



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

**“If your husband doesn’t beat you,  
he doesn’t love you”**

**- A qualitative study about the work of change regarding  
Intimate Partner Violence in Nairobi, Kenya.**

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## Abstract

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This qualitative interview study aims to examine the work of change regarding Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), through the voices of seven change workers at Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in Nairobi, Kenya. The focus lies on identifying worker’s expressed definitions and comprehensions of violence and in what ways those affect the work of change in sectors as victim support, awareness creation & changing societal attitudes and norms. A thematic analysis reveals two themes of *social and cultural norms*, which emerges as the main comprehensions of violence; as well as essential components of the *work of change*. Feminist theory enables the image of gendered, embodied norms that supports the hierarchal structure of marriage and women’s subordination. Findings of social and cultural norms include IPV as a loving form to discipline a woman, marital rape does not exist and women should stay in marriage. Furthermore, this study presents a mutual understanding of IPV by the change workers, but with various ways to create change. Obstacles for the eradication of IPV is presented as lack of shelters, lack of legal implementation, as well as lack of knowledge within the police force. Key findings include an ambivalent perspective from the change workers concerning women’s subordination. Most worked against it, while some taught it, so women could “escape” violence by becoming more submissive. Throughout, IPV is expressed in gender-neutral terms, but interviews reveal the perspective of gender asymmetry and that IPV is a form of violence directed towards women by men.

*Key words:* Intimate Partner Violence, norms, work of change, gender differences, Nairobi.

## Acronyms

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women

CTS – Conflict Tactics Scale

DV – Domestic Violence

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

PADV – Protection Against Domestic Violence Act

SGBV – Sexual and Gender Based Violence

SIDA – Swedish International Development cooperation Agency

VAW – Violence Against Women

VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls

WHO – World Health Organization

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## INTRODUCTION

In Kenya, 39% of ever married women age 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence from their spouse (KDHS, 2014:291). That percentage is higher than the world's average of around 30% (WHO, 2017), which makes Kenya an interesting country to study. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a form of violence directed towards women and it affects women of all classes all over the world. Even though it can be exerted by both men and women towards both men and women, in heterosexual or same-sex relations, the global burden is borne by women and the most common perpetrators are male partners or ex-partners (WHO, 2012), which is why this study has that perspective as well. IPV is a type of Violence Against Women (VAW) and other types include sex-selective abortion, female genital mutilation/cutting, honour killings, forced/child marriage, dowry deaths, sexual exploitation and sexual trafficking (Mapp, 2012; UN WOMEN, 2010).

This thesis will focus on IPV in the Kenyan context, specifically in Nairobi, and the work of change that is carried out to eliminate it. Kenya has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as early as in 1984 (UN, 2019) and they passed the bill on *Protection Against Domestic Violence (PADV)* in 2015. Though, it is commonly known that the government does not actively work to eradicate IPV in practice. These laws are not properly implemented and there is a social acceptance of IPV within the country. This will most definitely obstruct any kind of social change. In Kenya, 42% of women and girls between 15-49 years, believe that wife beating can be justified and 19.1% have this belief in Nairobi. The justification of the violence is when the wife does one of the following; burns the food, argues with the husband, goes out without telling him, refuse sexual relations or neglects the children. Men have this belief as well, though not to the same extent if compared to women. About 36% of men age 15-49 years believe wife beating can be justified for one of the reasons mentioned above and 45.4% in the Nairobi region (ibid:283-285). Since the government does not take its responsibility to ensure women's rights, who takes on this fight? Your answer is Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). The NGOs in Nairobi works for change within various sectors. They aim for societal change of knowledge regarding IPV and changing comprehensions of violence, such as traditional norms and understandings of it. Another area where change is warranted is survivor's overall health,

wellbeing and development, which includes better support systems e.g. physical, psychological, economical, legal, as well as increased numbers of safe houses.

