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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

**TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA:
THE GOOD MEN, THE GOOD LIFE AND THE GOOD NEWS.**

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor of Philosophy aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam en de Universiteit van de Vrijstaat,
op gezag van de rectores magnifici
prof.dr. J.J. Geurts en prof.dr. F.W. Peterson,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der Religie en Theologie
op woensdag 2 maart 2022 om 11.45 uur
in een bijeenkomst van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door

Jeremias de Klerk van Jaarsveld
geboren te Heilbron, Zuid-Afrika

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, **Jeremias de Klerk van Jaarsveld**, declare that I am the sole author of the academic thesis titled *Transforming Masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia: The good men, the good life and the good news*, which has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Doctor Philosophiae*. I confirm that this thesis in its entirety is an original work based on my own research; that all sources referred to or quoted in this thesis – in accordance with the requirements as stated in the University's plagiarism prevention policy – have been acknowledged and are referenced in the included bibliography; that no other party has used or was given permission to use the work included in this thesis to obtain any other degree or qualification; that this work meets the requirements of the University of the Free State's General/Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC), and that I submit this thesis knowing that I have met all the prerequisites set by the faculty.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'JDK van Jaarsveld', written over a horizontal dotted line.

JDK VAN JAARSVELD

21 OCTOBER 2021

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SUMMARY OF THESIS:

This study focuses on the intersection of masculinities, gender-based violence (GBV), and African Christianity. It is based on qualitative research done in the Reformed Church in Zambia and is presented in accordance with the seven movements of Julian Müller's African postfoundational practical theology. After GBV was identified as a global public health concern and human rights issue, numerous humanitarian initiatives aimed at "transforming masculinities" were launched. These initiatives strongly recommend the involvement of boys and men in the dismantling of patriarchy and gender inequality, which are generally considered the cause of GBV. Zambia, who proudly identifies as an official Christian nation, has been ranked as one of the countries with the highest number of GBV cases. Due to Zambia's Christian identity, the agency of churches has also been recognised in the fight against GBV. Masculinity ("how to be a man") has become a popular topic in sermons and promoting certain forms of manhood and expressions of masculinity have become part of many churches' ministry. This is also the case in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) – a denomination that started out as a mission station in eastern North Rhodesia and has developed into a recognised denomination in Zambia with approximately one million members.

Following the narrative and ethnographic research methods, and with lived religion and intersectionality as hermeneutical lenses, this study explores the question: *How are masculinities lived and experienced in the Zambian church in a time of GBV and HIV?* While researching this question, it became apparent that male dominance and male fragility are in a reciprocal cycle, the one continually reinforcing the other, and this cycle became a heuristic key throughout this study. This study offers an authentic, in-context descriptive account of the concrete, lived experiences and faith practices in the RCZ and broader Zambian context. Following inductive reasoning, this thesis begins with a description of the context before placing the findings in conversation with the larger bodies of scholarship. Therefore, the description and analysis of empirical involvement is preceded by a historical narrative and a present-day narrative which based on the researcher's fieldwork.

The dialogical self theory – which argues that each person represents a number of *I*-positions that are in dialogue with one another – was incorporated in the analysis of the empirical data. After grouping similar *I*-positions together, four main storylines were identified, namely religious normativity, cultural normativity, the male dominance-male fragility cycle, and creative (re)interpretations of masculinity. Following a transversal hermeneutic, these findings were brought into conversation with three noted scholars, namely Michel Foucault (who defines sex and sexuality in terms of bio-power),

Judith Butler (who conceptualised the theory of gender performativity), and Raewyn Connell (who conceptualised the theory of hegemonic masculinity). Each scholar's perspective expanded (or "complexified") the insights on gender, sexuality, masculinities, GBV, and African Christianity which were collected in the field.

In the concluding chapter of this project, the dominant narrative (the reality of GBV) and the four main storylines are revisited – this time with new insights. While discussing these storylines, some tensions (or discrepancies) are highlighted, and true to the postfoundational approach, each tension is countered with an alternative (or disruptive) narrative. Countering the main storylines with a disruptive narrative could be seen as part of the process of imagining alternative interpretations of being a man in Zambia in a time of GBV. Disruptive narratives are technologies of resistance directed toward an oppressive system with the aim to inspire true transformation of masculinities in the Zambian context. In a time of GBV, these disruptive narratives focus on recognising the dangers of forced heteronormativity and male dominance, it encourages embracing the power of vulnerability, and it challenges churches to rethink theological positions when it comes to gender equality and the fight against GBV.

Possible future research and important emerging narratives were also recognised and included in the conclusion and epilogue of this project.

ABBREVIATIONS:

AIDS	-	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AU	-	African Union
BSAC	-	British South Africa Company
DRC	-	Dutch Reformed Church
DST	-	dialogical self theory
GBV	-	gender-based violence
HIV	-	human immunodeficiency virus
IPV	-	intimate partner violence
JMU	-	Justo Mwale University
RCZ	-	Reformed Church in Zambia
UN	-	United Nations

KEYWORDS:

Africa

bio-power

Christianity

colonialism

Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk)

gender

gender-based violence

gender performativity

hegemonic masculinity

intersectionality

lived religion

male dominance

male fragility

masculinities

narrative

Reformed Church in Zambia

sex

sexuality

storylines

Zambia

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This thesis is dedicated to
the seamstress who made me a *chitenge* quilt
– my mother –
and the reverend who took me to Zambia
– my father.
They made me the man I am today,
and we experienced Zambia
together.

PROLOGUE:

One of my most treasured possessions is a quilt blanket my mother made me with the colourful and patterned African material – or “*chitenge*” – that she has collected over the years. For me, this quilt tells many stories simultaneously: the story of my mother’s love for needlecraft, the story of my reverend father’s involvement in ecumenical initiatives in Zambia, the stories about my own visits to Zambia, and the major role these visits played in my own narrative. It also tells stories about Zambia and expresses identity markers associated with being Zambian. *Chitenges* are usually worn as dresses and are considered an essential piece of a Zambian woman’s wardrobe. Wearing a colourful *chitenge* could be considered an expression of one’s identity, and it doubles as a way of covering (or inscribing) the body with cultural, social, religious, and gendered significance. Therefore, this quilt embodies both physical and abstract materials, both stories and identities.

During the last six months of my PhD, I stayed on the outskirts of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Twice a day, on my way to the Vrije Universiteit and back, I cycled past a large sign that reads “*Kent uzelf*”, which roughly translated means “know yourself”. Predictably, this sign led to questions surrounding my own identity as a South African in the Netherlands, doing research on Zambian masculinities. I had to ask myself: *Who am I? What are the chitenge patches (the physical and abstract materials, the stories and identities) that define me? What do I embody, and how does this influence the way I think and talk about Zambia?* I soon realised that I cannot force myself into thinking on behalf of Zambians, nor imagine solutions on their behalf – I can only write from where I am and from my own lived experience. Cycling to and from the university became a time of reflection – a time to think about the many patches that define me, the social graces (or GGRRAACCEEESSS – gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, and spirituality) that have shaped me and are still shaping me as a person (Totsuka 2014:87). It became a time to locate myself within this project, a time to (re)consider the storylines of this study and my own life, a time to formulate some arguments that were included in this thesis, and a time to reminisce about my experiences in Zambia.

My earliest memory of Zambia dates back to 2002. I was part of a delegation from the Dutch Reformed Church that visited congregations of the Reformed Church in Zambia. Although the details of this visit are a little vague, I do remember that I was aware of the socio-cultural boundaries between “us” and “them”, a socio-cultural divide between the men and women in the public sphere, and the fact that there are multiple ways of being men within a single community. For example: In a Zambian

village there would be a highly regarded and influential pastor whose masculinity is expressed by his ability to lead and communicate well; a farmer working in the fields whose masculinity is expressed by his ability to do physical labour; a man sitting on an empty beer crate at the local tavern whose masculinity is expressed by his ability to hold his liquor and charm women; a drifter in ragged clothes whose strive to be a good man left him vulnerable and ashamed; and a suspicious and distant adolescent boy who expresses his masculinity through his wardrobe. Without realising it, I was already collecting “patches” of empirical data on Zambian masculinities that would take shape in the form of a thesis twenty years later. For a naive thirteen-year-old boy, this visit was also disillusioning; even though I was born on the African continent, *this* Africa was different from the one I was used to. In *this* Africa, concepts that used to be theoretical – like poverty, malnourishment, gender-based oppression, child-run households, insufficient healthcare, and, relatedly, the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS – became concrete and suddenly had faces. Of course, this also divulges a lot about my own privilege and upbringing in South Africa. It would have been patronising to suggest solutions to Zambians, since that would imply that my lived experience is the norm when in fact it is the exception.

Since 2002, I have had the opportunity to regularly visit Zambia and other Southern Africa countries. Usually these visits were church related and did not only nurture a sincere interest and deep compassion for the African continent, but also played an important role in the shaping of my identity, my worldview, and religious outlook. These visits made me aware of my privileges and blind spots, and during the fieldwork of this study I was once again made aware that my context and my experiences in South Africa have not only benefitted me materially, but it also constrained my perspective in some ways. Throughout my life, as a white able-bodied South African man who is formally educated and financially secure, I have benefited from certain systems that habitually exclude those who do not fit the profile. Accordingly, as a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, I have spent most of my professional life in spaces dominated by white men; with people whose views and values are similar to mine. Therefore, even though I grew up in a society known for its diversity in terms of culture, race, language, gender, sexuality, social and economic status, the systems and exclusive spaces that have secured my advancement have also limited my perspective and pruned me to certain hegemonic norms.¹

¹ These considerations were inspired by Richard Rohr’s blog entry titled *Ways of knowing* (2020:e-source). This particular consideration presupposes the complexity of living in a post-Apartheid South Africa as a white, Afrikaans man. South Africa is sometimes referred to as the “Rainbow Nation” due to its diversity and its constitution’s deliberate acknowledgement of people of all races, cultures, languages, religions, genders, and sexual orientations. However, although the Republic of South Africa is considered a democratic country since 1994, certain groups still benefit from the remnants of the Apartheid regime; particularly white, heterosexual, Afrikaans men.

Whilst writing this thesis on African masculinities, I constantly had to negotiate my own positionality, and I soon came to the realisation that being a man is hard. Like my *chitenge* quilt that consists of many dissimilar patches that were sown together, being a man is multicoloured, patterned, and textured; it comes with a number of interwoven expectations set by external forces, which include (but are not limited to) religion, culture, and society. These expectations could be compared to dominant internal voices that have influenced (or even controlled) my choices, behaviour, and the ways I conduct myself as a man in public. These voices do not necessarily represent my true self, but they have conditioned me to take on certain positions, align myself with certain opinions, and perform my gender and sexuality in certain ways. These voices, however, have also installed feelings of fear and shame when it comes to my own sexuality. As a homosexual person, I also embody an identity that does not fit the hegemonic norm in many contexts – including Zambia. Therefore, despite adhering to many expectations of being a man and enjoying the benefits and privileges thereof, my sexuality also demotes me in some social hierarchies, resulting in an ambiguity when it comes to my own masculine identity. But since there is more than one way of being a man – as I have already observed as a thirteen-year-old – ambiguity and complexity are usually implied in the study of masculinities.

The choice to study masculinities in the Zambian context could be attributed to my personal connection to the country and its role in my own identity. Africa is part of who I am – it is my address and my destination, my past and my future. Consequently, I have a sense of responsibility to become a participant in realising an Africa where all people – irrespective of their GGRRAACCEEESSS (gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, and spirituality) patches – can flourish and thrive. For me, Zambia simultaneously represents things that are important to me, as well as things that I find concerning: on the one hand, Zambia publicly identifies as a Christian nation, actively promotes gender equality while upholding its humanist (and inclusive) philosophy – “One Zambia – One Nation”; on the other hand, Zambia has some of the highest gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS statistics in the world, is intolerant towards homosexual persons, and during fieldwork it appeared that gender equality is still an unrealised ideal. These discrepancies set the stage for this thesis, and in the quest to explore the question “*What does it means to be a man in Zambia?*” I also tried to continuously reflect on my own experiences and thoughts on the subject. Assembling these stories could be compared to creating my own *chitenge* quilt – a process that recognises that no person is single-storied or one-dimensional. No, we are all complicated assemblages of many identities (or stories); we are unique arrangements of multi-coloured patches – each with its own significance.

CHAPTER 1: FRAGILE BODIES AND TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES

1.1 BODIES AT THE FRONTLINE:² THE BACKGROUND OF THIS PROJECT

In the field of African masculinities, there has been a prevailing dominant narrative: the reality of gender-based violence (GBV).³ Considering the fact that patriarchal control – which ordinarily involves men exercising power over women – remains a reality in many African societies, widespread violence as the result of the complexities within gender relations has increasingly become subjected to analysis (Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:5-7; Simister 2012:10). It is broadly accepted that GBV is a destructive practice which is associated with the assertion of male dominance, and both women and men in many communities all around the world – irrespective of culture, religion, ethnicity, or social belonging – are affected by and left vulnerable due to this practice. In fact, GBV has been called “[...] the most extreme expression of unequal gender relations in society” (SIDA 2015:4). Although both women and men experience (are fragile due to) violence,⁴ "violence against women" and GBV are considered interchangeable, as women's physical, sexual, and emotional well-being are overwhelmingly affected by this destructive practice (Ngonga 2016:145).

In 1993, GBV was officially recognised as a global public health concern and a human rights issue by the General Assembly of the United Nations held in Vienna – a notion that has been repeatedly affirmed by the World Health Organisation, who inextricably link GBV to the physical, mental, and reproductive health of women (Muluneh *et al.* 2020:1-2; García-Morena *et al.* 2005:66; Garcia-Morena, Guedes & Knerr 2012:1; Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014:1; WHO 1998:6,14-15). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of 1995 ascribed violence against women (or GBV) to a “systematic disadvantage” – an unfavourable (or sexist) bias which is “[...] embedded in legislation, official policy and practice, political and religious ideologies, and cultural conventions” (Baylies 2002:6). It is evident that GBV especially thrives in communities where male dominance is idolised and women’s interests repressed (Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:3), and despite being the backbone of the

² This is a direct reference to Michel Foucault (1978:135-139) who argues that bodies are the symbolic and literal “battlefield” of power systems (including – but not limited to – society, culture, and religion), and physical violence.

³ Gender-based violence (GBV) is the colloquial term used for any form of physical, sexual, mental and/or emotional harm or suffering – domestic or civil, in act or insinuation – inflicted upon a person on the basis of their gender. Not all scholars agree on the definition of GBV; some feel that GBV only implies physical violence, excluding economic, emotional and/or sexual violence, and arguing that the latter should be investigated separately (Simister 2012:10). In this research project, all forms of violence – physical, emotional, economic, and sexual – directed at women are considered forms of GBV.

⁴ Even though they are half as likely to be victims to sexual abuse, men are twice as likely to experience (and more likely to die because of) physical abuse than women (Gennrich 2015:204).

rural economy⁵ and the force behind many community-based initiatives aimed at care and protection in sub-Saharan Africa, this “disadvantage” hesitates women from living *the good life* – a life free from violence, and where basic human rights including dignity, healthcare, education, and freedom of speech are recognised (Paas 2016:503; Baylies 2002:1,6). This also creates the backdrop to the devastating statistics and effects of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (Louw 2008:417; Baylies 2002:7).⁶

Sub-Saharan Africa – specifically Southern Africa countries – which has alarming GBV statistics, also has the highest number of HIV cases in the world.⁷ The interrelationship between HIV/AIDS and GBV has earned the latter the title of “the silent epidemic of sub-Saharan Africa” (Muluneh *et al.* 2020:2; Phiri 2003:15; Jewkes *et al.* 2010:42; Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014:1-2).⁸ Since women are twice as likely to be infected, HIV/AIDS is still considered the main killer of women in the age group of 15 to 49 years (Van Cutsem 2021:e-source). The effects of HIV/AIDS include the decline in quality of life and a shorter life expectancy, an increase in poverty and orphaned children, the revival of diseases such as tuberculosis and measles, and the loss of many competent men and women in the African workforce who not only contributed to their communities, but also provided for their families (Banda 2010:141; Louw 2008:417; Makhulu 2001:378; Khauoe 2015:49; Bujra & Baylies 2000:26).

Sub-Saharan Africa countries have often been subjected to empirical investigation, and the findings generally attribute GBV (and relatedly HIV/AIDS) statistics to low socioeconomic status, limited access to education, and, undisputedly, the socio-cultural (and even religious) endorsement of male dominance, which is visible in the empowerment of men and disempowerment (or undermining) of women (Jewkes *et al.* 2010:41; Chitando 2012:72; Mwaba 2016:106; Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:3). Along

⁵ In many African households, women are the breadwinners and sole providers. Women also represent almost half of the total agricultural labour force in sub-Saharan Africa (Paas 2016:503).

⁶ HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body’s white blood cells, which are essential for protecting the body against viruses and bacteria. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the advanced stage of HIV and is the condition where the body is unable to defend itself against infections and certain types of cancer (Louw 2008:421). AIDS was officially “discovered” in 1981 in Los Angeles; since then, 76 million people have been infected and 33 million people have died. Today, around 38 million people are living with HIV (Van Cutsem 2021:e-source).

⁷ According to the World Health Organisation, 1 in every 25 adults in sub-Saharan Africa is living with HIV, which accounts for more than two-thirds of people living with HIV worldwide. The statistics is most severe in southern African countries; particularly in Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, and Zambia (WHO 2018:e-source).

⁸ Some scholars feel that intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence and rape do not belong to the same category as GBV (Simister 2012:17). This study, however, does not go into the specifics of IPV, sexual violence and rape, but rather the motive behind it – men’s use of violence to assert their dominance over women. Therefore, these destructive practices – despite the type of damage it does – are labelled as a form of GBV.

with GBV and HIV/AIDS, masculinities in Southern Africa has become a rapidly expanding research field, with entire volumes of noted academic journals⁹ devoted to the subject (Shefer *et al.* 2010:511-518). Even the UN amplified their focus on male responsibility and the transformation of destructive African masculinities,¹⁰ building their plea on the fact that patriarchal systems that deliberately disadvantage women and obstruct gender equality, not only preserves GBV, but also contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS (United Nations Zambia 2017:3; UNAIDS 2000:7; Baylies 2002:21). This could also explain the African Union's (AU)¹¹ proposal to involve men and boys in achieving gender equality in their *Agenda 2063* ("The Africa We Want"), stating that the dismantling of patriarchy is more than a proposition – it is a pragmatic resolution with the aim to foster healthy communities, families, and individuals, which would be beneficial for both men and women. This is considered crucial in the establishment of "[...] an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa" where every man, woman and child can flourish and live *the good life* (African Union 2018:10, 16; Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:15).¹²

In Zambia, the prevalence and incidence of GBV have been labelled as "worrisome", and it is no longer considered an isolated problem, but "[...] a widespread, tragic and daily issue that touches and impacts every Zambian one way or the other" (Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014:2). Gennwich (2015:205) writes that a vast majority of Zambian women have experienced some sort of gender-based abuse (either physical, sexual, or emotional) in their lifetime, and many women claim that their first sexual experience was against their will. Careful not to generalise the findings of a small-scale study with a limited focus group to the wider population, other studies¹³ were consulted as well, and they all affirmed the reality and destructiveness of GBV in Zambia. Even though it is not an exclusive

⁹ Including *Journal of Southern African Studies* (Volume 24, 4), *Agenda* (Volume 37), and *South African Journal of Psychology* (special edition, 2004).

¹⁰ At the General Assembly of the UN in 1999, gender equality and equity, and especially men's role in realising it, were considered as a crucial factor in the fight against AIDS. The role and responsibility of men from sub-Saharan Africa in particular have been highlighted repeatedly (UNAIDS 2000:7-8).

¹¹ For the African Union (known as the Organization of African Unity until 2002), gender equality and women empowerment are considered issues of utmost importance. The AU has established a Directorate for Women, Gender and Development, a Women and Gender Sectorial Cluster Committee, and at the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July of 2004 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), the *AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* was adopted – a milestone in the continent's efforts to promote gender equality.

¹² In the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, UNAIDS explicitly highlights that if women are at risk from current sexual norms, ungirded by ideologies of masculinity, so too are men (Baylies 2000:21). In the AU's executive summary, former Secretary General to the UN, Kofi Annan is quoted: "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance" (African Union 2018:10).

¹³ *Association Between Girl-child Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021), *Gender Based Violence against Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Muluneh *et al.* 2020); *Spousal violence in sub-Saharan Africa: Does household poverty-wealth matter?* (Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014); *Gender Based Violence: The Zambian Situation* (Mwaba 2016); *Factors contributing to physical Gender Based Violence reported at Ndola Central Hospital: a case control study* (Ngonga 2016).

Zambian phenomenon, GBV “[...] is becoming a common occurrence – an everyday thing. Barely a day passes in Zambia without the report of a case of violence against women, whether in a rural or an urban setting” (Zulu n.d.:e-source)

The pervasiveness of violence against women has been ascribed to (or is reaffirmed by) certain cultural practices which are considered harmful to the bodies of African women, with *lobola* (the bride price or marriage settlement), child marriages,¹⁴ female circumcision, virginity testing, polygamy, dry sex, widow cleansing and widow inheritance as examples (Zulu 2015:90-93; Van Klinken 2016:44). Van Klinken (2016:44) feels that these practices “[...] demonstrate that women cannot take control over their bodies, as this control is assigned to men.” This culturally-sanctioned control over women’s bodies is visible in the concrete statistics of GBV, and although GBV is not an exclusive Zambian phenomenon, approximately half of Zambia’s female population – irrespective of cultural or socioeconomic background – has recorded gender-based physical, domestic, intimate-partner, and/or sexual violence (Muluneh *et al.* 2020:11; Mwaba 2016:111; Ngonga 2016:146; Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014:7). Annually, GBV cases in Zambia increases, and in the vast majority of cases, women have identified the perpetrator as a husband, intimate partner, or a male family member, and this does not even include the statistics of emotional¹⁵ and economic violence,¹⁶ which are also considered forms of GBV (Ngonga 2016:149; Mwaba 2016:106; Katebe 2017:e-source; USAID 2010:1,14).

Along with the numerous international humanitarian groups involved in Zambia, many political and religious groups have also responded to this imminent threat in the form of conferences, empowerment initiatives, workshops, literature, and anti-GBV campaigns. In these numerous, multi-sectoral strategies to alleviate GBV, men are progressively engaged with and encouraged to participate in the discussions, since they are considered key players in the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination (Chitando 2012:75; Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:13; Jenkinson 2018:e-source; Katebe 2017:e-source). In fact, together with initiatives aimed at mobilising women, it is considered the most common approach to emphasise male responsibility, their co-operation and involvement in addressing gender inequality and alleviating GBV (Baylies 2002:22-23). This notion is personified in the former Zambian president, Edgar Lungu, who regularly

¹⁴ Despite the many attempts of African leaders to stop child marriages, many cultures still condone the marriage between underaged girls and older men. This practice is considered an abuse of (male) power since it not only involves sexual activity with underaged girls, but also robs them from an education and installs an economic dependency (Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:4).

¹⁵ Including (but not limited to) bullying, manipulation, and/or blackmailing.

¹⁶ Including (but not limited to) property grabbing, issues concerning *lobola*, and/or issues on widow inheritance.

acknowledged men's role in this regard, while also emphasising (or envisioning) women's full participation in government and in the economic sector, pledging investment in small to medium female-owned businesses, and providing women access to land and other resources (UN Women n.d.:e-source).¹⁷

Historically, the (predominantly male) Zambian government partook in numerous initiatives aimed at fighting GBV. In 1985 they approved the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), and in 1994 they fully committed themselves to the *International Conference on Population and Development's* (ICDP) decision that *Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights* (SRH&R) are inherently human rights (Mwaba 2016:113; United Nations Zambia 2017:1). Zambia subscribes to the *Declaration on Gender and Development* by the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC) and is a signatory to the 1998 *Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children*. Zambia has also established numerous other key institutions to combat GBV and promote gender equality, including *Gender in Development Division* (GIDD), the *Human Rights Commission* (HRC), *Police Victim Support* (VSU), and in 2000 they identified GBV as a priority area before adopting a *National Gender Policy* and declaring an implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (Mwaba 2016:114). In 2008 the *National Action Plan on GBV* (NAP-GBV) was developed, which introduced a penal code that “[...] prohibits sexual violence, rape, incest, defilement, neglect and/or desertion of children, coercion, discrimination and other associated abuses” (NAP-GBV 2008:11). In 2011, the parliament of Zambia authorised the *Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act*, which provided more protection for victims of any form of abuse, “[...] whether occurring in public or in private life, and actual or threatened physical, mental, social or economic abuse” on the grounds of a person's gender (Mwaba 2016:114).

In 2014, Zambia joined the rest of the world to commemorate the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence*, which normally starts on the *International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* on 25 November, commemorates *World's AIDS day* on 1 December, and ends on 10 December – *Human Rights Day* (Mwaba 2016:115). In 2017, with the theme “Leave no one behind, end gender violence now”, the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) addressed the fact that the number of GBV-related murders and assaults have increased in 2017 (GBV-related murders with 25,5% and assaults with 32,3%), while highlighting the fact that these figures do not

¹⁷ President Lungu – who was president during the fieldwork of this study – frequently uses social media platforms to address these issues regularly (see Lungu 2021).

even include the number of unreported cases of abuse (Katebe 2017:e-source; Jenkinson 2018:e-source). Therefore, despite the many political initiatives, GBV-related statistics have escalated.

Apart from political initiatives, numerous religious groups also responded to the harsh reality of GBV and HIV/AIDS. Religious initiatives frequently use the term “transforming masculinities”, with the hope that alternative (or even “biblical”) expressions of manhood would be an effective response to HIV/AIDS and GBV (Van Klinken 2016:51). Gender, masculinity, and the lived experience of men underwent a critical social and theological exploration, resulting in pleas to transform traditional forms of masculinity characterised by “[...] competitiveness, power, control, violence and the repression of emotions” (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:5). The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians,¹⁸ for example, considered the HIV pandemic as proof that gender relations need to be transformed. While advocating for those who are most vulnerable (women and children), the Circle pleads for the transformation of (the men in) religious communities that uphold the traditional (or patriarchal) gender roles and power relations (Phiri 2003:4-5,16; Van Klinken 2016:5,26). Other gender-critical African theologians also responded, arguing that patriarchy has disempowered the African continent and fuelled the spread of the deadly virus, calling gender inequality destructive to women, and, by consequence, to men as well (Van Klinken 2016:46-47; Chitando 2012:74). In a time of HIV and GBV, Chitando (2012:80-82) argues, it is part of the church’s mission to transform gender relations, challenge patriarchy, criticise practices that reinforce gender inequalities, and work towards transforming masculinities characterised by partnership and mutuality, rather than dominance and violence.

In a deliberate attempt to promote the church’s involvement in gender issues, the ecumenical body, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches,¹⁹ published a conversational book titled *Created in the image of God: From Hierarchy to Partnership* in 2003. In this book, they challenge the traditional biblical interpretation and cultural norms that encourage unequal power relations, discrimination, and the exclusion of women within clerical and societal structures (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2003:12-14). In 2010, they partnered with the World Council of Churches to publish a follow-up book with the title *Created in God’s Image: From Hegemony to Partnership*. This book responds to the demand to talk about the promotion of positive masculinities (or “transforming masculinities”), and to “facilitate renewal and transformation of churches” by challenging patriarchy and promoting women’s

¹⁸ The Circle – a community of African women theologians that focus on intersection of gender, race, class, culture, nationality and religion – was founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye in 1989. Today, the Circle produces authentic African theology that represents the voices and views of real African women (Phiri 2003:5-6).

¹⁹ Later renamed the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

participation in the church (Sheeratan-Bisnauth 2010:3). The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (WCC-EHAIA) has also put a considerable focus on "transforming masculinities" through the hosting of workshops and seminars, by developing literature, and by deliberately involving Southern African countries (including Zambia) in the process. In 2013 they published a bible study manual titled *Contextual Bible Study Manual on Transformative Masculinity* (Chitando & Njoroge eds. 2013; Gender Links 2010:e-source).²⁰

In response to and in an attempt to save the suffering bodies (the actual bodies of men and women) and also the suffering church (the Body of Christ) from the devastating effects of GBV and HIV, "transforming masculinities" have also become the topic in sermons of numerous denominations. In the light of "the good news" (or the gospel of Jesus Christ), the reinterpretation and re-imagining of traditional forms of manhood have become a popular topic in many Zambian churches.²¹ Even though some churches still encourage and justify male dominance, others offer an alternative which Van Klinken (2016:185) calls "soft patriarchy". Even though patriarchal language is still used (for example "male headship" and "leadership") in these sermons, they promote (or offer) a softer, kinder, and gentler version of patriarchy that fosters good men who accept civil and domestic responsibility and use their agency to facilitate change (Van Klinken 2016:185). "Male headship", for example, which used to be associated with male dominance and assertive and aggressive behaviour, now urges men to take responsibility and encourages behavioural change (Van Klinken 2011:114-118). These "transforming masculinities" sermons usually have a strong moralistic character, promote the archetype of what it means to be a *good man*, and regularly feature themes like heterosexuality, monogamy, fatherhood, the traditional family, self-control, abstinence, sobriety, gender equality, proficiency, and peacefulness (Van Klinken 2016:118-130; Van Klinken 2011:116-123).

Therefore, in response to HIV/AIDS and GBV statistics that have been labelled as "worrisome" in Zambia (Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014:2), "transforming masculinities" has been seen as the solution to HIV/AIDS and GBV for the last few decades. "Transforming masculinities" has been the subject in academic journals and empirical investigation, part of the public discourse, the aim of humanitarian groups, and proclaimed from pulpits, yet it seems as though there is a general receptive

²⁰ Other religious groups also published similar material, for example, *Created in God's Image: A Gender Transformation Toolkit for Gender Transformation for Women and Men in Churches* (2015), which was published by the Norwegian Church Aid in association with Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action (PACSA), and edited by Daniela Gennrich.

²¹ See Van Klinken's *Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity* (2016), *Male Headship as Male Agency* (2011), *Homosexuality, Politics and Pentecostal Nationalism in Zambia* (2014), *Transforming masculinities towards gender justice in an era of HIV and AIDS. Plotting the pathways* (2011).

attitude towards GBV in Zambia (Simister 2012:38). This begs the question: is this receptive attitude the cause or the effect of GBV? Did the “transforming masculinities” initiatives in fact work or take effect? Did masculinities, in fact, undergo transformation? The data tells us that despite regional and international support policies, guidelines, frameworks, and advocacies committed to ending the destructive practice of GBV, cases are still increasing (Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:3-4), implying that “transforming masculinities” initiatives have less effect or influence than it supposes.

It is in the middle of (embedded in) this complex web where the narratives on transforming masculinities, gender-based violence, and African Christianity intersect that this research project begins.

1.2 MAPPING BODIES:²² LOCATING AND DESCRIBING THIS PROJECT

1.2.1 The boundaries and direction of this project

In many African societies, GBV and HIV are contestants in a dynamic narrative where sex, sexuality, and gender interact with social, cultural, and religious systems; in a sense, physical bodies become the metaphorical “battlefield” on which these socially, culturally, religiously, and historically constructed power systems (or “bio-power”) are inscribed (Connell 2000:208; Connell 2005a:51; Foucault 1978:102-103). In this narrative, virility, potency, and physical strength are stereotypically admired as expressions of manhood, and in an attempt to uphold their dominance, men buy into a relentless cycle that sometimes involves aggression and violent behaviour in order to prove their masculinity (Van Klinken 2016:49). Men’s sexual entitlement is also part of this cycle, and some men would see partaking in risky sexual behaviour (having unprotected sex with multiple partners, or underaged girls) as a privilege and a right. This could explain why many HIV-prevention initiatives that promote abstinence, fidelity and safe sex are often met with reluctance, since they rob men of their supposed “right” to have sex and are considered “emasculating”; this type of attitude then contributes to the surge of HIV infections (Van Klinken 2016:49-50; Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021:3).

From related studies it is clear that there is a reciprocal (power) cycle where the strive to achieve (or assert) male dominance actually causes male fragility (feeling of and/or actual vulnerability,

²² This refers to the body of this project, as well as the literal bodies that were researched (individual bodies, the body of Christ, and the body politic). Since bodies are the site and location of research, the description thereof is often compared to a metaphorical “mapping of bodies” (Cooley 1994:90-94; Jones 2000:1-21).

inferiority and powerlessness), while fragility (and the attempt to escape it) becomes the vigour behind male dominance in return (Connell 2009:6-8). I argue that male dominance and male fragility therefore seem to be the two sides of the same coin; a notion that becomes a heuristic key in this research project, and is also visible in the formulation of the hypothesis and primary research question, which is:

Considering the interplay between male dominance and male fragility, how are masculinities lived and experienced in the Zambian church, in a time of gender-based violence and HIV, and despite the numerous “transforming masculinities” initiatives to combat it?

This project could be summed up as a practical theological exploration of masculinities as lived and experienced in the Reformed Church in Zambia; an exploration on how the dynamic male dominance-male fragility cycle manifests. This study does not aim to prove the existence of patriarchy in the Zambian context, nor its connection with gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS – ample research has been done to prove this.²³ Neither does this study offer answers and solutions to the problems connected to patriarchy – multidisciplinary research has been done in this regard as well. Rather, this study offers an authentic, in-context descriptive account of the concrete, lived experiences and faith practices in the Zambian context. This study could therefore also be compared to a metaphorical “embodiment” (an expression, a representation, a composition, and/or a personification) of the relevant stories regarding the physical bodies on which these power systems are inscribed.

This research project has a descriptive-analytical character, and it intends to provide an authentic cultural portrait²⁴ that represents African masculinities as lived, perceived, and experienced²⁵ (or embodied) in the Zambian context. Although the primary research question is open-ended,²⁶ it acknowledges a problem-saturated, dominant narrative which will be explored throughout this study (White & Epston 1990:10). The aim of this research project is to externalise and deconstruct the dominant cultural narrative (White & Epston 1990:51-53), sensitive to the fact that gender is not the primary signifier of identity in Africa, but rather intersects with other identity markers, like sex, sexuality, race, culture, class, education, and geography (Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:5). Also, since

²³ Affirmed by Jewkes and colleagues (Jewkes *et al.* 2010:41) that argue that “Qualitative research has shown that the links between HIV/AIDS, gender inequity, and gender-based violence lie in the patriarchal nature of society, and ideals of masculinity that are based on control of women and that celebrate male strength and toughness.” This is reaffirmed in Muluneh’s article *Gender-Based Violence against Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Cross-Sectional Studies* (Muluneh *et al.* 2020:1-2).

²⁴ This refers to the ethnographic approach used in this research project (see Osmer 2008:51).

²⁵ This refers to the sub-discipline of *lived religion* (see Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.).

²⁶ This is intentional, as it resonates with the narrative approach used in this research project.

people are the experts of their own stories, their contributions (thus, the first-hand accounts of respondents) are treated as the primary sources of knowledge in this research project. In its presentation and attempt to make sense thereof, people's stories are placed within the larger, dynamic framework of interdisciplinary scholarship (Müller 2017:91). After the externalisation, deconstruction, decontextualisation, interpretation of and elaborations on the dominant narrative, unique (or possible) outcomes are highlighted, and alternative (life-giving) narratives imagined (Müller 2017:94; White & Epston 1990:65).

In other words: this research project does not aim to offer simplistic understandings of gender roles, nor impose a new form of masculinity on Zambians – that would only install another hegemonic cycle of male dominance and male fragility (Foucault 1978:158-159; Connell 2005a:84). However, some alternative presentations, forms, expressions, or embodiments of masculinity would be referred to and introduced throughout this study; not as a prescriptive practice, but as an attempt to complexify and add depth to the knowledge and understanding of masculinities in Zambia (Ward 2017:103).

1.2.2 Naming this project

The title of this research project is:

Transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia:

The good men, the good life, and the good news.

This title was composed inductively, formulated by using recurring words and phrases that were found in the consulted literature and that were repetitively used by the participants of this research project. This title presents the multiple considerations and complexities involved when exploring issues surrounding masculinity in Zambia. It also insinuates the interplay of male dominance and male fragility, and it installs a creative tension that questions “transforming masculinities” and the presentations of the good men, the good life, and interpretations of the good news in Zambia. The title presupposes some epistemological (the nature of knowledge)²⁷ and ontological (the nature of being)²⁸ vantage points, and it also divulges the themes and topics explored throughout this research

²⁷ Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that refers to the science of study or knowledge. It aims to discover the nature, the basis and acceptability of knowledge. In this project, I chose an interpretivist (or hermeneutical) approach, which is an empathic way of understanding in order to grasp the individual's point of view. Knowledge was gathered empirically through the qualitative strategy that focuses on the experiences of people and observations made by the researcher (Bryman 2012:27-30).

²⁸ Ontology is a branch of philosophy that refers to the nature of being and how the world relates to reality. It asks philosophical questions about existence and reality, and how to accomplish meaning. A constructivist approach is visible

project. The description of each of these vantage points become clearer in the breakdown of the title, found in this section.

1.2.2.1 Transforming masculinities...

This is a deliberate and direct reference to the “transforming masculinities” initiatives propagated by political, humanitarian, and religious groups in response to GBV and HIV, and it does not only involve the bodies of men. “Transforming masculinities” has been adopted by scholarship on the topic,²⁹ and it involves the deconstruction and unpacking of the perceptions, attitudes, social expectations, deeply-held beliefs, values and the misconceptions (or “constructions”) commonly attributed to masculinity, since they are considered the root of gender injustice and inequality in the church today (Tengatenga 2010:8); it addresses the fact that the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and gender-based violence have been interpreted as “women’s issues” for too long, while also urging male religious leaders to become more involved in these issues (Chitando 2013:6; Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:13); it aims to challenge negative and harmful ideas of what it means to be a “real man” (which include violent behaviour, power, control, dominance, emotional numbness, and sexual vibrancy), by embracing the constructive ways of being a “good man”, directing men toward a masculinity where they are (or can be) caring, sensitive, respectful, responsible, and challenge forms of gender-based violence (Chitando 2013:7; Gennrich 2015:212).

During empirical involvement it became apparent that the traditional, hegemonic forms of masculinity generally associated with patriarchy and hierarchy are indeed being contested and undergoing transformation. This could be ascribed to a changing world (or globalisation), which also influenced the way people see traditional gender roles (Louw 2008:395). Gender roles have undergone a tremendous revolution; in fact, they are constantly transforming, and this could be seen in a vast and increasing number of societies where economic opportunities, political privileges, and legal standing are equitably distributed among women and men (Harari 2014:178). The “transforming masculinities” in the title acknowledges this, and this research project questions *whether*, *why*, and *how* this is happening in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ), by studying the transforming masculinities from within.

in this research project, since this acknowledges the fact that a researcher only presents a version of reality which is not definitive, and it also acknowledges that social reality is the product of constant constructions and revisions (Bryman 2012:32-34).

²⁹ For example, *Transforming masculinities in African Christianity* (Van Klinken 2016); *Contextual Bible Study Manual on Transformative Masculinity* (Chitando and Njoroge eds. 2013).

The word “transformation”, however, does not only refer to the question if masculinities are being transformed, nor to the fact that there are forms of masculinities that are already being changed (busy transforming); it also implies a contribution which essentially generates new knowledge on African masculinities, which in turn produces a transformative framework that recognises the diversity of sexualities that questions the notion of a unified, conventional sexuality (Ngwena 2018:227). Successively, since I am personally involved in this research project, and my own narrative (autobiographic notes, certain normative positions, and my unpremeditated subjectivity) is considered a dynamic voice in this research project, the word “transforming” also refers to the transformation of and the road to rediscovering my own cultural and gender identity as a white, educated Afrikaans cisgender man from a privileged background (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:27).

1.2.2.2 ...in the Reformed Church in Zambia

According to Chitando (2013:8-9), institutional religion (or the church) is considered as a major force of influence – an incomparable resource and irreplaceable instrument suitable to transform communities. In some cases, however, the church has been considered as an obstacle – a contributor, an enabler or re-enforcer of gender inequality and discrimination (Chitando 2013:8-9; Van Klinken 2016:188). Since Zambia is a nation that proudly and publicly identifies as Christian (Soko 2010:38), one could also question whether institutional religion and the church – the RCZ in particular – was an instrument or an obstacle in this discussion on GBV and “transforming masculinities”. Since much research has been done on the subject in Zambian Pentecostal and charismatic churches,³⁰ the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) – a respected, growing, and recognised denomination in Zambia – was chosen as sample group for this project.³¹ Although the Reformed Church in Zambia is the “body” (or “body of Christ”) researched in this project, the findings can be transferred to other bodies of enquiry as well.

Demarcating one aspect within the RCZ, however, is not an easy task. The RCZ is a denomination with congregations in many urban and rural areas all over the country; each congregation has its own history and customs, and each congregation have some context-specific identity markers, such as

³⁰ For example, Van Klinken’s book *Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity. Gender Controversies in Times of AIDS* (2016).

³¹ This is an example of “purposeful sampling” (De Vos 1998:46).

language, and communal, cultural, and/or economic backgrounds. Each member in each congregation is nestled within a web of local, regional, national, and global systems, and all of these narratives influence and affect the other (Osmer 2008:12). Despite being a social and natural system in itself, the RCZ is also influenced by other (power) systems and global narratives.³² Since masculinities is the product of cultural practices and institutions, understanding the origins and consequences of these the formative and political systems should be considered, and in this research project, questioning whether they install male dominance or male fragility (Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:9,11).

Before becoming an established church denomination, the RCZ was a South African mission station in the British colony of North-Rhodesia. Since religion was one of the central aspects of colonialism, an honest reflection on the RCZ's colonial roots and the influence of the missionaries' (Western) theology is done in this research project, as well as its influence in the installation of the male dominance and/or male fragility (Morrell & Ouzgane 2005:9). The post-colonial period and contemporary narratives are treated with the same importance since they tell the story of how the RCZ fostered its own identity since decolonisation and the independence of Zambia in 1964 (Soko 2010:28). Although RCZ congregations in Lusaka became the primary setting in which research was conducted, rural congregations and mission stations were also visited as well during the field work of this research project. The participants (or respondents) of this research project were male and female members and ministers of (or part of the body of) the RCZ, and together with some personal accounts and relevant literature, the lived experience (and stories) of these respondents take centre stage throughout this project.³³

1.2.2.3 ...The good men, the good life, and the good news

The subtitle of this project refers to three features (or focuses and deliberations) that emerged in both the pilot study and in the consulted literature. Therefore, these three features ("the good men, the good life, and the good news") were identified inductively (from within). During empirical involvement, these three features were formulated into three, open-ended secondary questions:

- (i) What are the definitions, experiences, and/or expectations of masculinity (being a good man) in the Zambian context, and what is the RCZ' view on this?*

³² This could also refer to intersectionality.

³³ De Vos (1998:46) identifies the four parameters when doing research in the field: the setting, actors, events that would be researched and the process to be followed.

- (ii) *What is society telling (or prescribing) men about the (good) life that they should be living, and what is the RCZ's view on this?*
- (iii) *In a Christian nation, what is being taught from the Bible about men and masculinities, and what is the RCZ's view on this?*³⁴

These three features, connected with the main title (*Transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia?*), underscore the fact that studying masculinities is not a straightforward and one-dimensional process, but multifaceted and intricate. The title of this project therefore acknowledges that there are multiple narratives and identities that come into play when doing research on masculinities in an official Christian nation like Zambia. It demonstrates the multiple layers, or intricate, multifaceted webs of interconnected systems³⁵ that influence the lived experiences of members in the RCZ.³⁶ These three features aim to highlight the interconnectedness, interplay, complexity and sometimes ambiguity between the multiple narratives when doing research on masculinities.³⁷

These three features could also be explained in terms of the male dominance-male fragility cycle. When exploring the roots of patriarchy, for example, which is synonymous with the studying of gender and masculinities, Louw (2009:99; 2008:385) suggests that there are four cornerstones that justify male dominance in society today, namely: (1) *biology* (men are physically stronger), (2) *culture* (social and familial values and hierarchies attributed to men), (3) *economy* (money, property, production and distribution of goods are considered the natural domain of men) and (4) *religion* (religious literature, rituals, assignments and official roles often favour men and validate male superiority, dominance and privilege). The four cornerstones of male dominance have been contested in both the academic and public arena, and have undergone major shifts, which could also be ascribed to its association with fragility.³⁸

³⁴ In terms of the dialogical self theory, which would be elaborated on throughout this study, these questions could also be seen as an exploration concerning the dominant *I*-positions (voices, stories, opinions) in the field.

³⁵ See *The human web: Reflections on the state of pastoral theology* (Miller-McLemore 1993).

³⁶ There are historic narratives which refer to the influence of colonialism and the decolonising of Africa; narratives on the transformation of traditional masculinities in a time where gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS is considered a major problem; narratives that speak of the promise of and strive towards human flourishing and economic growth, while there are still many people stuck in poverty in sub-Saharan Africa; and narratives that tell stories of the influence of the thriving neo-Pentecostalism movement in sub-Saharan Africa and the influence it has on the integrity of the gospel (the good news).

³⁷ An argument to embrace complexity and ambiguity is included in the next section of this chapter.

³⁸ (1) In *biology*: even though men are considered to be the stronger sex physically, it is important to remember that women are more resistant to hunger, disease and fatigue, and there are also women who have more physical endurance and strength than men. (2) In *culture*: even though men are naturally attributed aggression, domination, procreation, wisdom, and the role of protector of and provider for their families, one must not forget that it has been proven that many

Also, these cornerstones can be reconciled with *the good men*, *the good life*, and *the good news*, since they can refer to biology, culture, economy, and religion synchronously, as well as autonomously. The four cornerstones (biology, culture, economy, and religion) and/or three features (good men, good life, and good news) are not considered as separate boxes when discussing African masculinities; rather, it underlines the intersectional nature³⁹ of this and any other project on gender and sexualities. *The good men, the good life, and the good news* underscores the fact that gender is not an independent entity, but rather a structured social-cultural enterprise which constantly intersects with other identities, like race and class (Connell 2005:75).

1.2.3 Theoretical points of departure⁴⁰

Even though a variety of academic and theological disciplines were implicated in this research project, this project is done within the field of practical theology. Theologians, like Ganzevoort (2009:n.p.), agree that defining practical theology is a complex task, since one encounters a complex multitude of definitions, approaches, themes, motives, and objects of study when studying practical theology. Its complexity, however, does not make practical theology an invalid or ill-conceived field; rather, it underscores its multivalent and extended responsibilities spread over a broad array of spaces and places (Miller-McLemore 2012:5). The multiple practical theologies could be ascribed to the numerous paradigm shifts – how people interpret the world and make sense of reality – that occurred (and are still occurring), including moving from modernism to postmodernism, from structuralism to poststructuralism, from positivism to relativism, from fundamentalism to postfoundationalism, from secular dualism to post-secular holism, and moving from rational-argumentative approaches to narrative approaches (Müller 2011:1).

women have superior social skills, a greater tendency to cooperate and can therefore definitely contribute to society. For example, many women in Africa have taken on the role of the breadwinner of the family, and there are many female-run households in Africa today. (3) In *economy*: even though the economy, property, production, and the distribution of goods are considered to be the natural domain of men, one cannot ignore the fact that *women* are considered to be the economic backbone of Africa today. The argument that women lack testosterone and are physically weak becomes irrelevant when considering that many women have become excellent business executives, politicians and even “empire-builders” (Harari 2014:174-178). (4) In *religion*: even though religious literature justifies male superiority, dominance and privilege over women, the gospel of Jesus Christ actually recognises and included women and their visibility in the church. Both men and women are created in the likeness and image of God and that “...the man and the woman were given joint stewardship and benefits of the earth” (Matsveru & Gillham 2015:37; Louw 2009:99).

³⁹ Intersectionality (or the intersectional nature of gender) have greatly influenced the field of gender and feminist studies. It acknowledges the fact that categories like race, class, gender, and sexualities intersect and influence one another, while also highlighting the fact that universalism and normative suppositions need to be deconstructed (McCall 2016:1777; Davis 2008:68).

⁴⁰ Also referred to as epistemology.

Over the years, the focus of practical theology has also shifted from ministry formation and the application of doctrine in certain pastoral situations, to a deliberate engagement with philosophy, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. Consequently, in order to deepen and broaden the sensitivity for the human condition within society and religious communities, the boundaries between the previously distinct theological and religious field have been broken down (Müller 2011:5; Miller-McLemore 2012:1-3; Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.). Miller-McLemore (2012:5) feels that the main aim of practical theology lies in the pursuit of an embodied Christian faith that goes beyond the concerns of disciplinary enterprise.

In short, a wide-ranging number of intellectual developments inside and outside religious and theological studies – too many to name and describe in detail – intersected to generate fresh interest in practice, the study of practice, and the pursuit of improved pedagogical strategies for cultivating practical knowledge (Miller-McLemore 2012:3).

Pattison (2007:18) poses that practical theological knowledge and insight should not be independent from engagement with reality – it should address issues and questions of everyday life, and attend to issues such as injustice, inequality, and the misuse of power through interdisciplinary and dialogical investigation (Pattison 2007:18).⁴¹ This is a simultaneously *scientific* and *artistic* endeavour:⁴² as a *science*, practical theology should value truth, reality, things, objectivity, explanation, proof and determinism, and as an *art*, it should value beauty, symbols, feelings, meanings, subjectivity, interpretation, insight and freedom (Pattison 2007:20-22). As a *science*, practical theology is an academic discipline that defines, evaluates and elaborates on empiricism, which is research based on facts, methods, findings and knowledge that are valuable and have purpose; and, as an *art*, practical theology also focuses on exploring, enriching and nurturing the human imagination, listening to people's narratives, focusing on their worldviews, while recognising (valuing) the importance of love, joy, flourishing, awe, wonder, and fascination while seeking understanding (Pattison 2007:269-286). In this research project, both scientific and artistic sides of doing research in practical theology were

⁴¹ Pattison feels practical theology should be practical (realistically related to people), pastoral (committed to human flourishing), personal (based on the ideas and phenomena that people deem important), political (acknowledges the fact that individuals and communities are shaped by the social, organisational and institutional powers), popular (focus on the significant, meaningful things in people's ordinary, everyday lives), partial (done with an awareness of the researcher's own biases and limits, and committed to see things from the perspective of the marginalised), passionate (concerned with the emotional and embodied aspects of human existence), public (intended to address all people in ways they can understand and appreciate), polemical (involving a critical response to inadequate information), and, professional (having professional skill and expertise) (Pattison 2007:18-19). In his approach, authenticity (for example, through real relationships) is valued, since it not only enhances the relevance and capacity to inform, transform and delight (Pattison 2007:21).

⁴² *Science* is often considered an archaic way of referring to research, and *art* is sometimes considered too insubstantial when doing research; therefore, Pattison argues, it should be a combination of the two (Pattison 2007:20-22).

embraced, with empiricism as the foundation of the project, which flows into an artistic interpretation and presentation of the findings.

Practical theologians prefer not to define what practical theology is, but rather describe what it does. Miller-McLemore, for example, identifies four distinct *enterprises*, each with its own audience and objectives, when doing practical theology: “[...] it is a *discipline* among scholars and an *activity of faith* among believers”, used as “[...] a *method* for studying theology in practice and it is a *curricular area* of subdisciplines in the seminary” (Miller-McLemore 2012:5). These four enterprises are not supposed to contain (or restrict) practical theology like in modernistic thinking; rather, it highlights their interconnectedness and complex, interdependent nature. She adds that “[...] each understanding points to different spatial locations, from *daily life* to *library* and *fieldwork* to *classroom*, *congregation*, and *community*, and, finally, to *academic guild* and *global context*” (Miller-McLemore 2012:5).

Building on this, Osmer strongly highlights the interpretive dimension (or the hermeneutical nature) of practical theology, and divides this into four core tasks that are based on the four questions that guide the interpretation of and response to situations.⁴³ For Osmer (2008:20), practical theology is “[...] the interpretive activity of ordinary people in everyday life”, as well as the interpretive dimension of scholarship. These four tasks could be seen as independent, or as interdependent and interrelated tasks, and when doing practical theological research, these four tasks could also become referred to as guidelines. Osmer’s four tasks/questions of practical theology could be summarised as follows:

- (1) The *descriptive-empirical task*, which responds to the question “What is going on?”, is fixated on the gathering of information to discern patterns and dynamics in specific episodes, situations, and contexts. According to Osmer, this task requires a priestly listening through attending and guiding (a spirituality of presence). In formal research attending translates into empirical inquiry, especially through the qualitative skills of describing, observing, and interviewing (Osmer 2008:4,37-39,58).
- (2) The *interpretive task*, which responds to the question “Why is this going on?”, is fixated on understanding and explaining these patterns and dynamics, by referring to theories within the

⁴³ The four questions are: “*What is going on?*”, “*Why is this going on?*”, “*What ought to be going on?*” and “*How might we respond?*”

arts and sciences. According to Osmer, this task requires sagely wisdom, which translates into wise judgement (recognising the relevant particulars, discerning with the moral ends, and determining the most effective means to achieve these ends), through thoughtfulness and theoretical interpretation, analysis, and assessment (Osmer 2008:4,81-84,113).

- (3) The *normative task*, which responds to the question “What ought to be going on?”, is fixated on the construction of responses in these episodes, situations, and contexts, and studying good practices, after referring to theological concepts of interpretation. For Osmer, this task requires a spirituality of prophetic discernment, which simultaneously refers to a sympathetic reflection (human participation in God’s pathos), and theological and ethical interpretation, which also encourages a cross-disciplinary dialogue (Osmer 2008:4,135-139).
- (4) The *pragmatic task*, which responds to the question “How might we respond?”, is fixated on the desirable influence within these episodes, situations, and contexts, by determining strategies of actions, and afterwards, entering reflective conversations (an evaluation) after their enactment. For Osmer, this task requires a spirituality of servant leadership, which entails tasks competence informed by humility, transactional guidance through crossing boundaries, and by personifying deep, transformational change inspired by the Christ’s suffering (Osmer 2008:4,176-178,192-196).

In Pete Ward’s (2017:14) approach to practical theology, he identifies five practices involved in (or ways of doing) practical theology. These practices have a strong narrative undertone and are built on the premise that practical theology should primarily be concerned with studying the ordinary and the everyday. Although they are different to Osmer’s four tasks and Miller-McLemore’s four enterprises, there are some intersections and correlations. Paraphrasing Ward, these five practices could be studied independently, or could also be used as a process of doing practical theological research (Ward 2017:14-21):

- (1) Practical theology as *remembering*, not only refers to recalling the past, but also expresses how stories (particularly referring to the message of the gospel) raise, envelop, and/or take us into itself.
- (2) Practical theology as *absorbing*, not only refers to the internalising of theories, ideas, or the communal practices in which we are embedded, but also the external expression thereof in our participation in the life of the Christian community.

- (3) Practical theology as *noticing*, not only refers to the action of intercession and contemplating on certain issues that are both personal and political, but also to the spiritual practice of seeing that leads to a response or action.
- (4) Practical theology as *selecting/editing*, not only refer to the decision-making process between various options, but also focusing on what could be done better while envisioning something new.
- (5) Practical theology as *expression*, not only refers to the way people express their faith in the church life, but also to the way that the gospel becomes embodied and lived out in the personal, communal, political, and economic arena, in the everyday life.

Although I could have aligned this particular study according to these tasks, practices and/or enterprises of doing practical theology, I also acknowledge Ward's (2017:10) discomfort with restricting practical theology to simple and straightforward ways of thinking. Ward (2017:102-103) criticises practical theologies with fixed, straightforward and simplistic stages or tasks with a starting point and a finish. Even though these tasks, stages or enterprises are helpful for theological reflection and structuring research projects, the danger of systems and universal concepts is that they do not always grasp the complex and multifaceted nature of some situations and contexts, nor the complexness of the divine mystery. Particularity and generality in cultural contexts while doing practical theology, Hoeft (2012:415) adds, always cause tensions, since there are always compromises and exceptions.

Doing practical theology, therefore, is complex, and research should always recognise the reality of the presence of this complex (or messy) network of interacting and interconnected systems (Ward 2017:11).⁴⁴ When studying a particular phenomenon like masculinities for example, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the texts, context, persons, or objects we intend to interpret are situated in a complex web of personal, internal, social, political, and cultural structures (McClure 2012:276; Ward 2017:10). Practical theologian Bonnie Miller-McLemore (1993:366-369) calls this "the living human web" or "the web of life", which not only links individuals, families, congregations, communities, and larger social systems together, but also reminds us that social systems are not

⁴⁴ When referring to the rich variety of narratives included in this research project, for example, one will see the relatedness of patriarchy, power struggles, gender inequality and other complex issues, as well as stories of hope and testimonies of justice. Although these narratives are separate accounts, they are also connected and interrelated.

mutually exclusive, but rather intertwined, interdependent, and interconnected to other systems (Osmer 2008:16-17; Ward 2017:10-11). These systems are nestled within local, regional, national, and global systems, shaped by culture, society, and reality, and influenced by other open and dynamic micro- or macrosystems, which become an important dimension when doing contextual analysis and interpretation (Osmer 2008:12; McClure 2012:276; Ward 2017:10).

Ward does not necessarily reject other practical theological approaches, like those mentioned in the previous paragraphs, but he agrees with theologians Swinton and Mowat who embrace the complexity of experience and encourages the process of “complexifying” our understanding of situations and contexts (Ward 2017:103). Simply put, complexifying entails taking a subject, issue or experience that seems familiar and is understood, put it through more levels of analysis to comprehend its complexity and multivalent nature, and in the end, *adding depth* to the understanding and knowledge (Ward 2017:104). In other words: complexity invites more people with divergent opinions (different backgrounds, different point of view) to the table, and engages with them on the topic, and in return it broadens the extent and deepens the understanding of the subject.

Therefore, complexity should not be seen as a problem that needs to be solved – “[...]it is just the way things are” (Ward 2017:10). Ward (2017:10-11) recommends that the theologian start research “in the middle of things”, embracing the “messiness” of the lived experience – the complex web of multiple layers and interlocking systems (Hoeft 2012:416).

Situations [...] are ‘complex, multi-faceted entities which need to be examined with care, rigour and discernment if they are to be effectively understood’. Empirical research and particularly the qualitative methods of inquiry are a means to explore situations in a more sustained and structured manner, offering the multilayered and richly textured accounts of experience (Ward 2017:103).

The messiness of the lived experience also becomes the premise of this study. When I entered the field for empirical research, I arrived “in the middle of” people’s stories – stories that are situated within a web of social systems, that is intertwined with past, present and future stories as well. Although the processes, tasks, enterprises, and movements (a postfoundational approach) of practical theology influenced this project greatly, the ordinary, complex, messy everyday life of people becomes the focal point. Doing research on the human experience – in this case male dominance and male fragility – while starting “in the middle” of “messiness of life” may seem ambiguous, vague, open-ended, and even anti-categorical; embracing this complexity theology, however, leads to a

richer and deeper understanding of masculinities in Zambia, with inclusivity and equality in mind (McCall 2016:1772-1775; Davis 2008:76).

In this process of making sense of the messiness as a practical theologian, Ganzevoort (2009:n.p.) reminds us that this endeavour remains a theological one, and should therefore remain focused on “tracing the sacred” within the spiritual, empirical-reconstructive, and critical-constructive modes that were followed in this study. He continues to elaborate on four possible meanings of “tracing the sacred”, which in turn could be connected to the praxis of practical theology, namely practical theology as travelling, following, studying, and sketching. Paraphrasing Ganzevoort (2009:n.p.), these are:

- (1) *Tracing as travelling.* When doing theology, we become fellow travellers in realm of the sacred. During this journey, we try to understand what is happening around us, and we deliberately allow ourselves to be affected by the places and people we encounter. When we visit the places we’ve been to before, we ask the same old questions, but we also consider new answers. We do tie ourselves to previous knowledge, but we open ourselves up to new and unexpected knowledge as well.
- (2) *Tracing as following.* When doing theology, we are deliberately following in the “footsteps” of the sacred. Through following (discipleship), the theologians try to grasp God’s intention in the light of the Kingdom.
- (3) *Tracing as studying.* When doing theology, we are constantly discerning and analysing the evidence of the sacred that could be perceived in the natural and human life. We study the marks left by God, we follow the signals and cues left by divine intervention. When studying, we trace down the sacred in a reconstructive and empirical mode.
- (4) *Tracing as sketching.* When doing theology, we model and decorate the religious reality and experience. It entails transposing the original sacred image so that it may become transparent in the world we live in, and it envisions a world where we can live faithfully.

In this research project, as a practical theologian, I would construct meaning by means of searching for “[...] traces, signs, evidence, or remains of traces, signs, evidence, or remains of something that indicate a certain activity or presence” (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.), through a metaphorical (and in some

settings a literal) travelling, following, studying, and sketching, in order to trace the sacred in the ordinary and the everyday.

1.2.4 Hermeneutical guidelines

When doing practical theology – irrespective of the preferred method or approach – a dynamic hermeneutical character that not only sets out to deepen preliminary understanding and interpret a context, but also point toward alternative interpretations and imagining new possibilities is evident. Practical theology at its core involves a constant interplay between practice and context, with the one continuously informing and influencing the other. Browning (1991:39) compares this process to a cycle, and Osmer (2008:11) compares it to a spiral – a hermeneutical process that incessantly moves from practice to theory to practice, constantly moving towards a deeper understanding as new insights emerge.

Hermeneutics, like practical theology, is defined in terms of what it does, rather than what it is. On grassroots level, hermeneutics involves making sense of the activities of ordinary people in everyday life; and in formal scholarship, hermeneutics has a more scientific, interpretive dimension (Osmer 2008:21). In terms of the hermeneutical cycle, practical theology starts with the questioning of one's preunderstanding of a phenomenon, followed by deliberate dialogical engagement for the person, context, object, and/or text to reveal itself in new ways.⁴⁵ This results in new insights, new understanding, new ways of thinking, and involves (re)acting in the world (Osmer 2008:23). Since this is also the aim of the study, two specific hermeneutical lenses – lived religion and intersectionality – were chosen in the plight to deconstruct and better grasp the dominant narrative, to make sense of and interpret the “complexity” and “messiness” of the field, while also keeping this study on track.

1.2.4.1 *Lived religion*⁴⁶ – the ordinary and everyday lived faith practices

Over the years, “lived religion” has developed from a subcategory in practical theology, to an independent field of study and is considered useful methodological and hermeneutical tools when doing research. Lived religion is built on the idea that religion and theology is dynamic; it is lived and on the move. It supposes that theology is not only doctrinal in nature, but it is visible and exists in the ordinary everyday experience of people at home, in the streets, and at church; it focuses on

⁴⁵ This also corresponds with the dialogical self theory, referred to throughout this study.

⁴⁶ I feel lived religion is an important hermeneutical lens when doing ethnographic research.

how people live their lives in relation to religion, and is therefore incomplete, provisional, fluid, mobile and incompletely structured (Ward 2017:56-57). Lived religion attempts to unravel and understand “[...] the performative dimensions of ‘religion-in-action’ as it functions in people’s ordinary lives” (Ganzevoort & Sremac 2019:3). Complementing the ethnographic method of research, lived religion is parallel to the idea that religion, like culture, “[...] is enacted or performed through practices” (Ward 2017:56).

Lived religion broadens the scope of practical theology, which was previously limited to theology in church practices (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:214). Together with the emergence of liberation, black and feminist theology, practical theology started directing its focus beyond the theological world, by also involving all domains of human existence, including the cultural and social daily activities and practices, and lived experience that ordinary people value (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215). Lived religion within the field of practical theology begins with the concrete lives and practices of individuals; it is interested in the ordinary settings in which people live out their faith, while also acknowledging the fact that contexts consist of a web of interrelated relationships. Lived religion is not necessarily harnessed to take religion into the ordinary, everyday life, but also bring the ordinary, everyday life into religion (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215,217,220).

In the field of practical theological research, Ganzevoort (2009:n.p.) poses that lived religion could be considered as a useful hermeneutical tool, since it aims to recognise “the sacred” by discerning, describing, interpreting, explaining, evaluating, and constructing ways people speak about and experience God. Furthermore, lived religion does not only focus on religious practices, but also on the ways religion is embedded and embodied – the concrete ways “the sacred” is present in the human experience – by valuing people’s desires, hopes, thoughts, imaginations, their embodied experiences, as well as the spatial dimension in which this takes place (Ganzevoort & Sremac 2019:3). Although the ordinary and everyday lived experiences are filled with complexities, inconsistencies, heterogeneity, and untidiness (Ward 2017:58), lived religion aims to attend to this multilayered complexity and revisit the ways “[...] the sacred is produced and performed in the realm of the everyday” (Ganzevoort & Sremac 2019:3-4).

In this research project, the ordinary and everyday lived experiences – along with the associated narratives, symbols, and imaginations – become the premise and focus of this study. As a practical theologian, lived religion is considered both a guiding and hermeneutical tool in order to better grasp and present context, whilst also attempting to trace the sacred. The embodiment of male dominance

and male fragility in Zambian Christianity is central to this thesis, and therefore, lived religion is considered a useful and crucial hermeneutical lens.

1.2.4.2 Intersectionalities⁴⁷ – the simultaneous embodiment of multiple identities

The theory of intersectionalities is considered as one of the most important contributions to the field of women-, gender-, ethnic-, and cultural studies, and it is used in a variety of academic fields, including sociology, law, political science, and – progressively – in theology (Davis 2008:67-85; McCall 2016:1771-1800; Kim & Shaw 2018:3,12). The term “intersectionality” was coined in 1989 by the feminist African American law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, in a response to the fact that black women were often excluded in feminist and anti-racist discourses, and the fact that traditional feminist views often overlooked the lived experiences of black and non-white women. Even though feminist scholars promoted gender equality, Crenshaw felt that a white woman’s experience of inequality differs from that of a black woman, because different markers of inequality – for example race and class – are at play (Yee 2018:2; Kim & Shaw 2018:3,12).

Intersectionality (or “intersectionalities”) expresses the idea that there are multiple identities that overlap and converge, and theorises the complex interconnection between gender, sexuality, race, and class (Yee 2018:2; Kim & Shaw 2018:3,12). There isn’t a single, pure, overarching experience of (or mould for) gender, sexuality, class, or race since each identity differs from and is influenced by the other. For example, a rich, able-bodied, heterosexual, white man’s experience and definition of “oppression” would differ from a poor, disabled, homosexual, black woman, “[...] because both occupy different but intersected and often conflicted locations on gender, race, and class continuums” (Yee 2018:2; Kim & Shaw 2018:3). Totsuka (2014:86-87, 89) calls this the social graces (GGRRAAACCEEESSS – gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality) that a person embodies, which will undoubtedly guarantee privilege or be the cause of marginalisation.

In this study, intersectionality appreciates, acknowledges, and typifies the multiple interconnected systems and identities people experience (Kim & Shaw 2018:2). Intersectionality was chosen, not only because of its contribution to the field of gender and sexuality, but also since it embraces “complexity”, “messiness” and the practical theological idea that each person is situated in a “web of life” which consists out of multiple and divergent – albeit intertwining and interdependent – power

⁴⁷ I feel that intersectionalities is an important hermeneutical lens when doing narrative research.

structures. It also complements pastoral approach that sees people as “multistoried beings” who are simultaneously influenced by multiple stories (Morgan 2000:5, 8; McClure 2012:276). These stories could also be seen as “identity markers”, since they are informed by things like race, culture, sexuality, gender, class, and geography (Yee 2018:2). Kim and Shaw (2018:80) pose that

[o]ne’s identity is not monolithic but rather multidimensional, complex, and intersectional, situated within interlocking structures of power. One’s identity includes and is not limited to ethnicity, class, race, sexuality, gender, and ability, which all intersect and are interdependent. Our lives are complex and our multiple identities are not mutually exclusive. Therefore the axes of classism, racism, homophobia, ableism, and other issues play a role in characterizing ourselves and how we engage in the struggle for social justice.

As a hermeneutic, intersectionality is considered a helpful tool that breaks down a researcher’s bias which is shaped by their social position and power, recognising their limitation by remembering that their lived experience does not necessarily reflect the human experience of the majority (Kim & Shaw 2018:3). Intersectionality is a corporeal hermeneutic that focuses on a person’s lived experience within these interlocking social structures (or identities). Kim and Shaw (2018:2) argue that intersectionality is a lens that recognises the shifting patterns of power, and understands how social institutions – like gender, social class, and sexual identity – are connected, influenced, and shaped by one another. Each person is situated in a web of multifaceted identities and systems of oppression that mutually and simultaneously shape and situate people differently (or unequally), and each identity can either advantage or disadvantage them (Kim & Shaw 2018:10). This could be seen in the male dominance-male fragility cycle as well.

Intersectionality is considered an important tool when analysing the nuances and complexities of oppression (for example, male dominance). It highlights the fact that there are multiple social locations, identities, and institutions which are embedded in hierarchised and structured systems of power and privilege that simultaneously shape individual and collective experience. For example, when studying gender, intersectionality reminds one that gender does not function independently, but is continuously shaped and reinforced by sexuality, race, class, and other social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies (Davis 2008:68; Kim & Shaw 2018:2). According to Ngwena (2018:21), intersectionalities enrich the way we think about the equality and identity, since it owns the fact that individuals and social groups are made up of more than a single subjectivity. This is important when doing research on gender, since hegemonic vantage points exclude individuals in terms of race, culture, and/or class and this becomes (or should be) a concern. Intersectionality helps

researchers to remember that race, class, and gender are intertwined and mutually constitutive (race is gendered, and gender is racialised), while also reminding us that both gender and race are related to the permanencies and transformations of social class (Davis 2008:71).

It is also important to note that violence and inequality are deeply rooted in “[...] relationships that are defined by race, class, sexuality, and gender”, and therefore, intersectionality contributes to the deconstruction of the normative suppositions of these categories (McCall 2016:1777). Intersectionality deconstructs the binary oppositions and universalistic paradigms, it problematises hegemonic and biased generalisations, while simultaneously conceptualising multiple and shifting identities (Davis 2008:71-71,75). Intersectionality embraces “[...] the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (McCall 2016:1771). Intersectionality becomes a useful resource that constructs an equality framework that works toward inclusivity, by embracing and building on all the categories that usually differentiate (and therefore exclude) human beings on the grounds of their race, class, gender, sexuality, culture, religion, disability, geographic location and other associational categories; it recognises that identity (sexuality and gender) is not determinate or unidirectional, but rather – depending on the cultural, sub-cultural and social setting – a complex, fluid and unstable phenomenon which is porous to subjectivities (Ngwenya 2018:33-34; 237-238).

Even though intersectionality is often labelled as “ambiguous”, “vague”, “open-ended” or even “anti-categorical”, it is a rational reminder that the world has multiple dimensions and is much more complicated and contradictory than theorised (McCall 2016:1772; Davis 2008:76). When discussing identities, it is crucial to involve intersectionalities, since this articulates the fact that identities are not unified, but fragmented and “[...] multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions” (Hall, in Ngwenya 2018:32). Intersectionality celebrates diversity, deliberately encourages complexity, avoids premature closure, provides new insights and opportunities in which blind spots are identified, while also exploring the consequences of power, and the incompleteness of identities (Davis 2008:76-77; McCall 2016:1772-1775).

Intersectional theology demands that a theologian question the assumptions that are based on norms of dominant culture, examine one’s commitment to the pursuit of justice, and assess one’s dedication to embrace complex and contradictory identities (Kim & Shaw 2018:16,79). Intersectional work requires the recognition of both dominant and subordinate identity markers that shape a person’s lived experience, and it also involves vulnerability, since it often leads to disclosing whether a person is a victim or a beneficiary in (or due to) these socially constructed identities (Kim & Shaw 2018:19).

Religion also intersects with these identities, and since theology and theological ideas cannot be separated from the stories in which they originate, intersectionality also makes room “[...] to see, examine, and value the complexities, intricacies, contradictions, and individuality of each person’s experience in a way that more linear and systemic theologies do not” (Kim & Shaw 2018:19).

In this research project, my own experience of and views on masculinity differed from the lived reality of Zambians. My positionality and experience of masculinity is enforced and influenced by a range of intersectionalities, including race, language, culture, ethnicity, geography, level of education, age, gender, sexuality, and class. Intersectionality as hermeneutical lens does not imply apologising for these identity markers, but rather understanding and accepting that others also function within a different web of multiple identities. Intersectionality as a hermeneutical lens therefore helped me to constantly re-evaluate my own positionality, different views, and stances. Intersectionality breeds empathy, respect, fairness, and understanding, and is considered a crucial guide in this research project’s pursuit of justice.

In this research project, the dialogical self theory (which will be elaborated on later in this project) will be used to explain the different identity markers that shapes a person’s (or “the self’s”) positionality, and different identities would be referred to in terms of voices, narratives and/or *I*-positions.⁴⁸

1.2.5 Practical points of departure⁴⁹

As highlighted in the introduction of this study, this research project enters an on-going (and already-crowded) conversation on African masculinities. In the previous section, practical theology was presented as a vast academic field with an abundance of definitions, models and approaches associated doing empirical research as well. In an attempt to not replicate but contribute to the discussion on masculinities from a practical theological stance, an inductive⁵⁰ approach of doing research was chosen for this particular study. Since beliefs and actions cannot be detached from the context, inductive reasoning argues that only *after* studying and truly understanding the contextual narratives of people and setting they live in, one can move into the process of interpretation, constructing meaning and composing theories (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:12; Riemer

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3, subsection 3.2.

⁴⁹ Also referred to as research methodology

⁵⁰ In research, one either works deductively, which is an approach aimed at testing an existing theory, or inductively, which is an approach concerned with developing a new theory after considering the empirical data.

2012:170). Inductive methodologies therefore start within concrete contexts and with concrete evidence before working towards more abstract concepts and theoretical frameworks (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:225). Inductive research strongly emphasises the importance of fieldwork, and the concrete, in-context narratives and lived experiences therefore not only become the sources of knowledge, but also the basis of the study.

Since the purpose of this research project is to contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory – or “basic research” – empirical work is implied (Osmer 2008:49). The intention of empirical involvement is to understand (or better grasp) physical and human phenomena. Empiricism therefore strengthens practical theology’s study of the issues that arise from everyday individual and communal faith practices (Ward 2017:21; Osmer 2008:41; Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215). Empirical data could be collected in the form of numbers and statistics (quantitative research), or in the form of words and stories (qualitative research). Although relevant numbers and statistics⁵¹ are considered valuable and would be referred to throughout this study, this research project primarily focuses on the findings obtained in qualitative research methods. Qualitative research entails immersing oneself in the context (like ethnography), focusing on the perspectives of insiders (like narrative research), trying to understand that meaning and knowledge is context- and time specific, while also recognising how power is embedded in social contexts (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:3).

Since this study is grounded in the African context, its methodology and epistemology should reflect that (or “feel at home”) as well. This does not mean that all Eurocentric modes of knowing should be avoided or silenced altogether; but instead of just highlighting abstract ideals, the methodology should represent the real issues related to Africa, referring to real African voices and concrete lived experiences of Africans (Ngwena 2018:39-40). Put differently: the concrete lives and practices of the context – or the embodied aspects of everyday life – packaged in the form people’s stories should enjoy preference and be central in the study of said context (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:217-220; Müller 2017:89). The focus on stories that represent real people in real contexts is also the premise of Julian Müller’s African postfoundationalist practical theology. In the postfoundational approach, the narrative and ethnographic methods of collecting qualitative data are considerably dominant. This means that while the stories of participants are valued and central to this study, my own narrative – personal memories, observations, accounts, and conclusions in the field – is

⁵¹ This refers to quantitative research – a methodology that tries to remain independent from the phenomena, and usually generalises findings (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:3)

accommodated as well, which reciprocally contributes to the subjective integrity of this study (Van den Berg 2006:167; Müller 2017:93).

1.2.5.1 *The narrative approach: bodies have stories*

I entered the field with the intention to listen to the stories of communities, congregations, theological students, church members, ministers, and individuals on the periphery, since these stories co-construct a larger narrative from which male dominance and male fragility could be researched and understood. The narrative approach of doing research is built on the premise that humans not only live in *storytelling societies*, but they are in fact also *storytellers* (or narrative agents) who use stories to make sense of (or express) their lived experience, and to articulate the things that are deemed true and meaningful in their life (Coetzee & Rau 2019:3; White & Epston 1990:10; Grimell 2018:39). Ganzevoort (2012:216) affirms this when he writes that “[w]e live our lives from day to day, but we understand our life as if it were a story. Our collective identity, history, and religious traditions are likewise structured as stories.”⁵²

Regarding the *storytelling societies* we are part of: people are born into on-going stories – stories with a history and a future, stories that relate them with other people, and stories that influence the identity of the individual (Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:115; White & Epston 1990:15-16; Meulink-Korf & Van Rijn 2016:66). Our stories are not closed systems – they grow and change, and they are open-ended in nature. Each individual story does not consist of one singular story, but rather multiple, interwoven stories that simultaneously affect one another. The plot in these stories is dynamic, influenced by a series of changes, adventures, obstacles, and contingencies, and they are constantly influenced by the actors, actions, and events in their life (Meulink-Korf & Van Rijn 2016:65-66). These stories can connect people with one another but can also cause conflict; they can be both significant and ambiguous (Meulink-Korf & Van Rijn 2016:66). In Hubert Hermans’ theory of the dialogical self, he compares this to “the extended self” – the stories (or voices) which are external to oneself but becomes part of a person’s internal negotiation when positioning themselves in the world (Hermans 2004:19-20).

⁵² This is also the premise of Charles Gerkin’s book, *The Living Human Document* (1984), in which he compares human being to living documents – living stories (narratives) constructed by language and experience (Gerkin 1984:39-40). Just like a book is the product of and the author’s reaction to the outside world (social, political, economic, and historical narratives that simultaneously occur), so too a person constructs their world through language and gestures in the form of a story (Gerkin 1984:38-39; Capps 1998:25).

Regarding being *storytellers*: when talking about our lives, we tell stories; when communicating the way we experience the world, we express ourselves in the form of stories (Freedman & Combs 1996:18). Every sensation, stimulus, relational transaction, deliberately or instinctively, is stored in story form (Müller 1996:21), or as Meulink-Korf and Van Rijn state it (2016:65), “[t]he contents of our self-consciousness have the structure of a story.” Our goals, motivations, intentions, and consequences of our choices are displayed in our stories; they are the vessels through which we transfer our feelings, our experiences, and our perceptions of the world (Gerkin 1984:26-27; Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:111). Even the question about identity, “Who am I?”, could be answered in narrative form using stories about one’s youth, the impact it had on one’s life stories that had a positive or negative impact on one’s life, stories about habits, characteristics and attitudes towards the world, concluding that one’s identity is packaged in one’s narrative (Müller 1996:22-23; Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:112-113).⁵³ The dialogical self theory argues that the self has a narrative identity, made up of numerous internalised voices and stories; the self also is a dialogical narrator (storyteller) of these many stories that define their make-up (Grimell 2018:42-45).

Regarding the stories we tell, Elliot (2005:4,8-11) argues that narratives have three dimensions: (1) they are *temporal*, meaning stories have a sequence or chronology, they acknowledge the fact that lives and social contexts are time-bound; (2) they become *meaningful attempts* to understand behaviour and experience, meaning the telling of stories requires an evaluative act that asks a question of meaning and significance, while simultaneously indicating that a type of response is required; and (3) narratives both *influence and are influenced by the context*, meaning narratives divulge both biographic information, as well as information of the social context in which they are produced. Narratives contain a clear sequential order that connect actions and events in meaningful ways, and subsequently they offer insights about the world and how people experience and perceive it.

Narrative research (or narrative inquiry) is an approach that concerns the understanding of these experiences, through the intimate study of experiences over time and in context (Clanindin & Caine 2008:541). Narrative inquiry has been a particularly effective tool in sociologists’ quest to understand and interpret meaning, as it offers a unique window into the ordinary lives of ordinary people, while looking for meaning underneath the multiple intricate levels related to emotions, feelings, and subjective experiences (Coetzee & Rau 2019:3). Narrative inquiry is an on-going reflexive and reflective methodology that not only requires the respondent to tap into their memory and experience,

⁵³ This idea is carried throughout this study and is prevalent in the dialogical self theory which would be referred to later in this study as well.

but also requires a researcher to question their own experience before, during and after each inquiry (Clanindin & Caine 2008:542; Elliot 2005:3,8-11).

When studying stories, one attempts to unwrap the elements of the wider socio-political order, one reviews structural trends, and one sets out to understand the larger society and the social reality of others. One also sets out to discover (or uncover) the invisible structures of interests, forces, and trends behind (or underneath) the visible structures of the human world (Coetzee & Rau 2019:3-4). All stories are embedded in (and induced by) a particular context. When listening to the stories of individuals in a particular context, the coherent stories not only reveal insights into their own lives and experiences, but also into the lives of the audience (Coetzee & Rau 2019:5). It is the aim of narrative research to collect knowledge on the everyday reality and the contextual situatedness thereof, from the participant's point of view (Coetzee & Rau 2019:6-7).⁵⁴ Even though stories (or narratives) may oversimplify the complexity of life, they become helpful in locating us in our lives, in telling and reminding us where we come from, while also articulating the central themes and values we live by. Sequentially, narratives of the past can help in the creation of new stories, new ideas, and new beliefs to be shared and pondered on (Capps 1998:30). Stories, however, are more than just descriptions of events, they also provide insights on the sequence and consequence thereof, while also giving a glimpse on what the story might become (Lemley & Mitchell 2012:221).

According to Ganzevoort (2012:215), the narrative approach has made useful contributions to theology⁵⁵ as well, since this approach seeks alternative ways to gain knowledge, outside rationalist positivism. He adds that the narrative approach is a helpful tool that helps a researcher to move away from general, objective, and (so-called) absolute knowledge, to a more local, particular, and subjective way of understanding. Narratives, according to Ganzevoort (2012:216-217), are performative⁵⁶ since, apart from giving a "window" on people's reality (or their lived experience) they also engage people in dialogue to establish, maintain, change, or even end relationships. Here, it is also important to realise the importance of language, since stories are constructed by language,

⁵⁴ This accords Müller (2011:3), who refers to Van Huyssteen's transversal rationality which highlights that "[...] our irrevocable contextuality and the embeddedness of all belief and action in networks of social and cultural traditions, beliefs, meaning, and action arise out of our embedded life worlds."

⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that many contemporary theologians place an emphasis on lived experiences (narratives) as a crucial source when composing theology (Cheng 2011:20). Thatcher feels that lived experience becomes a crucial and distinct source of theology, especially in the field of sex, sexuality, and gender; she adds that if experiences are removed from the equation, it could result in poor theology (Thatcher 2011:39-40). Experience provides a wider framework of reflection, it tells the story of personal transformations, and gives accounts on how grace is at work in human lives (Thatcher 2011:49, 53). Queer theologian Patrick Cheng (2011:18) agrees that human experience should be a source of theology, since lives and experiences also contain stories about God, or as Ganzevoort (2012:214) puts it, "[i]n one way or another, human stories are connected with the stories of or about God."

⁵⁶ Also see Butler's theory of gender performativity (Butler 1999:180).

and language becomes the means through which narratives are expressed and interpreted (Gerkin 1984:40). As language constructs one's reality, it also influences the way we think and talk. Thatcher highlights the powerfulness of language, referring to the fact that it is used to reference, name, objectify, create assumptions, stereotype, label and stigmatise minorities as well (Thatcher 2011:23-25). Language becomes the generators of meaning and agents of change within lived experiences (White & Epston 1990:80). White and Epston (1990:81-82) highlight the role of language in the narrative, posing that

[...] [t]he narrative mode centers around linguistic practices that rely upon subjunctive mood to create a world of implicit rather than explicit meanings, to broaden the field of possibilities the "triggering of presupposition," to install "multiple perspective" and to engage "readers" in unique performances of meaning. These linguistic practices bring an importance of complexity and of the subjectivity of experience.

Language also has a hegemonic power (Coetzee 2019:27). Throughout history, language was used to manipulate societal values and norms, and language became the means to maintain cultural dominance through spreading ideology (Coetzee 2019:28). When doing research using the narrative method, it is important to be aware that language have been used to determine meaning, control culture, preserve certain identities, and establish certain concepts of superiority and inferiority based on race, social status, politics, and religion as well (Coetzee 2019:30). Lemley and Mitchell (2012:218) make a crucial contribution when they write that

[s]tories of black scholars in primarily white institutions and indigenous nation members participating in language revitalization efforts privilege and validate voices that are historically oppressed in an effort to institute social and cultural change. Narrative inquiry, therefore empowers social, political, cultural, and economic identities.

