not knowing that he has impregnated someone. I was so traumatized; I could not even fall asleep. I was so heartbroken. Coming to think that I saw that girl the very same day. God is great….. he was
exposed.. I called the girlfriend just for a chat. I had bought clothes for my sister’s child and I wanted to give them to this girl, I was surprised to notice that she is pregnant. Little did I know that it was my husband’s pregnancy; I was mad! I went to seek a lawyer in Johannesburg to claim for a divorce. The same week that I claimed a divorce, I found his sermons in the post box; my husband has filed for a divorce as well, he was divorcing me. The aim was that he was going to divorce me unknowingly; I would just see myself being kicked out of the house. You could see that he is pushed by his parents. Sometimes he would come and demand sex, forcefully. I would chase him away, insult him, go to his girlfriend’s house in my “nighties” and insult her and people would be watching. My friend would come and console me. When I started fighting the affair, he started doing things openly without remorse. He would go to the girlfriend’s house in brought day light. He would hold his child openly without feeling ashamed. He didn’t even care. I would stand at the window and watch him holding the child. Funny I continued loving him. He was never open with me; he used not to tell me anything. I used to stand outside and watch his child’s nappies hanging at the neighbour’s house.

**Interviewer:** How did that make you feel?

**Tebogo:** I would have pain just seeing those nappies hanging on the fence. I loved him despite all that. Even though I was insulting him, I still loved him. Sometimes I would go to the witchdoctors and use ‘muti’ to lure him back home. I would scream at night… calling his name. Hee….eh….. (Laughing) a person who does not know marriage knows nothing. You know what they say; you must never buy shoes for your husband because he will run away from you. I did that and he ran away without even wearing them (laughing). The last straw was when his mother called me a parcel. I had come to visit my husband at his mother’s house. Her mother was pacing up and down. They laughed at me. My husband slept with his jeans on, facing the opposite direction. That night I had a strange dream. In the morning I saw my mother in law holding a candle as though he was checking on us and she called her son and said he must wake up. He jumped out of bed immediately. I also jumped out of bed, took my child and left. Even today I will never! Never! Never! (Banging the table) set my foot in that house again. I will never forget the pain I got from that house. Due to external advices he came back home and I forgave him, and I fell pregnant with his second child. He continued meeting with the girlfriend in secret. But I still loved him. The girl friend would phone and insult me. He continued buying bicycles and stuff for his “extramarital child”. The money was still not coming home. Sometimes he would want to beat me up. He continued with his unfaithfulness. This girl married someone else but my husband continued with the maintenance. We cancelled the divorce… the lawyer advised him to do paternity tests to prove that he is the father of the girlfriend’s
child or not. The result were not clear and had to be repeated but the girl friend refused the repeat, and my mother in law said that she knows that the child belongs to my husband anyway. I never trusted him and now I don’t have any love for him. I am in debts; he does not assist me financially. I was under so much pressure that I even thought of going overseas. I have cut him off completely. I resigned from my job as a nurse in a provincial hospital so that I could have money to pay off my debts, even his. He once bet horses for R2000.00. How can a sane person bet horses with such a big amount of money? It was tough. He always eats his bonuses; he does not discuss or share his money with me. I went to my grandmother and told her and she advised me to ignore his money. His money used to “eat” mine. I eventually told him to keep his money. That is when I started falling out of love with him; I don’t know whether I was becoming wise or what. Even today, I don’t have an affair. I hate men! I don’t want them, I hate them! They like pretending and they can’t even take good care of their wives. I hate them! (Banging). They are pretenders. Even if I can divorce, I will never have a man in my life again. I don’t know why I don’t divorce him.

**Interviewer:** What’s still keeping you in the marriage?

**Tebogo:** I think I feel pity for him, and now he has a habit of insulting me, he accuses me of having affairs with small children. He says I am becoming proud because I have money. I have stopped loving him, or is it because of the insults, or is because I’ve had enough, I don’t know. I have moved out of the bedroom. We have not had sex for one year. That hurts. I feel fed up when I see him. When he is not there I feel happy. I hate him, yet when I have to move out I feel guilty. I don’t go to his relatives, I like being alone. I hate company, I don’t have friends. There is no working together, no communication between us. I pay for the house and he has to pay for electricity, he becomes so irritable when he has to pay his dues. He annoys me. I become happy if he is not in the house. What hurts me is that I feel sorry for him. I sometimes think that I am the one who is cruel (sobbing). I sometimes feel like moving out and buy myself a house, but I feel sorry for him, he makes me feel guilty. It seems like I am abusing him. But he talks too much and he likes pretending. When we have visitors, he likes giving an impression that we are a happy family, I don’t fall into that trap because I can’t pretend; if I hate you I hate you. You know what the only time that I am happy is when I am at work.

He tries to chat with me but I don’t want to talk to him, but now I feel like I am cruel, that is what is hurting me most. I have guilt feelings, when someone has died in his family I don’t go. Actually I don’t go anywhere and I don’t want visitors, I always want to be alone. I don’t like visiting people, I don’t like company. He used to bring friends in the house and I would be the one who cooks and serve them whilst he sits and does nothing. He used to like the ‘get together’ thing; and I would
always have to work hard. Maybe that’s why I hate company. I associate it with slavery……and…. My husband and I do not click at all. When he says blue I say red, if he says green, I say yellow, and if he says white I say black. It’s like we met by mistake. Each one pulls in a different direction. Like I ‘m saying what hurts me most he is now trying to be ok… but I…… you know we always argue about money, that who should do what and so on….he does not cooperate, he even teaches my child to lie about money related issues. He is unfaithful even with simple things. He cannot be honest even with simple things, He can’t! He is not someone you can trust. It is on-going, he always snaps, we fight frequently for minor things. I am also like that. I don’t care anymore. I don’t have time to beg him. I have temper; he does not help me with anything, he always says he does not have money, which makes me fed up. You know, this thing of having a child hurt me badly, and insulting me that I am having an affair when I don’t have one. He insults me with my private parts…. …he says I am ugly and I am a whore. He used not to insult me, these are new things. Even now you see I am going to arrive late at home? He will be telling me that I was busy with men because I am a slut. He always pulls me down, saying that I am ugly; he tries hard to lower my self-esteem. I always tell him that I love myself .He hurts me with words. At the age of fifteen I had a child, I did not raise the child, and I kept him a secret because I was still young. He stayed with my aunt who could not bear children, now my husband always insults me with the child; and when he married me he knew that I was having a child but he continues to insult me. He says I am the same age as my son, meaning I’ve since been a slut. He hurts me; he has a lot of different things…..