To eliminate IPV and for the future health & safety of women in Kenya, the comprehensions of violence need to be examined and the use of definitions needs to be studied. This is an interview study that will focus on the change workers at the NGOs. Their own understanding of definitions and comprehensions of violence will most probably have an effect on the work of change itself. Kilpatrick (2004:1218) writes about definitions and measurements of VAW and that different definitions gives different outcomes of measurements. He mentions that what is covered by the definition of VAW is critically important. It can be defined narrowly, according to the criminal justice definition or in a broader way, including acts that is not violent per se, but still harmful, e.g. psychological abuse (ibid). According to my literature review, there is a major lack in information regarding how change workers view comprehensions and definitions of violence. This research's significance for gender studies is based in the importance of knowing how change workers use comprehensions of violence & the definitions within their job. The ultimate goal to eliminate IPV is highly supported by this thesis and the results can be of use within the Kenyan context.

### **Objective & research questions**

The objective of this study is to examine how the work of change is expressed by the change workers within the field of Intimate Partner Violence in Nairobi, Kenya. The purpose is to identify what definitions and comprehensions of violence are presented and used within the work of change by local Non-Governmental Organizations. The objective will be achieved through in-depth interviews based on these research questions:

- How is the local NGOs work of change expressed by its workers in Nairobi, Kenya?
- What are the expressed definitions and comprehensions of Intimate Partner Violence?
- How do definitions and comprehensions of violence affect the work of change according to the change workers?

## Disposition

This first introductory section presented a short introduction to what this research is about, as well as the importance of it for Gender Studies. It led up to the objective of the study and the research questions. A section of the limitations will follow before a chapter regarding the background of IPV.

The introduction will be followed by a literature review presenting previous research regarding IPV and the work of change. My theoretical framework will follow, with information of my used feminist theory with the complementing concepts of norms, power and gender symmetry. Moving on to the chapter regarding methodology, which will explain how I have practically conducted this study and my ethical considerations. I will then present my respondents before my analysis of my empirical data. The analysis will lead to my discussion where I clarify how my research questions have been answered. This thesis will be finished with my concluding remarks and suggestions for future research, before my references and appendixes.

## Limitations

The findings in this thesis are limited to the Kenyan context and cannot be globally generalized. There are contextual differences within the Kenyan society as well and this thesis presents findings from change workers in Nairobi. The change workers at NGOs in Nairobi might not have the same view as change workers in more rural areas in the rest of Kenya. Even if the findings cannot be generalized, they still have a certain transferability to similar social contexts. The thesis is not meant to compare neither organizations nor the respondents to each other, rather its aim is to present the expressed views of change workers in Nairobi.

This thesis will not consider the differences in women's experienced oppression and subordination. When the term *woman* is used it refers to Kenyan women, but not all Kenyan women. When women share experiences of oppression it does not mean women share the *same* experiences (Stanley, 1990:20). I am aware that experiences differ depending on the contexts and who you talk to, but the focus has not been on examining how they differ or that they do.

The empirical data gathered from face to face interviews are affected by the relationship between the respondents and me as the researcher. It is limited by the amount of established trust and power imbalances. The fact that I can be perceived as a wealthy, white woman from a developed Western country can have had an unknown effect on the interview itself. In addition to that, my respondents were working for NGOs, which are dependent on external funding. This could have had an effect on their answers, to present a more polished or suited picture for eventual funding.

## Background

This background section will first provide information regarding VAW & IPV and the used terminology. I will then contextualize Nairobi, the legal framework & I will present some existing comprehensions of IPV. This section will be rounded up with background information of the importance of definitions and comprehensions.

### *Violence against women & Intimate Partner Violence*

In the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN, 1993), a concern is expressed regarding that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace. Violence against women is defined as:

*“Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”*

(UN, 1993)

These acts of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are affecting both women and men, as well as girls and boys, though with a disproportion on women and girls. WHO (2012) states that the most common perpetrators of violence against women are male intimate partners or ex-partners. Women can also be violent, though most often in self-defense (ibid). SIDA (2015:7) presents the life cycle of GBV for both females and males with divisions for states in life such as: prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood & old age.