To do balanced and responsible narrative research does not mean exclusively listening to the stories of the oppressed and marginalised, but rather working towards participatory democracy and ethical ownership (Ngwena 2018:39). Ganzevoort (2012:220) feels that since subjectivity is central in a narrative approach, it is ethically relevant to include the powerless, the outsider, and the marginalised to challenge the dominant narratives and bring them in dialogue. This is a crucial insight when doing research in Africa on gender issues, especially in theology, since all traditional ideas were constructed by those who are in power. In the Christian church, this led to the prioritisation of men over women, and the marginalisation of people of colour and those who are economically and socially

disadvantaged in society (Ward 2017:37).⁵⁷ In practice, this necessitates African narratives to take centre stage in matters concerning Africans, and base findings of research on concrete realities instead of abstract ideals (Ngwenya 2018:39-40). Narrative researchers turn to stories that all people live and tell, while looking for ways to represent and understand the meaning, hidden underneath intricate or blatant language, to provide new knowledge, or enhance existing knowledge about a certain phenomenon (Lemley & Mitchell 2012:218).

Narrative inquiry is not only for the benefit of minority groups, but it does give them a voice (Ganzevoort 2012:218). The subject of the narratives is the individual experiences that illustrate and extrapolate to the broader social location the individual embodies (McCall 2016:1781). When analysing these personal narratives, the complexity of a social life, which intersects with a single dimension of multiple categories is revealed (McCall 2016:1781-1782). The divisions between a researcher and researched in terms of culture, racial classification, class, language, and religion should not be seen as the periphery of research, but a guide in epistemological exploration which leads to the unwrapping of the often neglected, subliminal meaning of the both the researched and the researcher's lifeworld (Coetzee 2019:31).

In this research project, I aim to reflect on both the complementary and (often) ambiguous stories concerning the transforming masculinities in Zambia. It is my hope that these narratives will also help in locating people in their lives, remind them (us) where they (we) come from, articulate the central themes and values, while also laying the foundation for new stories, new ideas, and new beliefs (Capps 1998:30). Through narrative involvement, I hope to unwrap the elements of the larger social order, better understand the goals, motivations, and after-effects of reflection, experience, and action, and ultimately, understand what is really going on in society (Coetzee & Rau 2019:3-4). In order to do this, two particular theories have been incorporated throughout this project: the theory of intersectionalities⁵⁸ and the dialogical self theory.⁵⁹ Both theories embrace the idea that every person is a multistoried and multidimensional being that can embody multiple identities simultaneously, and are considered relevant interpretation tools for this project.

The choice of the dialogical self theory is based on its premise which poses that we (humans) are narrative agents who make sense of their lived experience through the telling of stories. These stories could also be seen as different *voices* that have shaped the conscious and unconscious structures we

⁵⁷ This affirms why intersectionality as hermeneutical lens is crucial and beneficial.

⁵⁸ See subsection 1.2.4.2.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3, subsection 3.2.

live by, the guiding principles referred to when making moral decisions, and the adaptations and appropriations involved in the compositions (or the construction of) a certain disposition of *the self* (Grimell 2018:39). In a sense, societal and/or cultural narratives could also be compared to the “software of the self”; they are mediums through which individual and collective experiences, identities, selves, others, and lives are given meaning (Grimell 2018:39).

The theory of the dialogical self poses that each person (or the self) is “multivoiced” and represents (or embodies) a “society of self” – a multiplicity of distinct voices, opinions, perspectives, narratives, norms, and/or characters (*I*-positions) that are in constant negotiation or in dialogue with one another (Hermans 2001:245; Hermans 2006:149). *The self* is shaped, influenced, and/or conditioned by the *I*-positions that were introduced, installed, adapted and appropriated through this internal dialogical negotiation between *internal I*-positions (*I* say/feel/think) and also *external* (or extended) *I*-positions (or *me*-positions – my culture/family/community/religion says/feels/thinks).⁶⁰ In the negotiation of these *I*-positions, *the self* does not rely on self-knowledge alone (“*Who am I in relation to the other?*”), but also on the alterity of the other (“*Who is the other in relation to me?*”). This means that the stories of others (external *I*-positions) actually become intertwined with one’s own story and become internal *I*-positions (Hermans 2003:104; Hermans 2006:151).

Practically speaking, this means that when a person is involved in a dialogue with actual others, their response, their approach, their opinion and/or their position on a matter is actually based on (the result of, informed by, and/or formulated according to) this internal dialogue (or negotiation) with “imagined others” – the assumed *I*-positions (the voices, opinions, perspectives, narratives, norms, characters, and/or positions) that had been enforced, introduced and/or installed by significant others, as well as one’s community, culture, society and/or religion (Hermans 2003:104; Hermans 2001:273-274; Hermans 2006:150-151). Put simply, positionality could be seen as the product of a dynamic internal dialogue. In *the self*’s internal negotiation, certain voices “speak louder” – some *I*-positions (or stories) are more dominant, carry more weight, and/or are more valued – than others, and these dominant *I*-positions become the ontic basis for *the self*’s response, approach, supposition, and/or positionality regarding certain issues. This dialogical process is dynamic, and new *I*-positions are constantly being introduced into the “society of self” which could either shift *the self*’s views (their normative assumptions) or re-establish current views on and/or *the self*’s standing relationship with certain issues (Hermans 2003:104; Hermans 2006:151).

⁶⁰ There are *outside I*-positions as well – those *I*-positions that *the self* is unaware of but could be internalised as well.

1.2.5.2 *Ethnography: bodies are embedded*

Even though this research project has a strong narrative undertone (focusing on the narratives of respondents), the parameters of an African postfoundationalist practical theology also makes room for some personal observations and my intermitted subjectivity. Originally, ethnography was an anthropological research methodology concerned with the “[...] ways of life of living human beings” (Riemer 2012:165). It focuses on the cultural context of the sample group, and it aims to unravel the multiple layers⁶¹ of meaning that play into people’s lives (Goulding 2005:299-300), to understand the complexities and nuances of human communities, while also fostering social transformation (Moschella 2012:232). Ethnography is built on an inductive process of reasoning (“from the bottom up”), which involves constructing meaning and composing theories only after studying the specific, rich narratives of people and settings wherein they live (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:12). This requires that a researcher engage with fieldwork, since beliefs and actions cannot be detached from their context (Riemer 2012:170).

The hallmark of ethnography lies in its emphasis on fieldwork, and the fact that participants’ voices are considered the crucial source of data (Goulding 2005:299). As a method, ethnography involves “[...] watching, listening, and learning” (Berg 2001:153). In the field, data are primarily collected through observation (or becoming a participant-observer), but other sources like interviews, surveys, projective techniques, written records and artefacts are considered important too (Riemer 2012:171-176). Ethnography acknowledges that all research has subjective motivational factors behind it, and therefore, it accommodates a researcher’s (subjective) personal voice as well (Berg 2001:134). This, however, does not authorise blatant intervention, nor that the research is overwhelmed by a researcher’s voice; it does however recognise the autobiographical notes and personal observations made in the field as sources of knowledge (or raw data). Instead of only presenting a collection of results, findings, and analysis, ethnography does provide authentic insights into the world of both the researched and the researcher (Berg 2001:142).

Goulding feels that ethnography’s strength lies in the fact that there are multiple data collection methods to explicate the behaviours and experiences constructed by culture (Goulding 2005:299). Ethnography strongly emphasises the stories of people, since stories give meaning and coherence, while also acknowledging the fact that people are shaped by familial, cultural, and religious stories (Ward 2017:112). Ethnography falls under the interpretivist perspective of doing research, which

⁶¹ The idea that there are “multiple layers” in narratives, also correlate with intersectionality.

means that a researcher acknowledges the uniqueness of individual's narrative and the reality they live in; it assumes that people create their own meaning within their lifeworld and experiences, while moving away from a single, unitary reality that averages and aggregates people (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:8).

Ethnography has undergone an evolution which resulted in multiple practices of ethnography, including institutional ethnography,⁶² marketing ethnography⁶³ and theological ethnography⁶⁴ (among others), each with their own epistemological and ontological preferences. Ethnography has also developed in itself, and Islam (2014: 2-8) names three streams of contemporary ethnography: including *autoethnography*, which is when a researcher's own culture, background and historical background becomes the object of research ("narrating the narrator"); *multisited ethnography*, which acknowledges the fact that cultural knowledge, products, and populations move across boundaries and repositions cultures against macro structures ("following the traces of a diffuse system"); and *para-ethnography*, which translates into "side-by-side" research, where both researcher and participant become contributors in depicting culture and contexts ("locating reflexivity from within").

For this research project, along with the narrative approach, I also followed a para-ethnographic approach of doing research. Although respondents and their narratives were considered as the primary sources of this study, my own reflexivity – my personal impressions and responses to experiential encounters – was also included (Moschella 2012:225; Ward 2017:112). I followed the disciplined skill of attending, as prescribed by Osmer (2008:58-63), by *describing* (field notes, process notes, and other records that describes the setting, the sequence of events, emotions, and other relevant documents), *observing* (paying attention and writing descriptively, discerning information, surveying observations and recognising the strengths and limitations of one's own perspective), and *interviewing* (stretching from informal conversations, to open-ended interviews, to semi-structured interviews, to verbal questionnaires).

Like narrative inquiry, practical theologians have found appeal to this form of doing research. Not only does ethnography reveal some historical information, but it also gathers intersubjective insights which are considered important when doing research (Moschella 2012:227). The methods through which data are collected, include sincere narrative involvement through appreciative interviewing,

⁶² See Smith's *Institutional Ethnography* (2002).

⁶³ See Goulding's *Grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research* (2005).

⁶⁴ See Van Klinken's *Transforming masculinities in African Christianity. Gender Controversies in Times of AIDS* (2016).

actively listening to the complex local stories of a group, becoming an active participant, and immersing oneself in a context, and the study of artefacts and symbols that express group identity and history (Moschella 2012:229; Ward 2017:112; Osmer 2008:51). It is advantageous to take on the role of a learner and an observer, paying attention to the finer details – the sights, smells, and tastes of communal life (Ward 2017:112) – to create a much more authentic, a much richer and more complex understanding of the cultural narratives in the chosen community. Even though questionnaires, literature, and institutionalised religion are considered important sources, ethnography also makes an effort to focus on the cultural and social daily activities and practices of ordinary people (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215), painting a cultural portrait of what is going on in the community of the researched (Osmer 2008:51). It is my intention to move away from narratives *about* Africans and to focus more on narratives *by* Africans by engaging with the Zambians in Zambia and do research from within; an intention that correlates with the ethnographic method.

Ethnography becomes a qualitative method that provides accurate and rich data for theological reflection and interpretation (Moschella 2012:230). Human frailty, vulnerability, and fragility are themes that arise through ethnographic research as well (Moschella 2012:227), which also adds to the authentic richness ethnography offer. In practical theology, ethnography becomes “[...] a form of holistic pastoral listening that attends to the range of meanings, experiences, desires, and theologies that congregations express not only through their words but also through their lives” (Ward 2017:112). Ethnography is an activity; it is built on interactions, taking notes, journaling, inscribing patterns of cultural experience, and giving perspectives on life (Müller 2011:4). Müller writes that ethnography “[...] is interested in the depth of quality and approaches the lives of people as ‘works of art’” with the researcher taking in the role of an artist (Müller 2011:4). Ethnography is interested in real persons with their senses, desires, and thoughts (Müller 2011:4). Listening and attending to everyday life becomes a liberating practice, as it honours and validates the respondent’s experience, which contains both beauty and tragedy, their insights, and their soul; it initiates a dialogical process through which stories are reflected on, revised, and corrected, and it work towards transformation and healing in the lives of those affected (Ward 2017:113; Osmer 2008:37).

1.2.6 Values⁶⁵ and normative positions⁶⁶

When entering the field and conducting research, values, ethics, and normativity – consciously or subconsciously – are implicated. Concerning *values*: values carry meaning; they are context-specific and are the result of (or moulded by) actions, shared experiences and culturally informed attitudes and views (Pattison 2007:33; Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:42). Values are the consequence of social standards, build on assumptions, expectations, judgements, and prejudices, and in return, it also informs shared views on what is good and/or bad, desirable and/or undesirable. Pattison (2007:31) however warns against expressing values in simplistic, binary terms; since values are dependent on socio-variables, they could indeed be complex, vague, inconstant, ambiguous, moveable, and/or even incomprehensible. This becomes clear when considering the subjectivity and intricateness of the values like credibility, transferability, dependability, authenticity, and fairness (Mertens 2012:29-30). Aware of the ambiguity of values, I approached this project with the three basic axiological principles identified by Mertens (2012:22) in mind, namely beneficence, respect, and justice.

- (1) The value *beneficence* urged me to engage with the dominant (problem-saturated) narrative, contribute to the current understandings by recognising its strengths and weaknesses, and – if necessary – imagine alternative narratives. Since only focusing on the problems of the community's way of life and criticising the issues of the context are considered unhelpful and unbeneficial, I strived towards honest and balanced reporting, highlighting the relevant issues and challenges of the context, while also formulating constructive (and beneficial) context-specific outcomes – in the name of beneficence (Mertens 2012:20-24; Müller 2017:87).

⁶⁵ Also referred to as axiology. Axiology is a branch of philosophy, traditionally linked to epistemology and ontology, which refers to the values that are deemed important when conducting research. It is intricately related to the ethical considerations of a research project, which are crucial when conducting social research. Axiology promotes an ethical and responsible understanding and interpretation of contexts and cultures, and within the many distinctive and disparate considerations, it places an emphasis on values such as relevancy, credibility, fairness, truth, goodness, beauty, responsibility, dignity, knowledge, wisdom, freedom, love, justice, and wellness (Mertens 2012:22; Hiles 2008:52).

⁶⁶ Normativity (or normative positioning) is an abstract concept that describes a person's metaphorical stance in relation to an issue, matter, and/or situation. This stance is based on certain assumptions, considerations, boundaries, authorities, values, ethical principles and/or opinions that affect their attitude towards and response to the matter. Normative positioning does not only play a determining role in the theological and ethical interpretation of episodes, situations, and contexts, but also offer guidance when reflecting on boundary issues that reaches beyond "the situated" and "the concrete" (Osmer 2008:131, 161). Since this research project falls in the field practical theology, normativity then also involves certain theological suppositions connected to experiences of divine activity, the sacred, authentic faith expressions, and the mystery of transcendence (Osmer 2008:160; Graham 1996:206-207; Ganzevoort 2009: n.p.).

(2) The value *respect* urged me to become a considerate participant-observer in the community, deliberately immersing myself in the concrete setting of this project, in order to become more sensitive towards and understanding of contextual norms and customs. For me, sincere and appreciative inquiry, truthful reporting, a thoughtful portrayal of the context, and a compassionate retelling of participants' stories are signs of respect (Mertens 2012:25-26; Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:26; Müller 2017:89). As a practical theologian in Africa, respect also involves a conscious and purposeful attempt to locate and express my own positions, intentions, biases, perceptions, and expectations as well, since truthfulness and honesty contributes to the integrity of the study (Müller 2017:89). My personal, subjective views, however, should not overpower this study and take centre stage.

(3) The value *justice* urged me to move away from instinctively accepting hegemonic storylines (or so-called "grand narratives") since they often disregard the intersectional nature of identities, ignore the voices of the marginalised (those who are habitually silenced), and inhibits a context to be understood on its own terms. Justice as a value encourages thorough contemplation,⁶⁷ purposefully incorporating suppressed voices, and acknowledging the influence of intersecting identities (Mertens 2012:27-28; Müller & Pretorius 2019:92-93).⁶⁸ Justice is inherently connected to human rights, and human rights contend for *freedom* from all types of oppression – exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence; it also promotes *access* to the basic necessities in life, *inclusion* in the various social and ecological bonds of life, and *participation* in decision-making as well as decision-implementation (Koopman 2015:27-28).

As already highlighted, theological reflections on situations and contexts – even if they appear simple and familiar – are complex, multilayered, and multivalent (Ward 2017:69). This could be attributed to the ambiguity of shared views and values as well. Complexity (and ambiguity), however, should not be avoided or ignored; in fact, some theological reflective methods embrace and encourage the deliberate "complexifying" of the understanding of situations and contexts (Ward 2017:103). "Complexifying" entails moving away from the familiar and the assumed, and – through careful albeit rigorous examination and discernment – focusing on the unknown, since this uncovers new layers of

⁶⁷ Since different social, cultural, and religious contexts also produce a plurality of masculinities, the over-generalised (mis)representations of masculinities should be acknowledged and contemplated on as well (Van Klinken 2011:290; Siwila 2011:297).

⁶⁸ Müller and Pretorius' "hermeneutics of contemplation" argue that instead of approaching grand storylines and contexts with radical suspicion that only looks out for hard facts, a context should be approached with hermeneutics that contemplate on and advocate for certain possibilities, whilst seeking to understand the context on its own terms (Müller & Pretorius 2019:92-93).

understanding, which adds to the depth to one's understanding and knowledge of situations, contexts, episodes, concepts, and phenomena (Ward 2017:103-104).

Complexity could then be considered as a value in theological reflection as well, since it acknowledges and values the complex stories of real people in real contexts in real situations, and reaches beyond a preliminary and often biased understanding thereof. In this research project, these stories – not only despite, but also because of their complexity – are considered credible, authentic, contextual, and valuable accounts and sources of knowledge. These accounts include, are influenced by, and intersect with several other relevant and complex narratives, including the male dominance, male fragility, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence (Chitando 2015:273). These complex stories are valued, engaged with, complexified, reflected on, and presented with the values of beneficence, respect, and justice in mind (Müller 2017:87).

Along with the values identified in the previous section, there are also some definitive points of departure (or *normative positions*) that influenced the way that I approached, interpreted, and presented this research project.⁶⁹ When doing practical theology, Osmer (2008:161) feels that normativity has three dimensions: “Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, and contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from ‘good practice’ ” (Osmer 2008:4). Building on this, as a researcher in practical theology, I am aware that my religious background, personal beliefs, theological preferences, and subjective views of God and mankind have created an inner and dynamic (ever developing) theological framework that influences my approach to episodes, situations, and contexts, and this would be incorporated throughout this research project. I am also aware that I subscribe (or have been conditioned) to certain socio-cultural rules, principles, and moral guidelines which are not necessarily based on religious views, but on a universal ethic that acknowledges human dignity and rejects the deliberate infliction of harm onto others. The latter reinforces the belief that harmful practices like GBV cannot be justified in the light of the universal ethics of equality, mutuality, and fairness.

In response to the first two dimension of normativity that Osmer identified (theological and ethical interpretation), I also align with Ngwena (2018:205) who encourages researchers in Africa to move away from generalisations, and the dominant (oppressive and subjective) narratives that reaffirm the

⁶⁹ Osmer (2008:132) defines normativity as “prophetic discernment”, referring to the role(s) of prophets: announcing divine judgement and hope, reminding God's people of God's Word which speaks of both grace and righteousness. Prophets served as interpretive guides that highlighted God's involvement in human suffering, as well as human participation in God's pathos (Osmer 2008:132-133,136).

cultural hegemonic and do not portray the lived experience of Africans authentically. Ngwena (2018:208) also advises a metaphorical “widening of the table”, which involves a dialogic exchange peripheral (and often-excluded) voices and stories, instead of having people speaking on behalf of them. Therefore, I have incorporated many African voices into this project as well – African scholars, journalists, grassroots research, and the male and female respondents of this study – while also being critical towards hegemonic scholarship that often only present abstract ideals that aren’t necessarily situated in the concrete reality (Ngwena 2018:219).

Regarding the third dimension of Osmer’s practical theology, namely “good practice”, I agree that practice is a powerful source of normative (or moral) guidance, and a source of new (or different) understandings of God and social values. As a researcher, I observed, reflected on, and highlighted relevant forms of good practice (or practical wisdom) from the past (historic) narratives and the present narratives (everyday lived experiences) throughout this study, since good practice not only guides, but also generates new knowledge (Osmer 2008:139,150-152).⁷⁰

The dimension of good practice is of particular concern for Elaine Graham. In *Transforming Practice* (1996) she argues that since it is hard to build a consensus of values in a context characterised by pluralism, fragmentation, scepticism, and uncertainty, normativity should not be approached prescriptively, but reflexively – because of dialogue and reflection that emerges from practical wisdom (Graham 1996:6-7). For Graham (1996:6-7; Osmer 2008:154-155), *transforming practice* is an inductive, normative approach that does not lean on old theological truths and societal values exclusively, but rather looks at practice (or practical wisdom) to generate new knowledge and values. “Ethics and politics therefore become processes and practices, rather than applications of metaphysical ideals” (Graham 1996:7). Transforming practice is orientated towards human freedom, mutual love, struggles to overcome domination, and it offers models of transcendence – going beyond the situated and concrete to speak of authentic faith and encounters with divine activity (Graham 1996:206-207), or, in other words, transforming practice discloses God and God’s presence in the world.

As a practical example – which also coincides with this research project – Graham (1996:6-7) uses the “oppressive legacy of patriarchy”, where maleness and masculinity is considered the norm, to explain the necessity of transforming practice. Graham (1996:104-105) acknowledges that gender

⁷⁰ It could be argued that the three dimensions of normativity – theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and good practice – established certain dominant positions, attitudes, and opinions (or *I*-positions) that not only guided the course of this study, but also the interpretation thereof (Osmer 2008:161).

(identities, roles, and relationships) is socially constructed, and within these structures (or networks of social practices), human beings are agents (have power) that can either reproduce current institutionalised patterns or become sources of transformation that install new forms of knowledge, values, and social patterns. For Graham (1996:114; Osmer 2008:157-158), transforming practice is an “activity marked and illuminated by Christian love”, committed to the purposeful action (or praxis) of liberation. Concerning gender, Graham feels that prioritising instead of essentialising the diversity of women’s experiences in an androcentric world creates spaces where women can form new practices of gender identity, characterised by equality, liberation, and justice. This could also be considered as an expression of the praxis of Christian freedom and love (Graham 1996:132; Osmer 2008:158). Transforming practice (or good practice) then seems to make normativity – which is an abstract concept – more practical and accessible.

When discussing normativity and positionality when doing research, the dialogical self theory is also a helpful tool. When studying a phenomenon (like masculinities), faced with an issue (like GBV), or responding to complex situations (like the male dominance and male fragility cycle), each person has an entire repository (or “society”) of dominant *I*-positions, adopted “voices” and opinions to refer to, to align with, and/or to shape an opinion (take a normative stance). In a sense, this is also what normativity is – the dominant (or valued) *I*-positions that were informed, shaped, or conditioned by familial, societal, cultural and/or religious voices, opinions, perspectives, and positions; the theological positions and understanding of *good practice* that reciprocally informs a person’s approach to certain phenomena. With the dialogical self theory in mind, and considering this research project, one could ask: *What were the dominant voices, opinions, perspectives and/or positions (the I-positions) that informed the approach and influenced the execution thereof?* In this section, some of these normative positions (dominant *I*-positions or significant internal voices) are highlighted, which not only guided this study, but were also considered important when confronted with external and outside *I*-positions.

As outlined in the introduction of this study, I subscribe to the broadly accepted narrative that GBV is a problematic issue and destructive practice that violates basic human rights, robs people of their dignity, and harms the real bodies of real people (Chitando 2015:271). Along with Graham (1996:132), I believe that the diversity of women’s experiences should be acknowledged and included when discussing issues on gender, patriarchy, and GBV, since it is women’s bodies that are disproportionately affected. I am also of the opinion that any form of harm (whether gender-based, physical, sexual, domestic, emotional, or economic) inflicted upon another person, denies, disregards, disrespects, betrays, abuses, and violates that person’s dignity (Simister 2012:1; Chitando 2015:271).

However, I am aware that not all forms of violence are related to gender, that there are cases where women are violent as well, and the idea that all men are violent oppressors is often over-generalised and exaggerated. Some of these realities will be highlighted in Chapter 3, which focuses on empirical involvement (Gennrich 2015:204; Siwila 2011:11-12, 297).

Since members of the RCZ regularly confess that both men and women are equal and “created in the image of God”, human dignity is considered a “created dignity”; a dignity that does not reside in merit, capabilities, or performance, but sprouts from people’s dependence upon God the Creator (Koopman 2015:20). GBV, however, is an injustice built on oppression that not only disregards a person’s human rights, but also their God-given dignity, and it constrains the victim’s right to freedom and ability to live the good life. Here, I align with Graham (1996:104-105) who articulates human agency and its role in transforming practice, since this not only develops new knowledge, values, and social patterns, but also prioritises the experiences of women in an androcentric society, which installs practices that promote gender equality, liberation, and justice in the name of freedom and Christian love (Graham 1996:132).

Further, I am aware that gender inequality and patriarchy are not exclusive African phenomena, but visible in almost every society. GBV and HIV/AIDS – which undeniably intersects with male dominance – have devastated the African continent, and it should be addressed (and researched) earnestly, as well as compassionately; not for personal gain, but out of deep concern for those affected (Chitando 2015:269). This involves considering and reflecting on the traditional socio-cultural and religious practices that leave African women more vulnerable to physical abuse and sexual exploitation than in other communities, which endorses male privilege and violence as a method of asserting power, control and authority over women, children and those considered as “lesser men” (Theron 2015:54-56; Zulu 2015:90-92; Chitando 2015:271; Gennrich 2015:204,209). I am aware of some counter-narratives that try to dissolve GBV, but still endorse male dominance; men are supposed to be transformative agents that bring about change, but they are just installing a new hegemonic, leaving more men ashamed and vulnerable (Van Klinken 2016:118-130; Van Klinken 2011:116-123).

I agree with Ngwena (2018:20,34,208) who poses that African masculinities cannot (and should not) be reduced to its cultural and racial essence, since this ignores the “manyness” of identity, and the fact that gender intersects with racial, cultural, societal, historical and religious narratives as well. Identity is complex, fluid, unstable and porous to subjectivities and the influence of these narratives. It is advantageous to acknowledge that there is a long and complex (colonial) history in which African

men (and black masculinities) are portrayed as violent, dangerous, rapacious, promiscuous, and with uncontrollable sexual urges. In the name of just reporting, this history should be deconstructed rather than reinforced by using inaccurate, one-sided, gender essentialist, and out-dated sources that unfairly typecasts (or even make a fetish of) the bodies of African men (Ngwena 2018:33-34,184,237-238). Also, I am aware that GBV have become a comprehensive field of study, and that some scholars prefer to treat physical, sexual, domestic, intimate partner, emotional, and economic violence as separate fields of study (Simister 2012:10). Since this study's aim is not to focus on GBV per se, but rather the power relations associated with it (the assertion of male dominance and/or the consequence of male fragility), GBV was considered the colloquial term for all types of violence because of gender relations. In fact, studies on GBV often provide a glimpse of a much larger and dynamic network of power that installs hierarchies, socio-cultural networks and regulations that maintain the hegemonic narrative (Ngwena 2018:222). To uncover these narratives, my focus fall on the embodiment of these narratives – the lived experience in actual bodies in terms of dominance and fragility.

1.3 MOVEMENTS AND IMAGINATION: THE EMBODIMENT OF THIS PROJECT⁷¹

1.3.1 The movements of this project – a postfoundational approach

In the structuring of this project, inspiration was drawn from the seven movements of Müller's postfoundational approach to doing practical theology in Africa⁷² – an inductive approach that does not only embrace the “messiness” and “complexity” of the lived experience, but also accommodate the hermeneutical lenses lived religion and intersectionalities. The seven movements of Müller's postfoundational approach to doing practical theology not only compliment the chronological order in which this study was conducted, but also accommodate the qualitative methods used to obtain empirical data for this project.

Müller's postfoundational approach when doing practical theology was inspired by the work of Van Huyssteen on postfoundationalism (Müller 2017:92). After finding foundationalism (a proponent of grand metanarratives, universal systems of knowledge, and biblical literalism) and nonfoundationalism (a rejecter of traditional rationalism, empiricism, and denier of strong foundation for belief systems) inadequate when doing theological research, Van Huyssteen proposed

⁷¹ “Embodiment” refers to the literal and symbolic establishing of this project – the way it was structured and transferred.

⁷² See *A postfoundationalist, HIV-positive practical theology* (2005); *Postfoundational practical theology for a time of transition* (2011); *Practical Theology as part of the landscape of Social Sciences and Humanities – A transversal perspective* (2013); *African Postfoundational Practical Theology* (2017).

postfoundationalism, which is an approach “[...] that fully acknowledges the role of the context, the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience, and the role of tradition in shaping religious values” (Park 2010:2). Simply put, postfoundationalism is a postmodern epistemology that points beyond determinism. Van der Westhuizen writes:

Unlike foundational notions of universality and ideas about general knowledge, a postfoundational approach listens to interpreted experience from a local situation. It values the local experiences about praxis, God and traditions, yet it does not confine itself to the local, but rather, promotes a move beyond the local into the public multidisciplinary realm (Van der Westhuizen 2010:2).

Although interpreted experience and socio-cultural embeddedness are considered the premise of postfoundational rationality, it is also capable of reaching beyond local contexts through interdisciplinary investigation, following a transversal rationale (Park 2010:2; Meyer 2017:3; Müller 2017:91). In terms of practical theology, postfoundationalism simultaneously and reciprocally pays attention to both practice and theory.⁷³ It introduces a model of practical theology where dominant (and sometimes problem-saturated) narratives are deconstructed, and possible alternative, transformative narratives are developed and imagined. Therefore, it is concerned with both “story telling”, and “story making” (Meyer 2017:3).

This seven-phased approach of doing practical theology is an example of inductive research: the first four movements are concerned with contextual narratives, while following three movements are concerned with the interpretation thereof, formulating abstract concepts, and imagining an alternative narrative. In his own words, the seven movements of an African postfoundationist practical theology are (Müller 2017:92):

The context and interpreted experience

1. A specific context is described, not from a faked “objective” position, but from a personal perspective and, therefore, with the inclusion of one’s own story.
2. In-context experiences are listened to and described.
3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described, and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers”.⁷⁴

⁷³ This correlates with both Brown and Osmer’s definition of practical theology as a “cycle” or “spiral” which insistently moves from practice to theory and back to practice (Browning 1991:39; Osmer 2008:11).

⁷⁴ Even though Müller refers to interviewees as “co-researchers”, this study will refer to them as respondents or participants. Although interviewees’ voices and stories take centre stage, they did not necessarily take on a role of a “co-researchers”, but rather “crucial contributors” and “participants” whose authentic accounts of the field are handled delicately.

Traditions of interpretation

4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation.

God's presence

5. A reflection on God's presence/absence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.

Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

6. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation and based on the concept of transversal rationality.

Point beyond the local community

7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community.

A postfoundational approach involves taking on a post-structural position. This means moving away from the hegemonic generalisations of a certain phenomenon, being stripped away from expert knowledge and prejudices, deliberately taking on a stance of “not knowing” when approaching the field to create a safe space where marginalised and non-hegemonic voices could be heard as well (Müller 2017:86). Participants in this research project should be considered as the experts of their own stories since “[t]he researcher cannot pretend to be able to imagine on behalf of the participant” (Müller 2017:87). By sharing their stories, participants contribute to “[...] a new landscape of imaginative understanding” (Müller 2017:87). Including a researcher's (my) own narrative which contains personal biases, memories, observations, accounts, and conclusions (which is the premise of ethnographic research), contributes to the subjective integrity of this study (Van den Berg 2006:167).

Responding to Ward (2017:10) who poses that doing practical theology does not necessarily happen chronologically or systematic, it is acknowledged that multiple “tasks”, “enterprises”, and/or “practices” could apply to and be involved in each movement in this research project. Osmer's four tasks (descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic), Ward's five practices (remembering, absorbing, noticing, selecting/editing, expressing), Miller-McLemore's four enterprises (discipline, activity of faith, method, curricular area), and Pattison's view (science and art) of practical theology could easily fit into one or more of these seven movements separately or simultaneously. Doing practical theological research on masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia could be considered as a “messy business” where some movements intertwine; nonetheless, an African postfoundationalist practical theology is considered as a helpful blueprint in this research project. This seven-phased approach – which starts with a description of the context and the

interpreted experience, and then moves (or points) beyond the local community – also accords with the chronology of the phases in which this project was conducted. It could be compared to one extended movement of doing practical theological research, with the one movement naturally and simply flowing into the next.

1.3.2 Bodies as metaphor for plotting this project

The current chapter introduced the “body” (or content) of this project; it identified important considerations, outlined the methods used, delineated the content included, described the way this study was approached and would be structured further, and it defined some important points of departure as well. It highlighted the numerous narratives that – separate and simultaneously – come into play: the reality of GBV and its connection to HIV/AIDS; the interplay between male dominance and male fragility; the Zambian context and the Reformed Church in Zambia; the “transforming masculinities” initiatives and the intersectional nature of gender; the importance to focus on the ordinary, the concrete and the everyday; the inclusion of personal observations as well as narratives of marginalised persons; importance of corporeality (or embodiment) and contextuality by embracing the “manyness” of identity, the messiness of context, and the dynamic field of sex, sexuality and gender. Within these multiple narratives, the significance of *bodies* – both concrete and as a metaphor – is highlighted regularly.

When discussing topics like sex, sexuality, gender, GBV, HIV, male dominance and male fragility, bodies, embodiment, and corporeality are undoubtedly implied. The human experience (which is also a field of investigation of this study) implies having a body; our experience of being, our sensing of the world, our rhythms and the patterns of our everyday life are all attached to physical bodies (Moltmann-Wendel 1995:1-3). As Moltmann-Wendel (1995:86) puts it: “The body is the medium of experiencing the world.” Bodies, however, are intricate and multifaceted; they function interdependently with multiple identities and stories. Stories influence and are influenced by bodies, and, reciprocally, the way we do (how and what we do with) our bodies, become the base of our storylines (Meulink-Korff & Van Rijn 2016:65-66). Focusing on only one aspect of identity, like gender for example, disembodies it from its complexness, and this is why theory of intersectionality is not only helpful, but also crucial in this study. This is substantiated by the work of Judith Butler (1999:1955), who not only acknowledges that identity is multifaceted, but also the ontological character (always in a process of becoming) of bodies.

It could be argued that bodies have an epistemological character as well. Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel (1995:84)⁷⁵ emphasises this, stating that when doing research, we are not only thinking *about* bodies, but also *with* our bodies. Thinking *about* bodies is inevitable when doing research, since the “[...] body is a space that needs space” and “[e]xistence is always ‘being a body’ in the world” (Moltmann-Wendel 1995:98-99). She (Moltmann-Wendel 1995:101-102) adds that all societal power (im)balances – including the power that limits women and arms men – are engraved on our bodies, adding that it is ironic that aggressive potency (male dominance) is often connected to repression of embodiment (or male fragility). Thinking *with* the body is evident when a researcher enters the field (which is considered a “bodily approach”), their own embodiment (together with its perception, participation, and understanding) becomes subject to the study as well. Bodies therefore are both object and subject in studies, and embodiment therefore becomes a basic epistemological concept – the medium of both experience and knowledge (Moltmann-Wendel 1995:86).

This also resonates with the work of Paula Cooley (1994:90),⁷⁶ who calls the body a medium with a major – albeit ambiguous⁷⁷ – epistemological role. Cooley (1994:52) says that bodies and experience are intricately connected – the way bodies are engendered would undeniably influence its experience. Cooley (1994:19,26) highlights how bodies are never simply bodies – they are submerged under the power arrangements of language and discourse, *engendered* by definitions, interpretations, prescriptions, delineations, and descriptions.⁷⁸ Cooley (1994:41-42) calls bodies “[...] the site for and artifact of human imagination”, which means bodies are not only the source (or *site*) of knowledge, but also the consequence (or *sign*) thereof. “Viewed as *site*, ‘body’ focuses conceptually upon sentience as a field of pain and pleasure, experienced by imagining subjects” (Cooley 1994:90). Cooley (1994:63,66,89) also calls bodies an ambiguous *sign* for imagination; they are the objects and representations of the engendered imaginings, and the subjects of social and cultural constructions and relations. “Viewed as *sign*, ‘body’ forces the attribution or denial of agency to another, and therefore serves as a building block in the social construction of subjectivity, an attribution often denied particularly on grounds of racial, ethnic, class, and gender differences” (Cooley 1994:90). The body as *site* and *sign* (or material and social) is also visible when considering the male dominance and male fragility cycle: historically conditioned processes of socialisation have shaped certain

⁷⁵ See *I Am My Body* (1995)

⁷⁶ *Religious Imagination and the Body* (1994).

⁷⁷ Cooley (1994:5,8,9) regularly refers to the ambiguity of the body, since it is both the “[...] object of and vehicle for the social construction of reality”, both the “[...] location and artifact of human imagination”, and both the “[...] resource for and object of value and power”.

⁷⁸ This idea is also dominant in Foucault’s work, *The History of Sexuality: an introduction* (1976), referred to later in this study.

attitudes towards the body that are internalised; these attitudes influence the way people experience their bodies (Cooley 1994:91).⁷⁹

To highlight the centrality of bodies in this study, language that centres around bodies and embodiment (body-related terminology inspired by the works of Cooley and Moltmann-Wendel) would be continuously referred to, especially in the titles of this project. Researching masculinities (or the male experience) involves describing the ways of “doing the body”, whilst “transforming masculinities” implies considering the rules, disrupting the structures, and questioning the power systems that keep certain bodily practices intact. Continually emphasising bodies, embodiment, and corporeality correspond with the issue of GBV too, since the root of GBV has already been traced back to patriarchy and gender inequality. This also steered me in the choice of research methods, and in an attempt to make sense of bodies in Zambia, ethnography (with lived religion as hermeneutical lens) was chosen to observe the everyday and ordinary ways of doing the body; the narrative approach (with the theory of intersectionality as hermeneutical lens) was incorporated too, since “[t]he contents of our self-consciousness have the structure of a story” (Meulink-Korf & Van Rijn 2016:65), and since every conscious and unconscious sensation of (bodily) stimulus and interpersonal transaction are stored in story form (Müller 1996:21).

1.3.3 The *chitenge* as a metaphor for “doing the body”

Up to this point, this chapter set out to define, describe, and outline this thesis. Gender does the same to bodies – it defines, describes, and outlines the bodily practices that constitutes one’s gender. Gender is defined as the “ways of doing the body”, and Butler frequently refers to “drag” (expressing or performing gender by means of clothes) as a metaphor to explain gender (Butler 1999:xii). Since the *chitenge* material is one of the mediums through which gender is expressed in Zambia, it will also be used as a metaphor to explain gender throughout this thesis.

A “*chitenge*” is a colourful, patterned piece of material Zambian women wrap around their waist as a dress. At the local market, a piece of *chitenge* material will cost around 100 Zambian kwacha (approximately US\$8), and a Zambian woman would normally own at least five *chitenges*. Even though not all fabrics and materials originate in Zambia, Zambians have made *chitenge* material part of their daily lives and an expression of their cultural identity. It also serves as a swift reminder that

⁷⁹ In a sense, this notion (internalisation of attitudes) is also present in the dialogical self theory.

Africans were involved in the trade of material and textiles even before the time of Colonialism,⁸⁰ and that culture and identities were formed, cultivated, and influenced by a variety of aspects over a long period of time.

It is considered a sign of respect to wear a *chitenge* in public, and also whilst doing domestic chores at home. Covering one's knees and dressing modestly is also seen as a way of living out the country's Christian status,⁸¹ and it is possibly a distant remnant of colonialism and Western views of modesty. During traditional rituals, ceremonies and even initiations (like the Chewa initiation of girls, called the "*cinamwali*", later described in this research project), women would also wear a *chitenge*. There are numerous variants on how one can wear a *chitenge*: women who are skilled with a needle and thread or have the funds to hire a seamstress, will turn the piece of material into a beautifully tailored dress; women who do not have the skills to make it or the funds to own a tailored dress, simply wrap, knots, or pin the *chitenge* around their waists.

Even though the colourful, patterned *chitenge* material is customarily associated with women's clothing, nowadays one will see men wearing shirts and jackets made from *chitenge* material, while more women are wearing trousers in urban Zambia. When going to the local marketplace today, you will find the *chitenge* material incorporated into multiple everyday items with different purposes, including shopping bags, handbags, laptop sleeves, cell phone covers, hats, car seat covers, quilt-blankets and tablecloths. Church denominations (including the RCZ) and some political parties have even designed their own *chitenges*, which could be worn by its members during significant events and becomes an expression of their identity. *Chitenges* therefore represent stories, histories, cultural and religious beliefs.

It is also worth noting that apparel and fashion intersect with class, status, culture, and gender. In an article on fashion in parliament,⁸² Osiebe (2020:8) writes that fashion is often a tool used by African politicians to distinguish themselves from others, to enhance their charisma, and to establish a certain masculine and/or powerful image. Osiebe (2020:10) feels that

[...] it is worth rehashing that textiles indicate the rank of the wearer in parts of Africa. Certain patterns and colours on title cloths are signs of power and leadership. In order to project wealth, high social status, religious piety, and political authority, the ceremonial dress of leaders extends to their horses

⁸⁰ See Chirikure, *Documenting Precolonial Trade in Africa* (2017).

⁸¹ See "Does dress code define a person?" (Mbewe 2017).

⁸² See "Fashion in Parliament: Performances from Nigeria to South Africa" (Osiebe 2020).

and/or motorcade. In Africa, textiles and clothing function as visible signs of status wherein the ruling class expends its energy accumulating imported designer consumer goods leaving them vulnerable to the colonial/industrialised vultures hovering overhead.

In Butler's theory of gender performativity, she uses the metaphor of drag (or gender impersonation) to explain how clothes don't necessarily represent one's gender – gender is continually reinforced and constructed by observing and adhering to the set of societal and culturally-defined expectation (Butler 1993b:23). In this case, becoming a woman involves repeatedly putting on gender-appropriated clothing in the form of a *chitenge*. When putting on a *chitenge*, Zambian women are also putting on certain faces (or identities) that adhere to cultural expectations (or roles) in their search for identity and security within the process of becoming a woman. This metaphor also applies to men, since they also “put on” certain faces in their search for identity, to preserve cultural values and ideals, to strive towards the hegemonic norm, and to endorse the socially and culturally constructed gender expectations (Zulu 2015:87).

A *chitenge* therefore has historical, communal, social, cultural, religious, political, and economic significance, and even though *chitenges* are traditionally worn by women, men are also integrating it in different and creative ways into their daily wardrobe. The wearing of *chitenge* material therefore not only becomes an expression of each person's unique taste and preference, but also of their gender identity. This colourful and patterned piece of material is being reinvented, transformed, and fashioned in new and exciting ways in contemporary times characterised by globalisation, technology, and urbanisation.⁸³ I argue that the *chitenge* is a fitting (and context-specific) metaphor for representing the numerous intersecting narratives that are involved in this study. Behind each piece of material that clothes (or “engenders”) the body, there are numerous threads – identities, histories, theologies, relationships and lived experiences – that are intricately woven together to shape a person's story. Like every piece of *chitenge* represents a larger pattern and a larger piece of material, so too I recognise that each person's story is part of a much larger reality and limited and demarcated for this study. Just like the *chitenge* is part of the everyday life in Zambia, I aim to focus on the everyday life and lived experiences of members in the Reformed Church in Zambia. The men and women in Zambia express themselves and their identities through these colourful, patterned pieces of material. Similarly, there are distinct and unique identities, whose fabric of being is delicately

⁸³ See Soko (2010:48-49) and *Christian identity and justice in a globalized world from a Southern African perspective* (Kroesbergen ed. 2014).

interwoven and manufactured by several intersectional components, which includes tradition, culture, race, gender, and the social-economic environment.⁸⁴

With this in mind, one could say that I took on the metaphorical role of a seamstress or tailor whom is concerned with both the *scientific* side of practical theology, which focuses on the facts, figures, methods, data collection, data analysis, findings and interpretation of involved *chitenges*, as well as the *artistic* side of practical theology, which is concerned with exploring, enriching and nurturing the human imagination, and presenting these findings as a piece of *art* (Pattison 2007:269-286). Referring to Coetzee and Rau (2019:5) who argues that the aim of narrative research is to present a “mosaic of individual and collective narratives”, and Osmer (2008:51) who poses that ethnography involves “painting a cultural portrait” of what is going on in the community, this project could be compared to creating a *chitenge* quilt; it is made up of a number of colourful patches of *chitenge* material, and presented in the form of a new imaginative pattern.

1.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an outline of the body of the project, while also highlighting the epistemological and methodological motivations and considerations in this study. Building on the metaphor of making a *chitenge* quilt, this study also has certain methodological steps, and I got inspiration from the seven movements of Müller’s African postfoundational practical theology (Müller 2017). The chapters of this project are arranged accordingly.

The current chapter involves the planning, choices of patterns and methods which will be used in the creation of a patched quilt. Chapter 2 focuses on gathering materials – the phase that involves in-context listening, the interpreted experience, and focusing on the “body politic” of Zambia and the history of the RCZ and its influence on and part in the male dominance-male fragility cycle. Chapter 3 focuses on the patchwork; the individual stories (patches) of individuals are carefully chosen, edited, deliberated on, coded, arranged in a such a way that a pattern (themes, topics, theories, findings, dominant storylines) starts to arise. It is concerned with the description, analysis, and interpretation of the relevant in-context narratives – the stories of the participants of this study. Chapter 4 moves deeper and focuses on adding batting to the patchwork. This chapter broadens the

⁸⁴ Originally moulded by feminist scholars and in women’s studies, intersectionality addresses the issue that there are numerous categories, like gender, race, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies, that come into play when doing social research on identity(ies). See Davis’ *Intersectionality as buzzword* (2008).

scope of the conversation, refers to those considered as “experts” to the thicken the descriptions of the interpreted experience. Chapter 5 focuses on framing the quilt; this chapter reflects on the project’s findings, the “good practices” from which we can learn, and it imagines alternative narratives interpretations that point beyond the local community.

CHAPTER 2: THE BODY POLITIC AND THE BODY OF CHRIST⁸⁵

2.1 THE “TENSES” OF BODIES: INTRODUCTION TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

Before listening to the stories concerning the experiences and expressions of masculinity in the Reformed Church in Zambia, it is both necessary and helpful to understand the country's past and reflect on the stories that contributed to (or are related to) the reality of male dominance and male fragility in the Zambian context today. In terms of the metaphor outlined in the conclusion of the previous chapter, this chapter sets out to gather *chitenge* material⁸⁶ by going into the storeroom to see what is available, and also going to the marketplace in order to obtain supplementary pieces of material.⁸⁷ Similarly, in an attempt to describe the context in which this research project was conducted in, this chapter not only contains a historical narrative in the form of a biography of the body that is being researched (the RCZ and the body politic), but also a narrative that depicts the current, concrete, ordinary and everyday lived experience of ordinary Zambians in the form of a personal description of the “market place”. Although these two narratives are presented independently, they are related since the “past tense” informed and shaped the reality of the “present tense” (Graham 2017:1).

The inclusion of these two narratives has practical theological significance in this study. In Ward's (2017:14-21) terms, it involves *remembering* (recalling the past of a context, recognising the instalment of certain stories, ideas, and practices, and reflecting on its influence) and *absorbing* (recognising that people are embedded in and conditioned by a context, and reflecting on how certain external theories, ideas, and practices were internalised and have become part of communal participation). It is an attempt to “trace the sacred” (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.) – to look for the sacred in the everyday by means of (both literal and figurative) travelling, following, studying, and sketching. These two narratives also correlate with the first three movements of Müller's postfoundational approach to practical theology which focus on the concrete context and the (power) relations that have not only influenced identities in the past, but also established certain structures that influence

⁸⁵ The “body politic” refers to the prevailing socio-cultural systems; the “body of Christ” refers to the Church, which would be explored throughout this chapter.

⁸⁶ *Chitenges* are the pieces of material with cultural significance, which is also associated with gender expression. One can even say when one “covers the body” with a *chitenge*, they are covering themselves with its social, cultural, and religious significance. Both literal and metaphorical applications of the *chitenge* are relevant in this study, and a metaphor for the two narratives in this chapter.

⁸⁷ And even though only patches of *chitenge* material will make part of the quilt, each patch is situated in, shaped, and influenced by a larger web of complex, multifaceted, multilayered, and richly textured narratives as well (Ward 2017:103).

identities to this day. To acquire and present authentic insights on masculinities in the context of the Reformed Church in Zambia, some personal observations and autobiographic notes are included throughout this chapter as well (Müller 2017:92; Berg 2001:142; Coetzee & Rau 2019:3-4).

The inclusion of context-specific narratives within the field of practical theology also highlights the context's *temporal* and *spatial* dimensions (Elliot 2005:8-11). Concerning the *temporal* dimension, Graham (2017:1) poses that the *past tense*, *present tense*, and *future tense* are (and should be) involved when doing practical theology. Since every context has a history (Niemandt 2018:13), a historical description of the context (or setting) is considered an essential first step of doing practical theological research (Müller 2017:87). Furthermore, since stories (and identities) are shaped over time,⁸⁸ understanding of the “past tense” (and including a historic narrative) not only becomes a useful tool for comprehending the present tense (or the current narrative), but also for imagining an alternative narrative and thinking about the desirable future (Ngwena 2018:24-25,27,34; Graham 2017:2). The history of the RCZ could highlight some important markers that shaped a post-colonial African masculine identity which is visible in and upheld by the *body politic* in Zambia today. Concerning the *spatial* dimension of a context, Niemandt (2018:13) highlights the concrete significance of a space, since faith (or lived religion) “takes ground” or “takes place” in the streets, suburbs, and the city. People cannot be disembodied from their addresses, and their identities are shaped, influenced and determined by “places”, “spaces” or “addresses”⁸⁹ in which they live, work, rest, and play. Niemandt (2018:14-15, 17) adds that everything that the Creator does with people (or “the sacred”) takes place in places, and if you close pay close attention, you will see traces of the sacred and God’s looming presence in the most unlikely of spaces (Niemandt 2018:13-14). In this project, knowledge was not only found in the church and in archives, but also in the streets of Lusaka, in villages, small towns, cemeteries, museums, at monuments, and around dining room tables (Ganzevoort 2007:5). I feel that acknowledging the spatial dimension – the concreteness and situatedness – of the involved narratives, adds to the authenticity of this study.

In his book *What is Africanness?* Charles Ngwena (2018:22) argues that an inclusive biography – a historical narrative that includes the lived experiences of those who are often oppressed – is a good place to start when constructing effective remedial responses to status inequality (or when imagining alternative narratives). This is also the purpose of this chapter: it is an attempt to better understand

⁸⁸ Gender identities are also continuously being constructed, metamorphosing, and they are never fully complete; they are fluid and are influenced and affected by memory (histories), myths (beliefs or current “truths”), and fantasy (current and future possibilities); they have a past, a present and a future.

⁸⁹ In Niemandt’s (2018:14) words: “We have an address, and we are like our address.”

the contextual embeddedness – both spatial and temporal – of the dominant narrative (the reality of GBV and the interplay of male dominance-male fragility) by tracing the relevant historical lines, referring to in-context experiences and local stories, reviewing the gendered ideals installed by the *body politic*, and describe how it was (and still is) embodied in the Christian church – the *Body of Christ*.

2.2 CHITENGE 1: THE “PAST TENSE” OF THE BODY OF CHRIST IN ZAMBIA

2.2.1 The historical embeddedness and social significance of the RCZ⁹⁰

Before formally entering the field, I purposefully familiarised myself with the history of the Reformed Church in Zambia (the sample group of this study). Therefore, although this narrative primarily focuses on one denomination (the RCZ), some important historical markers, the broader context, and storylines in the Zambian context, as well as its influence on the *body politic* were considered as well. In this section, I will refer to first-hand accounts, information received from the synod office of the RCZ, notes of synod meetings, archival documents, assignments, and dissertations done at Justo Mwale University,⁹¹ biographies and autobiographies, revered historical sources and studies, personal experiences, visits to relevant monuments and museums,⁹² and newspaper articles. In this narrative, the influence of lived faith practices and spirituality is considered relevant,⁹³ as well as the role of space and time (the aftereffects of history), since they all contributed to the shaping of the masculine identity in Zambia.⁹⁴ This section is also part of my journey of doing practical theology, by focusing on the “past tense”, before focusing on the “present tense” and “future tense” (Graham 2017:1-2).

2.2.1.1 “The scramble for Africa”

⁹⁰ Although Cronje (1981 and 2003), Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982), Pakenham (1991) and Roberts (1976) are older sources, they are still regarded as authoritative historical sources when it comes to studying the history of Africa and the RCZ. They are regularly referenced in the literature consulted for this study. Cronje and Verstraelen-Gilhuis are repeatedly referenced in this section since no comparable publication regarding the history and origins of the RCZ have been published in the meantime.

⁹¹ The RCZ synod offices are situated at the corner of Mpulungu and Mwaleshi road, Olympia Park, Lusaka, Zambia. Contact: +260 211 295 369 / info@rczsynod.org. The RCZ archive is situated in the library of Justo Mwale University, Munali Road, Chamba Valley, Lusaka. Contact: +260 211 294 251 / <https://justomwale.net>.

⁹² During field work, I deliberately visited Magwero and Madzimoyo missions, RCZ congregations in Zambia, numerous cemeteries, the Livingstone Memorial, and the Lusaka National Museum to name a few.

⁹³ See Ganzevoort (2009:n.p.) who poses that doing practical theology involves “tracing the sacred”.

⁹⁴ See Niemandt (2018:14) who poses that the spaces we live, work, rest, and play in, also shape our identity.

“The scramble for Africa” is a phrase coined by British historians, and is considered a fitting metaphor to describe the annexation of the entire African continent from 1876 to 1912 (Pakenham 1991:xxiii-xxv; Brooke-Smith 1987:1; Gaile 2008:262). Originally, Africa was labelled as a “charnel house” – a site of disease, death and suffering (Harlow 2003:244), and the people as barbaric, draconian, primitive, backward, rude, illiterate, indecent, dirty, and without identity or human dignity (Njobvu 2017:1; Soko 2010:20-21).⁹⁵ With the intention to develop, civilise, and convert the “savage and barbarous heathens” of Africa (Bediako 1997:194), and save them from “spiritual darkness” and “moral debasement”, Europeans identified Africa as a mission field (Harlow 2003:243). By the end of the eighteenth century, many mission stations were already established, and the efforts of the (“brave”) European missionaries who lived in Africa as guests of African rulers were recognised (Paas 2016:373; Soko 2010:22).

In 1841, an emissary from the London Missionary Society and one of the most famous explorers and missionaries, Doctor David Livingstone,⁹⁶ arrived in Africa. In 1857, Livingstone published *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, in which he poses the three C’s for doing missionary work in Africa – *Christianity, commerce and civilisation* (Dritsas 2010:24; Roberts 1976:151).⁹⁷ Livingstone’s efforts fuelled the influx of many European missionaries, mission societies⁹⁸ and future colonisers (Paas 2016:474; Njobvu 2017:1-2). While (obsessively) searching for the source of the Nile River, Livingstone died on 1 May 1873⁹⁹ in the Bangweulu Wetlands, near the Luapula province

⁹⁵ In François-Xavier Fauvelle’s book *The Golden Rhinoceros: Histories of the African Middle Ages* (2018), he poses that the assumption that precolonial Africa was “dark” and “underdeveloped” is false. Due to a lack of local historical resources and the fact that European voices dominate the narrative, the fact that Africa was home to many powerful and prosperous states who participated in the “[...] global exchange that circulated people, merchandise, and religious conceptions” (Fauvelle 2018:3) often goes overlooked. Fauvelle (2018:3, 12) argues that Africa underwent a “golden age” whilst Europe had its “dark centuries”; that many African societies thrived, participated in international economy and trade long before European “exploration” and “discovery”; and – unlike the European imagination – many African states were active participants in the global conversation on politics, religion, law, philosophy, and aesthetics. Slave trade, colonisation, and the exploitation of African resources eventually lead to the “violent transformation” of the African continent (Fauvelle 2018:3).

⁹⁶ Livingstone is only referred to in this research project. For a more in-depth, expanded account of the life of Livingstone, the works of Rob Mackenzie, *David Livingstone: The Truth Behind the Legend* (1993), Robert Smiles, *David Livingstone* (1885), Andrew Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (2002), Tim Jeal, *Livingstone: Revised and Expanded Edition* (2013), Lawrence Dritsas *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa* (2010) could be consulted (among others).

⁹⁷ It is noteworthy that the English biologist, geologist, and explorer Charles Darwin (who almost became an Anglican priest) published *The Origin of Species* in 1859. This book not only sparked an interest for intercontinental exploration, but also established the idea of evolution (“the fight of the fittest”). Later, scientific Darwinism ratified race superiority (Europeans are superior to Africans) and social Darwinism ratified colonialism (European powers would take control over the resources over the continent) and was considered part of the church’s “civilising mission” (Harlow 2003:14; Neill 1964:322; Harari 2014: 287,303).

⁹⁸ This includes the Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa, which was founded in 1858 as a direct result of Livingstone’s work, and London Mission Society (Livingstone’s employer) who started to plant churches, start schools, and open medical clinics around 1878 (Paas 2016:474; Njobvu 2017:1-2).

⁹⁹ Some believe he died in the end of April, while others believe it was on 1 May. His last journal entry was dated 1 May 1873, and his heart was buried on 4 May 1873 (Paas 2016:452).

in Zambia. Respecting his wishes, his servants buried his heart at the foot of a tree near Chief Chitambo's village, balmed his body, carried it to the coast of Tanzania, to be shipped off from Zanzibar to England, where it was buried in Westminster Abbey in April of 1874 (Pakenham 1991:7; Dritsas 2010:22; Taylor 2019:e-source; Paas 2016:452).¹⁰⁰

The accounts of explorers such as David Livingstone (mission-doctor explorer), Richard Burton (cartographer), John Speke (soldier), Henry Stanley (journalist), Frederick Lugard (soldier), Carl Peters (pedagogue), and Pierre Brazza (sailor) sparked an international hankering for African exploration, the discovery of unknown lands and peoples, and instigated a question on "territorial rights" from these discoveries (Paas 2016:336; Harlow 2003:3; Gaile 2008:262; Pakenham 1991:15; Roberts 1976:155). In 1876, Belgium's King Leopold II sponsored a geographical conference in Brussels, calling for European cooperation to facilitate bringing the "three C's" (Christianity, commerce, and civilisation) to sub-Saharan Africa, and to "liberate" (or redeem) Africa, without using violence, through trade and compassion (Gaile 2008:262).

Pakenham however feels that a fourth "C", namely "conquest" predominated the European expeditions that followed. Under the flag of missionary work, a type of imperial colonialism not focused on "saving" Africa, but conquering it as a means to save their own countries (Pakenham 1991:xxv). After recognising Africa's commercial potential and its rich variety of raw and valuable resources, an intense competition for territory followed (Harlow 2003:244; Gaile 2008:262).¹⁰¹ From this conference onward, Africa became a "battlefield" for territory, and European powers claimed territories they barely knew (Gaile 2008:262). Colonies were established, and at the request of Germany's Prince Otto von Bismarck – succeeding a congress held in 1878 and growing tensions and rivalries in West-African colonies – the infamous Berlin Conference was held from November 1884 to February 1885 (Brooke-Smith 1987:38-43).

With the intentions to avoid unnecessary rivalries and conflict, to establish boundaries and territories, and negotiate trade and commerce on the African continent, representatives from fourteen European

¹⁰⁰ This information corresponds with the monuments erected at the Livingstone Memorial Site in the southern parts of the Bangweulu wetlands in Zambia. I visited this site in November 2018. One monument reads: "*David Livingstone. Traveller. Medical-Missionary. Born March 19, 1813, Blantyre, Scotland. Died Here. May 1, 1873. Chitambo's Village.*" The other monument reads: "*This Monument occupies the spot where formerly stood the tree at the foot of which Livingstone's heart was buried by his faithful native followers. On the trunk was carved the following inscription: Dr. Livingstone May 4, 1873. Chuma Suza Mniashere Vchopere.*" Pakenham however says the days were miscounted – the date of his death is in fact 1 May (Pakenham 1991:6).

¹⁰¹ Even though territorial ambition later became the part of England's interest in Africa, it was originally ascribed to commercial interest, as England was not as wealthy as Portugal and Spain (see Paas 2016:336).

countries, including Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium by name, as well as some representatives from the United States of America and the Ottoman Empire, were present at the Berlin Conference (Pakenham 1991:239-242; Brooke-Smith 1987:38; Gaile 2008:262-263). Territory was associated with power, and the African continent was divided (or “carved up”) among these superpowers according to diplomatic or geopolitical preference (Paas 2016:374; Neill 1964:322-324 Fischer 2015:e-source).¹⁰² The General Act of the Conference of Berlin was signed on 26 February 1885, and with it, the fate and future of Africa were determined on another continent, by men who had never set foot on African soil. The African continent was irreparably divided into territories (colonies or “spheres of influence”), and the borders determined by Europeans remain to this day. This event is considered the pinnacle of European power and greed, its effects and consequences are visible in the pages of the history books in the forms of civil and world wars, xenophobia, white supremacy and systemic racism, crimes against humanity, exploitation, corruption, and inequality (Pakenham 1991:259,275; Brooke-Smith 1987:38; Harlow 2003:14; Gaile 2008:263; Paas 2016:413; Fischer 2015:e-source).

2.2.1.2 Cecil John Rhodes and the BSAC

While the Europeans were establishing the boundaries of the African continent, the British gold-and-diamond tycoon Cecil John Rhodes – considered as “the spearhead of British imperial interests” (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:27) – had the ideal to build a railway from Cape to Cairo with the confidence that the entire African continent would eventually be under British rule (Paas 2016:375; Roberts 1976:156-157). Rhodes had already gained great financial and political power in the diamond fields in Kimberley, and he intended to extend his control and secure the rights of Africa’s mineral sources, especially after gold was found in the Witwatersrand in 1884. In 1889, he formed the “British South Africa Company” (BSAC), a British company incorporated under a royal charter with the authority to acquire and exercise commercial and administrative rights in Central and Southern Africa (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:27-28; Roberts 1976:174-174).

In 1889, Rhodes sent BSAC representatives to the regions allocated to the British government after the Berlin Conference in Southern and Central Africa. In 1891, despite some concerns of resident

¹⁰² Even though many borders in Africa are natural boundary lines – mountains, rivers and other natural phenomena, many borders between African countries were drawn in by hand according to the preferences of the colonial masters, without consulting or respecting the indigenous people’s wishes. See Fischer (2015:e-source), Gaile (2008:262-263), Brooke-Smith (1987:38) and Harlow (2003:14)

Scottish missionaries,¹⁰³ Nyasaland (renamed “Malawi” after independence) was declared a British protectorate. The same year, Sir Harry Johnson – the commissioner of Nyasaland – started negotiations with the tribal captains (chiefs or headmen) in the neighbouring territories, promising British protection in exchange for allegiance to the Crown and the BSAC being allowed to enter, administer, and develop the land. By 1895 the company took control over most northern territories, and in 1897, Nyasaland’s neighbour was officially named “North Rhodesia” (renamed “Zambia” after independence) after the company owner, Cecil John Rhodes (Roberts 1976:162-165; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:28; Cronje 1981:145; Hendriks & Soko 2011:92).

The colonising of land did not occur without resistance: in eastern North Rhodesia, one Angoni¹⁰⁴ captain – paramount chief Mpenzeni – was not keen on negotiating with the white men. At first, the BSAC ignored Mpenzeni and build Fort Patrick (later renamed Fort Jameson, today known as “Chipata”) about 45 kilometres from his village. After building Fort Young near Mpenzeni’s village, his son, Nsingo, along with other young men tried to use violence to remove these men from their land. The BSAC sent for reinforcements from Nyasaland and started planning an attack with the order to “[...] smack these Angoni’s; it must be done sooner than later” (Cronje 1981:145-146; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:28). Despite the valour of Nsingo’s army, their spears and shields were no match for the weapons of the British. After the battle of 19 to 20 January 1898 near Fort Jameson, Nsingo was executed by a fire platoon, Mpenzeni was caught and sent to jail at Fort Manning (today known as “Mchinji” in Malawi), Mpenzeni’s villages were burnt down, and his cattle confiscated (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:28,42; Cronje 1981:147).

Initially, the BSAC believed that Mpenzeni’s country was rich in gold. This attracted many explorers and prospectors of numerous companies and were eventually followed by many other British (and later South African) farmers and tradesmen. Fort Jameson became the headquarters of the area, and “native”¹⁰⁵ commissioners, magistrates, African askaris (or soldiers), and tax collectors were appointed (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:29). Even though the British Empire abolished slavery in 1834 (Harlow 2003:93), a “new type of slavery” (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:44) was established in 1901

¹⁰³ The missionaries felt that company rule would result in suspicion and mistrust towards them, and damage relationships build with the villagers and chiefs (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:28).

¹⁰⁴ The Angoni’s, also called “Ngoni”, are originally from South Africa, and fled from Natal after conflict with the Zulus in 1818 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:29). This could also explain the fact that the surname “Zulu” is a common Ngoni surname.

¹⁰⁵ During colonial times, the word “native” – meaning indigenous or domestic people – was not only an ethnic signifier, but also a derogatory and belligerent term used to mark people as inferior. By just using the word “native” when referring to Africans, colonial powers “othered” them, conveying a colonially imagined hierarchy build on race and citizenship (Ngwena 2018:164-165).

when the local administration enforced the so-called “hut tax”. This tax subjugated ordinary villagers to the BSAC, obliging them to participate in the monetary policy, and forcing them into labour migration to pay the tax. Tax defaulters were threatened, flogged, their huts burned down, and/or they were arrested, taken to the nearest town where they were trialled by a judge. This tax ensured cheap labour for farmers, while maintaining control over the “natives” (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:29,44; Harlow 2003:245).

Ordinary village men were enlisted for the police and British military; others were recruited by representatives from mines and plantations with twelve-month contracts. Zambian migrants moved across borders in order to work at British-owned mines, farms and plantations, resulting in largescale labour migration to the tobacco and coffee plantations in Northern and Southern Rhodesia (Zambia and Zimbabwe), to the sugar plantations in Natal (South Africa), to the gold mines in the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa), to the Katanga (Congo) and Copperbelt (Northern Rhodesia) mines (Sanderson 1961:263-24,268-270; Hendriks & Soko 2011:93; Roberts 1976:175). Village life changed forever: social cohesion was damaged, men left their villages to provide for their families, woman and children were left vulnerable and had to learn to survive on their own (Hendriks & Soko 2011:93; Roberts 1976:177). Ironically, despite paying a “tax” to the local administration, basic services like healthcare and education (and the upkeep thereof) were left in the hands of Christian missionaries (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:29).

2.2.1.3 Reverend A.C. Murray, the Dutch Reformed Mission, and Mpenzeni’s Request

On 4 June 1888, after undertaking a two-month journey by sea, river and land, nephew to the famous South African Doctor-reverend Andrew Murray,¹⁰⁶ Reverend A.C. Murray¹⁰⁷ arrived at the Bandawe Presbyterian Mission in Nyasaland. Upon arrival, he met Doctor Laws to determine a possible area

¹⁰⁶ Doctor Andrew Murray was the son of one of the first Scottish ministers – also Andrew Murray – in South Africa. Dr Murray’s first congregation was in Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, and in 1857, he was appointed member of the Committee for Foreign Mission Work. He played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Missionary Training institute in Wellington in 1877 (today known as the Huguenote College). Fifteen of his nieces and nephews would become missionaries, many in Malawi, from 1885-1916.

¹⁰⁷ Even though Reverend Murray was from Scottish descend, he became a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Pauw 2016:17). Kritzinger (2014:2-4) however notes that Murray’s theology and spirituality was greatly influenced by Celtic tradition, embodied by the great Celtic missionaries like St Patrick of Hibernia and Saint Columba of Iona. Celtic missionaries placed a great emphasis on and committed to a life of simplicity, charity, piety, integrity, education, learning, and reaching out to the unreached – even if means going independently and crossing borders to do so (Kritzinger 2014:4). Despite success of Scottish missionaries in Africa, some criticises their extreme piety (complete sobriety), prudish reading of the Bible, and patriarchal approach to ministry, and the heritage thereof is still visible in many African churches and communities today (Parsitau 2020:e-source; Cage & Rueda 2018:3-4)

in which the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)¹⁰⁸ of the Cape synod can establish a mission. He also visited the Livingstonia mission, where he realised that the hope of the mission lies in education and children (Pauw 2016:17). Unlike British missionaries, Murray did not believe that the people needed to be “civilised” and given a high secular education, but rather be converted, taught to observe all things as God intended, and enabled to read the Bible in their own language (Pauw 2016:18). On 28 November 1889, after a meeting with chief Chiwere and after the arrival of his companion and recent graduate of the Missionary Training Institute, Reverend T.C.B. Vlok, Murray pitched a tent at the edge of the Mangudzi stream and founded the Mvera Mission¹⁰⁹ – the first Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland (Pauw 2016:23-24; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:44).

The Dutch missionaries¹¹⁰ were met with suspicion and curiosity; the locals feared that the “azungu” (white men) would kidnap their children and sell them into slavery. Despite this, the mission flourished, schools grew, services were attended, and in 1891, a church building was erected. Murray and Vlok preached a message of equality – all men were created “out of one blood” by one God, and they – the “azungu” – were no different from the people with whom they shared the gospel and message of salvation (Pauw 2016:25-26). In 1896, after obtaining permission from the Chewa chief Mazengera, the Nkhoma mission¹¹¹ was established under the leadership of Reverend W.H. Murray¹¹² (Pauw 2016:25-26; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:44-45).

In October 1898, whilst at the Mvera mission, Reverend A.C. Murray and newly appointed Missionary-reverend P.J. Smit received word from Fort Manning that the incarcerated paramount chief Mpenzeni¹¹³ seeks an audience with the Dutch missionaries. Whilst in jail, chief Mpenzeni heard about the work they have been doing in Nyasaland (in terms of education, medicine, and evangelising), and even though he never officially converted to the Christian faith, chief Mpenzeni felt that it would be in the village’s best interest to “learn the ways and customs of the white man”. After visiting chief Mpenzeni¹¹⁴ in Fort Manning, scouting for a suitable site for the mission, and being granted permission by the local (British) administration, Murray and Smit returned to Mvera

¹⁰⁸ Throughout this study, when referring to the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), I am referring to the “Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk” (or NG Kerk), not the “Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk”, the “Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk” or the “Gereformeerde Kerk”.

¹⁰⁹ Mvera is the Chewa word for “obeying” or “hearing”.

¹¹⁰ When referring to the “Dutch” in this chapter, it refers to the white settlers from South Africa (or “Afrikaners”) who spoke Afrikaans – a language related to Dutch spoken in the Netherlands.

¹¹¹ Nkhoma would be named the head station of Nyasaland in 1912 and would later house an institute of theological training.

¹¹² A descendant of Dr Andrew Murray, and cousin to A.C. Murray. Dr W.H. Murray would also translate the Bible into the Chinyanja language (also known as Chechewa).

¹¹³ The reason for his incarceration outlined in the previous section.

¹¹⁴ Mpenzeni was released in 1899, returned to his village, and died in 1900 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:42-43).

where they sent a message to the Cape synod with the hopes that a new mission would be established in North Rhodesia (Cronje 1981:146-147; Cronje 2003:67; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:50).

Since the Cape synod of the DRC already established and financed missions in Nyasaland, the Executive Mission Board of the DRC approached the synod of the Orange Free State (OFS), which had their first synod sitting from 24 to 25 October 1898. It was a relevant request, since the OFS synod already contributed financially to the Nyasaland missions, and after being visited by Murray in 1897, they were also considering doing missionary work in Africa (Cronje 1981:147; Cronje 2003:67). Despite the rumours of a war,¹¹⁵ and therefore on the eve of a dark period in the OFS' history, the synod accepted the proposal to send missionaries to North Rhodesia (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:63; Soko 2010:16). Reverend J.M. Hofmeyr was appointed by the OFS, and sent to Mvera, from where he would make his journey to Magwero – the first Dutch Reformed Mission in North Rhodesia (Cronje 1981:147-148).

2.2.1.4 Magwero and Madzimoyo, missions and missionaries

Soon after the arrival of Reverend Hofmeyr at Mvera mission on 29 May 1899, a large caravan of around 200 people, which consisted of carriers, teachers, evangelists, Hofmeyr and P.J. Smit, was assembled under the leadership of a baptised elder from Mvera congregation. On 28 June 1899, the caravan departed from Mvera, and on 5 July 1899, after a 200-kilometre journey on foot, they arrived on the spot that Murray and Smit identified the previous year, pitched their tents, and started erecting grass-roofed structures (Cronje 1981:148; Cronje 2003:67; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:41). 5 July 1899 marks the founding date of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in North Rhodesia, and on 9 July 1899, at the source of the Bua River, under a big Mpundu (or wild fig) tree, the first sermon was held from Luke 8:22¹¹⁶ for a group of (roughly) 250 curious – albeit excited – villagers (Soko 2010:15; Van Schalkwyk 2017:129; Cronje 1981:151; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:63). The new mission was christened “Magwero” – a name that literally means “origins” or “source”, which refers to both the “origins” of the river, as well as the “origin” of the mission that would become the Reformed Church in Zambia (Van Schalkwyk 2017:129; Cronje 2003:67). The mission's logo, which was later adopted as the RCZ's official logo, was a hand holding a burning torch, with the slogan “*Kuunika*

¹¹⁵ Only months after the first two reverends went to Zambia, on 11 October 1899, the Anglo-Boer war was declared – a war between the British and the two Boer states (Orange Free State and Transvaal). This war ended on 31 May 1902.

¹¹⁶ The first sermon done by the DRC missionaries, according to the monument erected under the big mpundu tree in Magwero, was done from the scripture in Luke 8:22, which says: “*One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side of the lake.’ So they got into a boat and set out.*” This specific scripture reflects on the journey of reverends Hofmeyr and Smit had to make, since they also had to cross the Malawi Lake reach Magwero.

M'Mdima” – “Light in the darkness”. This was designed in accordance with the logo and slogan of the DRC of the OFS (“Lig in die duisternis”), and to this day both churches use this logo and slogan, which reaffirms the 120-year-old affiliation (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:63).

Hofmeyr and Smit’s Sunday worship services in Magwero were attended very well. With his elementary medical skills, Reverend Hofmeyr started caring for the sick in Magwero. He also held regular worship services for the British in Fort Jameson (mostly tobacco farmers), but unfortunately, Hofmeyr had to return to South Africa after becoming ill with black water fever (Cronje 1981:152). In 1903, with the looming possibility of a second mission station, Reverend C.M. Hofmeyr (brother to J.M. Hofmeyr), along with Reverends J. du Plessis, J.H. van Schalkwyk and farmer F.J. van Eeden were making their way to Magwero (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:59; Cronje 1981:152,154). It was around this time that Reverends Smit and W.H. Murray identified a new station, and on 8 August 1903, under the leadership of Reverend J.H. van Schalkwyk, Madzimoyo¹¹⁷ mission – an important mission in the history of the RCZ – was established (Cronje 2003:67; Cronje 1981:154).

The early history of the RCZ contains many beautiful stories of ministries that emerged from the established missions. After Magwero (1899) and Madzimoyo (1903), more mission stations were established, namely Fort Jameson (1905), Nyanje (1905), Nsadzu (1908), Hofmeyr (1914),¹¹⁸ Merwe (1922),¹¹⁹ Tamanda (1924), Kamoto (1928), Malherbe (1935),¹²⁰ Katete (1944), as well as numerous outposts in and around Lusaka, Broken Hill (today known as “Kabwe”, in 1921), and eventually in the Copperbelt (Cronje 1981:164-170, 180-181; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:63-64). On 3 July 1943, the first synod was held for the 16 congregations (which included one congregation from South Rhodesia). Although evangelisation and spiritual work was considered the heart of these missions, the scope of mission work was both ambitious and comprehensive, prioritising three other enterprises, namely medicine and medical work, education and social welfare, and agriculture and industrial work (Cronje 1981:164-170; Cronje 2003:67; Van der Watt 2017:66; Phiri 2017:70).¹²¹

¹¹⁷ The word “Madzimoyo” literally means “living waters” (Cronje 2003:67).

¹¹⁸ In honour of the Hofmeyr missionaries.

¹¹⁹ Named after P. van der Merwe – a former mission secretary of the OFS.

¹²⁰ Named after A.J. Malherbe – a former chair of the synod Mission Council in the OFS.

¹²¹ At the Madzimoyo mission, a monument was erected in 1949, depicting these four “departments of mission work”. The sign reads: “*TO THE HONOUR AND GLORY OF GOD. Monument erected at Madzimoyo in 1949 as part of the Jubilee Celebrations. It illustrates the four departments of mission work, viz.: 1. Spiritual work: Woman in prayer, 2. Education: Person reading book, 3. Medical care: Strong arms lifting patient, 4. Agricultural and industrial work: Maize cob.*”

Concerning *evangelisation*: like the mission in Mvera, the “azungus” at Magwero were met with curiosity and excitement, as well as fear and suspicion. White men were called “dog killers”, “child snatchers”, and “greedy thieves” that came to steal land and enslave the people (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:57), which were valid precautions when considering the history of slavery and colonisation in Africa. Along with evangelists and teachers, the first converts became crucial fellow-labourers who were trained to share the gospel in their villages and to their families. Mission outposts were recognised, and in a radius of fifty kilometres, there were approximately 20 000 unreached people. The white missionaries observed that when a black man shared the gospel, people were much more eager to accept the gospel than when they did (Cronje 2003:11).

On 11 December 1904 the first group of nine men, and on 25 June 1905 a second group of five men were baptised at Magwero. Before being baptised and becoming a member of the congregation, a person first had to attend catechism classes, be able to read the Bible (or memorise Bible verses), give up beer drinking at village taverns,¹²² commit to monogamy, and denounce all forms of ancestor worship, spiritism, sacrifices and indecent customs and initiations (Cronje 2003:67; Cronje 1981:154; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:79). Disappointingly, four men from the first group went back to drinking beer and polygamy. Becoming a Christian was not easy, since polygamy, ancestor worship, and beer drinking was part of the Chewa and Ngoni cultures and traditions. Christians were highly unpopular in their villages; they were despised, called traitors to their culture, treated with suspicion, and since they did not pray to the ancestors anymore, they were accused when natural disasters such as drought occurred (Cronje 1981:157; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:80). In May 1906, with the confirmation of church elders, Magwero was no longer regarded as a mission, but as an official church congregation in accordance with DRC Church Order (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:74).

Concerning *medical work*: the arrival of mission-doctor J.A.K. Hofmeyr (cousin to Reverends J.M. and C.M. Hofmeyr) in Madzimoyo is considered a significant event. In 1908, he established a clinic, and despite being mocked by the doctor at Fort Jameson for “living on a missionary’s salary”, Hofmeyr served diligently among the villagers. Tragically, he died from cancer in 1914, and according to the Madzimoyians:

¹²² Drinking was (and still is) considered a major problem in Zambian villages. Alcohol overindulgence – especially and specifically among men – often lead to domestic and sexual violence, aggression and partaking in risky behaviour, family neglect and the irresponsible squandering of money. Beer drinking is also closely associated with witchcraft (Martin 2009:220-221). The missionaries proposed cutting off sinful behaviour at its source, proposing a sober life. To this day, beer drinking, and alcohol consumption is denounced in the RCZ.

The doctor was truly a man of God; he never got angry; his heart was good, and when he hunted, he shared the meat with us; he loved us black people (Cronje 1981:169-170; Cronje 2003:67).

Another significant event (among many others) occurred in 1930 with the establishment of a community for lepers¹²³ at Nsadz mission. The community of lepers initially functioned under the supervision of nurses N. Erasmus (1930-1938) and M. Gutter (1938-1945). In 1945, their successor, miss J.M. Stoffberg (remembered as “Donna Stoffie”), arrived to look after the then 245 patients. She later received an M.B.E. award (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for her service among the lepers (Cronje 1981:171-172; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:65).

Concerning *education*: after founding the mission in Magwero in 1899, education and the establishing of schools became a priority. The value of schools was already proven in the missions in Nyasaland. Most teachers were baptised members from congregations in Nyasaland, which meant they knew the language and customs of the Ngoni, Chewa, and Nsenga tribes (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:60-61). Ten years later, in 1909, there were 5 mission stations with 10 missionaries, and 324 African teachers; by 1915, the number of teachers increased to 782 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:59). The Dutch teachers – mostly graduates from the Missional Training Institute in Wellington – worked alongside the African teachers. In 1906, Issie Hofmeyr, former teacher from the School for the Blind in Worcester and sister to doctor Hofmeyr, married Frikkie van Eeden, the Dutch farmer at the Magwero mission. Soon after moving to Magwero, she found that there are many blind people in the area,¹²⁴ and soon the news spread that a “azungu” is teaching blind people to read. Unfortunately, after 5 years of fruitful work, Issie died in 1910 of black water fever (Cronje 1981:167; Cronje 2003:67).

This however did not mark the end of the ministry among the blind. In 1912, a recent graduate from Wellington, miss Ella Botes (remembered as “Botie from Magwero”) started her career as a missionary in Fort James. In 1914 she moved to Madzimoyo, in 1916 she bought a braille typewriter, retyped the Gospel of John, and started to teach and minister to the blind people from the area. Botes soon recognised the opportunity to teach deaf people in the area as well, since they were unable to communicate, followed her around, and watched her teach the blind (Van Schalkwyk 2017:128-130; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:64; Cronje 1981:168). In 1924, a school for the blind was started in

¹²³ Lepers weren’t necessarily excommunicated from villages, but they did not receive the much-needed treatment, were ashamed and died early deaths.

¹²⁴ Blindness could be ascribed to diseases like smallpox, but also because of traditional medicines from witchdoctors (Cronje 1981:167).

Nyanje, but was moved to Magwero in 1930. In January 1930, Botes joined another female missionary, miss Paul Spies, in Magwero. In rural North Rhodesia, it was considered a bad omen when a child is born with a disability, when the mother dies during giving birth, or when twins are born. Customarily, these children would either be killed due to superstition that witchcraft is involved, or be hidden and severely neglected. With the establishment of the school for the deaf and blind, Botes and Spies soon realised the crucial need for an orphanage and took it upon themselves to care for these children (Van Schalkwyk 2017:136; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:176).

These two women singlehandedly established and managed a school for girls, a school for the blind (1930), a school for the deaf (1936)¹²⁵ and the Môrelië orphanage, under the banner of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in North Rhodesia – but not without frustration with the (male-run) Mission Office in Bloemfontein (Van Schalkwyk 2017:136,139). Ella Botes' efforts were acknowledged when she received an honorary doctorate from the University of the Orange Free State, and she was awarded an M.B.E. in 1947 (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:65).¹²⁶

2.2.1.5 *The two world wars*

Apart from the vast challenges the missionaries faced in field, their efforts were also stunted and influenced by international politics. For example, when World War I broke out on 28 July 1914 in Europe, the African continent became an inevitable battleground. Amid war recruitment and labour migration, North Rhodesia experienced a great drainage of men. In North Rhodesia, thirty percent of all taxable men served in war for the British. Between 1916 and 1918, 12 241 black men – which included missionary teachers and evangelists – were recruited from Fort Jameson and sent to the warfront of German East Africa (renamed “Tanzania” after independence). In this “white man’s war”, Africans were treated with little respect, they were provided with insufficient rations, and more than 2 300 Zambian lives were lost (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:91-96; Chutel 2018:e-source). Even though World War I ended when Germany signed an armistice agreement in Paris on 11 November 1918, German Lieutenant-Colonel P.E. von Lettow Vorbeck (referred to as “the Lion of Africa”) continued to advance in East Africa with 3 000 Germans and 11 000 Africans. On 25 November 1918 in

¹²⁵ The Magwero’s boarding schools for the blind and the deaf still exists today and attracts many students from across Zambia.

¹²⁶ Botes retired in Bloemfontein and died on 31 October 1971. Her funeral was led by fellow-missionary, doctor J.M. Cronje. Her tombstone reads: “*Botie van Magwero. Sy het gedoen wat sy kon. Die Naam van die Here word grootgemaak*” (transl. “Botie from Magwero. She did what she could. The Name of the Lord is exalted”).