**Interviewer:** So that’s something you always live with?

**Tebogo:** Yes, there are so many things, this year it’s this, the next year is another thing…that’s why I say I end up feeling guilty as if I am the one who is abusive. I ask myself why I dislike this person so much.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

**Tebogo:** I feel guilty as if I am the one who is wrong. My children are affected especially the girl. She wanted to move out and go and live with her brother. I told her to mind her own business. She even asks why we don’t divorce. The older one was also affected, but it seems like he has accepted the situation, but he has come out strong, he always comforts his little sister. My parents love my husband; they feel pity for him because he is a good pretender. They always think I am the one who is abusive because I don’t even want to cook; because sometimes when I cook he does not appreciate. I have become very stingy with groceries, he had to buy food. He can stay for three
months without buying electricity. That man is so inconsiderate. I have anger, hatred towards him….
I hate him! I’ve even moved out of the bedroom. I am now sleeping with my daughter.

**Interviewer:** What feelings are generated by the experience?

**Tebogo:** I become so fed-up when I find him in the house. I feel like turning back. That’s how I feel about him.

**Interviewer:** What bodily changes or states are you aware off?

**Tebogo:** I feel like I have developed into this cruel person. I am not myself. I have developed high cholesterol levels and I have changed my diet; I suffer from stress, I have headaches, and I have this fear of being abandoned…but at the same time I want him to leave…I don’t know. I have this fear of loss. I have fear. I have invested a lot. I also feel sorry for him.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect the significant others?

**Tebogo:** I am irritable towards my children. I like shouting at them, then correct myself afterwards. Sometimes I feel like I am ill-treating them, but you know how these things are. But sometimes even if I reprimand the child genuinely, my husband will always say that I am trying to get at him by shouting at the child.

**Interviewer:** What makes you stay in this abusive relationship?

**Tebogo:** I don’t know. I fear that I will lose everything I worked for. I seem like it will be a draw back. I don’t know…. I don’t even have valuable things that I keeping me there…I just don’t know. Not that I have much….but… I don’t know….. I am protecting my property. Because, I don’t love him, I have no feelings for him…I just have fear; I don’t know where it comes from. Truly speaking, I don’t know why I am still in this relationship, because it does not exist. The other thing that annoys me is his comments. He likes saying that I don’t take him seriously because I earn more than him. He always tries to make me feel guilty. You know what; I worked very hard for that house. I’ve built an outside room and a garage. Even my children are surprised why I am still in this relationship. My little girl once said to me she will never get married. It’s a double bind situation. I hate him and yet at the same time I feel sorry for him (Tebogo and interviewer laughing)….I have never seen such a thing! Maybe it’s because he once moved out, so I still have that fear that he may repeat the same thing. But I don’t love him. I don’t even want him to touch me. Sometimes I feel I want to buy myself a house and leave him, but the “pity for him” crops up again. I don’t! I just feel sorry for him. I don’t want to see him struggling.

**Interviewer:** What efforts have you made to curb the abuse in your relationship?

**Tebogo:** M….I’ve become stricter, being open about issues, if he is wrong, if he borrows money from me I refuse, unlike before. I just tell him straight. If I was not open I would be ill. It relieves me.
I just tell him not to touch my things. My tears are dry; I don’t have time to cry anymore. I don’t care anymore, but I have this thing that I don’t want to see him suffering. The thing is that I don’t wish anything bad on any person, that’s how I am.

**Interviewer:** What are your coping mechanisms?

**Tebogo:** I keep myself busy with my work, and being open, I don’t bottle up. I don’t want to suffer in silence. Maybe if I was the kind of person that bottles up, I could be having hypertension, but because I talk, I become relieved.

**Interviewer:** What justifications do you attach to this experience?

**Tebogo:** Wrong upbringing from his home. He was badly brought up. His mother used to hero worship him. He was spoilt as a child. He is the only boy. He comes from a wrong family. His mother was never married. His mother embraces every wrong doing my husband does. She does not reprimand him.

**Interviewer:** What do you plan to do with the situation?

**Tebogo:** My plan is to quit, but like I’ve said, I have fear, and I feel for my kids. Even though they aware that I don’t know why I am still in this marriage. I don’t know, maybe I am the problem. In essence, I was supposed to have long divorced this man. From last year he became worse, he is not becoming any better. He is a liar, he is untrustworthy. He will die like that, he will never change. He used to assault me. He is very abusive even verbally. No other pain will surpass the pain that I’ve experienced in this relationship. The worst that can happen now is death. I think I am staying for convenience, having to start afresh is another thing. I am staying because I’ve gotten used to the situation, but as far as the relationship is concerned, it is dead and nothing will repair it. I sometimes ask myself what is finally going to be the solution, or was I bewitched? Sometimes I end up believing all sorts of funny things. I ask myself why have I am I tolerating all this?

**Interviewer:** You have lived this kind of life for over twenty years, how do you feel?

**Tebogo:** I feel guilty as If I am the abuser, but you know what, I will never have an affair. I hate men, they are all liars!

**Interviewer:** Have you shared all that is significant with reference to your experiences.

**Tebogo:** Yes I have.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for your time and thank you for sharing your experiences with me.
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW WITH NOMFUNDO

Interviewer: Hi Nomfundo. Thanks for coming. Can you tell me how you do you as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?

Nomfundo: Yooo….. (Silence).