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is one form of violence that affects women in the last three stages of life, from adolescence to old age (ibid). IPV is defined by WHO as:

*“Intimate partner violence refers to behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors. This definition covers violence by both current and former spouses and partners”.*

(WHO, 2017)

### *Terminology*

There are several available terms to define and explain violence, to emphasize the basis of the violence and to include/exclude acts and victims. GBV, SGBV, DV, IPV, VAW, VAWG are the most commonly used ones. To refer to violence that occurs between partners, the term IPV is commonly interchanged with the term Domestic Violence (DV) in many countries. Though, this term can also include child or elder abuse, or abuse of any other member of a household (WHO, 2012). In this research, I will therefore use the term IPV to emphasize the intimate relationship between partners and to exclude violence between any other people within a household. To highlight that violence is used to maintain gender inequalities, Simister (2010:254) is consciously using the term GBV instead of IPV. What was not considered in the start of this thesis is that the term IPV is gender neutral and therefore does not highlight the gender imbalance that exists within IPV, who the perpetrator and victim are. Partners for prevention's (n.d.) tool for terminology states that the used language in VAW is sensitive and variations in terminology shapes and influence how researchers analyze and discuss their findings. This is why I want to make clear that even though a gender-neutral term is used, there is still an understanding that violence within intimate relationships is gender based. This is what could have been further stressed throughout the thesis and collection of data.

### *Nairobi, Kenya*

The chosen area for this research is Nairobi, Kenya. Kenya is a country in eastern Africa, with an estimated population of 49,7 million (The World Bank, 2017). Its capital, Nairobi, had the last measurement of the population in 2009 and were about 3,1 million (Citypopulation, 2017). As mentioned, IPV occurs all over the world and Kenya is no exception. The most recent Demographic and Health Survey showed that 39% of ever married women in Kenya, age 15-49, have experience spousal physical or sexual violence (KDHS, 2014:291). As mentioned in the problem statement, the population in Kenya have various comprehensions of domestic violence and are accepting/tolerating it to varying levels. 36% of men and 42% of women age 15-49 years believe wife beating could be justified. When it comes to Nairobi, the statistics looks a bit different. The percentage of women who justifies domestic violence are lower, 19.1%, but for the men it is the opposite. Justifying men are 45.4% in Nairobi (ibid:283-285).

OMCT (2008:9) states that GBV is a persistent issue in Kenya, which is visible form the statistics above. Domestic violence is still rampant despite the interventions mainly by civil society's actors (ibid:14). UN (2007) writes in paragraph 21 that the "Committee is concerned about the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in all spheres of life" (ibid). Such customs uphold the discrimination and violence against women. Some troublesome comprehensions of domestic violence regard for example the Police force. Officers are not adequately trained to handle GBV cases and view domestic violence, including marital rape as a private affair (OCMT, 2008:9). Officers are reluctant to take on domestic violence cases, since they are unwilling to interfere with these "domestic issues". Victims are also often questioned if they did provoke the violence and they are encouraged to solve the issue at home (ibid:23). Law enforcement agents have ridiculed women who have reported domestic violence matters, which has led to fewer women reporting (ibid:9). There are other reasons behind why women yield from reporting domestic violence. One obstacle is women's economic dependence on men. They have limited resources for legal services and the cost for medical consultations. There are also social obstacles that women are forced to overcome. The fear of revenge, social stigma or loosing custody of one's children are some (ibid:21-22).

Ondicho (2018:2043-2044) writes an article about VAW, GBV and the public health sectors importance in Kenya. One of the main paradigms of the public health sector is that prevention works better than cure. The same goes for VAW. Ondicho (ibid) concludes that it can be prevented by ensuring that the needed support services such as counseling, shelters and referrals are accessible for women at a local level.

### *Legal framework*

The World Bank noted that only one country had legislation against domestic violence in 1976. In 2013, this number had increased to 76 countries (SIDA, 2015:9). Kenya was not one of those countries then, but luckily, things have now changed. Recent data from The World Bank (2018:19) show that 144 economies now have laws protecting women from IPV, where Kenya is one of the economies. Various kinds of public violence have been criminalized in Kenya, but violence that occurs in the “private” sphere has been left out until 2015. This is when the Parliament of Kenya enacted the PADV act. Before 2015, Kenya was lacking a law that addressed domestic violence in specific. This act provides relief and protection for victims of domestic violence. I will go through the stated meanings and inclusions of the terms “violence”, “domestic relationship” and “family member” in the PADV Act.