Abercorn (today known as “Mbala”)¹²⁷ near the Tanzanian border, the last of Germany’s troops surrendered to British General W.F.S. Edwards, which means that the last shot fired in World War I, was in Zambia. Nearly two million Africans were involved in World War I, but their sacrifice is rarely recognised in history books (Chutel 2018:e-source).

In the years that followed, with the rapid increase in value of copper, and recognising the agricultural potential in Southern and Central Africa (land prices were low, and the labour was cheap), North Rhodesia became home to many Europeans. This not only stimulated economic growth, but also established modern infrastructure (railways and roads) which not only increased productivity, but also helped missionaries spread the gospel. In April 1924, the British Colonial Office took control over North Rhodesia, ending the reign of the BSAC, and from 1925, thousands of white migrants (mostly South African) moved to North Rhodesia to work at the copper mines, or to become farmers during the “tobacco boom” in 1926/1927. The success of the mines and plantations, however, rested on the labour of thousands of African migrant workers, who did not profit from this economic success at all (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:113-114; Cronje 1981:180; Cronje 2003:19-20; Roberts 1976:178-185).

When World War II was declared on 1 September 1939, North Rhodesia allied with its colonial master, Britain. Many tribal chiefs who lived through World War I pledged their allegiance to King George, believing siding with Britain is their only chance for survival and with the hope that their loyalty would ensure peace in Africa. Their loyalty could also be ascribed to large-scale propaganda that was spread in the colony in different languages, which assured Africans of economic flourishing under British rule, but slavery, fear and suppression under German rule (Tembo 2015:33, 38-39).¹²⁸ This propaganda worked, and the colony raised eight battalions, recruiting 700 European and 15 000 African servicemen. Since copper was considered a commodity in the production of weapons, North Rhodesia’s biggest contribution to the war was the provision of copper to its allies. However, unlike World War I, no military action took place in the colony, and Africans only experienced the Second World War through news and propaganda. By 1944, 101 titles (or films on the war) had been shown across the territory, reaching an estimated 80 000 people (Tembo 2015:3-4, 40).

¹²⁷ In Mbala, there is a monument with the inscription: “*Near this place on 25th November 1918 the German forces in East Africa, commanded by General Von Lettow Vorbeck laid down their weapons before General W.F.S. Edwards C.M.G., D.S.O.*”

¹²⁸ Propaganda posters in indigenous languages were spread across Northern Rhodesia. One poster, for example, distinguishes between British and German rule in pictures. The one picture depicts a British soldier peacefully shaking hands with a clothed African man, with the caption: “*Britain is your friend and believes in progress for all.*” In the second picture, however, there is a picture of a German soldier who violently whips a naked African man, with the caption: “*Germany is your enemy and believes in slavery for all non-Germans.*” (Tembo 2015:43)

2.2.1.6 Theological training, Justo Mwale, and J.M. Cronje

The training of indigenous (Zambian) evangelists was considered crucial by missionaries, and evangelists received theological training at the Nkhoma mission in Nyasaland. In 1915 and 1916, the first two (male) evangelists, misters Yosefe Mwale and Paulo Banda, were trained at Nkhoma; by 1930, there were fifteen evangelists in service of the mission (Cronje 1981:187; Cronje 2003:19). During this time, after identifying the need for indigenous ministers, mister Cokwe Marizani Justo Mwale, who went to school in Madzimoyo and was baptised in 1909, was identified. After completing his training in Nkhoma, Justo Mwale was ordained at the Madzimoyo congregation on 29 September 1929 as the first African “mbusa” (or pastor) in North Rhodesia (Cronje 1981:188; Cronje 2003:68; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:149; Soko 201:22-23; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:65). Despite the significance of this historical event, Reverend Mwale initially served as the assistant to the Dutch minister, to gain “spiritual maturity”. Despite his dedication and “outstanding quality” of his work, there was no room for promotion, and he felt like a “second-rate” minister (Soko 2010:23; Hendriks & Soko 2011:94; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:162). In 1937 to 1939, Reverend Mwale continued his studies in South Africa, and soon after returning to Madzimoyo, he was transferred to Ndola congregation in the Copperbelt, where he was highly respected and served until his death in 1955 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:165-167).

Other North Rhodesian ministers started graduating from Nkhoma as well. Reverend Jafeti Kumbuyo Mwale, for example, graduated in 1933 and was posted at Nyanje in 1934. Reverend Petro Pereka Phiri dedicated 66 years of his life to the ministry – he started out as a teacher, became an evangelist, and after finishing theological studies in 1933, he served in many congregations up to the age of 85. Reverend Hezekiya Thawani Banda also started out as a teacher, became an evangelist at Fort Jameson, and after graduating in 1941, served in Tshumbwi village and at Katete. By 1947, eight ministers graduated from Nkhoma (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:167-177; Cronje 2003:14,68; Van der Watt 2017:65).

In September 1937, a recent graduate from the Mission Institute in Wellington, and invaluable missionary in the RCZ, Reverend J.M. Cronje (remembered as “Johannie”) was on the train to North Rhodesia for the first time. Although he served in Malherbe and Fort Jameson missions for short periods, he spent most of his ministry in Madzimoyo. During his ministry, he completed a master’s degree at the Stellenbosch theological seminary in 1950, as well as his doctorate at the Vrije

Universiteit in Amsterdam in 1955, under the supervision of professors J.H. Bavinck, D. Nauta, and G.C. Berkouwer (Cronje 2003:9,19,29-30). Cronje played a crucial role in the establishment of a theological college in Zambia. Since Nkhoma was very far, Reverend T.A. Theron started training a group of fifteen evangelists at Nsadzu mission in 1940 (Cronje 1981:189). In 1945, Cronje started training evangelists at the Madzimoyo mission, and by 1951, Cronje founded the Theological Training College for reverends in Madzimoyo. In time, the possibility to move the college to Lusaka – the capitol of Zambia¹²⁹ – was considered, since it would be closer to universities, railroads, and since Lusaka was a focal point of society. In January 1970, although its official opening would be in 1975, classes began at the new theological college in Lusaka named “Justo Mwale Theological College of the Reformed Church in Zambia”. In 1970, a lay training centre was also started at Madzimoyo, with Reverend E.A. Phiri as principal (Cronje 1981:188-189; Cronje 2003:19,70; Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:65).¹³⁰

After becoming very ill with malaria in 1960, Cronje moved back to South Africa, but returned many times after that as part of a delegation of the DRC of the OFS. On 15 August 1999, during the centenary celebrations of the RCZ, Cronje delivered the sermon at Madzimoyo (Cronje 2003:76).¹³¹ After his passing in 2006 (and at his request), Cronje’s body was buried in the Madzimoyo cemetery, alongside other Dutch missionaries and Reverend Justo Mwale.¹³² Van der Watt and Odendaal (2017:65) compares his burial to a state funeral, and was attended by the then vice-president, mister Rupiah Banda, who officially thanked the Dutch Reformed Church of the Free State for their on-going work in Zambia (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:65).

In 2014, after obtaining university status and registering with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Zambia, Justo Mwale Theological College was renamed Justo Mwale University.¹³³ Today at Justo Mwale University, both male and female students from all over sub-Saharan Africa are studying theology to become ministers or evangelists in the RCZ or other churches in the reformed tradition. The university also has other graduate and postgraduate programmes in education, peace, and conflict studies, and also programmes in gender, culture and development studies, to stress the RCZ’s

¹²⁹ In 1964, North Rhodesia becomes the independent Republic of Zambia.

¹³⁰ The Dutch Reformed Mission in North Rhodesia was renamed “Reformed Church in Zambia” in 1968, after *Umwini* in 1966 (Cronje 2003:70).

¹³¹ The scripture reading and theme of Cronje’s sermon was from Deuteronomy 8:1-6 – “*Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way*” (Cronje 2003:53).

¹³² Cronje’s tombstone reads: “*Johan Martinus (Johane) Cronje. 31 Aug 1914 – 5 Des 2006. Stigter van die Teologiese skool van die ‘Reformed Church of Zambia’ op Madzimoyo*” followed by the text of 2 Timothy 4:7 in Afrikaans and repeated in Chewa.

¹³³ According to Justo Mwale University’s website.

commitment to gender equality and gender justice (Justo Mwale University n.d.:e-source).¹³⁴

2.2.1.7 Decolonisation, Independence, and “Umwini”

After the Second World War, there was a growing consciousness of decolonisation and revival of African nationalism in many African countries, which led to their independence in the 1950s and 1960s (Soko 2010:28). Ghana was the first country to gain its independence from Britain in 1957, commencing a new scramble – this time *out* of Africa – and among those who left were European missionaries (Pakenham 1991:67). On 24 October 1964, Zambia became an independent country under the democratically elected United National Independence Party (UNIP), and the charismatic leadership of Kenneth Kaunda¹³⁵ (Hendriks & Soko 2011:95; Evans 2021:e-source;). Kaunda, who would be Zambia’s president from 1964 until 1991, was a prominent figure in Zambia’s (and Africa’s) struggle for independence. He was also a devout Christian and regarded the church as an important pillar in society (M’fundisi-Holloway 2018:77). Kaunda united Zambia under his philosophy of “Zambian Humanism”, which not only emphasised the traditional African principle that acknowledges the value of each man and the respect for human dignity, but also rejected the unfair and humiliating policies bestowed upon Zambians during colonialism. Under the motto “*One Zambia – One Nation*”, which would be incorporated in Zambia’s coat of arms, Kaunda fostered a country where there is (should be) no violence between individuals and states, and no divisions on the grounds of race, colour, creed, tribe, religion, and sex (Kaunda 1974:xi; Paas 2016:478; Soko 2010:33; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:31).¹³⁶

During the time of decolonisation and independence, there were signs of nationalism in the church as well. For example, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in North Rhodesia was renamed to the “African Reformed Church in North Rhodesia” at the synod of 1957, which could be seen as a disavowal of its association with Europe (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:297). During this time, the word “*Umwini*” – literally translated to “ownership” – was being used more often. *Umwini* sprouted from

¹³⁴ According to Justo Mwale University’s website.

¹³⁵ Kenneth David Kaunda has been awarded numerous awards and honorary degrees from a number of universities and institutions. In 1963, he received a doctorate of Law from the University of Fordham; in 2013, an Honorary Doctorate in Peace and Conflict studies at the Copperbelt University in Zambia, and in 2017, an Honorary Doctorate in Societal Human Rights from the Latin University of Theology (together with IChange Nations) in the United States of America in recognition of his role in the uniting the many tribes of Zambia, and promoting peace all over the African continent. Kaunda also played a prominent role in South Africa’s road to democracy. Dr Kaunda – often referred to as “the father of the nation” – died on 17 June 2021 (Evans 2021:e-source).

¹³⁶ This humanist philosophy perpetuates to this very day, with Zambia being considered one of the safest, friendliest and most peaceful nations in Africa, that not only accommodates, but also respects the views and beliefs of other religions (Njobvu 2017:1; Owen 2018:e-source; ZDA:e-source).

the church's desire to exercise control over its own affairs, independent from the DRC. Eventually, the Zambian synod formally "demanded" full control over all property and finances (Cronje 2003:29-30) and expressed their desire for autonomy in 1964 – the year Zambia also gained its independence. The newly appointed moderator, Reverend M.W. Khondowe and synod secretary Reverend F.D. Sakala formally requested autonomy from the mission secretary, Reverend D.S. Snyman (Cronje 1981:189; Soko 2010:27-28). After negotiations, autonomy was granted during the synod in Katete on 23 April 1966 (considered the RCZ's "Independence Day"), and all property belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission was handed over to the African Reformed Church in Zambia with its then 20 000 members. This event was attended by a four-man delegation from the DRC in the OFS, their role in the church's history was acknowledged, and they signed an agreement to ensure future cooperation (Cronje 2003:70; Cronje 1981:190; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:300, 307-308; Soko 2010:28). In 1968, the church was finally renamed "Reformed Church in Zambia" (Cronje 2003:70).

Despite the joys for a new Africa, and high hopes for flourishing under Kaunda's administration – especially after being rated as one of the most prosperous countries in sub-Saharan Africa due to its rich copper deposits and agricultural potential – Zambia soon experienced mismanagement, patronage, corruption, and growing political authoritarianism. This was affirmed when Zambia declared itself a one-party state on 13 December 1972, which led to a rigid and authoritative leadership, deterioration of infrastructure and the economy, as well as food shortages (Gewald, Hinfelaar & Macola 2008:2; Hendriks & Soko 2011:95-96). Concurrently, "[...] the RCZ settled into a pattern where its autocratic and bureaucratic power went unchallenged" (Hendriks & Soko 2011:96). The RCZ denied the help of an accountant, P. Botha, after *Umwini*, and appointed their own candidates to manage the funds of the church. Unfortunately, this resulted in corruption and the disappearance of the RCZ pension fund, and many years without an audited report of the RCZ's synodical funds presented at a synod (Cronje 2003:36).

Despite these irregularities that were sorted out over time, the RCZ expanded and grew in membership. In 1966, there were 27 congregations, 23 ministers and 20 000 members. In 1999, at its centenary celebrations, there were 146 congregations, 102 ministers and approximately 500 000 members (Cronje 2003:43,70). It is also noteworthy that the RCZ, the "daughter" of the DRC, felt uncomfortable to request missionaries from South African after *Umwini*, since there was uneasiness with the racial discrimination in South Africa during the Apartheid era (Soko 2010:29). According to

the minutes of the 1989 Synod of the RCZ,¹³⁷ the RCZ took a deliberate and strong stance against Apartheid, calling it an ungodly ideology that goes against the heart of the gospel.

2.2.1.8 *Fredrick Chiluba and Pentecostalism*

Despite Kaunda's role in uniting a post-colonial Zambia, and fostering a proud new nation, the Zambian people started losing their trust in the president and the ruling party after immense economic decline, high levels of unemployment and poverty, poor infrastructure, and corruption, and called for a multiparty democratic election in 1990 (Soko 2010:37-38; Njobvu 2017:1). Zambian churches played a tremendous role in this election. The three ecumenical church bodies – the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, Zambia Episcopal Conference, and the Christian Council of Zambia (of which the RCZ is a member) – were pro-democracy, and formed the Christian Monitoring Group,¹³⁸ whose main aim was to observe (or monitor) all electoral procedures at polling stations (Hendriks & Soko 2011:97; M'fundisi-Holloway 2018:115). Soko feels that this could be attributed to Kaunda's theological position and interest in Eastern religious beliefs,¹³⁹ as well as the ban to register new churches in Zambia (Soko 2010:37).

After a 27-year Kaunda-presidency, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) – with the slogan “*The hour has come!*” – won the election with a landslide (76% of the vote), and on 31 October 1991 Fredrick Chiluba became Zambia's second president (Soko 2010:38; M'fundisi-Holloway 2018:111,113). Chiluba was a born-again Christian and Pentecostal, and his success in the election could be attributed to the support from and engagement in Zambia's Christian community – especially within the growing Pentecostal movement.¹⁴⁰ Chiluba was compared to biblical leaders like Moses and Joshua – the one who would lead Zambians out of oppression, and many Pentecostals prophesised that he would become the president (M'fundisi 2018:114). This could explain his bold move on 29 December 1991, when Chiluba – after barely two months in office and without prior consultation with his cabinet – declared Zambia as a Christian nation (Erdmann & Simutanyi 2003:13; Soko 2010:38; Njobvu 2017:1).¹⁴¹ This declaration was met with adoration and appraisal among all

¹³⁷ The minutes of the RCZ Synods is available at the RCZ Synod offices and the RCZ archive in the Justo Mwale University library.

¹³⁸ Also referred to as the Zambia Independence Monitoring Co-ordinating Committee.

¹³⁹ Zambian churches claimed that Kaunda converted to a new religion, which was followed by the erection of the “David Universal Temple” at the state house, and the launching of a television project called “Heaven on Earth” with Marharishi Mahesh Yogi. This was unacceptable for Zambian Christians (Soko 2010:37).

¹⁴⁰ This upsurge of Christianity in Zambia was greatly influenced by the increasing popularity of American televangelists with a fundamental interpretation of the Bible.

¹⁴¹ “[...]this declaration was meant to be a code of conduct that would enable the nation to attract God's blessing” (M'fundisi-Holloway 2018:124).

Christians, and later became the preamble to Zambia's constitution (Van Klinken 2014:263; Van Klinken & Phiri 2015:10).

After Chiluba's declaration, a religious desk was established in the state house (Soko 2010:39), and later, a Ministry of Religious Affairs and National Guidance, with an appointed member of parliament.¹⁴² Chiluba appointed many Pentecostals to his cabinet, who would play a key role in political affairs in Zambia. Pentecostals spiritualised all socio-political, health and economic problems, assigning Zambia's poor economy to the work of the Devil, rather than poor performance by the government officials and widespread corruption (M'fundisi-Holloway 2018:112; Alimi 2015:e-source). During the field work of this particular study, some respondents disclosed that they question Chiluba's intentions when he declared Zambia as a Christian nation: was it out of personal conviction, in order to obtain popularity, or to leave a legacy like his predecessor?¹⁴³ In either case, the power of the president was abused in the name of the Christian faith, and a decision was made which would later result in discrimination against other religions and sexual minorities, the flourishing of (American-inspired) Pentecostalism in Zambia, and the explosion of African independent churches (Hendriks & Soko 2011:100; Forster 2021:e-source).¹⁴⁴

Regrettably, despite Chiluba's declaration, and the hope for restoration and economic advancement, he would later earn the reputation of being a corrupt leader (M'fundisi-Holloway 2018:115). After finishing his second term in 2001, he became a suspect in a criminal trial, whose claims escalated after discovering several stored trunks and suitcases containing designer suits, shoes, and shirts in a warehouse in Lusaka.¹⁴⁵ Through fashion, like many leaders in Africa as well as Pentecostal pastors, Chiluba crafted himself as a public persona, presenting himself as a big man and chief. Chiluba's fashion choice conferred prosperity and power. However, this lavish consumption and spending of millions of dollars in federal funds later exposed a large entangled system of corruption that involved Chiluba, politicians, civil servants, and businesspeople. Chiluba did not show any remorse, and it is documented that he laughed during the entire trial that ended in 2009 (Hansen 2019:96,105-106).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² According to Zambia's official parliament website.

¹⁴³ M'fundisi-Holloway (2018:125) feels that this declaration was an "attack" on Kaunda, his policies, and his government

¹⁴⁴ African independent churches (AIC's, also called African instituted churches, or African indigenous churches) are churches in which Christianity was contextualised for Africans; they were greatly influenced by the post-colonial African nationalism philosophy, and were founded by Africans, for Africans (Hendriks & Soko 2010:100). AICs criticised and broke away from colonial mission churches (like the RCZ), and by rejecting colonial inspired leadership – which are synonymous with racism, attitudes of superiority, and paternalism – AIC's reclaimed power for themselves (Soko 2010:57).

¹⁴⁵ The contents of Chiluba's warehoused wardrobe (21 trunks and 11 suitcases) included (by estimate) 100 pairs of shoes, 300 shirt and 150 suits (Hansen 2019:96, 103).

¹⁴⁶ Ironically, Chiluba felt disgraced for having his "dirty laundry" hung out in public to dry (Hansen 2019:106).

2.2.1.9 The position of women

Since the beginning of the RCZ, women played a crucial role in its ministry. With labour migration draining villages of its men, women had to become entrepreneurs, farmers, builders, caretakers, and communal leaders. The influence of cultures did influence women's roles and ministry in villages. The RCZ's early membership was especially dominated by the Chewa and Angoni tribes. *Chewas* have a matriarchal culture, which means that women can become chiefs (but not paramount chiefs), their opinions are valued in village life, and they are involved when making important decisions (like the choice of a spouse). It is considered a blessing when a daughter is born and paying *lobola* ("bride wealth") is more a courtesy than a prerequisite, which is the case in patriarchal tribes.¹⁴⁷ There are ascribed gender roles, usually determined by sex: men are expected to provide for the family and perform hard manual tasks and physical chores (like ploughing, cutting down trees, building houses). Today, however, you will find many men in the hotel and food industry as well, and although women are still responsible for domestic chores (Taylor 2006:94), you would find Chewa women in stereotypically "male dominated" fields, like farming, carpentry, and bricklaying.¹⁴⁸

This matriarchal culture has a female initiation ceremony called the "*cinamwali*". Young girls are instructed on the critical stages of a women's life – menstruation, marriage, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and childbirth (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:182; Banda 2014:12). This initiation however contained some practices (for example dancing, beer drinking, and praying to the ancestors) that missionaries felt were un-Christian, which resulted in tensions between missions and indigenous people, since this ceremony was considered a cornerstone of social life. A Christian alternative was introduced at mission schools, which involved all the positive aspects of the *cinamwali* (character building, perseverance, communal responsibility), and was named the "*cilangizo*" (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:84,183).

The *Angoni* tribe on the other hand, like most Zambian tribes (including the Bembas, Nsengas, Tongas, and Lozis), is patriarchal. Angonis prefer having sons, since this will secure the family's inheritance and legacy. Angoni men and women have designated gender roles: women are homemakers and caretakers of children, and it is the wife's responsibility to cook and clean, to gather firewood and build the fire, to smear the yard with wet cattle manure, and perform household duties.

¹⁴⁷ Included in my field journal, based on informal discussions with high-ranking Chewas.

¹⁴⁸ According to interviews in the pilot study.

Men are the breadwinners and decisionmakers, and husbands look after the livestock, thatch the roof, and are responsible for all issues concerning kinship, transactions, and exchange (Zulu 2001:23). Women are not allowed in male-dominated positions, not consulted in decisions, nor allowed to speak in public. In the early days of the RCZ, women were deliberately excluded from any positions that involved decision making, since they were considered “substandard creatures” (Njobvu 2017:3,21-22; Phiri 2017:75-76; Paas 2016:497).

The early missionaries’ culture and understanding of the Bible were patriarchal as well. Bible passages from Paul’s letters that prohibits women from speaking in the church,¹⁴⁹ and the Creation Order in Genesis – where God created the man first and the woman second (Phiri 2017:76) – became the premise of gender discrimination and the exclusion of women in the early days of the RCZ (Njobvu 2017:3). Phiri (2017:76) feels that the church was complicit in turning a blind eye towards the marginalisation of women, which were driven by patriarchal cultures and traditions, and that some RCZ leaders deliberately remained silent when it came to the harsh reality of gender-based violence and the gender discrimination that Zambians still face today (Paas 2016:496,501). With the growing awareness of human rights and gender equality – which also ensured that the rights of women were supported, and the increasing sensitivity for women empowerment and the fight against gender-based violence – more and more churches revisited their understanding of the roles of women in church. Genesis 1:27¹⁵⁰ (male and female were both created in the image of God) and Galatians 3:26-28¹⁵¹ (there is neither male nor female) became popular verses and were quoted regularly and anew to (re)establish God’s plan for women in the church (Njobvu 2017:24; Phiri 2017:3; Paas 2016:496).

Up to this point, all issues concerning women were handled by the Women’s Guild (“*chigwirizano cha aimai*”), an initiative started in the 1920’s by the Dutch missionaries with the purpose to empower pastors’ wives and other women of the congregation. Initially, the Women’s Guild was a group of women who had prayer meetings, Bible studies, sewing and cooking classes. Today, the Women’s Guild play a vital role in promoting gender equality in the RCZ, by not only empowering women leaders, but also fighting against gender-based violence in their congregation, providing care, support, and counselling for those affected (Phiri 2017:70-71,75; Njobvu 2017:38-39; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:187). It is however sad to note that many women are unwilling to take up leadership roles in

¹⁴⁹ Particularly 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

¹⁵⁰ “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (NIV-translation).

¹⁵¹ “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NIV-translation).

congregations, either because they feel that culture and society prohibits them to do so, or their husbands, families and in some cases RCZ clergy do not allow them to accept leadership roles (Phiri 2017:39). This creates deep challenges when thinking in terms of gender equality in the RCZ, as this could qualify as a form of gender discrimination from within.

Although the church was originally predominantly governed by male leaders (in accordance with their patriarchal culture), RCZ members started to pose questions at the synod of 1979 whether women should be allowed in the ministry of the church. In 1989, the RCZ Synod decided that women would be allowed to become deaconesses and serve on the church council, and at the synod of 1998, women were permitted to become elders (Phiri 2017:76). On this decision, the minutes of the synod reads:¹⁵²

Nine years have elapsed since women were allowed to become deacons in the church. There are however problems with men's understanding of this step taken by the church. In some congregations, they have been turned into concubines for elders and pastors. The other problem also lies with women themselves. They sneer their fellow women who have been chosen deacons. However, this cannot stop making further progress on women generally. The other problem is with sister churches who give us money, they have insisted on that condition when giving us aid and at JMTC¹⁵³ and Lay Training Center. Despite the problems surrounding women, the church has to take a quick postmortem (sic) on the entire ministry for women.

During the celebratory synod held in 1999, in commemoration of the century existence of the RCZ, the case for women ministers was not discussed, but at the synod of 2000, the RCZ made the progressive decision to allow women to become ministers and to be fully ordained into ministry in RCZ congregations (Phiri 2017:76; Njobvu 2017:4). A vast majority of the synod agreed with this decision, but there were also concerns and objections. Some felt that women would not be accepted in leadership positions due to the patriarchal nature of the Zambia, while others argued that the Bible is clear on matters of women's role in church, referring to 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2.¹⁵⁴

Up to the synod of 2000, women in the RCZ only participated in unofficial ministries, and were never fully recognised or appreciated; today, women are encouraged and free to be part of the RCZ's

¹⁵² According to the minutes of the RCZ synod meeting of 1998.

¹⁵³ Justo Mwale Theological College, today Justo Mwale University, where the RCZ ministers are trained for ministry.

¹⁵⁴ According to respondents who attended this synod.

leadership structures on congregational, presbytery and synod level (Phiri 2017:76). According to Njobvu, many women boldly claimed that they were called to the ministry after this synod, and started theological studies, without hesitation (Njobvu 2017:4). The first woman to be ordained was Reverend Rose Molowa, who was inducted on 7 January 2001. Today, of the 162 ministers in the RCZ, there are 18 women who are in full time ministry, and of the 33 full-time evangelists, there are 4 women. Women considering theological training are enthusiastically encouraged by the RCZ leadership, particularly since their participation in the ministries could not only help foster gender equality on congregational level, but nationally as well.¹⁵⁵

2.2.1.10 The RCZ today: challenges and opportunities

120 years after Mpenzeni's request, the RCZ is a growing and recognised denomination in Zambia with 175 congregations (many with rural ministry outposts), 17 presbyteries, 162 ministers, 33 full-time evangelists, and approximately one million members.¹⁵⁶ When looking at the gender demographic of the RCZ congregations in urban areas, the membership consists of two-thirds women and a third men, which could be ascribed to women having a higher life expectancy, labour migration, men's disinterest to go to church, and/or the fact that men find the message of the church too condemning (men are unwilling to give up beer drinking and promiscuous behaviour). Even though women dominate the membership in the RCZ, many offices and leadership positions in the church are still held by men.¹⁵⁷

Being a growing and recognised church denomination in a Christian country does not necessarily mean that there are no theological issues that need to be addressed. According to academic outputs from Justo Mwale University (and therefore also the RCZ), there is an overwhelming reference to the (negative) impact of neo-Pentecostalism and spreaders of the prosperity gospel in Zambia.¹⁵⁸ The RCZ took a strong stance against any minister who aligns their theology with the theology of the neo-Pentecostals, which resulted in the expulsion of nine RCZ ministers in March 2001, who later started their own church, the Bible Gospel Church in Africa (Soko 2010:82).

In sub-Saharan Africa, Pentecostal churches and prosperity teaching is experiencing an increase in

¹⁵⁵ This information is according to the office of the general secretary of the RCZ in Zambia, April 2019.

¹⁵⁶ Statistics according to the office of the general secretary of the RCZ in Lusaka, received in April 2019.

¹⁵⁷ Included in my field journal, and according to the office of the general secretary of the RCZ.

¹⁵⁸ See *In search of Health and Wealth. The Prosperity Gospel in African, Reformed Perspective* (Kroesbergen ed. 2015). *Prophecy today: reflections from a Southern African context* (Kroesbergen ed. 2016), *Neo-Pentecostalism in Southern Africa – some critical reflections* (Kroesbergen ed. 2017).

popularity, which could be attributed to the growing influence of mass media, increasing exposure to American televangelists and evangelical missions (Parsitau 2020:e-source; Forster 2021:e-source), the Chiluba presidency (Hendriks & Soko 2011:105), the contemporary music, and/or the charismatic pastor who – without formal theological training – builds their entire message on the tremendous promises of health and wealth for the 315 million sub-Saharan Africans who live on less than a dollar a day, and lack the basic needs of basic shelter, education, health and water (Chilenje 2015:17; Zulu 2015:30). These pastors proclaim that it is God's will for people to prosper; that illness, sickness and/or poverty could be traced back to curses, witchcraft, evil spirits, and/or not being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit; and that these churches not only offer spiritual and supernatural protection and healing to its members, but the leaders personally become the agents of these material blessings, physical riches and prosperity (Chilenje 2015:16,18; Kroebergen-Kamps 2015:108). The so-called “good life” is also embodied by the leaders of these churches – usually a sole (male) pastor with charismatic leadership, who enforces authority, and attract a large following due to their riches, power, and showmanship (Phiri & Maxwell 2007:e-source). These rich, powerful male pastors are strong leaders who command respect and authority; they can be compared to the traditional African chief or headman and can be categorised as “Big Men” in Africa (Chilenje 2015:18).

The RCZ did not escape the influence of Pentecostalism, and today, there are minor signs of its influence in the lives of ministers and their ministry. During the field work of this study, for example, after attending numerous services and visiting many congregations, I was aware that during Advent and Christmas there were no mention of fragility, frailty or marginalisation usually associated with the birth of Jesus and the message to the shepherds, but an overwhelming reference to the kingship and authority of God. Accordingly, during Lent and Good Friday, which are usually associated with suffering, sacrifice and quiet reflection, there were “crusades”,¹⁵⁹ weekend programmes and worship services with an overwhelming reference to Jesus' victory, the power of the cross, the benefits of Easter, and the victory over death.¹⁶⁰ This however is not a strange phenomenon in African theology, since the African context presents a range of different challenges foreign to Western theology and hermeneutics. Interpreting Jesus Christ in terms of power (Jesus the Victor, the Conqueror, the Defeater of all supernatural powers and the Defeater of death) is a relevant hermeneutic in a context where the spiritual realm, the fear of witchcraft, sickness, spells, death, and the desire for prosperity are significant realities. The “Africanisation” and/or “inculturation” of the Gospel renders it relevant and meaningful theology for the African people, addressing the totality of their existence (Motlhabi

¹⁵⁹ “Crusades” are usually weekend or weeklong church assemblies, with services conducted by a guest minister, choir performances, prayer meetings, and worshipping.

¹⁶⁰ A personal observation, included in my field journal.

The inculturation of the Gospel, however, could impoverish the significance thereof. Dustin Ellington, an American lecturer who resides and teaches at Justo Mwale University, noticed that there is the strong emphasis on the power of religion and the belief that the Christian faith is a route to success, economic flourishing, and political advancement (Ellington 2017a:47). Ellington also observed that Zambian Christianity tends to focus on the readers and their context, which in turn determines the meaning of the biblical text, and therefore pays “[...] more attention to the context and aspirations of the readers than to the text of Scripture self” (Ellington 2017b: 90-91). Ellington suggests that the “success” and “succeeding” is overemphasised in Zambian Christianity (which includes the RCZ), and that the cross, an important Christian symbol which signifies the death and suffering of Jesus Christ, is “missing” as main feature in Zambian Christianity (Ellington 2017b:91). It is ironic that the symbol of suffering (or the cross) is absent in African Christianity, and a theology that avoids weakness is prevalent, especially since suffering is an integral part of African Christians’ lives (Ellington 2017a:62). Ellington highlights that the message of the gospel (the “Good News”) comes under the influence of contextual hermeneutics, which mirrors cultural pre-understandings, societal values and the desires of prospering and succeeding (Ellington 2017b:96), while neglecting a crucial theme for the Christian life, which entails suffering and self-renunciation which subsequently follows one’s union with Christ (Ellington 2015:37).

Within all these influences, the RCZ is still a recognised denomination in Zambia, involved in numerous religious, social, and civil initiatives, and over the years many new ministries emerged from it. It is an inclusive church where men and women, young and old, able-bodied and disabled, healthy and sick are welcome. Ministerial initiatives could still be categorised under the original four enterprises, namely evangelisation, education, healthcare and agricultural (and industrial) training, but new ministries also emerged within the church over the years (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:67-68):

¹⁶¹ It is interesting to note that power, protection, and prosperity are also important themes in traditional African religions (ATRs). ATRs, like Pentecostal churches, attach great value to power, virility, fertility and prosperity, and attribute sickness, misfortune, and weakness to the work of evil spirits, the devil, or dark forces (See Kroesbergen-Kamps 2015:100-112 and Crafford 2015:1-32). It makes sense that many African Independent Churches (AICs) – African churches that function independently of (so-called) mainstream churches (or denominations with colonial roots) – resonate with Pentecostal churches’ theology, and therefore also integrate traditional African rituals and practices into their ministry. Statistically speaking, the African Independent churches are currently regarded as the fastest growing Christian movement in Africa (Verster 2015:64).

- (i) Concerning *evangelisation*: Justo Mwale University is still responsible for the theological instruction of ministers and evangelists but is also expanding its courses in order to attract other students from Lusaka as well. The Diaconia Department is involved in the service ministry in vulnerable communities, and Witnessing Desk is responsible for evangelism throughout the country. There are also fellowships for men, women, and youth at each congregation, focused on spiritual formation and growth.
- (ii) Concerning *education*: the Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS) initiative currently provides basic education in communities throughout the country, and the RCZ is still custodian of the mission schools, including Katete girls school, Magwero's school for the blind and the deaf, and the Youth Skills Training Centre in Madzimoyo.
- (iii) Concerning *healthcare*: the RCZ supervises two hospitals, numerous clinics, and they take part in national initiatives to combat HIV/AIDS.
- (iv) Concerning *agriculture and industrial* training: the RCZ is involved in skills training, as well as agricultural training at Madzimoyo and Justo Mwale University.

The RCZ is also a member of many ecumenical bodies – nationally and internationally, including the African Council of Churches (of which the previous moderator, professor Edwin Zulu, had been the chair), the World Council of Churches, and World Council of Reformed Churches (Van der Watt & Odendaal 2017:68).

2.2.2 Thoughts on *Chitenge* 1: precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial masculinities

In light of this historical narrative, this section will reflect on how society, culture, and religion have influenced the ways men conduct themselves in Zambia and the RCZ. In some cases, Zambia's history has resulted in establishing forms of male dominance, and in other cases, it has left men vulnerable to experiences and emotions related to fragility (like powerlessness, emasculation, shame, guilt, embarrassment, anger, and fear). History and context cannot be disassociated from gender since social identities are gendered identities (Lorber & Martin 2013:254). Historically, society and culture have put forward certain roles (or identities) that are in fact “gendered”, which could translate back to the fact that sexualities and gender are in fact continuously constructed by culture and society (which in this case is predominantly patriarchal).

Langa (2020:2) accords this, stating that the study of male (and female) experience “[...] varies according to a specific context and across socio-historical-cultural formations.” In this narrative, it is clear that the church is not a closed entity to be researched independently, but a rich, multifaceted arena where many histories – colonial and postcolonial, indigenous and Western, African and European – collide and intersect with culture, society, economics, politics, religious beliefs and ecclesiology, each influencing and affecting the other. Also, there are numerous examples of gender-biased socio-cultural views imposed by colonialists, missionaries, nationalists, politicians, and neo-Pentecostals, and their traces – some faint, some vivid – are still visible in contemporary identities of men and women in Zambia.

Precolonial indigenous life already had a culture system which contained shared expectations for appropriate behaviour, social norms and assigned roles for men and women (or a gender hierarchy). Most Zambian cultures are patriarchal,¹⁶² which deliberately favour men’s dominion, power, control, and authority over women. Men justify this dominance on the basis that they are physically stronger, are considered the protectors and providers for families, they are expected to be rough and tough, hard workers, and their superiority also ensured them leadership roles (Louw 2008:380,384). Men in patriarchal societies fear powerlessness and emasculation, shame, and failure, and being exposed as weak or vulnerable. To “regain” power, they would usually react with violent or aggressive behaviour to (re)assert their dominance and masculinity (Louw 2008:386-387). According to missionaries’ accounts, culturally sanctioned beer drinking, sexual virility, strength, and bravery were some of the early signs associated with a masculine identity (Cronje 1981:154; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:79). Since women were considered the weaker sex, a more passive and submissive stance was taken, leaving them vulnerable and defenceless to the physical harassment, violation, intimidation and/or exploitation by men (Louw 2008:393-394; Lorber & Martin 2013:256).¹⁶³

During *colonisation*, indigenous (and gendered) identities were disturbed. One could argue that colonial Christianity robbed Africa of its cultural heritage, causing both a physical and an emotional alienation (or estrangement) with themselves (Kaunda 2016:56, 61). “[...] African people internalised oppression, lost sight of indigenous agency, and have continued to recolonise themselves” (Kaunda

¹⁶² With the exception of the Chewa culture, which, despite being matriarchal, still privileges men in some cases, and ascribes each gender certain gender-appropriate roles.

¹⁶³ This does not mean that women in precolonial Zambia were weak, had no authority in society, or that they did not exercise power in their communities. In precolonial times, in addition to managing their households and their nurturing role in the community, women were strong, they had physical endurance, they participated in trade, and they took initiative and made tremendous contributions in (among others) the agricultural sector (See Paas 2016:60-61, Matsveru & Gilham 2015:37, and Louw 2009:99).

2016:56). With force and violence, colonial European superpowers claimed their racial superiority, not only robbing Africans of their land, but also of their identity and dignity, whilst exploiting their (gendered) bodies in order to build their empires.¹⁶⁴ By instating a money politic and imposing the “hut tax”, men were forced to into labour migration in order to provide for their families; when wars were declared war, men were forced to fight in a “white man’s war” in order to secure their lands, peoples, and freedom, fighting for something they had already lost (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:29,44,91-96).

Being forced to work under dangerous conditions for a minimal (and unfair) wage – with no chance of flourishing or promotion and while enriching white farmers and mineral tycoons – left African men emasculated and disempowered. They were also stigmatised (or “nativised”) as sexually promiscuous, rapacious, extraordinarily virile, and dangerous with uncontrollable sexual urges (which especially posed a threat to white women) by colonial imagination (Ngwena 2018:184; Van Klinken 2016:31).¹⁶⁵ These inherently racist systems and unfair stereotypes resulted in feelings of humiliation, shame, and inferiority among African men, and according to Louw’s (2008:386,391), feelings like these could become internalised and they eventually fuel expressions of masculinities characterised by violence and risk-taking behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, and also gender-based violence and gender domination in order to assert (or “reclaim”) their masculinity. This aligns with Moffett’s (2006:132) observation that “[...] rape [is] a source of patriarchal control” and “[...] women are far more likely to be raped [...] [since] sexual violence is an instrument of gender domination [...]” (Moffett 2006:134).

Even though African women did not participate in labour migration and wars (they were viewed as the weaker sex whose place and purpose were at home), they were left vulnerable, had to fend for themselves, became victims of different types of exploitation, and in some cases, they became (had to become) the sole provider of an entire household, which usually includes members of the extended family as well. Some women became entrepreneurs, farmers, builders, domestic workers, cooks, and nannies – sometimes at the cost of receiving an education – to provide and take care of their families (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:44). The social, economic, and political structures however benefitted (and still benefit) men – women were not seen as equal human beings and were perceived inferior to men

¹⁶⁴ The BSAC’s battle with Mpenzeni and Nsingo is a clear example of this.

¹⁶⁵ Also referred to as “the black peril” – which was a blatant form of racism and gender stereotyping, that depicts all black men as predatory rapists with uncontrollable urges, closely connected to colonial power, race, white supremacy, patriarchy, and sexuality. This also became the base for criminalising consensual sex between white women and black men, and the fear of losing control over racial boundaries and losing “white respectability” (Ngwena 2018:185-186).

(Van Klinken 2016:31). Above this, colonial imagination stereotyped women as “sexual degenerates”¹⁶⁶ with little regard for consequences of sexual behaviour: they were seen as sexually promiscuous, having “transactional sex” with men, or marrying for the sake of lineage and reproduction instead of love and mutual commitment (Ngwena 2018:193-194).

In *postcolonial* Zambia, a country where there are both patriarchal and matriarchal cultures, the historically definitive gendered roles (or identities) ascribed to each sex¹⁶⁷ are still visible in Zambia and the RCZ today. Culturally and socially, men still tend to be more privileged, and in order to constitute their social identity – their manliness or masculinity – they are ascribed certain roles associated with physical strength, sexual prowess, toughness, valour, independence, and leadership. Women, habitually portrayed as the weaker sex, constitute their feminine identity by being nurturant, emotionally giving, subordinate to men and their needs, maternal, dependent on men, and vulnerable to the intimidation of men. It appears men and women’s value are determined by these roles, and to “be useful” and “have purpose” in terms of the socio-cultural norms, men are willing to push their bodies to the limits, and women are willing to submit to these cultural ideas and practices (Lorber & Martin 2013:256,265).

Despite decolonising efforts, African people are simultaneously trying to “keep up” with the West, whilst trying to reclaim, restore, and reconstitute traditional system of African thought and wisdom with the West (Kaunda 2016:63). This could explain Kaunda’s 27-year presidency, which commenced with a new, independent, and “democratic” Zambia, but finished with an authoritarian (almost autocratic) government that could be compared to traditional “chiefship”. Chiluba – a graduate of a “Western” education, previous employee of European companies, and a proponent of democracy – who would later be accused of the embezzlement of public funds, would also be remembered for his extravagant wardrobe. Through dressing lavishly, he embodied a true African tradition where leaders’ clothes represent their status, which according to Hansen (2019:101) builds on the notion that bodies become the surface of social reproduction.

“Embodying” (or performing) success like Chiluba is also linked to neo-Pentecostal theology whose portrait of a “successful” masculinity (or hegemonic masculinity) would include economic power, heterosexuality (as well as superiority over women), marriage, access to wealth, material possessions,

¹⁶⁶ Throughout history, sexual degeneracy as a stereotype was also ascribed to the Irish, Jews, prostitutes, feminists, gays, lesbians, and criminals, and is a blatant example of misogyny, racism, homophobia, and xenophobia (Ngwena 2018:192).

¹⁶⁷ Men provide, work and fight, women nurture and do domestic chores. Contemporary academic scholars would identify as “gender essentialism” - one’s biological sex determines one’s gender identity (Ngwena 2018:223).

and resources. This message however immediately excludes (and therefore emasculates) men who are vulnerable, jobless, disabled, poor, uneducated, sick, unmarried, homosexual, and unable to fulfil to the ideals of what it means to be a man (Langa 2020:20). This is also the premise of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). For Butler (1999:43-44; 1988:526), all individual identities are gendered; all gender roles, stereotypes, and norms imposed (or forcibly reiterated) on an individual by a society and culture that subscribes said constructs (norms, stereotypes, and roles). Individuals become gendered by enacting, re-enacting, or "performing" these roles in order to participate in "performances" required to assert their masculinity and femininity in their context (society and culture).

Put differently (and referring to subsection 2.2.1.8): through his lavish dressing, Chiluba did not only establish his role as president, but his body also became the stage for the enactment of a gendered performance, asserting his masculine identity (Hansen 2019:101). This enactment however did not display his private identity; it was a public performance to an audience with certain expectations on how a (male) president should act. Accordingly, men (and women) continually perform certain identities in public to maintain a certain "[...] respect and trust in routine social interaction" (Langa 2020:28). Masculinity is considered "successful" if they live up to (or perform) these expectations; failure to live up to these expectations leads to stigma, shame, and anxiety. This is also the premise for Raewyn Connell's "hegemonic masculinity", which is the socio-cultural establishment (or sanctioning) of certain ideals of masculinity (or a pattern of certain practices or "performances") that men (and boys) aspire to, even though it does not correspond with their actual personalities, and in the process of achieving it, they usually experience fear and anxiety (Connell 1987:184; Connell 2005a:77; Langa 2020:30).

In this narrative that describes the history of the RCZ within the broader lines of colonialism and independence, the interplay between male dominance and male fragility cycle becomes palpable. Male dominance and male fragility are the two sides of the same coin – they are inseparably intertwined and feed off one another. Fragility and the attempts to escape it becomes the drive behind men's need to dominate and conquer, while dominance is often connected to the practices that causes harm and leads to fragility. In this narrative there are numerous intersecting storylines and important perspectives involving race, gender, culture, religion, and class, which are all related to the current stance of the RCZ and the Zambian context. Despite the aims to develop Africa and Livingstone's dream to civilise, commercialise, and Christianise the continent, colonialism actually left Africa and Africans traumatised and vulnerable. The force and dominance of the European powers left African

men and women powerless, and today, it is not implausible to trace the origins of the troubling GBV statistics to this narrative (Louw 2008:386,391).

There is no doubt that colonial superpowers changed the African continent and the lives of African people forever by enforcing their (patriarchal) authority and control, by exploiting resources and people, by robbing the African continent of its identity, leaving African men and women vulnerable and disempowered on their own lands (Ngwena 2018:24-25). Men's worth was connected to their ability to provide for their families, their ability to do labour intensive work, their ability to fight in foreign wars, while submitting to their colonial masters. African men experienced feelings of loss, trauma, powerlessness, humiliation (or fragility), and the internalisation of such feelings are often linked with aggressive and risk-taking behaviour, a hunger for (and enactment of) power and control (male dominance), and other (harmful) expressions of masculinity associated with GBV (Louw 2008:386,391; Moffett 2006:132-134).

Even though Zambia like other African nations has undergone decolonisation and are independent today, some examples of social hierarchies remained, and some expressions of masculinities endured. The patriarchal character of the body politic, and despite the attempts of politicians to empower more women leaders, politics remains an arena dominated by men. The same could be said of the church (the Body of Christ) – most churches are stereotypically associated with strong male leadership, and even though women dominate membership, all important offices are still held by men.

2.3 CHITENGE 2: THE “PRESENT TENSE” AND WISDOM IN THE STREETS

2.3.1 The bodies in the streets

After reflecting on the “past tense”, the theory-laden “present tense” (or practice) that contains “[...] the significance of the human context and the realities of lived experience” and “embodied expressions” of knowledge was consulted in this research project (Graham 2017:3). As a precursor to Chapter 3 (which will focus on formal qualitative involvement), and follower of the historical narrative (which identified important considerations for this study), this section contains an autobiographical description of my in-context experience with public transport as metaphor. This correlates with Ganzevoort's (2007:5) view that (theological) knowledge is found in the streets (“de wijsheid op straat”) and is not (or should not be) limited to the church and the academy. When entering the field (or the streets), concrete human experiences (or everyday lived practices) become

the premise of study. The plurality of a context and the influence of faith, culture and society on people's worldview and lived reality becomes evident (Ganzevoort 2007:5-6,41).

This intentional attempt to understand the lived experience of thousands of Zambians also aligns with the basic principles of "lived religion". Lived religion poses that knowledge is not only found in history books, but also found (or embodied) in the streets of Zambia. Lived religion is theology "on the move" (Ward 2017:56). It is shaped by the everyday experiences of ordinary people – the complex, inconsistent, heterogeneous, and untidy ideas and practices generated in the streets, in homes, in churches, and at the intersections of life (Ward 2017:56,58). The travelling necessary to reach a physical destination is a fitting comparison to describe my experience in the field: to reach a metaphorical destination, a researcher embarks on a metaphorical journey, and through observations and experiences in the field, he reached new insights and understandings on masculinities in Zambia. "Travelling" is also a means to trace the sacred in everyday life (Ganzevoort 2009: n.p.). This section describes this physical and metaphorical journey.

To present these observations in a simple and creative manner,¹⁶⁸ this "messy" experience at the bus station would be compared with attending a performance¹⁶⁹ at a large, interactive theatrical stage. This is a deliberate reference to Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which argues that gender is a cultural interpretation of the body. Gender is the performance of various acts over an extent of time; it is a way of "doing the body" in accordance with certain cultural and societal sanctions and proscriptions (Butler 1988:526). Butler's theory of gender performativity became the inspiration for this section, and it focuses on how forms of masculinity and femininity are performed in the streets of Lusaka. During this bus station-experience, there were significant characters who will be referred to as actors¹⁷⁰ of this performance. I will be referred to as "the passenger" during this performance, and the focus of this "play" is to depict the power politics and a concrete portrayal of a hegemonic hierarchy shaped by gender, class, and economic status. This narrative not only highlights some important realities that thickened my understanding of the setting, but it also provoked relevant question and made room for intersecting storylines as well.

¹⁶⁸ Referring to Pattison (2007:286) who feels that practical theology needs to be "[...] creative and illuminative, not just analytic, active and useful. At its best, [practical theology] might amongst other things provide space where people as individuals and communities reflect and grow in relation to ideas and experiences that they can savour."; Ward (2017:110-111) writes that recollections pay attention to details that surrounds the experience, and that expression through metaphorical language adds to the authentic character of the narrative.

¹⁶⁹ A deliberate reference to the work of Judith Butler who feels that gender is "performed" (Butler 1999).

¹⁷⁰ This refers to Don Browning (1991:97) who promotes thick descriptions of concrete situations, which not only focus on concrete realities, but also the thoughts and actions of the actors in it.

2.3.2 Field journal entry: taxis, taverns, tuckshops, and temples¹⁷¹

Following the guidelines of ethnographic research, and to get a better grip on the everyday lived experience¹⁷² of Zambian people, I deliberately chose public transport as a mode of transportation whilst doing fieldwork in and around Lusaka. As someone who rarely uses public transport,¹⁷³ I have consulted the locals to better understand this system which was intimidating and overwhelming at first. Public transport later became an intriguing “[...] site of theological inquiry” (Ward 2017:42), a space where field notes were made, and despite a few irregularities, it was a convenient way of getting around in Lusaka. A single trip in Lusaka will cost around 7 to 10 kwachas (around 1 US\$). According to the *Zipar*¹⁷⁴ *Quarterly*, lower income households spend as much as 40% of their incomes on public transport – almost twice as much as the international benchmark of 26% (Chikuba 2014:5). “Bus ridership in Lusaka is estimated at 453 000 passenger trips per day on over 10 000 vehicle trips” (Chikuba 2014:5). Although public transport is advantageous when thinking in terms of the flow of traffic, there is currently an over-capacity of bus services, and in-route competition have resulted in conflicts in the past (Chikuba 2014:4-5; Cleaver 2013:e-source). I can recall experiences where fellow passengers and I were forced off one bus, and onto another on the way to a destination, which could be the direct result of the subsurface politics of the public transport system that goes unquestioned (Chikuba 2014:4-5; Cleaver 2013:e-source).

Despite the timetable and route grid usually taped to the bus window, the arrival and departure of busses are unpredictable, and only estimates are given when asking for the duration of a trip, or the arrival of the next bus. Depending on the destination, a person should be prepared to exchange busses several times every day. Once a person understands the public transport system and the available routes, one can go to any compound, suburb, or specific area in Lusaka. For me, a normal day’s journey would start at the Kaunda Square – the bus stop near Justo Mwale University.¹⁷⁵ All busses

¹⁷¹ This narrative focuses on the daily rhythm of many Lusaka residents, as well as my own experiences in the field. The past tense and the present tense meet in this narrative, and it serves as a precursor for the next chapter that focuses on the interviews with RCZ ministers. I am aware that some “characters” are excluded from this narrative, for example disabled persons, beggars, street dancers, and street children. In some cases, when they do not necessarily contribute to the purpose of this narrative, they were intentionally excluded; in other cases, their exclusion is the result of my own blind spots. This narrative highlights the fact that the theatrical activities at the bus stop is a complex world, packed with empirical data.

¹⁷² To describe the everyday reality and the contextual situatedness thereof from the participant’s point of view becomes an important source when following the narrative and ethnographic approaches of doing research (Coetzee & Rau 2019:6-7; Ward 2017:112-113; Osmer 2008:37).

¹⁷³ This divulges something of my own lived experience in South Africa, where only a certain economic class uses public transport. In South Africa, having a vehicle is very common in the middle class. This is not necessarily the case in other countries.

¹⁷⁴ A publication by the *Zambian Institute for Policy Analysis and Research*.

¹⁷⁵ During field work, I stayed on the Justo Mwale University campus.

will first go into the city centre, or “town” as the locals call it, and depending on the destination Lusaka, I would get off at either Millennium, City Market or Kulima Tower bus station. What locals call “bus stations” could be compared to South African “taxi ranks”. Bus stations are noisy and cramped, but the people are exceptionally friendly and helpful when searching for the correct bus. Most busses will not depart until there are enough seated passengers.

Upon arrival at the crowded bus station, the first actor that appears on the scene is the *recruiter*. The recruiter is usually a young man in raggedy clothes who is well-versed in the English language and can communicate very well. After asking where I am heading, the recruiter would grab me by the arm and guide me through the maze of busses to the bus on which I should get. After arriving at the right bus, the recruiter will receive a small gratuity from the conductor for recruiting a customer – a small cut of the profit. After giving me his cell phone number for possible future transport-related enquiries, he would go off to recruit more passengers. This is what the recruiter does all day long – he hustles against numerous other recruiters to receive a small gratuity. He will stay at the same spot for the entire day and will occasionally get into fights with the other recruiters for “stealing their customers”. After a day’s work, he will have some money to buy food, but according to respondents in this research project,¹⁷⁶ it is not enough to support an entire family or to become financially independent. During an informal discussion, one respondent disclosed that these recruiters will often go from the bus stop to the tavern and use their money to buy alcohol. This could be a symptom of the monotony and unpredictability of their job which leaves them fragile in an arena where male dominance is obvious.

The second actor to appear on the scene, is the *conductor*. The conductor is also a young man. He is smartly dressed and has a roll of kwacha notes in his pocket. For the conductor, contact with the passenger is strictly transactional – After paying the bus fee, the conductor shows (or points) me to my seat, and then leaves me alone. The conductor will make sure the bus is full. Occasionally, the bus will be overcrowded, and the conductor will stand or sit on someone’s lap. He announces the departure from the bus station, as well as the arrival at every bus stop. He makes sure that every person gets off at the right stop. The conductor seems occupied and is constantly counting the money in his pocket. Since he oversees the wallet, he will be the first one to know if they had made enough money, or if they are having a “bad day”. It is considered a “bad day” when the bus did not transport enough passengers, whilst competing against countless other busses. This explains the overcrowding

¹⁷⁶ Apart from the semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, I also had numerous informal discussions which are considered authentic and authoritative sources in the ethnographic methodology.

of busses – to conciliate for the trips with fewer passengers.¹⁷⁷ This happens regularly, despite numerous regulations that the municipal and national government impose on busses, and despite being obligated to register at Zambia’s Road Traffic Safety Authority (RTSA).¹⁷⁸ Consequently, the conductor’s salary is unpredictable, and only paid out after the driver’s salary, the fuel, and other important expenses, including the owner’s cut, have been deducted.¹⁷⁹

On the bus, there is an assortment of other passengers – old and young, men and women,¹⁸⁰ some who dress well, and others in raggedy clothes. Some passengers will be busy on their cell phones, listening to music, texting, or scrolling on social media,¹⁸¹ while other passengers will befriend the (only white) passenger, and make small talk in fluent English. Passengers must sit very tight next to each other, and some bus rides are cramped and uncomfortable. While waiting for the bus to fill up with passengers, an actor with a small role makes an appearance; a role that may seem insignificant and will often go overlooked. The *vendor* walks from bus window to bus window, selling ice cold water, cold drinks, fruit, sweets, biscuits, and cell phone airtime (or “talktime”). The vendor is a man who cannot afford his own shop, so he sells products from a cooler box to passengers at the bus station every day. The vendor is also competing with numerous other vendors who sell the same products. Occasionally, conductors will chase them away, but many passengers will support the vendor through the window of the bus – especially on hot days. As a participant-observer, I frequently wondered whether the vendor makes enough money to make a decent living.

The fourth actor that arrives on the scene, is the *driver*. This character is always a man – women do not drive busses or taxis in Lusaka.¹⁸² The driver appears only when the bus is full – as though he is summoned. He does not need to recruit passengers, nor does he have to do business with passengers. In fact, the driver will seldom converse with passengers. The driver dresses well, wearing formal black shoes and a light blue collared shirt. He is groomed, looks fresh, and he knows the streets of Lusaka very well. According to Chikuba (2013:4), the driver receives around 28% of the gross income of each trip. His salary is paid by an actor that never makes an appearance. The respondents of this study divulged that there is an unknown number of bus owners – or “big men” – that work

¹⁷⁷ Also see Chibuka’s article *Lusaka needs public transport reforms* (2014).

¹⁷⁸ According to the RTSA’s official website (<https://www.rtsa.org.zm>).

¹⁷⁹ See Chikuba (2014:4)

¹⁸⁰ During interviews, participants revealed that many female commuters are afraid to use public transportation and often experience forms of sexual harassment, and they endure this harassment on the bus and at bus stops as they have no other means of transportation.

¹⁸¹ With less than 6% of Africans who owned a mobile phone in 2004, Africa has become the fastest growing mobile market in the world with more than 82 million mobile users (African Business Pages n.d:e-source).

¹⁸² This is a personal observation based on four months in the field.

behind the scenes. Together with the drivers and conductors, they are organised into a private syndicate rarely discussed in public. Nonetheless, bus operators are unanimous on the designation of routes and prices for trips in Lusaka, and to prevent tension in the public transport sector, they will not deviate from it.¹⁸³

In the background of this play, there is an actress who is habitually overlooked. The *entrepreneur* is a woman who sells traditional food, fruit, material and/or needlework from a small tuckshop, or on the pavement at the bus station. She is ignored by some, and goes unnoticed in this macho, male-dominated environment where men are hustling and thriving. Despite this, the entrepreneur is also trying to make a living. Unlike the recruiters, she does not approach her customers directly, but she can speak English fluently, and she has good negotiating skills. She is not a stakeholder in the public transport system, but she has her own small business. This actress would usually have a baby or a small child with her, and according to respondents, she would be considered the breadwinner of her household. She must make enough money to support her entire family, and statistically, her husband is either dead, missing, drunk, jobless, or a migrant worker who has not sent money home in a long time.¹⁸⁴

As the bus departed, the driver puts on the radio, and a female newsreader read the news over the bus's sound system:

The Zambian government is committed to fight the growing issue of gender-based violence, and Zambia's dedication to promote gender justice and equality will start on governmental level.

A quick Google search thickened my pre-understanding on gender issues in Zambia. At that point, there was an 18.1% female representation in the Zambian parliament,¹⁸⁵ but Zambia has also recently elected its first female vice president – “her excellency” (or “her honour”) Inonge Mutukwa Wina¹⁸⁶ – which makes her the most powerful woman in Zambia. After being appointed in 2015, vice president Wina disclosed her dreams for the future of Zambia to a reporter from DemoFinland (2015:e-source):

¹⁸³ See Shaun Cleaver's article on transport in Lusaka at <https://humantransit.org/2013/08/guest-post-on-lusaka-transportation-for-human-transit.html>

¹⁸⁴ See “*Holding up half the sky – How Zambia's women went from housewives to breadwinners*” (Evans 2014:e-source).

¹⁸⁵ According to <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/members/gender>

¹⁸⁶ According to <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/427> and <https://www.ovp.gov.zm>

I want to see reduction in poverty levels, every Zambian has to benefit of our policies. I also hope that every girl will get educated as well as boys and that women enjoy the same rights and benefits as men.¹⁸⁷

President Edgar Lungu¹⁸⁸ is also an advocate for gender justice in Zambia, and regularly states that the fighting of all forms of violence against women and girls is of high priority in Zambia. The Zambian government is committed to end human trafficking and forced early or child marriages, they are committed to the economic empowerment of women by facilitating gaining access to and control of land and credit to small businesses, and more women are increasingly involved in the decision-making process of the country.¹⁸⁹ President Lungu is aware of the gender inequality and social injustices in the country that prohibit women to prosper, but constantly reaffirms the government's devotion to fight this. He recently initiated a Gender and Equity Commission that will address these issues.¹⁹⁰

Inside the bus, I also became aware of the many visible expressions of the Christian faith. There are Roman Catholic rosaries and crucifixes hanging from the rear-view mirror, and pictures (or figurines) of angels and white doves that represent the Holy Spirit. On the windshield, there is a picture depicting a (white) Jesus from an old Hollywood movie, with the words: "Where is your faith?" written underneath it. There is also a small bumper sticker on the window with the words: "This bus is protected by the blood of Jesus." Most busses in Zambia have Christian slogans, testimonies, and/or Bible verses written on them as well, which include: "God is my Rock", "Jesus wins", "Jesus did this", "Jesus is King", "Goodness and Mercy will follow me", "Only God knows", "Gift from God", "Jesus is alive", "God's love never end (sic)" among others. Many tuckshops are christened with similar slogans, including "Divine Grace", "God is my boss", and "God's blessing", which Cas Wepener (2015:n.p.) would call expressions (or manifestations) of the Christian faith in liturgical practices that remind the passengers (or customers), even just for a brief while, of God's presence in their midst. Some respondents said that this is also a smart marketing strategy to attract more customers in Christian Zambia, whilst other feel that this sprouts from superstition, believing that the Name of Jesus would ward off evil spirits and bad luck (Kroesbergen-Kamps 2015:100-112).

¹⁸⁷ According to <https://demofinland.org/inonge-wina-becomes-zambias-first-female-vice-president-want-women-enjoy-rights-benefits-men/?lang=en>.

¹⁸⁸ Since this narrative was originally written, Zambia elected a new president, Hakainde Hichilema, and a vice president, Mutale Nalumango, from the United Party for National Development (Mfula 2021:e-source).

¹⁸⁹ According to United Nations Zambia (n.d.:e-source).

¹⁹⁰ According to *Lusaka Times* (9 March 2019).

After arriving at my destination and debarking the bus, the conductor slams the door shut, and the bus drives off to the next bus stop. At the bus stop, there is another entrepreneur selling fruit and sweets, and a recruiter who wanted to know where I am heading. After replying, “I am on my way to church,” the recruiter asked: “Which church? Sabbaths? Catholic? United? Reformed? Pentecostal? Temple? Tabernacle?” whilst pointing towards a large advertisement of a Pentecostal church. Zambia is an official Christian nation (Soko 2010:38), and some co-travellers agreed that being Christian has become synonymous with being Zambian. On a Sunday, one can go to any town in Zambia, and find that there are multiple worship services happening simultaneously in churches, cathedral, halls, tents, and “temples” on almost every corner.

Besides the older and established churches, there are numerous new and emerging ministries and churches actively advertising their ministries on the streets. An advertisement like the one the recruiter was pointing at will usually have a picture of the smartly dressed (typically self-appointed, self-trained) pastor and his wife and would contain bright words traditionally associated with the prosperity gospel, including “wealth”, “miracles”, “signs”, “wonders”, “powerful”, “healing”, and “fire”. These types of posters are very common and could be considered as a “script” that portrays a certain form of manhood that many Zambians would strive towards, or at least find appealing. It is clear that there is not necessarily room for fragility and vulnerability in this narrative.

Political parties also exploit Zambia’s Christian character with similar advertisements at bus stops and next to the streets of Lusaka. For example, when president, Edgar Lungu, campaigned for his presidency, there were large billboards depicting Lungu praying for Zambia. When travelling around in Lusaka, one will regularly see a billboard with president Lungu’s face and a Christian message.¹⁹¹ When politicians campaign for elections, biblical references would always be included in their parties’ speeches, their social media, and advertisements about their party. Like the advertisement for Pentecostal churches, politicians advertise themselves in terms of power, authority, dominance, strength, intelligence, and, without exception, as Christians. One co-traveller (sarcastically) added, “People will think: ‘What a good, Zambian man. He believes in God and prays for the people! I will vote for him.’”

After observing the surroundings, I recognised some other clues (both subtle or blatant) or “cultural scripts” about masculinity and manhood. These clues – like the liturgical practices in the bus and the

¹⁹¹ This is a personal observation. There are numerous billboards in Lusaka with the message: “May God bless you! Together we can make this nation great.”

political and Christian advertisements – present themselves as notices (or posters) that advertise health services of certain “doctors” who did not necessarily receive formal medical training; in fact, traditional healers or “witchdoctors” would have been a more accurate description. Although witchdoctors and practising traditional healers have been condemned by the church and officially banned by the Zambian government,¹⁹² this however does not mean they are not practising anymore. In the streets of Lusaka, on almost every lamppost and at every bus stop, there are white posters with bright blue writing that advertise cures for several ailments directly connected to men and women’s bodies, their gender roles, and their sexuality.

According to these posters, these “doctors” can provide financial flourishing and resourcefulness to their patients, remove all forms of bad luck, help you become rich,¹⁹³ fast, help with job interviews, recover lost property (“in 24 hours”) and win court cases. The latter, however, is not the prevailing narrative; these doctors also promise to “bring back lost lovers”, help you “control your lover”, help with “manhood problems” which includes “penis enlargements”, “thickness”, “bigger and stronger erections”, help with “early ejaculations” and to have “more rounds”. For women, a visit to one of these doctors will help with “hips and breast firming”, help to get “wider hips”, help with “barrenness”, “waist pains”, “STD’s”, “bring back a runaway husband” and to get “revenge”.¹⁹⁴

This is another example of the continuous male dominance-male fragility cycle in the Zambian context. These posters both attend to and promote forms of masculinity that many men strive for or find attractive. The subtexts of these posters claim that men should be successful, resourceful, sexually vibrant, and that women should be fruitful and sexually appealing. These “doctors” exploit the cultural expectations which state that men should be the leaders and decision makers, providers, and protectors, marry and father many children, while women are expected to get married, have children, keep their husband sexually satisfied, submit to him in the house while doing the domestic chores (Theron 2015:58-60). It exposes a story of quick-fixes offered, while simultaneously

¹⁹² See Vidal’s article in *The Guardian* newspaper, “*Zambia struggles with power of witchdoctors*” (Vidal 2005:e-source). This was also affirmed by the respondents during interviews. Here it is important to recognize that this narrative is taking place in urban Zambia where more and more people are placing their trust in modern medicine and medical doctors than in rural areas. Although traditional healers have been discredited by the early missionaries and colonial governments, this does not mean that people do not use their services. Traditional healers play not only a medicinal role but also a social role. They act as custodians of indigenous cultures and religions, and they perform a healing, protective, and life-giving function. They also claim that they can repair the damaged relationships between people and their ancestors, free them from ancestral ties, and thus ensure for them a life filled with health, wealth and prosperity (Crafford 2015: 19-21).

¹⁹³ It is interesting that many of these posters proclaim that the doctor can help you win the lottery, connect you with the “billionaires club” and the “illuminati”, which entertains the idea that men have a desire for status and/or power by association. Respondents agreed that even though this is “laughable”, some men are so desperate to achieve success, they will try anything, even if it means paying large sums of money to one of these “doctors”.

¹⁹⁴ This is a personal observation, and is included in my field journal.

prescribing (stereotypical) gender roles to people who cannot meet the standards of a hegemonic framework, due to the realities of poverty, unemployment, reproductive health problems, disability, and/or gender-based violence.¹⁹⁵

Even though it is not presented on these posters, it is public knowledge that these “doctors” can perform an anonymous and quick abortion too.¹⁹⁶ There is ignorance and confusion concerning abortion in Zambia, and it is important to note that it is not illegal in Zambia to get an abortion, even though many in this conservative Christian country believes it is (Banda 2017:e-source). Banda writes as follows in the Zambia Daily Mail (Banda 2017:e-source):

In Zambia, termination of a pregnancy is legally permitted if continuing a pregnancy poses a risk to the life of the pregnant woman, her physical or mental health or that of any of her existing children, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, a child born of the pregnancy would suffer from physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

Abortions due to unwanted pregnancies however become an ethical dilemma, because many women succumb to unsafe abortions from traditional – and therefore unqualified – healers. Studies show that these abortions are unsafe, with a 30% mortality rate in Zambia, and according to original research done in urban Zambia 50% of all gynaecological-related admissions in Zambian hospitals, are due to abortions done by unqualified or traditional healers (Owalabi et al. 2017:167-168).

Camouflaged underneath these narratives are numerous problematic issues embedded in the on-going discussions about topics such as gender, sex, and sexuality. These topics also intersect with other important issues, which include gender politics, reproductive health, culture, religion, and gender justice. Not only do we see that there are many prescribed and culturally preordained roles and expectations from each gender, but these roles are also being exploited with devastating effects on society. As I was walking towards the Reformed Church in Zambia congregations that I would be visiting for formal interviews, I was both confused and intrigued by the multiple – and sometimes contradictory – storylines that are visible in one context. There are hierarchies visible in each of the various arenas: the bus station, the church, and politics. In each arena, certain performances of masculinity – usually associated with dominance and power – are valued, leaving little or no room

¹⁹⁵ See Ngwenya (2018:151-196) and Van der Watt (2012:7).

¹⁹⁶ Included in my field journal; affirmed by respondents of this study.

for fragility. The irony of this is that a vast majority of each arena do not fit into this profile and could actually be described in terms of fragility.

2.3.3 Thoughts on *Chitenge 2*: gender hierarchies in the public arena

This narrative becomes a fitting metaphor for my personal experience in the field: while the actors continue with their normal lives, the passenger first had to orientate himself, step out of his everyday reality, and step into the reality of others. For a short period, I became a fellow traveller, following (or moving around in the world) in the footsteps of others, and sketching (describing and contemplating on) these experiences and lived realities, as a part of a quest to identify or indicate traces, signs, evidence, or remains of a certain (divine) activity or presence; or – as Ganzevoort puts it – “tracing the sacred” (Ganzevoort 2009: n.p.). During this experience, I was doing practical theology. This experience addresses multiple topics and concerns which intersect with a range of different disciplines, and it becomes the first step in working towards thickening descriptions and imagining an alternative narrative (Osmer 2008:163; Müller 2017:94; Ward 2017:31).

This accords with Müller and Pretorius’ “hermeneutics of contemplation”; unlike a hermeneutic of suspicion which only focuses on “hard facts” (and its deconstruction), requires radical suspicion of the context, and denies divine activity (Müller & Pretorius 2019:91), the hermeneutics of contemplation (or recollection) aims to contemplate on and advocate for certain possibilities, whilst seeking to understand the context on its own terms (Müller & Pretorius 2019:92-93). Müller and Pretorius (2019:99) feel that a contemplative disposition is a transformative contemplation which enables a greater theological self-understanding and reflexivity, serves as a potential meeting ground for interdisciplinary dialogue, and could be instrumental in the unravelling of presuppositions linked to the colonial heritage. During this experience (or process), the passenger (co-traveller) became aware of multiple intertwining and underlying “story- or plotlines” (and/or performances) in Zambia, he gained new insights, built relationships, reflected on, and interpreted this experience, which would later change into explanations (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:33-34;81). After contemplating on *Chitenge 2*, the following plotlines were identified:

- (i) A *first* plot depicts the dominance of men in the public arena – the public transport sector is run by men, and it is a “man’s world”. It is also clear that the bus stop has become an area where men can hustle and express their competitiveness – attributes stereotypically ascribed to men (Harari 2014:177). Competitiveness (constant contest and struggle for power and visibility) as a masculine ideal (to be “man enough”) however also provokes anxiety and shame. The

inability to prove their “manliness” (or live up to the ideal masculinity) in front of other men result in feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, anxiety, and self-doubt, which often lead to violent or risk-taking behaviour, to prove that they are not cowards, effeminate, or failures (Langa 2020:28-30). This plot is visible in the other arenas, particularly in the church and in politics.

- (ii) A *second* plot depicts women as entrepreneurs who are contributing to the economy in this space, despite subordination and being unacknowledged. This accords with the *United Nations: Africa*’s statistics, which states that sub-Saharan Africa has the highest female entrepreneurial activity rate in the world, with many women owning and managing small businesses (United Nations Africa 2017:e-source; Aboum 2000:137). The exclusion of women in Lusaka’s public transport sector could be ascribed to the fact that men still appropriate some jobs and skills to themselves, based on unwritten rules saturated with patriarchy (Harari 2014:177-178). Despite this exclusion, women in sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly taking over the role of the sole breadwinner of their households (Paas 2016:503). This plot also points towards the male dominance-male fragility cycle. Even though men use their power over women, their inability to provide and care for their families resulted in more women (successfully) taking over the roles traditionally ascribed to men.
- (iii) A *third* plot depicts the ambiguity of the bus station as a space where there is definite hierarchies. This accords with Connell’s view that gender is inherently political – it is the site of certain inequalities, marginalisation, exclusion, and oppression (Connell 2002:5-7; Connell 2009:6-8).¹⁹⁷ The bus drivers do not socialise with the recruiters; the male conductors do not mingle with female entrepreneurs. There is a clear gender and social divide, despite the overwhelming Christian presence in the form of slogans on busses, names of shops and loud gospel music or sermons played over expensive sound systems in small shops. Despite the devotion to the Christian faith (which is or should be a proponent of inclusion, equality, and justice), the bus station is also a space where you can shamelessly buy black-market items, and see locals gambling, drinking and even fight over money. This space contains a variety of helpful and enlightening stories within a bigger story (Müller 2017:87).
- (iv) A *fourth* plotline illustrates how the setting (the place where lived experience takes ground) shapes identities (Niemandt 2018:14-17). In this space, the hierarchies at the bus station, as

¹⁹⁷ Generally, men are beneficiaries of systemic gender inequality – they hold more positions of power, are higher educated, and earn more money, while women are considered objects of men’s desire, they are excluded from (or refused) power positions, and they are marginalised in society.

well as the advertisements of politicians, churches and witchdoctors provide insights and clues to culture. Although these insights and clues exhibit a proposed form of hegemonic masculinity (heterosexual, virile, productive, able-bodied, lucky, rich, powerful, resourceful, “Christian”), the truth is that the setting houses multiple experiences of masculinity (the recruiter, the conductor, the vendor, the bus driver, the big men behind the scenes)¹⁹⁸ whose lived experience of masculinity and performance of masculine ideals differ due to their race, culture, education, social standing, and class. The recruiter’s experience and performance of masculinity differ from the conductor, the conductor’s experience and performance of masculinity differ from the driver, and the passenger’s experience and performance differ from all the actors in this setting. Therefore, there is not a single form/model of masculinity found in this context, and enforcing a certain hegemonic norm on them would not only be unrealistic, but also incredibly cruel. For rich men it is easy to dress well, marry, drive a car, own property, have a large family; for poor men – in the same city – getting married is unrealistic, dressing well is a luxury, owning a car or property is impossible. When contemplating on these advertisements, one can both question and understand the churches’ strong emphasis on health and wealth, politicians’ emphasis on Christian prosperity, and witchdoctor’s emphasis on physical and material wellbeing; areas in which a majority of Zambian men fall short.

In short: Despite multiple narratives of gender equality and the social advancement of women, public spaces are dominated by men; despite their contribution to the economy, women are customarily overlooked; despite a very dominant Christian narrative, there are also numerous un-Christian narratives that protrude in this space; and, despite a hegemonic masculinity that presupposes flourishing, many men fall short.

These plot- or storylines (reflections or interpreted experiences) are centred around my personal experiences in the field, and my unintentional yet predominant prejudice, my inability to be neutral and objective, and a certain pre-understanding based on past experiences cyphers through (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:30). These experiences and reflections do not only contain unintentional explanations and a deepened understanding of the gender politics in Zambia, but it also opened the floor for further enquiry (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:81). This becomes a motivation to move beyond a “thin” description, to a more “thickened” description through

¹⁹⁸ Hegemonic masculinity (described later in this research project) refers to the cultural exaltation of one form of masculinity, but most men are unable to live up to its cultural and societal side, resulting in subordination and marginalisation of masculinities (Connell 2005a:77; Connell 2000:10-12).

interdisciplinary investigation (Müller 2017:92; Macallan & Hendriks 2013:140). The postfoundational rationality makes room for this, as it acknowledges a person's own, individual experience, while also reaching beyond the boundaries of a person's own epistemic boundaries (Park 2010:2). A postfoundational practical theology can help in the unpacking and questioning these immediate assumptions. Postfoundationalism allows the creative fusion of experience and interpretation, acknowledging the important role of interpreted experience (Park 2010:2). As Park (2010:2) writes: "[...] interpreted experience starts from the individual's experience and proceeds towards the interpersonal and social."

This narrative (or *Chitenge* 2) could be considered as a deliberate interjection between the history of the RCZ and formal empirical involvement. It also becomes a fitting metaphor for my position in the field – even though I entered a context that differs from my own, I still did not truly “enter” the context of the other. In this narrative, I found myself in an “in-between” position (or a liminal space) where there were structures of power politics, struggles, suffering that I do not embody or necessarily understand (Müller 2017:87-88). This bus station experience may be business-as-usual for Zambian people, but for me it is foreign territory. On my journey to understand the transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia, I am but a passenger, moving from one place to another, reflecting on my experiences, and “tracing the sacred” along the way (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.).

Apart from travelling, following, and sketching, “tracing the sacred” in everyday life (or doing practical theology) also entails *studying* – an attempt to discern with and analyse the evidence (or raw data) of this experience (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.). In this journal entry,¹⁹⁹ I was confronted with real people in real-life situations. These situations are concrete and embedded within social and cultural networks (Müller 2011:3). When reflecting on this experience, the general context becomes the carrier of multiple narratives that could be developed and discussed further (Müller 2017:87). My reflection on this experience is embedded in a consciousness shaped by experience, and it also embodies a lifeworld shaped by social and cultural traditions (Müller 2011:3).²⁰⁰

I acknowledge that I cannot imagine on behalf of the actors who each embody their own context. Müller (2011:3) suggests that they should be considered as fellow travellers in this endeavour, as they are the experts of their own story. Being a fellow traveller means refraining from the position of a “guide”, and rather aim to understand the “who” and the “what” I encounter, and how it affects me

¹⁹⁹ In the ethnographic method of doing research, journaling is encouraged and considered an authentic and authoritative source of data. See Ward (2017:112) and Müller (2011:4).

²⁰⁰ Here one can also say that I embody and was conditioned by certain dominant *I*-positions.

(Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.). Being fully present and engaged in this context, and truly listening and reflecting on these stories as they play out, initiates a dialogical process that points forward to real understanding, and validates the experiences of these actors in practice (Ward 2017:113). This also correlates with Schoeman and Van den Berg (2016:217) who feel that practical theology starts within concrete lives and practices, and is also shaped by the political, social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects of a specific context.²⁰¹ All domains of human existence – especially the everyday social and cultural practices that ordinary people consider important – should be considered and attended to when doing research (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215). In the narrative journey, interpreted experiences present theory-laden practice, that advances into the retrieval of the normative practice to an alternative, theory-laden practice (Park 2010:3).

According to practical theologian Don Browning, “[t]heory is always embedded in practice” (Browning 1991:9). This translates into the idea that behind all practices, there are ideas, words and theories that influence and shape one’s way of thinking and acting (Ward 2017:16). Concrete, real-life situations and contexts precedes historical and systematic theology (or theory), but that does not subordinate the latter; theory (or scholarship) should always inform and orientate practical disciplines in its interpretation of and application in concrete situations (Browning 1991:96-97). In this narrative, I found myself “in the middle”²⁰² of a space where multiple realities²⁰³ (or narratives) emerged – living stories of people, who live in real contexts, whilst embodying (or expressing) theory (Müller 2017:91). Contexts are the social and natural systems in which culture and traditional values, attitudes, beliefs, and customs are embodied (Osmer 2008:12), and they are usually subjective to the intersectionality of numerous aspects, including race, age, sex, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, and education (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:41).

When looking at the embodiment (or expression) of culture, it is crucial to remember that culture is first experienced externally, and becomes internalised after processes of socialisation and education, which contributes to one’s identity or the sense of self (Ward 2017:35). In a sense, this narrative is a good comparison: using public transport for the first time was foreign to me as passenger (external), but after a while, it became habitual and customary to the everyday (internal). And just like the power dynamics at the bus station, it also is crucial to remember that traditions are (usually) constructed by those who have power, which has resulted in the marginalisation of women, people of colour, and those who are economically and socially disadvantaged in society in the past (Ward 2017:37).

²⁰¹ Or the intersectional nature of one’s context.

²⁰² See Ward (2017:10-11).

²⁰³ See Müller (2017:87).

Both culture and tradition are seen as contributors to the construction of gender, since “[e]very culture has a gender system that contains shared expectations for appropriate female and male behaviour, social norms or roles” (Louw 2008:380). In this narrative, these expectations and roles are concretised and expressed in the form of patriarchy, hierarchies, power relations, prescribed gender roles, socialisation, social stratification, and gender inequality (or male dominance and male fragility in short). Consequently I found that, even before doing (or in between) qualitative interviews, theory was (already) embedded in the concrete situation (or practice) I have experienced.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I set out to better understand the context in which this project was conducted. Understanding the historical (colonial) background, and recognising the ways gender identities have been shaped, fashioned, fabricated, and performed in the “past tense”, and giving a preliminary overview to them in the “present tense” creates an introductory framework for understanding masculinities in Zambia. These two narratives – compared to two pieces of *chitenge* material – represents several interwoven storylines with socio-cultural, religious, economic, gendered, and sexual significance, as it is lived and installed by the body politic and body of Christ. The narratives and reflections in this chapter not only highlight the spatial and temporal dimensions of the context, but also the materialisation of male dominance and male fragility in the Zambian context. These two narratives primarily focussed on the broader storylines which set the tone for the rest of the study, which would focus on individual stories and voices involving the “transforming masculinities” in the RCZ. In the next chapter, these narratives begin to unravel; they will be deconstructed and untangled by focusing on individual stories and *I*-positions.

CHAPTER 3: BODIES AS *SITE* AND *SIGN* OF INVESTIGATION²⁰⁴

3.1 THE “FABRIC” OF BODIES: INTRODUCTION TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

The previous chapter highlighted how bodies have been and are still being inscribed and engendered with social, cultural, and religious significance in the public sphere, establishing hierarchies in the process. The public sphere is often (over)crowded with a multitude of voices (positions and/or narratives) that tell men and women how to conduct themselves, how to do their bodies, and perform their gender. This chapter looks at these voices and asks how they construct bodies and influence the everyday lived experience. This chapter corresponds with the fourth and fifth movements of Müller’s (2017:91-92) postfoundational practical theology, which views the local context – the stories of real people, their perceptions, their behaviours, and their lived experiences – as the prime source of knowledge that would be described, analysed, and interpreted. It also aligns with the first two tasks of Osmer’s (2008:4) approach to practical theology (the descriptive-empirical and interpretive tasks), as well as the practice of *noticing* (entering, seeing, experiencing, and contemplating on the field from an “in the middle” position) in Ward’s (2017:17-18) practical theology.

In terms of the metaphor of creating a *chitenge* quilt, this chapter takes a closer look at the gathered material, organising and arranging them into a visually inventive pattern before stitching them together. When looking closer at the fabric, each patch not only represents a larger pattern and piece of fabric, but it is also clear that each patch consists out of multiple intertwined and intricately woven threads. Similarly, the narratives included in this research project are situated within a larger context and network of ideas, identities, stories, places, and a certain point in time as well (Hermans & Gieser 2012:15; Coetzee & Rau 2019:5), and each narrative (or individual story) is not made up of a single storyline but contains multiple intersecting stories. The aim of this chapter is to not only look at the individual “patches”, but also go deeper and look at the “threads” and storylines that fabricate them.

Each patch could be compared to a “window” to the lived reality (or a description of bodily experience) of the respondent – a limited view into a much larger ongoing narrative (Ganzevoort

²⁰⁴ The title of this chapter is inspired by Cooley (1994:41-42,63,66,89,90), who writes that bodies are both the site and sign of knowledge, both artifact and consequence of human imagination, both material and social; the field of and an agent of social construction, and the “carrier” of racial, ethnic, class, and gender identities.

2012:216-217; Coetzee & Rau 2019:3-4).²⁰⁵ Each patch define and is defined by (shape and is shaped by) certain habits and characteristics, experiences and histories, attitudes towards the world and dreams for a future, relationships and conflicts, obstacles and achievements, which would also be studied in this chapter (Meulink-Korf & Van Rijn 2016:65-66; Ganzevoort & Visser 2007:112-113,115; Ward 2017:155-156). Each patch represents a complex and multistoried self in space and time – a person (or identity) that not only occupies a space in the world, but also a certain point in time in the world’s history (Holquist 2002:20-22). The idea that self-narratives are temporally and spatially structured, and that the self is multivoiced²⁰⁶ is also the premise of the dialogical self theory (Hermans & Dimaggio 2004:1), which is used as analysing tool in this project.