Interviewer: It seems like it is difficult even to begin……

Nomfundo: Mh… yes. Actually, I don’t know where to start…… (Silence).I’ve tasted them all. He used to bit me up…but he does not do that any longer because I exercised my rights and obtained a restraining order against him. He used not to trust me. During the week when he is supposed to be at work, he would sneak in, to check on me, monitoring me. Even financially he would want to tell me what to do with my money. I did not have freedom to use my money. So it carried on and on, until I decided take control of my finances and use my money the way I want to. When I do introspection I notice that this abusive behaviour started long ago before we even got married. Sometimes you think things will sort themselves out, only to find that you are lying to yourself. At times you misinterpret control as caring. I have experienced all kinds of abuse…… all of them….. physical, emotional and sexual. He used to bit me up for very petty issues. Financially, he is not there. I do everything in the house. He would tell me that he is paying the bond and I must do the rest. So I have to pay for electricity, pay school fees and transport for the children, pay for my own transport, buy clothes for me and the children and even for him. Literary I have to do everything else. I don’t know what he does with his money. You would think there is no father in my house because he does not fulfil his role as a breadwinner. He talks too, much he complains, he calls me names, and he controls me. When I receive a phone call he would nag me and ask who it is, he is always suspicious. He has no regard for me, emotional abuse is worse. He comes home late and he doesn’t care about anything. Sometimes he comes in the morning without giving any explanation of his whereabouts, but if I can come home later than usual, say 5pm, he will shout and moan, you see that?

Interviewer: M…

Nomfundo: So I think in that regard, there is a lot of emotional abuse, and in the house he discriminates against the children. I have a child that I had before marrying him. The child is not his. He makes the child feel that he is not his own. He abuses the child physically and emotionally. He always threatens that he will chase him out of the house. How am I supposed to feel? His own children are treated differently. I am even scared that my child is going to develop psychological problems because he is always shouted at and he is always reminded that this is not his home. We can write the whole book about emotional abuse in my house. He talks to me as if I am a child or his
enemy. He shouts at me in front of the children, saying all bad things. Sexually I am abused as well. He has extramarital affairs, actually one after the other. I find romantic messages from his girlfriends in his phone. That affects me a lot because he gives me sexually transmitted diseases. I am always suffering from vaginal thrush. When I try to address that issue, he becomes defensive and tells me that I know where I got it from, and to think that I don’t have an affair… that makes me sick. Financially…..mmh (frowning)… it’s sickening. He is the kind of man who does not account for his finances.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect you?

**Nomfundo:** It affects me because at the end of the day it interferes with my happiness, because I have to succumb to his demands and at the end I find myself not having a social life. He is aware that if I have social contacts, I will be able to share my frustrations, he does not want that. So I find myself isolated and stuck. Funny, most of the time he is not in his house. He is roaming the streets and I have to accept that.

**Interviewer:** What changes do you associate with the experience?

**Nomfundo:** I am always irritable, angry and grumpy. Sometimes I get very grumpy. And at times I don’t want to talk to him. At other times we can take the whole week or two not talking to each other. That is very strenuous emotionally.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect your significant others?

**Nomfundo:** My children get very irritated with these continuous fights and misunderstandings, because sometimes I take my frustration out on them; I shout and scream at them. They become aware of the fights and end up being miserable. My family does not favour him especially my sister. He hates my family but I am supposed to be supportive towards his family. He hates all my friends. If a friend can pay me a visit, he makes it a big issue, if I go to my friends, it’s also an issue. He strains my relationships with other people. He controls who is supposed to visit me and who is not supposed to. He chooses who I or should not befriend. He says I am getting bad influence from my friends, but I don’t control who he should or should not befriend.

**Interviewer:** What feelings are generated by the experience?

**Nomfundo:** Anger, frustration…should I elaborate?

**Interviewer:** Yes, if you can.

**Nomfundo:** You know I become so hurt that I wish bad things to happen to him, at the same time I feel guilty that I am a Christian and I am not supposed to hate. You see… such things.

**Interviewer:** What bodily changes are you aware off?
Nomfundo: I am sickly, I get palpitations and chest pains because of anger. I eat a lot and as a result I gain a lot of weight. I was not this big.

Interviewer: What makes you stay in this abusive relationship?

Nomfundo: It’s convenient for me. Having to start afresh and look for shelter is a mission. Things are sky rocketing, I cannot go out on my own and seek accommodation. I feel I will stay there and make myself comfortable. I have learned that though this situation is negative, I have to change it and make it positive by just making myself happy… in many ways. If buying clothes makes me happy, I will do that, if I want to buy a car, I’ll do that. As long as whatever I’m doing brings happiness and contentment in my life, then I’ll do it that way and whatever situations that may be negative, I’ll use it to my benefit.

Interviewer: What efforts have you made to curb the abuse in your relationship?

Nomfundo: Sometimes I confront him to solve issues particularly those that are consistently emanating, but at times it does not help. Even though it does not necessarily help, we would talk about particular issues that are recurrent, talk about strategies to avoid conflicts…. but he goes back to his behaviour soon thereafter….so still, I cannot say it helps. Sometimes I end up insulting him as well. I now also resort to verbal abuse too, it becomes verbal to verbal abuse (laughs loudly). Verbal abuse works for me. It numbs him. I know he likes talking nasty things about me, so I return the favour and it hurts most…M… It works for me. I cope by talking to people I trust, even if I don’t trust a person, I just confide, ventilate anywhere, it removes the baggage. I feel lighter, I talk even if I don’t know a person, I just talk, I don’t care who you are as long as you will listen to me. (Pauses and laughs). …..and this one of buying clothes and feel happy about it. It boosts my self-esteem….. .. Buying a car and taking my children to the movies. I don’t have money, but I use the little that I have to make myself feel better. I go out and see people; I chill out and talk to people (pause). At other times as people we don’t read the situation that might come up. There are other things that give you a clue, but you don’t take them seriously until it is too late. I blame myself … I should not have condoned any form of abuse from the start. I allowed it to happen. Let me make an example; during courtship he stated that he won’t marry a woman who has a child that is not his. But I continued to stay in that relationship despite that. At the time I saw it but I ignored that fact. I thought that I would fix him. It is now that I realize that you cannot change a person. I made my bed so I have to lay on it (Laughing)….and I am still laying on that bed even now. You know what? My main problem is accommodation; I can’t afford to have a bond. If I had financial means….I would leave today. My man comes from a family where the father is domineering? He took that from his father, it is rooted in him. He is full of farm life mentality, you know in the farms women work like slaves….so he is
still holding on that. He would complain that I don’t do house hold chores. He would complain about dirty dishes, dirty curtains, and to think that I do all those things…… According to him I have to work non-stop in the house. The other thing is lack of parental love. He was moved from one relative to another….I think somewhere that creates a gap in terms of stability. I am not living the kind of life I wanted. I am always worried about his complaints. I cannot even be comfortable with putting my bag anywhere I want to, because I know he is going to complain. I am leaving a life of fear and I am afraid that my children are going to copy that. My young girl is going to think that this is the way a wife has to be treated. I am cheating myself in many ways. This life is boring; it’s like a vicious cycle. Sometimes you keep on hoping that things will be fine. At times I ask myself this question: “what am I waiting for that will give me a platform to move out, what I am waiting for? So it means I am stuck, until I can afford my own place.