§3 regulates what counts as violence, which is rather extensive. First, “violence” covers the well-known economic, emotional, psychological, sexual, physical and verbal abuse. It also covers abuse that includes child marriage, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced wife inheritance, interference from in-laws, sexual violence within marriage, virginity testing and widow cleansing. Some other acts of violence are damage to property, harassment, incest, intimidation, stalking and any other act that harms or may harm to the safety, health or well-being of the person.

4§ covers the term “domestic relationship”, which includes persons who are married, have been married, living in the same household, are a family member, are or have been engaged, have a child together or have a close relationship.

5§ regulates who is a family member. It covers a spouse, a child (step, adopted & foster-child), an adult son or daughter, a parent, a sibling or any other relative that should be regarded as a member of the family. This means that the act has a wider coverage, it does not only cover people in an intimate relationship.

Kenya ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984 (UN, 2019). CEDAW is usually described as an international bill

of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and it includes an agenda for ending such discrimination. The definition follows;

*“any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of the sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”*

(UN WOMEN)

By ratifying the convention, the state commits to undertake measures to eliminate discrimination against women. These measures include incorporating the principle of equality in the legal system and abolish all discriminatory laws (ibid). The process of implementing it is still ongoing and Kenya has undergone some legislative reforms. The 8<sup>th</sup> periodic report (UN, 2017) mentions the legal addition of the PADV act as one of the positive aspects, along with the Legal Aid Act in 2016.

#### *NGOs responsibility*

In Kenya, it is commonly known that the government is not taking on the fight to eliminate IPV in practice. In theory, it might seem so when Kenya for example have laws against domestic violence. But what difference do they make when there is zero to little implementation? On the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2018), Kenya ranks 144 of 180 countries. Kenya scores 27/100 where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. The average score is 43. The state is clearly compromised and not fully trustworthy, so the NGOs have taken over the responsibility of creating change and eliminating IPV. I view this as problematic in many ways. PENKenya (2012) have listed challenges for NGOs in Kenya and they include limitations within funds, resources, capacity and sustainability, which the government could have secured if they took their responsibility. Another problem could be that the situation is not as bad as it could be, thanks to the work of the NGOs, which sends a message to the government that it is not an emergency, that they do not need to intervene urgently. Since the NGOs are the main provider of services and interventions surrounding the elimination of IPV, I see the need to study their work of change. This is why I examined how they work and speak about IPV.

### *Definitions & comprehensions*

There are many pre-existing comprehensions and understandings of violence that will have an effect on the preformed work of change. The inhibited comprehensions of both service providers themselves, but also by the society in general, affects how the work is preformed and what is done. This will be deliberated further below.

Gracia (2014) writes that public perceptions and attitudes are a part of the shaping of the social climate where the violence takes place. To reduce the issue of IPV, the societal attitudes that leads to justification or tolerance of IPV need to be addressed. A social climate of tolerance towards IPV can yield women from both reporting the abuse and to seek help for it. Gracia means that the question of who is responsible for the violence, is extremely important to study. If people blame the woman who is the victim, they are also likely to place the responsibility to solve the problem on the victim (ibid). This can affect in what ways the work of change is or should be carried out, who to target and how.

Cultural and social norms can either support and encourage the use of violence or prevent it. WHO (2009) have a publication of how to change cultural and social norms that support violence. These unspoken norms design what appropriate and inappropriate behavior consists of and these are maintained by both internal and external pressures (ibid:4). Norms that support IPV can be that a man has a right to assert power over a woman and is socially superior. It can be that a man has a right to “correct” unwanted female behavior or that divorce is shameful (ibid:5). These norms need to be challenged in one way or another, so IPV can be eliminated and women and men can live their lives on equal terms. Legislation can also create change in the way that it sends a message to society, e.g. that violence is not accepted (ibid:9). Though, Kenya’s Chief Justice David Maraga noted that GBV still persists despite legislative changes. Cases of GBV goes unreported due to heavy stigma and other harmful norms and attitudes that lead to silencing of victims (Judiciary, 2018). WHO (ibid:12) mean that efforts to prevent violence must consider how social pressures and expectations influence behaviors.