3.2 IDENTITY AND THE DIALOGICAL SELF ²⁰⁷

3.2.1 The self as an embodiment of internal and external *I*-positions

As indicated before, the individual stories in this study will be analysed with the help of the dialogical self theory (DTS). The theory of the dialogical self was originally conceptualised by psychologists Hermans, Kempen and Van Loon (1992)²⁰⁸ and has since been translated, adapted, and applied in other academic fields.²⁰⁹ Hermans (2012:2) calls the dialogical self theory a “bridging theory” that stems from different traditions in the fields of psychology and philosophy with the aim to bring two concepts – “the self” and dialogue – together. This theory is inspired by and built on the works of two specific thinkers – American psychologist William James and Russian literary scientist Mikhail Bakhtin.

In James’ work on the self in context of consciousness (1890), he distinguishes between the *I* and the *Me*. James poses that the *I* (or the “self-as-knower”) has three distinct features: (a) *continuity* – a

²⁰⁵ As a practical theologian, reflecting on the larger narrative includes reflecting on signs of God’s presence/absence (Müller 2017:92) – or “tracing the sacred” – by discerning, describing, interpreting, explaining, evaluating, and constructing ways people speak (or do not speak) about God (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.)

²⁰⁶ The idea that each person is multistoried is also the premise of the theory of intersectionality – a hermeneutical lens in this study

²⁰⁷ Moltmann-Wendel (1995:1) argues that we do not only have bodies – we are bodies, and our bodies are who we are. Our identities cannot be removed from our bodies and bodily experience, and therefore the self – which is identity – is associated with our bodies.

²⁰⁸ See *The dialogical self: Beyond individualism and rationalism* (Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon 1992).

²⁰⁹ This includes studies on education, religion, race, sexuality, gender, and culture. Also see *The dialogical self: toward a theory of personal and cultural positioning* (Hermans 2001); *The construction and reconstruction of a dialogical self* (Hermans 2003); *The Dialogical Self in Psychotherapy* (Hermans & Dimaggio eds. 2004); *The self as a theatre of voices: disorganization and reorganization of a position repertoire* (Hermans 2006); *Handbook of dialogical self theory* (Hermans & Gieser eds. 2012); *The dialogical self theory in education. A Multicultural Perspective* (Meijers & Hermans eds. 2018).

sense of personal identity, a continuous sameness through time, (b) *distinctiveness* – a sense of individuality, a distinctiveness and subjectivity throughout time, and (c) *volition* – “the self” as an active processor of experience, visible in the continuous appropriation and rejection of certain thoughts (Hermans 2001:244; Hermans 2003:97; Hermans 2004:17). The *Me* (or “self-as-known”) “[...] is composed of the empirical elements considered as belonging to oneself”, therefore the things a person calls his or her own (Hermans 2001:244; Hermans 2003:97; Hermans 2004:17). The *Me*, according to James, is “[...] the self as extended to the environment” (Hermans 2004:17) – an important insight in the formulation of the dialogical self, since the extended (or external) parts of the self (“my father”, “my mother”, “my wife”, “my friend”, “my enemy”) have the potential to function as “another *I*” in the self (Hermans 2004:19-20).

In James’ *I-Me* distinction, he acknowledges the contrasts, oppositions and negations between the *I* and *Me*, which supposes that the self is in fact “multivoiced” (Hermans 2001:245). In the process of self-reflection, which could be described as a process where a person orders (or organises) their experiences in narrative form (or story-like fashion), the *I* is considered as the author (or the self-as-subject) who imagines a future and reconstructs the past; sequentially, the *Me* as the extended self is considered as the actor, the protagonist or even an “alter ego” (or the self-as-object) that acts, performs, or partakes in said narratives (Hermans 2004:18; Hermans 2006:149). The self therefore contains a multiplicity of characters, and both the *I* (the internal self, the self-as-knower, the self-as-subject) and the *Me* (the extended self, the self-as-known, the self-as-object) are part of, make up and belong to the domain of the self (Hermans 2006:149).

In Bakhtin’s work on dialogism (1929), he uses the polyphonic novel as a metaphor to explain how each “novel” has a variety of conflicting positions and views that simultaneously come into play (a multiplicity of voices, or “multivoicedness”). These positions and views are constantly and simultaneously in dialogue with one another – “[...] a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous *I*-positions” (Hermans 2001:247) that interact with the minds of others, creating a “landscape of mind” (Hermans & Gieser 2012:6; Hermans 2006:149). The polyphonic novel moves away from an omniscient narrator and introduces the reality of several voices – in different spatial and temporal positions – that can either accompany or oppose one another in dialogical relationships (Hermans 2003:93). The voices that partake in a dialogue – both actual or imagined, internal and external – are the embodiments of personal meanings, ideas, thoughts, and memories (Hermans 2004:19). “[...] [T]he notion of dialogue allows the author to differentiate the inner world of one and the same individual in the form of interpersonal relationships. By transforming an ‘inner’ thought of a particular character into an utterance, dialogical relations emerge between this utterance and the utterance of imagined

others” (Hermans & Gieser 2012:6). The utterances of others could be conceived as “another *I*”, which accords James’ idea that others are part of the extended domain of the self, and the fact that dialogues take place internally and externally (Hermans 2006:149).

The dialogical self theory is the interface (the “bridging” or “fusion”) of James’ views of “the self” and Bakhtin’s view of dialogism. The dialogical self theory poses that the self is populated by a dynamic multiplicity of (internal and external) *I*-positions (the distinctive parts, voices, characters or positions the self embodies or adopts) that enters a dialogical relationship and functions as a “society of mind” (Meijers & Hermans 2018:7). Like a person who takes part in an external society, so too the self functions as a “society of mind” where certain external voices are in dialogue with internal voices (Hermans 2006:150; Hermans 2004:21). This means that the self functions as a “mini-society” – a “society of selves” (Hermans & Gieser 2012:2).

Like in any society where some voices (characters or positions) “speak louder”, are more powerful or dominant, so too there is a hierarchy (or “superordinate levels of organisation”) of voices, characters or positions present in this internal communicative interchange (Hermans 2004:13; Hermans 2006:164). Simply put, this theory states that “[...] one person is like two persons in dialogue” (Hermans 2004:20), and the different *I*-positions of the self could be compared to the interacting characters in a story who are continually “[...] involved in processes of question and answer, agreement and disagreement, conflicts and struggles, negations and integrations” (Hermans & Gieser 2012:2), each reacting from their own perspective (Hermans 2001:248).

According to this theory, self-narratives are told from (or structured in) a particular position in space and time and produced through the dialogical interchange of two (or more) internally voiced positions that continuously endorse, revise, structure, restructure and develop an existing story (Hermans & Damaggio 2004:2). The fact that a person can give (or author) different versions of the same story proves that the narrative construction of a story (in which they are the actors) not only depends on space and time, but also the interests, expectations, questions, and responses of the audience; in fact, a person can even function as his or her own “audience” in the construction or retelling of a story (Hermans & Damaggio 2004:2). Therefore, the self (and self-narratives) is the product an internal, multivoiced “society of mind” where various internal – albeit independent – positions, voices or characters are involved in creating memories, thoughts, and stories.

According to Hermans (2003:90-97) the self has four distinct characteristics: (a) “the self” is *spatially structured and embodied* – a person occupies both literal (physical and corporeal) and figurative (or

metaphorical) positions in the world; (b) “the self” is *other inclusive* – a person is continuously influenced by the world outside one’s sensory experience of the world, and one’s consciousness (or voices of those in a different spatial position); (c) “the self” is *historically and culturally contextualised* – the established parts of the self (the voices that shaped and continues to shape a person), are in constant dialogue (being challenged, evoked, repressed or ignored) with other institutionalised and culture-bound voices; and (d) “the self” is *open and decentralised* – self-narratives emerge from dialogues in “the society of mind”, or a multiplicity of (internal and external) voices that enter self-negotiations, self-negations, and self-integrations as a way of processing experience (Hermans 2001:252).

Building on the latter, Hermans (2003:102-103) argues that boundaries between the internal and external domains of the self are often blurry, and experience significant fluctuations. In some cases – due to temporal and spatial variables – the boundaries are closed as a means to protect itself, as a result of disappointment, or in accordance with the collective voices of groups, cultures and societies (or cultural conditioning); in other cases – also due to temporal and spatial variables – boundaries are open to cultural and societal shifts, or the influence of relationships with others. Here, Hermans (2003:102-111) highlights how the self is subject to change in accordance with temporal and spatial variables, and poses that through the continuity and discontinuity, the centralisation and decentralisation, the organisation, disorganisation and reorganising, the introduction of new (sometimes disruptive) narratives, and the structural maturation of internal and external *I*-positions, the self (or identity) is in a constant process of becoming.

The influence of the “real” voices in the external society – including the stories, positions, voices, and opinions told or enforced by significant others (collective voices, the audience, the extended self, the external domain of the self) that shaped and continually shape the self – should not be underestimated (Hermans 2006:150-151). In fact, other voices play an important role in the obtaining of self-knowledge. In a sense, the dialogical self theory also asks the questions “Who am I in relation to the other?” and “Who is the other in relation to me?” Self-knowledge lies in recognising and admitting the alterity of the other as an external domain of the self, and “[...] the self-in-relation-to-the-other is a form of social exploration and discovery as a part of an unfinished dialogue, both external with the actual other and internal with the imagined other” (Hermans 2003:104).

Hermans (2006:151) poses that the stories (or influential voices) of significant others become closely intertwined to one’s own story, become part of an external dialogical self, and “[...] they play their part in the organisation, disorganisation, and reorganisation of told narratives” (Hermans 2006:164).

The dialogical self theory supposes that the world in which the self exists, also exists in the mind; that what happens in society, happens in the self as well. In the “society of mind”, the self is closely connected to society, and “[...] external positions influence internal ones and vice versa” (Hermans & Gieser 2012:18). Dialogues between the self and actual others – or “objective realities” – help in the confirmation, correcting, development, the construction and reconstruction of the external positions within the self. These positions are incorporated (introduced and/or included) into the self in a process that Hermans (2003:109) calls “layering”. As time and space changes, positions that were formerly in the background, could move to the foreground. Put differently: as the result of a reorganisation of the self, positions that were already part of the system (external, deeper layered) become more accessible (are brought to the surface). Through dialogue, multiple *I*-positions therefore support and/or develop each other, cooperates and/or collides with one another, resulting in the emergence of new subsystems in the self, or new positions with similar purposes and orientations (Hermans 2003:110-111).

With the help of Figure 1 (Hermans (2001:253) explains the dialogical self theory, posing that the self is not an entity merely composed of a list of internal positions that are isolated from one another; rather, the self is an active multivoiced process of positioning, consists of a high density of positions, and depending on the particulars of the situation, the different *I*-positions (internal and external, *I* and *Me*, author and actor, self-as-knower and self-as-known, self-as-subject and self-as-object, individual and collective) are constantly negotiating for a relevant position that fits into the particular situation, or accords the broader social system (Hermans 2001:253, 274). Hermans (2001:254) also recognises that there are also many positions outside of the subjective horizon of the self; positions of which a person is unaware, but the self may enter these spaces at some moment in time, depending on how the situation changes. Situations and positions outside of (and uncertain to) the broader heterogenous social systems of the self, subjects the self to “position leaps”, and possible change and transformation (Hermans 2001:274).

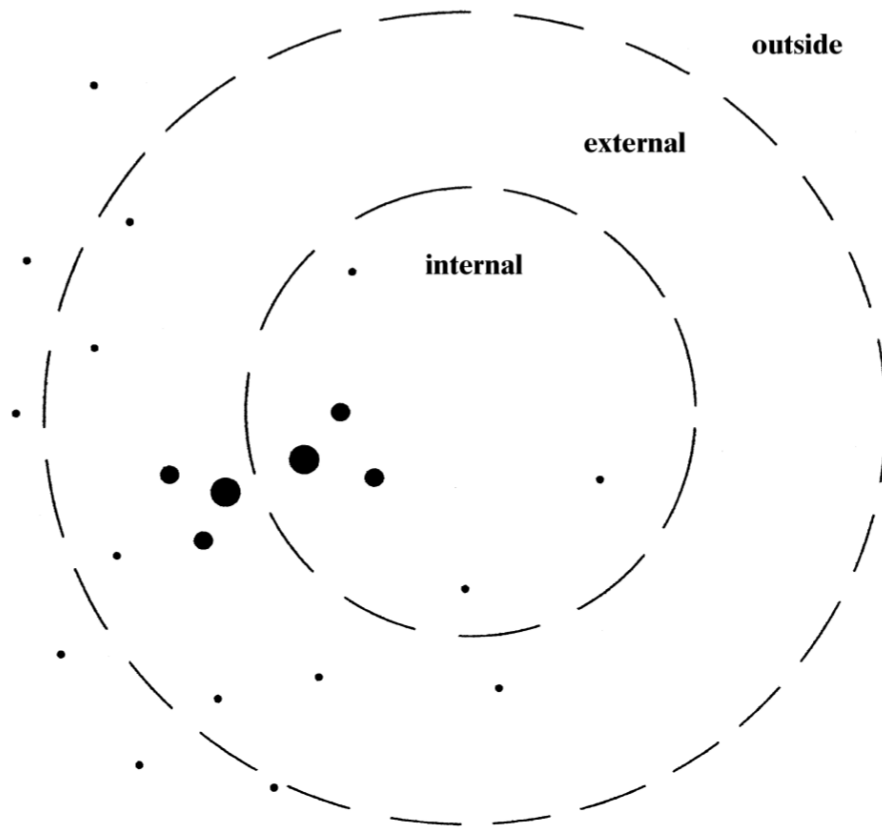


Figure 1. Positions in a multivoiced self

When a person enters a dialogue with an actual other person (and not just an imagined other like in Figure 1), new positions are introduced to the self, and some dialogical misunderstandings may occur. The course and result of an actual dialogue may drastically differ from an imagined dialogue, as interaction affects, challenges, and questions a person's current positions. During actual dialogues with actual others, new positions are introduced, and it forces a person to continually navigate through and reconstruct current positions and opinions (Hermans 2001:255-256). Hermans (2001:256) illustrates this in Figure 2.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ These voices can also be attributed to the intersectional nature of identity – the number of meaningful and influential social graces (GRRRAACCEEESSS – gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, and spirituality) that the self simultaneously occupy, that shape and influence a person's lived experience (Totsuka 2014:86-87).

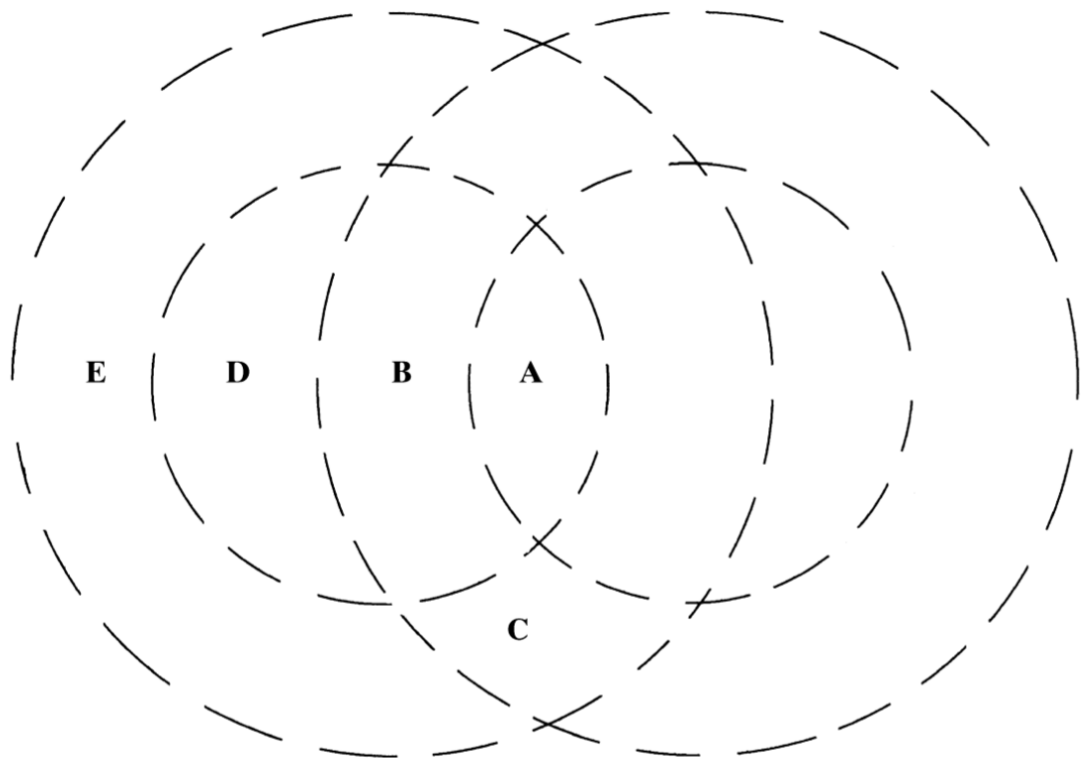


Figure 2. Two actual people in dialogue

- A = two-way internal sharing (e.g. I know something about myself that you know and you know something about yourself that I know and we are both aware of this)
- B = one-way internal sharing (e.g. I know something about myself that you know)
- C = external sharing (e.g. you and I, we have a common interest)
- D = non-sharing internal area (e.g. I know something about myself that you don't know)
- E = non-sharing external area (e.g. I know something about the world that you don't know)

Although Hermans originally applied this theory to the field of psychotherapy, with Figure 2 portraying the relationship between a therapist and a client, Figure 2 is also a helpful tool that portrays the relationship between the interviewer (or researcher) and interviewee (or respondent) in qualitative research. In the case of cross-cultural research, Hermans (2001:272) advises that one should not only focus on core cultural aspects (the contact zones marked A and B in Figure 2), but also the peripheral features (the contact zones marked D and E in Figure 2). The periphery, Hermans (2001:272), “[...] becomes salient as the meeting point between different cultures. This implies not that the boundaries between cultures are erased, but, rather, that they become more and more permeable.”

The dialogical self theory embraces the dynamic complexity of community, culture, and identity, and poses that the shared practices and meanings in a community are more than mere social processes within a culture – it is the result of an interactional meeting place of a multiplicity of positions. Although there are some heterogenous and shared (contextually shaped) positions, ideas, and

practices in communities – which could be attributed to the active involvement and guidance of the context (the community and culture) itself – each person or individual also has the ability to renew the context by embracing or taking on new, preferred, relevant positions (Hermans 2001:273-274).²¹¹

As seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2, *I*-positions are not fixed and/or isolated entities; they interact and form new combinations incessantly, and, depending on the situation, there often are involuntary conflicts of interests (or positions). In order to reach a common position in the societal context, so-called “third positions” are introduced in the self as intermediate and “boundary crossing” positions where conflict could be reconciled, lessened and/or mitigated. The self, therefore, is continually moving, innovating, adapting, reorganising, and makes room for continuity and discontinuity (Meijers & Hermans 2018:11; Hermans & Gieser 2012:15).²¹² This could also be translated as the self’s resilience – its persistent scripting of new stories, its ability to adapt and undergo (sometimes involuntary) change, and the fact that the self is continually moving towards (or transforming in accordance with) alternative narratives. The latter is also a key aspect in this research project (Müller 2017:97).

3.2.2 The dialogical self theory in this research project – “mapping *I*-positions”

It could be argued that the dialogical self theory is applicable for this research project on transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia; in fact, this theory has been used in similar projects. For example, South African clinical psychologist David Blackbeard (2018:143-156) has reconciled Raewyn Connell’s theories of gender relations²¹³ and hegemonic masculinity²¹⁴ with the dialogical self theory in his research on masculinities among South African adolescents.²¹⁵ Blackbeard (2018:146) argues that Connell’s theory of gender relations is compatible with the dialogical self theory since “[...] masculinity is defined not as traits or categories of a person but as a way that men

²¹¹ Hermans calls this process “hybridisation”, a reaction to experiences of uncertainty, development and change (Hermans 2001:274).

²¹² “Continuity is realized by their ability to link the past, present, and future of the self, whereas discontinuity follows from their capacity to generate new positions” (Meijers & Hermans 2018:13).

²¹³ In the gender relations theory, Connell (1987:99-116; 2000:208) argues that gender relations occur in four dimensions (or substructures), namely *power* (power inequalities and ideologies of male supremacy), *production* or labour (the allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people), and *cathexis* (the emotional, psychological or instinctual dimension that governs or informs sexual practices, and presupposes sexual difference), and *symbolism and discourse* (the effect of culture and language in the portrayal and expression of gender).

²¹⁴ “Hegemonic masculinity” refers to “[...] the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 2005a:77).

²¹⁵ See *Dialogical Selves and Intersectional Masculinities: Image-and-Interview Research with South African Adolescents* (Blackbeard 2018:143-156).

position themselves”. Referring to Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, which argues that masculine identities are “context-specific”, and spatially and temporally structured, Blackbeard (2018:145) highlights how “[...] masculine identities are produced through positioning of self and others and that this positioning is intersectional with other identity positions”. Blackbeard (2018:146) poses that a man positions their masculinity, like all other identities, in relation to the hegemonic norm (or dominant positions). He adds that

Hegemonic masculinity can be conceptualised as an *I*-position, variably plural or singular, internal or external, and equivalently, that masculine identity occurs through *I*-positioning in relation to this dominant *I*-position. Masculine *I*-positions are actualised in variable, and context-specific ways and in relation to other voiced positions, gendered or non-gendered.

Blackbeard (2018:148) also reconciles the dialogical self theory with the feminist theory of intersectionality (see Kim & Shaw 2018:80), posing that masculinity is situated in multiple, interlocking, spatial and temporal, material and relational, literal and figurative domains of power. When studying gender, the dialogical self theory provides perspectives on communal, religious, cultural, racial, and sexual identities as well, and how they intersect with one another (the “contact zones” or intersections between identities). Consequently, when inquiring about masculinity and manhood (“What does it mean to be a man?”), one is also implicating the other co-dependent *I*-positions, including what it means to be a good or real man, a religious or Christian man, an African or black man, a family or an unmarried man, a Chewa, Angoni or Bemba man, a hetero- or homosexual man, a young or old man. Blackbeard also feels that the dialogical self theory helps with describing hybrid identities and recognising the so-called “third spaces”²¹⁶ which emanates from the self’s ability to “[...] construct ‘a pattern of positions’ from what is available or restricted within society and definitions of self and other” (Blackbeard 2018:148).

Subsequent to the theory that states that a person is an embodiment of multiple perspectives, American professor of English, Dawan Coombs (2018:159) argues that *I*-positions not only reflect the different facets and traits of an individual’s identity, (but also represent their literal and figurative place in space and time.²¹⁷ In terms of the dialogical self theory, Coombs (2018:159) explains the

²¹⁶ This could also be compared to “liminal” or “in-between” spaces, which are spaces that contain structures of power politics, struggles, and suffering that an individual enters, but do not necessarily embody or understand (Müller 2017:87-88).

²¹⁷ Even though *I*-positions exist in the present, they also represent past and future positions. Conflict with past positions play a pivotal role in the formation and reformation, construction and reconstruction of the self in the present and the

nature of identity formation, emphasising the crucial role the external *I*-positions – the perspectives and ideas of the world – play in a person’s identity formation (cultural and societal conditioning, or “layering”²¹⁸). From a young age, a person is engaged in persistent approving and disapproving dialogues with actual others (parents, peers, siblings, teachers, and other collective voices of society like the church). These perspectives become internalised, meaning that the communal utterances (“you are...”) are transformed into utterances used in the construction of a self-narrative (“I am...”), and – in some ways – become voices of imaginal others that informs a person’s position (or self-understanding) in relation to the world (Coombs 2018:159).

Coombs’ definition of identity formation could also be compared to Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity, which states that gender is not necessarily a product of choice, but “[...] a forcible citation of a norm” (Butler 1993b:23). For Butler, gender is the effect of the regulatory constraints, taboos, prohibitions, and the ritualised repetition of cultural norms; gender, then, is an identity constituted (or stylised) over a period through a repetition of bodily acts (gestures, movements, enactments), and the “embodiment” of certain ideals (or “*I*-positions”) of femininity or masculinity (Butler 1988:519; Butler 1993b:21-22). This process aligns with Michel Foucault’s understanding of power and sexuality. According to Foucault (1978:103), sexuality is “[...] an especially dense transfer point for relations of power”, with power being the basic force behind social formations, produced from one moment, one subject, one social situation to the next, and inherent to every social relation that shapes organisations and institutions (Foucault 1978:92).

When considering the work of Hermans and his colleagues for this study, it is clear that interviews and conversations with actual others (as portrayed in Figure 2) are actually dialogues with multivoiced individuals that represent a “society of mind” – a multiplicity of internal and external, temporally and spatially constructed *I*-positions (Hermans & Dimaggio 2004:1). In other words, although I would be focusing on a respondent’s *present* position and lived experience on religion and masculinity in the RCZ, there are other temporally and spatially constructed, internal and external *I*-positions and processes that come into play as well. This means that I am also in conversation with all the other voices (dominant and stagnant, past, and present, individual and collective, approving and disapproving) that conditioned the person up to this point.

future. The present self’s positions could be in conflict with the past self’s positions, which is the proof that the identity undergoes transformation (Coombs 2018:159).

²¹⁸ Hermans (2003:109) use the word “layering” to describe the process in which new positions are incorporated (introduced and/or included) into “the self”.

During dialogical interchange (as portrayed in Figure 2), respondents are not only positioning themselves in relation with me (the “audience”), but also undergoing an internal dialogical interchange (as portrayed in Figure 1) between the multiple internal and external *I*-positions (Hermans & Damaggio 2004:1-2; Hermans 2006:163). Hermans uses the theatre as a metaphor to explain this (Hermans 2006:147), claiming self-narratives are dialogical narrations in which an individual not only address significant others, but also themselves (Hermans 2006:164). Put differently: although the main character (the interviewee) takes on centre stage and performs to the audience (the interviewer), there are multiple other characters, settings, actions, and situations that address each in various forms of dialogue (agreement, disagreement, negotiation, opposition, and conflict) on the same stage. In terms of the *chitenge* metaphor: although one is presented with one side of a squared cloth patch, there is a reverse side, and when one looks closely, it is composed out of numerous, multicoloured, intertwining threads, closely woven together. This roughly translates back to the idea that the self and the self-narrative represent an entire landscape of mind, which is shaped by – and therefore also intertwined with – the minds of others (Hermans 2006:149).

In Figure 2, it is highlighted that I (the audience) also represent and embody a “society of selves”. Despite taking on a stance of “not knowing”, personal positions and bias could overshadow the narratives of respondents and compromise the integrity of the study. That is why the non-sharing internal and external areas (marked D and E in Figure 2) should be the main interest in this research project. As a society of selves, a researcher should withhold making value judgements based on personal *I*-positions (his own frame of reference) when in the field, as this may introduce new *I*-positions that aren’t authentic to the respondents’ frame of reference. Only when value judgements are mutual and confirmed by respondents, a researcher may affirm it. For example: from my frame of reference, I could argue that certain traditional practices in Zambian homes are patriarchal and therefore also discriminatory and oppressive, but from the frame of reference of respondents, these practices are not necessarily seen that way at all. In order to be able to discern then on right or wrong, oppressive or liberating, the voices of marginalised persons should be included as well, as their lived realities – their *I*-positions – don’t necessarily fit the hegemonic norm (Ngwenya 2018:198-199).

Since the dialogical self theory highlights the complexity of identities and self-narratives, and acknowledges that identity is an ever-changing, impressionable enterprise, it can be reconciled with the work of contemporary practical theologians, who pose that lived (or human) experience is situated in a complex, messy, multifaceted, multilayered, richly textured web of interlocking systems and ideas, that can not necessarily be demarcated (Ward 2017:10, 103; Hoeft 2012:416), and that identity is immediately influenced by temporal and spatial dimensions (Miller-McLemore 2012:5; Graham

2017:1; Niemandt 2018:13). The field of lived religion – which poses that religion is integrated with one’s ordinary, everyday life and involved in all domains of human existence (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215; Ward 2017:58) – also aligns with this theory. Religion – with its internalised perspectives and ideas of what is perceived as significant in the world – presents and embodies an entire repertoire of independent *I*-positions and (dominant) voices that become part of the internal dialogue of the multivoiced self (Coombs 2018:159). In return, these positions power one’s identity, decisions, speech, reactions, and perspective of oneself.

Therefore, this theory not only complements practical theology, but also the hermeneutical lenses of lived religion and intersectionality. This theory also fuses narrative and ethnographic research: dialogues with actual others in the form of interviews and informal discussions are considered the main source of empirical data (narrative research), and although my voice does not dominate the study, autobiographic notes are included and brought into conversation with the voices (or stories) of respondents as well (ethnographic research). This is also the premise of an African postfoundational practical theology: although the stories of respondents take centre stage, a researcher’s story, observations, insights, and motivations are included (brought into dialogue with the empirical data) as well to provide authentic insights into the world of both the researched and the researcher (Müller 2017:87; Berg 2001:134).

In conclusion: calling each respondent a “society of selves” or “multivoiced” may result in “noise” – an abundance of deliberate and coincidental narratives and positions that simultaneously come into play. In the end, it is my role and intention to make sense of the “noise”, and through considering the stories of participants, construct “[...] a new landscape of imaginative understanding” (Müller 2017:87).

3.3 STUDYING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

3.3.1 Empirical involvement and in-context experiences

This section correlates with the descriptive-empirical task in Osmer’s (2008:4) practical theology, and it involves the gathering of information to “[...] discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts”. This study sets out to explore how masculinities are lived and experienced in sub-Saharan African Christianity, and the interplay of male dominance and male

fragility in a time where gender-based violence has been identified as a critical issue.²¹⁹ It is the intention of this project to contribute to current knowledge (or “basic research”), to deepen the understanding of the everyday, individual and/or group actions and practices, as well as the meanings ascribed to it (Osmer 2008:49-50).²²⁰ Through empirical involvement (gathering practical information) – a process Osmer’s (2008:58) frames as practicing “the discipline of attending” – three skills were implemented, namely interviewing, observing, and describing (Osmer 2008:58). This, while remembering that the individuals that would be interviewed, observed, and described are embodiments of a multivoiced self with both internal and external *I*-positions.

This study is structured according to Müller’s African postfoundational practical theology, and its seven movements not only represent the chronological order of this thesis, but also the order in which research was conducted, including the deployment of empirical research. Müller suggests an inductive (“from the bottom up”) approach of doing research, and therefore empirical reality precedes theory.²²¹ This approach “[...] forces us to first listen to the stories of people in real-life situations. It does not aim to merely describe a general context, but to confront us with a specific and concrete situation” (Müller 2017:90). Practically, this entails the study of people’s lived reality, understanding their circumstances, and recognising relevant stories (authentic, in-context narratives) before attempting to construct meaning or compose theories thereof (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012:12). Put simply: inductive qualitative research begins in the field and sets out to study and portray people’s stories authentically and fairly.

When collecting empirical data, De Vos (1998:46)²²² identifies four parameters that need to be outlined (or described), namely: the *setting*, the *actors*, the *events* that would be researched, and the *process* that would be followed.

3.3.1.1 *The setting*

An extensive (historic and current) description of the setting in which this study was conducted is included in Chapter 2 of this study.²²³ Although numerous towns and important sites in different

²¹⁹ This claim is based on initiatives of the World Council of Churches, the United Nations: Africa, the Zambian government, the RCZ, as well as the respondents of this project.

²²⁰ This is also the premise of qualitative research; empirical involvement has been designed accordingly (Osmer 2008:49-50).

²²¹ This is visible in the first five movements of Müller’s approach to doing theology, which is primarily concerned with the context in which research is conducted.

²²² Also see De Vos (2005:402) and Greeff (2005:301).

²²³ See Chapter 2, subsections 2.2 and 2.3.

Zambian provinces were visited,²²⁴ Lusaka – Zambia’s capitol – was the base from which all fieldwork was conducted.²²⁵ During fieldwork, I resided on the Justo Mwale University campus.²²⁶ This arrangement not only enabled easy transport in and around Lusaka, but also benefitted the empirical aspect of the study, since the RCZ archives are situated in the JMU library, and the fact that – along with JMU lecturers – the general secretary, the current moderator and vice-moderator of the RCZ live on campus. This also enabled me – per the guidelines of ethnographic research – to become a participant-observer and immerse myself in the context I was researching (De Vos & Fouché 1998:90; Ward 2017:112-113). Personal observations, informal discussions, and relevant field notes are incorporated throughout this study.

3.3.1.2 *The actors*

The empirical data included in this research project was collected through qualitative involvement in the RCZ (and by affiliation, JMU). Arguments for delimitating this study to this denomination²²⁷ include: its affiliation with both the Dutch Reformed Church in the Free State (NG Kerk: Vrystaat) and the University of the Free State (UFS); its devotion to promote gender equality;²²⁸ the fact that the majority of leadership positions are held by men, while the majority of membership consist of women; the prominent role both the RCZ and JMU play in promoting reformed theology, despite the increasingly influential Pentecostal movement in African Christianity;²²⁹ and the fact that the RCZ is a growing and influential²³⁰ denomination in Zambia – a country which is considered an official Christian nation (despite the presence of other faiths as well). The respondents who participated in this research project were identified by means of “purposeful sampling” (also called “purposive

²²⁴ This includes the first two mission stations – Magwero and Madzimoyo – in the Eastern province, the RCZ congregation where reverend Justo Mwale served in Ndola in the Copperbelt province, and the towns Livingstone and Siavonga in the Southern province, as they were considered relevant for this study. The National Museum, and various national parks were visited as well.

²²⁵ Although not necessarily applicable in this research project, it is interesting to note that Zambia played a crucial role in South Africa’s road to democracy. Between 1969 to 1991, mister O.R. (Oliver) Tambo – the then-president of the African National Congress (ANC) – spent 22 of his 33 years in exile in Lusaka, in a house provided by Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda. Lusaka became the ANC’s headquarters. After Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, he visited Tambo in Lusaka. Tambo returned to South Africa on 13 December 1990, where he participated in negotiations for the country’s new democratic constitution. This information was obtained during a visit to the Oliver Tambo Heritage House (or “Phiri”-house) on the Great East Road in Lusaka.

²²⁶ Situated in Munali Road, Chamba Valley, just of the Great East Road in the eastern part of Lusaka, Zambia.

²²⁷ Also see Chapter 1, subsection 1.2.2.2.

²²⁸ This statement is based on the 2000 synod decision to allow women reverends, personal observations, informal discussions with officials in the RCZ, and initiatives to promote gender equality in the RCZ and JMU (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.1.9).

²²⁹ See Justo Mwale Universities’ official website (<https://justomwale.net/our-history/>).

²³⁰ According to the office of the general secretary, the RCZ has approximately one million. The RCZ’s influence could be ascribed to its commitment to Zambian education, healthcare, and social involvement. See Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.1.10.

sampling”), which means that they were not randomly chosen, but intentionally selected after being identified as “key informants who have the most information” (Quartaroli 2012:334; Schensul 2012:84; De Vos 1998:46).²³¹ More about respondents in the following section (3.3.2).

3.3.1.3 *The events*

During fieldwork, I deliberately and purposefully combined qualitative interviews with visits to RCZ congregations’ Sunday worship services, mid-week services, prayer meetings, devotions, communions, baptisms, the induction of ministers, choir festivals, and other relevant events (some not necessarily related to the church). Along with interviews and informal discussions, I include personal observations in my field journal. It is significant to note that – in terms of the liturgical year – my visits to Lusaka aligned with Lent, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, Ordinary Time, and Advent. This enabled me to make observations on the RCZ’s rhythms and habits, their liturgy, and embodied (or lived) theology – the rich, multilayered, and performative expressions of religion visible in “[...] the everyday practices of religious life” (Ward 2017:65).

Aligning with Bakhtin, who poses that “the self” (or a self-narrative) is an “event with a structure” (Holquist 2002:20), the main “events” that I studied are people and their stories; particularly, the narratives of respondents containing their experiences and understanding of masculinities in the RCZ. These data are supplemented with fieldnotes on respondents’ lived experience and their religious expressions. The latter is also the premise of “lived religion” – the subdiscipline in practical theology that focuses how people live their lives in relation to religion, and poses that religion and theology is not only doctrinal and visible in the church, but exists and is visible in the concrete, ordinary, everyday lives of people (Ward 2017:56-57; Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215, 217, 220). Or, as Ganzevoort and Roeland (2014: n.p.) suggest, everyday life and popular culture actually relate to notions of “sacredness”, and therefore, when the researcher “trace the sacred”, it becomes an event in which meaning is constructed (Ganzevoort 2009: n.p.).

3.3.1.4 *The process*

As indicated throughout this study, practical theology has a dynamic hermeneutical character that moves to interpret a context, while also imagining alternative narratives and new possibilities; a

²³¹ Some informants with “alternative views” are also sought, with the intention to present a balanced view (Quartaroli 2012:334).

process characterised by an incessant correspondence between theory and practice. Browning (1991:39) and Osmer (2008:11) compare this process to a cycle or spiral that constantly moves towards a deeper understanding of the world, a person, a context, a phenomenon, or a text, with the aim to transform current- and imagine alternative narratives (or, in terms of the dialogical self theory, introduce alternative *I*-positions to the multivoiced self). In this study, there is an ongoing interplay between theory and practice, literature, and the field, listening and understanding, experience and interpretation. This process is packaged in accordance with Müller's African postfoundational practical theology, and data collected in accordance with the guidelines of ethnographic and narrative research.

This spiral could also be used to describe the process that occurs in both researcher and respondents. Since one continually consults one's preunderstandings (or certain *I*-positions) based on past experiences, the hermeneutical process is not objective or neutral (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:30). Even though a postfoundational approach makes room for subjectivity, both researcher and researched embody certain beliefs, values, customs, and attitudes (which are all components of culture) in the field, and these inherently influence their views on race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and education, age, and religion (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:41-42). Through individual and collective conversations, new interpretations, understandings, and positions (or new, external *I*-positions) are introduced into the biased lives of both interviewer and interviewee (Hermans 2001:255-256), which could lead to a different way of thinking, feeling, and acting (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:31). This corresponds with the last movement of Müller's (2017:92) approach to doing practical theology – and therefore the aim of the empirical involvement, namely, to develop, (introduce/imagine) alternative interpretations and stories that point beyond the local community.

3.3.2 Fieldwork and data collection – interviews and observations

The ethnographic and narrative approaches have been identified as relevant and fitting research strategies for this study,²³² and all theories considered and included in this research project serve, emanate from, and respond to the empirical data collected in the field. Practically speaking, fieldwork – especially when it takes place in another country – does not necessarily take place in accordance with the neatly laid out and clean-cut steps or phases as set out by scholars like De Vos,²³³ Lapan,

²³² Outlined in Chapter 1, subsection 1.2.5.

²³³ *Research at grass roots: A primer for the caring professions*, 1998, and *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human science professions*, 2005.

Quartaroli, and Riemer,²³⁴ Hendriks,²³⁵ or even Osmer.²³⁶ More than often, one step or phase flows into the other, and Ward (2017:10-11) recognises the fluidity and exchangeability of these steps or phases, posing that research – especially in practical theology – should start “in the middle of things”. Practical theology should embrace the “messiness” of lived experience (Hoeft 2012:416), focus on serving the context through a persistent process of discerning, describing, interpreting, explaining, evaluating, and constructing meaning (Ganzevoort 2009:n.p.; Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016: 222). Consequently, the work of scholars who embrace the fluidity of the hermeneutical cycle – like Müller,²³⁷ Ganzevoort,²³⁸ Ward,²³⁹ Van der Westhuizen, Greuel and Thesnaar²⁴⁰ – were included in the design and implementing of this project.

Before entering the field for formal qualitative research, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Free State’s General/Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC).²⁴¹ In this research project, ethical clearance presupposes that: (1) a research proposal – which contains this project’s proposed topic, methodology, and protocol – has been submitted and approved by the relevant authorities; (2) that the faculty’s ethical committee, as well as the leadership of the RCZ and JMU, have been informed of this project’s intention and content, and approved my request to enter the field; (3) that respondents of this study would be briefed on the particulars of this project, ensured of their anonymity, and reminded that participation is voluntarily; (4) that interviews would be conducted only after respondents have given permission (informed consent) to participate in interviews, aware that interviews would be recorded, transcribed, and incorporated into this study;²⁴² (5) that all additional data that were obtained in the field – including field notes, personal observations, and informal discussions – have been verified, and the inclusion thereof epistemologically motivated; and (6) that all empirical data collected in the field would be presented accurately, and the copies of raw data kept safe.²⁴³

²³⁴ *Qualitative Research: An introduction to methods and designs*, 2012.

²³⁵ *Studying congregations in Africa*, 2004.

²³⁶ *Practical Theology*, 2008.

²³⁷ *A postfoundationalist, HIV-positive practical theology*, 2005; *African Postfoundational Practical Theology*, 2017.

²³⁸ *Narrative Approaches*, 2012; *De wijsheid op straat... Levensbeschouwing en hermeneutische communicatie van professionals in een plurale context*, 2007; *Forks in the Road when Tracing the Sacred. Practical Theology as Hermeneutics of Lived Religion*. 2009.

²³⁹ *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church*, 2017.

²⁴⁰ *From my own to the unknown and back to my own*, 2018.

²⁴¹ Ethical clearance number: UFS-HSD2019/0269/1409. Proof of clearance attached in the appendices of this study.

²⁴² An example of the indemnity form is included in the appendices of this study.

²⁴³ According to GHREC guidelines, all raw data should be safely stored for at least five years after the thesis is accepted.

Data collection in the field occurred on three separate occasions – each with a different intention. During the *first visit*,²⁴⁴ a pilot study (a pre-testing or preliminary study) was conducted. This is considered standard and essential in the implementation of a qualitative study.²⁴⁵ The intentions of the pilot study, aligning with the recommendations by Strydom (2005:205-216) and Schensul (2012:69-103), were: (1) to familiarise oneself with the context in which research would be done; (2) to network with persons that would be beneficial for the study; (3) to test the feasibility of the study; (4) to design the project protocol and research methodology to fit the context; (5) to practice interviewing; (6) to amend the questionnaires and criteria for viable respondents if necessary; (7) to read contextual literature; (8) to become a participant-observer; (9) to access relevant documents, including archival material, local publications, relevant statistics, assignments and dissertations in the JMU library, and RCZ synod agendas; and (10) writing a research proposal that is informed by the contextual analyses.

During the pilot study, apart from visiting relevant sites to collect local information, I also had face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with a variety of respondents (young and old, ministers and lay persons, lecturers and students). The respondents who participated were identified by the RCZ and JMU leadership, which by definition is an example of purposeful (or purposive) sampling (Quartaroli 2012:334; De Vos 1998:46). Twenty-one respondents (15 male and 6 female) agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews²⁴⁶ with open-ended questions.²⁴⁷ These interviews informed me on the RCZ's theology, practices, and ecclesiology. Since its purpose was to create an authentic cultural portrait of the RCZ's views on gender issues, patterns of practice, and their ordinary, day-to-day actions (Osmer 2008:51), these interviews were not transcribed, but rather included in my field journal.

On reviewing the pilot study interviews, I became aware of several challenges posed by language, gender, class, racial, and cultural barriers. This is an example of how power dynamics influence empirical involvement: I was aware that my identity and the officiality of the research process were intimidating to some respondents, and this undoubtedly influenced the content of some interviews. Despite attempts to “decolonise” research through the postfoundational approach and the inclusion

²⁴⁴ From 16 October 2018 to 28 November 2018.

²⁴⁵ According to Strydom (2005:205): “[t]he pilot study is indeed a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project. The pilot study forms an integral part of the research process. Its function is the exact formulation of the research problem, and a tentative planning of the *modus operandi* and range of the investigation.”

²⁴⁶ Both open-ended and closed-ended questions are asked and adapted in accordance with the flow of the conversation (see Osmer 2008:63).

²⁴⁷ Questionnaires are included in the appendices of this study.

of marginal voices, there still was a “distance” – or a type of “power imbalance” – between me and most participants. The awkwardness of interviews and hesitancy of laypersons could be traced back to Zambia’s colonial and postcolonial history, and/or the result of certain hierarchies build on patriarchal and/or sociocultural and religious values. As a white, educated man (who also happens to be a minister in a Reformed church), my presence did cause discomfort and left some participants feeling defenceless and exposed (fragile). This, however, was not the case in the conversations and interviews with RCZ ministers, who were comfortable and keen on participating in this study. Most participants who were also ministers shared their experiences and thoughts on the topic honestly, told stories from their ministry, and unlike in other interviews, language, gender, socioeconomic standing, and culture did not necessarily pose barriers, uneasiness, or difficulties. For this reason, I decided to demarcate the sample group to male and female ministers in the RCZ. This was a deliberate attempt to create a more homogenous group within a very diverse context and was – in my view – a successful attempt to eliminate (or, at least, reduce the influence of) this imbalance (Müller 2017:91; Van den Berg 2006:167). Interviews with RCZ ministers also underline the shift the RCZ has undergone from a colonial missionary church where men and women were suppressed and patronised (positions associated with fragility) to an independent church denomination where domestic ministers are taking control and empowering others (associated with dominance, but in a positive sense).

This delineation, however, could easily result in another imbalance – a partisan and misleading view of masculinities in Zambia. Although interactions with male ministers in the RCZ were fruitful, it is crucial to recognise that they embody (value or strive for) a particular hegemonic masculinity – certain socio-culturally appropriated expressions of being a man (or dominant *I*-positions) which customarily exclude those who fall short (Connell 2005a:76-81). Generally, male ministers are privileged individuals who do not represent or embody the same experiences, struggles, or opinions as lay members. Reverends tend to be typecast as caring, intelligent men who are highly respected members in their communities. They are considered a source of power and authority, and their masculine identity is not associated with physical strength or labour, but with their ability to be assertive leaders with good communication skills. A major part of their identity rests on (or their life revolves around) the church, which in return is also the source of the power and status that enables them to dominate in society and enjoy many benefits that the “average” or “ordinary” members of the RCZ do not.

Limiting the study to this hegemonic group could weaken the significance of the data of a study that focuses on the Reformed Church in Zambia, and therefore transgressive voices should be included as well (Ngwenya 2018:22). For this reason, the voices of women were integrated in this study as well.

Women experience the church differently, and even though women ministers also enjoy some benefits of being employed in a church setting, women still represent a group that are often marginalised, suppressed, and dominated. Women ministers – despite being educated, having leadership skills, and supposedly embodying a position of power and leadership – often experience backlash from congregants and colleagues; especially when they stand up against the patriarchal structures that keep men in power. When a woman becomes a reverend, she does work that is traditionally ascribed to men, she disrupts the hegemonic norm, pushes gender boundaries, breaks down gender stereotypes, and disturbs the societal rules that upholds patriarchal systems. Despite the homogeneity of the sample group of this study, the inclusion of women’s voices (or *I*-positions) – their experiences and opinions about masculinities in the church – does diversify positions included in this project.

After obtaining ethical clearance, a *second visit* ²⁴⁸ to Zambia was arranged during which I conducted formal face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with open-ended but focused questions.²⁴⁹ Potential respondents were identified by RCZ leadership and contacted by telephone. Fourteen (9 male, 5 female) RCZ ministers who live and minister to congregations in Lusaka agreed to participate in this research project.²⁵⁰ Even though all fourteen interviews were conducted without any irregularities, only ten interviews were selected to be transcribed and coded in this research project. This selection is based on the deliberate inclusion of female voices and the relevance and distinctiveness of the interview. Each respondent’s identity is kept anonymous and identified with a unique code which consists of an R (for respondent), the chronological number of the interview (from 1 to 10), and their gender (M=male; F=female). For the benefit of the study, each respondent’s gender, age, culture or tribe, and marital status at the time of the interview are included as well. This is done deliberately, since it highlights the intersectional nature of gender, and the fact that these other identities (or *I*-positions) shaped their stories. The only common identity (or *I*-position) that unifies the entire group, is the fact that they are all reverends in the RCZ and have a tertiary qualification. The respondents who participated in this study are listed in the table below.

Table 1: List of Respondents

Respondent 1:	R1_M	Respondent 2:	R2_M
Date of interview:	12 April 2019	Date of interview:	15 April 2019

²⁴⁸ From 29 March 2019 to 3 May 2019.

²⁴⁹ “Semi-structured interviews” means that even though I prepared a sequence of questions, they were “[...] adapted to the emerging flow of the conversation” (Osmer 2008:63). Questionnaires are included in the appendix of this study.

²⁵⁰ There were other male and female respondents who agreed to participate in the study, but due to logistical challenges, could not realise.

Gender:	Male	Gender:	Male
Age:	32	Age:	34
Culture/Tribe:	Nyanje	Culture/Tribe:	Chewa
Marital status:	Married	Marital status:	Married
Respondent 3:	R3_M	Respondent 4:	R4_M
Date of interview:	16 April 2019	Date of interview:	16 April 2019
Gender:	Male	Gender:	Male
Age:	40	Age:	49
Culture/Tribe:	Chewa	Culture/Tribe:	Chewa
Marital status:	Married	Marital status:	Married
Respondent 5:	R5_F	Respondent 6:	R6_M
Date of interview:	16 April 2019	Date of interview:	19 April 2019
Gender:	Female	Gender:	Male
Age:	50	Age:	46
Culture/Tribe:	Chewa	Culture/Tribe:	Chewa
Marital status:	Married	Marital status:	Married
Respondent 7:	R7_F	Respondent 8:	R8_F
Date of interview:	20 April 2019	Date of interview:	24 April 2019
Gender:	Female	Gender:	Female
Age:	41	Age:	35
Culture/Tribe:	Chewa	Culture/Tribe:	Tomboka
Marital status:	Unmarried	Marital status:	Married
Respondent 9:	R9_F	Respondent 10:	R10_F
Date of interview:	29 April 2019	Date of interview:	1 May 2019
Gender:	Female	Gender:	Female
Age:	37	Age:	42
Culture/Tribe:	Chewa	Culture/Tribe:	Nsenga
Marital status:	Married	Marital status:	Married

The main research question of this study is: *How are masculinities lived, experienced, and understood in Zambia, a Christian nation, in a time of gender-based violence and gender injustice, despite the numerous initiatives to combat it?* The subtitle of this study,²⁵¹ “the good men, the good life, and the good news” – poses three focused, but open-ended questions:

- (i) *What are the definitions, experiences, and/or expectations of masculinity/being a man in the Zambian context, and what is the RCZ’s view on this?*
- (ii) *What is society telling (prescribing) men about the life (“good life”) that they should live, and what is the RCZ’s view on this?*
- (iii) *In a Christian nation, what is being taught from the Bible about men and masculinities, and what is the RCZ’s view on this?*

²⁵¹ See Chapter 1, subsection 1.2.2.

During interviews, respondents were encouraged to share stories from their ministry and lived experience as ministers in the RCZ. I also prepared related probing and continuation questions (which were informed by the pilot study) which were used depending on the course of the conversation and on how much the respondent was willing to divulge on the topic. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

The *third visit*²⁵² entailed informal follow-up and supplementary interviews, numerous informal discussions, visits to various RCZ congregations, attending worship services, visiting relevant sites, report writing, as well as courtesy and farewell visits to RCZ and JMU leadership. All data collected during this visit is included in my field journal.

3.3.3 Coding of data: identifying main storylines and “making sense of the noise”²⁵³

After leaving the field, the voice recordings of the ten selected interviews were transcribed verbatim by an impartial third party.²⁵⁴ The unprocessed verbatim transcripts then underwent a process called “coding”, which involves the organising, analysing, labelling, categorising, simplifying, summarising, and conceptualising (or “tidying up”) of the raw data (Riemer 2012:176-177; Saldaña 2009:3). Saldaña (2009:3,12,45), Friese (2014:17-18), and Riemer (2012:178) agree that the coding process in inductive qualitative research has two cycles (or phases):

- (1) The *first cycle of coding* (“initial coding” or “descriptive-level analysis”) involves noticing and encoding big chunks of data, by selecting, demarcating, and labelling the relevant data, based on its content, within the magnitude of data (“tidying up” or “sense making”).
- (2) The *second cycle of coding* (“analytical coding” or “conceptual-level analysis”) involves linking related codes, (re)classifying them into categories, and grouping them together through processes of prioritising, integrating, extracting, and conceptualising.

From these codes, categories and groups, the dominant patterns, themes, and concepts become the premise of reflection, conceptualising, and interpretation (De Vos 2005:343-344) – a process Saldaña (2009:33) calls “memo writing”, which could also be seen as an additional (or third) coding cycle. Coding, however, can be a strenuous and demanding task – especially if there is an abundance of

²⁵² From 18 November 2019 to 15 December 2019.

²⁵³ Since the self embodies (or accommodates) multiple voices (or *I*-positions) simultaneously, coding could be seen as an attempt to discern and make sense between these voices.

²⁵⁴ Outsourcing transcript-writing to a third party was a deliberate choice to ensure the integrity thereof.

data. Therefore, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) as method to code the transcripts was chosen. ATLAS.ti²⁵⁵ software, which is a well-known, trusted, and widely used form of CAQDAS, and was used to code the data of this study.

3.3.3.1 First cycle coding: InVivo coding – coding of I-positions

For the first cycle of coding, “InVivo” coding (also called “verbatim coding” or “literal coding”) was selected. This means that the exact words or phrase – and therefore the actual language of the respondent – are selected in the transcript as a code. Therefore, this form of coding is “participant-inspired”, rather than “researcher generated”. InVivo coding not only respects the actual voices of respondents but is especially beneficial in studies conducted in other contexts with a variety of cultures. After selecting the entire phrase, sentence, or even a paragraph, the vocal emphasis or cohesive idea becomes the shortened code (Saldaña 2009:74-77). For example:

Verbatim excerpt from interview:

R6_M: *A man is also a leader. A leader in the sense that God has deposited in man a leadership quality to change the situation around him. That's why he needs to by His grace offer leadership in his family, offer leadership where he is working, offer leadership where he is staying. Just to bring change through his leadership. (6:29)*²⁵⁶

InVivo codes:

“a man is also a leader”

“God has deposited in man a leadership quality”

“offer leadership in his family [...] working [...] staying”

Verbatim excerpt from interview:

R8_F: *We follow exactly what the Bible says what God wants. Live a life of forgiveness, live a life of love, live a life of integrity, live a life of humbleness. Imitate Christ Jesus. This is what the RCZ focuses on. (8:26)*

InVivo codes:

²⁵⁵ The ATLAS.ti software used in this research project has been made available by the UFS postgraduate school. ATLAS.ti is a form of CAQDAS that has the ability to process and analyse large bodies of qualitative data (textual, graphical, audio and video), and is widely used in different academic fields.

²⁵⁶ For referencing purposes, the number of the document and the InVivo code (or the section thereof) is indicated after each quote.

“Live a life...Imitate Christ Jesus”

Verbatim excerpt from interview:

R4_M: *If you tell me that I must provide food at all costs I don't think that is being fair to me. Yeah, at all costs I must provide food. That is not fair. Because what is happening then is that in case I fail to provide there are a number of things that happens. Number one, I may commit suicide, number two I may be depressed because I am not able. Number three I may be forced to steal or commit a crime for me to get something to provide for my family. Number four I think I will just have a very low self-esteem if at all, if I do not meet the expectations of the family. While some of the expectations may be OK, but in order for the society to tell me that I am not providing for my family that's unfair. That is totally unfair on me. But if they can give me room to understand that my wife and I shall work together to provide for the family I think that's more better. (4:24; 4:25)*

InVivo codes:

“at all costs I must provide food”

“in case I fail...I may commit suicide...I may be depressed”

“forced to steal or commit crime...to provide”

“a very low self-esteem...if I do not meet the expectations”

Verbatim excerpt from interview:

R4_M: *One of the things that we have as men, you see, traditionally we are taught that a man is supposed to be strong. Even if you are bitten by the bees and the wasps and the snakes. You shouldn't cry [...] If I've got struggles I should keep them to myself. People should not know that I've got this problem as a man. (4:11)*

InVivo codes:

“traditionally we are taught that a man is supposed to be strong”

In some cases, however, an answer or conversation is coded in its entirety, since the entire excerpt is necessary to express one idea or theme.²⁵⁷ The entire story was selected and coded InVivo (“as it is”,

²⁵⁷ This is also the premise of holistic coding (Saldaña 2009:118-120), which, like InVivo coding, focuses on the actual language of the respondent.

and therefore also includes language errors), and catalogued (given a descriptive code) during a second cycle coding. For example:

Verbatim excerpt from interview coded in its entirety:

R1_M: [...] *like I said, in church when you go in the RCZ church, you will be able to take that there is a divide between women and men. Because women sit on their own side and men on their own side. Why? Because culturally when a woman is being brought up, she is told that men are not your friends. You don't pray with men. I remembering being told growing up as a young child, when you come from school you have a friend who is a girl, your parents will ask you have you ever seen a man and a woman being friends? It does not happen. You see? So, women and men grow up from different sides. They don't just meet. The moment a man and a woman are playing together it is towards their marriage. That is where we come from in Africa.* (1:31)

Verbatim excerpt from interview coded in its entirety:

R3_M: *In my time in ministry, I've learned – with experience – to allow someone to be broken. Whether it's a man or a woman. They should be able to express emotional time, without pretending to be strong or to be what. So, we have – I have – encouraged that. As if for example, a man has lost a wife, I have literally gotten involved during the body viewing. Telling that man: "Take your time, look, and bid farewell to your wife here. Don't rush on this one." So that's the kind of position I take.* (3:16)

Verbatim excerpt from interview coded in its entirety:

R2_M: *When I think about Jesus Christ I am always confronted with the question: What did he do in a specific situation? Jesus Christ, being a man, he never mistreated women. He regarded them as part of God's image. Jesus Christ being man, He did not uhm consider himself more powerful than the other party. Him as a male of course, but in all his ministry he saw the importance of another sex, and that is woman. That is why women were involved in his ministry life. Because they were important components. And this is what we are doing even the reformed church. Previously we used not to ordain women. So, we have realised to*

say that actually they can do even better than we so called men. So why should we segregate them? We talk about culture, others will argue about [unclear word] theology coming out in the scripture, but in the way we interpret the scripture ourselves is different from what others do. Because some of the issues in the Bible are cultural, but what would Jesus do? [Laughs] So, he was a human being and a man, but he never misused his position as a man – Jesus Christ. (2:33)

Here, it could be argued that each statement (or InVivo code) made during an interview (which essentially is a dialogue) should be considered as an *I*-position of (or voice in) the “society of self” (or the “multivoiced self”). Therefore, InVivo coding could also be reconciled with the dialogical self theory (Hermans 2001:256). In terms of the dialogical self theory, interviews not only represent in-person dialogues, but also the internal dialogues and negotiations that occur between the multiple internal and external *I*-positions (or voices) a person has internalised (Hermans 2001:256). Also, in the telling of their stories, some cliché expressions and responses (culturally and socially conditioned *I*-positions) could be expected in response to the positions I (or “audience”) embody in the dialogue (Hermans & Damaggio 2004:2).

3.3.3.2 *Second cycle coding: Focused Coding – plotting I-positions and identifying storylines*

During the second cycle of coding, the InVivo codes (and therefore the multiple *I*-positions) were attributed to a descriptive code. Essentially, a descriptive code aims to unify related *I*-positions. Twenty-one descriptive codes were identified inductively, and the InVivo codes were then labelled and categorised according to its content under the relevant descriptive code. This process is called “focused coding” (Saldaña 2009:155-159), and its purpose is to develop groupings that are true to the data’s properties and dimensions.

Even though some *I*-positions may seem as though they overlap,²⁵⁸ or should be in the same group, they were separated on the basis of their content, context, intention, and/or unique vocabulary. For example: despite the similarities between some descriptive codes, some are informed by religious beliefs and practices, while others are informed by socio-cultural beliefs and practices, some *I*-

²⁵⁸ For example, the *I*-position that “everyone is created in the image of God” may overlap with the *I*-position which states that a man should be a gender advocate; but when considering its intention, its vocabulary, to whom it was directed at, whether it is focused on the broader or the specific context in the interviews, it is clear that they are in fact dissimilar and belong to a different group.

positions are embodiments of the male dominance-male fragility cycle, and some *I*-positions are unique to the RCZ. By giving each their own descriptive code is an attempt to remain true to its intention. The descriptive codes of this study could be summarised as indicated in the table below.

Table 2: Descriptive codes.

<u>DESCRIPTIVE CODE:</u>	<u>HOW IT WAS IDENTIFIED:</u>	<u>INVIVO CODE EXAMPLES:</u>
<i>Positions based on/related to/shaped by religious beliefs and practices</i>		
<i>I as a leader.</i>	Contains the word “lead”, “leading”, “leadership”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with the emphasis on male leadership.	• “A man is also a leader” (6:29) • “[...] culturally men are leaders and whenever they speak, they must be heard” (1:47) • “It has always been understood that men should be the leading role” (10:3)
<i>I as a man of God.</i>	Contains the reference to “godly”, “godlike” or “God-fearing man”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men being a “Godly man”. General references and not necessarily associated with the RCZ.	• “[...] a good man should be God fearing and should have integrity” (8:34) • “[...] good men are those who are living according to the Christian values” (5:3) • “So, man has got some deposits of what God has” (1:73) • “A man, it is he who fears the Lord” (7:21)
<i>I as a responsible person.</i>	Contains the word “responsibility”, “responsible”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with the expectation that men should take responsibility.	• “God gave man the responsibility to subdue” (6:30) • “[...] the men are being burdened with responsibility” (10:13) • “[...] to be a good man is to be a man who understands his responsibilities in society and in the family” (2:1)
<i>I as a provider and source of security.</i>	Contains the word “provide”, “providing”, “take care”, and/or related descriptions and/or examples of offering security to the family. Concerned with a man’s role of being the provider	• “[...] spiritually, financially, emotionally, physically” (8:3) • “[...] one who takes care of his family” (3:1) • “A good man is one who is able to take care of his family or should I say is able to provide the needs of his family” (4:5)

	for and caretaker of their families.	• <i>“They are supposed to provide. Perform your role as a man” (4:14)</i>
<i>I as someone who practises self-control.</i>	Contains descriptions, examples, experiences and/or expectations of being able to control yourself. Concerned with the expectation that men should practise self-control (especially in terms of sexually and sobriety).	• <i>“[...] people buy from the streets to enhance their sexuality as man” (6:18)</i> • <i>“[...] a woman should not show that she’s sexually active, only a man” (6:13)</i> • <i>“[...] prostitute [...] brought a lot of problems in that family, because man just thought because I am a man I can do anything” (5:18)</i>
<i>I as the head of the house.</i>	Contains the word “headship” or “head of the family”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men’s role as the head of the house.	• <i>“[...] first and foremost is clear that men are the head of the family” (3:25)</i> • <i>“You leave the men to speak” (8:28)</i> • <i>“[...]they want to be in the highest position, they want to give commands” (9:18)</i>
<i>Positions based on/related to/shaped by socio-cultural beliefs and practices</i>		
<i>I as a family man.</i>	Contains the word “family”, “marriage”, implies heteronormative values, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with traditional family values, and the importance of family.	• <i>“[...] a good man in Zambia or a church is one who takes care of his family” (3:1)</i> • <i>“A good man is one who is able to take care of his family” (4:5)</i> • <i>“[...] you have to make sure that you take good care of your family, you love your family, you are there for your family, you provide for your family” (8:5)</i>
<i>I as a good (and fruitful) lover.</i>	Contains the word “sex”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with the expectation that men should be sexually virile and good lovers.	• <i>“I understand that as a Christian sex is a gift that God gives and too much of anything is bad that’s what I will say” (2:20)</i> • <i>“[...] our people don’t talk about sex just openly; it’s seen as a taboo and a woman from tradition is taught not to talk about sex even ask for sex from her husband. It’s only the husband who should ask for sex” (6:13)</i>

		• “[...] they are selling medicine to say here’s medicine for the power of manhood, for the performance” (5:23)
<i>I as a labourer.</i>	Contains the word “work”, “job”, “labour”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men’s labour and ability to work.	• “[...] the men are supposed to go out there, bring some meat and bring some bread, some food at home [...] if you fail to do that you are not considered to be a good man or a responsible man” (4:15) • “[...] a man should be able to work hard” (2:21) • “You really need to work hard. Earn your own sweat that’s what the bible tells us. Eat your own sweat so you have to work hard.” (9:31)
<i>I as a strong person.</i>	Contains the word “strong”, “strength”, “tough” and/or related descriptions. Concerned with the expectation that men should be (physically) strong and perform external toughness to assert masculinity.	• “[...] we think being strong or powerful is what defines a man” (7:12) • “[...] a man must have a little bit of some muscle and beards, looking a different way that a woman can look” (2:15) • “[...] we raise our children, we always tell them don’t cry. Men don’t cry. You are a boy – be strong!” (10:36) • “Even if you are bitten by the bees and the wasps and the snakes, you shouldn’t cry [...] If I’ve got struggles I should keep them to myself - people should not know” (4:11)
<i>I as an educated person.</i>	Contains the word “education”, “educated”, “school”, “degree”, “academic”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with education and education of the family.	• “[...] able to take the children to school, a decent school of course” (2:22) • “I am blessed if my children can go to schools, I’m blessed if they can pass their schools” (4:29) • “Very few men in Zambia does that, because even those who are educated, they don’t do that” (9:20)

<i>I as someone who values wealth.</i>	Contains the word “money”, “rich”, “wealth”, “prosperity”, and/or a related description of monetary gain, economic class, and fame. Concerned with men’s strive towards flourishing and prosperity.	• “[...] a good life, I think number one the men look at the well money” (3:18) • “I will be able to have tea with milk. The congregation would even buy a pastor a vehicle. Yes, we see that – having good life and an income...” (8:19) • “[...] the physical blessing is not all that we need because they are not everything; you may have all these blessings but still live a miserable, miserable life” (7:19)
<i>I as someone with power.</i>	Contains the word “power”, “control”, “dominate”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men’s power and agency.	• “A man wants to control things, wants to be in control.” (1:62) • “[...] as a woman I would say there are those who are untouchable” (5:4) • “So, if you talk of power or authority being a man, then it means a man has to use that power and authority to protect, to defend, to provide for those that are vulnerable” (7:12) • “[...] men have freedom to choose what they want in their life” (10:43)
<i>Positions based on/related to/shaped by male dominance and/or fragility</i>		
<i>I as a gender advocate.</i>	Contains the word “gender discrimination”, “inequality”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men’s role in promoting or obstructing gender equality.	• “The lady is unemployed, she has children to take care, if she leaves this man who is very abusive who’s going to sponsor her? Who’s going to give a shelter, who’s going to give food” (10:8) • “But it is a struggle to accept a female minister. I have a female minister and each time she comes up to take a service I do get feedback that’s negative. But I know it’s from the point of view that they have not appreciated a female pastor” (3:33) • “[...] women are being infringed by their rights, because men are supposed to be men (8:15)

<i>I</i> as an unemployed person.	Contains the word “jobless”, “unemployed”, “without work”, and/or related descriptions (men’s inability to provide, vulnerable to the socio-cultural expectations). Concerned with the idea that unemployment makes you less of a man.	• “[...] one of the biggest struggles that we have as men, currently, is that there is a lot of job losses and the economic hardships and then the man is expected to provide for the family. And there he is, he has got no job, or he has lost his job, or his salary is not enough for him to take care of his family” (4:12) • “Laziness is discouraged in the word of God” (4:27) • “[...] maybe the woman is working has got a stable income, and a man has no stable income, and the man has no stable income, it means that this man will be inferior” (2:11)
<i>I</i> as someone who can hold their liquor.	Contains the word “alcohol”, “beer”, “liquor”, “beer drinking”, “tavern”, “bar”, “smoking”, “drugs”, and/or related descriptions. Concerned with substance abuse as a means to assert masculinity.	• “[...] a good man should not drink beer” (6:4) • “[...] the ones who is beating up their wives, the bad men are always are drunk, the bad men they do not provide leadership for their families” (4:9) • “[...] because of the poverty levels, a number of women they get into these bars, they are bought a tin of liquor, you know just to be used” (7:6)
<i>I</i> as someone who experiences vulnerability and shame.	Contains descriptions, examples, experiences and/or expectations of the vulnerability and shame men experience. Concerned with men’s avoidance of feelings associated with vulnerability and shame.	• “[...] if a man confronts a woman to say this is what I’m feeling, then he is considered to be a weak man. I would rather die than revealing these feelings to a lady” (9:14) • “I think men it’s their nature; they don’t open up [...] they can’t even go to the police – they would rather keep it to themselves” (7:10) • “So it’s an aspect that cause mostly men even the way that we raise our children, we always tell them don’t cry men don’t cry. You are a boy, be strong. And I’ve seen it even with boys who are playing in the park, even when they hurt

		<i>themselves they tell each other don't cry that's what it means to be a man. Even when you've hurt yourself you should not cry. But I think it's important that we, you know emphasise that aspect so that people understand, men understand that they too need help. Cause it's a cry for help." (10:36)</i>
<i>I in the fight against GBV.</i>	Contains the word "gender-based violence", "GBV", "gender violence", "abuse", "domestic violence", "beating", "divorce", and/or related descriptions. Concerned with men's role in GBV.	• <i>"You know like beating your wife, you know and just a lot of challenges caused by men. You know killing and so on. [...] Shooting your wife – or vice versa, the wife shooting the husband. There are such circumstances, stabbing your wife [...] and there was another gruesome act where one guy bashes his wife with his car." (6:3,6:5)</i> • <i>"And the women agree that is a man doesn't beat them he does not love them. So culturally it was accepted." (1:24)</i> • <i>"But even just emotional torture, it's violence." (8:11)</i> • <i>"But when you look at statistics, mostly it is the women that are victims in this home." (10:15)</i>
<i>Positions based on/related to/shaped by the respondents' affiliation to the RCZ</i>		
<i>I as a believer that all are created equal.</i>	Contains the phrase "image of God", "created in God's image", "neither male nor female" and/or other references to Genesis 1:17 ²⁵⁹ or Galatians 3:28, ²⁶⁰ and/or related descriptions. Concerned with the notion that men and women are both	• <i>"Being created in the image of God. God considered all women and men to be one" (5:39)</i> • <i>"So, whatever I do today it's actually in appreciation to my maker. God who has created me. So, I am not doing in order to abuse the other part, no, I am doing it in appreciation actually to what God has created me for this</i>

²⁵⁹ "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NIV).

²⁶⁰ "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (NIV).

	created in the God's image, and that it is God's intention to include.	way. <i>I am not a man in order to suppress a woman, I am a man because actually I am created in his image.</i>" (2:32) • "[...] we are equal in the image of God, we are created one [...] He broke those barriers to say there's no male there's no female. No Greek no gentile, we are all equal in the image of God" (9:33-34) • "[...] no matter your status be low or high, maybe specifically when you are very, very down you have completely nothing that would maybe give you a name or an identity. The best that you can do is to know that God still loves you and he cares for you" (7:26)
<i>I as a follower of Jesus' example.</i>	Contains a description of how Jesus' example should be followed, and/or imitated. Concerned with descriptions of Jesus as the prototype (hu)man.	• "Imitate Christ Jesus" (8:26) • "He did not just preach, but he fed the thousands; he did not just preach, but he healed the sick; he did not just preach but he helped the poor." (10:27) • "Jesus say he was human, but he lived a very humble life [...] Humble life that the material things were not an issue to him [...] The other thing is that Jesus knew who he was - as a human he knew who he was. So, if only we can know who we are our purpose on earth, um the purpose of God for our life, it will help us to live a healthy and happy life." (7:25)
<i>I as a member of the RCZ.</i>	Contains references to and/or descriptions of the RCZ's ministry at congregational and/or denominational level. Concerned with relevant RCZ policies.	• "[...] marriage counselling or premarital counselling. I usually want to take advantage of that. That as the marriage is starting men and women are equal" (1:26) • "[...] the seating arrangement should be changed. So that people realise that there is a change in the world we live in today" (1:40)

		• “[...] men’s fellowship. That is a way of structured group in terms of how you can engage the men” (3:13) • “[...] ministry should be holistic – you should not just look at what people need, [...] You must feed the flock, I think that must be the first thing, feed the flock and then the rest come in” (10:29)
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After the InVivo codes (the individual *I*-positions) were attributed to one (or more) of the twenty-one descriptive codes (as outlined in table above), these descriptive codes were grouped together (or catalogued) to capture their similarities and difference (Osmer 2008:56). Here, the dialogical self theory was implemented as an analysing tool. The criteria for cataloguing descriptive codes (related *I*-positions) involves recognising whether the code represents an internal position (a subjective and personal identity/experience: “*I* feel”, “*I* say”, “*I* believe”), or an external position (the self as extended to/by the environment, or “*ME*-positions”: “my *culture* says”, “my *religion* says”, “my *society* says”, “my *family* says”) (Hermans 2001:244; Hermans 2003:97; Hermans 2004:17). Consequently, the twenty-one codes were recategorized into four “storylines” (or overarching categories) on ATLAS.ti, which is also an example of “focused coding” (Saldaña 2009: 155-159), and could be summarised as indicated below.

Table 3: Storylines

<u>STORYLINE:</u>	<u>DESCRIPTIVE CODE:</u>
Religious normativity	• <i>I</i> as a leader. • <i>I</i> as a man of God. • <i>I</i> as a responsible person. • <i>I</i> as a provider and a source of security. • <i>I</i> as someone who practises self-control. • <i>I</i> as the head of the house.
Cultural normativity	• <i>I</i> as a family man. • <i>I</i> as a good lover. • <i>I</i> as a labourer. • <i>I</i> as a strong person. • <i>I</i> as an educated person • <i>I</i> as someone who values wealth. • <i>I</i> as someone with power.
The male dominance-male fragility cycle	• <i>I</i> as a gender advocate. • <i>I</i> as an unemployed person. • <i>I</i> as someone who drinks booze and smokes weed. • <i>I</i> as someone who experiences vulnerability and shame.

	• <i>I</i> in the fight against GBV.
Creative (re)interpretation of masculinity	• <i>I</i> as a believer that all are created equal. • <i>I</i> as a follower of Jesus' example. • <i>I</i> as a member of the RCZ.

Therefore, in the quest to explore how masculinities are lived and experienced in the Reformed Church in Zambia in a time of GBV (the dominant narrative highlighted in Chapter 1), four storylines (or overarching themes) were identified inductively. Each storyline comprises of a number of *I*-positions (or voices) in the dialogical self, which in turn feed certain behaviours, attitudes, and opinions. Although each storyline has a unique set of *I*-positions, storylines often overlap and intersect. Some *I*-positions also highlight that there are some definite complexities (discrepancies and tensions) when studying gender in a unique setting like Zambia. Often, these positions are more and goes deeper than mere expectations – they are inscribed on bodies, meaning that bodies become the surfaces on which socio-cultural and religious meanings are inscribed, and gender becomes the performance of these meanings (Connell 2005a:51).

The identification of these four storylines, could also be considered as the first stage in the reflexivity of the research. This implies informing the findings of this study within the metatheoretical network of knowledge, ideas, theories, science, and values that transcends this project (Osmer 2008:57-58), or – in Müller's terms – moving towards thickened descriptions through interdisciplinary investigation, following a transversal rationality (Müller 2017:92). The four main storylines would be engaged with in the next two chapters, and could be described as follows:

- (i) *Religious normativity*. This storyline aligns with the “biblical manhood”-narrative that Van Klinken (2016:109-130) identified during his research in Zambia. It involves the positions (or expectations) imposed and language used by the church associated with being a good man. Although it values some qualities which could be considered as “good” (like sobriety, headship, and responsibility), some expectations and norms are exaggerated (like religious authority), while others are considered to be unrealistic for many men (like self-control). This tension could be seen as a contributor to the male dominance-male fragility cycle, since exclusivity is implied when it comes to being a man in the church setting. In this study, these positions are considered as external *I*-positions (or influences from the outside).
- (ii) *Cultural normativity*. This storyline, like religious normativity, is based on external positions, and involves the expectations that society and culture (both general and specific) poses when it comes to being a man. This storyline values strength, labour, education, prosperity, power, and

traditional family values. This storyline has a strong patriarchal undertone, which does not only affect (or suppress) women, but men as well. Therefore, despite fostering male dominance, it is actually the cause of fragility and exclusion of many men, which brings us to the next storyline.

- (iii) *The male dominance-male fragility cycle.*²⁶¹ This storyline involves a continuous and dynamic interplay between dominance and fragility, which has already been identified in the beginning of this study. It does not consist of expectations, but rather the effects (or symptoms) of these expectations. This storyline has traces of both external and internal *I*-positions: in a patriarchal society, not all men are able to conform of cultural and societal norms, leaving them fragile, and in order to regain power and assert their masculine identity, they often respond with behaviour to assert their dominance. Therefore, stories related to gender-based violence and gender discrimination is prevalent in this storyline.
- (iv) *Creative (re)interpretations of masculinity.* This storyline does not contain expectations of manhood, but rather the church's creative responses (or theological *I*-positions) to religious and cultural normativity (including the transforming masculinities initiatives) when it comes to being a man. This storyline divulges ministers' responses to GBV, gender inequality, transforming masculinities initiatives. This storyline is also crucial in the final movement of a postfoundational practical theology, which involves imagining alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community (Müller 2017:92).

3.3.3.3 Third cycle of coding – “post-coding and pre-writing”

The second cycle of coding is followed by an in-between, “post-coding” and “pre-writing” phase (Saldaña 2009:185), which could be seen as an additional (or third) cycle of coding. This phase involves memo-writing, reflecting, reviewing, preliminary conceptualising, and presenting the findings comprehensibly (Frieze 2014:165; De Vos 2005:343-344; Saldaña 2009:33). Here it is important to remember that the four storylines that were identified in the previous section do not function separately – they intersect and influence one another. This is tangible in the current and the next section of this project. During this stage, Ward (2017:114-117) warns that one could be

²⁶¹ This storyline is already identified in Chapter 1. It claims that male dominance and male fragility are the two sides of the same coin; when men assert their dominance through practices, they are actually installing either their own or other men's fragility, and men's fragility (being vulnerable and emasculated) becomes the power and vigour behind men's strive for and assertion of their dominance (Connell 2009:6-8).

confronted with some ambiguous and contradictory positions. He advises the prevalence of the hermeneutical loop – the process that involves a continuous interplay between theory and practice – that focuses on both the “normal” parts of everyday lives (“that which comes naturally”), and the main topics and themes that arise from the data. For Ward (2017:114-117), positioning oneself *within* the research – to consider, reconsider and intuitively listen to the perspectives that speak to a researcher personally – is an essential part of theological reflection. Therefore, this section focuses on my own observations and reflections and serves as a precursor for further reflection and interpretation in the chapters that follow.

In terms of the dialogical self theory, it is essential to remember that both the respondent and I were participants in the interviews, each bringing our own perspectives, voices, opinions and/or unique *I*-positions (see Figure 2) into the conversation (Hermans 2001:255-256). Considering the theory of intersectionality, these *I*-positions are informed by and based on the multiple structures of power (or identity markers like race, class, gender, sexuality, culture, and religion) that both researcher and respondent embody, that do not exist independently, but inform one other (Kim & Shaw 2018:80). During interviews, both theories became palpable: researcher and respondents embodied differences in race, class, and culture, and had to participate in the interviews in their second language. Consequently, some positions could not be transferred or expressed as in their mother tongue. Meanings were lost in translation, and – in a way – language became a suppressive system where both researcher and respondent were vulnerable to misunderstanding and being misunderstood.

Language became an interesting site of enquiry. In practice, local vernacular and indigenous (faith) expressions (or positions) could easily be misinterpreted when one does not understand the context. For example: the RCZ has a history of distancing itself from the Pentecostal movement; in fact, resistance to Pentecostal influences has led to the expulsion of ten RCZ ministers between 1996 and 2001, after they had introduced Pentecostal tendencies into the practices and rituals of the church (Soko 2010:1). Twenty years later, the influence of the American-inspired Pentecostal (or evangelical) movement in sub-Saharan Africa is greater than ever before (Forster 2021:e-source),²⁶² and despite their aversion towards the Pentecostal movement, the theological language and expressions the ministers who participated in this study stereotypically signal the immense influence of Pentecostal theology. This includes references that men should be “Godly”, “Godlike” and “God-fearing”, and regular mentions of words like “biblical”, “power”, “blessing”, “prosperous” and

²⁶² The influence of American televangelists is undoubtedly weaved into African Christianity. American televangelists have a large following in many African countries, including Zambia, and they visit these countries regularly, espousing a theology of wealth and health (Parsitau 2020:e-source).

“flourishing”. When reviewing the history of Christian-Zambia and its current state, it is clear that Pentecostal theology has also seeped through to the common colloquial language, irrespective of the denomination. For this study, this is important, because this type of theological language is usually favourable towards masculine and patriarchal ideals, as it asserts and admires male dominance, strength, power, influence, success, and even misogyny. According to Parsitau (2020:e-source) this Pentecostal (or evangelical) language has not only promoted essentialist views on sexuality and gender, but it has also established collective conservative values and views on issues like marriage, abortion, and gay rights.

The flip side of this phenomenon is noteworthy: language that focuses on the vulnerability of Jesus Christ (his suffering, the cross, and his death), which plays a key role in my understanding of the gospel, was rarely mentioned, or referred to when asked about the application of the gospel in the field of masculinity in Zambia. This affirms Ellington’s (2017b:91) observation, which highlights the overemphasising of “success” and “succeeding”, and understatement of the cross and the suffering it represents in Christian-Zambia. During interviews, it was apparent that the average Zambian man does not look to Jesus on the cross – which symbolises weakness, pain, suffering, and powerlessness – for comfort. For Zambians, and the RCZ in particular, the emphasis would rather fall on Jesus the Victor, the Powerful, the Healer, the One who did miracles and conquered death (Ellington 2017a:62). During Easter of 2019, the following inscription was made in my field journal:

*Good Friday was not a quiet day of reflection on the Cross and the suffering of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ solidarity with human suffering was only briefly mentioned. Jesus’ resurrection, however, was already celebrated on Thursday night. It is as though the vulnerability of the cross is overlooked. This is ironic, since African/Zambian men, maybe even more than the average man, know the cost of suffering. Associating with Jesus on the cross in terms of his suffering was underemphasised, and the power and victory of Easter Sunday was overemphasised.*²⁶³

During interviews, respondents were also questioned on their position when it comes to gender equality and the RCZ’s role in promoting gender justice. RCZ ministers habitually distinguished themselves from other denominations, self-appropriating themselves as the promoters of gender justice. It is ironic that *male* respondents methodically emphasised the church’s commitment to promote gender equality in the church. For example:

²⁶³ This observation aligns with that of Dustin Ellington (2017a:62).