**Interviewer:** Have you shared all that is significant to your experiences?

**Nomfundo:** M…. Ja

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for your time.
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW WITH SALAMINA

Interviewer: Hi! Salamina. We are going to start our interview. We have discussed everything including the purpose of this interview and issues around confidentiality.

Salamina: Yes, we can start.

Interviewer: Describe how you do as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?

Salamina: Verbal abuse. My man cannot talk when he is not drunk. He uses abusive language, he bears grudges. You can do something on Monday; he will only talk about it when he is drunk. Last year December he chased me with a gun and he got arrested. He drinks four days in a week. He doesn’t know how to express himself, he screams and shouts. He deprives me of sex because he is always drunk. Sometimes he tries to have sex with me but most of the time he doesn’t know what he is doing because he is drunk. The abuse started in 1999 after the birth of my first child. He would come home drunk, talk this and that. When you ask him tomorrow he denies everything. I used to work as a health promoter and I would read articles about women abuse whereby a husband would hurt his wife and afterwards bring her a gift and things would be ok and the following day he repeats the same thing. I always search why people do that and I realized that others come from abusive families, they were never loved. They think that abuse is the correct thing. We both once saw a psychologist; he could not answer the questions that were asked because he knew he was wrong. He was also abused as a child. His mom and Dad got divorced and he used to stay with all the relatives who ill-treated him. This gave me an impression that this guy did not have good upbringing. He doesn’t know what to do in life. I always tell him that he has got issues and he needs to deal with them. He is negligent. You teach him something today, tomorrow he has forgotten. It shows that there is something wrong with his mind. When he is not drunk, he is ok, but he processes everything I say so that he can talk about it when he is drunk. So the abuse is actually daily. He burdens me, he shifts everything to me, be it children’s homework or whatever. I always encourage him to read so as to become empowered in all spheres but his response will be “you found me like this; you will leave me like this. My husband insults my kids. He does things and I always forgive him, I heal as time goes on. I cannot trust him. He once pointed a gun at me and it was taken away from him. He is aggressive; I don’t why he brought the gun home. I can’t trust him. Till to day he has not asked for forgiveness for pointing a gun at me, instead he became more abusive. When he has made a mistake, he insults me and makes a lot of noise.
Interviewer: How does the experience affect you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

Salamina: It affects me a lot. I suffer from headaches, sadness and irritability. God gave us happiness, but I am not happy. When I see him, I shift from being happy to being sad. I told myself that I’ll be happy for my children, I try and avoid him but he switches me off as he wants. I try to deal with by listening to gospel music and I am kept busy by reading books. The abuse affects my children terribly so much that they want to leave. The children run away when he gets into the house. My family hates him, but my mother always says that I cannot leave my home, I have to endure. His relatives are also angry with him. They have withdrawn from him. I feel pain for him. I think I still love him.

Interviewer: What feelings are generated by the experience?

Salamina: Anger, I become very angry especially when he is drunk. I avoid him.

Interviewer: What bodily changes or states are you aware off?

Salamina: I have gained weight. When I am frustrated I eat and sleep. I try to eat healthy but I still gain weight.

Interviewer: What makes you stay in this abusive relationship?

Salamina: I love him. His children love him, he is ok, he is good when he is sober. He cleans the yard, he irons for the children, and he cleans their shoes. I see more good than bad. I look at the bigger picture. The problem is that men do not want to lose. If I bit him in an argument he wants to be the one who ends. To survive, I apologize and forgive.

Interviewer: What efforts have you made to curb the abuse in your relationship?

Salamina: I did self-talk. I told myself that he is like this and he won’t change. I stay out of choice. In 1997 I moved out, his family convinced me to come back. He was advised to go to Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) because he seemed to have issues and he handles them with abusing alcohol. We also went for therapy but it did not work. I also advised to go out and meet people and see how other people live. He does not listen. The other thing is that I am assertive. When I say no I say no. I don’t cry anymore, no more tears. But I must say I wasn’t happy about him dropping therapy because he was going to be a father. I cope by doing self-talk. I tell myself that I have a job; I meet with people that keep my mind busy. I am also a strong believer in God. I think there is a pattern here. His parents got divorced, his aunts. It seems like divorce runs in his family. They do not know how to keep the family together.

Interviewer: What do you plan to do with this situation?
Salamina: I am going to stay with this man and we are going to raise these children. I’ll keep my burden with the help of God. I am going to stay here. That’s my decision.

Interviewer: Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience.

Salamina: I think so, Ja.

Interviewer: Salamina thank you very much for sharing your experiences with me, I really appreciate it

Salamina: Not a problem.
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW WITH DARKY

Interviewer: Good day, thanks for honouring this appointment. I have explained everything regarding the interview and the confidentiality issue, so feel free to talk about anything. I think we can start.

Darky: No problem.

Interviewer: Describe how you do as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?

Darky: The abuse?

Interviewer: Yes, describe abuse in your relationship as you experience it.