Definitions of violence and IPV also have an impact on work of change and what it is based in. These definitions will ultimately affect how the work is carried out. Kilpatrick (2004:1217) brings up some aspects of using different definitions. If a definition only focuses

on the violations of the criminal code, and is therefore narrower, measurements will be restricted. Many feminists and public health professionals would argue for a wider definition that includes e.g. psychological abuse, that might not be a criminal offense or violent per se, but still affects women negatively. Kilpatrick (ibid:1218) writes that if a narrow definition is used, the prevalence will also be smaller while measuring it. This becomes a problem when policy makers tend not to listen to small numbers (DeKeseredy, 2000:734). Women's subjective experiences also tend to be trivialized and a hierarchy of abuse, based on its "seriousness" is created. Broad definitions of violence help researchers generate higher and more accurate estimates than what narrow definitions do (ibid:735).

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is much research on IPV in Kenya with a focus on prevention work, prevalence, associated factors and risk factors as well as its relation to e.g. ethnicity or sex workers. I found less research investigating how the work of change is expressed by change workers and what definitions and comprehensions are used within the work. Kulkarni, Herman-Smith & Caldwell Ross (2015) also argue that this subject has not received enough attention in the literature. What was found in the literature review is the importance of knowing how service providers understand DV and their attitudes towards IPV and their work (ibid; Allen, 2011). Articles for this literature review have been found through Umeå University online library. All used articles are peer reviewed. The used search words have been: *IPV, Intimate Partner Violence, Domestic Violence, Kenya, definitions, comprehensions, understandings & work of change*. Below, I will present a summary of the already made studies to create an understanding of existing previous research.

### IPV in Kenya

One of the most common description of GBV in Kenya is “bodily harm inflicted by man on woman” (National Crime Research Centre, 2014:x). Most Kenyans, 71% of men and 78% of women consider humiliation in front of other people as domestic violence. Simister (2010) is using the term GBV instead of IPV, to show that violence is used to maintain gender inequalities that are associated with a patriarchal society. The term GBV implies domestic violence by a man towards his wife or partner. By using this term, you reject the claim that women are as violent as men (ibid:247-254).

Justification of IPV is a problematic and researched field in Kenya. Family members often support norms and practices that justify violence. They would encourage wife beating as a loving form to discipline the wife (Odero et al., 2014). Lower age, lack of education and rural residency have all been independently associated with a higher tolerance toward wife beating in Kenya. Studies have found that if both men and women transgress the traditional gender roles, violence can be the outcome. This violence was also justified to punish women who transgress from normative domestic roles (Lawoko, 2008:1056; Hatcher et al., 2013:411; Simister, 2010). IPV is also justified with referrals to a man’s rights. From a survey made in 13 counties in Kenya, 52.5% of female and 56.6% of male respondents reported beliefs in

their community that “disciplining a woman is a man’s traditional right” (National Crime Research Centre, 2014:74).

Creating an understanding of the responses to IPV, available resources and the existing barriers for utilizing available support services for women in Kenya have important implications for the prevention of IPV. Some formal and informal resources exist but there are many barriers to access these. Many women choose to be silent about their experiences, which mirrors the global findings that battered women never tells anyone about the violence. Women often seek support from extended family and other informal support systems, rather than formal institutions. The first formal institution women visit is health clinics, which gives an opportunity to support these women and refer them to suitable services for IPV. One noticed issue is that many health workers lack skills to deal with issues like IPV, which result in worsened well-being for the abused women (Odero et al., 2014). The legal process can be very complicated to go through. For a woman to file a legal suit against her spouse, she needs to fill in a P3 form, which is obtained by a cost and she needs an identification card, which many women do not have. Women are also blamed for provoking the violence, by the community structures that are meant to offer support, such as chiefs and elders (ibid:799). The victims are also shamed for the violence they are subjected to. The women do not view authority figures as helpful, due to the male dominated culture and the corrupt police system (Gillum et al. 2018). One issue for many women comes if she receives justice and her partner is penalized. The penalty on the partner might punish the woman as well, and bring greater challenges for her economically.