R4_M: *We have got a lot of females that are pastors [...] there are female elders or deaconesses, female pastors, and I think we are happy. Because we mingle with them, and we learn so much from them. We learn so much from them, and we are just on the right track.* (4:40)

These accounts were often followed by an ambiguous, or even contradictory statements,²⁶⁴ like:

Interviewer: [Do] *you have [...] women in your church taking leadership roles? Do men accept them?*

R3_M: *It is not a struggle. They [men] easily accept it. But it is a struggle to accept a female minister. I have a female minister and each time she comes up to take a service I do get feedback that's negative [...] You know there are a lot of imaginations about a woman and a man, the way they live in their homes, just thinking and imagining: 'Maybe this woman is doing her "menzies" [menstruation] and she is in front leading us.' So, the question of purity the question of cleanliness all those things, cultural issues.* (3:33)

Since 2000, women can become ministers in the RCZ. Women are also included in RCZ leadership on presbytery and synod level. Female respondents, however, frequently expressed their concerns that their voices are not being heard, and their presence often overlooked. The following three excerpts substantiates this:

Interviewer: [How is it being a female reverend in the RCZ] *Is it difficult?*

R8_F: *Yes, sometimes it's difficult. Sometimes it's difficult. [...] [Y]ou find that there are some opportunities that come, but the priority will be men. And, for example, if there are these – maybe – very important programmes like ordination, you will find that you get a programme, you find that the people that are given tasks are only male. There is no female given to do something on that particular days. To me, I felt sometimes it's really tough, because it shows you are not regarded. And you are maybe regarded as if you cannot do that particular task.* (8:17)

R7_F: *I would say, when a woman takes up maybe the leadership role, the top leadership role, men they would not want to listen, or to respect, or to follow whatever instruction come from the woman. Because they think it is*

²⁶⁴ When reviewing the data, it is apparent that respondents sometimes changed their views or positions during interviews. This could be ascribed to the internal negotiation or dialogue, or the positional involvement of the respondent while participating in the interview (Hermans 2001:253, 274).

them [men] that are to rule, it is them that have a final say; it is them that have the knowledge, wisdom, and the understanding. And sometimes this power becomes so much, that they begin to do things in a wrong way. (7:14)

R10_F: [...] looking at my experience [...] there have been times that I have had to ask myself as well, you know: 'Am I welcome here?' [...] I do get an impression sometimes, that, you know, my presence sometimes, people still have – and some of my fellow male ministers still have – mixed feelings. They still find it difficult to accommodate. [...] [They] still feel women do not add value. There are still that few that haven't done much. It's still a process, you still fight that. And that forces you to go an extra mile as a minister, because you have to prove a point. As a pioneer, it is not an easy position that I sit in, because any mistake I make, people will be able to refer to say: 'This is why we were saying women cannot be leaders, this is why we were saying women should not be reverends.' So, it's like you are in this open space where all eyes are on you. You know, and that's not very easy. Especially on my part it puts me in a very, very difficult situation because you always have to be careful [...] (10:3)

Generally, both male and female respondents were sympathetic towards men and the harsh realities and high socio-cultural demands they face. This courtesy, however, is not necessarily extended to women. Also, here it is significant to recognise that although gender inequality may appear as a top-down phenomenon (men as the custodians of gender equality), it is reinforced and maintained from the bottom-up as well. Zambian theologian, Edwin Zulu (2015:94) argues that even though men have agency to eradicate culturally sanctioned inequality and gender discrimination, in many African cultures the primary transmitters and custodians of cultures in society (and in church) are actually women. Here, it is ironic to note that even though some cultures identify as “matrilineal” (like the Chewa tribe), women are also contributors and enablers of patriarchal ideals. Respondents affirmed this assumption:

R1_M: In the past it was accepted. It was acceptable for a man to beat up his wife in a married relationship. And the women agree that if a man doesn't beat them, he does not love them. So culturally it was accepted. (1:24)

R8_F: [...]before you get married, you are prepared to be married. They will tell you: 'You have to respect a man, you have to respect your husband. A

man is a man.’ [...] No matter what you do, what career you have, but you need to respect a man. [...] [S]o women are being infringed by their rights, because men are supposed to be men. (8:15)

Building on Zulu’s hypothesis, the data also show that women’s reinforcement of patriarchy could not be solely attributed to socio-cultural expectations, but also seen as an act of desperation to survive. In the words of respondent R7_F:

The women, because they are unemployed, they have no say, their rights, they are denied their rights. Because it’s like, if I leave this man, if I stand up and claim my rights, where do I go? There’s no one to help me. This man, who has got a financial muscle, is the source of my survival. (7:7)

The latter would not only be classified as “gender discrimination”, but also as a form of “gender-based violence”. In her article *Gender-Based Violence: The Zambian Situation*, Sidney Mwaba (2016:106-107) highlights how the economic dependency, and women’s tolerance of violence as a means of survival not only asserts men’s authority over women, but also contributes to women’s lack of confidence, feelings of powerlessness, despair, guilt, fear, and inadequacy, which, consequently, guarantees their silence about the matter (Mwaba 2016:109). All the respondents who participated in this research project agree that gender-based violence is an issue in Zambia and in their congregations, and many shared stories on how they encourage women to talk about it:

R5_F: So, as a woman reverend I try to balance not to be so tough with the men, [with letting] the women know that they can also do something and they should not keep quiet, by teaching them not only to be strong, but that they have to speak [out] when something is wrong. (5:13)

During interviews, despite their apparent commitment to fight gender-based violence, it did seem as though the RCZ’s emphasis falls on reconciliation and forgiveness, rather than divorce and/or restitution. This could be ascribed to the RCZ’s strong emphasis on family values that stem from the heritage of the Christian missionaries and the country’s Christian character (Cage & Rueda 2018:26; Cage & Ruenda 2019:9). As one respondent stated:

R1_M: [...] [our] church preaches equality between men and women, but it is difficult for this message to be received by the people, because the people have grown up in this patriarchal system where whatever a man does is correct. [...] I usually take advantage to teach young couples or would-be couples [during] marriage counselling or premarital counselling [...] that

issues of gender-based violence are not good. And I tell the people that I counsel: 'When he beats you – your husband – you must tell me as your pastor, so that I should be able to help you, because when you tell your family members, issues will be blown out of proportion.' (1:24, 1:25)

Women are disproportionately identified as the victims of gender-based violence, but there were few instances where women were labelled as offenders.

R6_M: Shooting your wife [...] There are such circumstances! Stabbing your wife. Imagine that – one stabbing his wife! And there was another gruesome act where one guy bashed his wife with his car. You know, it's issues. Also, another perspective of GBV could be [when] a man doesn't supply for his wife. He's married, has [a] legal wife, and he takes care of [...] his concubine, for example. Maybe he forgets to do his responsibilities, and the wife suffers mentally, physically, spiritually, because of this. And this is happening right now, it's actually very rampant right now. (6:5)

R8_F: Gender-based violence, I think [...] where some would understand that it's just when one is beating up the partner. But even just emotional torture its violence. [...] I had one member – the husband was a truck driver, and the wife was just a business woman. And so, this lady was really violated by the husband. Each time he would go out, the moment he comes back [...] you find midnight, they are coming to my home, dragging each other. The wife being assaulted. It could be either way: the wife assaults the husband or the husband assaults the woman. (8:10)

During interviews, even though each respondent referred to gender-based violence, not a single respondent referred to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It appears gender-based violence is restricted to wife-beating, and its definition is not extended to rape, sexual assault, nor its relationship to HIV/AIDS statistics. In the past, faith-based organisations have undoubtedly played a significant role in promoting family values to prevent the spread of HIV. Initiatives include encouraging abstinence before marriage, discouraging child-marriages and risky sexual behaviour (including multiple partners and unprotected sexual encounters), and elevating monogamy as God's will (Cage & Rueda 2018:26-27). Other churches (irrespective of denomination) blatantly proclaimed that HIV/AIDS is God's punishment for promiscuous and immoral sexual behaviour (Van Klinken 2016:37-38). However, the spread of HIV in Zambia disproportionately affects women through certain culturally

sanctioned (or patriarchal) practices (and prevailing realities) of sexual abuse, rape, defilement, incest, forced prostitution, sexual cleansing (including widow cleansing), initiation practices (or rites of passage), early/under-age/child marriages, and the misconception that having sex with a virgin can cure one from sexually transmitted infections (Mwaba 2016:110; Zulu 2015:90-92).

Even though all respondents indicated an unfavourable attitude towards gender-based violence, it was never described in terms of sex or sexuality. The resistance to talk about sex and sexuality could also be attributed to the influence and heritage of missionaries who strongly emphasised sexual purity (Cage & Rueda 2018:2), or the current influence of pious Pentecostal theology (Forster 2021:e-source), while others simply ascribe this to culture. According to Bastien, Kajula and Muhwezi (2011:2), discussion of sexuality is considered a taboo in many sub-Saharan African cultures, and the lack of communication about sexuality – especially parent-child communication – has contributed to certain behaviours undoubtedly connected to the spread of HIV. This was affirmed in interviews.

R6_M: [...] *our people don't talk about sex just openly. It is seen as a taboo. [...] a woman [...] is taught not to talk about sex, [or] even ask for sex from her husband. It's only the husband who should ask for sex. And a woman should not show that she's sexually active, only a man. So, it has come from the culture, from tradition, and it has continued, unfortunately, in the church.*
(6:13)

Even though HIV/AIDS was not mentioned in interviews, it is crucial to acknowledge the major contribution of African women theologians – especially the *Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians* – who had already identified HIV/AIDS as a fundamental issue in the early 2000s.²⁶⁵ Phiri (2003:8), for example, identifies HIV/AIDS a gendered phenomenon that disproportionately disadvantages and affects women. Not only are women (and teenage girls) more susceptible to HIV due to physiological differences (unprotected vaginal sex), but they are also greatly affected by the outcomes thereof – which include the burden of caring for HIV/AIDS patients at home, being burdened with the economic/financial consequences and medical costs. Phiri (2003:10-14) adds that the cultural differences and religious beliefs on women's position in society also contributed to this statistic. Violence against women (or gender-based violence) and HIV are inseparable – the one intricately connected to the other. Likewise, gender-based violence cannot be restricted to physical violence or wife-beating alone – sexual (or sexualised) violence (sexual abuse/rape) is the “[...]”

²⁶⁵ *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians* was founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, and is considered a platform where African women – irrespective of their class, race, culture, nationality or religion – can speak for themselves about their experiences on issues that concern culture and religion (Phiri 2003:5).

communication of patriarchal power, reining in, enforcing submission and punishing defiance” (Gqola 2015:21; Phiri 2003:14-15).

According to Mwaba (2016:106-107, 109-110), Zambian women are expected to be powerless, submissive, and obedient. In the marital context, violence against women is perceived as socially acceptable, and rape is not condemned – even though Zambia has one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the world (Mwaba 2016:110). Apathy toward intimate partner violence could be the result of the practice of *lobola* (the “bride-wealth” or “bride-price”), which is the cultural practice where the groom transfers money, cattle, and/or other goods to the family of the bride prior to a marriage, and even though this does not mean that the bride becomes the groom’s slave, it may imply that she (her body and sexual/reproductive rights) belongs to the groom (Elphick 2012:71-72).²⁶⁶

R10_F: [...]men have always seen women to be properties. [...] Even before they are pronounced husband and wife, a man is taught that you are in charge, you are to control the woman. So, it’s from that perspective that you see men becoming so strong so dominating in some of these relationship or marriages. [...] [B]efore the marriage itself, a man pays something, and that payment, they feel like they have bought this woman, [...] he has all the rights to do as he wishes on her. So, the misunderstanding on what the dowry means – the bridal price – that bridal price has brought a lot of issues. And if somebody wants to come in, you know the man would say: ‘Are you the one who paid this money? I am the one who paid this money. Because I paid I have the right to beat her.’ (10:9)

Women, therefore, do not have power over their own bodies when it comes to sexual decision-making – they have been “paid for” by their husbands. According to Elphick (2012:71), this is an important indicator of women’s status in society, and even they are not “slaves”, it does seem as though they are “owned”. Since sexual contact is the consequence of gender relations (relations where men hold the power, and women have been constructed as powerless), many women (and girls) feel uneasy to demand safer sex to protect themselves from HIV – especially from their husbands (Van Klinken 2016:41). This is also worrisome when considering the fact that the practice of polygamy (where a man has more than one spouse) is still considered culturally appropriate, and in some ways seen as desirable and commendable by many African men (Elphick 2012:74). This is also the case in Zambia.

²⁶⁶ According to Elphick (2012:72), early missionaries criticised *lobola*, saying that it is an assault on (their) ideal of womanhood and marriage, and since this practice could easily be construed as a transaction in which the bride’s father sells the reproductive and sexual rights of his daughter.

R9_F: *According to the youth [...] you are popular, living a good life, a luxury life, having so many girlfriends. To them, they think that's a good life. [...] Then coming to the middle-aged, for them being a good man, according to this context, according to them, it is having wives, [and] so many children. Not wife, but wives. [...] Many wives. (9:2-9:3)*

Related to this, framing “talking about sex and sexuality” as a taboo could also be extended to their unwillingness to talk about sex and sexuality outside these binary, heteronormative structures. During interviews, homosexuality was hardly mentioned. During the pilot study, the few respondents who were willing to give an opinion, did so with strong anti-gay sentiments. Again, scholars, like Ananyev and Poyker (2021:366,371), attribute this intolerance to the heritage of the missionaries and European colonisers, as well as the current (and growing) influence of American-inspired evangelical movement in sub-Saharan Africa. Homosexuals are stereotyped as “sex maniacs” with “a serious distortion”, who violate the Divine Order and God’s intention for heterosexual marriage (Van Klinken 2016:111-112). Respondents’ disgust is based on the general opinion that homosexuality is “[...] un-African, un-Christian and a Western invention”, which undermines traditional family values and gender roles (Van Klinken 2016:111). These responses – both the silence and the timeworn reactions – reveal Christian-Zambia’s efforts to justify and sustain heteronormative values, while also reinforcing a hierarchical order between men and women; a hierarchy that same-sex relationships disrupt and inconvenience (Van Klinken 2016:155).

It is noteworthy that male respondents were more upset about homosexuality than about gender-based violence. It is also noteworthy that male ministers, when talking about gender-based violence, immediately exclude themselves from the problem.

R4_M: *Bad men are the ones who is beating up their wives. The bad men [...] they are drunk. The bad men they do not provide leadership for their families. The bad men do not provide for their families. The bad men are not at church. (4:9)*

Gender-based violence is considered a “they” problem, not a “we” or a “me” problem, even though it was mentioned that some ministers also beat their wives or impose patriarchal values in their households.

R5_F: *[...] in my experience I have heard, and I've seen some men, even pastors, beating their wives, divorcing their wives. (5:10)*

Not taking personal responsibility and exempting oneself from “the bad men” could be considered as ironic, since the church is home to some of the behaviours it condemns. This is also the definition of “virtue-signalling”²⁶⁷ – a term coined by conservative writer James Bartholomew in 2015 (Waterson 2020:e-source), which implies conditional (or false) solidarity or sympathy with the oppressed, usually expressed in the form of moral outrage, typically from a place of privilege, and predictably in service to one’s own agenda (Jordan & Rand 2019:e-source).

This response, however, is not restricted to Zambian churches. In her research on sexual violence in African countries, Elisabet le Roux (2012:51-52) found that even though many African churches openly advocate for gender equality and preach against gender-based violence, many survivors disclosed that they received little support from the church and were faced with stigmatisation and discrimination instead. Le Roux (2012:52-54) attributes this to “inculturation” – the process where the church is often the bearer of culture. Therefore, the cultural perceptions of sex, sexuality and gender influence the church’s views on sex, sexuality, and gender – and consequently also their views on gender-based and sexual violence – which results in the “imprisonment of the gospel” (Le Roux 2012:53).

Here, it could also be argued that forbidding men to express themselves is also an example of the “imprisonment” by the cultural ideals.

R9_F: [...] if a man confronts a woman to say: ‘This is what I’m feeling’, then he is considered to be a weak man. I would rather die than revealing these feelings to a lady. [...] Very few men in Zambia does that [...] – even those who are educated. [...] If a wife dies, then will the man show the emotions in public? [...] It’s wrong, it’s wrong. [...] I think it’s cultural, because [of] our forefathers – that’s what they used to teach our boys. So, I think it has just stuck in us. Whether you are a Christian, you are educated, [...] I think it’s just, we inherited it [...] That’s how it is. They say men you are supposed to be like this – that’s the end of the story. Even if the funeral is for your wife or your child, you have to show that bravery [...] You shouldn’t break down. And I believe they should, because it’s one way of grieving. (9:14)

²⁶⁷ Also referred to as “moral groundstanding”, which implies “moral talk” without living up to the ideal (Tosi & Warmke 2016:198).

In conclusion, the narratives mentioned in this section highlight the complexity and ambiguity of positions when it comes to studying gender within the RCZ and Zambian context. To better understand how masculinities are lived and experienced in Zambia and the RCZ, the four storylines that emerged from the data become the premise of further discussion and imagining (or working towards) alternative interpretations that point beyond the community (Müller 2017:89).

3.4 CHITENGE 3: MEMORIES AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

3.4.1 Supplementary data – informal but informative dialogues

Apart from the formal qualitative interviews, the informal discussions and personal experiences in the field as recounted in my field journal are also considered a crucial source of information in this research project.²⁶⁸ During these discussions, it was evident that there is a growing interest in gender studies and an undoubted support for gender equality in Zambia. The overwhelming approval of Zambia's current (woman) vice president, her excellency Inonge Mutukwa Wina,²⁶⁹ and the support for the gradual increase of female ministers in the RCZ can attest to this notion. But despite the inclusive language and theoretical support for gender equality, it seems as though there are still forms of culturally sanctioned gender inequality in Zambia (Zulu 2015:81). In conclusion to this chapter, as well as a preamble to the next chapter, the next section contains a field journal entry that focuses on what happened after interviews were conducted (informal discussions). Together with the two narratives in Chapter 2, this narrative not only affirms the themes and topics that were identified in this chapter but contains additional information on how I experienced the everyday lived experience of RCZ ministers. Therefore, it serves as a fitting transition to the interdisciplinary discussions in the next chapter.

3.4.2 Field journal entry: discussions during dinner

Irrespective of their tribe, Zambians are considered hospitable people and gracious hosts. This is backed by the repetition of the phrases "*you are welcome*" and "*this is your home*", as well as invitations to attend worship services and prayer meetings, to tour the church grounds (which often

²⁶⁸ Informal discussions, and personal observations and experiences are considered a credible source of information in the ethnographic method of doing research.

²⁶⁹ Since the field work of the thesis was done, Zambia has elected a new president (Hakande Hichilema) and Zambia's second woman vice president (Mutale Nalumango).

is a construction site),²⁷⁰ and regular invitations to visit the homes of RCZ ministers. Despite prior hesitation and feelings that my presence would be an inconvenience, these invitations were sincere and without ulterior motives. “*It is considered a great honour and blessing to receive a guest in our home,*” one respondent said. Even though I was aware that my credentials did contribute to receiving an invite, I accepted every invitation.

Meetings like these were reciprocal: for *me* it was an inadvertent field of investigation and window into the daily lives of ordinary Zambian people (in accordance with a “lived religion” approach); for my *hosts* it was an opportunity to talk about theological issues, South African politics, and inquire about possible study opportunities. I was asked about my research out of genuine interest and found out that many young (mostly male) reverends in the RCZ are busy with postgraduate studies.²⁷¹ These visits became insightful opportunities to ask supplementary questions about gender and culture in Zambia. Even though a visit to a Zambian household was not particularly unusual, there were some noticeable differences that contributed to a deeper understanding of the context in which the research was conducted, and additional information that supplements the empirical data.

Upon arrival at the home of my host, it is apparent that most households consist of an extended family. Along with the host’s own children, there will be grandchildren, a nephew, niece or cousin, a mother, grandmother, aunt and/or uncle staying with them. This gesture substantiates the Zambian virtue of selfless hospitality and familial/communal responsibility – an African virtue which sprouts from the philosophy of *ubuntu*.²⁷² Introductions are not rushed, and a host will spend ample time to explain who everyone is. Almost every family member repeats the refrain “*You are welcome.*”

There was a recurring (and awkward) custom in some homes that both fascinated and bothered me. Upon being called (or summoned) by the “man of the house”, his wife (and/or daughter/niece) would enter the room on her knees, shake my hand, and then sit on her knees until she is dismissed. She would respond to questions, but not ask any question of her own. I later found out that in some cultures this custom is considered a sign of respect, and that most households do not abide by this practice anymore. It is notable (and ironic) that this particular custom specifically occurred in the homes of

²⁷⁰ Many ministers shared the story of their congregation, and it was significant to note that nearly all male reverends in the RCZ are planning, raising funds for, or already busy with a building project. This entails modernising the interior of the church, making structural changes to enlarge the building, and even demolishing the building to make room for a new, more modern one. “*Young reverends think they should build a cathedral,*” one responded said. Having a building project is an important way to get noticed by the synod, and it proves their ability to lead and take charge.

²⁷¹ Education – especially postgraduate studies – contributes to one’s status, and it is supposedly a prerequisite for becoming involved in the synodical committees, and an induction to church leadership.

²⁷² The term “ubuntu” could be translated into “I am because we are”.

respondents who are well-informed on gender issues and used inclusive language during interviews. This was followed by some internal questions, like: *Is this not a blatant example of patriarchy? Do men feel that gender equality only applies in public, but not at home? Do men practise multiple forms of masculinities, depending on the setting? Is it the men or the women who maintain these practices?*²⁷³

After being welcomed and introduced to the family, the men would usually socialise and relax in the living room, while the women prepare the food in the kitchen. Inadvertently, this gesture affirms the stereotypical gender roles traditionally ascribed to each gender. In some Zambian households, the women would remain in the kitchen for the entirety of the visit. Despite the many Zambian households where both the husband and wife will socialise with their guests, interactions with women would generally be limited to the formal introduction, dishing up, and clearing the table afterwards. This intrigued me, and I asked my hosts about the responsibilities of both wife and husband in the household. According to my hosts, more men are marrying women with careers – especially in urban areas – and even if they earn more money than their partners, a wife will still oversee the domestic chores, which include cooking for guests. There are numerous households where men and women share the workload of the domestic chores, and households where the woman of the house joins us in the living room, but during most visits men usually sat in the living room until the food was ready. “*The husband is considered the head, provider and protector of the house,*” one respondent said, “*and the wife is the caretaker of the household*”. Being the caretaker of the house implies cooking, cleaning, raising children, and looking after her husband (Banda 2014:31; Zulu 2001:32).

During informal conversations, some respondents insinuated that being married and having a family is considered an important step towards becoming a real man (Banda 2014:28). For example, male theological students at JMU would be encouraged to get married before they enter the ministry. This could be attributed to the church’s strong emphasis on family values, the church’s response to toxic masculinities and gender-based violence,²⁷⁴ to protect the reverend from being “taken advantage of”,²⁷⁵ and/or to assure that a (male) reverend is “taken care of” (physically, emotionally and – although not admitted publicly – sexually).²⁷⁶ Female theological students, however, are neither

²⁷³ See Zulu’s article on culturally sanctioned gender inequality (Zulu 2015:81,94).

²⁷⁴ The RCZ feels that having “godly men” in the leadership positions is important in the fight against GBV and being married or having a healthy marriage is part of this criteria – it is “part of God’s plan for men”.

²⁷⁵ This came up a few times in conversations: it seems as though well-educated, high regarded men with a stable income are often the victims to inappropriate sexual advances.

²⁷⁶ Considering Zambia’s stance on homosexuality, this could also be an attempt to maintain/assert the RCZ’s heteronormative character.

encouraged, nor discouraged to get married, and even after entering the ministry, they would still be responsible for the domestic chores.

Before dishing up, everyone washes their hands with water and soap, since Zambians eat with their hands and rarely use cutlery.²⁷⁷ The man of the house would customarily pray for the food, but in some households, the children did the prayer. Usually, a meal will consist of *n'shima* (balls of stiff maize porridge), *rape* (a vegetable similar to spinach, prepared with tomato and onion), and either beans, fish or chicken. “*Every Zambian woman should be able to make these traditional dishes before she gets married,*” one host informed me. In some cultures – especially in rural areas – before marrying, the future bride is obligated to visit the family of her future husband to cook for them, to get to know them, and prove herself as a fitting spouse. In some cases, she would also do domestic chores, spend a night at the house or in the village of her future in-laws, and, although not admitted in public, this visit would sometimes entail (secret) sexual activity (Banda 2014:12-14).

In the Chewa culture, there is a mysterious traditional practice called the “*cinamwali*”, which is a type of initiation most Zambian girls undergo before getting married (usually after reaching puberty). During this practice, on the beat of a drum and while wearing a *chitenge* dress, girls are cut off from the outside world, taught how to dance seductively, and how to please their husbands sexually by older women. Students at JMU informed me that many Zambian men expect their future wives to attend this type of training, and it is not strange to hear that men send their wives back to her family or have affairs with other women, justifying it with the argument that their wives did not satisfy them sexually.²⁷⁸ Modern women in urban areas do not necessarily subscribe to this practice, and prefer a (Western) kitchen tea to undergoing *cinamwali* (Sibomana & Meulenbeek 2011:e-source; Gwaze 2019:e-source; Banda 2014:14-15). Customs like these seem to endorse girls’ submissive role in relationships, while enabling men to thrive.

Curious whether men also must prove themselves, my hosts replied that men are mentored in other ways to become real men. Despite men’s expectation for women to undergo preparations and initiations like the *cinamwali*, men are not taught how to satisfy their wives in the bedroom (Sibomana & Meulenbeek 2011:e-source; Gwaze 2019:e-source). Since it is considered a taboo to talk about sex in public, men can ask elders questions in private, but rarely do this out of fear of being ridiculed. However, men are taught that they are supposed to be the providers and protectors of the family; they

²⁷⁷ One host said: “*Abusa, when you eat with your spoon, you will not get full. You must eat with your five fingers.*”

²⁷⁸ This was backed by more than one respondent in multiple informal conversations.

should be responsible, and the source of discipline and wisdom (Zulu 2001:24-31). The ability to pay the bride price (or *lobola*) is the final proof that you are able (or “man enough”) to care for your family, and therefore a testimony of one’s manhood. In urban areas, the custom of *lobola* has been adapted to the changing times,²⁷⁹ and although it is not necessarily considered an obligation, many men still pay the bride price as a sign of respect to the future in-laws (Banda 2014:13). During my time in the field, I have met many single men who weren’t married because they could not afford the *lobola*, as well as men who had to borrow money to get married, and they must pay it off in monthly instalments. “*Marriage is for rich men*” said one respondent who felt that the whole institution of *lobola* results in feelings of inferiority, anxiety, and loss by both men and women.

In some traditions, the marriage is only considered “completed” after the birth of the first child (Banda 2014:20). Having children is considered a sign of blessed marriage in Zambia, and, depending on the culture, the announcement of having a baby boy would often be seen as a greater blessing than having a baby girl.²⁸⁰ During my time in the field, one respondent opened up about the trauma he and his wife went through after a miscarriage, and the fact that they could not (or did not want to) share this information with their family or the congregation. He did not care whether they have a boy or a girl, as long as the baby is healthy. In some African cultures, when a marriage is not fruitful, the blame usually falls on the wife, and several “causes for her barrenness” are considered, including infidelity, suspicion of witchcraft, or God’s (or the ancestors’) disapproval of the marriage. These speculations are considered valid grounds for divorce (Banda 2014:20-21).

While sitting around the table, my hosts and I would share many stories. I would usually explain how the *chitenge* is used as a metaphor throughout my study. During one visit, the reverend called his wife to explain the significance of a *chitenge*. “*Every woman should own around ten chitenges*”, she said. Women are taught to wear a *chitenge* around their waist when doing domestic chores like sweeping and cooking, and when they go to church. Even though women wear pants and shorter dresses to town, at home it is considered respectable to cover your knees.²⁸¹ By simply wrapping a *chitenge* cloth around her waist, she not only establishes her role²⁸² in the household, but also shows respect to her husband, family, and elders. The *chitenge* cloth is considered a decent and convenient dress

²⁷⁹ For example, instead of the bride price, the husband would pay for the wedding.

²⁸⁰ According to respondents, matrilineal cultures like the Chewas would consider the birth of a girl great blessing, but in patrilineal cultures the birth of a boy is preferable. This could be attributed to the fact that boys are considered more “useful” due to their strength when it comes to doing manual labour (Banda 2014:31).

²⁸¹ This could be traced back to the pious theology installed by European missionaries in the Victorian times and is upheld under the banner of Zambia’s Christian identity (see Mbewe 2017:e-source).

²⁸² See Butler’s theory of gender performativity, later referenced in this chapter.

code when receiving guests, as it enables her to do all her chores without exposing herself to strangers. It is as though a Zambian woman “puts on” certain gender roles when she puts on the *chitenge*. Her husband interjected here and added that no one is supposed to see a woman’s body except for her partner, and therefore women should wear a *chitenge*, comparing the wear of a *chitenge* to the garments of Arabian women.²⁸³ There were some gruesome but unconfirmed stories of women who were beaten when they refused to wear a *chitenge* in public and at home (Mwaba 2016:113).

Guests do not help with clearing the table, or the cleaning up after the meal. After offering to help, one host replied with the words: “*Please do not help – you will embarrass my wife.*” Out of respect, I did not help to clear the table. Men do not help with domestic chores when entertaining guests – this remains the primary role of the woman of the house. Every single host invited me to return and sent me off with their best wishes. Usually, my hosts would have arranged a driver or transport so that I do not have to call a taxi or go to the nearest bus stop. This is a reaffirmation of their hospitality.

During one visit, as I was being escorted to the door, I became very aware of loud music playing nearby. “*The tavern next door makes a lot of noise until early in the morning.*” Alcohol is not tolerated in the houses of my hosts, and the RCZ is very strict on alcohol and beer-drinking since it usually goes hand-in-hand with violent behaviour.²⁸⁴ Taverns and beer-drinking, however, are evident in some forms of masculinities. According to my host, young men drink beer to prove their manliness, and the tavern becomes the space where men can engage in risk-taking behaviours (such as violence, making sexual advances on women, and substance abuse) to gain admiration from their peers and assert their masculine identity (or a certain form of masculinity). In some male circles, if you do not drink alcohol, engage in regular (heterosexual) sexual activity, and if you are unable to use violence to prove your dominance and strength, you are considered weak and you are compared to a “girl” or “sissy”. This form of masculinity is different from the form of masculinity that my hosts and many reverends (and members) of the RCZ embody. The young women at these taverns also drink alcohol, they wear modern (which some would call “promiscuous”) clothes, and there is no *chitenge* in sight.

²⁸³ Comparing Zambian women to Arab women unlocks questions on the controlling of women’s bodies, the exclusion of women in the decision making that concerns their bodies, etc.

²⁸⁴ This could be traced back to the early days of the RCZ, where missionaries encouraged a sober lifestyle as the will of God. Early converts were expected to give up beer drinking, commit to monogamy, and denounce all forms of ancestor worship, spiritism, sacrifices and indecent customs and initiations which are usually associated with beer-drinking (Cronje 2003:67; Cronje 1981:154; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:79).

On my way home, I made notes on these conversations, and identified some practices applicable to this research project. During this meal, it was apparent that the hegemonic masculinity²⁸⁵ of a male reverend in the RCZ is a heterosexual, married, sober, educated man, who is reliable, responsible, and hospitable. He would be (or should be) busy with a building project, and/or pursuing (or considering) postgraduate studies and be affirmingly aware of the RCZ's road to gender equality. While attempting to adhere to the hegemonic norm – which Van Klinken calls “the ideal of biblical manhood” (Van Klinken 2016:117) – some RCZ reverends would also have to observe some traditional, gender-specific customs that reinforces the heteronormative patriarchal norm. At the tavern next door, however, there is a different form of hegemonic masculinity – a man would assert his manliness by the amount of alcohol he consumes, the clothes he wears, the car he drives, multiple sexual encounters with different women, risk-taking behaviour, which includes asserting his dominance with violence and aggression.

Despite the two opposite forms of masculinities visible in proximity, I did not identify with either since I subscribe to another form of hegemonic masculinity as a middleclass, Afrikaans, white man. This observation confirms that there are different dominant cultural stereotypes of masculinity visible in each society, community or group, and that hegemony intersects with other contextual factors such as race, class, and culture (Langa 2020:13-15).

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I set out to study the real, in-context lived experiences of RCZ reverends. In a sense, the primary research question posed in Chapter 1 (*Considering the interplay between male dominance and male fragility, how are masculinities lived and experienced in the Zambian church, in a time of gender-based violence and HIV, and despite the numerous “transforming masculinities” initiatives to combat it?*) has been answered in this chapter. The stories of participants were foregrounded in this chapter, and to recognise themes and patterns (or dominant storylines), the dialogical self theory was incorporated as analysing tool. Four dominant storylines were identified, namely *religious normativity*, *cultural normativity*, *the male dominance-male fragility cycle*, and *creative reinterpretations of masculinities*, and these storylines will be revisited in the next two chapters. In terms of the metaphor, I set out to obtain material in the field, and upon my return, I have cut the *chitenge* material into smaller patches, and arranged them into a pattern, creating an inventive design.

²⁸⁵ The term “hegemonic masculinity” is the prevailing, socially sanctioned and generally approved form of masculinity in a certain context, and it would be discussed under the work of Connell in the next chapter.

From this point forward, these patches – the *I*-positions, ideas, themes, patterns, topics, and unique insights – would be (re)interpreted and discussed within a larger body of scholarship.

CHAPTER 4: IMAGINING BODIES AND BODIES OF IMAGINATION²⁸⁶

4.1 “COMPLEXIFYING” BODIES: INTRODUCTION TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

The four main storylines that were identified in the previous chapter affirm that gender is situated in a complex and messy network of interacting ideas, practices, and interconnected systems (Ward 2017:11). This chapter aims to “add complexity” to the main storylines. “Complexifying” involves (or necessitates) widening the metaphorical table, engaging with the unfamiliar (other, new, and/or outside voices), intending to add depth to current and uncovering new layers of knowledge related to the topic (Ward 2017:103-104). Since Africa is already very complex and diverse in terms of its civilisations, histories, cultures, religions, ethnicities, identities, and language, Ngwenya (2018:242-243) argues that “complexity” is a value that should be embraced. Complexity does not aim to prove, verify, or criticise the local narratives; it does acknowledge their situatedness whilst trying to avoid overgeneralisations, gender essentialism, and the strict binaries posed by heteronormativity. “Complexifying” our understanding of situations and contexts entails putting “the familiar” and “the understood” through more levels of analyses with the aim to comprehend its complex, multifaceted, multilayered, and multivalent nature, and therefore, adding depth to the understanding and knowledge (Ward 2017:103-104).

In other words: apart from the bodies that wear the *chitenges*, there are other “bodies” that study its significance as well. In terms of the metaphor of creating a *chitenge* quilt, this chapter could be compared with the *basting* of a quilt. Basting entails pinning cotton-, polyester-, wool- or bamboo-based batting to the patchwork, which is then stitched together. It could be compared to a type of “filling” which strengthens, substantiates, and upholsters the quilt’s patchwork. Accordingly, this chapter aims to “add substance” to (or to look beneath the surface of) the narratives and storylines identified in the previous chapters – this time with newfound insights and vocabulary gathered in the academic works of those considered experts in the field. In a way, this chapter aims to “go deeper” than those narratives on the surface and position the narratives of the respondents and researcher within the larger web (or a larger body) of intersecting narratives concerning gender, sex, sexuality, race, class, and geography.

²⁸⁶ This refers to both the interpretations of bodies, as well as interpretive bodies, aligning with Cooley (1994:63) who says that bodies are not just the object of interpretation, but also the resource of human imagination.

This chapter draws inspiration from the sixth movement of an African postfoundational practical theology, which, according to Müller, guides one to consult the dynamic network of ideas, discourses, and culture in the broader context (Müller 2017:94). According to Ward (2017: 18-19), this involves the practice of *selecting/editing*, which entails active listening and distinguishing between relevant sources, with the intention of envisioning something else. It also aligns with the *normative task* in Osmer's (2008:4, 139, 163-164) practical theology, which involves "attending to" empirical data, and entering an interdisciplinary dialogue with theories of the arts and sciences that exceeds (and precedes further) theological reflection. The insights of noted scholars (or "specialists") in the field of sex, sexuality, and gender would be discussed, with the intention to introduce new (or outside) *I*-positions (voices or narratives), which would not only contribute to and enrich the conversation on transforming masculinities in the RCZ, but also assist both researcher and researched to navigate themselves through (and reconstruct their) current positions and opinions on the topic (Hermans 2001:255-256).

4.2 DIALOGUES WITH OTHER BODIES: MOVING FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY

4.2.1 Motivation for interdisciplinary dialogue

The previous two chapters reaffirmed the fact that there are multiple narratives (and storylines) that simultaneously come into play (or intersect) when doing research on gender in the Zambian context. It also highlights the fact that the context divulged an abundance of data even before referring to theory. In the fourth movement of a postfoundational approach to practical theology, Müller (2017:92) poses that one should reach beyond the boundaries of their epistemic boundaries, since this would not only deepen the understanding of the context (or practice), but also pave the way towards thickened description of these storylines (Park 2010:2; Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:30-31). In line with Browning (1991:46) and Osmer (2009:160), practice and theory should not be viewed as separate entities, but as reciprocal voices that continuously informs one another. Both argue that one should be in constant dialogue with contemporary cultural experiences and practices when doing theology.

In Browning's *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (1991), he addresses the gap between theology (or theory) and practice, and poses that this gap can be bridged by simply following the nature of the human thought – moving from practice to theory, and from theory back to practice (Browning

1991:9).²⁸⁷ Browning's practice-theory-practice model of practical theology petitions for a constant interplay (or cycle) between practice and theory, and he underscores the necessity to *re-examine* – and sometimes *re-interpret* – the classic sources that shaped present practices, bringing a new understanding into practice (Browning 1991:39). Browning's practice-theory-practice model implies a circular movement that ends where it started; Osmer compares this process to a "spiral" that goes beyond and deeper than the preliminary understanding, with new insights constantly emerging (Osmer 2008:11). In practical theology, this is known as the "hermeneutical loop",²⁸⁸ and it suggests a dynamic process that moves from a pre-understanding based on past experiences to new experiences, new understandings, a new way of thinking, new feelings and – possibly – the reconstruction or transformation of established relationships and narratives (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar 2018:30-31).²⁸⁹

The hermeneutical loop is also prevalent in Müller's approach to practical theology. Müller (2017:86) calls practical theology an "in-between discipline" that breaks down the walls between various theological disciplines, the humanities, and social sciences. Even though practical theology advances from the local contextual situation (Macallan & Hendriks 2013:137), "[...] the practical theologian is confronted with, and exposed to multiple realities" (Müller 2017:87). Local narratives tell stories of concrete situations and contexts; they are not isolated entities, but rather part of a dynamic network of ideas, discourses, and cultures (Müller 2017:94). A postfoundational practical theology not only guides a researcher to engage the "raw material" in dialectical dialogue with cultural resources, the human sciences, and the Christian classics (Macallan & Hendriks 2013:138), it also enables communication across boundaries and the transversal²⁹⁰ movement between disciplines and contexts (Müller 2011:3; Park 2010:2). Transversal discussions are characteristic to postfoundational practical theology, and an outflow of Van Huyssteen's "wide reflective equilibrium", which according to Müller (2011:3-4) is the "in-between" position of reflection that provides a

[...] safe but fragile public space we have been searching for, a space for shutting back and forth between deep personal convictions that finally result

²⁸⁷ This is also conceptualised in the book *From my own to the unknown and back to my own* (Van der Westhuizen, Greuel & Thesnaar, 2018).

²⁸⁸ Also referred to as the hermeneutical cycle or hermeneutical spiral.

²⁸⁹ In terms of the dialogical self theory: introducing new (or other) *I*-positions into the conversation not only supplement current (or old) positions, but also measures the current motifs and positions, leading to thickened – even transformative – descriptions (Hermans 2001:274).

²⁹⁰ Cross-disciplinary dialogue can take on many forms: interdisciplinary, intradisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or metadisciplinary. Its intention, according to Osmer (2008:163-172), is either to find areas where disciplines correlate with one another (shared goals, mutual understanding), to transform one another (opposites converse with the intention to find a middle ground or reconcile), or to inform one another on intersecting issues (divergence of disciplines that share resources of rationality). The latter is also the definition "transversality" – the rationale followed in this chapter.

from interpersonal judgements. An interdisciplinary approach, not on the basis of assimilation, but on the basis of transversal rationality.

Müller (2017:86) also calls practical theology a “multilingual discipline” – a discipline that simultaneously speaks the language of different disciplines (including the humanities, social sciences, and theology); it is a discipline known for its “[...] fluidity and dynamics which enables it to move eloquently between various fields of study” (Müller 2013:1). Since practical theology does not only involve the theological world, but all domains of the human existence, the importance to engage with other academic disciplines – or interdisciplinary reflection – is encouraged (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:215,222; Van den Berg 2014:4). Building on Van Huyssteen’s postfoundationalism, and to “[...] deepen and broaden the sensitivity for the human condition within human society and religious communities”, Müller proposes opening the boundaries between theology and other disciplines within humanities and social sciences (Müller 2011:5). In accordance with Van Huyssteen (2006:9),

[i]nterdisciplinary discourse, then, is the attempt to bring together disciplines or reasoning strategies that may have widely different points of reference, different epistemological foci, and different experiential resources.

When thinking in terms of the influence of the social sciences, and its strong empirical values when it comes to understanding human nature within a religious context, interdisciplinary investigation in practical theology becomes inevitable (Müller 2013:2).

Interdisciplinary dialogue and a strong, positive relation with modern human sciences is considered advantageous when doing theological research, since it acknowledges that all reflections in human culture are contextually embedded, it acknowledges that tradition is shaped by interpreted experience (or “experiential understanding”), it transcends the fixed biblical paradigm (or “foundationalism”), and equips a researcher to recognise patterns within the interpreted experience (Van Huyssteen 2000:428-429). While pointing beyond the confines of the local culture and community, it also fosters a sensitivity for marginalised groups, which is considered a strength in the postfoundational approach of doing practical theology (Müller 2011:5; Park 2010:3; Osmer 2008:163-164). Having knowledge of a theoretical framework, or placing oneself within the larger, ongoing discussions is considered beneficial for this study, and it enables a researcher to build on the knowledge of those in other disciplines, resulting in new insights (new *I*-positions) when revisiting the same places, asking the same old questions, and reconsidering current (or old) positions (Ganzevoort (2009: n.p.).

It is however important to also acknowledge that interdisciplinary conversations may be vulnerable to meaninglessness and insignificance when the various opinions and positions are merely accommodated (or tolerated) without moving toward a new understanding and imagining alternative narratives (Müller 2013:3; Müller 2017:94). Creating a collage of different meanings – or the assimilation of different perspectives – can easily become mere theological responses to contemporary issues, aiming to achieve universal rationality without ever truly engaging or acknowledging the social embeddedness and contextuality of knowledge (Van Huyssteen 2000:428-429). This results in a one-sided dialogue upon encountering conflicting language and theories they cannot accommodate (Müller 2011:2; Ganzevoort 2006a:3-4; Osmer 2008:163-164). In order to counter this, a postfoundational approach suggests following a transversal approach.

4.2.2 A transversal approach to interdisciplinary dialogue

Aware of the challenges interdisciplinary dialogue may offer, Van Huyssteen provides a “philosophical window” – a rationale or hermeneutic – that helps to frame interdisciplinary research, namely “transversality” (Van Huyssteen 2000:429). The term “transversality” is the term used in many disciplines to indicate its intersectional, interwoven, or convergent nature, without necessarily achieving coincidence (Osmer 2008:170). In its nature, transversality is suspicious of relativity and subjectivity, it distances itself from both fundamental and non-fundamental claims, and it attempts to “[...] envision a responsible and workable, tangent point between disciplines” (Müller 2013:3). Van Huyssteen calls transversality an epistemological option that points beyond the extreme forms of absolutism, and pluralism; protesting the fixed and prescribed, imperialistic, and ideologically driven rationales by moving towards a postmodernist rational of interpretation that integrates all ways of thinking, without a modernistic totalisation (Van Huyssteen 2000:430). As a rationale in postfoundational, interdisciplinary dialogue, transversality enables meaningful conversation between the diverse disciplines (Müller 2013:3). In Van Huyssteen’s (2006:19) own words:

In this multidisciplinary use of the concept of transversality there emerge distinct characteristics or features: the dynamics of consciousness, the interweaving of many voices, the interplay of social practices are all expressed in a *metaphor* that points to a sense of transition, lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting, and conveying without becoming identical.

In other words: transversality is an attempt to achieve maximum communication among different levels and meaning; it is a rationality that encourages cross-disciplinary dialogue between different

fields with values and perspectives that overlaps (intersects) on certain issues (Osmer 2008:171). It makes room for the “in-between” theories that do not necessarily fall into a specific category, and it assists a researcher to understand that the borders between different disciplines are not set always in stone – they are, rather, porous and absorbent in the areas where they intersect. The social and contextual embeddedness of people’s stories in real life becomes the locus of transversal rationality (Van Huyssteen 2006:10); embodied persons and not abstract beliefs are prioritised, and its aim is not to describe a general context, but to confront one with specific and concrete situations (Müller 2011:3). Transversal rationality – through interdisciplinary dialogue – reaches beyond the concrete, local, and contextual ways of thinking, and acknowledges epistemologies that are shaped by traditions (or theory) within the broader networks of beliefs (Müller 2011:3).

The postfoundational approach to practical theology embraces the ethnographic and narrative approaches of doing qualitative research. Concrete situations are valued, people’s lives are framed as “works of art”, and the experiential understanding of the practical theologian is involved as well (Müller 2013:3-4). Practising practical theology in this framework of thought, according to Müller, “[...] makes conversation with natural and other sciences possible without creating anxiety” (Müller 2013:4). Even though the beliefs, meaning, and actions of a practical theologian are embedded in a certain life world – an “irrevocable contextuality” shaped by a network of social and cultural traditions – the postfoundational notion of rationality compels the practical theologian to consult beyond the boundaries of their discipline, their local communities, groups, and cultures, toward plausible forms of interdisciplinary dialogue (Van Huyssteen 2006:24; Muller 2013:4).

4.2.3 Notes on sex, sexuality, and gender²⁹¹

In response to and emanating from the previous two sections, this section involves different disciplines and includes some clarifying notes on sex, sexuality, and gender. Although it only scratches the surface of the knowledge on the topic, it contains some important points of departure considered beneficial for this chapter. Throughout this study, I have attempted to widen the metaphorical table, moving beyond the realm of theological study, bridging the illusory borders between theology, the humanities, and social sciences to better understand and interpret masculinities in the RCZ (Müller 2017:86; Macallan & Hendriks 2013:137).²⁹²

²⁹¹ This section does not aim to cover the extent of the field of sex, sexuality, and gender, but rather give introductory notes, descriptions and definitions that would be prominent in the sections that follow. It also refers to contextual understandings of sex, sexuality, and gender one encounters in the work of the specialists.

²⁹² More on this in Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

Accommodating a plurality of voices does not impoverish this project; in fact, it does the opposite. For example: defining sex, sexuality, and gender in theological terms alone would be inadequate when considering the intricacy of the field. Practical theologians have stressed the importance of incorporating other academic disciplines in practical theological research. In the interpretive and normative tasks of Osmer's (2008:163) practical theology, for example, he not only suggests interdisciplinary dialogue – he encourages it. Broadening the scope of theological inquiry is also the premise of “lived religion” (Schoeman & Van den Berg 2016:214). Graham (1996:104-105) does this when she borrows vocabulary and theories from other scholarship to define gender (its identities, roles, and relationships) as the collectively constructed social practices (or systems of power) in which human beings can either serve as agents that reproduce current institutionalised patterns, or mediators of transformation that install new forms of knowledge, values, and social patterns.

When questioned on the relevance of this section, I argue that practice necessitates it and that the postfoundational approach encourages it. Postfoundationalism is a context-specific approach that is suspicious of so-called “grand narratives” and values both the concreteness of local experience and general dialogues, paying equal attention to *practice* and *theory* (Park 2010:2; Van der Westhuizen 2010:2). In this research project, when I entered the field (or “*practice*”) and asked respondents to give their own definitions of sex, sexuality, and gender, their answers helped me to realise that they subscribe to the hegemonic narrative that does not acknowledge gendered identities beyond heteronormativity. Despite a module in gender studies, regular gender workshops at Justo Mwale University, and repeated assertions that gender equality is of utmost importance in the RCZ, most respondents struggled to differentiate between sex, sexuality, and gender. Most respondents defined sex (male/female) and gender (man/woman) in binary, heteronormative terms, and some even implied that they are synonyms. Some respondents understand the complexity of the field, and defined sex in biological terms and gender in terms of power relations, but the majority oversimplified gender to the specific roles ascribed to a particular sex, implying that one's sex determines one's gender.

After consulting relevant literature (or “*theory*”), it became clear that this is an “essentialist” view of gender, and it classifies gender as a fixed, heterosexual system limited to its reproductive purpose (Thatcher 2011:19). These heteronormative and binary views of gender also support the theological doctrine that divides humanity into the two distinct and immutable sexes; it claims that man and woman were made (by God) for one another, and therefore rejects same-sex desire and attraction (or

homosexuality), as well as alternative expressions of gender (Thatcher 2011:20-22).²⁹³ These definitions are restrictive and narrow. It keeps male dominance intact, since it does not acknowledge (or strongly disapprove) the existence of the broad spectrum of sexual identities outside of the heterosexual, binary norm, nor all the research done to prove it.²⁹⁴

As a researcher who follows a postfoundational approach, I prefer to subscribe to gender constructivism, which, unlike essentialism, poses that gender cannot be defined by biology alone; that gender is situated within a complex web of power structures, recognising the fact that gender is context-specific, relative to social and cultural conditions that are politically sanctioned and administered. I agree that gender intersects with (is inter-reliant to and influenced by) sex, sexuality, race, culture, class, and religion (Thatcher 2011:20; Tamale 2011:2; Van Klinken 2011:290).²⁹⁵ Sex, sexuality, and gender are topics that have been extensively researched – separately and conjointly – in a large number of academic fields; in the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology and gender studies, sex, sexuality, and gender are usually treated as separate, non-interchangeable entities, but they do intersect and influence one another.

Unlike *sex* – which refers to the physiological (hormones) and physical (anatomical) differences between males and females and their ability to reproduce – *sexuality* focuses on sexual attitudes, practices, and feelings (McGivern *et al.* 2014:368, 382). Therefore, sexuality can refer to short-term, physical and pleasure orientated encounters, as well as a person's capacity to form deep and lasting relationships; it is based on relational, emotional, and physical interactions, and should not be limited to erotic (or physical) desire (Thatcher 2011:4). Likewise, a person's *sexual orientation* refers to the emotional, romantic, and physical attraction one feels toward a particular sex, and although many communities still expect one to express their sexuality in accordance with heteronormative norms,²⁹⁶ the existence of intersex persons,²⁹⁷ and also homosexuality,²⁹⁸ bisexuality,²⁹⁹ pansexuality,³⁰⁰ and

²⁹³ The opposite of gender essentialism is “constructivism” which poses that gender is not defined by biology – it is relative to social and cultural conditions and contexts, and the rules thereof is politically and socially sanctioned and administered (Thatcher 2011:20). The latter is the preferred definition within the broader scope of scholarship.

²⁹⁴ For example, simply referring to the reality of asexuality and a-romanticism – people with no interest in sexual or romantic connections – prove the complexity of the field, and that one's sexuality does not define one's personhood (Roberts 2020:6).

²⁹⁵ No two masculine identities that are the same; sex, sexuality and gender should not be understood for its sameness, but for its plurality, its relational and non-hierarchical difference, and its capacity to evolve and assume newer forms (Ngwenya 2018:18;208).

²⁹⁶ Heteronormativity involves encouraging (or even enforcing) heterosexual relationships.

²⁹⁷ Persons who were born with both male and female reproductive organs.

²⁹⁸ Same-sex interest (romantic feelings toward a person of the same sex).

²⁹⁹ Interest in (or romantic feelings toward) both male and female sexes.

³⁰⁰ Interest in a person despite or irrespective of their sex or gender (including transgender persons).

asexuality³⁰¹ proves that sexuality is not a strict dichotomy, but rather a continuum. The discrimination on the basis of one's sexuality is called homophobia, and it is usually based on misinformation, stereotypes, and/or religious, societal, and cultural norms and beliefs (McGivern *et al.* 2014:369-372).

Gender, on the other hand, is usually defined as the socially (and culturally) constructed systems or distinctions associated with *being* male or female and expressed in terms of being a *man* and *woman*, and/or the extent to which one identifies as *masculine* and *feminine* (McGivern *et al.* 2014:368; Louw 2008:380). Gender is habitually expressed in binary terms, with certain gendered attributes ascribed to each sex, for example: men should be masculine, and women should be feminine. Gender could therefore be compared to a type of “cultural script” – a list of expectations written and prescribed by society. Both Butler (1999:xii) and Connell (2009:11,67-68) define gender as “a way of doing” (or “performing”) the body according to this cultural script, in a society which is socially, culturally and historically constructed as well. Gender is acquired through socialisation (family, education, peer groups, and mass media) and informed by the overgeneralised attitudes, traits, and behavioural patterns ascribed to men and women (McGivern *et al.* 2014:376). Foucault calls this “bio-power” – discursively produced mechanisms of power that take charge of (or govern) human bodies by constituting the practices that simultaneously reinforce the system it installs (Foucault 1978:88-90).

When talking about gender, sex, and sexuality, bodies are implied. Gender – which is defined as a way of “doing the body” – does not automatically align with one's sex or sexuality; men, for example, can have stereotypical feminine traits, and same-sex, romantic interests. This confirms that gender – like sex and sexuality³⁰² – should not be viewed as a fixed entity, but as fluid. Many societies (like Zambia) would criticise terms such as *gender non-binary*, *gender fluidity*,³⁰³ *transgender*³⁰⁴ and *drag*,³⁰⁵ as well as the people that represent or embody them, since they disrupt or transgress the so-called “traditional” family values or “normal” ways of doing the body. Butler (1999:85-86), however, repeatedly asserts alternative expressions of gender have advanced our understanding of this complex field; those persons who “disrupt” or “transgress” the traditional gender norms have greatly contributed to the field of gender studies. For example, in his book *The Pink Line: Journeys across the world's queer frontiers*, Mark Gevisser (2020:xiii) refers to “nifty slogans” created by the

³⁰¹ No interest in sexual activity of any kind, and no romantic feelings toward any sex or gender.

³⁰² Especially when considering the existence of intersex, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer persons.

³⁰³ When a person's gender identity does not reflect or fit into the fixed binary (man/woman, masculine/feminine and heteronormative) norms according to societal expectations.

³⁰⁴ When a person's gender identity does not match their sex.

³⁰⁵ When a person impersonates another gender through clothes, make-up, and certain behaviours.

transgender movement that greatly contributed to the distinguishing between sex, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression:

My gender is between my ears, my sex is between my legs; my gender identity is who I go to bed as, my sexual orientation is who I go to bed with; sex is what I do with my clothes off, gender expression is what I do with my clothes.

Although presented and defined separately, one cannot deny the close relationship between sexuality and gender. In her celebrated article *Patterned Fluidities: (Re)Imagining the Relationship between Gender and Sexuality* (2007), Diane Richardson investigates this relationship. Richardson feels that with the rise of feminism, queer theory and Butler's theory of gender performativity, new areas of analysis and debate have been opened, the fluidity thereof accentuated, and gender and sexuality categories have undergone reappraisal and major shifts (Richardson 2007:458). Although metaphors of a theoretical knot³⁰⁶ and a closely entwined tangled web³⁰⁷ have been used to describe the relationship between gender and sexuality in the past, Richardson calls them too static, anchored, self-contained, and focused on themselves (Richardson 2007:465). After acknowledging the interconnectedness (or intersectional nature) of discourses on sexuality, gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, place, culture, religion, and society, she proposes a new metaphor that re-imagines the relationship between sexuality and gender. In this metaphor, she compares the relationship between sexuality and gender to a *shoreline* – a boundary in motion between land and sea that continuously shifts and shapes (Richardson 2007:469-470). She writes:

[...] we can think of the two hinterlands that frame the shoreline, the land and the sea, as gender and sexuality respectively. Where they intersect, the relationship between them, constitutes the shoreline. This is a dynamic relationship, affected by both local and global conditions, (micro and macro climates) in which land and sea bleed into each other and are inter-related (they shape each other), but are also distinguishable (Richardson 2007:470).

This metaphor makes room for emergence and disappearance of sexualities and genders; it allows the possibility of transformations; it acknowledges that this relationship isn't free floating but "[...] like shoreline construction has patterns to its fluidity" (Richardson 2007:471). This metaphor also makes sense when considering that both seas and the land are governed by laws and regulations, as well as local customs and practices that are routinely constituted and reconstituted within a particular context.

³⁰⁶ An assortment of woven strands that connects them to each other.

³⁰⁷ Co-dependent and the product of particular social and historical contexts.

This metaphor also recognises that just like there is both a predictability and unpredictability in the shoreline – gender and sexuality – and gives recognition for the possibility of the fluid interplay that exists in both structures and materiality, and in meaningful socio-cultural stories which results in social coherence and intelligibility (Richardson 2007:471).

This metaphor makes sense when considering the multiple narratives that come into play in this study. In continuation of this metaphor, it is important to acknowledge that the metaphorical shoreline would also differ from the physical shoreline – it is important to remember that Western perspectives on sexualities and gender cannot be applied to the African context with a “one size fits all” mentality. Connell highlights the importance to understand that gender is geographically and culturally bound (Connell 2009:11; Connell 2002:20). Not only does the African continent have a complicated history with the West (colonisation, missionaries, visitors, researchers), but there is also a unique variety of cultures, structures, rituals, and morality codes which are often generalised when referring to “African people” (Farley 2006:77-78).

4.3 BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE: LISTENING TO OUTSIDE VOICES

In a conversation on transforming masculinities in African Christianity, it is considered beneficial to place the main storylines within the broader scope of scholarship. This in an attempt to connect “the local” with “the general” (Müller 2017:91), to thicken (or complexify) the descriptions of the main storylines by introducing new *I*-positions (some *outside* of theological scholarship), and to recognise tensions between these storylines which would inevitably lead to new imaginations and alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community (Müller 2017:94). Giving a general overview of masculinities as an academic field, however, is a difficult task when considering the extensiveness of the field. Therefore, three authoritative and standard sources were recognised, which correlates with Browning’s (1991:39) practice-theory-practice model that encourages re-examining and re-interpreting the *classic* sources to bring new understanding to practice. Therefore, the contributions of three scholars, namely Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Raewyn Connell, were identified for this study.

Foucault, Butler, and Connell are considered specialists in the field of sex, sexuality, and gender, and their work were considered applicable for this study since all of them follow a post-structural/postfoundational approach, embodiment or corporeality is central to their work, they value

interdisciplinary dialogue,³⁰⁸ they are from different corners of the world,³⁰⁹ and they have made acclaimed academic contributions. Additionally, their work is considered “disruptive” and “transgressive” – they confront the institutionalised systems of power and domination that attain to essentialise sexualities and gender to a homogeneous heteronormative mould which demonises any form of sexuality that does not conform to the culturally hegemonic narrative of heterosexuality. It is also evident that Foucault, Butler and Connell’s work is the consequence of their own lived experience (or their corporeality) when it comes to sex, sexuality, and gender, and how it intersects with race, culture, class, and geography.³¹⁰

Apart from this, Foucault, Butler, and Connell’s work is considered fitting responses to the historical narrative in Chapter 2 (subsection 2.2.1), as well as the main storylines identified in the previous chapter (subsection 3.3.3.2), and this section could therefore be considered as a continuation of those narratives. For example, even though it is considered taboo to talk about sex and sexuality in public, it was a recurring topic in both the religious normativity (a man should practise self-control) and the cultural normativity (a man should be a good lover) storylines. Relatedly, when thinking about GBV, sex and sexuality do not necessarily involve pleasure, but rather the assertion of power. Also, in the historical narrative which focuses on colonial and postcolonial Zambia, modern notions of sexuality played a very important role in shaping (and repressing) views on sex, sexuality, and gender, which are important to highlight when talking about masculinities today. For these reasons, Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* is considered an important contribution, as it primarily focuses on intersection of power, sex, and modern sexuality.

Additionally, each storyline divulges the repetition of certain bodily acts associated with gender. For example, a man asserts his manhood by means of physical appearance, and attributes like strength, toughness, authority, and leadership. Asserting one’s masculinity can therefore be compared to a type of performance (or repetition of performances) in the public arena. This aligns with the work of Judith Butler who worked extensively on the subject of *gender performativity*. And finally, within the storylines it is clear that there are certain (power) structures that constitute what it means to be a man. It is also clear that one can find many masculinities in one context, which naturally establishes hierarchies where one expression of masculinity is usually favoured above the other. Raewyn Connell

³⁰⁸ Foucault combined history with philosophy and the humanities, Butler combines philosophy with feminist studies and other humanities, and Connell combines sociology with education, psychology and anthropology.

³⁰⁹ Foucault was French, Butler is from the United States of America, and Connell is from Australia.

³¹⁰ Foucault was a gay man, Butler is a lesbian, and Connell is a transgender woman.

has worked extensively on this topic, formulated the theory of *hegemonic masculinity*, and her work is considered standard when studying masculinities.

4.3.1 Michel Foucault: Bodies are the battlefield of bio-power³¹¹

The French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is considered one of the most prominent philosophers of our time. In his writing it is clear that he despises modern philosophy that only serves the needs of the modern (and privileged) bourgeois capitalist state (Gutting 2005:54, 60; Rabinow 1984:4-5).³¹² Foucault is critical towards “universality”, formal structures, and (so-called) absolute truths; he is sceptical of grand teleological narratives that were endorsed by privileged systems and universal systems of morality – Foucault feels that they do not provide effective responses to social and political problems (Gutting 2005:16,23,38,40; Rabinow 1984:4; Downing 2008:10). For Foucault, history should be told from a person’s experiences and be concerned with human concerns, since it then ends with a humanly meaningful conclusion (Gutting 2005:32-36; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Foucault considers lived experience (or a biological conception of experience) as the driving force in human thought (Gutting 2005:62; Downing 2008:7). There is a “grass roots” element to Foucault’s way of thinking, which could explain his affinities to progressive ideals, his resistance towards traditional bourgeois values, as well as his dedication to uncover and challenge the workings of power in society (Downing 2008:4; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source).

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault uses *genealogy* as a method of writing history.³¹³ This method is suspicious of “grand narratives” where human progress is considered triumphant and presents

³¹¹ See Foucault (1978:135-139).

³¹² This anti-bourgeois sentiment is visible in his written works: *Mental illness and psychology* (1954), *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961), and *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963). After publishing *The Order of Things* (1966), he became a world-renowned scholar. *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), and *Discipline and Punishment* (1975) are also considered ground-breaking contributions to the academy (Gutting 2005:1-2; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source; Rabinow 1984:11). Foucault criticised political and social systems informed by universal accounts of reasons and justice, responding that there are no external positions of certainty, nor supposed universal understandings beyond history and society (Rabinow 1984:4). As a thinker, Foucault was driven by the aspiration to pursue intellectual alternatives to the dominant poles of Marxist and existentialistic thinking, which influenced contemporary thinkers by providing models for “thinking out of the box” (Downing 2008:6; Rabinow 1984:13). Foucault believed that working across boundaries of different disciplines (“intellectual hybridity”) is important, since it highlights the blind spots and limits of each knowledge system (Downing 2008:20). He also believed that accounts on experiences of transgressions should always be involved, since it points beyond the limits of intelligibility, reveals the limited experience and limited understanding on certain topics (limits set by ourselves), and it pushes consciousness beyond the laws (or “logic”) set by human societies in the name of propriety (Gutting 2005:16-17; Rabinow 1984:108-109, 138). Foucault encourages the questioning of the way knowledge operates, stemming from his conviction that all forms of knowledge are inextricably connected to the workings of power, and contingent to its history (Downing 2008:vii).

³¹³ This method first appeared in *Discipline and Punishment* (1975). Genealogy views history as a number of small and multiple specific little changes operating independently of one another that lead to alterations in trends of thinking and operating in any given period (Gutting 2005:46; Downing 2008:14-15; Rabinow 1984:11).

history as single seismic shifts that brought change and progress. The central focus of Foucault's genealogical studies falls on the human body as the locus in and over which power operates; this implies that individual human bodies (people's own bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, and their own conduct) are considered the force that drives history – even more than thoughts, social institutions, and environment (Gutting 2005:46-47; Downing 2008:15; Rabinow 1984:11). In this section, the parts of *The History of Sexuality* that focuses on the repressive hypothesis, bio-power, and sexual liberation would be outlined, and then placed in conversation with the Zambian context.

4.3.1.1 Introducing “*The History of Sexuality*”

The History of Sexuality is considered Foucault's greatest, most original, and most personal contribution to the academic world.³¹⁴ Although he intended to write a multivolume series of books on a whole range of subjects within the field of sexuality,³¹⁵ only three volumes³¹⁶ of *The History of Sexuality* were published before his death in 1984.³¹⁷ *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, also referred to as “The Will to Knowledge”, was published in 1976,³¹⁸ and is still recognised as a key text when doing research on sex, sexuality, and gender, and it is seen as an inaugurator of queer theory (Downing 2008:87). Although this volume was intended to be the general introduction to the series that focuses on aspects of modern sexuality, the result was a dense and comprehensive account of Foucault's understanding of modern sex (Gutting 2005:44). Using a genealogical method, Foucault refers to an assorted of bodies of knowledge (or scientific disciplines) in modern society with the aim to showcase its intimate relation with power structures (Gutting

³¹⁴ There is no dispute that Foucault was a homosexual man. Foucault never publicly identified as a “gay man” nor side with gay activist groups. Biographers agree that the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* would have been Foucault most personal contribution to the academy (Gutting 2005:91).

³¹⁵ Proposed fields would have included “the body and flesh”, “children: women, mothers and hysteria”, “the perverse adult”, and “populations and races” (Downing 2008:87).

³¹⁶ *Volume 1: An Introduction* (or *The Will to Knowledge*), *Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure* and *Volume 3: Care of the Self*. All three were published before Foucault's death in 1984. Volumes 2 and 3 deals with ancient sexuality, and could be seen as “pre-histories” to *Volume 1*. A fourth volume, *The Confessions of the Flesh* was also planned, but never completed (Foucault 1990:12). *The Uses of Pleasure*, according to Foucault, “...is devoted to the manner in which sexual activity was problematised by philosophers and doctors in classical Greek culture of the fourth century B.C.” (Foucault 1990:12). *The Care of the Self* “[...] deals with the same problematisation in the Greek and Latin texts of the first two centuries of our era” (Foucault 1990:12), an era influenced by the Christian moral that perceived all sexual acts as evil (Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source; Gutting 2005:106). By studying ancient texts of the Greeks and Romans, Foucault sustained the idea that “the self” is not something that could be deciphered or emancipated, but rather, it is created and shaped by power and knowledge networks (Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source).

³¹⁷ At the age of 58, Foucault died of AIDS. Some argue this was the result of his fanatic search for extreme sensations and pleasures, which included using drugs and indulging in sadomasochistic sex (Gutting 2005:2; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source).

³¹⁸ The 1978 English translation by Robert Hurley was used in this study.

2005:92). This volume revolves around sexuality in the Modern (or Victorian) era in seventeenth to twentieth century Europe.³¹⁹

4.3.1.2 *Modern sexuality and the “repressive hypothesis”*

In *Volume 1: An Introduction*, Foucault opposes the “repressive hypothesis”,³²⁰ which presupposes the assumption that modern society had a suppressive attitude towards sex – an attitude that opposed, silenced, and eliminated all forms of sexuality outside of the sphere of monogamous marriage (Gutting 2005:92; Downing 2008:88; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Sexual pleasure does not feature in this hypothesis since it is not considered “useful” when thinking in terms of the political economical purposes of sex. Foucault (1978:9-11) however challenges the “repressiveness” of this hypothesis (the negation, condemning, and silencing of sex, and associating it with sin and guilt), whilst investigating the power dynamics involved. Despite the evidence for the “repressive hypothesis”, Foucault highlights the fact the invention of new discourses about sex resulted in sex becoming a field of scientific knowledge. This resulted in the establishment of sexuality as a new category of knowledge which not only controls and informs, but also dominates the discourse (Downing 2008:89; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Since modern fields of knowledge on sexuality are intimately connected to power structures in the modern society, and sciences of sexuality have laid down certain norms which are internalised and monitored, Foucault’s study is not necessarily concerned with sexuality itself, but rather how these forms of power penetrate and control everyday pleasures (Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source; Foucault 1978:11).

Despite the “prudishness” – along with the control, silence and censorship – usually ascribed to modern sexuality, Foucault argues that the repression of sexuality actually had the opposite effect: a “discursive explosion” – a multiplication of discourses concerning sex (Foucault 1978:17-18).³²¹ As

³¹⁹ The period this book focuses on is also the period of African colonisation, as described in Chapter 2 in this study. This book could be seen as a tool to understand the Western (and therefore colonial) views, positions, and opinions on sex and sexuality which inspired the laws that were also established in African nations, like Zambia, during the colonial period. For example, Zambia – or then North Rhodesia – was a British colony, ruled by the old British colonial sodomy laws, which prohibits and criminalises homosexuality. After independence, Zambia continued to rule and govern according to these laws, even though Britain amended their constitution on homosexuality in 1960 (Van Klinken 2014:265; Han & O’Mahoney 2014:9-10).

³²⁰ Foucault questions the so-called “repressive hypothesis”, the common Western narrative transferred from the eighteenth-century Victorian bourgeoisie which restrained, muted, privatised, and confined sexuality to the bedroom of a monogamous heterosexual couple for utilitarian and reproductive (or economic and political) purposes (Foucault 1978:3-4).

³²¹ This “explosion” of discourses on sex could be construed as constraining mechanisms, treating sex as a secret by limiting and coding it in accordance with economic and political guidelines, Foucault feels that treating sex as a “secret” effectively led to modern societies dedicating themselves to discovering, analysing, and even exploiting this secret (Foucault 1978:34-35).

Western societies underwent modernisation in the eighteenth century, the discourse on sex became a political, economic, and technical incitement that was rationalised, managed, and administered to. Sex was regulated through public policies and it became a concern to economic and political systems that focuses on wealth, population rates, labour capacity, and resources (Foucault 1978:23-25).³²² Even though it seems that sex was “repressed”, the truth is that discourse on sex was determining factor in a whole web of discourses (Foucault 1978:26).³²³ Discourses on modern sexual practices were primarily concerned with and centred around the prescriptive matrimonial relations (monogamous heterosexual marriage); breaking these rules or seeking strange pleasures (debauchery, adultery, rape, incest, homosexuality, marriage without parental consent, or bestiality) were condemned as violations of the law. In other words, heterosexual monogamy was deemed as the legitimate norm of “regular sexuality” and all other “peripheral sexualities” were considered sick, demented, unnatural, incomplete, and/or perverted by the agencies of control and mechanisms of surveillance that exercised power in the discussions on sex (Foucault 1978:38-39).³²⁴

Foucault describes the relationship between power and pleasure as a spiral: the powers of examination actually introduced perverted forms of sexuality, and the attempts to repress it had the opposite effect. Despite labelling the modern society as prudish, the sites in which pleasure and power emerged multiplied disparate sexualities (Foucault 1978:47-49). With the proliferation of sexual discourses, and in the quest for the truth of sex, scientific knowledge became increasingly preoccupied with (and flourished under) the perversions ascribed to sex (the hazards, aberrations, perversions, oddities,

³²² A question that arises within the proliferation of discourses is whether the reduction of sex and sexual practices to what is economically useful (population, labour capacity) and politically conservative (social relations), expels or excludes all practices not amenable to the economy of reproduction (for example casual pleasures, non-reproductive practices, sexual irregularity, childhood and old age sex, and homosexuality). Foucault feels that modern discourse (among other legal sanctions, pedagogical controls, and medical treatments) brandished a whole vocabulary of sexual abominations and perversions (Foucault 1978:36-37).

³²³ Sexual matters were increasingly put in discourse, and Foucault identifies four such centres of discourse: medicine (nervous disorders), psychiatry (mental illness, sexual perversions), criminal justice (crimes against nature, minor indecencies, insignificant perversions), and social controls (to protect, separate, and forewarn against perils). These sites radiated discourses and intensified people’s awareness of sex (Foucault 1978:30-31), and there wasn’t just a singular discourse on sex, but “an explosion of distinct discursivities which form in demography, biology, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, ethics, pedagogy, and political criticism” (Foucault 1978:33).

³²⁴ Peripheral sexualities, however, were not ignored; in fact, it became an obsession to put these sexualities in discourse to become areas where power and control is exercised. Through constant surveillance and scrutiny, the dangers of sex were identified and theorised (Foucault 1978:41-42). Fighting the dangerous perversities in children’s sexuality (incest and masturbation) became an obsession of doctors, teachers and parents and the base for the prescriptive sexual conduct in the school and family setting (Foucault 1978:41-42). Doctors and psychiatrists became obsessed with homosexuality (or “sodomy” as it was called), which was regarded as a criminal act, and the homosexual became the personage of medical and psychiatric investigation, awarded a category, a specification, and made into a principle of classification and intelligibility (Foucault 1978:43-44). In other words, as more power (or devices of sexual saturation) was exercised over the family and warned against the dangers of sex, the more perverse sexualities appeared in society; therefore, it did not lead to inhibition, but the multiplication thereof (Foucault 1978:45-46). Despite the attempts of bourgeois society to inhibit, contain and regulate sexuality through prescriptive behaviour mechanisms and the implantation of perversities, the result was actually a proliferation of discourses on sexualities and the multiplication of disparate sexualities.

pathological abatements, and morbid aggravations). These perversions as framed by scientific knowledge (biology and medicine) were backed by the economic-political structures and seen as a threat for the whole society (Foucault 1978:53-57).

Foucault hypothesises that the nineteenth century bourgeois capitalist industrial society “[...] did not confront sex with a fundamental refusal of recognition. On the contrary, it put into operation an entire machinery for producing true discourses concerning it” (Foucault 1978:69). Sex became an object of suspicion – interrogated and problematised to obtain the truth about it through confession and science. Discourses on sex were annexed by the academic elite, compartmentalised into disciplines, and expressed in a prescriptive manner, robbed from any forms of pleasure. Sexuality became an inherent part of a person that determines behaviour, and its truth needed to be interrogated and interpreted (Foucault 1978:71-73,78). With the West’s preoccupation with finding the truth of sex, ascribing all behaviour and problems to sex, it seems as though people are still unable to express their fullest truth of sexuality about it (Foucault 1978:77-80).

4.3.1.3 Power, sex, and sexuality: sexuality is a transfer point of power

In Foucault’s quest for obtaining the truth of sex and sexuality, he poses that it should not be analysed in terms of repression or law, but in terms of power, and power should be expressed in terms of what it does rather than what it is (analysed rather than theorised).³²⁵ Within the idea that power only represses sex and that law constitutes desire, power becomes framed as a negative force that only restricts, limits, dominates, and subjugates in order to demand obedience (Foucault 1978:85); it imposes boundaries and hierarchies despite being “useful” when it comes to governing (Foucault 1978:85-90). Rather than defining power in terms of its ability to dominate, subjugate, and pervade entire systems, Foucault gives a more complex and slightly elusive definition of power: Power is “[...] the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate, and which constitute their own organisation” (Foucault 1978:92). Simply put, Foucault sees power as the basic force inherent to every social relation that shapes organisations and institutions, and although the law is founded on it, power is not the law, but it is the force behind social formations. “Power is everywhere”, Foucault says (1978:93); not all-embracing, but comes from everything, produced from one moment, one subject, one social situation to the next. For Foucault, power is not an institution, a

³²⁵ Features of this analysis include the negation of the relationship between sex and power (in the form of limit and lack), the insistence on the rules that determine how sex should be understood, the thriving on prohibition and suppression, silences and censors, and being subjected to homogeneity and uniformity (Foucault 1978:81-85).

structure, nor a certain strength – it is the “name” given to the complex strategic situation as it emerges in society (Foucault 1978:93).

In order to understand power better, Foucault gives it an extensive list of propositions (Foucault 1978:94-85): power is not something one can acquire, seize, or share – it is diffuse, and exercised from all points in any relation (nonegalitarian and mobile); power is not positioned exterior to relationships (economic, knowledge, sexual) in a superstructural position, but rather in a productive role inside the immediate effects of divisions, inequalities, and imbalance; power is not a binary or top-down hierarchical system between rulers and the ruled, but rather manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play independently on all levels. Power is exercised with a series of aims and objectives, and power relations therefore are intentional (motivated by some sort of intent) and non-subjective (it supersedes the conscious will of those implicated). Resistance is an important part of power relations, and resistance is never external to power – “one is always ‘inside’ power, there is no escaping it, there is no absolute outside” (Foucault 1978:95). This does not mean that resistance is futile; occasionally radical ruptures appear within a dense web of power relations which could result in a revolution and should therefore be seen as a local and strategic part of power relations that constitute society (Foucault 1978:95-97).

Building on this, Foucault calls sexuality “[...] an especially dense transfer point for relations of power” (Foucault 1978:103) between a variety of subjects (men and women, young and old, parents and children, priests and laity, government and population). When thinking in terms of power relations, sexuality could be considered as a “linchpin” (a point of support) for various strategies, as it is endowed with the greatest instrumentality. Despite habitually being reduced to its heterosexual, matrimonial character and reproductive function, sexuality does not function in one single inclusive social strategy that highlights the manifold objectives and means employed in the sexual politics present in the intersection of sex (or gender), age group, and social class (Foucault 1978:103).³²⁶ In order to illustrate this, Foucault identifies four historically important strategic unities (or four epistemic moments) which produced mechanisms of knowledge and power in modern sexuality:

- (i) *The hysterisation of women’s bodies* (“The hysterical woman”)³²⁷

³²⁶ Although Foucault does not use the term “intersectionality”, it is evident that he was aware of the complex relationship between sex, age, and social class.

³²⁷ Foucault’s reference to “the hysterical woman” resonated with feminist scholars, since this highlights the patriarchal oppression of women’s bodies.

This strategy made women's bodies (the feminine body) the field of investigation within the spheres of morality, medical practices, and sociology. This strategy claimed that women were excessively sexual ("thoroughly saturated with sexuality"), an issue that was pathologised as "hysteria". The pathological sexuality of women (negatively portrayed as "the nervous woman") became an issue of concern within the public space, and society demanded that women's bodies needed to be controlled in order to maintain their biological-moral responsibility – reproducing population and mothering her offspring (Foucault 1978:104).

(ii) *The pedagogisation of children's sex* ("The masturbating child")

Children were seen as "preliminary sexual beings", whose sexuality was simultaneously framed as natural and unnatural, precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered, and whose sexual activity posed certain dangers in society (masturbation and incest). Parents, families, educators, doctors, and psychologists took charge of children's sexual potential through pedagogical means (Foucault 1978:104).

(iii) *The socialisation of procreative sex* ("The Malthusian couple")

Sexual activity was delimited to the responsible, economic, and political forms of socialisation, namely reproduction, and non-procreative (or recreational) forms of sexual activity were criticised. Birth-control practices fall under this strategy, as well as the Malthusian couple – the couple who have sex for recreational purposes (Foucault 1978:104-105).

(iv) *The psychiatrisation of perverse pleasure* ("The perverse adult")

Sexual instinct became a field of investigation in the medical and psychiatric field, and sexual anomalies were placed under the authority of clinical analysis. These anomalies were classified as mental pathologies, and corrective technologies (or treatments) were sought to treat these perversities (Foucault 1978:105).

These four strategies, which also became objects of knowledge, were preoccupied with sex, and although they seem to function as attempts to control, regulate, and conceal sexual activity, they actually contributed to the "production of sexuality". Foucault feels that sexuality is more than an obscure objective domain that needed to be regulated and defined by power and knowledge; it is a historical (and social) construct, produced by a dense network where "[...] the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourses, formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances" (Foucault 1978:105-106) are intertwined with the strategies of knowledge and power.

4.3.1.4 Bio-power and bio-politics

As highlighted in the four epistemic moments, bodies have often been the figurative and literal battlefields over which power were exercised. In pre-Modern societies, bodies were subject to the sovereign powers who claimed complete autonomy and control over people's life and death. In the Modern age the administering to, fostering of, and promotion of life became the dominate narrative, and rather than focusing on threatening to take life away, contemporary power focused on optimising and protecting the life of the social body (Foucault 1978:135-139). Foucault highlights how the "power over life" evolved in two forms: (1) *the anatomo-politics of the human body*,³²⁸ where the human body, through the procedures of power, was regarded (and controlled) as a kind machine for utilitarian and economic purposes; and (2) *the bio-politics of the population*,³²⁹ where the human body is regarded as part of a biological species, focusing on the biological processes (propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity) and how it is regulated (Foucault 1978:139).³³⁰

This background enables one to understand why sex is considered a political issue, since sex could be seen as a transfer point (or enabler) of both *anatomo-politics* (the disciplines of the human body) and *bio-politics* (the regulation of populations). This could explain the Modern era's preoccupation with sex, as it deals with both forms of bio-power.³³¹ A political (and social) construction of sexuality (or bio-power) is especially evident in the four epistemic discourses (previously referred to as four strategic unities) over the last two centuries: the hysteresis of women (medicalisation of women's bodies and sex) and the sexualisation of children were both examples *anatomo-politics*, which

³²⁸ This form complements the treatment of medicine in his book *The Birth of the Clinic*, which emphasises the political, social and economic significance of the medical norms that defines a healthy individual (Gutting 2005:96).

³²⁹ The protection, supervision, and improvement of the population as a resource; In capitalistic terms, sufficient medical care and education is necessary to ensure an adequate workforce (Gutting 2005:96).

³³⁰ With these developments, and the emerging of techniques that subjugated human bodies and populations, the era of "bio-power" has arrived – an era in which the deployment of sexuality is evident (Foucault 1978:140). As bodies became the machinery of production and subjugated to economic processes, bio-power is an indispensable element in the rise of capitalism. Bio-power in its many forms and modes of application (how human bodies became utilised in different institutions in the economic sphere, its developments, and maintenance) could also be seen as contributing factors when thinking in terms of segregation and social hierarchisation, since both *anatomo-politics* and *bio-politics* guaranteed relations of dominion and effects of hegemony (Foucault 1978:141). Although human existence has become the object of power and knowledge – something that needs to be understood, regulated, and controlled – bio-politics placed the nuance on the fact that people are *living* human beings. Even the juridical system (the law) was not interested in forbidding and condemning anymore, but rather normalising and optimising the conditions of life. It seems that "life" became the central issue of political struggles – the "right" to life, one's body, health, happiness, the satisfaction of needs (Foucault 1978:142-145).

³³¹ Sexuality became a theme in political operations, economic interventions, and ideological campaigns; its political energy and biological vigour was explored, and technologies of sex were directed at disciplining the body and regulating populations (Foucault 1978:145-146).

focused on the collective welfare of the family institution and the safeguarding of society, while the case for birth control (non-reproductive, recreational sex) and the psychiatrisation of perversions were regulatory interventions ascribed to *bio-politics* (Foucault 1978:146-147).

For Foucault sexuality is not necessarily considered a symbol of power, but rather the object thereof; an object that simultaneously excites and creates fear, which could explain the fact that it was taken control of and administered to (Foucault 1978:147-148).³³² This is also clear when thinking in terms of race and how the exertion of political power through certain devices of sexuality (family, marriage, education, social hierarchisation, and property) has favoured one race above the other (Foucault 1978:149).³³³ It seems that the bio-political organisation of power through the deployment of sexuality allows power to envelop through bodies more effectively than a juridical or deployment of alliance.

In the conclusion of *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Foucault questions whether talking about sexuality as the instrument of power has excluded “sex” itself from examination? Sex is more than the “thing” that supports the manifestations of sexuality; sex takes form in the different strategies of power. Within the developments in the deployment of sexuality, sex exists with its own properties and laws, and is considered more than just body parts, bodily functions, and physical sensations. Turning toward the four strategies of power (or the four epistemic moments), it is clear that sex performed a number of functions that made it indispensable: in the case of the *hysterisation of women*, women’s body were reduced to its ability to reproduce; in the case of *the sexualisation of children*, sex was seen as both present (anatomy) and absent (physiology), visible and hidden; in the

³³² Sexuality was “taken control of and administered to” by determining good marriages, inducing fertilities, ensuring health and longevity.

³³³ Even though race and racism are not the subject of *The History of Sexuality*, discourses on sexuality and the social construction of a historic moment eventually incorporates it. By restricting sexuality to the bourgeois culture, Foucault neglects crucial sites in the production of discourses of sexuality: in the practices of racialised bodies (Stoler 1995:3,7-8). Race played a crucial role in Europe’s contemporary thinking and social order, and in colonial studies the earliest technologies of sex date back to the eighteenth century where modes of sexual conduct were enforced in order to control populations – some of which were explicitly racially-biased and discriminatory. Foucault would have been aware of these policies that divided people according to race, culture, social status, and religion (Stoler 1995:24-26). Foucault presented sexuality as a complex process, and through deconstructing sexuality and its connection with the technologies of power, he recognises that history and culture play a crucial part in the social constitution of sexuality, sexual acts, sexual identities and sexual behaviour (Ngwena 2018:228). Stoler feels that race emerged from the technologies of sex intimately connected to bio-power, and that racism is a consequence of the racially and relationally coded bourgeoisie. Bio-power (the political and social construction of sexuality) however did not produce racism, but the biopolitics as both bourgeois and imperial form of modern power that focused on the population and the calculated management of life, surely did (Stoler 1995:33,53; Foucault 1978:139-140). Foucault’s study on the discourses of sexuality prompts the rethinking of colonial studies, since discourses on sexuality are saturated with tactics of racism, visible in the theories of Social Darwinism, eugenics, degeneracy, anthropology, philology, and social psychology as epistemic principles (Stoler 1995:205-207; Ngwena 2018:228).

psychiatrisation of perversions, perverted sex was seen as biological inadequacy; and in the case of the *socialisation of procreative behaviour*, despite the econo-political guidelines for sexual activity, sex for the means of pleasure surfaced (Foucault 1978:152-154).