Darky: It is verbal abuse. Most of the time my partner comes home drunk and abuses me verbally, saying all sorts of things that he is not supposed to say, swearing, and screaming at me. I don’t like it because he does it in front of my children, and all those things affect my daughter, her school work has dropped. When he is not drunk, he does not communicate, it’s only when he is drunk when he will start saying all sorts of things. My children will grow up thinking that it is the right thing to swear. I don’t think my children will have respect for me because the things he says are degrading. In the past he used to assault me. Now the fights have stopped but not the verbal abuse. I don’t know whether to call it jealousy or what? He fights when I buy things for myself. Now I control my spending, I am growing up, I need to save money, but still he is not satisfied. He controls the budget. Sometimes he would ask me what I have done with the money and I have to explain. Another thing he does not want me to go out. He wants me to stay in the house but he does not stay in the house. Sometimes when I have visitors he fights, he checks up on me. I don’t visit people. He does not like my family, he is just pretending. When my family achieves something, he would say I want to imitate them, that I want to do things like my family does them. I think we are unable to succeed because he is not open to changes, he is not cooperative. He wants to do things his way. He does not take any advice from me his wife. If I decide to be quiet, he would ask for my opinion. He thinks I am arrogant when I don’t answer, but it does not feel right to say something knowing that it won’t be taken seriously. I don’t feel supported in many things I am doing even in thing related to my work. Sometimes we will talk about things happening at work, when we have a quarrel or a misunderstanding, he refers back to the problem and use it against me….he scrutinises everything. Sometimes we fight over phone calls. He accuses me of having affairs. The abuse started very early in the relationship, almost immediately. He was physical, He would come home drunk and start abusing me verbally and start fighting and It happens always. It does not feel right. I am not happy….
I say I am not happy. … The swearing and the accusations of having affairs, the instability. There are a few times when I wanted to leave. Last year I nearly, nearly, nearly…. ended it all. I felt I could not take it anymore. I did not want to live with him anymore. He persuaded me to stay, he apologized. Mh… This is affecting my daughter. She will scream when we fight.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

**Darky:** I am no longer happy. When I am with people, I don’t enjoy, I enjoy myself more at work than at home…. Because I have people I can talk to. I laugh a lot when I am with other people than when I am with him.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect the significant others in your life?

**Darky:** Most of the time my children miss out on a lot of things, we are always monitored, I can’t take them out as much as I would love to. I can’t make my children happy when I am not happy. My family is not happy too. They are trying hard to support me, but I can see this frustrates them. I remember one day he assaulted me I ended up phoning my mother, and as I was talking to my mother. He shoved me and my phone fell off, my mother did not know what was happening. That affected her negatively.

**Interviewer:** What feelings are generated by this experience?

**Darky:** Feelings of anger, frustration, sadness. I ask myself why I don’t sort this out once and for all now the car is a problem, I don’t have a car. Last year I was staying with my sister and I had to use public transport, with the children, it was awkward.

**Interviewer:** What bodily changes or states are you aware of?

**Darky:** I have become more forgetful, I eat a lot, and this happens mostly when I am frustrated, as a result I gain weight.

**Interviewer:** What makes you stay in the abusive relationship?

**Darky:** Initially it was out of love, but I don’t have love anymore…..I don’t…. (pause). I would stay if he could change, but I don’t think that will happen at any stage. Last year if I had found a place, I don’t think I could have come back. After I have left, he came and asked for the children because transport was awkward for them. So he took the children and stayed with them until I went back. I think I am staying for the sake of the children. I tried to talk to him about it, I went for psychological counselling, and I involved parents, thinking that he will change. He has not. He would change for a certain period and start all over again. Mostly when I am stressed I read a lot and I pass my exams. I also get support from my family, my mother, and my sisters and from his mother. It keeps me going, and also the love I get from my children.
Interviewer: What explanation do you give of this experience?

Darky: I think he is jealous and insecure. He has a low self-esteem, he is bossy and he wants things to be his way, like sometimes when I am studying or I am ill, he won’t cook, he will say his father never cooked for his mother. Patriarchal dominance is another thing, according to him a woman has to work, cook and wash for her husband. I am not supposed to rest; when I sit down he would complain and say that I am sitting doing nothing. I always have to work…work…….work…. in the house and he is the boss. And he is educated; I don’t expect such things from him. You know what they say” Mosadi ongalla motsheyo” (a woman endures difficulties and never leaves her marriage). It will be fine.

Interviewer: What do you plan to do with the situation?

Darky: I want to be happy. I am prepared to do anything that will make me happy…. I want to be the person I was before, I want to be myself. I think divorce will be the best solution, once and for all. Even if I can struggle, it will be for the better.

Interviewer: Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience?

Darky: Mh……..I think so. That’s all.

Interviewer: Darky thanks very much for sharing your experiences with me.

Darky: Ok.
Interviewer: Hi! Neo. As I’ve explained in the letter that I will be conducting an interview with you about your experiences of abuse in your relationship, I guess we can start. As I have promised, I am going to keep everything confidential; hence I use a pseudo name.

Neo: Hello….

Interviewer: How do you as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience being abused in your relationship?

Neo: How?

Interviewer: I would like you to describe the abuse in your relationship as you experience it.