### **Work of change**

The work of change surrounding VAW is carried out at various levels in society to achieve societal change. It includes both interventions for response and prevention and studies have brought up many suggestions. Odero et al. (2014:800) encourage community level work of change around the norms of IPV. They promote creating awareness of IPV and the consequences at community level. According to Heilman & Barker (2018:12-13), the work of change should focus beyond the individual and community-levels and examine the structural and political underlying factors (ibid). To prevent violence and create a change, Gillum et al. (2018) puts a strong emphasis on education. For example, education can be made completely free to make sure more girls stay in school and do not get married early. Education regarding



IPV could be spread through church or through social media, since it is popular in the younger generation. Along with using education to eradicate IPV, the laws need to be implemented properly. Men who were reported to the police could get out of the situation with bribes (Gillum et al., 2018:2136-2142). Removing logistical legal barriers such as regulations around the P3 form can also help to create change for women who report IPV. Health facilities do need training on IPV to be able to support the victims (Odero et al., 2014:). For future work, broader measures of attitudes towards IPV is warranted (Lawoko, 2008:1072).

For instance, in Rwanda, the roles of women and men are defined by power differences between the genders. In order to change these power relations between men and women, both genders need to be actively involved. It demands a public space where traditional perceptions can be discussed, evaluated and modified. Informal institutions such as the family, school and church have an important role to play in the work of change and opening up a safe space for new perspectives on gender relations. Community-based programs and policy implementation at the local level need to support and guide women and men's change of attitudes (Slegh & Kimonyo, 2010:52-53).

There is a need to address men in violence prevention to eliminate IPV, mainly since it is largely men who perpetrate the violence. Progress in preventing VAW will only be made if we can challenge and change the masculine norms, attitudes, relations and identities amongst men that sustain violence (Flood, 2011; Heilman & Barker, 2018:12). The cultural and collective support of violence that is found amongst men need to be exchanged with norms of consent, sexual respect and gender equality. There is a need for systematic, large-scale, coordinated efforts directed towards men, by men as well (Flood, 2011:372).

An understanding regarding service provider's attitudes towards their work and their understanding of DV is critical to implement great practices (Kulkarni, Herman-Smith & Caldwell Ross, 2015; Allen, 2011). Service providers' attitudes either facilitate or impede the implementation of a model called Survivor-Defined Advocacy. Victim-blaming attitudes can inflict on the service providers ability to support clients' decision making (Kulkarni, Herman-Smith & Caldwell Ross, 2015). If service provider's definition of DV is unclear and simplistic, they struggle to determine who their client is and how the interventions are supposed to be directed (Allen, 2011:246).

## Norms

There are a bunch of social, cultural, traditional norms and beliefs about IPV in Kenya and some have been discussed in research before. The violence within relationships is usually normalized, condoned and seen as a private matter. Within the Kenyan cultural context, IPV is a common, normal and timeless tradition. It is seen as unchangeable and a normal part of the local culture (Hatcher et al., 2013; Gillum et al., 2018).

According to Hatcher et al. (2013), violence can occur within a relationship if a woman refuses sex with her husband. This can be seen as a sign of infidelity, which often leads to some type of IPV. Violence can also be triggered by women who do not meet the social expectations of being ‘good wives’, which is described as respectful, obedient and responsible. When men go against the norm of being the economic provider of the household and are questioned by their wife, violence could occur. The man could interpret the questioning as of his masculinity, which then could lead him to use violence to reinforce the societal gender norms (ibid).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this thesis has feminist theory as its benchmark. There are several different approaches and perspectives within feminist theories. What they all have in common is their explanation for women's oppression and their own solution on how to eliminate the oppression (Tong, 2014:1). Feminist theories mean that IPV can be understood through examining the social context. In a patriarchal society, where men have more political, economic and social power than women, men can also use violence to subordinate women (Basile, Hall & Walters, 2013:852). This power difference between men and women makes gender an important aspect to consider in feminist theory. Since gender inequalities are socially and culturally constructed, they can therefore also be changed (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015:94). Change is a cornerstone within feminist theory and what it emerged from. As Stanley (1990:15) wrote "The point is to change the world, not only to study it". Feminist theory will be explained further in this theoretical framework.