Sex was able to function as both signifier and signified, as function and latency, instinct and meaning, knowledge and biology. It is apparent that sex does not precede social determination, nor is sex an autonomous agency that produces the effects of sexuality; sex is instead an internal element in the deployment of sexuality that controls bodies and their materiality, forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures (Foucault 1978:155). Sex claimed power over life (the Western ideal that love is worth dying for) and established the internal operating system of desirability that attaches one to the injunction to know and understand it. Although sex is historically subordinate to sexuality, sexuality is the historical formation (Foucault 1978:156-157). In search for the truth of sex and sexuality, we imbued it with so much importance to explain who and what we are and got caught up in the deployment of sexuality. The repression of sexuality was a mirage that distracted individuals to obsession. When the twentieth century people finally “broke away” from the sexual repression, protracted by Christian ascetism and bourgeois economy, they saw the complex deployment was moved by the power mechanisms of sexuality. Instead of focusing on “liberation” from repression, however, Foucault feels we should rather consider a possibility of a different economy of bodies and pleasures, reclaiming the autonomy of our own bodies, and in that way produce the truest form of knowledge. Attempts to “liberate” sexuality divulges one’s misunderstanding of the functioning of power relations in it (Foucault 1978:158-159).

4.3.1.5 *Can sexuality be liberated?*

Foucault concludes *The History of Sexuality* with the open-ended hypothesis that sexuality cannot be “liberated”. “Liberation” only means adhering to a new set of rules created by bio-power. Throughout his book, he argues that – despite the efforts of the bourgeois sex-scientists – there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach when it comes to studying sexualities, and that there are in fact – because of the proliferation of discourses on sex and sexuality – multiple forms and expressions of sexuality. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault describes how modern bodies of knowledge is intimately connected to power structures in modern society. He criticises those who restrict sex to a concrete natural biological referent and reduce sex to a body that needs to be controlled, and those who delimit sexuality to an abstract ahistorical constant. For Foucault, sex and sexuality are historical and social constructs dependent on certain power mechanisms in historical context (Farley 2006:18-19). By

framing modern sexuality as bio-power – biological knowledge as a basis for the socio-political control of individuals and groups – Foucault poses that in the discernment of the fundamental nature of individuals as sexual beings, individuals have become both the *objects* of disciplines of knowledge, as well as the *subjects* controlled by this knowledge (Gutting 2005:95,97,100).³³⁴

Foucault questions the modern ideal of “sexual liberation”, since it only leads one to reshape one’s life to a new set of norms. Liberation in terms of the expression of one’s true nature is just the repetition of what happened earlier – the internalisation of external norms (Gutting 2005:98). In Foucauldian terms, sexuality is considered as the direct result of modern power fashioned to administer living beings. He does not deny the repression of sex but poses that in their plight to uncover the hidden truths on sex, sexual scientists (doctors, psychologists, educators, clergy) produced sexuality as a new category of knowledge (Downing 2008:89). For Foucault, everything that is “normal”, “stable”, or “unquestionable” are mere constructions, which implies that sexuality is a transfer point of power that creates more desire than it represses. Desire, according to Foucault, is the result of cultural and social forces (power), and it is historically determined (Farley 2006:20).

By framing sexuality in terms of bio-power, *The History of Sexuality* inspired the emergence of transgressive sexualities. Even though sexualities cannot be “liberated” *per se*, Foucault acknowledged that it can be disrupted through resistance against the hegemonic structures. Foucault poses the idea that power does not work from the top down through hierarchy or oppression, but from the bottom up, through resistance; power works in a network of power relations with no single, true, pure law of revolt (Downing 2008:90). One example of resistance is feminism. Despite being critiqued for its masculine bias, overlooking the influence of class and culture on sexuality, and its focus on the Western middleclass, contemporary feminist scholars regularly refer to *The History of Sexuality* when reformulating concepts of power and identity in the homogeneous, oppressive field of patriarchy. His continuous reference to the hysterisation of women’s bodies as a mode of oppression, could be seen as a crucial contribution in women’s continual struggle for gender equality (Downing 2008:104-109; Farley 2006:22-23; Ngwena 2018:228).

³³⁴ See Connell (2009:67-68) who poses that bodies are both the *objects of* (bodies form the social structures) and the *agents in* social practice (social practice provide the conditions of new practices in which bodies are involved and addressed).

Another example of resistance is queer theory. Queer theory³³⁵ was born within the field of identity politics during a time when being (or “identifying as”) gay was considered politically dangerous. Although it is not considered as the only inspiration for the development of queer theory, Foucault’s work vastly contributed to deconstructionist (and post-constructionist) theories which are suspicious of purely biological and natural explanations of sex and gender. Foucault provides alternative strategies when theorising sexuality by problematising the “natural” categories of sex and sexuality, claiming that they are social and historically contingent. By posing that sex, sexuality and gender should not be considered as naturally occurring categories, but rather discursively constructed categories, his work is considered as a “identity-disruptive” text which dissociated conservative practice and politics by countering them and the identity labels given by medical disciplines, with an emphasis on bodies and pleasures instead of a desire for sex (Downing 2008:110-114; Ngwena 2018:233-234).

This connects to Foucault’s idea that identities are constituted through acts and bodily acts – the principal idea in the work of Judith Butler – rather than discovered in psychoanalysis and knowledge production (Foucault 1978:157; Downing 2008:116). The focus on bodies and pleasures helps one “unlearn” the rules of patriarchy and move beyond sexuality as a primary register in which we make sense of ourselves. Downing (2008:117) writes:

Foucault’s proto-queer imaginings of relational possibilities defined by plurality and diffuseness – by a constant negotiation between the processes of self-creation and the disciplinary inscription of new forms of sexual relationality in social and legal codes – go far beyond anything we have seen translated into contemporary policy making and thematise the most challenging tension visible throughout Foucault’s work on self and relationality.

4.3.1.6 Stitching Foucault to the chitenge-patchwork

This is not the first time Foucault has been used in deliberations on sex, sexuality, and gender in the Zambian context; Van Klinken (2016:83-85; 129) refers to Foucault when discussing how

³³⁵ Queer theory was the result of the discourse to delink the relationship between sexuality and gender within the deconstructionist paradigm and was coined by Teresa de Lauretis in 1991 (Ngwena 2018:233). Queer theory has developed into an academic discipline that not only represents the rethinking of queer (LGBTIQ) cultures and politics, but also critiques the metaphysics of sex and gender that habitually essentialises sexual acts and identities and biologically determines it.

Christianity has installed certain technologies to regulate (or discipline) bodies throughout history. It has already been established that sex, sexuality, and gender are three identity markers that intersect, are governed by certain rules and laws (bio-power), and although they are independent, they affect and are affected by one another (Richardson 2007:471). There is no doubt that the Victorian views of sex and sexuality – which narrowed sexual activity to heterosexual monogamy and disputed all sexual “perversions” – influenced the beginnings of the RCZ mission. And when considering the politico-economic “usefulness” of sex, one must remember that Zambian men were subjected to the Western colonial rule and their bodies were mostly valued for its physical abilities in order to participate in the workforce (mines and plantations).

According to Ngwena (2018:197), “[...] sexuality is situated in a highly contested domain of cultural, religious and political life”, and it is in these spheres that many African countries (like Zambia) publicly proclaim and strictly sanction heterosexuality as the sole sexuality of African people (Ngwena 2018:199). In return, the institutionalisation of a culturally hegemonic heteronormative sexuality not only maintains the heterosexual patriarchal dominance, but also leaves sexual (and gender) minorities vulnerable to discriminatory laws, policies and social norms and practices (Ngwena 2018:199,204). This echoes the work of Foucault who poses that both sex and sexuality – despite its biological reality – are historical and social constructs; they are transfer points of power in the form of cultural and social forces that create (or determine) sexual desire more than it repress it (Gutting 2005:95; Farley 2006:19). This means that like gender, our sexual desire is shaped by cultural and social forces (or “bio-power”) and historically determined (Farley 2006:20).

In Zambia, the Foucauldian observation that sexuality has become a theme in political operations, economic interventions, and ideological campaigns directed at disciplining the body and regulating its residents, is also relevant (Foucault 1978:145-146). In present-day Christian Zambia, the strategies of knowledge and power (or four epistemic moments) that Foucault (1978:103-106;152-154) identifies, which focuses on reducing sexuality to heterosexuality, matrimony, and reproduction, are still visible, and consequently sex and sexuality seems to be subjected to these mechanisms of power.

- (i) In terms of *the hysterisation of women*: Zambian women are increasingly taking up new responsibilities, but there seems to be a discomfort when it comes to the autonomy of women beyond their reproductive and domestic roles. Even though many Zambian men have difficulties to live up to the expectations of being the head of and provider for the household, some also argue that it goes against the moral order when women take over traditionally male roles (Dover 2005:177). This could explain why women reverends – despite repeated assertions

that gender equality is important and being encouraged to study theology – feel unwelcome on the pulpit (Phiri 2003:9-11; Zulu 2015:90-93). Many churches – including the RCZ – align with the societal and cultural constructs that favours the dominance of men and uphold the status quo by continuing the unequal power relationships. If women, for example, should come forward with accusations of GBV, few churches would address it, and even if they do, few will modify their behaviour (Le Roux 2012:54-55).

- (ii) In terms of *the sexualisation of children*: The censoring of discussions about sex and the church's installation of the so-called "purity culture" – that only warns of the dangers of (or negates) sex – have resulted in sexually illiterate youths (the sex knowledge of youths is based on a mixture of truth, myth, ignorance, speculation, and jokes), sexual narcissism (or sexual entitlement), and an unhealthy relationship with sex. Studies have affirmed that this has contributed to the GBV and HIV statistics in sub-Sahara African countries (Langa 2020:75-80; Bastien, Kajula & Muhwezi 2011: 2, 15; Mbiti 1975:135). Despite the church's silence about sex, many cultures do have initiation rites, which focus on educating pubescent children on – among others – sexual matters (Mbiti 1975:135) The Chewa practice of the *cinamwali*,³³⁶ which has been discussed earlier in this study, is an example of this.
- (iii) In terms of *the socialisation of procreative behaviour*: When it comes to sex, the fertility of women and the potency of men (which are gendered roles too), instead of mutuality and pleasure, are often seen as the purpose of matrimony (Dover 2005:180).³³⁷ However, it does seem as though women's bodies are often subject to some (harmful) forms of culturally (and/or socially) sanctioned sexual behaviour, including polygamy,³³⁸ underage marriages,³³⁹ and widow cleansing³⁴⁰ (Zulu 2015:90-93). When survivors of sexual abuse do come forward in the church, the topic is met with hesitation and its causes and consequences often go overlooked (Le Roux 2012:55).

³³⁶ The *cinamwali* is a Chewa initiation rite, which focuses on preparing girls for marriage, and does not only focus on gender roles, but also how to please a man sexually (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:182; Banda 2014:12).

³³⁷ According to Mbiti (1975:133), marriage and procreation are synonymous since it is a sacred obligation to ensure the legacy and survival of a family. There are some African societies where sex have a ritualistic and spiritual significance, and where casual sexual encounters are not frowned upon but encouraged (Mbiti 1975:146-147). In Zambia there are ambiguous views when it comes to sex, but in the context of this study, the emphasis fell on heteronormative, matrimonial sex.

³³⁸ In its essence, polygamy is concerned with power – the more women a man marries (and controls), the greater the extent of his power (Zulu 2015:90-93).

³³⁹ This practice assumes that a young wife would be easier to control, and more fertile (Zulu 2015:90-93).

³⁴⁰ Widow cleansing is the humiliating practice in which a widow is subjected to "cleansing" by having (sometimes involuntary and/or culturally ordained) sexual intercourse in order to get rid of the ghost of her deceased husband in order to receive her inheritance (Zulu 2015:90-93).

- (iv) In terms of *the psychiatrisation of perversion*: The legal ban on same-sex practices, the fiery discussions that label homosexuality as un-African, un-Christian, and a Western invention, and the governmental and clerical rejection of homosexuality have not only excluded queer people, but also incited violence against them (Van Klinken 2016:111-112; Van Klinken 2014:264-271). Homosexuality has become politicised in Zambia, and since Zambian culture and Christianity have become interchangeable canons, the citizenship of sexual minorities has been contested (Van Klinken & Phiri 2015:10).³⁴¹

Concerning the latter, and to highlight the contested domain in which sexuality and gender are situated, two structures of “bio-power” (socio-cultural and historical forces) could be used as examples when considering sexuality in the Zambian context. The *first* force of bio-power is the effect of *Christian nationalism*. After president Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian nation in 1991³⁴² – which was met with adoration and appraisal from the predominantly Pentecostal Christians – this declaration became the preamble to Zambia’s constitution (Van Klinken 2014:263). Zambia experienced an upsurge of Christianity that was greatly influenced by American televangelists, along with the fundamentalist and patriarchal interpretation of the Bible that installed the general assumption that homosexuality³⁴³ undermines traditional (patriarchal) family values and gender roles (Van Klinken 2016:111-112; Alimi 2015:e-source; Van Klinken 2014:262; Van Klinken & Phiri 2015:10).³⁴⁴

The *second* force of bio-power is the fact that Zambia still yields to the old (Christianity-inspired) *British sodomy laws* that date back from the colonial era which frames homosexuality as a crime

³⁴¹ For example: A member of parliament from the Patriotic Front, Martin Malema, recently argued that all parties aligned with the African Liberal Network – a network in several African countries that receives funding from Europe and the United States – are trying to introduce liberal values into Zambia, which in turn would later permit homosexuality in this Christian nation. These accusations were purposefully invoked to discredit political opponents, and it worked since all parties affiliated with the African Liberal Network immediately refuted these accusations, persistently reassured the parliament and the public that they do not have a “gay agenda” (Lusaka Times 2019a:e-source). It is also public knowledge that former president Edgar Lungu has previously associated himself with the notion that homosexuality is a Western invention, an imposition influenced by neocolonialists attempting to re-alienate and re-acculturate the minds of African nationalists (Van Klinken 2014:266). Despite the pressure from donor countries, and his commitment to promoting gender equality, Lungu remain outspoken *against* gay rights (Times Live 2018:e-source). Of course, this phenomenon is not restricted to Zambia. Nigerian journalist Bibi Alimi wrote that “...populist homophobia has kept many politicians in power. Across Africa, if you hate gay people, you get votes” (Alimi 2015:e-source). Alimi finds it quite ironic that Africans argue that homosexuality is a Western import, un-African or not part of African culture, while using Western religion and Western interpretations of the Bible to substantiate their argument, since, historically, the Bible is not Africa’s culture either (Alimi 2015:e-source; Khumalo 2018:267-270).

³⁴² This would be elaborated on in Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.1.8.

³⁴³ This applies to other members of the LGBT+ community as well.

³⁴⁴ Anti-homosexual attitudes, however, were not introduced by Christian nationalism – they are also the continuation of the conservative (or prudish) views on sexuality installed by the European Christian missionaries in the early twentieth century (Cage & Rueda 2019:1).

“against the laws of nature”. Whereas many countries – including Britain – have amended these laws and decriminalised homosexuality, Zambia feel that this law is intricately linked to the country’s Christian identity and respect for the Bible (Gondwe 2019:e-source; Times Live 2018:e-source; Frey 2019:e-source; Han & O’Mahoney 2014:272-273).

The effects of these two forces were visible during field work. Zambians are reluctant to even mention homosexuality in conversation – especially in church circles. When the subject does come up in conversation, it is aggressively opposed. Homosexuals are stereotyped as “sex maniacs” with “a serious distortion”, who violate the Divine Order and God’s intention for heterosexual marriage (Van Klinken 2016:111-112). These responses reveal Christian-Zambia’s efforts to justify and sustain heteronormative values, while also reinforcing a hierarchical order between men and women – a hierarchy that same-sex relationships disrupts and inconveniences (Van Klinken 2016:155). Therefore, it seems that despite former president Kenneth Kaunda’s efforts to unite and foster Zambia under his humanist philosophy and inclusive ethos “One Zambia – One nation” – which claims that there should be no divisions or discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, creed, tribe, religion, or sex (Soko 2014:131-133; Kaunda 1974: xi) – discrimination on the grounds of one’s *sexuality* is acceptable since the presidency of president Chiluba and onwards.

The historical narrative, journal entries, and the four storylines that were identified in the empirical data, all contain *I*-positions that Foucault would compare with mechanisms of bio-power. In Foucault’s study of historical texts, he also highlights the idea that “the self” is not something that could be deciphered or emancipated, but rather that it is created and shaped by power and knowledge networks. “The self”, however, does not take on a passive role, and can therefore submit to or contest power by exploring new ways of being, experience, pleasures, relationships, modes of living and thinking (Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Foucault calls this the internalisation of external norms through repetition (Gutting 2005:98). There are some correlations between the latter and Hermans’ theory of the dialogical self, and like Foucault, Hermans also argues that it is necessary to introduce or include alternative, disruptive, and/or counter narratives (or *I*-positions) as resistance to the hegemonic structures in order to create (or imagine) a new narrative where “transforming masculinities” really involves change and prohibiting GBV (Downing 2008:104-109; Farley 2006:22-23; Ngwenya 2018:228). This will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

4.3.2 Judith Butler:³⁴⁵ Bodies are always under siege³⁴⁶

This section discusses and outlines Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble* (1990) and her theory of gender performativity. Although Butler was initially involved in the post-structuralist efforts within the Western feminist theory, and even though scholars would categorise Butler's work under feminist scholarship, she actually criticises feminist literary theory with its pervasively heterosexual character (and therefore homophobic consequences), which actually "[...] restricts the meaning of gender in presuppositions of its own practice" and "[...] sets up exclusionary gender norms within feminism" (Butler 1999:vii-viii). In her earlier work, Butler already distinguishes between sex and gender – sex as the “natural” and “bodily”, and gender as the “cultural” and “historical”. Butler claims that one experiences society through one's body, which leads the body to be the site of both oppression through its social involvement, and liberation through the re-articulation and self-definition of it (Gleeson 2019:e-source).

In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (1993) and *Undoing Gender* (2004), Butler goes beyond the cultural-theoretic assumption that gender is the result of socialisation. For Butler, sex – just like gender – is also a performative social construct, which could be attributed to the heteronormative cultures that imposes sexual desire in accordance with the artificial association between one's biological sex and gender (Duignan 2020:e-source). Butler admitted that she deploys a strategy that aligns with Foucault's “politics of discomfort”, which is designed to provoke and upset, to question schemes of intelligibility by extending the familiar linguistic and epistemological horizons in order to achieve “radical social change” (Salih & Butler 2004:n.p.³⁴⁷).

³⁴⁵ The American poststructuralist and feminist, Judith Pamela Butler was born on 24 February 1956. The fact that she is a Jew and gay immensely contributed to her academic work. Butler has been involved at University of California Berkeley since 1993, and her work is not restricted to the field of gender, sex, and sexuality (including queer theory, feminist philosophy and women's studies); she also did research in politics, linguistics, vulnerability, resistance, race, religious extremism, war and peace, and the philosophy on non-violence. She published many acclaimed books, which includes *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997), *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (1997), *Antigone's Claim: Kingship Between Life and Death* (2000), *Precarious Life: Powers of Violence and Mourning* (2004), and *Is Critique Secular?* (co-written with Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, and Saba Mahmood, 2009) and *Sois Mon Corps* (co-authored with Catherine Malabou, 2011), *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (co-authored with Athena Athanasiou, 2013), *Senses of the Subject and Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), and she is also the co-editor of *Vulnerability in Resistance* (2015). She has also written a great number of academic articles for celebrated academic journals on a variety of topics, but her contribution to gender studies is considered the most influential (Gleeson 2019:e-source). She is also the winner of numerous awards that acknowledges her contribution to gay and lesbian studies, involved in research political and economic inequality and anti-Zionism, and is an advocate for human rights, involved in many associations including the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and Jewish Voice for Peace.

³⁴⁶ This is a direct quote from *Gender Trouble*; bodies are the *surface* of cultural inscription, the *medium* through which culture emerges, the *contours* of cultural coherence, and the *boundaries* of the social hegemonic (Butler 1999:165-167).

³⁴⁷ E-Publication, Chapter 13 “Changing the Subject: Judith Butler's Political of Radical Resignification”, p. 325-356.

4.3.2.1 Introducing “Gender Trouble”

Gender Trouble was first published in 1990, and it is still viewed as a significant intervention in the field of gender, feminist, and queer studies. *Gender Trouble* is an anti-essentialist, Foucauldian-inspired investigation that critiques identity categories that reify and endorse the repressive heterosexual matrix (Salih & Butler 2004:n.p.³⁴⁸).³⁴⁹ Butler was greatly influenced by the *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (1976), and she accords Foucault’s idea that sex and its categories (maleness and femaleness) were not “invented” in a particular historical period but founded on scientific discourses who claimed their explanation as the “truth” and constituted their categories (as a result of the discourses) as “natural” (Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Following Foucauldian thought, Butler agrees that sex, sexuality, and gender are not naturally occurring categories, but rather discursively constructed (Downing 2008:111). Butler critiques the heteronormative, binary-gendered systems in which culture operates, and in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), she highlights that the normative binary thinking not only constructs gender and sexuality, but also bodies, which usually leads to othering, exclusion and disappearing of the bodies that do not conform to the social expectations (Downing 2008:111; Butler 1993a:ix).

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler questions these alleged “natural” ideas of sex as the supposed ground for sexual and gendered identities, since it actually has a normative function that constitutes one’s conceptions of “normal” sex and “natural” desires (Butler 1999:xxxi; Gutting & Oksala 2019:e-source). Even though one becomes one’s gender, Butler adds that sex (or the body) does not “cause” gender, and sexual practice does not “produce” gender (a notion that secures a heterosexual hierarchy); rather, “[...] gender is a way of ‘doing’ the body” (Salih & Butler 2004:n.p.³⁵⁰; Butler 1999:xii). The necessity for a critical genealogy, a “re-description” and exposition of the complexity of gender and existing gender identities that offer a prescriptive view about what gender reality ought to be, becomes the premise for *Gender Trouble* (Butler 1988:530).

³⁴⁸ E-publication, Chapter 3, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative subversions”, p. 90-118.

³⁴⁹ *Gender Trouble* is the continuation of Butler’s earlier research that reflects on the work of Simone de Beauvoir (one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one), Monique Wittig (to be a woman within the terms of a masculinist culture is to be a source of mystery and unknowability for men), Jean-Paul Satre (all desire is presumed as heterosexual and masculine), and Michel Foucault (the notion of sex was established by the effects of institutions, practices and discourses). This led Butler to pose that gender is not a static entity, but a culturally constructed activity; a process of becoming that takes place incessantly. Gender identities, Butler says, are socially constituted and circumscribed (Butler 1999:xxvii, 3).

³⁵⁰ E-publication, Chapter 1, “Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig, Foucault”, p. 21-38.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler is not in search of the origin or causes of gender and discourse; rather, it provides a genealogy³⁵¹ that focuses on the political operations of discourse within the field of sex and gender (Salih & Butler 2004: n.p.³⁵²). Butler feels that “trouble” is inevitable when considering the indeterminacy of gender, despite numerous contemporary debates over its meaning. “Trouble” becomes both the cause and the task of *Gender Trouble*, since Butler wants to “trouble” (or interrogate) within the realm of discourse, the gender and identity categories as described, constituted, circumscribed and constructed by masculine and heterosexual powers that support a certain gender hierarchy and a binary framework of thinking about gender (Butler 1999:xxviii; Salih & Butler 2004:n.p.³⁵³).

4.3.2.2 “Becoming Gender”: Bodies as subjects of sex/gender/desire

Butler commences *Gender Trouble* with feminist theory, which not only developed a language to adequately represent women, but also fostered their political visibility. The problem however is that the political and linguistic domains (juridical notions of power) that sought to bring emancipation for women, actually produced a criterion that formed a category for the “subjects” that needed to be regulated in the political life.³⁵⁴ In other words, the same juridical system and power structures that aim to represent and liberate women, actually universalised them, and produced and restrained them as the “subjects” of feminism (Butler 1999:3-5). Denoting women to a common identity becomes a problem, especially since there is more to being a woman than one’s gender. Gender intersects with several other discursively constituted identities including race, class, ethnicity, sexual and regional modalities, which makes it impossible to separate gender from the political and cultural intersections which are invariably produced and maintained (Butler 1999:6). The universal basis for feminism is the agreement that women are being oppressed by a universal patriarchy (or male dominance), but Butler questions whether this commonality alone is enough to constitute an identity, especially when considering that this binary or exclusive framework decontextualises one from the other axes of power that constitutes one’s identity. Therefore, Butler poses a reconstruction and rethinking of the

³⁵¹ Calling *Gender Trouble* a genealogy, underscores its Foucauldian and anti-essentialist character.

³⁵² E-publication, Chapter 5, “The Lesbian Phallus and the Morphological Imaginary”, p. 138-180.

³⁵³ E-publication, Chapter 3, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative subversions”, p. 90-118.

³⁵⁴ This idea was already outlined by Feminist Audre Lorde’s influential article “*The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House*” (1984). Lorde warns against racism and homophobia in (white) feminist theories, that either ignore differences (poor women, women of colour, lesbians, women of Third World countries) or see them as causes of separation. Lorde calls for “community” – this does not mean shedding differences, pretending they do not exist, or merely tolerate them, but recognising the creative potential in order to speak in new, courageous ways. “Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged” (Lorde 1984:e-source).

ontological constructions of identity, especially the category of women who are constructed and represented in a domain of exclusion and dominance (Butler 1999:7-9).

Butler feels that the simple distinction between sex and gender – where sex is seen as biological (natural, hormonal, anatomical, chromosomal) and gender as culturally constructed – is inadequate when studying gender, since Foucault already proved that sex is also discursively produced and culturally constructed. In other words: gender cannot be defined as the cultural interpretation of sex, since sex itself is a gendered category; gender then becomes an apparatus of production that establishes sexes, a cultural “prediscursive” that constitutes how a sex must act (Butler 1999:9-11). Butler adds that when feminist theorists define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, it not only set limits to analysis of gender within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse, but also implies some form of social determinism where the (anatomically differentiated) bodies become passive recipients of an inescapable cultural law, and is figured (or fixed) as an instrument (or medium) for a set of cultural meanings that are only externally related (Butler 1999:12-13).

Butler frames gender within the discourses concerning identity, questioning the extent regulatory practices of gender formation have when constituting and governing identity. Socially (or culturally) instituted norms of intelligibility define a person’s identity, and those who fail to conform to these norms – those whose sexual desire do not correlate with their biological sex – would be labelled “incoherent” or “discontinuous” gendered beings (Butler 1999:23-24). In Foucauldian terms, regulatory practices not only generated coherent identities and promoted the “heterosexualisation” of desire, they also produced and instituted certain expressive attributes ascribed to each gender, and these “cultural laws” established and shaped the meaning of sexuality. Foucault and Wittig, however, underscored the necessity to disrupt and displace this heterosexual hegemony, especially since both men and women can have both masculine and feminine attributes; one cannot “be” a gender, when there is a substantive grammar of sex that imposes and regulates an artificial binary relation between the sexes which serves the interest of the heterosexual system with reproductive aims. This institution of compulsory and naturalised heterosexuality presupposes (and regulates) a binary gender system (Butler 1999:24-26).

With this in mind, Butler argues that gender cannot be a noun, nor a set of free-floating attributes; rather, Butler poses that gender is performative, “[...] constituted by the identity it is purported to be” (Butler 1999:33). In other words: expressions of gender do not constitute gender identity; gender identity is constituted by the performance of said expressions. For Butler, “being” a man or a woman is only an effect of gender, since gender is – in line with De Beauvoir – something one “becomes”; it

is a process of acculturation and construction (Butler 1999:43). Gender seems to congeal itself through insistent and insidious practice, and it is sustained and regulated by various social means. According to Butler:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (Butler 1999:43-44)

4.3.2.3 Prohibition and the production of the heterosexual matrix

The corporeality of gender is emphasised throughout Butler's work, and in *Gender Trouble* she gives an extensive analysis of how foreclosed sexual desire is incorporated on the surface of the body. In Lévi-Strauss' structuralist anthropology, he compares sex to "the natural" or "the raw", and gender to "the culture" or "the cooked". When sex undergoes a mechanism of cultures (or through cultural signification) it "becomes" (or is transformed into) gender. Butler however feels that in this binary view of sex and gender (natural/cultural; raw/cooked; sex/gender), sex is already political and culturally constructed (or "cooked"), since it is rooted in a gender hierarchy (or patriarchy) which subordinates women (Butler 1999:47-48). Like gender, sex is discursively constructed, and limiting it to what is "natural" robs it from its ontological character (the process of "becoming"). Butler critiques the naturalisation of heterosexuality and the masculine sexual agency found in Lévi-Strauss' work, since it only sustains a patriarchal, heteronormative view of gender, when gender is much more multifaceted (Butler 1999:55).

Although Butler refers to the work of Lévi-Strauss, Lacan,³⁵⁵ Freud,³⁵⁶ and Foucault, she also feels that most occupy a hegemonic position that reinforces a binary, heterosexist framework of genders.

³⁵⁵ In Lacan's body schema, the "phallus" is installed as a primary bodily signifier: men are said to "have" the phallus, and women are said to "be" the phallus. "Having" a phallus signifies masculine privilege, position and their role in repressing of the subjects who are without the phallus. "Being" the phallus means filling the position of the masculine subject (women) and representing everything that men are not, which keeps intact the power as signified by paternal law (Butler 1999:57-58). The consequence of women appearing "to be" the phallus is what Lacan calls a "masquerade" – or "appearing as being". In the schema, a masquerade could be compared to the performative production of a sexual ontology where women appear as a "being" and participate in man's desire at the cost of giving up their own (Butler 1999:60). Femininity therefore could be compared to wearing a "mask" in a world dominated and predetermined by the masculine, heterosexual agency; the female is an object of desire, fearful of her own phallicism (Butler 1999:68).

³⁵⁶ For Freud, melancholia (the process in which one grieves for a lost one is unable to fully comprehend or identify) becomes the key to understanding gender. Due to the culturally sanctioned heterosexuality, homosexuality is often rejected, but only after undergoing a confusing process where one needs to choose between the masculine or feminine disposition (Butler 1999:75-76). A feminine and masculine identity therefore become the result of a set of internalised, pro-heterosexual sanctions and taboos, and this identity is constructed and maintained by these sanctions and taboos, and it prescribes of sexual desire (Butler 1999:81). This idea is continued in the work of Michel Foucault, who – when referring to the repressive hypothesis – says that the repressive law not only produces heterosexuality, but also excludes (or negates) marginal gender identities (Butler 1999:83).

This not only limits identification and does not acknowledge the complexity of gender, but also excludes the reality of gay and lesbian cultures. It also represses the value of autobiographical narratives that constitute identities, as language becomes constrained. Here, Butler proposes an alternative perspective that recognises that there are multiple, coexisting identifications within gender configurations that not only contests the fixity and deterministic view of masculine and feminine placements, but also embraces the possibility of multiple identifications beyond the paternal law (Butler 1999:85-86).

When considering the standpoint that “becoming” a gender is the process of becoming “naturalised”, all bodily pleasures should correspond with the normative ideal of a gender-specific body, and pleasures are therefore determined (and some also prohibited) by a (heterosexual) matrix of gender norms. The existence of transsexuals (and other transgressive sexualities) however disrupts these norms and discontinues the correlation of sexual pleasures and bodily parts with the claim that desire exceeds the physical body (Butler 1999:90). In Foucauldian terms, desire is not the object of repression, but rather “[...] an occasion for the consolidation of juridical structures” (Butler 1999:96). These juridical structures favour heterosexuality and manufacture desire with its own power. Power in this context is not the law, but the force inherent to every social relation that shapes organisations and institutions (Foucault 1978:93; Butler 1999:96). The reason Butler emphasises this, is that one can only understand a displacement or substitution in relation with the “original” – in this case the production of a heterosexual matrix that prohibited transgressive sexualities and constituted “natural” sexualities and gender (Butler 1999:99).

4.3.2.4 *Gender performativity and subversive bodily acts*

Before the publication of *Gender Trouble* in 1990, Butler already laid down her theory of gender performativity. In an article published in 1988,³⁵⁷ Butler states that gender is not a stable identity or locus of agency from which acts proceed, but rather an identity stylised and constituted over a period through a repetition of acts of the body (bodily gestures, movements, and enactments) (1988:519). Referring to De Beauvoir³⁵⁸ and Merleau-Ponty’s³⁵⁹ understanding of the body, Butler poses that the body should be understood as an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities; an embodiment which could be compared to performative acts within theatrical contexts

³⁵⁷ See *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* (Butler 1988).

³⁵⁸ In *The Second Sex* (1974), De Beauvoir states that gender is a historical situation rather than a natural fact.

³⁵⁹ In *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Merleau-Ponty claims that the body is a “historical idea” rather than a “natural species”.

(Butler 1988:520-521). Butler poses that while sex is considered a biological facticity, gender is considered the cultural interpretation (or performance) of this facticity. The various acts of gender over a period of time create the idea of gender, which means that gender is only real to the extent that it is performed (Butler 1988:522). A body becomes (or produces) a gender through a series of (concrete and historically mediated) acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time. In feminist terms: like sedimentation³⁶⁰ that slowly congeals into something solid over a period, so too the gendered body is not the product of a single act, but rather the accumulation of a variety of acts – whether natural, cultural, or linguistic, and gendered identity produced by the way the body acts within this sedimentation entrenched with certain gender norms and expectations (Butler 1988:523).

Gender is “done” (acted or performed) in accordance with certain sanctions and proscriptions, Butler says, and certain gender norms that originate within the family specify pre-existing cultural relations. She writes:

The act one does, the act one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which is rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again” (Butler 1988:526).

Butler poses that gender as a performative act is not a project of individual choice, and the body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, no “[...] the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives” (Butler 1988:526). She argues that gender is not just a “role” that expresses an interior self, but rather that gender is an “act” governed and regulated by social conventions, which constructs the social reality on its own psychological interiority (Butler 1988:528).

In *Gender Trouble*, after an extensive analysis of the works of Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault and Monique Wittig, Butler’s theory of gender performativity takes shape. In Kristeva’s work, “the body” is labelled the subject, the bearer or proponent that emerges as a consequence of the prohibitive (repressive or paternal) law, which leads Butler to assert that repression actually “produce the object that it comes to deny” (Butler 1999:101, 119). This aligns with the “repressive hypothesis” in Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, where he highlights the fact that the mechanism of “repression”

³⁶⁰ The metaphor of sedimentation – numerous small particles that become sediment and builds up to the surface – is used by feminists and Butler to describe how cultural expectations accumulate over time, and how the gendered body becomes the legacy of predetermined acts.

is actually a culturally contradictory enterprise which simultaneously prohibits and generates the body (Butler 1999:119).³⁶¹ For Foucault, sexuality is an open and complex historical system, that – through power and discourse – both perpetuates and conceals sex. Sexuality, according to Foucault, is always situated within matrices of power, produced within specific historical practices (discursive and institutional) which, through regulative strategies, produce the subjects they come to subjugate (Butler 1999:121-125).³⁶² Butler stresses Foucault’s emphasis on the necessity to disrupt (or displace) the heterosexual hegemony that constructs and regulates sex “in the service of a system of regulatory and reproductive sexuality”, and he implicitly suggests that homosexuality is “instrumental to overthrow the category of sex” (Butler 1999:127,129,140).³⁶³ This also the premise of Wittig’s work.

Considering De Beauvoir’s insinuation that gender is “[...] a variable cultural accomplishment, a set of meanings that are taken on or taken up within a cultural field, and that no one is born with a gender – gender is always acquired,” Monique Wittig question *when* one “becomes” a gender³⁶⁴ (Butler 1999:142). Although every human is born with a sex, with sex as a necessary human attribute, sex does not cause gender, and neither does gender necessarily reflect or express sex. Wittig claims that for the purpose of reproduction and the institution of heterosexuality, sex is a political and cultural (and therefore already *gendered*) category (Butler 1999:144).³⁶⁵ This category is produced and maintained using *language*; bodies are conceptualised, categorised (and accordingly hierarchised), socially configured and interpreted through language. Claiming that men should be masculine, that women should be feminine, and physical features (or one’s body) determine one’s sex reifies this. Language creates social realities; it has the ability (or power) to enslave, violently shape, cast sheaves of reality upon, and oppress those bodies who do not adhere to presumptive heterosexuality. Therefore, language also implies “[...] a set of acts, repeated over time, that produce reality-effect that are eventually misperceived as ‘facts’” (Butler 1999:147-148).³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ When a body seeks “liberation” from the paternal law, it actually experiences the self-amplification and proliferation of that same law; which translates to the possibility of subversion within the terms of the law and permutations of itself

³⁶² He criticises emancipatory or liberationist models of sexuality (like feminism), since they also subscribe to a restrictive juridical model which subjects one to a set of social regulations which are formative to one’s sex, gender, pleasures, and desires

³⁶³ Since sex and identity are irrespectively considered the effect and instrument of this regulatory sexual system, and one’s homosexuality produces a sexual *nonidentity*, it designates an unnameable libidinal heterogeneity (Butler 1999:129)

³⁶⁴ Here, Wittig is referring to the famous quote by Simone de Beauvoir, who stated that “one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.” For Wittig, as for Butler, gender is an ontological issue.

³⁶⁵ According to Wittig, the institution of heterosexuality is the founding basis of male-dominated social orders with the purposes of social control (Butler 1999:159).

³⁶⁶ The discursively constructed body therefore is a fictive phenomenon, and therefore Wittig petitions for the destruction of universal categories (which are inherently systems of power) of compulsory heterosexuality, and more inclusive (anti-hierarchal) language that asserts the true universality of a person (Butler 1999:152-153).

It is here that Wittig proposes the contesting (or acts of resistance) of discursively constructed categories of sex that reduces sexuality to the heterosexual norm through the deliberate engagement with the proliferation of categories of sexual identities (as “acted out”) within homosexuality (Butler 1999:156).³⁶⁷ Homosexual identities and the multiplication of gender possibilities disrupt and expose the so-called “natural” and binary order of sexuality and gender, and suggest a dissimulation of gender coherence that exists among sexed bodies, gender identities, and sexualities (Butler 1999:157, 160). Since language is used to configure bodies for political interests, Wittig feels that *language* should be seized to deconstruct (and reconstruct) bodies outside the oppressive categories of sex, to describe, represent and produce new categories of ways of being a body within the cultural field (Butler 1999:160,162). Like De Beauvoir, Wittig agrees that to *be* a woman is to *become* a woman, but considering the proliferated new ways of being a body in a cultural field, and the fact that gender is more fluid than fixed, one can “[...] become a being that neither *man* nor *woman* describes” (Butler 1999:162).

It is within the discussions on bodies, sex, sexuality, and power systems that Butler’s theory of gender performativity emerges. Even though “the body” pre-exists the acquisition of its sexed significance, Butler highlights how bodies often seem to act as passive mediums signified by external cultural inscriptions (Butler 1999:164). “The body is always under siege”, Butler says (1999:165), and it becomes the *surface* on which these (mostly heterosexual and misogynist) cultural inscriptions (knowledge, language, discourse) constantly act on, and it simultaneously becomes the *medium* through which culture emerges, the *contours* that establish certain codes of cultural coherence, and the *boundaries* of the socially hegemonic (Butler 1999:165-167). These contours/boundaries/markings constitute the limits of the body, and the body becomes the consequence of these codes of cultural coherence (Butler 1999:166-167). These boundaries, which are based on the regulatory practices and the cultural lines of the body, are not impermeable and can be disrupted by sexualities (like homosexuality) which has its own gendered exchange, positions, and erotic possibilities (Butler 1999:169). Even if the surface of the body does not necessarily correlate with the inner world (or one’s identity), social regulation and prohibitive laws compel bodies to adhere to certain laws as their essence, style, and necessity (Butler 1999:171).

Calling the gendered body performative

³⁶⁷ She refers to (originally derogatory) terms like queens, butches, femmes, girls, dykes, queers, and fags as categories for homosexual identities.

[...] suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decided public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the integrity of the subject (Butler 1999:173).

Gender impersonation, or “drag”, could be used as an exemplary of gender performativity; although drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer, it also plays upon this distinction between the performer’s anatomy and the gender being performed (Butler 1999:174-175). A drag performance serves as an example of how the instituted, naturalised and presuppositional binary system of gender is disrupted and challenged. Drag is a form of fantasy – it allows one to imagine things otherwise, it establishes possibilities within reality, and projects internal desires (Kornstein 2020:1-2). Drag reveals both the imitative structure, and the contingency of gender itself, and even though drag creates a picture of a woman, it also reveals the aspects of the gendered experience which are falsely naturalised through the “regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence” (Butler 1999:175).

Butler concludes *Gender trouble* by giving an exposition of how gender should be understood. Like De Beauvoir and Foucault who suggest that gendered bodies are styles of the flesh, Butler poses that gender is both an intentional and performative *corporeal style*, dramatic and contingent in its construction of meaning. Referring to Wittig who understands gender as the workings of “sex” in accordance with the prohibitive laws and cultural inscriptions, Butler highlights the punitive consequences for those who “fail do gender right” and not adhere to these laws and inscriptions. For Butler, gender certainly is a construction, in the sense that it is caused by various cultural norms and historically informed acts that constitute a gender. Using the metaphor of *sedimentation*, Butler explains how cultural, historical, and societal norms congeals over a period of time to produce the coherent gendered subjects and compares gender to a repeated performance in which a set of socially established meanings are incessantly re-enacted and re-experienced (Butler 1999:177-178).

In Butler’s view, gender should not be construed as a stable identity from which various acts follow, but rather an identity constituted (configured) through a stylised repetition of performative acts (social performances, bodily gestures, movements, and styles that constitute an abiding gendered self).

That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender’s

performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality (Butler 1999:180).

In her subsequent works, Butler writes that gender performativity does not imply that gender is a role or a construction that one puts on (like one put on clothes), but rather that it is the *effect* of the regulatory regime marked by constraints, taboos, prohibitions, and the ritualised repetition of cultural norms. Nor is gender performativity a matter of choosing which gender to be, but rather a matter of repeating (or reiterating) the norms by which one is (already) constituted, and the “embodiment” of certain ideals of femininity or masculinity (Butler 1993b:21-22). To explain this, Butler uses the example of when a child is born: naming the child “a girl” is considered an initiatory performative which initiates a process of “girling” which governs the formation of corporeally enacted femininity in accordance with the norm. “Femininity is thus not a product of a choice, but a forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment”, which implies that no “body” takes on gender norms, gender norms take on the body in order to qualify their viability (Butler 1993b:23).

Butler emphasises that it is not her interest to re-describe the world from a woman’s point of view, but rather offer alternative descriptions and prescriptions outside of the implicitly heterosexual framework that preserves the binary, heteronormative restrictions on gender, gender identity, and sexuality. She envisions a genealogy of gender which is supplemented by the politics of performative gender acts, that not only (re)describes the existing gender identities, but also offers an alternative prescriptive (pragmatic) view on how gender realities ought (Butler 1988:530).

Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what it puts on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure, but if this continuous act is mistaken for a natural or linguistic given, power is relinquished to expand the cultural field bodily through subversive performances of various kinds (Butler 1988:531).

4.3.2.5 *Stitching Butler to the chitenge-patchwork*

Butler’s theory of gender performativity has been applied in the Zambian context before; Paul Dover (2005:183) uses it to explain the expectations of manliness in rural Zambia. In this study – which

emanated from the reality of gender-based violence – the basic knowledge on how bodies are besieged by expectations and prescriptions (Butler 1999:165-167) offers thickened descriptions and some guidelines for further interpretation. Butler's theory of gender performativity disrupted the constructionist approach to gender by denaturalising and delinking sex and gender (Ngwena 2018:236). Ngwena (2018:236) praises Butler for highlighting the fact that cultural interpellation produces gender. Her theory of gender performativity demonstrates how gendered (and sexed) bodies are constantly produced (or constituted) through the repetition of (cultural) practices. Put differently: bodies are always anchored in (or subjected to) a society and a culture where there is a compulsion (regulatory societal and cultural norms) to perform gender in a certain way. In a context like Zambia, where heterosexuality is considered "compulsory", gender performances that do not comply are rebuked and/or censured (Ngwena 2018:237).

In the quest to understanding manhood and the markers that constitute it, Zulu (2015:86-87) refers to the meaning of traditional African masks as a metaphor to explain how culture affects gender in Zambia. Traditionally, masks are made by men, mostly worn by men, and its meaning defined by men. These masks play an important role in celebrations, rituals, and ceremonies; they are powerful, frightful, strong in appeal, worn by the male performers who dance in a circle on the beat of the drum while women are clapping their hands, cheering them on (Zulu 2015:86-87). This is a powerful metaphor that illustrates how men "put on" certain culturally sanctioned roles and "perform" according to said roles, while women remain in the margins to cheer them on. In other words, men put on certain faces (or identities) that adheres to cultural expectations (or roles) in their ever-becoming process of becoming men and in their search for identity and security, in order to preserve culture, uphold certain (cultural) values and ideals, and endorse the expectations that are socially and culturally constructed (Zulu 2015:87).

The same could be said about the piece of *chitenge* fabric women wear during a *cinamwali* initiation or when doing domestic chores. The moment a woman ties the *chitenge* around her waist, she is also putting on certain culturally sanctioned roles, and ascribing to certain rules as set out by her culture. She then performs the role as expected by the community and stands on the margins while clapping on the beat of the man-played drum. This metaphor accords Butler's theory of gender performativity, and her metaphor of drag (Butler 1993b:21). Gender performativity is not a matter of choosing a gender, a role, or a construction that one puts on like clothes in the morning. Rather, Butler builds her theory on the premise that

[...] [g]ender is performative insofar as it is the effect of a regulatory regime of gender differences in which genders are divided and hierarchised under

constraint. Social constraints, taboos, prohibitions, threats of punishment operate in the ritualised repetition norms, and this repetition constitutes the temporalized scene of gender construction and destabilisation (Butler 1993b:21).

No person is “free” from these norms (or ideals), and only when a person embodies these subjective norms and ideals, one’s gender becomes constituted accordingly. One’s gender therefore is a compulsive practice, a forcible production; not necessarily determined, but rather an assignment which one carries out according to expectations (Butler 1993b:22). Therefore, femininity and masculinity are not a product of choice, but the result of the forcible citation (or embodiment) of certain norms, formed over time in relation with discipline, regulations, and punishment (Butler 1993b:23). In other words: gender is more than putting on a mask or *chitenge* – it is repeatedly adhering to the set of societal and culturally-defined expectations (the things that the mask and *chitenge* represents), and therefore gender is continually reinforced and constructed by observing them (continually putting on the expectation signified by the mask and *chitenge*).

In the study of men and masculinities, it has already been established that masculinity is the set of historically and culturally contingent practices that changes over time and across cultures, and that masculinity is the indicator of how men practised being a man amid a changing world and socioeconomic conditions (Ratele 2004:9). In terms of the dialogical self theory, socio-cultural attitudes could be compared to outside or external *I*-positions that are introduced to and later internalised by (or become dominant voices in) the self which is already “multivoiced” (Hermans 2006:149). Masculinity could then be understood as the embodiment of certain societal expectations and culturally-sanctioned practices, values and attitudes (or positions) attributed to being a man (Lorber & Martin 2013:228).³⁶⁸ This is also how *bio-power* – Foucault’s term for the socio-political structures imposed to control the bodies of individuals and groups – functions; it is also an example of how the heterosexual matrix functions (Butler’s term for the juridical or power structures that incite the heteropatriarchal norm), and it also accords Connell’s reference to power structures that incite certain forms of inequalities, marginalisation, exclusion, and oppression (Foucault 1978:139-140; Butler 1999:99; Connell 2009:6-8).

³⁶⁸ Very sensitive to the fact that there is no single, independent form of masculinity since gender is embedded within (and intersects with) a web of societal and cultural power structures (Yee 2018:2; Kim & Shaw 2018:80).

In Zambia (and the RCZ), a country with both patrilineal and matrilineal cultures, men are still considered the keepers of power in culture, religion, and society, while women's bodies are still the battleground in the quest for equality – the prevalence of GBV is the proof of that. Zulu (2015:81)³⁶⁹ affirms this when referring to “culturally-sanctioned gender inequality” which is visible in a variety of (gendered) practices: in the division of domestic responsibilities, the promotion of certain gender roles in church, the traditional practices surrounding marriage – including the *cinamwali* (teaching girls to be submissive) and *lobola* (testing men's ability to provide) – and the gender-biased arrangements within a household. There are also practices that deliberately undermines women include the practices of child (or underage) marriages, widow cleansing, and polygamy (Zulu 2015:90-93; Farley 2006:79-80).

These gendered practices are also perceptible in the four main storylines identified in the empirical data, and therefore contributors to or consequences of the dominant narrative – the destructive reality of gender-based violence. One could speculate what Butler's response would be to the dominant narrative. Butler rejects gender essentialism, argues that gender is a continuous process of becoming, and that a gendered body is not constituted by a single act, but by an accumulation of a variety of acts that align with the codes of coherence (Butler 1999:xxvii, 6; Butler 1988:523).³⁷⁰ Since the current codes of coherence in Zambia lead to violence, disruptive practices – acts that do not fit socio-cultural regulation and prohibitive laws, that would establish alternative truths, new fictions, alternate interpretation or counter-narratives – are considered necessary, since this would push men's bodies to “perform” or act differently (Kornstein 2020:1-3; Butler 1999:169-171). This also aligns with the idea that new (or outside) *I*-positions need to be introduced into the society of self for “transforming masculinities” to be realised. Like Foucault, it seems as though Butler argues for disruptive narratives when it comes to establishing transforming masculinities.

³⁶⁹ Prof. Edwin Zulu is a lecturer at Justo Mwale University and is the current Moderator of the RCZ; even though his work focuses on the broader Zambian context, there are some similarities found in the religious and cultural normativity-storylines in this study.

³⁷⁰ Culture, society, religion, politics, and other intersecting identities inscribes certain expectations onto (or promotes “appropriate” acts of doing) the body, and through its responses, the body constitutes its gender (Butler 1999:166-167). This resonates with Cooley's (1994:41-42) view that bodies are both the sign and site of imagination.

4.3.3 Raewyn Connell:³⁷¹ Bodies are the arena of body-reflexive practices³⁷²

This section contains an overview of Raewyn Connell's work which is applicable for this study. Connell is best known for her research on masculinities – some even consider her as one of the founders of the field (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3975). Although Connell's early work focused on social class and inequality, gender issues clearly and consistently emerged in the empirical data. Since Connell was not satisfied with the concept of "patriarchy" as an abstract structure, she increasingly (and extensively) started doing research on gender in the field of sociology (Raewyn Connell – Bio n.d.:e-source; Bryson n.d.:e-source). After extensive qualitative research (using the biographical or "life-history" method) in Australian schools, Connell started recognising different forms of masculinities, patterns of hierarchical relationships, and dilemmas on how hegemony was maintained in changing economic circumstances. It is here that the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" started to take shape. With the help of two activists from the Gay Liberation movement (Tim Carrigan and John Lee), Connell started outlining a theory of multiple masculinities and hegemony, which synthesised concepts from feminism, the gay liberation movement, psychoanalysis, and sociology (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3977; Raewyn Connell – Bio n.d.:e-source).

Before Connell's contribution to the field, most of the scholarship on masculinity claimed that men are suffering from a "crisis in masculinity" and stressed the need to recover "true" masculinity. Connell however recognised (and condemned) the deliberate promotion and re-enabling of certain patriarchal ideals, since this can easily isolate men's issues and defend their privilege. Connell set out to contend essentialist views on masculinity around the same time that Judith Butler was contending essentialist ideas about femininity and women. In 1995, the first edition of Connell's most well-known book, *Masculinities* was published. Since then, a second edition was published in 2005; it has been translated into 10 languages, and, according to Google Scholar, it has been cited over 15 000 times. The 2005 edition has already been reprinted sixteen times, is considered a key text in gender studies and research on masculinities. *Masculinities* and *The Men and the Boys* (published 2000) has earned her the title: "Australia's leading authority on men's issues" (Connell 2000: front page), which

³⁷¹ The Australian sociologist was born on 3 January 1944 in Sydney, Australia. In 1976, she was appointed as the head of the Department of Sociology at the newly founded Macquarie University in Sydney, in 1996 she was appointed as Professor of Education at Sydney University, and in 2004 she was appointed as a professor at Sydney University (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3976). Connell's own gender circumstances contributed to her insight and leadership in the field of gender and masculinities. Due to an inhospitable and unfavourable environment when it comes to transsexual issues, she published her earlier works under the gender-neutral name "R.W. Connell". Only later in life, she came out as a trans woman, and underwent the formal transition. In 2014, Raewyn retired from the University of Sydney, but she is still active in intellectual and political work (Raewyn Connell – Bio n.d.:e-source; Bryson n.d.:e-source).

³⁷² According to Connell (2002:10; 2009:11, 67-68), bodies enter a socially constructed arena (or "reproductive arena"), in which they are subjugated societal differentiation on the grounds of their reproductive purposes or sex roles.

lead to her involvement in and providing leadership on matters concerning masculinity, gender equality, violence and peace-making in United Nations initiatives³⁷³ (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3977-3979; Raewyn Connell – Bio n.d.:e-source; Bryson n.d.:e-source).

4.3.3.1 *Gender and power*

Connell's work on gender is so extensive that this section can only scratches the surface of the extent of Connell's contribution to the academy and research in the field of gender and sexuality. In *Gender and Power* (1987), Connell critiques all social-scientific (and supposedly normative) theories³⁷⁴ on gender, as they are Western inventions³⁷⁵ which are predominantly based on European culture (Connell 1987:23). She offers an alternative account in which gender is not determined by the reproductive body, but rather a simultaneous social practice and a social structure (or power) linked to (or in relationship with) the reproductive body (the object of struggle). Structure and practice do not oppose one another but are in a sense transforming each other through time.³⁷⁶ "Human practice presupposes social structure" and "[s]tructure is always emergent from practice and constituted by it" (Connell 1987:94).

In *Gender and Power*, Connell poses that there are three (interrelated) substructures (or dimensions within gender) that need to be acknowledged when considering gender relations (or historically constructed patterns of relations between men and women), and that social practices (individual or collective) are shaped by these structures, whilst these structures are also changed by those very practices. The three structures are: *power*³⁷⁷ (power inequalities and ideologies of male supremacy), *production*³⁷⁸ or labour (the allocation of particular types of work to particular categories of people),

³⁷³ Connell was part of the team who drafted the international policy guidelines on men's role to achieve gender equality, which was issued by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3978)

³⁷⁴ These theories include biological essentialism, sex role theory, and all other categorical approaches (like the sometimes-overemphasised theories of patriarchy which categorises men and women as opposites).

³⁷⁵ For Connell, it is crucial to understand that gender as geographically and culturally bound; gender arrangements are socially reproduced and shaped and is therefore always changing as new structures emerge and develop (Connell 2009:11; Connell 2002:20).

³⁷⁶ Gender arrangements are "historically variable".

³⁷⁷ *Power*, as a dimension of gender, concerns the ways in which control, authority, and force are exercised on gender lines, as visible in organisational hierarchies, legal powers, and cases of collective and individual violence. In practice, this dimension is central in the liberation movements against patriarchy, in sexual violence where men assert their power against women, in discourses which features male superiority, and women's subordination (Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2005b:7)

³⁷⁸ *Labour* (or production), as a dimension of gender, entails the division of production and consumption in accordance with gender lines. In practice, there are certain work (or occupations) ascribed to each gender. For example, labour-intensive jobs are usually ascribed to men, whilst domestic-related jobs are usually related to women. These types of divisions are common throughout history and across cultures, it led to gendering certain occupations and wage gaps, but slowly but surely, more women are participating in the economy and are not dependent on a male breadwinner anymore (Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2005b:7).

and *cathexis*³⁷⁹ (the emotional, psychological or instinctual dimension that governs or informs sexual practices and presupposes sexual difference) (Connell 1987:99-116). In her subsequent work, she expanded these dimensions, and added a fourth dimension, namely *symbolism and discourse*,³⁸⁰ a dimension that acknowledges the effect of culture and language in the portrayal and expression of gender (Connell 2000:208).

Connell strongly emphasises the multidimensional character of gender, whilst acknowledging the that these dimensions do not act independently – they intersect, are interwoven, condition each other, and are simultaneously constituted within the structure of gender relations (Connell 2009:11; Connell 2005b:6). “Economic processes, authority, violence, discourses and ideologies, sexuality and emotional connections, are all part of the picture of gender relations – no one of them determines all the others” (Connell 2005b:7). Distinguishing between the dimensions does not imply that reality comes in boxes or operates in separate compartments, but rather acknowledges its extremely complexness, and serves as a conceptual tool to adequately understand how gender relations are at work and always interact with (are “intermingled”) other dynamics in social life (Connell 2002:53-56; Connell 2009:75-76,87; Connell 2005b:7).

In her books *Gender* (2002) and *Gender: In World Perspective* (2009), Connell challenges gender definitions that insinuate that gender is merely the cultural difference between men and women, the fixed dichotomy in human life or character based on biological division between male and female. Connell believes that gender is not a fixed (or an exclusively natural/biological) state, nor is it simply an imposition or appropriation as the result of social norms or pressure from external authorities,³⁸¹ rather, it is “[...] a becoming, a condition actively under construction”³⁸² (Connell 2002:4; Connell

³⁷⁹ *Cathexis*, the emotional relations, attachments, or commitments, as a dimension of gender, as organised along gender lines among people may be positive or negative, favourable, or hostile, affection or antagonism, and include feelings of solidarity, prejudice, disdain, sexual attraction, or repulsion. For example, prejudice against women (misogyny), or against homosexuals (homophobia) are definite emotional relationships. Sexuality is a major arena of emotional attachments, and hostile relationships could be considered practices of oppression (Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2005b:7).

³⁸⁰ *Gender culture, language, and symbolism* as a dimension of gender concerns the way gender identities are defined in culture, the prevailing beliefs, and attitudes about gender, and how it is expressed or portrayed in language and symbols. Cultural systems bear social interests and originate within a history with certain “ways of life”. When speaking of “a man” or “a woman”, for example, systems of understandings, implications, overtones, and allusions are consulted, and through language (speech and writing) and symbolism (gestures, dress, media, impersonal forms of culture), these gender relations are analysed. Generally, this dimension privileges the masculine and/or patriarchal gender arrangements, which in turn could also be considered as a form of sexual violence (Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2005b:7).

³⁸¹ According to Connell, gender-appropriate ideas are constantly circulating through legislators, priests, parents, teachers, advertisers, retail-mall owners, talk-show hosts, and disk jockeys (Connell 2002:4)

³⁸² People construct themselves as masculine or feminine (or they claim a place in the gender order) by the way they conduct themselves and their bodies in everyday life. These constructions however are ambiguous, and Connell highlights the fact that gender boundaries are dichotomous – even contradictory – instead of stable (or fixed). For example, there

2009:5). For Connell, gender is a matter of social relations (or social structures), “[...] a pattern in our social arrangements and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern” (Connell 2009:10). Gender is also inherently political, since gender arrangements (or power structures) the site of certain inequalities, marginalisation, exclusion, and oppression³⁸³ (Connell 2002:5-7; Connell 2009:6-8).

According to Connell, sexual reproduction (the body’s sexual expression) is *not* the precursor for gender practice;³⁸⁴ bodies are constructed both biologically *and* socially – the one cannot be reduced to the other, and in order to understand gender, one should understand the interconnectedness of the social and bodily processes bodies must comply to.³⁸⁵ Bodies are both the *objects of* and the *agents in* social practice; which implies that bodies form the social structures and personal trajectories that reciprocally provide the conditions of new practices in which bodies are involved and addressed (Connell 2009:67-68).³⁸⁶ Connell explains that these bodies are brought into the social process, which could be compared to entering a socially constructed arena (Connell calls this the “reproductive arena”), in which they are subjugated societal differentiation on the grounds of their reproductive purposes or sex roles (Connell 2002:10; Connell 2009:11,67-68). She defines gender as follows:

Gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes. To put it informally, gender concerns the way human society deals with human bodies and their continuity, and many consequences of the “dealing” in our personal lives and collective fate (Connell 2009:11).

4.3.3.2 *Hegemonic masculinity*

In Connell’s book *Ruling Class, Ruling Culture* (1977), a book on social (or class) inequalities in schools, she already formulated ideas on hegemony and cultural struggle. As she continued her

are masculine women and feminine men, women who like women, men who like men, women who head households, and men who bring up kids. Many people combine (or blend) masculine and feminine characteristics, rather than “being all one or all the other” (Connell 2002:5; Connell 2009:6).

³⁸³ Generally, men are beneficiaries of systemic gender inequality – they hold more positions of power, are higher educated, and earn more money, while women are considered objects of men’s desire, they are excluded from (or refused) power positions, and they are marginalised in society.

³⁸⁴ In her earlier work, Connell challenged the assumption that “[...] the biological make-up of our bodies is the ‘basis’, ‘foundation’, ‘framework’, ‘essence’ or ‘mould’ of the social relations of gender”, as well as the supposition that gender is a natural category which accords with one’s sex role (Connell 1987:67).

³⁸⁵ A process Connell calls “social embodiment”.

³⁸⁶ In her work on hegemonic masculinity, she calls this “body-reflexive practices”.

research on this topic, she started recognising certain patterns of social inequality and hierarchies connected to men, visible in hierarchal relationships, sexual violence, and gender inequalities (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3976-3977; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:830). Although feminists would frame this as “patriarchy”, Connell found the term too abstract, and set out to formulate a more concrete and practical concept. This resulted in the formulation of “hegemonic masculinity” – a model of multiple masculinities and power relations (Nascimento & Connell 2017:3976; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:830).³⁸⁷ The term “hegemony” – borrowed from Antonio Gramsci in his analyses of class relations – “[...] refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (Connell 2005a:77). Combining hegemonic with *masculinity* – which Connell (2011:10) defines as the “[...] socially constructed patterns of gender practice” – does not imply total cultural dominance through subordination, nor can it be simplified to ascendancy based on force and patriarchal violence; rather, it involves the cultural exaltation of one form of masculinity at a given time over other possibilities (Connell 1987:184; Connell 2005a:77).

It is important to note that Connell always speaks about masculinities in plural; since gender is constructed in different cultures and in different historical periods, multicultural societies will have multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity, and there will not be one pattern of masculinity found everywhere. In each society or culture, there are multiple forms collectively defined in culture, and institutionally sustained masculinities present – some more dominant than others. The most honoured or desired form of masculinity – or hegemonic masculinity – is not necessarily the easiest, the most common or the most comfortable (Connell 2000:10-11). In fact, according to Connell, many men live in a state of tension with (or distance from) the cultural or communal hegemonic masculinity, unable to reach (or live up to) the cultural and societal expectations, resulting in subordinated or marginalised masculinities (Connell 2000:10-12).

Successively, “hegemonic masculinity” refers to “[...] the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 2005a:77). Hegemonic masculinity is a historically mobile relation – it is period bound; therefore, it can be challenged and the bases for its dominance (its power/control) can erode over time. Hegemonic masculinity is the embodiment of a currently accepted (or the currently honoured) way (or the patterns of practice) of being a man. It is more than a set of role expectations – it is the pattern of certain practices, the

³⁸⁷ In *Gender and Power* (1987), the short subsection (“Hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity”) was dedicated to the concept of “hegemonic masculinity”, which became a frequent theme in her subsequent works.

establishment of certain cultural ideals of masculinity, even though they do not correspond with the actual personalities of the majority of men (Connell 1987:184; Connell 2005a:77; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832).

Hegemonic masculinity highlights how the patriarchal social order works and is constructed in relation to (or domination over) women and other subordinated (or nonhegemonic) forms of masculinities. There is no room for femininity in hegemonic masculinity, because this dominant form of masculinity is hegemonic among men, and it only accommodates the interests and desires of heterosexual men (Connell 1987:183). Hegemonic masculinity does not imply “[...] being particularly nasty to women”, but it does however imply “[...] the maintenance of practices that institutionalise men’s dominance over women” (Connell 1987:185). Hegemonic masculinity aims to embody a successful collective strategy in relation to women, but due to the complexity of gender relations, this collective strategy contains an inconsistent, yet simultaneous mixture of domesticity, violence, misogyny, and heterosexual interests (Connell 1987:186). Although “hegemony” does not mean “violence”, it can be supported by force, and achieves ascendancy through culture, institutions, and persuasion (Connell 2005a:76-81; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832; Messerschmidt & Messner 2018:38). The concentration of social power lies in the hands of men, and although there are power hierarchies in feminine contexts too, themes like power, authority, aggression, and technology are typically ascribed to masculine contexts (Connell 1987:187).

The flip side of hegemonic masculinity – the dominant structure that promotes the (global) dominance of men – is the cultural construction of “emphasised femininity”. According to Connell, femininity is performed – especially to men. Emphasised femininity is the compliance to the prevailing cultural ideology; it is organised as an adaption to men’s power, and actively promoted by mass media (which ironically is organised, supervised, and financed by men). It emphasises certain “womanly” virtues, like compliance, nurturance, and empathy, and is maintained by preventing alternative forms of femininity³⁸⁸ to gain cultural articulation, which in return allows men’s dominance over women to continue (Connell 1987:187-188; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832).

Supplementary to its construction in relation to women, Connell also constructs hegemonic masculinity in relation to four specific nonhegemonic masculinities:

³⁸⁸ Alternative femininities entail the exclusion of the experiences of (for example) spinsters, lesbians, unionists, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels, manual workers, midwives and witches (Connell 1987:188).

- (i) “*Subordinate masculinities*” are constructed as “lesser masculinities”, aberrant from and deviant to hegemonic masculinity. Even though hegemony does not necessarily cause “subordination”, cultural dominance can be the effect caused by hegemony (for example the political and cultural exclusion of homosexual men).
- (ii) “*Complicit masculinities*” do not actually embody hegemonic masculinity (yet) but do realise the benefits of patriarchal relations through practice. Hegemony does not necessarily infer the “complicity” of all men, but since men benefit from hegemony (for example the deliberate subordination of women and other patriarchal values), most subscribe to it, uncontestably.
- (iii) “*Marginalised masculinities*” is the result of other structures that gender relates to, like race, class, ethnicity, and age, that simultaneously come into play. The opposite of “hegemonic masculinity”, is “marginalised masculinities” – those masculinities that do not (or cannot) qualify (or conform) to the standards set by the hegemonic (or authoritarian) group and are therefore trivialised and discriminated against.³⁸⁹
- (iv) “*Protest masculinities*” are the constructions of compensatory hypermasculinities, which are formed in response to social positions, while lacking economic and political power. This pattern of masculinity is visible among the ethnically marginalised men in a local working-class setting, who try to embody the hegemonic masculinity standard, but lack the economic resources and institutional authority to claim it (Connell 2005a:76-81; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832, 847; Messerschmidt & Messner 2018:38).

Both hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities are subject to change since they are created and constituted under specific but also variable settings and situations that could be changed or replaced (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018:38).

4.3.3.3 *Masculinities and men's bodies*

³⁸⁹ In the case of race and class: the control of the predominantly white economy and political system (which Connell calls authorisation) is the result of the white hegemonic masculinity that sustains the institutional oppression and the physical terror of black masculinities, that deliberately exploits the stereotypes ascribed to black men in order to maintain political power; subsequently, the result of this institutional racism is unemployment, urban poverty and violence among black men because of the reinforcement of certain stereotypes (which Connell calls marginalisation). There is an interplay of marginalisation and authorisation, with marginalisation always relative to the authorisation of hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group (Connell 2005a:80-81).

Connell poses that there are multiple masculinities (and/or definitions of masculinities) present in every cultural and/or societal setting. These different forms of masculinity exist in relation with each other, and since each setting usually has a hegemonic form of masculinity, there is also a hierarchy that habitually exclude those masculinities that do not submit to the hegemonic norm. Apart from its individual enactment, masculinities are also sustained and enacted in groups, institutions, and cultural forms like mass media. Masculinities are actively produced by the actions of people, constantly in a process of construction, and while certain forms of masculinities may be overthrown, other patterns of masculinity can be re-introduced into society again. Tensions and conflicting interests often emerge within patterns of masculinity, reminding one that masculinities are more likely to be internally divided than homogeneous, and that any pattern of masculinity has the potential to change. Masculinities are often the direct result of particular historical circumstances and are likely to change in accordance with some groups' interests; in fact, masculinities are dynamic – they are always changing, liable to be contested, reconstructed or displaced, but these reforms and changes are customarily met with resistance from the hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2000:216-220).

Throughout Connell's work, the centrality of men's bodies is evident.³⁹⁰ When considering men's bodies, (true) masculinity is often viewed as a fixed, biologically (or naturally) determined entity. This approach suggests that men's behaviour is the consequence of testosterone; that because of evolutionary pressures on natural masculinity, men's brains are "hardwired", and bodies are the bearers of a natural masculinity with certain inborn (or genetic) behaviours, which include the tendencies to aggression, competitiveness, political power, hierarchy, territoriality, and promiscuity (Connell 2005a:46; Connell 2000:57). In biological determinism (or nature), men's bodies could be compared to "machines" which are always under pressure to perform and produce a form of masculinity in accordance with their biology (Connell 2005a:48). Social determinism (or nurture) on the other hand, does not compare the body to a machine, but to a surface or canvas on which cultural meanings are inscribed. This implies that gender is merely an accumulation of social constructions mediated by cultural and historical factors, which Connell feels can often lead to the disembodiment of sex and sexuality (Connell 2005a:51).

Although some approaches try to reconcile both nature and nurture approaches, for example a social elaboration of a biological function, Connell poses an alternative way of thinking of gender; one that

³⁹⁰ When considering the corporeal emphasis of Connell's work, one can see the influence of the work of Foucault, who highlighted how discourses and systems of knowledge were invented to subjugate human bodies, as well as Butler's theory of performativity, which underlines the importance of the bodily enactment of gender (Connell 2000:19-20).

recognises that gender is (or in this case – masculinities are) more than programmed genes and fixed social structures; one that recognises the performative character of gender, since masculinities (and femininities) are actively produced and come into existence when people embody and enact them in a given social setting (Connell 2000:12, 59). Instead of calling the body a “machine” or a “canvas”, Connell compares men’s bodies to an “arena” in which logically complex patterns of practice (or body-reflexive practices) are involved, where bodies are both agents and objects of practice (Connell 2000:26,12,218).

For Connell, men’s bodies do not necessarily fix or determine patterns of masculinity, but they are important in the expression and construction of masculinities; bodily experience, bodily pleasures, and the vulnerability of bodies are constantly involved in the production of masculinities (Connell 2000:218). By comparing the body to an “arena” of social practice (“[...] bodies are arenas for making gender patterns”), Connell highlights the importance of embodiment (or the materiality of bodies), adding that “[h]uman life does not occur in any other terms” (Connell 2000:12, 59). For Connell, bodily experience is central to memory and one’s understanding of and engagement in the world (Connell 2005a:53); she places a strong emphasis on the historicity of body, adding that “[g]ender is the way bodies are drawn into history” (Connell 2000:12,59).

Since the body is inescapable in the construction of gender, Connell recognises how the cultural interpretation of gender has influenced men and women to believe that their maleness and femaleness is a physical matter. Consequently, in their search for identity and the plight to embody masculinity, men often tend to (or believe they have to) “put their bodies on the line”, virtually assaulting their own bodies in the name of masculinity and achieving it (Connell 2005a:56,58). Connell uses two distinct examples of how men tend to do this, namely through sport and through labour.

- (i) In the case of *sport*, one’s masculinity is constituted through one’s bodily performance. Also, in sport there are definite social relations visible in forms of competition, established hierarchies according to one’s performance, as well as forms of dominance over and/or exclusion of women as an assertion of power and superiority. Sport heroes are often considered exemplars of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary western households, and they are required to live up to it strenuously. But restricting the constitution of masculinity to bodily performance, and constantly pushing the body to its limits may come at a great cost; especially since it immediately excludes those who have a physical disability, suffers from an injury, and “[...] gender is vulnerable when the performance cannot be sustained” (Connell 2005a:53-55; Connell 2000:11).

- (ii) In the case of *labour*, one's masculinity is constituted by hard work, since "[...] [h]eavy manual work calls for strength, endurance, a degree of insensitivity and toughness, and group solidarity" – attributes that many men cherish (Connell 2005a:55). Hard, physical labour has in a sense become "masculinised", and men's bodily capacity are considered economic assets. The work environment is also an arena of competitiveness and power, and men's bodies are valued in accordance with their skill and contribution. Successively, some bodies are excluded or exploited by the superior, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005a:55-56).³⁹¹ But these economic assets (working men's bodies) are also defenceless against the reality of fatigue, injury, the decline of physical strength and cognitive ability, which leaves men vulnerable, with loss of income, or even jobless (Connell 2005a:55).

For Connell, bodies are not neutral mediums of social practice, but rather "[...] *substantively* in play in social practices" (Connell 2005a:58). Just like bodies have become the arena through which masculinities are constituted, Connell emphasises the *agency* of bodies in social processes and bodies' role to bring about change through the disruption and subversion of the hegemonic norm (Connell 2005a:60, 64). She uses the concept of "body-reflexive practices" to explain how the physical body is integrated within social processes, whilst simultaneously interrelated with the social and cultural factors of individual bodily experiences.

Body-reflexive practices [...] are not internal to the individual. They involve social relations and symbolism. [...] Through body-reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed. [...] Through body-reflexive practices, bodies are addressed by social processes and drawn into history, without ceasing to be bodies. They do not turn into symbols, signs or positions in discourse. Their materiality [...] is not erased, it continues to matter (Connell 2005a:64-65).

When referring to body-reflexive practices, Connell is referring to the dynamic process wherein practice continually respond to structures and situations, incessantly constituting a world with a bodily dimension which is not an exclusive biological phenomenon. For both men and women, body-reflexive practices create a domain where gender politics surfaces, and according to Connell, said gender politics is embodied-social politics (Connell 2005a:65).

³⁹¹ Connell highlights how labour is often a "patriarchal dividend" that secures men's domination over women; a statement confirmed when considering unequal participation in the work-force, unequal wages, and cultural and sexual privileging (Connell 2000:46).

Connell distances herself from definitions that define masculinity(/ies) as objects, a natural character type, a behavioural average or a fixed norm; for Connell “[...] [g]ender is a way in which social practice is ordered” and should rather be understood as a simultaneous assemblage of processes, relationships, practices and the effects of those practices in bodily experience, personality and culture (Connell 2005a:71). In Connell’s (2005a:71-72) view, masculinities should be understood as a dynamic structure of social practice that constantly refers to men’s bodies and what their bodies do, without being reduced to the biology of the male body; masculinity is a gender project, a process of configuring periodically and culturally bound practices. Since gender is a way of structuring practice, it is crucial to remember that gender also intersects (or interacts) with other social structures like class, race, nationality, and geography as well. This has strong implications when analysing masculinity,³⁹² since these social structures are a determinant of our collective fate (Connell 2005a:75-76).

4.3.3.4 “Changing,” “transforming”, “protest”, and/or “new” masculinities

Historically, structures of gender relations have undergone tremendous change, especially when thinking in terms of the roles of women, and gender equality. These changes were met with resistance – especially from patriarchal (and some hegemonic) masculinities saturated with violence, oppression and exclusion (Connell 2005a:82-83). Many attempts have been made to implicate masculinities to provoke attempts to “restore” a broken and/or crisis-masculinity (or toxic masculinity). In her discussion on gender relations (or the dimensions of power, production and cathexis, described under “*Gender and Power*”) and in the production of contemporary masculinities, Connell poses that one uses the terms “disruption” and “transformation” instead of “restoring” and “liberating”, since masculinity is only a configuration of practice produced within an entire system of gender relations (Connell 2005a:84).³⁹³ The disruptions within (or transformation of) patriarchal (or dominating and violent) masculinities cannot be exclusively attributed to masculinity, but to the entire gender order, and no one person is an innocent bystander when it comes to change; both men and women are engaged in constructing a world of gender relations and consequently, both should be involved in the reconsidering (transformation or disruption) of masculinities (Connell 2005a:86).

³⁹² For example, white men’s masculinities are not only constructed in relation to white women, but also in relation to black men (Connell 2005a:75).

³⁹³ This correlates with the Foucauldian idea that sexualities cannot be “liberated” from power but can be disrupted through resistance.

“All economic processes, authority, violence, discourse, ideologies, sexuality and emotional connections are part of the picture of gender relations” (Connell 2005b:7). Whilst considering change, disruption, transformation, reconsideration or reformation of masculinities, these dimensions in gender – interwoven in actual relationships and transactions – serve as a conceptual tool that provides a framework for systemic research and comparison (Connell 2005b:7). The four dimensions are:

- (i) *Power relations* are concerned with “[...]the way in which control, authority, and force are exercised on gender lines, including organisational hierarchy, legal power, collective and individual violence” (Connell 2005b:7). In the pursuit of justice, power relations involve the contesting of men’s dominance (or patriarchy) in the professional, governmental, and communal arena, as well as the deliberate attempt to end violence against women. New power relations (or the reconfiguration of gender) are continuously produced, and often the result of tensions against the hegemonic norm (Connell 2005a:85; Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2000:206).
- (ii) *Production relations* (or gender division of labour) are concerned with “[...] the way in which production and consumption are arranged on gender lines, including the gendering of occupations, the division between paid work and domestic labour, etc.” (Connell 2005b:7). In the pursuit of justice, production relations are considered economic relations that aims to equalise incomes, opportunities for promotion, equalise access to education, and promote the sharing of household work (or domestic chores). Male-dominated work environments have often been antagonistic towards women, not recognising their contribution in the work force. Sexism in the workplace is gradually being replaced with new gendered accumulated systems that incorporates women into the money economy (Connell 2005a:85; Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2000:207).
- (iii) *Relations of cathexis* are emotional relations concerned with “[...] the way attachment and antagonism among people and groups are organised along gender lines, including feelings of solidarity, prejudice and disdain, sexual attraction and repulsion, etc.” (Connell 2005b:7). In the pursuit of justice, it is the aim of the relations of cathexis to end the discriminative, misogynist, and exclusionary relations that often leads to forms of violence, including homophobia, racism, and the masculine dominance. Patriarchy enforces heteronormative sexuality, ignoring the fact that other forms of sexuality and types of sexual preferences exist. When gay and lesbian sexuality was stabilised as a public alternative to the heterosexual order, and when women claimed that they too control their own bodies, it challenged the patriarchal

order which is developed around sexual inequality and men's rights (Connell 2005a:85; Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2000:207-208).

- (iv) *Relations of symbolism* are concerned with “[...] way gender identities are defined in culture, the language and symbols of gender difference, the prevailing beliefs and attitudes about gender” (Connell 2005b:7). In the pursuit of justice, it is the aim of relations of symbolism and language to enhance and promote language and forms of culture that are equal, inclusive, and fair. Symbolism of difference must be separated from symbolism of dominance, and cultural resources should be made available to the least advantaged groups. For example, gay men's movements are often the victims of cultural abuse and unfair stereotypes (or symbolism) and should be approached with dignity and respect (Connell 2005a:85; Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2002:58-68; Connell 2000:208).

The transforming of masculinities – particularly where men reconsider their privileges in order to sustain gender equality – may be considered a utopian project by some, but Connell poses that this process is already underway. More men – despite the challenges posed by a diversity of masculinities – are engaged in gender reforms. According to Connell, the awareness that gender customs came into existence at specific historic moments enabled broad cultural shifts that acknowledges that these customs can be resisted, disrupted, and transformed. Connell proposes that more men should realise their agency in this process, reaffirm their commitment to women's equality, and recognise their potential for action in fields such as education, parenthood, media, the labour market, sexuality, violence, and conflict prevention (Connell 2011:21-22).

Connell acknowledges how disruptive (or confrontational) masculinities are often scrutinised and ridiculed – predominantly by the hegemonic form of masculinity that it aims to reform. Connell, however, feels when considering the personal relationships, sexualities and domestic lives of men, men's ability to gain a deeper understanding of themselves is a key to its transformation (Connell 2000:200). Transformation is however not limited to emotions, and despite the belief that the male body is the limit to change, Connell highlights the “[...] enormous possibilities of *re-embodiment* for men”, where the different (or new) ways of using, feeling, and showing male are implemented (Connell 2000:206). The reconsidering of masculinities entails more than just the re-arranging of the elements that structures it, but also involves unpacking the elements of these structures and understanding why they need to be disrupted (Connell 2000:206).

In *Confronting Equality* (2011), in the chapter titled “*Change among the Gatekeepers*,” Connell poses that “[m]en and boys are in significant ways gate keepers for gender equality” (Connell 2011:7). Since the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, women (who are disadvantaged in many patterns of gender inequality) started claiming justice, proposing profound institutional change and addressing inequalities visible in all aspects of life, including economic assets, political powers, and cultural authority (Connell 2011:7-8). Men – who are generally the beneficiaries of these inequalities and the patriarchal dividend – are divided when it comes to supporting this, and women’s claims for justice are habitually met with resistance, since it upsets men’s interests. This is not surprising when considering that globally, men still hold the majority of high ranking and decision-making offices and positions in governments as well as the corporate world (Connell 2011:12-14). Inequality is also the result of inconclusive debates that claim that men cannot change their ways, and that certain patterns of behaviour come naturally, which includes rape, sexism, brutality, and selfishness (Connell 2011:16).

Connell, proceeding her work with the United Nations, however, poses that men and boys have substantial reasons to support change:

- (i) When considering *men’s relational interests*: Men are not isolated individuals – they live in many social relationships with women (familial, communal, professional), and the quality of these relationships greatly influence men’s quality of life. Promoting a world that offers women security, freedom, and opportunities to succeed has a reciprocal effect, and should convince men to support gender equality (Connell 2011:17).
- (ii) When considering their *health and well-being*: Connell urges men to avoid the toxic effects that advances in the (dominantly male) gender order. Men adhere to certain (masculine) social and economic pressures and expectations, and this often incites risk-taking behaviours in an attempt to assert a tough and dominant masculinity. Promoting equality, and consequently opening alternative economic paths and moving towards multi-optional masculinities are considered good for men’s health and well-being (Connell 2011:18).
- (iii) When considering the relevance of gender change in the *well-being of communities*: In communities struck with mass poverty and unemployment, the flexibility in gender division of labour is crucial to a household’s survival. Also, when considering how conflicts and war are often ascribed to the egos of men, the reducing of the rigidity of masculinities is considered

to be beneficial for communal security, as it promotes peace which is in the interest of both men and women (Connell 2011:18).

- (iv) And, when considering the fact that gender equality follows *political and ethical principles*: Connell states that “[t]he idea of equal human rights still has credibility among large groups of men,” and is usually endorsed by their religious, socialist or broad democratic beliefs (Connell 2011:18-19)

4.3.3.5 *Stitching Connell to chitenge-patchwork*

Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity has been applied in the Zambian context in the past; Dover (2005:177-179) uses it to depict the ideals of manhood, expectations of manliness, and the gender order in rural Zambia. He highlights how men’s bodies are “governed” by the ideals installed by the cultural hegemonic. Cultural identities, however, are not closed categories – they come from somewhere and they are going somewhere; they have histories and are constantly undergoing transformation; they are not homogenous and stagnant, but highly diverse, metamorphosing, and constantly constructed in response to historical and cultural contexts (Ngwenya 2018:8-10). Connell (1987:23) acknowledges this when she critiques the Western-inspired theories that do not always attend to the bodily experience of non-Western masculinities. For Connell, biology is not the only determiner of masculinities (Connell 1987:94), but male bodies are not neutral to social practices either – they become the arena in which masculinities are constituted (Connell 2005a:58-64). Like Butler and Foucault, Connell rejects gender essentialism, emphasises embodiment, corporeality and lived experience, and acknowledge that bodies are subjected to numerous intersecting power relations (Connell 2002:53-56; Connell 2009:75-87).