Neo: Verbal abuse, calling me names…..things like…”you can’t cope; you can’t do this and that, ‘Setlatla towe’ (you fool). “You come from the Free State; you think you know too much”. This is verbal abuse, and it hurts. Now of late he called me a ‘bitch’. He said I am foolish, I am a follower, I can’t stand on my own, I am influenced by everybody…. and….. Where do I begin? Eh… at the beginning of our marriage, I used to give him my salary. I would ask him to buy me a pair of shoes. I would have to wear that one and only pair for a long time. I would have to wear the same pair at home, at work…everywhere.. Sometimes I would walk bare footed to save the shoes. I don’t have ownership of anything, I am like a child. I buy furniture in my name; I cannot even pay for it properly because he controls my money. I end up losing focus as to how I should manage my debts. I allow this financial control to happen because I want to satisfy him. If I don’t do that I feel guilty. As a result I am always out of budget. Actually cannot budget, I end up going to the cash loans to borrow money, just because I want to satisfy him. I want to show him that I care, but despite that he is never satisfied. He would mention things such as “what kind of a teacher are you who can’t even budget. You know what? I cannot prioritise any more He is the “mastermind” of my life, he controls everything. I am still in the box, I am not free, I am not independent I feel lost… That is why I am dependent on him. He calls me a failure. So I leave everything to him. In the past week I even suggested that I should resume the habit of giving him my salary. He said we rather play a stokvel (laughing) how do you play a stokvel with your husband? He annoys me. He monitors my money. When he happens to buy for the kids, I have to pay him back. If I don’t have money, I have to go and borrow it so that I can pay him for buying clothes for his own children. I am not part of his budget…..I am even embarrassed to talk about this. Children are stressed because we don’t plan together. I try to please him to an extend that I end falling in to bad debt traps…long term debts…loans caused by him because I was trying to please him. He does not give me a chance to
express myself; as a result I do stupid things. Recently he told me that I cannot ask a man where he
goes or where he comes from I should be happy that he is back. One day he left early, and it was his
birthday. We had a small dispute, he wanted us to have sex and I refused and told him that I have a
bad vaginal smell after having sex with him. When I have sex with him I itch, and he would tell me
to go and bath, I smell. I told him that he must be sleeping with a wrong person because the itching
was continuing; I suggested that we use a condom or else he must go and do an HIV test. He went
and it came out negative. I have a bad smell…. when he goes out I become suspicious. I no longer
enjoy sex, How can I? You know what? I became aware in 1997 that this man is abusive. My friend
had come to visit. He ridiculed me in front of her, calling me a granny. I then became aware that I
have been neglecting myself. I changed, I started budgeting for makeup, buying clothes, I even
started having extra marital affairs. My budget stretched because of all those things. But I started
falling in love with myself. My life is a drawback. I want to prosper, but I can’t. I don’t know where I
will end with this life. People admire me; they don’t know what is happening inside of me. I am
wearing a mask, but I don’t want to blame him. I want to blame myself. I did not make good
decisions……I fell into debts. I am trapped, and I don’t know how to come out. Almost every day I
am abused, but because I am always happy, people don’t notice. He is always looking for mistakes
and his word is final. My children call my house a solitary camp, they always go out to relatives, and
they say the atmosphere in the house is too rigid. I see myself as a useless mother….Because I am
now having financial problems, if my husband did not compete with me but complemented me,
things would have been different. He has even shut down my reasoning capacity... (Crying)

Interviewer: its ok (comforting her)….here is a tissue. What is hurting you more at the moment?

Neo: My life is a drawback. I want to move forward but I can’t. I do not know where I will end up.
On the contrary, people always comment how beautiful I am… they don’t know what’s going on
inside of me…they don’t know how I am hurting. He calls me names even in front of people. He
does not respect me. He would say I am a “Jimmy comes to Jo’burg”, “this thing” meaning I am
stupid. As a result I do not like attending couples meetings because that’s where he makes me feel
stupid and hurt me. He married me young; he did not give me space. I did not explore. Calling me
names has lowered my self-esteem; it has caused me to take stupid decisions. My relatives would
even advise me to do a makeover, so as to boost my self-esteem.

Interviewer: How does the experience affect you? What changes do you associate with the
experience?

Neo: I became withdrawn, I choose friends. I don’t want people who will play with me. I want
people I can trust. I am irritable. I had patience and I was quiet, now I have lost all that. Now I am
talkative, but talking saves me. I am now having extramarital affairs. They make me sad, this is not me. I don’t want to have affairs but I am forced by circumstances. And if I change now, it will take me back to being a granny again.

**Interviewer:** How does the experience affect the significant others in your life? Maybe being a granny might please him.

**Neo:** My children have dropped performance at school, they become withdrawn, they choose friends, they no longer play sport.

**Interviewer:** What feelings are generated by the experience?

**Neo:** Yooo….hell…I am so hurt, I cry a lot, I blame myself, I feel like I am not the ideal mother or wife. I don’t see it as abuse; I think all this is happening because of me. I feel like crying.

**Interviewer:** What bodily changes or states are you aware of?

**Neo:** It’s either I don’t eat or I over eat. I gain weight, my face is dull. I have a heart problem. I can’t finish my studies; I don’t finish the things I started. I keep on asking myself why me? What went wrong? Normally I am a hard working person but my performance at work has dropped.

**Interviewer:** What makes you stay in the abusive relationship?

**Neo:** It’s just that you feel for the children. I want children to grow into a family that has both parents. I am also afraid that if I get out of this marriage, I will be open to abuse by other men. I don’t want that, it’s better if I am abused by this one. Sometimes I feel if I did not have children, I would have gone to be a nun because I would serve the community, I would talk to my God, I won’t have sexual feelings, and I would cut out worldly things. I was seeing that as a better option than a divorce. Because if I divorce, I am going to take another woman’s husband and I don’t want to break families.

**Interviewer:** What efforts have you made to curb the abuse in our relationship?

**Neo:** Talking to him…… I’ve written letters to him expressing how I feel, telling him that I love him, thanking him for giving me such beautiful children. After a quarrel I will try hard to make peace. At some point I took a protection order against him after he bit my son terribly

**Interviewer:** What are your coping mechanisms?

**Neo:** I read motivational books, I talk to people who inspire me, I pray.

**Interviewer:** How do you interpret the situation?

**Neo:** His father was a “my word is final” kind of a person; he says he has learned from his father, he says his father has taught him life. Patriarchal dominance is a pattern in his family, he is like his father. Her own mother was abused by his father.

**Interviewer:** What do you plan with the situation?
Neo: I want to be a good mother. I want to please my husband. I think there is something wrong with me. I don’t know what.

Interviewer: Thank you Neo for your time. After our intense interview I have picked up that you were very emotional and I would recommend that you seek professional counselling to deal with your issues.
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW WITH DIKS

Interviewer: Hello Diks. We are going to start with our interview. I have explained everything and I have assured you of confidentiality, so feel free to talk about your experiences. Tell me how do you as a Black South African Woman who is educated and employed experience abuse in your relationship?

Diks: I feel abused psychologically and emotionally--- but it’s not physical. I don’t know, I think this abuse is broad…excluding physical. I don’t even know where to start describing it. Like when I say it is psychological…where do I start? Oh my God! I think this thing goes from backwards…… I don’t even know where to start but at the moment I think I am the one who is clinging in the past. I always refer what is happening back to the past. I don’t know if I am making any sense. I experienced an extramarital relationship, if I may put it that way, and there was a child that was born in that relationship. I went for help…eh… I went to see a psychologist…..You know what when your partner is having an affair, you can see. I found concrete information that he is having an affair. What’s going to make him change? You know what, I have had enough… but I am still in the marriage. The struggle that I am having is that there are reasons why I am still in this marriage even though I feel I am enough.

Interviewer: Mh…what are the reasons?