I allowed my empirical material guide me within the frames of feminist theory. The used theory was not written in stone before the analysis started, though it gave me a wide theoretical lens to reveal important aspects that were brought up by the respondents. In other words – it set my focus. In this theoretical chapter, I will present the used feminist theory, my structural understanding of violence as well as the used concepts – norms, power & control and gender symmetry/asymmetry.

### **Feminist theory**

The decision to use feminist theory as the base of my theoretical framework came naturally from my understanding of IPV. Lawson (2012:579) describes it well with "Intimate partner violence is fundamentally a gender issue that cannot be adequately understood through any lens that does not include gender as the central component of analysis". Dobash & Dobash (1979:ix) based their book *Violence Against Wives* on the understanding that men's violence against their wives is the most brutal expression of patriarchal domination. The positions of women as wives and men as husbands is historically structured as a hierarchy where men possess and control women (ibid). This might not be the case in the societies where gender equality has evolved. But within the Kenyan context, this is still a norm. As mentioned in the introduction, 42% of women and girls between 15-49 years, believe wife beating can be justified if the woman does/does not do certain things (KDHS, 2014:284). This uneven position of men and women in the Kenyan society is a reason to why I have chosen to view

my empirical data; how change workers talk about IPV, through a feminist gender perspective.

Women's subordination is commonly a central part for feminist writers' analyses of violence (Kurz, 1989:490) and has been so in this case as well. Throughout history, women have had the status of being subordinated to the man, primarily in marriage. To be a wife was to become the property of the husband and therefore taking on a subordinate and secondary position in the marital hierarchy of power and worth. As a wife you were morally bound to obey your husband's will and wishes (Dobash & Dobash, 1979:33). Feminist theory focus on analyzing this subordinated status of the woman. Even though this might be outdated in some contexts, maybe more in e.g. Sweden than in Kenya, there are still noticeable remains of this within marriages in Kenya. Kurz (1989:496) clarifies that even though the nature of marriage has changed dramatically, there are still social and legal norms that support IPV to control women in marriage (ibid). According to Risman (2004:445), central questions for feminists must focus on social transformation, improving the status of women and reduce inequalities, which is all parts of this thesis' focus.

Feminist theory has one view on intimate partner violence and Lawson (2012) compares this one with various family violence theories. She concludes that feminist theory argues that the root cause of IPV is related to gender and in particular the patriarchal domination of men over women (ibid:572). Due to the gender-based nature of IPV, it differs from other types of family violence and the unit of analysis is therefore based in the male/female intimate relationship instead of the family system. One major difference between feminist theory and family violence theories regards a concept called *gender symmetry*. Family violence perspectives view IPV as gender-symmetrical, which means that men and women use violence to the same extent within relationships (ibid:587-588). Feminist theory contests this statement, which will be further explained and deliberated on in the *Gender symmetry/asymmetry* section (see page 22).

### *Structural violence*

There are several ways to view violence and what it emerges from, and mine comes from feminist theory. The violence can either come from a person i.e. direct violence (Galtung & Høivik, 1971:73), in this case an intimate partner or it can be a consequence from actors in society. Violence partly emerges from gender imbalances and hierarchal structures that affects

people in society, as well as from other structures in society. Anglin (1998:145) describes that structural forms of violence marginalizes people both socially and culturally. Structures might deny people opportunities and rights, which places them in situations where they are exposed to violence (ibid). For example, a country's legal framework can be seen as a strong structure that either allows or forbids violence. When Kenya passed the law against DV in 2015, the government's official permission of DV was changed. This was not a change from total permission to total prohibition though. What still affects this kind of structural violence is the corruption in Kenya, that does not fully allow legal changes to be implemented. The structural violence should also be seen as gendered, which means that the effects of social structures have different effects on men and women (ibid:147), which needs to be considered.

My view of structural violence is not based in individual factors, it is rather based in a system of social structures. IPV emerges as a result from those structures in a society, both from hierarchal gender structures and political/economical structures. My view will be applied consistently throughout the analysis.