Connell defines gender in terms of power relations and transactions, and she distinguishes between four distinct albeit interacting dimensions (structures or relations) which could also be applied to Zambian masculinities in a time when GBV is considered worrisome (Connell 2005b:7).

- (i) In terms of *power*, in this study it has been highlighted that GBV does not necessarily have to do with satisfaction, but rather the aggressor’s power over and/or control of the victim’s body; it involves enacting power as an assertion of male dominance and women’s subordination, and therefore maintaining the patriarchal ideals (Theron 2015:56-57; Connell 2005b:7). Both men and women are subjected to the cultural hegemonic in Zambia which enforces these practices

(both blatantly and subconsciously), Zambian men habitually engage with these types of practices that women also endorse in the name of religion and traditional family values (Theron 2015:57; Zulu 2015:93-94).

- (ii) In terms of *labour*, in this study it has been highlighted that certain jobs – domestic and professional, cultural and religious – are stereotypically assigned according to gender. Since men are considered to be the stronger sex, physical labour and protecting the family is habitually associated with manhood, while women are responsible for domestic chores (including cooking, cleaning, hosting guests, and taking care of children). In Zambian society, men are expected to be providers, heads of families, decision makers, and leaders, and even though more women are entering the workforce, these responsibilities still fall on their shoulders. Relatedly, some men find the success of women threatening to their responsibilities, since men are traditionally expected to be the breadwinners; some would even argue that jealousy and/or fear of a woman's success can lead to GBV (Theron 2015:58,62-63; Connell 2009:76-85; Connell 2005b:7). In the RCZ, some congregations – especially in rural areas – still feel uncomfortable with having a woman reverend and/or women in the church leadership, despite women dominating membership (Njobvu 2017:50-51).
- (iii) In terms of *cathexis*, it has been highlighted that transgressive sexualities (like homosexuality) are met with disgust and disapproval since they undermine traditional heteronormative family values. The idea that women cannot serve as elders or reverends also falls into this category, since they challenge the patriarchal ideals that determine perceptions of gender roles. Even in matrilineal cultures, like the Chewas, some gender roles still align with the patriarchal authority of men over women and children (Connell 2005b:7; Theron 2015:60,62-63; Phiri 2017:3; Van Klinken 2014:260).
- (iv) In terms of *symbolism and language*, it has been highlighted that the RCZ – despite recognising and proclaiming gender equality – still succumbs to the cultural customs that secures male dominance and privilege. One can argue that culture is still an obstacle when it comes to realising the religious ideal of equal dignity of men and women (Theron 2015:56,63; Njobvu 2017:52; Phiri 2017:75). The latter is substantiated when considering the culture of silence (women are not supposed to talk about the hardships in their marriage) and the cultural practice of *lobola* (the bride price) which leaves women vulnerable when it comes to talking about GBV (Farley 2006:86; Theron 2015:64; Connell 2007b:7).

Here, it is also important to highlight the fact that in each of these dimensions, there are also examples of how the RCZ contributes to gender equality and fight GBV. In Lusaka, there are men (and women) hard at work to promote inclusive congregations through sermons, liturgy, pastoral counselling, and bible studies. Hegemonic masculinity does not immediately imply violence, dominance, and/or oppression; rather, it implies the cultural exaltation of one form of masculinity based on the social structures and personal trajectories (Connell 2009:67-68; Connell 1987:184). Hegemonic masculinity, however, does exclude examples of nonhegemonic masculinities (subordinate, complicit, marginalised, and protest masculinities), installing a hierarchy of “more” and “lesser” masculinities (Connell 2005a:76-81). For example, it seems as though the cultural hegemonic in the RCZ values and defines an ideal man as heterosexual, married, sober, able-bodied, and educated; he should be reliable, responsible, and hospitable; he should be able to lead, inspire, and work hard in order to provide for his family. Of course, this immediately excludes (or undervalues) men who are unmarried, disabled, effeminate, jobless, childless, homosexual, introverted, uneducated, and not religious. The hegemonic masculinity in the RCZ also ignores the fact that many women have some of these “masculine” attributes as well. This resonates with the observation in Chapter 1 and in the formulation of the hypothesis: In their plight to embody the hegemonic masculinity and adhere to the socio-cultural (and religious) standards and expectations thereof, men are also subscribing to the fear of being emasculated, being powerless, and fragile. Fear of weakness (powerlessness, vulnerability, fragility, or being emasculated) then becomes the force and vigour behind adhering to the cultural hegemonic (Connell 2009:6-8).

Connell (2011:21-22) is in favour of “transforming masculinities” initiatives; in fact, like Foucault and Butler, she pleads for disruptive masculinities (alternative narratives, and/or introducing outside *I*-positions). She argues for a “re-embodiment” of men – a new way of “doing the body” (sensing, thinking, feeling, and responding), changing the rules (re-evaluating the prescriptions that are considered destructive), and expressing masculinities in such a way that benefits entire communities (Connell 2000:200; Connell 2011:17-19). In Zambia – a country with devastating statistics when it comes to GBV – Connell (2011:17-19) would argue that real or true “transforming masculinities” initiatives are not only beneficial for entire communities, but also for the health and wellbeing of men, since their bodies are on the line too.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1, gender-based violence has been identified as the prevailing dominant narrative when studying African masculinities. In the field, four storylines were identified in the RCZ – religious normativity, cultural normativity, the male dominance-male fragility cycle, and creative (re)interpretations of masculinity – each a consequence of, or influenced by the dominant narrative. In this chapter, the content of these four storylines were brought into conversation with Foucault’s depiction of bio-power, Butler’s theory of gender performativity, and Connell’s theories on gender relations and hegemonic masculinity in an attempt to broaden the scope of this study, and better understand the multiple storylines and power relations associated with GBV.

The premise of this chapter was twofold: (1) it attempted to thicken the descriptions outlined in Chapter 3 through an interdisciplinary dialogue that follows a transversal rationale, and (2) it also attempted to imagine alternative narratives (point towards a “future tense”) that will follow in the next chapter. All contributions could be seen as threads and pieces of batting that binds and upholds the multicoloured, multi-patched *chitenge* quilt. This chapter provided the necessary vocabulary, metaphors, theories, and hypotheses to better understand masculinities and GBV in Zambia. The insights gathered in this chapter, which will be addressed in the next chapter, includes the centrality of sexed and gendered bodies (or corporeality), the importance to include the voices of transgressive sexualities (sexual minorities), and the fact that the study of sex, sexuality and gender is often a messy, disorderly endeavour.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES AND RE-IMAGINING BODIES

5.1 THE “FUTURE TENSE” OF BODIES: INTRODUCTION TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

At this stage of this research project, the patchwork of the metaphorical quilt has been stitched together and upholstered with the appropriate batting. The patchwork consists of pieces of *chitenge* material, which is usually used to cover bodies and have gendered, cultural, societal, religious, historical, and economic significance. Creating the quilt was a messy albeit creative endeavour which involved going to the marketplace to obtain materials, as well as spending time in the workshop to sew the patches together in the attempt to craft an imaginative piece of artwork.³⁹⁴ The last phase of the metaphor entails embroidering the quilt – stitching all the materials together in order to present the unique design. In a sense, this quilt-creating endeavour also represents the hermeneutical spiral (practice-theory-practice) that involves a dynamic process that moves beyond preliminary understanding, obtains new insights, refers to relevant theories to better understand the dominant narrative, which is then followed by returning to practice with new insights and perspectives that were inspired by the context (Browning 1991:39; Osmer 2008:11). This metaphor describes the different phases (or movements) of this study: It started with reflecting on past stories, giving a contextual analysis, including first-hand insights, and in-context experiences. It was followed by processes of analysis, interpretation, and interdisciplinary reflection which resulted in bringing distant concepts into current contexts.

The last phase of making a quilt and the premise of this chapter focuses on converging all the information gathered up to this point. This not only involves interpreting past and present stories, but also envisioning future ones – or “the future tense” (Müller 2017:95; Graham 2017:6,9). Müller (2017:95) calls this “a convergence of different horizons” – a natural part of the hermeneutical process where one can come to a logical ending where difference is welcomed and learned from. This also aligns with the seventh and final movement of his African postfoundational practical theology, which entails the development of alternative narratives that point beyond the local community and formulating specific interpretations for specific contexts (Müller 2017:94). This would also fall in the

³⁹⁴ In Pattison’s terms (2007:18-22), practical theology is both a *scientific* and an *artistic* endeavour: as a *science* it values truth, reality, things, objectivity, explanation, proof, and determinism, and as an *art* it values beauty, symbols, feelings, meanings, subjectivity, interpretation, insight, and freedom.

fourth task of Osmer's (2008:4) practical theology – the pragmatic task – which involves “[d]etermining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into reflective conversation with the ‘talk back’ emerging when they are enacted.” This would also fall in the practice of *expressing* in Ward's practical theology (2017:20-21), which not only refers to the way people express their faith in the church life, but also to the way that the gospel (the good news) becomes embodied and lived out in the personal, communal, political, and economic arena, in the everyday life.

This chapter will start by revisiting the dominant narrative introduced in the first chapter of this study – the prevalence of GBV in Zambia. The four storylines identified in the empirical study would then also be revisited, but this time, the tensions in each storyline would be identified and countered with an alternative interpretation (or disruptive narrative) that points beyond the local community. The aim of this chapter is not to be prescriptive, but rather to promote innovative thinking that suggests counternarratives for the “future tense” of the RCZ, envisioning a future where GBV is not dominating the storyline, and transforming masculinities are realised.

5.2 REVISITING THE DOMINANT NARRATIVE: MOVING FROM THEORY BACK TO PRACTICE

5.2.1 GBV in Zambia: the body is not a thing – it is a situation³⁹⁵

Since the dominant narrative of this study is the reality of gender-based violence, this section takes a closer look at underlying ideologies associated with GBV before posing disruptive narratives to counter it. One could say that this section is a gradual movement from theory back to practice and serves as a foreword to the climax of this chapter where alternative narratives would be imagined. Before defining gender-based violence, however, it is important to remember that gender per its definition supports socio-cultural hierarchies and imposes hegemonic ideals that reciprocally ensure the domination of men (Lorber 2000:75-78).³⁹⁶ Men are customarily the beneficiaries of power, prestige, and economic rewards in the form of leadership roles, the promotion of their interests, and the reinforcement of their behaviour, while women are devalued in this social order. Both Butler

³⁹⁵ Direct reference to Ngweni (2018:179, 204-205) who argues the body is more than the patriarchal imagination that reduces it to biology, they are inscribed with historical, social, and cultural significance.

³⁹⁶ Lorber (2000:75-78) defines gender as (1) a process of maintaining a certain order by enforcing gender-appropriate expectations and norms in accordance with social differences, (2) a stratification (or process of hierarchising) that defines, separates, or isolates a person in accordance with certain (gendered) hegemonic ideals, and a (3) structure (or system) of inequality that ensures the social domination of men (or patriarchy).

(1999:6-9) and Connell (2009:76-85) affirms this observation, arguing that male superiority and the subordination of women are inevitably involved when talking about gender relations. Gender, therefore, puts bodies in an already inherently sexist system,³⁹⁷ leaving them vulnerable for the bio-power (political operations, economic interventions, and ideological campaigns directed at disciplining and regulating bodies) that would be inscribed on them (Foucault 1978:145-146). This resonates with Ngwena's statement that the body is not a "thing", it is a "situation" (Ngwena 2018:179). In response to this gender-biased (sexist, patriarchal, and/or misogynist) system (the "situation"), and as an act of resistance to the system that undervalues the bodies of women, the feminist movement was founded with the aim to achieve equal rights, individual freedom, and socioeconomic equity (Louw 2008:382).

Since bodies are affected by this sexist system, gender inequality is indisputably linked to gender-based violence. Even though violence affects both men³⁹⁸ and women, violence towards women are considered more worrisome, especially when considering the fact that the four pillars of patriarchy (*biology* – men are physically stronger, *culture* – men are on the top of the social hierarchy, *economy* – men have more power in the commercial world, and *religion* – male dominance is justified by religious literature) not only benefits men and ensures male dominance, but sustains the oppression of women (Louw 2009:99; 2008:385). The statistics prove that women and girls are vulnerable to this destructive reality, which is not limited to physical and sexual violence, but also involves depriving women of their freedom, justice, and dignity (Koopman 2015:30; Mwaba 2016:105). According to Mwaba (2016:105), this is also the case in Zambia.

Regardless of the target, gender-based violence is rooted in the structural inequalities between men and women and is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional or financial power and control.

The term "gender-based violence" and "violence against women" are viewed as synonyms, since women are disproportionately affected (Izumi 2007:14; Jewkes *et al.* 2020:6), and it refers to the forms of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and/or emotional violence and/or harm directed toward an individual or group on the basis of their gender. GBV can be executed through threats, acts, coercion and/or arbitrary deprivation of another person's liberty, dignity, and human rights

³⁹⁷ Favourable towards men, but oppressive and discriminatory towards women. Sexism is not an exclusive African phenomenon, and women across the world are victims to gender-based discrimination and violence. In many African countries, however, especially sub-Sahara African countries, sexism often leads to violence against women (Theron 2015:54).

³⁹⁸ Men are half as likely to be victims to sexual abuse, but twice as likely to experience (and probably more likely to die because of) physical abuse than women (Gennrich 2015:204).

(Ngonga 2016:145; Mwaba 2016:105; Izumi 2007:14). This means that GBV is not limited to physical violence, and may refer to any form of gender-biased intimidation (or blackmail), humiliation, sexual violence,³⁹⁹ sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual cleansing (for example the misconception that having sex with a virgin could cure HIV), domestic violence, intimate partner violence, rape (including corrective rape), forced marriages, child marriages, incest, widow cleansing, widow inheritance, genital mutilation, femicide, property grabbing (when women are forced from their homes on the death of their husband), and the economic exploitation of women (Mwaba 2016:110,112; Zulu 2015:90-93; Izumi 2007:14-15; Le Roux 2012:56). GBV devastates the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of its victims; it can have long-term effects on reproductive health of the victim, it erodes their self-esteem, it causes trauma and anxiety for the victims, their families and communities, and can also transmit sexually transmitted infections and HIV (Gqola 2015:150; Mwaba 2016:106-107; Izumi 2007:14). All the examples mentioned – in some way or another – is still a reality in Zambia where nearly half⁴⁰⁰ of the women population have recorded experiencing some form of GBV since the age of 15 years – the majority thereof inflicted by an intimate partner.

There are arguments that GBV is accepted in (and kept intact by) some cultures; in this research project, respondent R1_M made the comment that “[some] *women agree that if a man doesn’t beat them, he does not love them*”. In an article about GBV in Zambia, Mwaba (2016:110) emphasises that there is a seemingly accepting attitude towards GBV in some (patriarchal) African countries. Zulu (2015:94) affirms this notion, highlighting the fact that women are the custodians and the primary transmitters of culture and culturally sanctioned gender inequality in many African cultures. Nadar and Potgieter (2010:141) call this *formenism* – the phenomenon where women subscribe to the belief that men are inherently superior, and therefore (should) support and perpetuate patriarchy (Le Roux 2019:5).⁴⁰¹ In Zambia, there seems to be a clear discrepancy when it comes to GBV: despite the negative attitudes toward GBV on the national (political) and communal (congregational) level, GBV cases keep on escalating, and the social norms and oppressive systems that reinforce it and seen

³⁹⁹ Sexual violence is considered a field of its own, and Le Roux (2012:56) defines it as “[...] any kind of violence exacted through sexual means or targeting the sexuality of another, regardless of age”, and it is not limited to penetration of the vagina or anus with a penis or a foreign object, but also include: (forced) oral sex, sexual humiliation, forced marriage, forced prostitution (including human trafficking and pornography), forced (culturally-appropriated) impregnation or abortion, forced sterilisation, medical experimentation on a person’s reproductive health, genital mutilation, and other forms of violence perpetrated by sexual means.

⁴⁰⁰ 47% according to Mwaba (2016:111), 52% according to Ngonga (2016:147), and 46,5 % according to Jewkes et al. (2020:5)

⁴⁰¹ *Formenism* was coined in the article *Living It Out. Liberated Through Submission? The Worthy Woman’s Conference as a Case Study of Formenism* (Nadar & Potgieter 2010). “*Formenism*, like masculinism, subscribes to a belief in the inherent superiority of men over women...but unlike masculinism, it is not an ideology developed and sustained by men, but constructed, endorsed, and sustained by women” (Nadar & Potgieter 2010:141).

as contributors to GBV generally remain intact. (Mwaba 2016:111; Ngonga 2016:146; Jewkes *et al.* 2020:5).

Social scientists have been debating the causes of GBV for decades, and the influence of poverty, patriarchy, alcohol, aggression, and even the internalisation of post-colonial (post-Apartheid) trauma has been discussed and deliberated on thoroughly (Jewkes 2002:1423; Louw 2008:386-387). In an article on intimate partner violence, Rachel Jewkes⁴⁰² also explores this, presenting her findings in the figure (Figure 3) below (Jewkes 2002:1426).

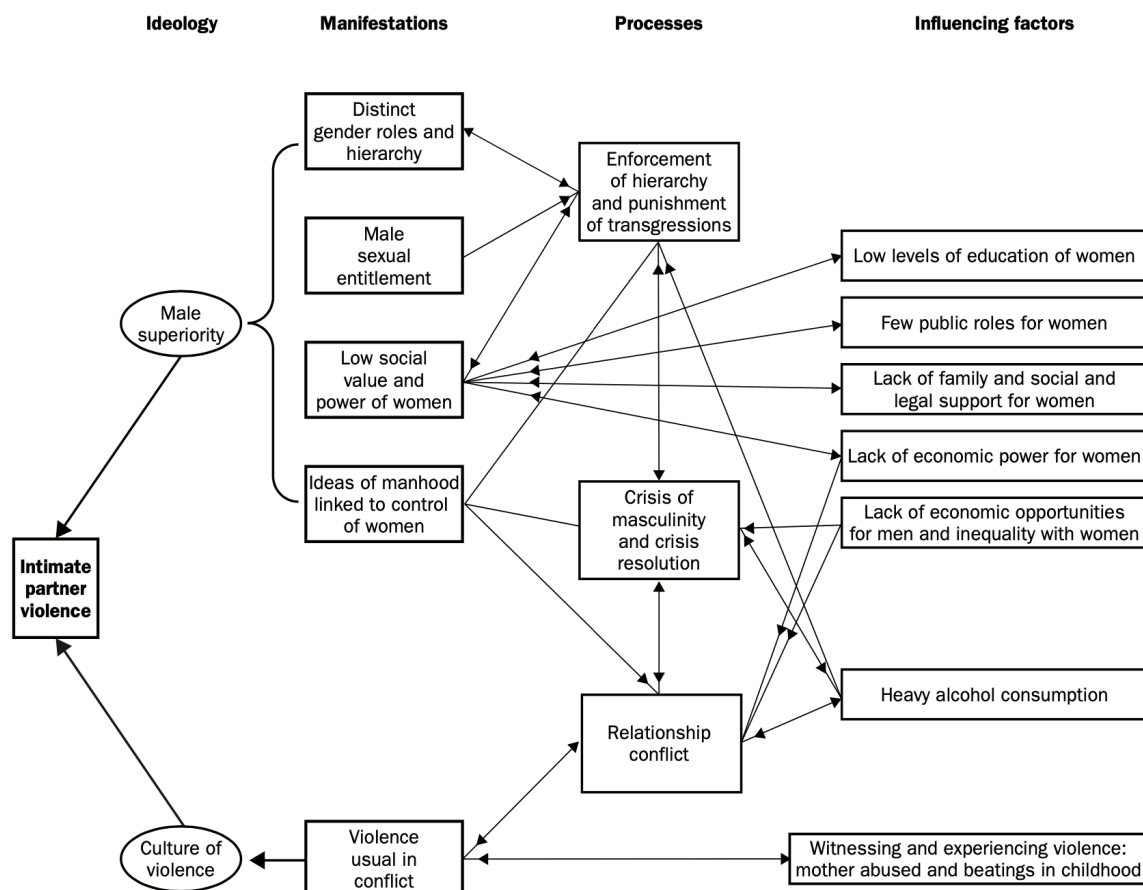


Figure 3: Causes of intimate partner violence

In Jewkes' research, she argues that the relationship between poverty, economic inequality, and intimate partner violence – with violence as a means to assert masculine identity – proves that socioeconomic factors undeniably contribute to GBV (Jewkes 2002:1424). Relatedly, certain models (or ideals) of masculinity are considered unrealistic or unattainable in some socioeconomic environments, and from a place of involuntary vulnerability (or fragility) “successful” masculinities

⁴⁰² Rachel Jewkes is considered an expert on GBV-research; she serves on the *Gender & Health Research Unit* of the *South African Medical Research Council*, and her research is based on empirical data collected in South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Rwanda, Nepal, and Afghanistan.

are reshaped and directed towards misogyny, substance (ab)use, participation in crime, violent behaviour, and dominance over minorities in a desperate attempt to exercise (to regain or assert) the power that they have been denied or have no control over (Jewkes 2002:1424).

The complex relationship between female empowerment and GBV have also been discussed. Socio-cultural gender relations differ from one culture/society/community to the next, and it is clear that the cultures/societies/communities that enable, promote and/or sustain gender-biased, male centric mechanisms of power, enforce gender hierarchies that also disvalue women (Jewkes 2002:1425-1426). The influence of alcohol and substance (ab)use are also connected to GBV, since men are more likely to act violent when they are under the influence of these substances. Jewkes adds that learned social behaviour contributes to the intergenerational cycling of violence, and those who were abused would often learn that violence is normal in some settings; this results in men believing that violence is normal and/or necessary, while some women are taught to tolerate it (Jewkes 2002:1426; Jewkes *et al.* 2020: 6-7; Jewkes *et.al* 2010:41-42).

When considering GBV in Zambia, Figure 3 and Jewkes' research remind us that GBV is deeply rooted in a system that glorifies violence and female humiliation as a "normal" expression of "real" masculinity (Gqola 2015:152), and directly connected to the socio-cultural norm that amplifies male dominance and affirms men's superiority over women (Mwaba 2016:107). Gender, per Lorber's (2000:75-78) definition, is a dynamic and inherently sexist process that – through enforcing certain gender-appropriate expectations and process of stratification (or hierarchising) – ensures the social dominion of men. Hegemonic masculinity does the same – it installs gendered practices that justifies patriarchy in a society. Anyone who aims to disrupt this system – which is the premise of feminist scholars' work – is considered a threat to it, and men would retaliate through a conscious process of intimidation to keep women in a state of fear (Le Roux 2012:56).

In the case of sexual violence, for example, the act should not necessarily be seen as sexual aggression, but rather as an act aimed to maintain power and control. The satisfaction of sexual violence does not lie in the sexual act, but rather in the enactment of power and the abasement (and therefore, the humiliation) of the victim (Le Roux 2012:56-57). GBV (like sexual violence) is about more than just violence, domination, and physical strength – it is about possessing power and asserting one's masculinity through violence. It could also be connected to the fear of and/or resistance to being powerless/disempowered, and is therefore a symptom of male fragility (Louw 2008:386-387; Gqola 2015:144). "Violence against women is a demonstration of male power juxtaposed against the lesser power of women" (Jewkes 2002:1427).

The causes of GBV are complex, but for Jewkes (2002:1426) there are *two definite* (or undebatable) contributors, namely “[...] the unequal position of women in a particular relationship (and in society), and the normative use of violence in conflict.” Although GBV is embedded in a complex web of interrelated factors that produce GBV – like biblically-endorsed male supremacy and socio-culturally enforced gender roles – she argues that intimate partner violence (and by association, GBV) would not occur when these two factors (gender inequality and the normative use of violence) are excluded from the equation. Gender-based oppression and discrimination are also embedded in this complex web, and would continue to thrive unless the gender-biased systems that maintain them are disrupted. In the empirical data of this study, four main storylines were identified, and these storylines verify Jewkes’s observation. Each storyline could be considered both a contributor and a consequence of unequal gender relations and a culture of violence, which in return reinforces the dominant narrative (the reality of GBV).

5.2.2 Transforming masculinities: disruptive narratives to transform practice

The growing call for (or need for) alternative masculinities in a time of GBV could be considered a response or resistance to the dominant narrative. In many societies around the world, gender roles have already undergone a tremendous revolution, prescribed gender roles are being subverted, and a new kind of gender freedom – where legal status, political rights and economic opportunities are now equally divided between men and women – is being established (Harari 2014:178). This is also the case in Zambia, which could be attributed to the effect of globalism, political involvement, and a number of political and humanitarian initiatives. One could ask whether this means that the “transforming masculinities” initiatives were successful, but I argue that since they contended for a masculinity where manliness are not connected to violence, sexism, risk-taking and/or homophobic behaviour, but rather to becoming an agent in promoting equality, fairness, and justice in society (Nadar & Phiri 2012:127), “transforming masculinities” did not have the effect they hoped for. These forms of masculinities are still highly unpopular and often ridiculed by the hegemonic forms of masculinity (Langa 2020:9,13,22).

It has been more than twenty years since African churches started promoting “transforming masculinities”, but like in many sub-Saharan Africa countries, GBV statistics are annually increasing

in Zambia.⁴⁰³ This means that the dominant narrative⁴⁰⁴ did not only remain dominant, but its ability to suppress gradually intensified over time as well. It could be argued that this “un-Christian” practice does not belong in a country that proudly identifies as a Christian nation, and since being a good man is synonymous with being a Christian in Zambia, one would not expect the influence of GBV to be so overwhelming.⁴⁰⁵ Despite this, and despite the fact that many Zambian men are against GBV and in favour of gender equality on paper, patriarchal practices that undermine women are still a reality in both political and clerical structures, with GBV as the most extreme example of gender inequality (SIDA 2015:4). This is what patriarchy does: it is a collective system in which both men and women are players but installs a social hierarchy which ensures the dominance of men, giving them status, power, and privilege over women (Gennrich 2015:209).

However, the idea that men are to blame and are all oppressors have often been exaggerated (Siwila 2011:297; Van Klinken 2011:123). In many African nations, men do value women’s rights, but they are side-tracked by women who are complicit in the patriarchal system. Studies have shown that some women – directly or indirectly – support or even encourage the practices and systems that subjugate them to patriarchal power, since their understanding of the Bible expects this (Le Roux 2019:5; Zulu 2015:94). Le Roux (2019:12-17) verifies this statement by referring to the many religious women in Zambia who believe that in order to protect the sanctity and stability of the marital relationship (and the traditional family), they have to endure oppression and suffer violence imposed upon them by a patriarchal system, making them complicit to the patriarchy, which paradoxically opposes the efforts of feminists who are fighting for gender equality.

The empirical data of this research project show that this is the case in a majority of RCZ congregations as well: despite the efforts of both men and women to reimagine and redefine gender relations, there are also groups of men and women in the church who are complicit to patriarchy. Therefore, despite its good intentions, it seems as if “transforming masculinities” remains a stagnant ideal. This could be ascribed to the fact that many cultural beliefs and practices that are still part of the daily lives of Zambian men and women are patriarchal in nature (Theron 2015:54-55). It is also important to remember that African Christianity was built on patriarchal and heteronormative values,

⁴⁰³ “Transforming masculinities” also focused on men’s roles and involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

⁴⁰⁴ The dominant narrative involves the destructive reality of GBV. This chapter aims to revisit it.

⁴⁰⁵ *Association Between Girl-child Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Ahinkorah *et al.* 2021), *Gender Based Violence against Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* (See Muluneh *et al.* 2020); *Spousal violence in sub-Saharan Africa: Does household poverty-wealth matter?* (Bamiwuye & Odimegwu 2014); *Gender Based Violence: The Zambian Situation* (Mwaba 2016); *Factors contributing to physical Gender Based Violence reported at Ndola Central Hospital: a case control study* (Ngonga 2016).

and therefore, when calling for transformation, one cannot leave out the fact that Christian nationalism has seeped into the fabric of the daily lives of all Zambians (Ngwena 2018:18,34,36). With this said, it is also crucial to note that if the dominant narrative is not disrupted, transformed, or replaced, GBV would continue to thrive in the Zambian context and remain part of the RCZ's main storyline. Connell poses that if the current hegemonic masculinity does not promote gender equality, it should be disrupted (or transformed) in order to create alternative constructions of masculinities in which both men and women can flourish (Connell 2005a:86). In Foucauldian terms, sexualities cannot necessarily be "liberated", but by implementing more inclusive systems of bio-power, they can be disrupted and transformed. This would involve listening to the stories (or transgressive voices) of those usually excluded by bio-power or sexual minorities (Rabinow 1984:45-46). Therefore, aligning with Foucault,⁴⁰⁶ Butler,⁴⁰⁷ and Connell⁴⁰⁸ who agree on the efficacy of disruptive narratives, this chapter focuses on disrupting the dominant narrative, particularly focusing on the four main storylines that were identified in the field.

"Disruptive narratives" may sound like a condescending and transgressive attempt to modify behaviour in the terms that were set out by those who do not want to follow the hegemonic norm. In a sense that is true, but in reality, disruptive narratives go beyond that. Disruptive narratives, which could also be called "alternative narratives", "counter narratives" or "new *I*-positions", are technologies of resistance directed towards an oppressive system (Downing 2008:110-114; Ngwena 2018:233-234). Disruptive narratives are part of the hermeneutical cycle when doing research; they are involved in the last movement of the postfoundational approach to practical theology, creating new landscapes of imagination necessary for the current context (Müller 2017:87,92).

Disruptive narratives also correspond with Ward's (2017:103-104) motivation of "complexifying" our understanding of situations and contexts: it does not ignore the real issues, but widens the metaphorical table, broadens the discussion, puts a discussion through more (even diverse) levels of analysis, and consequently adds depth to one's preliminary understanding of an issue or topic. Disruptive narratives intend to appeal to outdated and destructive ideas, creating a new awareness and understanding about a topic or practice. Disruptive narratives involve honest conversations in

⁴⁰⁶ For Foucault, disruptive narratives are acts of resistance to hegemonic structures, and necessary when promoting real change and transformation (Downing 2008:104-109; Farley 2006:22-23; Ngwena 2018:228).

⁴⁰⁷ For Butler, disruptive narratives are held up against the socio-cultural regulations and prohibitive laws, and they establish new fictions, alternative truths, and alternative interpretations of reality which are necessary to modify practices (Butler 1999:169-171).

⁴⁰⁸ For Connell, disruptive narratives involve re-evaluating destructive prescriptions and practices, while envisioning new expressions of the body that benefits the entire community (Connell 2000:200; Connell 2011:17-19).

which discrepancies are highlighted, weaknesses are outlined, and brutalities exposed; it rehumanises the dominant narrative by truly listening to people's experiences, feelings, perceptions, and motivations, with the intention to modify behaviour for the greater good (Brown 2012:184,188).

Disruptive narratives do not necessarily mean that an entire new system needs to be instated. It does what it says: it disrupts the dominant storyline and offers an alternative based on good practice. This is also the premise of Graham's (1996:104-105,205-207) "transforming practice", which argues that good practice is a source of knowledge necessary to establish, reproduce, and/or embodying new storylines; in other words, *good practice* disrupts. By engaging with narratives of good practice, one can learn a lot about one's context, and subsequently disrupt the bad practices which are dominating the storyline. Introducing disruptive narratives is also substantiated by the dialogical self theory (Hermans 2003:102-111); it could be argued that since the self is always in a process of becoming and subject to change, introducing of new (sometimes disruptive) narratives would lead to the organisation, disorganisation, and reorganising (or even the reconsideration) of dominant *I*-positions, and cause the structural maturation of internal and external *I*-positions, which in turn could lead to behavioural change. Disruptive narratives on GBV should not necessarily be aimed at shaming, prescribing, or "improving" men; it does however promote creating inclusive spaces where communities and churches can learn from good practice, have open and honest discussions, and introduce alternative and inclusive ways of being a man in a time of GBV.

There are some examples of good practice which could be considered as disruptive responses that succeeded to change the hegemonic norm – narratives from which one can draw inspiration in current practice. The one example I would like to highlight comes from Zambia's neighbour country Malawi. In Malawi, it is estimated that nearly half of the girls leave school before the ninth grade – mostly due to teen pregnancy and early marriages (Paliani-Kamanga 2019:e-source). In the Chewa culture (a culture which is also very influential in Zambia and the RCZ) it is possible for women to become chiefs of villages. It does however seem as though girls still have little or no sexual rights when considering the fact that one in ten girls in Malawi wed before their fifteenth birthday (Flanagan 2019:e-source). In response to this, one 60-year-old woman chief from Ntakataka village in the Dedza district, Senior Chief Theresa Kachindamoto, has annulled over 3 500 child-marriages and banned the sexual initiations of young girls, to provide them the chance to complete their high school education. Senior Chief Kachindamoto believes that education is key to breaking the crippling cycle of poverty which creates lifelong problems for women. Despite receiving death threats, being challenged, and called a traitor, Senior Chief Kachindamoto has built up a large network of female informers to ensure that this does not happen anymore, has fired male subchiefs who refused to ban

child marriages, and in 2015, after lobbying for five years with other similar-minded chiefs, she succeeded in persuading the Malawian parliament to pass a bill that sets the minimum marriage age at 18 years. Senior Chief Kachindamoto said that she is not defying tradition, but rather redefining it; her aim is to improve the life of girls and make male chiefs and headmen aware of the dangers of child marriages, and the benefits of girls who finish their education. Many men have since bought into this “disruptive” narrative, and followed Senior Chief Kachindamoto’s example (Paliani-Kamanga 2019:e-source; Flanagan 2019:e-source).

In Zambia, child-marriages (or underage marriages) are also considered a “persistent enslaving cultural practice” (Zulu 2015:91). Zulu (2015:91-92) highlights how this practice degrades women’s worth to their ability to produce offspring and is built on men’s perception that a young wife would be easier to control.” Since it is closely connected to the reality of GBV in Zambia, the story of Senior Chief Kachindamoto could serve as an inspiration and a source of knowledge for the Zambians who suffer under this culturally appropriated practice that actually cripples the ideal of gender equality (Zulu 2015:92). It is an example of a disruptive narrative that emanated from good practice. In the next section, the four main storylines would be described, and a disruptive narrative introduced for each storyline.

5.3 STORYLINES, TENSIONS, AND DISRUPTIVE NARRATIVES

During the coding of empirical data in this research project, all relevant data were catalogued into four dominant storylines, namely (1) religious normativity, (2) cultural normativity, (3) the male dominance-male fragility cycle, and (4) creative (re)interpretations of masculinity.⁴⁰⁹ In an attempt to complete the hermeneutical loop (the practice-theory-practice spiral), these narratives would be revisited and elaborated on. Since all four storylines represent different aspects of the same narrative, tensions and discrepancies are inevitable. This section aims to identify and respond to these tensions by putting them in dialogue with an alternative storyline – a counter or disruptive narrative which is inspired by examples of good practice, which would not only introduce new *I*-positions, but also inspire a new “transforming masculinities” hegemonic.

5.3.1 Dominant storyline 1: religious normativity

⁴⁰⁹ See Chapter 3, subsection 3.3.3.2.

The religious normativity-storyline correlates with the “biblical manhood” storyline identified by Van Klinken (2016:109-130),⁴¹⁰ and it could be defined as the religious and clerical – but not necessarily theological – expectations directed at men. In terms of the dialogical self theory, “biblical manhood” poses some external *I*-positions (“my religion says”) which over time can become internalised (Coombs 2018:159). In a nation that identifies as Christian, churches – like society – undoubtedly play a role in installing a certain hegemonic attitude and gendered patterns of practice when it comes to being a man in Zambia. Louw (2009:99) identifies religion as one of the pillars of patriarchy, and correspondingly, “biblical manhood” could be seen as a religiously endorsed patriarchy, build on the notion that religious literature (or the interpretations thereof) justifies male superiority, dominance, and privilege over women.

Religious normativity (and biblical manhood) could be traced back to the early missionaries, who – despite their good, but Western-inspired intentions – criticised traditional (gendered) practices like *lobola*, *cinamwali*, and polygamy, since it did not correspond with their interpretation of the Bible (Elphick 2012:72; Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:182; Banda 2014:12). Despite the local views that these traditional practices are in fact guarantors of social status for both genders, and – in some ways – promoted social cohesion, the early missionaries labelled them as unholy, unclean, and indecent. In the name of “biblical” family values and “desirable” marriages, they enforced a great number of constraints on sexual/gendered behaviours, including monogamy, abstinence outside and before marriage, taboos over contraception, banning divorce for reasons other than adultery, reluctance to speak about sex in public, and imposing hierarchal, male-lead households and female submission (Elphick 2012:74-75; Cage & Rueda 2019:3).

Sexual piety was weaved into the fabric of early Zambian Christianity, and to this day, it is taboo to talk about sex in public. This also complemented the sexual virtues typically ascribed to Pentecostal (or American evangelical) theology and churches, which gradually gained popularity in Zambia in the twentieth century (Balcomb 2016:127; Forster 2021:e-source). Today, the very influential evangelical movement does not only promote an entitled, authoritative, and patriarchal gospel that exhibits and emphasises muscular energy and male supremacy in sub-Saharan Africa countries, but also impose (American-inspired) conservative views on issues related to sex and sexuality, like divorce, abortion, and gay rights – views that are undoubtedly transferred to the RCZ as well (Parsitau 2020:e-source).

⁴¹⁰ Although Van Klinken’s research on masculinities in Zambia (2016) is based on Pentecostal churches, the principles behind it could be transferred to the RCZ.

The empirical data of this particular study recognised the existence of multiple forms of masculinities in the field. The hegemonic masculinity amongst RCZ reverends – the masculinity male reverends embody or strive towards – expected them to be in a heterosexual, monogamous and fruitful marriage, to be a reliable family-man who provides and takes responsibility for/in his household, to be a dynamic leader who is well-educated, a source of wisdom, well-dressed and able to take control of big challenges.⁴¹¹ These findings complement those of Van Klinken (2016:117),⁴¹² who argues that this type of masculinity – which he calls “the ideal of biblical manhood” – is actively promoted throughout the African continent. In Christian-Zambia, the “biblical manhood” hegemonic – usually associated with being “a man of God” – could be summarised in a list of five expectations:⁴¹³

- (i) Biblical manhood expects a man of God to be *responsible* – to take on responsibilities in the family, in the community, and in general society. In concrete terms, responsibility has economic and moral implications too – apart from being self-sufficient, dependable in work, able to provide for the family, and being a faithful spouse, a man has a moral obligation to give guidance in community as well (Van Klinken 2016:119-121).
- (ii) Biblical manhood expects *headship* – a trait closely linked to responsibility, but particularly involves men taking on their God-intended role (and therefore their right) as head of the household. Male headship implies that wives and children should submit under men’s God-given authority. In Zambia, male headship is both a Christian and cultural principle, and often exaggerated to impose male supremacy and domination, rather than gender equality, equity, dignity, mutual respect, and partnership in relationships. However, it seems that Zambian women are often expected and conditioned to sustain and submit under male headship and stand with her husband under all circumstances (Van Klinken 2016:121-124; Zulu 2015:94).
- (iii) Biblical manhood expects men to *provide* for their families. Providing for (or taking responsibility for the welfare of) one’s family is considered a sign of spiritual maturity and is considered both a cultural and biblical ideal. It implies that a “a man of God” leaves behind all types of destructive behaviour (like drinking and promiscuous behaviour), gets married (if possible), and get a job to take care his family. However, along with modern developments in

⁴¹¹ This type of masculinity could be seen as a response to existing toxic and unchristian masculinities that overwhelms the Zambian setting, and/or as a continuation of missionary-inspired piety, which is also favoured by Pentecostals.

⁴¹² Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity: Gender Controversies in Times of AIDS (2016).

⁴¹³ These five expectations identified by Van Klinken (2016:117-130) became the criteria for this main storyline during coding of the empirical data.

urban Zambia (which is connected to advancement of women), more women are enjoying the perks of formal employment, and many have become breadwinners of households. This disturbs the traditional and biblical masculine roles and expectations that deems men the “primary provider” and causes tensions (feelings of inferiority and emasculation) in some households. Although providing in the material needs of the family is still considered men’s primary task, more men are realising that as the head of the household, they must also provide in the spiritual and emotional needs of their family, providing the necessary security (Van Klinken 2016:124-126).

- (iv) Biblical manhood supposes that “a man of God” automatically becomes a *leader*. Since leadership is considered a characteristic of “mature masculinity”, biblical manhood suggests that a man should not only lead in the family, but also in the community and broader society. In African Christianity, men are expected to manage their households, make important decisions, and provide guidance and direction in society. Van Klinken (2016:126-128) notices that leadership is a gendered concept in Zambia – an attribute of manhood, instead of womanhood. This, of course, is not true, and it implicitly endorses male superiority and inequality in a marriage as well.
- (v) Biblical manhood also expects *self-control*. “Men of God” are expected to refrain from any immoral behaviours, fight temptations, and should have the strength to control their urges. The ability to control one’s sexual urges is considered an expression of true male strength, while promiscuous behaviour is considered a lack of control of one’s body. Sexual purity is considered an important virtue, and actively promoted in many Zambian churches (Van Klinken 2016:109, 129-130). In many African churches, promoting this particular form of masculinity is considered as beneficial, especially when thinking in terms of men’s role in the spread of HIV, illegitimate pregnancies, and forms of sexual (or gender-based) violence; other would argue that this actually contributed to the taboo nature of discussions on sexuality, which in turn contributed to an unhealthy relationship with sex and sexuality (Bastien, Kajula & Muhwezi 2011:2).

When considering the ways that “biblical manhood” has promoted, justified, and sustained some destructive forms of masculinity (patriarchy, misogyny, male supremacy, sexism, homophobia, sexual- and gender-based violence) that actually robbed people (especially women) of their dignity, freedom, and justice, one has to ask whether the promotion thereof is good or bad in society. Biblically or religiously endorsed gender inequality is not an exclusive Zambian phenomenon, but

visible in almost every society in the world (Theron 2015:54). Nevertheless, the fact that Zambia proudly identifies as a Christian nation distinguishes them from other African nations, and there is no doubt that Zambian churches have agency when it comes to facilitating change and transformation in the public domain. This was the case in 1991, for example, when churches came together and played a crucial role in safeguarding a fair and peaceful election, securing Zambian democracy (Hendriks & Soko 2011:97).⁴¹⁴

There are churches that use their agency to promote gender equality, inclusion, participation, and partnership of men and women in the church in their plight to secure dignity, freedom, and justice for all. In theory, the RCZ could be seen as one of these churches, especially when considering that women could be ordained as ministers since 2001, and regular references to Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:26-28 (which fall under the storyline “theological *I*-positions”) when talking about the roles of men and women. However, there are also arguments and empirical data that contradicts this, especially when considering the culturally legitimised prejudice and discrimination towards women that still privilege male-centredness (Zulu 2015:93). The roots of the latter lie in the fact that the hegemonic notion of “biblical manhood” that has been hijacked by some conservative, Pentecostal, and independent African churches to justify a hierarchal order in society, which benefits the interests of men (see Theron 2015:63-64).

This could explain the paradigm shift in African theological scholarship – especially in ecumenical bodies like the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) and the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians – with the aim to re-imagine, re-interpret, or transform current biblical and theological perspectives on the roles of men in a time of HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and religiously endorsed gender inequality and discrimination (Nadar & Phiri 2012:126-127; Phiri 2003:15-17). Many of these theologians argue that although the Bible does contain verses that could be interpreted as a justification of gender discrimination, the broader message of the Bible is actually in favour of equality, dignity, unity, freedom and justice for both men and women (Koopman 2015:30).

Emerging theologies in Africa look at the life of Jesus Christ, portraying him as not only the Saviour and Victor, but also a man who accepted people despite their sin and helped people who suffered; he gave a voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless – including women who were victims of oppression and muteness in society. Jesus spoke out against injustices and took the side of the

⁴¹⁴ See Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.1.8.

marginalised of people in an unjust society (Theron 2015:74). Jesus' solidarity with suffering and all aspects of the human experience is missing from a theology that only focuses on power and moralistic expressions of being a man (Ellington 2017a:62; Ellington 2017b:91). This means that the historical Jesus, and message of the gospel contradicts everything "biblical manhood" stands for. This explains the response from one respondent, when asked the question whether Jesus Christ would have been considered a good Zambian man:

R10_F: *Weak. He would be seen [as] weak. How do you send a woman for such an important assignment? How do you send a woman to preach about the resurrection? I think they [Zambian men] would have sent the men.*
(10:26)

Although there are many *I*-positions present in this storyline, the one position that repeatedly occurred revolves around sexuality. Although it is considered taboo to talk about sex and sexuality in public, it was a recurring theme in the religious normativity and cultural normativity-storylines. Although they both impose heteronormative values and present heterosexuality as the preferred sexuality, they do differ when it comes to practising one's sexuality. In the religious normativity-storyline, it is expected of "Godly men" to practise self-control and abstain from having sex outside of wedlock. After getting married, the "purpose" of sex is not necessarily associated with pleasure or solidarity, but rather with its utilitarian purpose – to have children, since having a family and being a family man is seen as "successful masculinity". When looking at the cultural normativity-storyline, however, sex and sexuality have a different purpose – it is expected of men to be good lovers (sometimes with multiple partners), be heterosexual, and sex is seen as technology of power through which a man asserts his dominance over women. Clearly, there is a tension between these two storylines – the one imposes purity and/or piety, and the other virility and/or promiscuity. Therefore, a disruptive narrative should be introduced – a narrative which offers an alternative view of sex and sexuality. For this study, queer theory and the stories of queer Africans were consulted.

5.3.2 Disruptive narrative: queer theory⁴¹⁵ and queer bodies in Africa

During the pilot study of this project, I deliberately asked the question: *Are there any topics that I should avoid while doing research on masculinities in Zambia?* On several occasions, I was advised (or rather warned) not to engage in discussions on homosexuality. If public discussions on sex and sexuality are considered a taboo in the Zambian context, discussions about homosexuality would be

⁴¹⁵ Queer theory has evolved into a vast field of scholarship and cannot be covered in its entirety.

considered an abomination (Bastien, Kajula & Muhwezi 2011:2).⁴¹⁶ Zambia, along with many other sub-Saharan Africa countries, argues that homosexuality is unacceptable, unnatural, inhuman, un-African, un-Christian, and a Western invention that undermines traditional family roles and values (Van Klinken 2016:111; Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:316-318). It is not only a religious issue built on the country's Christian character, but has also become a political issue in Zambia, and despite the efforts of the EU and other humanitarian groups, LGBT persons are not only vulnerable to discrimination, but also imprisonment if found guilty of practicing homosexuality – even if it is between two consenting adults (Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:313).⁴¹⁷

The irony of calling homosexuality “un-Christian” and “un-African” in Zambia, lies in the fact that the Christian faith and its views on sex and sexuality were imposed by the early European missionaries in Zambia during Colonialism (Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:318). This means that anti-LGBT rhetoric in postcolonial Zambia could actually be attributed to the decades of European influence (or indoctrination), and their views of sex, sexuality and civilisation. The same could be said of the contemporary, highly-popular, American-inspired Pentecostal (or evangelical) theology that demonises homosexuality, as it disrupts the traditional family values central to Zambia's identity as a Christian nation (Van Klinken 2014:268-269). Despite the belief that homosexuality and Christianity cannot be reconciled, the reality is that there are many queer people in Zambia who are proudly, happily, and deeply religious (Van Klinken 2015:948-949). The country's Christian nationalistic character, however, influences the sexual politics greatly, and inhibits LGBT rights, leaving the many gay men and women vulnerable to a type of culturally and religiously appropriated homophobia (Van Klinken 2015:959-960).

It could also be argued that calling homosexuality “un-African” in Zambia is actually an “un-African” sentiment, since independent Zambia was founded on the ethos “One Zambia – One Nation”, Kenneth Kaunda's (and therefore authentically African) humanist philosophy which fostered a nation where

⁴¹⁶ This does not mean that there are no spaces in which sex and sexuality can be discussed. There are “sex schools” in the traditional institutions of Zambia where sex and sexuality are discussed in depth. This includes the *cinamwali* initiation rite for girls (see pages 92, 168-169, 265). Also, as HIV and GBV have been labelled as matters of great concern, more churches are participating in discussions on the subject despite the hesitation of some.

⁴¹⁷ This was the lot of Stephen Sambo and Japhet Chataba who were arrested in August 2017 on the grounds of “performing unnatural acts”. After being found guilty in the local magistrates' court and sentenced with fifteen years in prison, the two men took their case to the High Court in Lusaka in 2019, pleading innocent on the grounds that their relationship is consensual and therefore does not harm anyone, and the fact that this case is a gross invasion of their privacy. The judge of the High Court, Charles Zulu, however, refused to review the verdict of the lower court, feeling that having gay sex goes “against the laws of nature” – a legal phrase in the old sodomy laws Zambia inherited from the British colonial era. Even though these British laws have been amended and homosexuality decriminalised in other countries, in Zambia this law is intricately linked to its Christian identity and respect for the Bible (Gondwe 2019:e-source; Frey 2019:e-source; Han & O'Mahoney 2014:268-288. Han & O'Mahoney 2014:2,3).

there are (and should be) no divisions on the grounds of race, colour, creed, tribe, religion, or sex (Kaunda 1974: xi). Although *Zambian Humanism*⁴¹⁸ is not explicitly Christian, it has been appropriated to the Christian nationalism ideology which was installed later by President Frederick Chiluba and his successors (Soko 2014:131-133; Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:316). This creed, however, embraces difference and accommodates diversity, and implies that all people should be treated with respect, love, and dignity (Soko 2014:131-133). Discrimination against homosexuals and homophobia goes against this philosophy. Relatedly, new research⁴¹⁹ has uncovered that many precolonial Southern Africa societies (Zambia by name) most likely knew and tolerated same-sex relations – some even embraced and accommodated homosexuality. Since it was the colonial masters that criminalised homosexuality, it could be argued that homosexuality and affirming same-sex sexualities is much more “African” than the discrimination against it (Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:317-318). Considering the abovementioned, introducing queer theory and broadening the table to listen to the queer experience could be considered a relevant, albeit uncomfortable, narrative in Zambia.

The term “queer theory” was coined by Teresa de Lauretis in 1991 and was an attempt to delink the relationship between sexuality and gender within the deconstructionist paradigm (Ngwenya 2018:233). Although the term “queer” was originally used as a derogatory term to describe persons whose sexual or gender identity do not fall into the binary and heteronormative categories, the gay community reclaimed this term – along with its painful (homophobic) connotations – as an inclusive umbrella term by and for individuals who identify with non-normative sexualities and/or gender identities (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons). The word “queer” involves a transgressive action of embracing sexual and gender identities that disrupts the status quo, reclaiming the voices of those who had been previously ignored, silenced, discarded, discriminated against, condemned, and persecuted (Cheng 2011:2-6; Van Klinken 2019:4, 7). Queer theory does not aim to impose homosexuality onto people; rather, it values the stories of queer persons in order to gain new perspectives on issues regarding sex, sexuality, and gender, since their experience thereof differs from the heterosexual-hegemonic norm (Cheng 2011:18-19). Also, since queer rights are inherently human rights, political homophobia in Zambia shows that contemporary Africa has a different understanding

⁴¹⁸ *Zambian Humanism* is very similar to *Ubuntu* in South Africa. It says: Together we are stronger, despite our differences; despite our culture, our race, our gender, our sexuality. “One Zambia – One Nation”, embraced and accommodated diversity; it has the ability to bring ethnically and culturally diverse people together in the spirit of cooperation and tolerance; it acknowledges marginalised groups, and treats all people with respect, love and dignity, unconditionally (Soko 2014:131-133).

⁴¹⁹ This includes referrals to historical and ethnographic accounts from Southern and Central Africa, as well as prehistoric cave paintings, oral histories, and the literary constructions thereof.

of the concepts (and the traditions of thought they represent) ascribed to identity politics and the lived experience (Van Klinken & Phiri 2020:320-321).

Queerness is inherently political; it could be seen as a resistance to the societal rules that upholds the patriarchal system, unravelling power that bind communities. Queer theory shows that sex and sexuality is not only about “usefulness”, procreation, or upholding hierarchies, it is also about meaningful relationships, pleasure, complementarity, and inclusivity. As an academic discipline, “queer theory” found inspiration in feminist theory, and in the deconstructive and poststructural schools of thought. This includes Foucault’s notion that identities are constituted through bodily acts rather than psychoanalysis and knowledge production; that identities are the result of constant negotiation rather than a mere natural (or biological) fact, and that the focus on bodies (the bodily experience, including pleasure) helps one to unlearn (and move beyond) the rules set by patriarchy which places sexuality as a primary register when making sense of ourselves (Foucault 1978:157; Cheng 2011:6; Ngwena 2018:233). Therefore, queer theory involves erasing boundaries – it challenges and disrupts the traditional (essentialist) notions that categorises sexuality and gender into fixed binary categories by questioning its significance when considering that they are merely social constructs (Cheng 2011:7).

Queer theory has since developed into a critical conceptual and analytical tool that aims to “[...] interrupt and destabilise the implicit and explicit norms and assumptions that underlie much sexual and gender identification and categorisation” (Van Klinken 2019:7). In other words: queer theory questions (and critiques) the metaphysics of sex and gender that habitually essentialises sexual acts and gender identities; it problematises the “natural” (or the biologically, socially, politically, and historically determined) categories of sex, sexuality, and gender, countering the identity labels given to bodies (Ngwena 2018:233-234). Queer theory embraces sexual pluralism and diversity, and it aims to move away from all sexual identities that implicitly privileges hetero-patriarchal values and categorisation. In practice, it mobilises against all identity-based hierarchies, seeking to achieve a radical plural democracy where there is hierarchal recognition in terms of sexuality and gender (Ngwena 2018:234). It is considered disruptive, since it destabilises heteronormative assumptions and categorisation, and works towards an epistemology where all binaries and hierarchies are displaced, resulting in no sexual minorities and majorities (Ngwena 2018:235; Van Klinken 2019:7)

In response to the question on whether queer theory is a relevant epistemology when studying sexuality and gender in Africa, Ngwena (2018:237) affirms that it can be, since queer theory emphasises the queer (lived) experience as a source of knowledge and gives descriptions of

nonhegemonic expressions of gender and sexuality that have remained historically hidden and not openly discussed in many African communities. In Zambian communities where patriarchal and heteronormative systems that are sustained in the name of Christian and traditional values, queer theory might seem like a threat since it disrupts the gender hierarchy (that advantages men and disadvantages women), disempowers men, and inconveniences the social hegemonic (Van Klinken 2016:155). In a time of GBV, it could be argued that this is exactly why queer theory (and queer theology) is necessary. Queer theory disrupts binary, essentialist, and deterministic grammar, and enables an equality framework that is porous to the plurality of sex, sexuality, and gender subjectivities. It embraces the fact that sex, sexuality, and gender – like other identity markers – are complex, fluid, unstable, and intersectional. Ngwena (2018:239) calls it a transformative way forward, since it deconstructs the criteria prescribed by so-called “master frameworks” that comes with rigid psychological and socio-cultural boundaries and hierarchies, which ultimately suppress and erase individuals and groups that are not compliant.

In his book *Kenyan, Christian, Queer* (2019), Van Klinken (2019:7) argues that queer theory could be a very useful tool when studying, analysing, and engaging in conversations on gender and sexuality in African religion, and even though his research was done in Kenya, the findings and theories could also be applied in the Zambian context. In the departure of his book that focuses on the queer experience (queer activism and resistance) in Kenya, Van Klinken (2019:4-5) reminds the reader that portraying the African continent as backward and conservative while claiming the West as liberal and progressive is quite problematic when considering the complexity and historical embeddedness of institutional homophobia in postcolonial Africa. Even though African scholars have been hesitant to use the term “queer” since it used to be linked with Western theoretical framework, it has been increasingly embraced by those who pose that queer African studies is an influential tool when researching gender and sexual diversity, since it also addresses intersection issues like postcolonialism and decolonisation (Van Klinken 2019:8-9).

In the context of a highly religious African continent, homosexuality and Christianity are often viewed as opposites, and engaging in queer activism or an LGBT identity often meant leaving religion behind. Queer theory and queer studies look to the lived experiences and testimonies of gay persons as authentic sources of knowledge, recognises sexual diversity in practice, and challenges us to revisit the heteronormative definitions of relationships, marriages, gender hierarchies, and expressions of sexuality (Cheng 2011:18-21). Van Klinken argues that queer African theology is necessary to really deepen the understanding of basic theological positions, like “being created in the image of God”, recognising that this means that all people – regardless of identity markers like colour, gender, class,

race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, health status, age, or sexual orientation – are loved by God (Van Klinken 2019:14,21).

More boldly, Van Klinken (2019:80-83) argues that queerness not only disrupts and critiques, it also reclaims Christianity and reimagines Africa. In many communities, Christianity has often been the motivation behind discrimination and rejection; queerness however pushes the boundaries of neighbourly love, unity, and solidarity with all who have experienced marginalisation and oppression because of who they are. Queerness in African Christianity values lived (religious) stories and is therefore a grassroots theology where the God of punishment and wrath – which is usually associated with homosexuality – is countered with an affirming and loving of God (Van Klinken 2019:125-129). Jesus Christ also becomes a disruptive figure in queer theology, since he took the experiences of people seriously, he treated (so-called) sinners and minorities with respect and compassion, he had countercultural views, and was in fact radical in his words and his methods (Van Klinken 2019:131-134). Contrary to the (patriarchal) belief, queer theory and queer theology do not impose a “gay agenda” onto people – it only recognises that which is already there; it reclaims (and queers) pieces of scripture that has been hijacked by anti-queer interpretations to promote discrimination and exclusion, it challenges the hierarchies installed by heteronormativity and therefore excludes stories of minorities, diversities, and queer ways of being community and/or church, whilst also embracing new (or alternative) ways of being human and a queer embodiment of one’s faith in Africa (Kaoma 2015:26-28; Van Klinken 2019:157-161; Cheng 2011:12-14).

5.3.3 Dominant storyline 2: cultural normativity

The cultural normativity-storyline refers to the ways “[...] bodies are socially constructed in material and cultural worlds” (Lorber & Martin 2013:230). In terms of the dialogical self theory, these are external *I*-positions (“my culture/society/community says”) that become dominant in the “society of self”, installing and maintaining certain hegemonic attitudes and gendered practices associated with being a good man in Zambia (Coombs 2018:159). In the empirical data, the codes that make up this storyline puts an emphasis on certain socio-cultural prescriptions (or expectations) directed at men. I feel that these are more than mere prescriptions, and aligning with Butler (1999:165-167) who argues that bodies become the surface of cultural inscription, I argue these socio-cultural expectations are actually *inscribed* on men’s bodies; men’s bodies, the way they do (or perform) their gender, and the way they use their bodies (put their bodies on the line) are shaped and conditioned by – or inscribed with – these expectations. Correspondingly, Connell (1987:99-116; 2000:208) says that gender

(masculinity and femininity) should not only be defined in terms of the reproductive body, since it is constituted by (or inscribed with) social practices and structures.

During the analysis of this project, the cultural normativity-storyline includes references to the importance of education,⁴²⁰ (traditional) family values and heteronormativity,⁴²¹ labour,⁴²² power,⁴²³ sexual virility,⁴²⁴ strength and toughness,⁴²⁵ and also wealth⁴²⁶ (Dover 2005: 173-185). These codes also align with Connell's (1987:99-116; 2000:208) four dimensions of gender relations⁴²⁷ (power,⁴²⁸ production,⁴²⁹ cathexis,⁴³⁰ and symbolism⁴³¹), and also with the first three of Louw's (2009:99; 2008:385) four pillars of patriarchy, namely biology (men are considered to be physically stronger), culture (society and cultures consider aggression, domination, procreation, wisdom, and the role of protector as manly attributes), and economy (money, property, production and distribution of goods are considered to be the natural domain of men).

⁴²⁰ Two different albeit related considerations are involved in this code. On the one hand, education goes together with status, and most male reverends in the RCZ are busy with or considering postgraduate studies. Tertiary education is extremely valued by Zambians, and having a degree or diploma is considered a sign of "successful masculinity". On the other hand, it seems as though Zambian men are held responsible for the education of their children – it is included in their fatherly duties as provider for the family. If a man's children go to school, he is considered a good man.

⁴²¹ Most Zambian cultures – including matrilineal cultures – still enforce heteronormative values on society. Having a family is considered a "successful masculinity", and in the family, the man is expected to be the head, provider, and protector of the family (Dover 2005:177-179).

⁴²² Since colonial times, a man's ability to work defined his masculinity. Stemming from his responsibility and being the provider of the family leads to caring for the family financially as well. Even though the economic arena was habitually attributed to man, and the fact that men was involved in hard, physical work, more women are entering the workforce, becoming entrepreneurs, and even taking over the hard physical labour men used to do. Many men find this threatening to the moral order, which is based on (patriarchal) gender stereotypes (Dover 2005:177).

⁴²³ In many Zambian cultures, men still have more power, are on the top of the social hierarchy, and enjoy privileges that women do not (Dover 2005:177-178).

⁴²⁴ In many African cultures, sex carry religious, social, and cultural significance. Having children is also considered an important part of being a man in Zambia, and in the field, barrenness is often seen as a misfortune. In some cultures, a man's "potency" is closely connected with his strength and manhood (Dover 2005:174,180; Mbiti1975:134-135).

⁴²⁵ From a young age, Zambian boys are taught that they should be brave and strong. This of course leads to the idea that violence could be or should be used to assert the masculinity if necessary (Dover 2005:174-175).

⁴²⁶ Wealth is associated with power and success, and therefore, resourcefulness and an outward portrayal of that success becomes a sign of "successful masculinity" (Chilenje 2015:18).

⁴²⁷ See Chapter 4, subsection 4.3.3.1.

⁴²⁸ This involves the reality of inequalities and ideologies that nurture male supremacy. In Zambian society and in the RCZ, it is clear that there are hierarchies that favour men and masculinity above women and femininity. Respondents ascribe the rising statistics of gender-based violence to this dimension.

⁴²⁹ This involves the allocation of certain jobs and/or chores to a person in accordance with identity stereotypes. Despite systematically entering the previously male-dominated economic arena and increasingly becoming breadwinners, it is clear that Zambian women are still associated with (or allocated) traditional (patriarchal) domestic-related jobs and expected to adhere to these culturally informed stereotypes.

⁴³⁰ This involves the emotional, psychological, or instinctual dimensions that governs or informs (sexual) practices. In Zambia, cultural bias and prejudice towards women (or misogyny) still play a defining role in emotional relationships and attachments.

⁴³¹ In Zambia, when considering symbolism and language (the portrayal of and expressions of gender), it is clear that masculine and patriarchal gender arrangements are still favoured in speech and writing, gestures and media.

According to Farley (2006:80), fertility rather than sex is at the heart of traditional African sexual ethics. This could explain that the stereotypical ideals – which is the result of cultural interpretation of the sexed body and the social construction of masculinity and femininity – that portrays the male body as hard, erect, strong, and potent and the female body as soft, round, yielding, and nurturing (Dover 2005:174). In many African communities, womanhood is closely linked to biological processes. Menstruation, for example, marks a girl's readiness to get married, as it is physical proof of sexual maturity. This could explain the fact that in rural Zambia, girls are more likely to drop out of school after reaching puberty, where after they are taught how to behave like proper women (shy, humble, and respectful to men), as well as their reproductive and domestic roles (Dover 2005:177-179). Boys have a longer time to establish themselves as men, to become tough and self-reliant before taking on the responsibility of being the head of a household. It appears that men have a different set of values and attributes (being strong, brave, wise, responsible, and potent), and men who do not live up to these social expectations (a man who fears, fails, or becomes a drunkard) are considered lazy and incompetent (Dover 2005:177-179).

Getting married is highly encouraged for both men and women, as it is an important part of manhood and womanhood. The traditional practice of *lobola* (the bride wealth or bride price) is still revered as an important undertaking before getting married, but has become an object of concern, since it could be interpreted as a transaction where the wife becomes the “property” of the husband, where after the husband holds exclusive rights over his wife's sexuality (Farley 2006:86). Successively, “raping your wife” is implausible, since it is the husband's right to have complete control over his wife's body and sexuality, and culturally, it is the wife's duty to be sexually submissive (Harari 2014:162-163). The traditional practice of *lobola* is also seen as the premarital proof of a man's ability to provide, but in some cases, it actually hinders men to get married; it is seen as too expensive (as one respondent said: “*marriage is for rich men*”), too transactional, too formal, and too binding. The inability (or even impossibility) to get married often leads to anxiety, promiscuous behaviour, multiple sexual partners, feelings of incompetence, frustration, and loss.⁴³² In some African cultures, the effect or function of the *lobola* does not end after the husband's death, and in some cases his widow's sexuality is still considered the property of the family (Farley 2006:86).

In his article on masculinities in Africa, David Oluwole (2010:101) expresses how the socio-cultural expectations of masculinity are also geographically determined:⁴³³ in *rural* (and therefore more

⁴³² This remark is based on empirical data collected in the field. See Chapter 3, subsection 3.4.2.

⁴³³ There are multiple masculinities that function in each setting, but for the sake of his argument, Oluwole divides masculinities into two distinct groups.

culturally-bound) Africa, one will find that having “[...] a big farmland, real estate, many wives, and several children, as well as the ability to feed and provide for the needs of a big family become important identity markers” makes you more of a man; in *urban* (and therefore more secular) areas, there are other markers when it comes to what masculinity looks like, which include “[...] the possession of an array of modern possessions – diplomas, degrees, salaried jobs, real estate, electronic gadgets, cars, among others” (Oluwole 2010:101). Having multiple sexual partners is also seen as an important marker when it comes to being a man, as numerous partners suggest power and wealth, while a single sexual partner symbolises poverty, low status, or weak manhood (Oluwole 2010:102).

In Chapter 3 of this project,⁴³⁴ the issue of reproductive health briefly came into conversation. In many African cultures, it is considered a great misfortune when marriages are childless (men are impotent and/or women are barren). However, if one is fortunate to have children, the child is already subjected to a culturally sanctioned gender hierarchy at birth since many cultures consider the birth of a girl as a misfortune, while the birth of a boy is seen as a blessing. Given the emphasis on fertility in African cultures, a childless marriage can be remedied by the practice of polygamy (Farley 2006:79-80; Zulu 2015:90-93).⁴³⁵ These African sexual practices – which are lodged in gendered patterns of relationships – conditions women to believe that their sole purpose is to produce offspring and satisfy the sexual needs of their husband, and since it promotes the belief that women’s bodies do not belong to them, it jeopardises the wellbeing of women as well (Farley 2006:79-80, 84-85; Zulu 2015:90-93).

Reflecting on the latter, Zulu (2015:82, 89) poses that even though some cultural practices are considered good for the community (like men’s role in the fight against HIV/AIDS), others persistently enslave and victimise (the bodies of) individuals – especially women. This hierarchises gender – it marginalises women and those considered as “lesser men” (Dover 2005:178-179). According to Zulu (2015:93), these practices need to be reformed or abandoned all together, and men could and should play an important role in the transforming of enslaving cultural practices. It is however noteworthy – or, in Zulu’s words, “ironic and unfortunate” – to note that in many African cultures (particularly in Zambia), women and not men are considered the custodians and primary transmitters of these cultural practices, and by supporting them openly and transmitting them to the next generations, “[...] they act as agents of men in perpetuating culturally-sanctioned gender inequality” (Zulu 2015:94). An example of this is visible in the different ways mothers raise their

⁴³⁴ Under the journal entry titled “*Chitenge 3*”, Chapter 3, subsection 3.4.2.

⁴³⁵ There are some scholars who prefer the word “polygyny” over “polygamy”, since “polygyny” implies one man married to more than one woman, while “polyandry” refers to one woman married to multiple men (Farley 2006:82).

children in accordance with the gendered socio-cultural expectations, “[...] through social segregation of the sexes, gendered tasks, [...] and the gendered use of space” (Dover 2005:175-176).

When revisiting the concrete local narratives in Zambia, the systemic patriarchy is clear since it is in patriarchy’s nature to oppress and dominate in its quest to obtain (and/or maintain) power (Van der Watt 2012:e-source). In Connell’s terms, there is a hegemonic masculinity in the RCZ which – despite some initiatives to promote the position of women – has the sole interest of the pleasure and advancement of men (Connell 2011:12-14). African feminists strongly criticise the practices that force women to be dependent on men, convincing them that their sole purpose is to be in sexual and economic service of men in their search for progeny and immortality. Along with the scholarship of African feminists, narratives containing women’s experiences of gender inequality, misogyny, gender-based violence, the transmission of HIV, and systemic patriarchy are increasingly emerging (Farley 2006:87; Connell 2005a:41,65). It is the aim of these narratives to disrupt the current narratives, and imagine alternative narratives, with the hope to transform masculinities.

When revisiting the *I*-positions of the cultural normativity-storyline, it seems as though men are initiated into and moulded by a context that expects them to perform their gender in a certain way. Even though RCZ reverends strongly oppose GBV and propose gender equality in the creating (re)interpretations of masculinity-storyline, GBV would still remain an issue if the patriarchal practices are continually reinforced by cultural normativity. It seems as though the cultural normativity-storyline’s main aim is to keep men in power, but as the male dominance-male fragility-storyline highlights, this is unsustainable. Considering that one storyline proposes gender equality, while the other imposes practices that inhibit this, it is clear that there is a definite tension when discussing the cultural expectations of men in Zambia. Therefore, a disruptive narrative should be introduced – a narrative which offers an alternative view of cultural expectations; a narrative that would inspire a new generation of men to find security in power, and not base their manhood on their ability to dominate. When considering the importance of male initiations in African cultures – where boys become men – a new or alternative interpretation on male initiations could be considered a fitting response to disrupt this tension.

5.3.4 Disruptive narrative: considering new male initiations

According to Butler’s theory of gender performativity, gender begins the moment when a child is born. From the moment the baby is called a “boy” or a “girl”, a process commences where the child’s body would be governed, regulated, and disciplined by the repetition of gender-appropriate norms

and expectations by means of clothes, toys, rules, and behaviours in order to “qualify” as their designated gender (Butler 1993b:23). Therefore, the body is actively and continuously under constraint to “do their body” through certain bodily acts that correlates with the sociocultural hegemonic (Butler 1988:530-531). One could say that a person undergoes a type of “initiation” into the gender they ought to be. Generally, genders are conditioned according to the stereotypical attributes awarded to masculinity and femininity. Boys, for example, grow up with the notion that being men entails macho behaviour, not being emotional, not asking for help, not complaining, and embodying physical strength, courage, and dominion. Girls, on the other hand, are reinforced with the idea that being a woman entails being submissive, inferior, emotional, and sensitive (Louw 2008:390-393).

These stereotypes are constantly reinforced by families and communities, by pop culture, mass media, and even religion. During my interactions with both male and female participants, I found that they are aware of this continuous process of “gendering”. They also admitted that they are frustrated with the hierarchies that this gender system imposes. I also found that the anonymity of interviews gave men the chance to be completely honest about their experience of masculinity, and the vulnerabilities, tensions, contradictions, and ambivalences associated with being a real man.⁴³⁶ Both male and female participants found the cultural initiation of pubescent children to be problematic, since some initiation rites install certain views of manhood and womanhood that only reinforces behaviours associated with GBV. They agreed that reclaiming these cultural initiations would be beneficial for churches as well as communities, especially in a time of GBV. This would not be the first time this happened in the RCZ – in the early days of the RCZ, the *cinamwali* initiation of young girls was countered with the *cilangizo* – a Christian alternative which focused more on character building, perseverance, and communal responsibility (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:182-183; Banda 2014:12).⁴³⁷

In many African cultures, initiation rites and ceremonies are still observed, as they carry cultural, societal, and religious significance, and mark certain milestones or key moments in the rhythm of both individual and communal life (Mbiti 1975:121). Traditionally, initiation rites have educational motives (teaching youth about the history of their culture), formation purposes (introducing youth to their privileges, rights, and responsibilities in the community), and also involve conveying knowledge on adult matters (preparing for sexual life, marriage, procreation, and family responsibilities). Some

⁴³⁶ During Malose Langa’s time in the field, he admitted that he had similar experiences (2020:155-160).

⁴³⁷ This is referred to in Chapter 2, subsection 2.2.1.9.

initiations involve withdrawing from society to receive secret instruction, while others involve a sacred or mystical experience; some focus on ritualistic bonding, and others involve getting circumcised as a sign of leaving puberty and entering adulthood. Although African initiation rites have been criticised in the past, their main focus is to prepare boys to become men, and girls to become women, through character-building rituals (Mbiti 1975:121-122,125-126). Therefore, although initiations are not “all bad”, they do reinforce (or inscribe) the stereotypical cultural stereotypes and behaviours connected to GBV. In a country that identifies as Christian, the church have agency to reformulate and reinterpret the symbolism and intention of these initiations.

Zambian theologian Edwin Zulu (2015:93) poses that men ought to eradicate and reform the humiliating cultural practices that enforce male authority and supremacy in societies today. Patriarchy cripples men and their functioning in society on a human level, while distorting their experiences of dignity and intimacy (Van der Watt 2012:25). Aligning with Van der Watt (2012:25, 27) who argues that real power does not lie in patriarchal power, but rather in spiritual power, I believe that transforming masculinities should be taught on grassroot level, and I believe this could be achieved when disrupting and reframing male initiations. This brings me to the book of the Franciscan monk and theologian Richard Rohr, *Adam's return – The Five Promises of Male Initiation* (2019).

Initiations are the oldest form of spiritual instruction, and historically, it was found in most cultures around the world. Initiations generally involved shaping and conditioning men to survive in the world, providing them with a map and a compass to connect to the world (Rohr 2019:9, 28). In contemplative spirituality, initiation rites also involve an act of repentance – realising one's mistakes and freeing oneself from the endless repetition thereof (Rohr 2019:30-31). Rohr (2019:35-107) identifies five essential truths (or important lessons) that every man should realise – each counters the socio-cultural inscriptions introduced in the dominant storyline:

- (i) *Life is hard.* Rohr poses that men have to learn that tough exteriors (being a warrior) does not alleviate or prohibit life's pain and suffering. Pain and suffering are part of the lived experience. However, instead of running away from pain and suffering (vulnerability and fragility), one should confront it, and learn from it. Rohr (2019:37-38) says it is important to remember that “[...] we do not handle suffering; suffering handles us”. If we do not learn from pain, we transmit it in the form of hate, bitterness, pettiness, blaming, negativity, or dominance. Put differently: “[p]ain and suffering that are not transformed are projected onto others” (Rohr 2019:39). The Christian religion teaches that there is something sacred in woundedness; vulnerability becomes a humbling place where all pretence is broken down,

and instead of projecting it onto others, one has to have the courage to accept it with grace (Rohr 2019:35-50). Burdens, however, does not define our stories; all successes and achievements have seeds and signs of failure, and all failures have seeds and signs of success. Rohr (2019:153-155) advises that men should bear the hardness of life, facing them head on, but do it with softness, since there also lies strength in that.

- (ii) *You are not important.* Rohr poses that egoism has resulted in the downfall of many men. For Rohr, power does not lie in status or important positions – these are fragile security systems that could easily be overturned. Rather, real power lies in the realisation that there are “[...] limitations when it comes to our own wisdom, our own power, our tiny self” (Rohr 2019:55). Of course, this is frustrating to the ego which wants to “be king of his own kingdom” by all means necessary. Being the king of your own kingdom, however, is a closed system in which you cannot get out of your own way. We need people’s help, Rohr says. “Powerlessness is the beginning of wisdom” (Rohr 2019:59), and opinionated people – who is always in search of power – would never be truly satisfied (Rohr 2019:51-59). Powerlessness, however, does not define our stories; neither does constantly searching for self-validation. Rohr (2019:155-57) advises that men should try to escape the crippling systems where one’s worth is established by comparing oneself to others, and where rivalry takes hold of you, robbing you of joy and peace.
- (iii) *Your life is not about you.* Rohr poses that one of the most important things we should realise, is the simple fact that we are part of a much bigger whole. In a highly individualist world, it is important to realise that we are merely participants in a society. Therefore, in order to survive on this planet, and in our participation in life, compassion and gratitude should be important values (Rohr 2019:60-61). This initiation encourages a pattern of servanthood, abandoning things that are useless, and working towards creating a better world. It also encourages carrying each other’s baggage despite cultural divides and religious differences, and becoming willing participants in a larger mystery, since those are true agents of transformation (Rohr 2019:60-65). Humiliation, however, does not define our stories, but radical humility should. Rohr (2019:157-161) feels that a new freedom arises when men let go of all pretences and any self-manufactured personas, and strive towards a life of humility and service.
- (iv) *You are not in control.* Despite being repeatedly advised to “take control of your life”, and the fact that taking control of your destiny signifies maturity, we actually have little control

over our lives. This disillusioning realisation – that we are not the “hero of our own life” – installs feelings of powerlessness, humiliation, failure, and silly dependency, but Rohr (2019:67-68) poses that admittance of powerlessness becomes the source of real power. Sacrificing the self’s need to take (or be in) control expects reaction – one can either act out of anger or make peace with the fact that one cannot always have things your way. This is not a cynical or immature reaction to life’s disappointments, but rather an attempt to keep the bigger picture in mind, a realistic look at one’s own abilities, and find comfort in the companionship of your fellow participants in life (Rohr 2019:66-91). Disappointments and your inability to control things do not define your story; in fact, it is both unrealistic and irresponsible to try and control every situation. Rohr (2019:161-163) feels that grounded men are those who do not try to steer their own life and agenda, because when you constantly think that you deserve something or expect something to happen, you are setting yourself up for constant unhappiness and disappointment. Surrendering to the flow of life is trusting in your abilities and opening up yourself to experience life in its fullest.

- (v) *You are going to die.* Despite the almost-chaotic ways men construct their life in order to gain power, status, authority, and leaving a legacy (being “immortal”), death is the inevitable reality we all face – some even see it as the enemy, and they will do anything trying to escape it. Rohr however highlights the sacredness of death: death has depth and beauty, and like pain, suffering, uncertainty, and disillusionment, death is an unquestionable gift and the ultimate sacred (Rohr 2019:93-94). The heroic instinct of men focuses on escaping death, and using their energy, vitality, and direction to disable it. When his heroics eventually fails him, what is the lesson? Rohr feels that death is not the enemy and focusing on one’s mortality actually contributes to beauty of life, since it reminds us to live life to the fullest. “It seems you are not ready to die until you have once truly lived. People who touch upon real life are ironically the ones who can also let go of it. It is people who have not yet begun to live who fear death” (Rohr 2019:100). Therefore, death contributes to the quality of life, and it adds depth to those who live in the now (Rohr 2019:92-107). Mortality, however, does not define our stories; hope in something eternal, does. Rohr (2019:163-166) advises that mortality teaches us the importance of forgiveness, acceptance, and, most importantly, love. Love is the most important human experience – it is who we are, what we rest in, what we learn from, and what men should always try to perpetuate.

Learning from these five essential truths, Rohr then refers to four conventional archetypes of men that are usually held up at initiation rites, but he redefines them. (1) Being a *warrior*: Rohr (2019:124-

125) emphasises the importance of discipline, focus, respect, setting healthy boundaries, and leading a road of self-denial, but also emphasises that being a real warrior does not lie in his ability to be aggressive, but in his ability to control it. (2) Being a *wise man*: Rohr (2019:125-128) emphasises the importance of knowledge, hard work, and ambition, but warns against the pettiness, envy, and arrogance that can easily overshadow the important values like devotion, obedience, and self-sacrifice. (3) Being a *lover*: Rohr (2019:128-131) emphasises the importance of intimacy, the mystical character of bodily pleasure, and the importance of integrating and validating the sensual, pleasure-loving, erotic part of being a man in religion, because the flesh had been characterised as bad and evil for too long. However, he also warns against the devious and destructive direction (at the cost of bodies and souls of the self and others) this could take without respect and accountability. And, (4) being a *king*: Rohr (2019:132-133) emphasises the fact that rulers that are (or were) considered as “good” are (or were) those who used their power for the common good; those who handled and balanced their power in such a way, that others were included, benefitted from it, and were transformed by their rule. Rohr warns against those who focuses on their own interest, excludes, and try to eliminate (or act out against) those they consider their “enemy”.

5.3.5 Dominant storyline 3: the male dominance-male fragility cycle

This storyline has already been identified in the first chapter of this project, and it poses that there is a reciprocal power cycle where the strive to achieve (or assert) male dominance actually causes male fragility (feelings of and/or actual vulnerability, inferiority and powerlessness). Likewise, men’s attempt to escape fragility becomes the vigour behind male dominance in return (Connell 2009:6-8). Aligning with numerous studies, including those of Langa (2020:11-32) and Van der Watt (2007:191-238), this storyline focuses on men’s reaction to the expectations set by culture, society, and religion. When men are unable to observe these expectations (for example, when they are unemployed, unmarried, poor, unsuccessful, dependent, effeminate, and/or emotional), they experience feelings like powerlessness, inadequacy, anxiety, insecurity, emasculation, shame, and vulnerability when it comes to their manhood (or, in other words, “male fragility”). In a desperate plight to regain power and assert their masculine identity, men “act out” by engaging in certain types of behaviours which include (but are not limited to) risk-taking behaviours (which includes sexual promiscuity and substance/alcohol abuse), violent behaviour and aggression (which includes GBV), competitiveness, and discrimination against femininity and homosexuality (Louw 2008:386-387; Langa 2020). This storyline is also closely connected to Figure 3, which attributes the reality of GBV to a combination of male dominance and the culture of violence (Jewkes 2002:1426).

When studying masculinities, theory supposes that men enter a socially-constructed arena⁴³⁸ in which their bodies become the *surface* of cultural inscriptions, the *medium* through which culture emerges, the *contours* that establish that codes of cultural coherence, and the *boundaries* of the socially hegemonic (Butler 1999:165-167).⁴³⁹ Men's (fragile) bodies "put on" certain roles, expectations, and identity markers, not necessarily out of free will, but as part of the dynamic process of "becoming" their gender. In the empirical data, religion and culture (each with its own historic and geographical significance) were identified as important power mechanisms that not only control, but also facilitate this process of becoming men.⁴⁴⁰ The embodiment of these (currently accepted) religiously and culturally appropriated patterns of practice associated with being a man, is also the definition of "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1987:184; Connell 2005a:77). However, true to its definition, hegemonic masculinity does not represent the actual personalities of a majority of men – not all men are able to live up to the cultural, societal and/or religious expectations held up as the hegemonic norm. In their strive (or daily struggle) to meet the hegemonic norm, many (if not a majority of) men find themselves in a nonhegemonic⁴⁴¹ – and therefore undesirable – position, which often contributes to having feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, insecurity, frustration, and emasculation (Connell 2000:10-12; Langa 2020:30-31).

Nonhegemonic masculinities are opposed at all costs, since they are not considered "man enough". This means that the same system that oppresses men, is the system that they reinforce. Put differently: feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, insecurity, frustration, and emasculation become the driving force in men strive to be "man enough" in society, which then submits them to the norms and expectations that caused those feelings that emphasises their fragility in the first place. The insistent cycle that marginalises, excludes, discriminates, despises vulnerability, and subordinates men to the unrealistic standards of masculinity, is also the cycle that is maintained by the men (and women) that it oppresses (Foucault 1978:88-90; Zulu 2015:94). A concrete portrayal of this cycle (hegemonic masculinity or patriarchal hierarchy) is included earlier in this research project in *Chitenge 2*.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ In accordance with Connell's understanding of gender.

⁴³⁹ In accordance with Butler's theory of gender performativity.

⁴⁴⁰ In accordance with Foucault's understanding of power and sex.

⁴⁴¹ Connell identifies four types of these "nonhegemonic" masculinities, namely *subordinate* masculinities (those who are considered as "lesser", "inferior" or "odd"), *marginalised* masculinities (those who do not or cannot meet the standard set by the hegemonic group, and therefore experience discrimination), *complicit* masculinities (those who willingly submit under/subscribe to/strive towards the hegemonic norm, even though they do not embody it), and *protest* masculinities (those who try to embody the hegemonic standard, but are unable to live up to it due to the lack the economic resources or institutional authority) (Connell 2005a:76-81; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005:832, 847; Messerschmidt & Messner 2018:38).

⁴⁴² See Chapter 2, subsections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3.