Diks: I am asking myself whether those reasons are concrete enough for me to stay. My son has finished school and has found a job as an electric engineer. My daughter is at Boston College doing media studies, now so much has happened; I pay R3000 a month, R1 500 on transport, she is staying in flat, it’s her second month in the flat. I pay R500 for her transport. I also have to see to it that she eats. So this husband of mine, I don’t know if I am right, I am telling the things that I have on my mind. He is aware that he is losing me. He is definitely aware that he is losing me. In the sense that, when we started having these problems I would ask him all sorts of questions, things like “where do you come from?” “Where are you going?” “Why do you come home late?” then he would answer back and say “am I not supposed to go to other men?”…….. I am sighting examples neh? Until such time that I spoke to myself …..Remember I went for counselling before and I was ok….. Not ok because I have accepted, but because I have told myself that I am no responsible for what he is doing. He does whatever he is doing for his own reasons and I am not going to feel bad that I am fat; I am ugly maybe that is why he is seeing another woman. Or maybe I have pushed him to do whatever he is doing. He did this for his own reasons. I am not going to involve myself. When I was attending therapy my psychologist told me that we should try and do things together particularly when the new
child is born (from the extramarital affair), he did not involve me. When he told me that he has a child, I got mad and did all the things that are done by people who are hurting. I was so stupid, I didn’t suspect anything. Many incidences that I linked to the affair proved that I have been so ignorant. Even a blind person would have seen this, but I did not. But I always say when you trust a person you do not suspect anything, when he says he is attending a meeting somewhere why should I have suspicions without a reason and even today I don’t feel bad about the way I was at the time because I didn’t have reasons to suspect him. The psychologist said we should try and cooperate for the best interest of the child and because we want to give this marriage a chance, and my husband said he will see what he can do because this is his problem, I tell you even today I can’t tell you how that child looks like. I don’t know the child. I want to be honest. Even if I saw her I think she was still very small, I can’t say that the child was properly introduced to me. I received therapy but I’m telling you sometimes I would just burst out of the blue, because I am angry. Then I would fight him and demand that he takes me to the child’s mother. He would take me. I don’t know how many times he has taken me to his girlfriend, because I would wake him up at night and say to him he is asleep while I am hurting. He would wake up and take me to that girlfriend. And when I arrive I would ask whatever I want to ask and tell whatever … then I would feel better. So I think at that time I did whatever that I thought would help me. Until now, ok the girl is grown up now; she is attending school…but I don’t know what happened to the baby, even though at times I feel so sad and angry because sometimes I think about her and ask myself that wherever she is, is she getting good care. But I don’t know whether I am selfish or what, but I would just tell myself that that’s what brought me where I am today. All this is the consequence of putting other people first. So if I show her that I care or I am worried about that child, she is going to take advantage, but honestly speaking, it does not mean that whatever is happening I am at peace with it. This thing has brought a crack which I don’t think there would ever be any kind of cement that would mend it. I’ve noticed that a person cannot change. After all this he had another affair, remember I said I don’t think I’ll trust a person again. Somebody came to me and told me the whole story about the new affair, and at that time I had terminated my therapy sessions because I told myself that I was ok. I was ok concerning the child issue, but for me to be in the marriage, I don’t want to lie, I am not ok. I don’t feel ok to be in this marriage. Every day I find a reason why I must be out of this marriage. This person will never change and he gives me a reason every day to leave him. He does not even support his children. He also has pride. He is aware that he is losing me but he is in denial, instead I see anger in him. He will fight for petty things and raises his voice unnecessarily. I think he is aware that I no longer beg him. When he goes out I no longer ask him where he is going same applies when he comes back, it does
not matter what time he comes back, and I no longer feel angry, I think he can see that I am at peace with whatever is happening, but instead of him humbling himself, he screams at me and he is the one who caused this. I am not going to live a life full of threats. He is aware that I am struggling with finances to support the kids, but he does nothing about it, so to avoid conflicts I put everything on my shoulders, and that hits back on me and I become angry. I avoid talking to him as much as I can because he blows everything out of proportion. I am burdened financially. I feel like I am in a deep pit and I can sink anytime. Based on that I feel I want to go out now. But now I ask myself this question, if I decided to leave now, here am I going? And wherever I go, I will have to rent or buy myself a place, I can’t buy a house because I am married in community of property. Should I buy anything now, we are going to share, so I have to play safely so that if I move out, I don’t lose. So it means I’ll have to rent until the divorce is final. But if I rent now, where will I get the money to pay the rent because I cannot afford financially I am not coping. For that reason I cannot get out. I don’t know whether that is the right reason or maybe I want to make that an excuse. That’s where I am struggling. At the same when I try to be honest to myself, because I think I’ve made a decision that I want out. That one is clear in my mind, but the two obstacles are finance and fear of the unknown. I have fear of the unknown a lot. I don’t want to be in this marriage, but when I get out of here where am I going? To think I was sixteen when I started living with this man. I was young and naïve and I ask myself if I have to live him, will I be ok to stay alone? Will I be ok? Not financially, not physically no! But I am just asking myself this question “The day I wake up in this house that I bought and he won’t be there, is everything going to be ok?” I don’t actually know where my fear comes from; I am trying to figure out what am I going to miss…..loneliness no! Because I am used to being alone anyway, you see, that’s why I say to you that physically, I won’t miss him. I won’t miss sex because I don’t enjoy sex even now, and financially…I am struggling now anyway, why must I worry about that, I am struggling now and I am pushing hard. He knows one thing about me that I am a hardworking person and I see through whatever situation when it comes to finance. I don’t care what, I push. I am pushy when it comes to getting money. He knows that financially I won’t miss him. But I cannot tell what I actually am afraid of. I know that he might feel threatened because he knows that when I commit to something I commit totally (silence)... He knows that financially I won’t miss him. I really don’t know what I am afraid of. But now I have realised that I feel pity for him, but you know in what way? I look at him and I go like: “Gosh, I wish you knew that sooner or later, I going to leave you and I hope when I do that you will be ready because I won’t want to see you ever again, not even in a single day knocking at my door because I will never listen to you.” So I pity him a lot. Because he seems to be in denial that I will leave him one day, or maybe he thinks I
will be held by his words because whenever we have a fight, he would say that it will never cross his mind that we should part ways. For me, these are useless words because this relationship works for him and not for me, because right now I feel like I am his ATM machine.

**Interviewer:** How does this whole thing affect you?

**Diks:** I don’t feel bad about myself, but what I have noticed is that I make stupid mistakes….my husband will even comment and say “this is unlike you” unawares that he is the cause of my problems. One day I got mugged and robbed, when he arrived, instead of comforting me he said I was stupid. I was instead comforted by a friend of mine and my child.

**Interviewer:** How does this affect your significant other?

**Diks:** I don’t think my children like what they are seeing, this situation affect them. I don’t know whether it’s because of our culture, but they can’t really say how they feel. He always comes late and causes havoc much to the annoyance of my children, so it went to an extent that once he enters the house, they move to their bedrooms. He won’t ask the kids why they are leaving when he enters the house, but he would complain that I am influencing his children to do that.

**Interviewer:** What changes are you noticing within you?

**Diks:** I no longer go out with him. When I want to socialize, I go out with my cousins. I don’t think that makes him happy because he likes controlling my movements. When I insist to go out, he would say things like “if you set your foot out of that door, you must not come back to this house again, you must leave for good”, and you know what? I tell him that this is my house and I am coming right back. When I am out he would phone four times, monitoring me. I have changed and I think he is no comfortable with this new me. He is always suspicious that I am having an affair; he said he will catch me one day and he is going to kill me. When it comes to my family, I don’t tell them everything, I tend to hide other things because they will sit with the grudge even after I have forgiven him. I was talking to my children telling them that I want to move out but I don’t know if it’s the right thing to do and they were like: “go ahead, why not?, because you are leaving a miserable life here”. I spoke to them about the financial implications looking at renting and buying food. I was trying to be realistic that it is not going to work. I am having that struggle that if I leave, how am I going to cope? But I don’t want my kids to suffer. If I don’t sort out my finances it means I am stuck here for the next three years because my girl is finishing school after three years (sighing). I don’t want him to change….I don’t want him to change. I have a feeling that it’s too late for him to change, he has hurt me too much and I have tried everything thinking he will change, instead he is deteriorating. Maybe he will change if there can be a second person in his life. I’ve been trying to change him for the past three years. He knows that I shaped and moulded him. But what makes him
to treat me like this; I am not going to waste another 23 years. Whatever he is doing now he is busy pushing me away. I no longer even listen to his suggestions. I no longer take him seriously. His in a mess financially, he is indebted. He does not have money to buy food; he does not ask himself where the food comes from. That’s the thing that pushes me away. What am I going to miss in this relationship...if I decide to go? I have decided not to ask him anything, whether he comes back late, sleeps out, waste his money, I am going to let him live his life the way he wants to. I am trying to take him out of my system. What makes me feel angry is this question “do I have to go?” It makes me feel like I am dubious and I don’t know what I want. Every day he gives me that reason to leave. When I am with other women, we talk about the same problem concerning men and funny, no one will say “I am moving out” It’s like they are accepting their condition.

Interviewer: How does the experience leave you feeling?

Diks: I feel sad, I used to feel angry, asking myself why can’t he be honest, why the affairs. I’ve never accepted that when we were dating. I am not going to do miracles to make this marriage work. I felt used and stupid. The whole township and his family knew about the girlfriend and the pregnancy, I was the only one in the dark. The feeling of leaving is so strong off late. He has anger, he is grumpy.

Interviewer: What bodily changes are you aware of?

Diks: Physically I don’t feel anything or...maybe subconsciously there could be something or maybe I concentrate more on my anger than the physical state, I don’t know. I am irritable, I snap. I am no longer close to my husband’s family. As long as my children love me, I am ok. I got myself in this nonsense. I always encourage my children to succeed. Their father always counts the chickens before they hatch. He is already asking how much my boy is earning.

Interviewer: Why do you think your man is so abusive?

Diks: I think the way he grew up. His past is not so good. He was given away……

Interviewer: How...What do you mean?

Diks: His mother had fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls. He is the last boy and the thirteenth child. They were so many and their mother could not give them love, so he would be given away to any family that did not have children, you see, that’s how he grew up. Some of these families used to abuse him physically. He used to sleep in the bush. The person I knew to be his mother when we got married was actually his aunt. He was His father used to abuse his mother. He was abused in that house, when he was in standard five he had to leave school and he went to work in the coal industry. And he became a man at an early age. That is why he got married at a tender age. I was also young and miserable when I got married. I don’t think feelings….true feelings of love were
involved in us getting married. It was more of two people who were having difficulties who found comfort in each other’s arms. I understand his father used to abuse his mother in all respects.

**Interviewer:** Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience?

**Diks:** I talk too much, I can talk from morning till noon non-stop, but I think that will be enough for now.

**Interviewer:** Thanks very much for your time. This was very meaningful.

**Diks:** Ok. Have a lovely evening.
ANNEXURES

ANNEXTURE A: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant

I hereby request that you participate in the study I am conducting as a requirement for the fulfilment of the D Lit et Phil (Psychology), (Doctoral degree in Psychology). The study is about the experiences of abuse by Black South African Women. The study I am embarking on is a study from South Africa conducted by a Black South African Woman. The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth description and interpretation of the experiences of Black South African women who are educated and economically empowered but suffer abuse in their relationships.

The study might raise public awareness and generate greater understanding of the plight of women who are educated and employed and yet suffer abuse. The study might also promote the continuation of social activism and advocacy against the abuse of women.

I hope you will find the description of my aims appropriate. I am looking forward to working with you in this valuable study. Everything will be handled with the strictest confidentiality. Appropriate counselling will be rendered in case this study evokes negative emotions.

Yours faithfully

Matilda Molefe
University of Johannesburg
ANNEXURE B: LETTER OF CONSENT

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I----------------------------------------------- give Matilda Molefe a DLitt et Phil (Doctoral degree) student at the University of Johannesburg permission to interview me. I have read and understood the aims of the study and I am participating willingly in this interview. I was in no way coerced to participate. I was also not promised any kind of remuneration for participating in this study. I understand that I will be given counselling in the event the interview evokes negative emotions.

Signed at--------------------------------------on this -------------day of ----------------------

Witnessed by-----------------------------------