Gender hierarchies are endorsed and maintained by certain biological, cultural, economic, and religious factors – each valuing certain attributes considered masculine (like physical strength, aggressive behaviour, domination in society, and male superiority), while also feeding on (or kept intact by) oppressive behaviour (Louw 2008:385). According to Louw (2008:386-387), patriarchal hierarchies (or hegemonic masculinities) are connected to an interplay between *fear* and *resistance*: in reaction to men’s fear of being vulnerable and affective (stereotypically female traits, and seen as signs of weakness), men succumb to misogyny and apathy; in reaction to their fear of shame (losing face or falling short of role expectations), men succumb to aggression and dominating behaviours; and, in reaction their fear of powerlessness (emasculatation, poverty, and/or unemployment), men succumb to violence (or even crime) to assert their masculinity. Of course, this could be seen an exaggeration, not considered as “the rule”, but what Louw (2008:388-390,395-397) tries to highlight is the fact that preconditioned socio-cultural and religious expectations (like “biblical manhood”) actually victimise men, divide society, and leave them vulnerable, which inevitably leads to a crisis in identity. Masculinity and its interpretations, expectations, and projections, then, is in fact fragile – constant struggle to remain in a position of power (Le Roux 2012:57).

In this research project, all data related to this fear/resistance identity-in-crisis narrative, was coded under the male dominance-male fragility storyline. “Male fragility” is considered an internal *I*-position; an exhibition of the real, internal self for which – despite its temporal and spatial adaptability – these norms and forms of masculinity are harsh, hard to reach, and, in some cases, unrealistic, leaving men vulnerable (or fragile) to the external, sometimes dominating voices and positions (Hermans 2003:102-111). This was clear in the empirical data: when presenting the masculine hegemonic in Zambia, the external *I*-positions of biblical manhood and socio-cultural inscriptions were prominent and dominant in the RCZ, but – in line with its nature to stratify and hierarchise – both forms actually exclude men who are unmarried, poor, unemployed, disabled, queer, not religious, not in leadership positions, impotent, and men who are unable (or unwilling) to take responsibility, headship and leadership, unable to control their sexual urges, and succumb to other identity markers to prove their masculinity.

Outside of the church – as seen in the journal entry titled *Chitenge* 3⁴⁴³ – there are other forms of masculinity present where being a man is characterised (or validated) by alcohol-consumption, risk-taking, irresponsible and/or violent behaviour, sexual virility, domination, aggression, money, and possessions. Despite being condemned as “distorted forms of manhood” (Van Klinken 2016:106) by

⁴⁴³ See Chapter 3, subsection 3.4.2.

those who promote biblical manhood, and although it does not reflect the desired forms of manhood installed by culture and society, the fact is that a majority of men – some willingly, some out of desperation – subscribe to these forms of masculinity (male dominance). This type of behaviour, however, could be seen as a symptom of male fragility – the deeply rooted fear of and/or resistance to feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, insecurity, frustration, and emasculation (Louw 2008:286-287).

Van Klinken (2011:278,281) offers an example of male fragility in Zambia, when referring to the fact that many Zambian men feel that a part of their masculine identity is connected to their sexual activity, as this asserts their manliness. Since it is culturally expected of women to serve the sexual needs of men, they exploit this culturally-appropriated “right” to have sex – usually with multiple partners – to assert their dominance and power over women (Van Klinken 2011:281). Some men, however, are hesitant when it comes to practicing safe sex, since having sex with a condom is seen as a “threat to their manhood” – robbing them of their right to sexual pleasure (Van Klinken 2011:278, 281). Despite knowing that their husband may have multiple sex partners⁴⁴⁴ and being more vulnerable to become infected with HIV, many women feel powerless when it comes to negotiating safe sex (Phiri 2003:12-13); as they were taught during the *cinamwali*, men are not supposed to be denied sex, or prescribed on matters concerning sex since this is humiliating and emasculating (Louw 2008:391-392). In their fear of and/or resistance to being emasculated in this way, men – unconcerned with the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS and without any regard for their sexual health or the sexual health of their partners – succumb to (sexual) violence or aggression in the name of “being a real man” (Phiri 2003:12-13; Van Klinken 2011:278, 281).

When posing that men need to change, it does not mean that men need to become more like women, but rather develop a new form of masculinity that values love, family life, and personal relations more than power, possessions, and achievements (Louw 2008:395). Louw feels that men should seek a new and more sensitive self-understanding, liberated from gender stereotypes which tells them that fear and failure are not allowed, emotions should be suppressed, self-sufficiency and independence are more important than reciprocal relationships and interdependence, and order and control are crucial to being a man instead of equality and dignity (Louw 2008:395-396).

When revisiting the *I*-positions associated to this storyline, the tension is implied – men try to avoid fragility through dominance, but through dominance they cause and experience fragility. When referring to the *I*-positions of the religious and cultural normativity-storylines, dominance and power

⁴⁴⁴ This could be ascribed to labour migration, polygamy, prostitution, male supremacy etc.

are implied – men are expected to be protectors, providers, leaders, strong, tough, be able to hold their liquor, be good lovers, and so on. All of these positions despise (or fear) vulnerability and being powerless, but vulnerability is inevitable – men experience violence too, are victims of evil, experience pressure to achieve, are unable to live up to the (sometimes unrealistic) standards set by culture, religion, and society, and this does not imply that they are weak. Therefore, a disruptive narrative should be introduced – a narrative which offers an alternative view of vulnerability and poses that there is no shame in being vulnerable.

5.3.6 Disruptive narrative: the power of vulnerability

During the interviews and informal discussions of this study, I experienced an eagerness to talk about issues surrounding gender relations, since they have seen and experienced the destructive consequences of male dominance. In some cases, when members of the congregation experienced GBV, confrontations with men were often met with resistance since they are conditioned not to talk about emotions, and habitually avoid discussions that would lead to shame or admission of guilt. *“Real men do not apologise or admit that they are wrong – that is a sign of weakness”* one respondent said, which could explain the silence of the church when it comes to the handling of GBV (Le Roux 2012:55). Out of fear for the perpetrator, the cultural consequences, or fear of humiliation, those who were victims to violence (both men and women) are also hesitant to talk about it (Le Roux 2012:56-57). All of this is the symptoms of a patriarchal system (or order) that gives men enormous power, a sense of entitlement, and privilege over women, as well as the belief that it is okay to use violence (including rape) since society tolerates it (Van Klinken 2016:49-50).

This system, however, has a flipside, which I have identified as male fragility. Male fragility is not only the consequence of male dominance, but – reciprocally – the fear of fragility becomes the driving force of dominant, sometimes violent, behaviour (Louw 2008:386-387). Using sex as an example of how male dominance and male fragility interact, one could argue that “the phallus” still plays a pivotal role in men’s construction of their power and autonomy in rural Zambia. Put differently: men’s potency, sexual virility, and fertility are traditionally linked to their masculinity, and having sex – despite being considered “a right” – also becomes an assertion of their dominant role in the household (Dover 2005:182-184). In the same context where raping your wife is not necessarily considered a misconduct, it is also reasonable for a man to have multiple (sexual) affairs with other women if his wife does not satisfy him sexually, or even divorce her if she does not give him children. However, failing to impregnate your wife, having reproductive issues, or not being able to perform sexually are demeaning to his manhood, his dominance, and his role in the relationship. This leaves him vulnerable

and can often lead to other – sometimes destructive – behaviours in order to reassert his masculine identity and counter male fragility (Dover 2005:179-185; Van Klinken 2016:49-50).

It is interesting to note that more women in Zambia are taking on new responsibilities and “[...] moving beyond the confines of female gendered space” (Dover 2005:177). Some men argue that the advancement of women is threatening to the moral order, while blaming their inability to live up the expectations set by the hegemonic norm on the autonomy of women (Dover 2005:177). Edwards (2006:14) highlights how masculinity and the enforcement of heteropatriarchal norms are the leading causes of violence in form of domination, exclusion, marginalisation, aggression, and brutality. After benefitting from gender inequalities for centuries, setting gender equality as the new norm often results in bruised egos, since men feel – despite generally being the beneficiaries of gender-biased socio-cultural structures – that gender equality undermines the structures in which they previously flourished, and robs them of certain privileges (living “the good life”), which results in feelings of suffering and loss (Edwards 2006:14, 20). It appears that the hegemonic masculinity in Zambia detests vulnerability, since being vulnerable in a society that values “man power”, strength, toughness, and dominance causes men to have feelings of shame, being exposed, and being weak. In reality, however, and aligning with Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, the majority of men are incapable to reach the high expectations set by the hegemonic norm, which means that, in reality, most men fall short and are actually quite fragile (Connell 2005a:76-81).

This could explain why scholars are increasingly embracing the idea that there is power in vulnerability, and it should not (and cannot) be avoided. Theologian Stéphan van der Watt (2012:27), for example, highlights the fact that Jesus Christ provided a counter-image to male dominance, affirming that there is power and no shame in vulnerability and weakness. He writes that

[t]he ultimate power of masculinity thus ultimately lies in embodying vulnerability and mutual relationality, contesting unilateral and hierarchal relations. Within this context manhood is not equal to the size of achievement or success, nor performances or powerful penetration. No, it rather denotes the capacity for loving hospitable relationships and the measure of the soul’s depth of character, i.e. its capacity to embody and affirm the courage (just) to be [...] with dignity and real intimacy (Van der Watt 2012:27)

Brené Brown’s book *Daring Greatly* (2012) aligns with this notion. When referring to the etymology of the word “vulnerability” from the Latin word “vulnerare” (which means “capable of being wounded”), it implies that bodies are fragile. Embracing one’s vulnerability, according to Brown

(2012:39) requires courage and can transform the way we live and our ability to love. For Brown (2012:34), although vulnerability by its definition involves a lot of uncertainty, emotional risk, and emotional exposure, it does not automatically imply weakness (like in the Zambian context). Our (or men's) aversion to vulnerability could be ascribed to its association with "dark emotions" such as fear, shame, grief, sadness, and disappointment. Of course, there are grounds for these emotions, but this cannot overshadow the fact that vulnerability is also the birthplace of "light emotions" such as love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. Vulnerability is considered a source of hope, and it actually helps us to live deeper and more meaningful lives (Brown 2012:33-34).

In order to protect ourselves from the discomfort of "being wounded", we put on certain masks or shield through our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, which according to Brown (2012:39,112,117), includes the mask of foreboding joy (dreading momentary joyfulness by staying in an unmovable state of perpetual disappointment), the mask of perfectionism (believing that doing everything perfectly would shield us from feeling shame), and the mask numbing (embracing whatever deadens the pain and discomfort, dulling the "light emotions" associated with vulnerability). These masks, ironically, which are worn in order to escape vulnerability are actually trauma inducing, and can cause more fragility in the form of cynicism, criticism, and even cruelty (Brown 2012:167).

Vulnerability is deeply rooted in our lived experiences, our identities, our stories, and the way we make sense of the world. If our stories are overpowered by destructive practices, they will remain dominant in our stories. If resisting vulnerability becomes our main focus, it will retaliate in the form of fragility. In order to cross the disengagement divide, Brown (2012:172-182) suggests installing a new culture where vulnerability is not met with suspicion, but rather countered with values like honesty, integrity, respect, accountability, gratitude, respect, and setting reasonable boundaries. This is also the premise of "disruptive engagement" – countering dominant narratives with honest and courageous conversations, awareness, and understanding in order to shine light on the "dark corners" – and the basis of deep, systemic change where men can live life to its fullest – even if they are broken (Brown 2012:184).

"Transforming masculinities" could be seen as an attempt to promote vulnerability among men, but as already stated, it seems as though it did not have the desired result. Connell (2000:219) would ascribe this to the fact that masculinities are just too complex, and that men often embody tensions between contradictory desires and practices. Calling for a culture of vulnerability may seem too simple, especially when the call to change often requires conflicting interests in the lives of men. Connell (2000:224-225) proposes installing a culture of peaceful masculinities – a hegemonic which

could be seen as a vulnerable masculinity. In a culture that emphasises violence, confrontation, and domination, a counterculture that imposes openness to negotiation, cooperation, equality, nonviolence, and mutual respect – which also aligns with Brown’s proposal of embracing one’s vulnerability – may sound like a distant ideal. Therefore, in order to achieve this, Connell (2000:225-226) suggests framing these qualities under “traditional” definitions of masculinities (for example courage, steadfastness, and ambition), and underlining the fact that the aim is not to abolish gender, but to reshape it; to disconnect “courage from violence, steadfastness from prejudice, ambition from exploitation” (Connell 2000:226). Through this, we can cross the disengaged divide, take courage to be vulnerable in order to truly transform masculinities (Brown 2012:172-184).

Relatedly, it could also be useful and relevant here to refer to the vulnerability of Jesus Christ. According to Moltmann (1994:36, 2009:18) when it comes to man’s question about suffering and vulnerability, he always looks to Jesus Christ and the cross. On the cross, Moltmann says (1994:37), it is not only Jesus that suffers, but also God himself. In Christ’s God-forsakenness, God also suffers from forsakenness from his son. This implies that it is not only Jesus that suffers, but God that suffers as well. Through this gesture, God shows solidarity with all of humankind – God is participating in our suffering, and takes all of our pains on himself, including the pain and suffering from the brothers and sisters that are unnumbered and unnamed, tortured and forsaken (Moltmann 1994:38-39). In the life of Jesus Christ, we see vulnerability: he feared and anticipated danger, he was anxious and experienced loneliness, he endured torture and had excruciating pain (Moltmann 1994:50-57). It is in the midst of his vulnerability (his wounded body) that God meets us. Jesus’ cross becomes a divine event where God protests against suffering. The crucified Jesus became the image of an invisible, but participating God who has suffered, endured humiliation, surrendered and emptied himself, becoming helpless up to the point of death in order to express unconditional love, and this is what hope is – love in the midst of suffering. On the cross we find a God with outstretched arms to embrace the entire world – especially those who are broken and suffering – inviting them to understand that suffering is actually linked to hope, since through Jesus, vulnerability now symbolises power (Moltmann 1974:211-213, 255).

5.3.7 Dominant storyline 4: creative (re)interpretations of masculinity

In this project that focuses on masculinities as lived and experienced in the RCZ, there were some theological positions that repeatedly occurred in discussions when it came to gender issues. These positions were coded separately (not under “religious normativity”) since they are unique to the RCZ and do not necessarily influence bad practices like other dominant storylines. In terms of the

dialogical self theory, these positions can be either internal or external – for some these positions are lived and an important part of their internal (faith) convictions, whilst for others these positions are external and only conveyed due to pressure from the body politic. These positions respond to the question concerning the RCZ’s position(s) when it comes to masculinities and gender equality. They are neither internal nor external: some could be ascribed to Western (and/or Colonial) systems of thought, whilst others are more progressive; some contain elements of traditional African thought, whilst others concern the way(s) RCZ reverends think of God and humankind. These creative (re)interpretations of masculinities could therefore also be labelled as “theo-liminal positions” (Kaunda 2016:63).

Some *I*-positions in this storyline affirms Ellington’s (2017b:90-91; 2015:37) observation that students at Justo Mwale University (the soon-to-be-ministers and members of the RCZ) often favour the narratives regarding the power, success, and victory of Jesus Christ above the narratives regarding his fragility, suffering, and death. Portraying Jesus as the victor, conqueror, defeater of all supernatural powers,⁴⁴⁵ and the defeater of death is a general characteristic in African theology according to Kärkkäinen (2003:247-258). Jesus’ authority is exaggerated, and expressed in terms of his headship, which could be compared to that of a chief whose job is to protect and bring prosperity to his people (Kabasélé 1991:103-115). Since health is also an important theme in the African context, it is often overemphasised in the Pentecostal tradition and in independent African churches, although the root of sickness is usually connected to the spiritual realm, and the cause attributed to God’s wrath because of people’s sin (Kärkkäinen 2003:252).

The *I*-positions that dominated this study, however, are concerned with the RCZ’s involvement in and handling of gender issues. Participants repeatedly asserted the RCZ’s view that gender equality is of utmost importance, habitually saying that men and women are both created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27) and that there is no difference between male and female in God’s eyes (Galatians 3:26-28). Even though the overwhelming majority of RCZ membership consists out of women and women are allowed to become reverends, the RCZ still seems like a male-dominated church. This could be ascribed to its patriarchal history and the culturally accepted norms that prioritise men when it comes to leadership and participation (Phiri 2017:3-5; Njobvu 2017:50-51).

⁴⁴⁵ This is a useful hermeneutic in Africa, since many cultures fear sickness, spells, evil omens, and death, and attribute them to spiritual realm. Portraying Jesus in terms of power establishes his might over all forces of evil, curses, and spells (Kärkkäinen 2003:247).

Historically, the church's literal understanding of the Bible prohibited women's full participation in the offices of the church (Njobvu 2017:52-53; Mouton 2012:115-116, 128). Bible texts were used to argue that women should be excluded from leadership and decision-making processes (1 Timothy 2:11-14),⁴⁴⁶ should be submissive to men (Ephesians 5:22-23),⁴⁴⁷ are not equal to men (Genesis 2:23),⁴⁴⁸ and that it is because of the disobedience of women that Eden came to an end (Genesis 3:1-24).⁴⁴⁹ According to Phiri (2017:66-67), this interpretation of the Bible could also explain the many (obsolete) arguments that were used (and are still being used) to prohibit women from entering the ministry, including: (1) women are (supposedly) the weaker sex and their biblical role is to be caretakers whose work is at home; (2) women who menstruate are unclean and should not be allowed to preach since their presence would tarnish the sacred space and the holy communion; (3) Jesus only appointed male disciples, and the women who were present during Jesus' ministry remained on the periphery; (4) Paul teaches us that women ought to be silent, and when women preach in front of men, it is a shameful act; and, (5) women could (or should only) exercise their leadership skills without any interference when involved in the Women's Guild. From this, it is clear that the message of the Bible has been used as a means of cultural suppression, and that many women have been silenced by this in church communities (Phiri 2017:2; Le Roux 2012:51-52).

Arguments *for* women's full ordination in the church and therefore, an argument for gender equality in the RCZ, was formulated by referring to Jesus' inclusive attitude towards all people – especially women, and the Bible verses Joel 2:28-29⁴⁵⁰, Galatians 3:28-29,⁴⁵¹ 1 Peter 3:7,⁴⁵² and Genesis 1:27.⁴⁵³ By the end of the twentieth century, along with the emerging voices of African women theologians (like the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, founded in 1989), the national conference of the Women's Guild of the RCZ, and the international ecumenical community's focus on human rights and gender equality in a time of GBV and HIV (Phiri 2003:4), the RCZ made progressive,

⁴⁴⁶ “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed, the Eve. And Adam was not deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” (NIV translation).

⁴⁴⁷ “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church[...].” (NIV translation).

⁴⁴⁸ “[...] she shall be called ‘woman’, for she was taken out of man.” (NIV translation).

⁴⁴⁹ The story of how Eve gave Adam fruit, whereafter they were cursed and banished from Eden.

⁴⁵⁰ “[...] your sons and your daughters will prophesy [...] Even on my servants, both men and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (NIV translation).

⁴⁵¹ “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NIV translation).

⁴⁵² “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life [...]” (NIV translation).

⁴⁵³ “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (NIV translation).

gender-inclusive decisions. At its 1989 Synod, the RCZ decided that women were allowed to become deaconesses, and in 1998 to become elders. The decision to allow women to participate in all offices of the church in 2000 – which implies the full ordination of women reverends – was a bold step in the RCZ’s history. This decision was met with suspicion and confusion by some, in regard to the interpretation of the Bible verses that clearly state that women should not be allowed to teach (Phiri 2017:5).

During fieldwork, when questioned about gender equality and the roles of men and women, respondents habitually responded with the reference to Genesis 1:27 (“created in the image of God”) and Galasians 3:38 (“there is neither male nor female”). These answers seemed like instinctive and rehearsed responses. Matsveru and Gillham (2015:35) classify these two responses under a Christocentric approach to human dignity, which argues that the value of human beings lies in the fact that they are created in the image of God; a value that was reaffirmed by the incarnation of Jesus Christ who also became a human being. Since people carry the image of God, they are also called to value and respect all people since they are also created in God’s image (or “love your neighbour as yourself”). Both men and women have a God-ordained dignity worthy of respect by others and themselves (Matsveru & Gilham 2015:35,37).

During fieldwork and after reviewing the minutes of the 2000 Synod, it did seem as though this decision could also be attributed to the pressure from outside bodies and not necessarily out of personal conviction,⁴⁵⁴ and despite this major step towards gender equality, there are often conflicts between religious leaders about women’s position in the church (Njobvu 2017:51; Phiri 2017:67). Theron (2015:56,62-64) attributes this to the fact that a patriarchal culture that habitually devaluates women has percolated into the Christian faith; therefore, although the church intends gender equality, the cultural embeddedness of many churches becomes an obstacle when realising the idea that men and women are actually equal, and that gender hierarchies have actually dissolved. When considering the fact that women rarely participate in RCZ leadership, the fact that the RCZ has no clear policy on the issue of gender inequality, the fact that women are much more informed and much more involved in gender issues in the RCZ, the prevalence of GBV in RCZ communities, the fact that “biblical manhood” still installs a patriarchal system that privileges men, and the fact that many women reverends habitually feel overlooked and undervalued in the RCZ (Njobvu 2017:51-52,56; Phiri

⁴⁵⁴ [...] The other problem is with sister churches who give us money, they have insisted on that condition when giving us aid and at JMTC and Lay Training Centre. Despite the problems surrounding women, the church has to take a quick postmortem (sic) on the entire ministry for women” (Minutes of the 2000 RCZ Synod).

2017:66-67), it seems as though the essence of these two verses have not truly been internalised. By consequence, gender equality will remain a stagnant ideal.

When revisiting the *I*-positions associated with this storyline, there seems to be tension when considering the fact that every RCZ reverend repeated and defended the familiar (and some time-worn) theological anecdotes, whilst GBV is still considered a concerning issue and gender equality unrealised. Clearly these *I*-positions are not transforming masculinities. RCZ reverends do have religious agency and moral authority in communities when it comes to these topics, but instead of reinterpreting old insights or creating new wisdom on the topic, it seems as though they hold onto the familiar phrases (“created in God’s image” and “there is neither male of female”) without realising the theological depth thereof (what does it mean if I say men and women are created in God’s image, and when I say there is neither male nor female?”). Therefore, a disruptive narrative should be introduced – narratives that introduces new theological insights and/or reinterpretations of old ones in the attempt to transform the way the RCZ think about gender issues theologically.

5.3.8 Disruptive narrative: rethinking creeds and sacraments

In his book *The Forgotten Creed* (2018), Stephen Patterson (2018:3) calls the familiar words of Galatians 3:26-28 – which was repeatedly referred to in the field – the first creed of early Christian church. It portrayed Paul’s radical social vision for the church, which also signified his own ministry among the gentiles throughout the Roman empire (Patterson 2018:14). Verse 28 in particular have been carefully and thoughtfully formulated by referring to the binary terms (Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female) that people usually use to distinguish themselves from one another – in terms of race, class, and gender (Patterson 2018:17). By doing this, Paul tries to highlight that there is no more distinguishing between people when it comes to being children of God (Patterson 2018:23-29). One particular but crucial detail that easily goes overlooked is that it says there is no longer “Jew or Greek”, “slave or free”, but “male *and* female” (and also, not man and woman).

For the benefit of this study, I will only focus on the part that focuses on the phrase “*there is no longer male and female*”. To understand this distinction, one must understand the historical background of this verse. During the time Paul wrote to congregation in Galatia, the boundaries between sexuality and gender was much more fluid. Of course Paul knew that sexuality was complicated, but since he was trained as a Jewish scholar, he habitually thought of sexuality in binary, gender-specific terms (Patterson 2018:124,127,131). This, however, does not mean that Paul privileged men and undervalued women; in fact, Paul regularly referred to women leaders in churches, deliberately

referring to their roles in congregation – even though it transgressed the traditional gender-appropriate prescriptions (Patterson 2018:142-143,145).

When he wrote to the congregation in Galatia, Paul realised that there are definite differences among members, when considering language, customs, culture, and physiology. By arguing that they are one, he is not arguing that they are (or should be) the same, but rather that they belong despite their differences. Paul argues for the eradication of hierarchies and subordination, because “[u]nity by exclusion and subordination is nothing to celebrate” (Patterson 2018:156). According to Patterson (2018:158):

“There is no Jew or Greek, no slave or free, no male and female” was not about overcoming difference for the sake of sameness. Nor was it a celebration of difference and cultural diversity. It was about overcoming the distinctions that commonly underwrite the human tendency to denigrate the other, to disempower, disenfranchise, dehumanize, and even enslave another person on the flimsy grounds that he or she is different. It was about denying a caste system.

In this “creed”, it is clear: there is no “us” and “them” – children of God all fall under one common kinship, and even though we still categorise people in terms of race, class, and gender, it is useful to remember that this creed is a “rare cultural and religious resource” that proclaims solidarity, oneness, and universal kinship despite these differences (Patterson 2018:160).

There is no better place to highlight this, than when referring to the significance of the Lord’s Table. Communion (or the Eucharist) in its essence, is a reminder that Christ dwells in us, and that we dwell in Christ. The Table also reminds believers that they do not only belong to God, but we also belong to one another (Van der Walt 2020:11-12). The Lord’s Table levels the field; it is an equaliser where no discrimination is allowed, and a tangible way in which Jesus is engaged in remaking a community (Van der Walt 2020:19). “The shared table is the natural and indispensable extension of the ‘embodiment’ of grace in Jesus’ person” (Van der Walt 2020:20), and a significant source of hope that reminds us that we are actually part of a new creation, despite living in a broken world that can easily overwhelm us. The Table also reminds us that even though we are flawed and damaged, we are also a product of the sacred at work, we are receivers of live-affirming courage that frees from our imperfections, and we are given a new identity (Van der Walt 2020:22-23).

Around the Table, we are reminded our restored dignity. Since we are all created in the image of God, and therefore, equally bear the image of God, no race, class, sex, or gender could be (or should be)

seen as inferior around the Table (Theron 2015:65). This means that all distinctions, barriers, and hierarchies installed by society and culture that gradually or invasively causes inequalities, injustices, and oppression, should be opposed since this does not represent the values of the Table, nor does it represent the image of God (Theron 2015:66,73). Even though the message of Table is that we have been made whole by Christ, the people who sit around the Table are (physically and emotionally) broken people. Fortunately, the image of God is not an image of perfection, but of love (Lindvelt 2015:298). Through Jesus' broken body and suffering on the cross, he showed that brokenness is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of complete humanity. In Jesus' broken body, we are all represented, and taken up into a new body – the body of Christ (Lindvelt 2015:299). Therefore, when we suffer, Jesus suffers with us; when we experience pain, Jesus' response is: "This is my body, broken for you" (Govinden 2003:259).

The Table is an act of social justice. In the past, the Table has excluded certain members, and women, for example, were not allowed to partake in this sacrament (Watson 2002:89). This was countered with the argument that communion does not take place between human beings and God, but between God and the whole of creation; it is a celebration of divine embodiment, as well as the embodiment of the church in the bodies of the men and women who make up the church (Watson 2002:90). The theology of the Table is an inclusive theology, that also carries the message of radical equality and justice for all (Watson 2002:91). To speak about freedom and the forgiveness of sins will remain an abstract ideal, as long as women remain oppressed and suffer under tyrannical practices that excludes them from fully participating in the celebration around the Table (Watson 2002:95). Therefore, the Table is also political, since it seeks to reclaim the bodies of women. For too long, "[...] women have [...] been reduced to submissive listeners of the word of God preached by men" (Watson 2002:98). In a time of GBV, the Table empowers women to speak and requires men to listen, and in doing that, the story of Christ's life and death, his incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection would also be told through the embodiment of women's own stories as performers and proclaimers of the good news (Watson 2002:100).

5.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: THE GOOD MEN, THE GOOD LIFE, AND THE GOOD NEWS

Masculinities have a past tense, a present tense, and a future tense – they have been transformed, are continuously transforming, and will continue to transform and adapt to the everchanging times and spaces. Masculinities consist of numerous storylines, they are shaped by multiple voices, and they

intersect with multiple identities that affect one another. Masculinities are more than just socio-cultural constructs – they are corporeal expressions, human events within certain hierarchy-inducing systems that oppress or exclude those who do not fit the hegemonic norm. In this study, it has been argued that masculinities in Zambia could be explained in terms of an incessant interplay between dominance and fragility, the one feeding from the other. In societies which are still inherently patriarchal, men strive to assert their masculinity through male dominance, and this dominance often leads to feelings of (or actual) fragility which in return becomes the vigour to embody dominance. The aim of this project was never to promote a new model of masculinity, since this would only install another hierarchy that comes with different embodiments of male dominance and fragility. Neither does this study claim that all forms of male dominance should be challenged, since this would not immediately make male fragility obsolete, just like emphasising male fragility would not prevent male dominance.

In this research project, I set out to explore the already-transforming masculinities in the RCZ. At first glance, it seemed as though male RCZ reverends are considered good men, that they thrive in a denomination that secures them a good life, and that they are serious about spreading the good news. The empirical data deepened and complexified these three features, and as more storylines emerged, more aspects connected to being a good man in the Zambian context emerged as well. The destructive reality of GBV overwhelmed the empirical data and was recognised as the dominant narrative when studying masculinities in Zambia. It is not necessary to prove the importance of gender equality in the fight against gender-based violence – a lot of research affirms this. Building on the “transforming masculinities” initiatives, transformation and equality should never involve forcing men to become more like women or vice versa, but rather fostering communities where both men and women can work together – as equals – in realising a world where male dominance is used for the greater good, and male fragility is not seen as a weakness that needs to be avoided at all costs.

Under the flag of “transforming masculinities”, many religious groups have responded to the reality of GBV and HIV with initiatives to establish a more equal society. There is no doubt that the behaviour patterns of both men and women have indeed changed in the Zambian society over the years. Like many African nations, Zambia has seen an increase in number of women role models in the economics, politics, popular culture, and also in religion where women are taking the responsibility for entire congregations as the sole pastors. In the field, it does seem as though some congregations (especially in rural and therefore more traditional areas) still feel uncomfortable with women reverends, but this is also slowly changing. Zambian women have proven that they can

successfully perform the roles traditionally ascribed to men despite experiencing levels of disadvantage in an inherently patriarchal system.

In Zambia, it seems as though there is a growing awareness of gender issues, a support for equality, and a growing participation of women in roles that they were denied in the past. Despite this, many men and women in Zambia still operate more comfortably in gender stereotypes, because stereotypes give a sense of security. These stereotypes re-establish the assumption that one's sex dictates one's gender – men should perform the masculine role and women should perform the feminine role. This role division has resulted in a disparity in many societies where men (or traditional masculine roles) are more valued than women (or traditional feminine roles). Gender equality and “transforming masculinities” however advocate for diversity and equivalence despite gender. This would not (and should not) only serve women, but it would be beneficial for men as well since it disrupts all the stereotypes and expectations ascribed to and inscribed on their bodies, dictating their lived experience. This would be a first step of working towards a community of women and men characterised by equity, fairness, opportunity, and participation, that is free from gender-based violence.

This study recognises the agency of religion (and churches) in this regard. In Zambia, religion plays just as a significant role in one's identity as culture, and both culture and religion uphold certain gendered norms that would (supposedly) guarantee a good life. Although there are some aspects in religion and culture that intersect, there are also many aspects that contradict one another, resulting in tensions that leave both men and women vulnerable. In both culture and religion, gender roles and stereotypes have created a social divide between men and women and influenced (or even dictated) the ways people act, think, and feel. These roles and stereotypes are continually being disrupted and challenged in the fields of psychology, the social sciences, and (increasingly) in theology and religious studies, and new interpretations of the good news have helped in slowly shifting the discussion from the formal equality of men and women to issues concerning equality, fairness, opportunity, and participation.

With this said, it is important to remember gender equality has never been about sameness – it is about cultivating an environment in which both men and women can reach their full potential and flourish, free from any prejudice based on the social graces (GRRRAACCEEESSS – gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, ethnicity, education, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation, and spirituality) they embody (Totsuka 2014:87). Also, gender equality does not imply deliberately disadvantaging men in the name of creating just and fair societies, but

rather involves imaging and co-creating communities where diversity is celebrated, and where the notion that both men and women are created equal and in the image of God is embodied.

In such a community you will find good men who view women as their equals; together, they would be living the good life and realise the intention of the good news. In such a community, being strong and smart are not only considered male attributes – women would not be stereotyped as overemotional beings, nor be reduced to sex objects whose sole purpose is to have a family and do domestic chores; women would be able to be educated and become experts in their fields, be competitive in the business world and deserve equal pay. In such a community, men would not feel burdened to be strong and wise all the time, they would be allowed to experience feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty, and not be denied the right to weep or be gentle. Men's sole identity would not be connected to their ability to work and provide for their families, and they would be allowed to take on (and enjoy) jobs and roles stereotypically ascribed to women – like cooking, sewing, and parenting (Cullen 1999:e-source).

This study represents the stories associated with masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia, and it is my hope that the representation thereof is true, fair, empathetic, and that the quilt of *chitenge* patches – the narratives and counter narratives – would inspire such a community in which both men and women can flourish; a community in which a person's identity does not only revolve around their sex, sexuality, or gender.

EPILOGUE:

Since the completion of my fieldwork, a number of diverse and impactful storylines have emerged in the Zambian context; storylines that are associated with the dominant narrative of this study and that undoubtedly affect Zambian masculinities as well. Even though these storylines were not mentioned throughout this thesis – they were not relevant at the time of data collection – they are crucial to acknowledge with future involvement in mind. One can say that new *chitenge* material has come under the seamstress' attention, and although they are not stitched into this quilt, they could and should be stitched into future *chitenge* quilts. In this section – which concludes this thesis whilst also looking towards possible future research – I would like to highlight three additional storylines: (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) new political leadership, and (3) ministry within disease-stricken communities.

(1) The COVID-19 pandemic.

Zambia – like all countries around the world – has been greatly impacted by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Winnie Byanyima, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the already devastating effects of HIV and AIDS in many African countries, and “[...] it is estimated that the effects of COVID-19 could contribute to a 10% increase in HIV deaths over five years” (Valodia 2021:e-source). Not only has governmentally sanctioned COVID-19 restrictions hurt the most vulnerable communities, disrupting their access to crucial HIV-related services (including HIV testing and consultations, access to antiretroviral medication, and medical male circumcisions), but it has also exposed economic, racial, and gender inequality in many societies. In an interview with *The Conversation: Africa*, Byanyima highlights how COVID-19 – like HIV – feeds off inequality; in many communities where systemic (patriarchal) oppression is the norm, women's rights are disregarded, and people are deprived of access to basic health care and education services, the effects of these two pandemics have contributed to greater economic insecurity, a rise in violence against women (GBV), and an increase in deaths (Valodia 2021:e-source). This is also the case in Zambia. A research group from the *World Bank Group* (Paul *et al.* 2021:2-4) has found that many poor and vulnerable households in Zambia were pushed into extreme poverty, that many children have dropped out of school, and that malnutrition, food insecurity and the unemployment number have increased. Since these facets are generally considered a man's responsibility (as found in the cultural normativity-storyline of this study), it is clear that

COVID-19 has influenced masculinities in Zambia, leaving possible gaps in academia that could (and should) be studied in the future.

(2) New political leadership.

Amidst the devastating effects of COVID-19, the political landscape in Zambia has changed as well. After many accusations of corruption, economic decline, falling copper prices, an increase in poverty levels, and youth unemployment, the public grew dissatisfied with the leadership of the Patriotic Front leader, President Edgar Lungu. During the general elections which were held in August 2021 – which was marred by sporadic violence and voter intimidation – Zambia democratically elected a new president. The opposition leader from the United Party for National Development (UPND), Hakainde Hichilema – a former CEO of an accounting firm before entering politics, who promised to save Zambia from economic ruin – won the presidency (Mfula 2021:e-source). Like his predecessor, Hichilema is a devout Christian who regularly quotes the Bible on social media, and on the first Sunday of his presidency he held church service at the State House. Like his predecessor, Hichilema also chose a female candidate for the role of vice president, Mutale Nalumango. In order to establish his support for gender equality, Hichilema also nominated and approbated two women for the roles of speaker and first deputy speaker in parliament. According to Hichilema, this “[...] illustrates our desire to promote women leadership in the country. We’ll work around the clock to ensure that matters of gender equality are addressed” (Hichelema 2021a). When looking at Hichilema’s presidential campaign and his presence on social media (especially Twitter), it is clear that he masterfully tapped into the socio-cultural and religious norms that most Zambians deem important (as identified in the cultural and religious normativity storylines in this study), making him the successful candidate. Many RCZ reverends also showed their support for President Hichilema, revering his faith and patriotism. I believe that this intersection – politics, culture, Zambian Christianity, and masculinity – is an interesting field of investigation that needs to be studied further as well.

(3) Ministry within disease-stricken communities.

Since completing fieldwork in Zambia, the Reformed Church in Zambia reverends have experienced challenging times as well. In a country that identifies as a Christian nation, the COVID-19 pandemic quickly became a spiritual issue; it has been referred to as a metaphorical (and unseen) enemy, and even attributed to the work of the devil (Kroesbergen-Kamps & Kroesbergen 2020:e-source). Like in many churches around the world, the pandemic has challenged the RCZ to rethink the ways they

worship and minister to their congregations. During the initial COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown mandates, church gatherings were prohibited between 27 March and 31 May 2020, which means that the RCZ could not celebrate Easter with festivals, processions, “crusades” (worship and prayer services), and choral performances as usual. Many (male) reverends from urban congregations started livestreaming their services on Facebook, but for a majority of RCZ members this was impractical; either they did not have a device for watching the service, or they did not have the financial means to buy data bundles in order to stream the service on the internet (Kroesbergen-Kamps & Kroesbergen:e-source). Theological training at Justo Mwale University also relied on online and distance learning in 2020 and 2021, which posed numerous challenges to students who come from rural areas, lecturers who come from other countries, and the RCZ synod who is responsible for the bursaries (and therefore livelihood) of many students. Covid-19 related restrictions have challenged the church to rethink their role and identity in a community. Fewer people attended worship services, midweek services and prayer meetings were cancelled, and day-to-day ministry was disrupted. The church – which used to be a source of comfort for members on the one hand, and a source of power and security for reverends on the other – became a place of uncertainty and powerlessness, and reverends are frequently faced with questions about life and death, God’s will, Christ’s protection, and the attacks of Satan (Kroesbergen-Kamps & Kroesbergen 2020:e-source). After a recent online discussion with one of the respondents of this study, I observed that some (male) RCZ reverends – who usually embody a kind of male dominance and authority in their community – are currently experiencing a time of great uncertainty, stress, and burnout – which are related to male fragility. Therefore, I would also pose a third storyline that needs to be studied: ministry (and ministers) in disease-stricken communities.

The reality of these three storylines re-establishes the fact that identities are dynamic, everchanging, and have spatial and temporal dimensions. Each storyline represents bodies that thrive and suffer, live and die, lead and follow, and experience the reciprocal cycle of male dominance and male fragility. These storylines represent and influence identities, introduce new voices to the dialogical self (or only affirm old ones) that could and would be internalised and influence individual and collective positions, and should be considered in further research on the transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

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APPENDICES:

A. ETHICAL CLEARANCE: UFS



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

14-May-2019

Dear Mr Van Jaarsveld, Jeremias JdK

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia: the good men, the good life, and the good news.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2019/0269/1405

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Petrus Nel

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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B. PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: RCZ



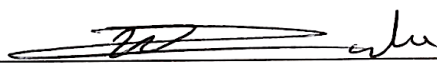
LETTER OF PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that **Rev Mias van Jaarsveld** has obtained permission from the Reformed Church in Zambia to do research on the perception on masculinity in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

This project would include empirical research (field work) in the form of qualitative interviews with identified persons who are willing to participate on a voluntary basis. We encourage participants to partake in this research project, as we believe it would be beneficial for the RCZ.

We have no objection to this research, as long as the researcher conducts this research ethically and present the findings truthfully, as stipulated in the document above.

We are aware that the findings of this study would be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.


DR WILLIAM ZULU (GENERAL SECRETARY RCZ)

08 April 2019
DATE



C. PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: JMU



LETTER OF PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that **Rev Mias van Jaarsveld** has obtained permission from the Justo Mwale University (JMU) to do research on the perception on masculinity in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ).

This project would include empirical research (field work) in the form of qualitative interviews with identified persons who are willing to participate on a voluntary basis. We encourage participants to partake in this research project, as we believe it would be beneficial for the RCZ and JMU.

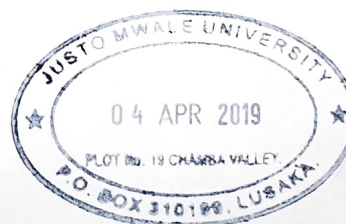
We have no objection to this research, as long as the researcher conducts this research ethically and present the findings truthfully, as stipulated in the document above.

We are aware that the findings of this study would be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.



DR LUCAS SOKO (VICE CHANCELLOR JMU)

DATE 04/04/19



D. LETTER OF PERMISSION: PILOT STUDY

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that **Rev Mias van Jaarsveld** has obtained permission from the Dutch Reformed Church Free State (South Africa) and the Reformed Church in Zambia, in terms of the partnership agreement between the two churches, to do some research on the perception on masculinity in the Reformed Church in Zambia. This empirical research will include quantitative and qualitative interviews with identified persons who are willing to participate on a voluntary basis.

G van der Watt

Dr William Zulu
(General Secretary RCZ)
(October 2018)

Dr Gideon van der Watt
(Secretary Partners in Mission)
(October 2018)

I, ..., hereby declare that I am voluntarily participating in research interviews by Rev Mias van Jaarsveld. I am giving permission that the interview may be recorded (electronically and in a written form) and that it may be used in the research project on "the perception on masculinity in the RCZ". This consent is given on the condition of anonymity and that my name or any personal details or opinions will not be exposed (made known) in any public documents.

Signed at..... (place) on the (date)

.....
Signature of the participant

I, ..., as researcher, agree to keep personal details of participants in the research project confidential and will use the collected data in an ethically responsible way.

.....
Signature of researcher
(Date:)

E. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

During the period of April to July in the year 2019.

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Transforming masculinities in the Reformed Church in Zambia: the good men, the good life and the good news.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Rev JDK (Mias) van Jaarsveld
2007002146 (UFS student number)
+27 72 901 8484 / +27 51 436 1967
miasvj@gmail.com

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Theology and Religion
Department of Practical and Missional Theology

STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Prof Jan-Albert van den Berg
Professor in Practical and Missional Theology
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Dr Gideon van der Watt
Partners in Witness and Research-fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Religion
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WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to do qualitative research on the way men and/or masculinities are perceived in the RCZ. This research project would focus primarily on the narratives of reverends and members of the RCZ in urban areas who are willing to participate voluntarily. The RCZ is a growing and well-respected church denomination, and the researcher would like to explore and observe the RCZ from the inside. As an objective observer, the reflections and findings of this study would be beneficial for both the RCZ and South African churches can.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

The primary researcher of this research project is reverend Mias van Jaarsveld. Mias has been in Zambia as a representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Free State province and Partners in Witness several times. He is a PhD student who finished his MTh in Practical Theology in 2017. He is also a reverend at the Dutch Reformed Church Heuwelsig congregation, and a part-time lecturer at the Shepherd centre – the short learning programme office of the Faculty of Theology and Religion.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2019/0269/1405

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

You have been identified to participate in this research project, because you fit into the desired criteria of this project. Your contact details were supplied to the researcher by the RCZ synod office, with the recommendation of the general secretary, dr William Zulu. The researcher is doing research about the RCZ's views on and perceptions of masculinity. The sample group consist of reverends and active members in the RCZ. This participation is irrespective of their gender, but women would also be approached to partake in this research project. There are going to be around 15 participants in this research project.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Participants would take part in the study voluntarily. Written consent will be given before an interview is conducted. The participant's ideas, stories, ideals, opinions, troubles and dreams will remain anonymous in the feedback of this study, and his/her particulars confidential. The study involves semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face interviewing, with primary, probing and continuation questions which the researcher prepared beforehand. Interviews would be recorded electronically with the consent of the participant. The questions would focus on the respondent's views and experiences on the theme of masculinity, and also on the way the RCZ is responding to it. If the conversation makes a participant uncomfortable, the researcher will respect the participant's personal boundaries. The researcher would also spend time on participant observation, and therefore also make his own experiences part of the study. Interviews would not exceed the of one hour, but follow up interviews could be requested if the

researcher feels it is necessary. The researcher would then discuss his findings with a focus group at Justo Mwale University to test if his interpretation of the information is accurate and fair for Zambians and the RCZ.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Participation in this research project is absolutely voluntarily, and there will be no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this research project is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If the interview is done, and the participant feel that they want to withdraw, they would be allowed. The participant can, however, not withdraw their statements once the information is stored and/or coded and the report is written.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Your participation in this research project would be greatly appreciated, as you would be contributing to international scholarship and to the RCZ's theology. Your participation would help the researcher create a relevant, faithful and contemporary cultural portrait of the RCZ's views on masculinity. Your participation in and contributions to this project would remain confidential and your identity kept anonymous. The findings and observations of this project would not be used for personal gain – the RCZ will have access to it, and it could be used to create room for future discussions on gender and masculinity. Your participation could be beneficial in the broader RCZ, scholarship at Justo Mwale university and in African theology.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

The researcher is aware that talking about sex and sexuality could make participants uncomfortable, since many African cultures are very cautious and hesitant to talk about this topic in public. The researcher however wants to affirm and reassure you that he respects to the culture of the Zambian people. Whenever you feel uncomfortable, exposed and/or unsafe, you are at liberty to withdraw from this study. If the researcher becomes aware of any hindrance that would contaminate the findings, for example if a participant lies, make up stories and even refuse to talk, the researcher may make the call to stop the interview. The researcher would like to assure you that when you open up, expose deep, personal information, the researcher would conduct a follow-up interview if necessary, and/or have debriefing sessions with the participants. In the case of any dangerous information, such as the participant who admits being a victim or a perpetrator of a criminal offence, the researcher would ask the participant on the record to withdraw the statement if it is untrue, or refer them to the appropriate authorities. If the researcher becomes aware of any indecencies, the researcher has the right to cancel or stop the interview, discuss it with the authorised staff at the RCZ offices and/or Justo Mwale University and/or with his supervisors.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The researcher wants to reassure you that your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your information would be processed by an external electronic coding system (Atlas.ti), which would ensure that your interview would remain confidential. An agreement of consent will be signed by both the researcher and the participant to ensure this. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Your personal details will always remain anonymous, but your contribution to the study in the forms of stories, feelings, experiences, values, ideas, could be used for other purposes, for example in a research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. In these publications, your identity will not be exposed and/or nobody will be able to connect the information with the participant. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. If you are part of the focus groups for data collection, every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group. You are allowed to refuse to participate in this research project.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of the participant's answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher personal office in Bloemfontein for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After 5 years, the electronic documents will be deleted from the researcher's computer and/or hard drive. Other documents would be destroyed by burning them, unless otherwise indicated or approved by the ethical committee of the University of the Free State. Because of the nature of this study, the researcher does not foresee any risks, exploitation or exposure of the participants views and identities. If, however, the personal information and/or views of participants are in any way exposed or portrayed incorrectly, the researcher will take full responsibility on the grounds that the accusations are supported by evidence. If the raw data of the researcher falls into the wrong hands, for example if his personal computer gets stolen, the researcher, after advising his supervisors, would inform the participants whose identities may be exposed.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Participants participate in this research project voluntarily, without any compensation. Participants does therefore not have the right to demand compensation for their participation. The researcher has to stipulate this in the consent agreement beforehand. If a participant takes part of this study, expecting compensation in any form, the researcher would not be liable to any damage, loss of income, cost to the participant, or gifts exchanged. The researcher would discourage the giving or receiving of gifts, or discuss the boundaries of the participant-researcher relationship with the participant. The participant does not have the right to make demands after the research have been conducted, using their participation in the project as leverage for financial or physical gain. The researcher would also not be responsible for any damage, injury or harm to a person during, before, during or after interviews were conducted

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, you could contact either the Department of Practical and Missional Theology (+27 51 401 3430 or dreyera@ufs.ac.za), or the researcher (+27 72 901 8484 / +27 51 436 1967 or miasvj@gmail.com). The researcher will present his preliminary findings to you personally and/or electronically after the qualitative research has been conducted and coded. The final findings will

accessible after the thesis have been completed. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact him personally. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact prof Jan-Albert van den Berg (+27 83 297 2619 / +27 51 401 3430 or vdbergja@ufs.ac.za), or dr Gideon van der Watt (+27 82 780 8038 / +27 51 406 6729 or mission@ngkvs.ac.za). If you have any complaints, enquiries and/or grounded accusations in regards to the researcher's method or methodology, the validity of the findings and personal observations made, you have the right to contact the above mentioned persons.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this research project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interview by electronic voice recorder and process notes made by the researcher.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

F. PILOT STUDY INTERVIEWS

FIRST VISIT ('PILOT STUDY') TO ZAMBIA (16/10-28/11).

REASONS FOR/AIMS OF THIS VISIT:

This visit could be called his 'Pilot study/ preliminary visit before doing qualitative research in 2019.

During this visit, the researcher aims to better understand the Zambian context, the Reformed Church in Zambia and to explore their views on masculinity.

The researcher aims to test/probe certain views, nuances, assumptions, opinions, uncertainties on the theme of his research project.

The researcher aims to network, build relationships and prepare for his visit in 2019 by meeting with identified individuals in the top structures of the RCZ and JMU.

The researcher aims to have structured qualitative interviews in order to help with the composing of the final questionnaires for 2019.

The researcher must become familiar with the church's views on masculinity and even femininity, and also their response through research programmes, structures and official statements.

FOCUS GROUP:

In order to achieve these aims, the researcher aims to have sample focus group (around) consisting of:

Male and female students from JMU.

Male and female reverends from RCZ.

Lay persons – members of the RCZ.

Preliminary conversations with the lecturers at JMU would also be advantageous, as they are not only colleagues, but also experts on the do's and don'ts, when doing research on this topic.

Drs Banda, Banda, Soko, Ellington, Zulu, Prof Zulu could be consulted. Dr William Zulu as general secretary of the RCZ could help the researcher gain access the synod and the archive of the RCZ in Lusaka.

THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS WOULD BE STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWED:

Visit/interview time: 30-45 minutes.

Style: Structured interviews (open ended questions with short answers)

Place: At the interviewees home or office (where they feel comfortable)

Introduction, courtesy and consent.

Biographic information and contact details of interviewee.

1. Is there a growing discussion on the role of men and women in church and society? Is such a discussion (or the absence of it) a positive or negative thing?
2. What do you understand under the concept of 'gender'?
3. Do you think there is a difference between 'gender' and 'sexuality'? Explain...
4. What are your thoughts when you hear the words 'masculinity' and 'femininity'? (Masculinity is... and, femininity is...)
5. What has been the traditional (African Traditional faith) understanding of the role of men? Has it changed?
6. Has the understanding of the role of women changed since the missionaries left?
7. In your opinion, in what ways are 'real men' portrayed in our society today? And/or the opposite, real men are not...
8. Do you think there are problems/serious issues when thinking of masculinity? If yes, what are these issues?
9. Different to other churches, the RCZ allowed women to become ministers. How do you feel about it? Is it threatening the role of men?
10. In what ways are the RCZ involved when it comes to issues ascribed to gender?
11. What did the church (RCZ) teach you about men, manliness, manhood, masculinity?
12. Are the RCZ ministers preaching about gender issues? What do they say?
13. What are the common attributes ascribed to being a man/men in Zambia? Do you think they are fair? Safe? Relevant?
14. What is the position/role men should take in at the church? At home? At work?
15. Would you say that vulnerability is a manly attribute?
16. When thinking of the future of the church, what are the roles that men (women?) should play?
17. How do you think about God (Jesus) in terms of the discussion on gender?
18. Can we learn something from Jesus about masculinity?
19. Do you think more time should be spent exploring gender and identity? Why or why not?
20. What are the unacceptable themes when discussing gender in Zambia and the RCZ?

Overview, and additional information if necessary.

Concluding thoughts.

Thanks and departure.

OTHER DATA SOURCES

The researcher will also visit the archive of the RCZ (after getting permission from the church's governing body), and read through some recent minutes of synods, agendas, official statements and decisions made influenced by or impacted by the questions on gender, gender equality. (Allowing women to the pulpit, structures/programmes focusing on some issues emanating from toxic masculinities or problems ascribed to gender)

The researcher intends to listen to spend time listening the staff of the RCZ synod office (men and women) to gain their insight on the theme as well.

G. PILOT STUDY REFLECTIONS/REPORT

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ABBREVIATIONS:

RCZ: Reformed Church in Zambia

JMU: Justo Mwale University

CODE FOR PILOT STUDY RESPONDENTS:

PS (Pilot study) + M/F (Male/female) + number (chronological number of the interview)

This journal contains observations, reflections, interesting facts, personal experiences, personal notes and journal entries by the researcher while staying in Zambia from 16/10/2018-28/11/2018. This journal also reflects on the interviews the researcher with reverends and members in the RCZ.

While in Zambia, the researcher lived on the Justo Mwale University campus (Munali road, Chamba Valley, Lusaka), which serves as the RCZ's seminary as well as a training facility for theological students from other church denominations. The campus is home to JMU students and lecturers, RCZ members and RCZ reverends, and other individuals connected to the RCZ. While in Zambia, the researcher also visited the RCZ Synod offices (Mwaleshi road, Olympia Park, Lusaka), the JMU library (on JMU campus), which also houses the RCZ archives, and a number of congregations in and around Lusaka (Chelston, Mtendere, Chilenje, Ibex Hill, Kabulonga, and Siavonga).

ABOUT THE RCZ:

The RCZ has around one million members – and it is a growing church. When the researcher arrived in Zambia, there were 183 congregations. Today, after two new congregations were established in November-December 2018 (or, since 16 December), there are 185 congregations (an increase of 2 congregation in two months). There are 17 presbyteries, 150 reverends (before JMU graduation in December 2018, there will be more today), of which there are 16 women (11%) who are in full time ministry. There are also 42 full-time evangelists, of which there are 4 females (10%) in a church where around 65% are women (according the synod office and respondent PSM21).

The biggest congregations are in the cities or urban areas (Lusaka, Chipata, Ndola). Some observations and notable facts:

There are 10 provinces in Zambia: North-Western-, Western-, Southern-, Lusaka-, Central-, Copperbelt-, Esatern-, Muchinga-, Luapula- and Northern Province

The RCZ is not really active in the North-Western province;

In the Western province, there is only 1 congregation,

in the Luapula province, there is 1 congregation, which is attached to the Copperbelt province;

The Copperbelt province has 3 presbyteries, and in Ndola alone, there are 15 congregations.

In Lusaka, there are 4 presbyteries, namely: Chelston with 13 congregations, Kamwala with 10 congregations, Matelo with 12 congregations, and Kafue with 9 congregations.

The largest presbytery thereafter is the Mazabuka presbytery with 7 congregations, which also include the Livingstone congregation.

The reasons for the large number of congregations in urban areas, may include the migration to cities and large towns to get jobs.

The church is particularly big in the Eastern province, which could be due to the fact that the RCZ originated in this area in 1899 at Magwero, a small villiage near Chipata.

In some rural areas, there aren't any full-time reverends, and the RCZ is training and employing evangelists (lay preachers) to do the day-to-day activities at the church.

In Lusaka there are many congregations, because it is the capital of Zambia, and therefore many people (from different provinces) go look for jobs.

The Copperbelt is famous for its copper mines, and a lot of people (men and women) moved to this province with the hopes of getting a good job.

The reason why the church is not that visible in the Western part of Zambia has to with its origins in the Eastern province. Many people feel that the RCZ is a Chewa church (the tribe in the Eastern province), since many of the songs, the language of the Bible, the names of the reverends, are Chewa (PSM21, PSM08).

SOME CULTURAL VIEWS:

It is also very important to remember that there are many distinct cultures, and these are not just different in terms of language, but also their position when it comes to the roles of women. During discussions with PSM01, PSM06, PSM07, PSM15 and PSM18, the researcher came to the following conclusions:

The Ngoni-tribe is considered as a very patriarchal tribe. In their day-to-day life, men are considered as the head of the family, the king of the household. They prefer having sons, as this will 'expand their kingdom'; having daughters means that 'the "crown" is not sustained'. Having many sons is celebrated as this means that the 'kingdom', the family's inheritance, is secured and they have a legacy. It is interesting to note that many women respondents of the pilot study, said that men are considered as 'kings'. Generally, Ngoni's believe that only men can (must) talk in public and make important decisions; women, on the other hand, are not consulted in decisions and not allowed to speak in public. In the Ngoni-tribe, only a man can be the chief. If the chief dies without a son, the daughter will not automatically follow him up – a relative, nephew or cousin will take over.

The Chewa-tribe, on the other hand, can be considered as matriarchal. The father still plays an important role in the day-to-day living in the household, but there is a big emphasis on the roles of women or the mother. Having many sons is not that important, but having daughters is considered as a blessing, as this will secure riches and secure care when they are old and retired. Men are still given the hard, physical chores, like ploughing, cutting down trees and building, and they are still considered as the breadwinners that has to work hard to provide for the family. And Women in the Chewa culture are still responsible for the domestic chores, to cook, clean, wash and sweep, but you will also find women in the fields, shuffling the lands and harvesting crops. In some households, women are in charge of the crops, while the husbands are in the urban areas for work. It is not strange to find women from the Chewa culture that study carpentry, brickmaking and bricklaying, and males in the hotel or food industry. Generally, Chewa men would be the ones who speak in public, but the opinions of women are crucial and they are counselled in decision-making. It would not be strange to see women in charge of the wallet in the house - men earn the money, but it is up to the women how the money should be spent. The Chewas have no problem with having women chiefs, in fact, there are currently women chiefs in the Eastern province. Is the Chewa influence important when talking about the admission of women to become reverends in the RCZ?

There are other tribes in Zambia, like the Nsengas, Bembas and Tongas, but most of them are more patriarchal than matriarchal. In Lusaka, you have a mixture of these tribes and languages, and a new 'hybrid' language was formed in the Urban areas – Nyanje.

English is Zambia's official language. It is interesting to note that a common language in some ways helped to cross borders between people of different cultures, especially in urban areas. When looking at the distinct differences between the two above mentioned tribes – Chewa and Ngoni, it is understandable why advocating the rights of women, and allowing women to become reverends, have been met with some resistance. In some cases, mostly in rural areas, women reverends are not accepted, and in some instances male members left the church when the woman reverend was inducted in their congregation. Women reverends in the RCZ regularly have to have discussions with members on why it is not a sin for a woman to be in her position. One female reverend shared that some men in her congregation refused to use the Holy Communion, as they thought it is contaminated by the woman reverend (PSF20). This can be ascribed to their literal understanding of the Bible, and Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:34 ('*Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.*' NIV-translation), but many of the respondents felt that it is because of the cultural understanding of the role of a woman in general. Even though most respondents were positive about women in the ministry, there were some concerns (from both male and female respondents) that women 'need to show maturity' (PSF05), as some women have taken advantage of this 'power position', feeling that it is 'now their time to shine' (PSF05, PSM12). There are however some congregations, predominantly in urban areas, that are educated and understand that this way of interpreting of this scripture has changed.

GENDER AND THE RCZ:

When looking at the demographic of women and men the RCZ, you will see that in urban areas, membership consist of 65 % women and 35 % men (PSM21, PSM08). This can be due to the fact that the men are moving around more, or because the life expectancy of women is higher. It can also be because men are not really interested in going to church. The irony here is that, even though women dominate the membership, many offices in the church are still held by men, and not women. In rural areas, the membership consist of around 55% women and 45% men. According to the RCZ synod office, the age bracket from 0-35 make up the largest number of the RCZ membership (youth and young adults). The older generation is getting smaller, which could be a reflection on the many health issues Zambia face which include HIV/Aids, insufficient health care, low life expectancy, poverty, etc.

In the RCZ, when talking about gender, the first reaction is that it has to do with women, women empowerment, women inclusion, women promotion, roles in household chores, and it is a reaction to of patriarchy. Zambia has come a long way in terms of what they call 'gender equality', and the RCZ embodied this when they allowed women to become reverends. When talking about gender, it seems that they tend to narrow it down to the biological makeup of a person – you are either male and female, and because of your biological makeup, you are assigned certain roles that fit your sex. 'Manhood' immediately is connected to the organ (the penis), and being a man is sometimes narrowed down to a little piece of the person's body; this is sexuality, not gender (Researcher). People in Zambia do not always realize that 'gender' is a complex issue that can not only be narrowed down to sexual roles and physical appearance. Gender has to do with identity. Some people will say 'I am for gender...', but they look at a person is still influenced by one's culture and tradition. Most respondents agreed Justo Mwale is very active to educate people around this topic.

PILOT STUDY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS:

21 interviews were conducted.

6 respondents were female, and 15 respondents were male.

This sample group consisted out of:

7 reverends in the RCZ,

7 lecturers at JMU,

7 members in the RCZ (4 students at JMU, 3 lay persons in the RCZ)

The reason for 21 interviews is for the researcher to really immerse himself in the Zambian culture, to hear voices from different backgrounds and to make sure the formal study that follows adopts the right discourses in Zambia and the RCZ.

In the interviews, the following conclusions could be made:

When asked if they think that if there is a growing discussion on the roles of men and women in the church:

21 (100%) respondents agreed that there is a growing discussion on gender roles in the church.

Some added that there are more discussions in the society or political arena than in the church, but that the church is taking notice of these debates.

When asked if they think more time has to be spent discussing gender and identity in the church:

20 out of 21 (95%) respondents agreed that more time should be spent discussing this topic.

The 1 respondent that did not agree did not showcase an indifference to the topic of gender equality; this should rather be seen as a testimony of frustration and a feeling that even though there is already much time spent on this, not much have changed. The respondent added that this topic goes deeper than mere 'gender equality', because it has to do with the 'fallenness' of human nature in general (PSM17).

When asked how they felt about women reverends:

21 respondents (100%) affirmed their support for women in ministry, and even though women in the ministry is generally seen as a good thing, the all respondents spoke about the adversity women in the ministry face, using words like:

there are cultural issues when accepting women in leadership roles (PSM11, PSM15, PSM16, PSM17, PSM21, PSM12, PSF19, PSM01, PSM06);

it is difficult/ a struggle/ a challenge (PSF20, PSM21, PSM09, PSF05, PSM07, PSM08, PSM14);

men feel threatened, insecure, intimidated (PSF03, PSF05, PSM14);

the people feel that this position is reserved for men (PSM10, PSM01, PSM17);

these women are not respected or taken seriously (PSM06, PSM07, PSM12);

some churches are not accommodating (PSF20, PSM09);

not all women are accepted (PSM21, PSM13);

they are met with resistance (PSF18);

it is a very controversial topic (PSM21);

women reverends are despised (PSF19).

When asking for personal definitions for gender:

11 respondents (52%) defined 'gender' in terms of the promotion of women, gender equality (women must be equal) and/or power relations between men and women;

7 respondents (33%) defined 'gender' in terms of one's biological makeup which influences the roles that is expected of you;

and 3 respondents (15%) defined 'gender' in terms of one's identity which formed by culture or society.

When asked how 'real men' are portrayed in society/ in Zambia today:

Each respondent responded differently. The researcher noticed that most respondents' answers aligned with these four clusters:

15 respondents (71%) aligned with the portrayal of men in terms of *power, authority, dominance, strength*;

16 respondents (76%) aligned with the portrayal of men in terms of *responsibility, providing, resourcefulness*;

10 respondents (48%) aligned with the portrayal of men in terms of *being the head of the house, showing leadership at home, ruling over wife*;

9 respondents (43%) aligned with the portrayal of men in terms of *making decisions, giving advice, speaking in public, wisdom*.

When asking for common attributes that are given to men:

16 respondents (76%) agreed that a man is/must be physically strong;

14 respondents (66%) agreed that a man is/must be resourceful and a provider;

11 respondents (52%) agreed that a man must rule over his wife, which includes having regular sex and, occasionally, beating his wife (not their personal opinions).

When asking whether vulnerability (which includes frailty, weakness, sadness, feeling powerless) is a manly attribute:

All the respondents responded differently. Some agreed and some disagreed somewhat.

6 respondents (29 %) feel that vulnerability in general cannot be seen as a manly attribute. Generally, men are taught not to express their emotions, and culture considers vulnerability a female attribute.

In further conversations, when talking about vulnerability, there were however two distinct groups (which included some of the above-mentioned group):

9 respondents (43%) feel that men are vulnerable when thinking in terms of their *emotions*. This includes men suppressing their feelings (emotions) with the fear of seeming weak or being laughed at; not being able (or allowed) to cry (even at funerals), because men are supposed to be strong and strong men do not cry; not allowed (willing) to acknowledge or admit their weakness, powerlessness, or fears; not being able to share feeling, because it is not something they are taught in their cultures.

10 respondents (48%) feel that men are vulnerable when thinking in terms of their *physical abilities*. This includes men who are physically challenged; men who are victims of sicknesses; men who do not fit into the secular expectations of physical appearance and strength, and are insecure because of that; men who were victims of abuse, and they are not able to defend themselves; men who are jobless; men who were humiliated by their wives or families because of mistakes.

When asked to identify the serious issues in society which could be ascribed to masculinity:

All the respondents named a number of issues which could be ascribed to masculinity in Zambia today. Most respondents agree on the following:

13 respondents (62%) agreed that *gender-based violence, which includes physical and emotional abuse, and rape*, is a serious issue;

13 respondents (62%) agreed that *undermining women or claiming dominion over women (gender inequality) at home or at the workplace* is a serious issue;

9 respondents (43%) agreed *promiscuity, which includes prostitution and infidelity, extramarital affairs, cheating, and polygamy* is a serious issue;

9 respondents (43%) agreed that *unemployment and laziness (men who are not responsible)* is a big issue;

7 respondents (33%) agreed that *alcohol- and drug-abuse* is a serious issue;

Other issues included *divorces, pride, HIV/Aids, street kids, orphans, child pregnancies and child marriages*.

When asked what subjects should be avoided when conducting research in the RCZ (a deliberate question):

12 respondents (57%) advised the researcher to respect the culture (treat cultures and cultural views with respect) in Zambia, and not to force respondents to speak if they feel uncomfortable.

9 respondents (43%) advised the researcher not to publicly speak about sex, sexual behaviour and sexuality, especially not in the presence of children, since it is a private matter. This includes talking about sex, sexual issues a person may have, and other topics respondents may feel uncomfortable discussing. Victims of rape or sexual abuse should also be respected and the researcher is advised that they will not necessarily come forward and open up about their experiences.

5 respondents (24%) advised the researcher not to talk about homosexuality or the LGBT-community. Not only is homosexuality still illegal in Zambia, but it creates a powerful discomfort in Zambia, and is considered 'not the African way'.

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY:

Traditionally, it is expected of men to be the breadwinners, the decision makers, the providers and protectors of the family. In reality, in many homes, women have also taken on these roles. Men are portrayed as strong, successful, they must have an income, and there is an emphasis on their sexual vitality. Even people who advocate gender equality also emphasise that men should still be responsible and provide for their family. In society and in the media, 'real men' are never portrayed as poor, vulnerable, weak, sick. Even if they are afraid of enemies, or are taken advantage of, or persecuted, or have sin they cannot break with, or live in extreme poverty, or feel weak, the average Zambian man will not own up to it or admit that they are weak or vulnerable. It is interesting though, because Zambia is an official Christian nation, and the message of the gospel actually makes room for vulnerability, because it is weakness that makes room for the grace of God. A lot of pressure is placed upon men to pretend that they are successful and strong, even if they are not (PSM04). Zambians would define 'good men' or being a 'good man', to being courageous, steady and strong. But they sometimes forget that women can have these attributes also. In some conversations, it is clear that in Christianity, there is actually room for honesty, frailty and vulnerability (PSM04).

When looking at Jesus, the African man cannot really associate with Jesus on the cross. Jesus on the cross symbolises weakness, pain, suffering, vulnerability, powerlessness; the emphasis would rather fall on Jesus the Victor, the Powerful, the Healer, the one who did miracles and conquered death. It is ironic, because the African men, maybe even more than the average man, know the cost of suffering, and therefore can actually associate more with Jesus in terms of his suffering and their suffering (PSM04). It is however clear that more RCZ and other Christian churches preach about social advancement, which includes the themes of health and wealth. Preacher will pray or claim things 'in the Name of Jesus, because this symbolises power. The cross, which symbolises humility and frailty, actually brings deep comfort, because it accompanies the message of the New Testament which states that weakness actually makes you a good candidate for grace. It would make sense for Africans to find comfort in the cross and Jesus' death, but in Zambia, people rather focus on the victory of Jesus. It may relate to a magical way of thinking that Jesus is a Man of God in a top power position, and praying to him can give economic and physical benefits (PSM04; and discussions with Ellington on his article: The Case of the missing cross: Is contextual hermeneutics depriving the Southern African church? In: Kroesbergen (ed), 2017. *Neo-Pentecostalism in*

Southern Africa – some critical reflections. Wellington: CLF). This leaves some questions with the researcher: Would Jesus make a good African man? To Zambian men, would Jesus measure up to their standards?

When you think of a man, you also think of someone who has a lot of sex – they are sexually vibrant. Promiscuity is a big issue, and this influences the divorce rate and the number of teenage pregnancies. In the RCZ, marriage is encouraged. Male students who start studying at JMU are encouraged to marry before entering the ministry. There are not really any celibate male reverends in the RCZ, of which most respondents are aware of. Could this be because of their stance on homosexuality? Could it be to inhibit promiscuity? This was the researcher's first reaction, but later it has come forward that it has more to do with protecting the young male reverends, so that when they arrive at a new congregation, the women do not take advantage of them (PSM15, PSM16, PSM21).

The pressures of globalisation is also real. Zambia is one of the countries in which telecommunication is growing at a significant rate. Urban congregations pay a lot of attention (money) to modify their churches and some cases try to copy the fast-growing Pentecostal churches with their modern technology and big church buildings. Do they sometimes lose sight of the main reason of going to church? We also see that the Christian faith is being enculturated with some traditional practices, which is visible in the way both men and women are being treated. In some cases, the Bible is used (misused) to affirm some traditional (cultural) views of men and women, believing that the Creation Order showcases God's intention when it comes to gender: men first, women second.

The RCZ however allowed women to serve as reverend after a synod in 2000. The first woman to be ordained, was rev Rose Molowa, who was inducted January 7th, 2001. This, after this motion was turned down at the extraordinary synod in 1999, which was part of the RCZ's centenary celebration.

The argument to allow women to become reverends, and also to advocate gender equality, could be summed up in the notion that both male and female are '*created in the image of God*'. In the 21 interviews, all the respondents used this phrase (21 out of 21) at some point during the interview, used this phrase when talking about gender and gender equality. The respondents comprised of reverends in the RCZ, members in the RCZ, students at JMU and lecturers at JMU, both male and female. This is the common 'go to' sentence, and goes along with (catchy) phrases like:

God is inclusive (PSF19, PSM01, PSM17);

God is a God of equality (PSM10, PSF05, PSM08, PSM11, PSM15, PSM17);

men and women are created equal partners and they should complement each other (PSF03, PSF19, PSM15);

God does not discriminate when it comes to gender (PSF05 PSM16, PSM17);

Paul makes the reference that there is no more male and female – we are one ('*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*'...Galatians 3:28, NIV) (PSM06, PSM13, PSM15);

God has no gender, God is not a man (PSM12, PSM21, PSM15, PSM17);

God is not gender-biased (PSM21, PSM01);

God is relational, and we must be the same (PSF20);

Genesis teach that both male and female are important and equal (equally loved) in the eyes of God (PSM11, PSM17);

God called both male and female (PSF18).

When asked about the example Jesus set for being the man or masculinity, most respondents referred to Jesus setting an example on how to treat women. Many referred to the way Jesus treated the adulterous woman in John 8:1-11, and the woman at the well in John 4:4-26. So, this lead the researcher to come to the conclusion that 'being a man', when looking at Jesus, has to do with the way you treat women. Other responses include:

Jesus was caring, supportive, respective, even towards women in a tradition where man had the upper hand (PSM13, PSM14, PSM15, PSM16, PSM17);

Jesus was accommodating, he did not segregate, and weak people, including women, were counted (PSF20; PSF18; PSF03; PSM11, PSM15);

Jesus used his authority to serve, and he made sure that women were made prominent (PSM01, PSM15, PSM16, PSM17);

He related to the tax collector, and to the fisherman – he was not biased, did not look at one's background (PSM11, PSM14);

He wanted equality, broke down cultural barriers between men and women (PSM07, PSM17);

Jesus showed that both male and female belong to the kingdom of God (PSM21);

By imitating him, we can learn a lot about being man (PSF05);

We are responsible towards one another (PSF05);

Jesus did what other men cannot do – He did not dominate (PSM08);

Jesus showed that masculinity should be used to reach out and be a blessing (PSM08);

Jesus looked at the 'humanness' of someone, and not just their gender (PSM17);

In the great commission, Jesus called both male and female (PSM15).

FINAL THOUGHTS:

One respondent made the statement that humanity is always looking for meaning, but while humanity is looking for answers and meaning in life, society and culture burdens people various expectations and presumes various roles– some of which are far-fetched, impossible and even cruel to the common man (PSM06). Because of the multitude of expectancies and duties, men are never satisfied (PSF03). While positioning oneself in life, taking on certain (prescribed) roles, various groups exploit this situation and uses the public space to their advantage, providing answers and methods to achieve happiness and live the good life (PSM06). The overwhelming number of prophets and pentecostal leaders testifies that people are obsessed with living the good life. Men, especially, value power, authority, control, being respected, honoured, having a good name in society, but in reality, these types of advances are difficult and scarce to achieve –especially if their lived reality contain poverty, sickness, HIV/Aids, gender-based violence etc. (PSM06).

It is important to consider though, that the message of the gospel (the Good News) not only stands in conflict with these expectations of men, but also in solidarity with the realities Zambian (African) men face today (PSM07). The Good News teaches us that humility is good, being a servant is just as important as being the head of the house (if not more important), poverty is called 'a blessing', and suffering is not something to be ashamed about (PSM07; PSM04). Vulnerability is not a unique attribute which only applies to Africa, but it is however a very difficult attribute for African men to admit to (PSM04).

It is interesting to note that the gospel is not necessarily read selectively, but there some texts are valued and accentuated above others. It is also interesting to note how some texts are used to validate some cultural beliefs, even some that condone gender imbalance. It is also interesting to note that the RCZ is forward thinking when interpreting the texts of women in the ministry, but conservative when it comes to other matters, even though the same hermeneutical approach is viable in these topics.

In the RCZ, the rights of women are accentuated and equality is an important topic when talking about gender. There is however no room in this discourse to discuss manliness, being a man, or masculinity – when talking about gender, Zambians prefer to talk about the advancement and rights

of women. To substantiate this equality, the phrase that both men and women are created in the 'image of God' occurred in every interview or discussion. The researcher however wonders if there is room to ask the question: What does it mean to be created in the 'image of God', when you are a man? Before, the creation order, where man was created first, was used to affirm the man's role as the head of the house, the first creation and therefore more important sex. Today, men and women are considered equal partners (PSF18), complimentary to each other (PSM09), both are equal recipients of God's grace (PMS21), both are (can be) called into ministry (PSF20) and should be therefore be respected equally (PSF03). The question the researcher poses, however, is, when thinking in terms of the gospel, about the broader message of the Bible and the phrase 'being created in the image of God', what does this mean for men? How should we think about men, manliness, manhood and masculinities, after realising that a patriarchal interpretation and understanding of the Bible is destructive to the message of the gospel (the Good News)? Should being created in the 'image of God' be reconsidered? What is the 'good news' for men when reading the 'Good News' in a time where gender stereotypes are broken down and reassessed?

Another observation the researcher made in regards to the RCZ: According to UNAids (<http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/zambia> accessed 10 February 2019), there are an estimate of 1,2 million people in Zambia (population of 17 million) living with HIV (around 7%), with around 59 000 new infections each year. Some researchers' hermeneutic, when considering masculinities in Zambia, puts an emphasis on the HIV/Aids pandemic ('*Transforming Masculinities in African Christianity. Gender controversies in Times of Aids.*' Van Klinken, 2013). This, however is not really a significant issue to most of the respondents, especially when thinking in terms of masculinities. What should the researcher make of this? Is HIV/Aids not a very big issue in the RCZ? Is HIV/Aids an exhausted issue? Should it be explored more or just noted? How does this influence the quality of life of the average Zambian man?

In this research project, there are three topics the researcher aims to address:

Masculinity and gender identity, wellness and happiness, a theological response from the Gospel and the broader themes in the Bible.

Good men. What are the expectancies of men, formed by culture, society and the church? What are the criteria to be considered as good man? When a man is considered good, are these attributes and description safe, fair and relevant in 21st century Zambia? Can men who suffer from disability/be poor/be sick, and still be considered 'real men'?

The good life. Are men really happy, and how would they define happiness in Africa? What can be considered as 'quality of life' and how are men in the RCZ embodying it? Is power, authority and respect all it is cracked up to be? What could be considered 'living the good life' in Zambia today? Is this philosophy fair/safe/relevant today in for the RCZ men?

The Good News/good news. In the RCZ, a growing church in an official Christian nation, how should they think about men and manliness when thinking in terms of the Gospel (the Good News)? When considering the Bible, is there good news for men who do not live up (cannot live up) to the standards created by society and culture? What is the hope for vulnerable men with disability/who are sick/who are poor? Does the 'image of God' need to be restored?

H. FORMAL INTERVIEWS: QUESTIONNAIRE

Second visit to Zambia: 29/03/2019 to 03/05/2019.		
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY: The primary purpose of the qualitative interviews is to generate a cultural portrait of the transforming masculinities in the Reformed church in Zambia, through participant observation, face-to-face in-depth interviews (narrative involvement) with open-ended question, studying of relevant documents and multimedia sources.		
QUESTIONS FOR FACE-TO-FACE IN-DEPTH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:		
MAIN QUESTION:	PROBING QUESTIONS:	CONTINUATION QUESTIONS:
THE GOOD MEN: What are the definitions, experiences, and/or expectations of masculinity/being a man in the Zambian context, and what is the RCZ saying?	When thinking of the word 'gender', where do you think men fit in? What do you have to be considered a 'real man' or 'a good man'? How do Zambians expect their men to behave themselves? When are men not shaping up? Is a 'real man' someone who is in touch with his feelings and emotions? Do you think women support or threatens 'good men'? In what ways?	In what ways do physical strength contribute to being a 'real man'? Why is resourcefulness an important attribute in Zambia? In what ways do a man's sexual activity contribute to his 'manliness'? How would you define 'masculinity'?
THE GOOD LIFE: What is society telling (prescribing) men about the life ("good life") that they should live, and what is the RCZ saying?	How would you define 'the good life'? In what ways do men in the RCZ pursue happiness? In what ways does a man's strength, power and stability contribute to this ideal? In what ways are the family part of a man's life? When would you say men in Zambia are living 'the good life'?	Are these expectations realistic ideals? What are the dangers of chasing the good life? The benefits? Who are the participants in 'the good life'? Who are the forgotten ones? What excludes you from 'the good life'?
THE GOOD NEWS: In a Christian nation, what is being taught from the Bible about men and masculinities, and what is the RCZ saying?	What does the Bible teach us about being a 'real man', manliness and/or masculinity? What should the church be teaching about men, manliness, manhood, masculinity? In what ways did Jesus set an example of good masculinities? Are there dangerous texts in the Bible, which does not support the Zambian ideals of masculinity? Why do you think the prosperity gospel message is a popular message?	Do you think gender equality is a Biblical message? Do you think we should read the Bible differently? In what ways? Do you think the Bible teaches us anything about masculinity? Explain? What is the reverends preaching from the pulpit about gender?

Copies of the transcripts from interviews are available for reviewing from the researcher and could be provided upon request.

I. ATLAS.TI REPORT: DESCRIPTIVE CODES

	R1_M.d ocx Gr=70	R2_M.d ocx Gr=35	R3_M.d ocx Gr=34	R4_M.d ocx Gr=39	R5_F.d ocx Gr=49	R6_M.d ocx Gr=36	R7_F.d ocx Gr=26	R8_F.d ocx Gr=34	R9_F.d ocx Gr=45	R10_F.d ocx Gr=45	Tot als
Alcohol / Drug abuse / Beer drinking / Taverns Gr=16; GS=17	0	4	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	0	16
Education / Educated Gr=11; GS=11	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	11
Family / Marriage / Heterosexuality Gr=41; GS=42	8	2	4	7	3	3	3	4	4	3	41
Gender Discrimination/Ine quality Gr=45; GS=51	12	2	3	1	0	2	6	5	2	12	45
Gender-Based Violence / Domestic Violence / Wife Beating / Rape / Divorce Gr=42; GS=47	7	2	3	4	5	4	2	7	1	7	42
Godly man Gr=53; GS=54	9	1	1	6	9	2	5	7	7	6	53
Headship Gr=18; GS=20	3	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	4	3	18
"Image of God" Gr=28; GS=29	3	5	1	3	4	2	3	0	6	1	28
Inclusivity / Equality / "Neither Male nor Female" Gr=44; GS=45	8	6	4	3	6	4	2	1	4	6	44
Jesus as Prototype Human Gr=39; GS=43	3	1	2	3	6	4	1	6	5	8	39
Jobless Gr=13; GS=14	0	2	2	5	1	0	1	1	1	0	13
Leadership Gr=17; GS=17	3	0	1	1	1	1	5	2	2	1	17
Money / Wealth / Fame Gr=34; GS=36	3	3	3	2	7	3	2	5	3	3	34
Power Gr=39; GS=39	12	1	4	1	1	1	4	3	5	7	39
Providing Gr=19; GS=19	2	1	2	7	0	1	1	5	0	0	19
RCZ Policy Gr=34; GS=42	6	6	3	1	1	6	2	3	2	4	34
Responsibility Gr=9; GS=9	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	9
Security Gr=8; GS=8	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	8

Self-control Gr=3; GS=3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Sexual Virility / Sex Gr=8; GS=10	0	1	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	8
Strength Gr=6; GS=6	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	6
Toughness Gr=18; GS=19	1	3	0	2	1	2	0	0	6	3	18
Vulnerability / Shame Gr=77; GS=79	13	8	4	6	6	5	6	5	11	13	77
Work / Labour / Job Gr=20; GS=20	4	2	0	4	1	0	2	1	4	2	20
Totals	98	56	43	62	58	52	53	63	75	82	642

Some similar *I*-positions were merged during the writing phase of this thesis. See chapter 3, subsection 3.3.3.2

J. ATLAS.TI REPORT: MAIN STORYLINES

	R1_M.d ocx Gr=70	R2_M.d ocx Gr=35	R3_M.d ocx Gr=34	R4_M.d ocx Gr=39	R5_F.do cx Gr=49	R6_M.d ocx Gr=36	R7_F.do cx Gr=26	R8_F.do cx Gr=34	R9_F.do cx Gr=45	R10_F.d ocx Gr=45	Totals
Religious normativity Gr=113; GS=116	16	6	6	16	12	9	11	16	12	9	113
Male dominance- male fragility Gr=164; GS=178	30	15	12	13	11	13	12	16	16	26	164
Cultural normativity Gr=154; GS=160	28	12	10	13	15	14	11	13	20	18	154
Creative imaginings Gr=128; GS=142	19	14	10	9	15	15	8	9	13	16	128
Totals	93	47	38	51	53	51	42	54	61	69	559

K. PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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Date: 2021/10/21

To whom it may concern,

LANGUAGE EDITING

This letter serves as proof that the following document was submitted for language editing in October 2021:

Author: Jeremias de Klerk van Jaarsveld
Document type: Thesis: Doctor of Theology (DTh)
Title: *TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA? THE GOOD MEN, THE GOOD LIFE, AND THE GOOD NEWS*

I applied all reasonable effort to identify errors and made recommendations about spelling, grammar, style and punctuation.

I attempted to be consistent regarding language usage and presentation.

The bibliography was also checked and corrections were made where necessary.

I confirmed the content as far as possible, but cannot be held responsible for this as all facts could not be confirmed. This remains the responsibility of the author.

Thank you very much.

Kind regards.

Rentia Mynhardt