### *Concepts*

There will be a few concepts used within the analysis and those will be explained in this chapter. The first concept is *norms*, which will include social and cultural ones. Second concept is the popularly used concept of *power & control*, which I also argue for cannot be taken out of the context of IPV, since they are interrelated. The third concept will be *gender symmetry/asymmetry*, which Allen (2011:245) describes as the most topical and controversial discussed concept within contemporary domestic violence literature.

### **Norms**

Norms are the unwritten and informal rules derived from social systems and they constitute how one is expected and allowed to behave in a certain societal and cultural context (Clark et al., 2018:163). These norms differ depending on time and place, as well as the general context. They tell people about acceptable behaviors and they differ depending on who you are. The social unit for sharing norms might be as small as a group of friends or large as all members of society (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). This thesis will include discussions regarding cultural norms. It is then important to remember that it is not individual cultures themselves that are problematic. Rather, it is aspects of patriarchy that are embedded within the culture that sustains those norms (Ozaki & Otis, 2017:1077). Kurz (1989) emphasizes the

impact of norms in relation to violence. The nature of marriage has changed over time but feminists would argue that social and legal norms that support violence against women, do still exist (ibid:496). One example from Kenya would be that IPV is seen as an expression of love and family members would encourage wife beating as a loving form to discipline the wife (Odero et al., 2014). Norms that legitimize and glorify violence in society need to be changed to reduce IPV and focus has to lie on the greater community (Straus et al., 1980 in Kurz, 1989:494; Odero et al., 2014:800). To change norms, one has to make sure they are not reproduced in the same way. Norms are produced and reproduced by people's actions and social interactions with others. The reproduction will either be in accordance to the norm or deviating from it (Popitz, 2017:3).

### **Power & control**

“Domestic violence cannot be adequately understood unless gender and power are taken into account” (Yllo, 1993:47). This statement is highly applicable in my theoretical framework. Power is defined and understood in various ways and the used understanding is connected to oppression and domination. Schippers & Sapp Greyson (2012:31-32) describe that power can be seen as the ability of one group to suppress and control people from another group. This can be done by controlling resources or establishing cultural practices, norms and traditions, which in turn works to maintain the position of the dominant groups (ibid). People's various identities construct these groups, and the focus in this thesis will lie on gender. If we add this category of gender here, Schippers & Sapp Greyson (ibid) state that men as a group possess power just by their structural position in the patriarchal society. The male dominant social structure uses this power to control women and to serve their own interests as men. This power structure will be applied to men and women in the analysis.

Feminist researchers mean that men use violence to control their partners, when making their partners comply with their wishes (Kurz, 1989:495). As Kimmel (2002:1352-1353) writes, the violence might not be motivated by the man's desire to express anger or frustration, but by the desire to control the woman. The violence could also be an expression of their loss of power and control. Dobash & Dobash (1979:ix) state that women can have a hard time escaping control, domination and the martial hierarchy that is being reinforced by the patriarchal domination. The reason why lies in the construction of her struggle as wrong and it is also a violation of the loyalty and respect she should show her husband (ibid).

Power and control comes in different forms and shapes and is involved in all the used terms and aspects of feminist theory that I mentioned in the Feminist Theory section. Patriarchy, gender hierarchy and women's subordination all partly emerge from the existing gender power imbalance. These aspects regard men's power over women, which will be visualized in the analysis.

### **Gender symmetry/asymmetry**

The ongoing debate about gender symmetry in partner violence is about to what extent women are equal to men as perpetrators of IPV. Some support gender symmetry and some support gender asymmetry. What might need to be clarified, as Enander (2011:108) explains as well, both men and women have the ability to be violent within relationships. What the term refers to is if women's violence can be compared to men's, when it comes to the contexts, motivation, results and consequences (ibid). Within feminist theory as a whole, there lies a disagreement regarding that gender symmetry in IPV exists. Feminist theorists stand for that men are far more likely to use violence in relationships with women, than what women would be. Women's use of violence against their partners can be misunderstood as 'mutual violence', if the dynamics of control and women's experience of fear is not fully understood by e.g. social workers (Allen, 2011:251). In most cases, women's violence is instead used for the purpose of self-defense or retaliation (Enander, 2011; Lawson, 2012:581; Kimmel, 2002; Allen 2011; WHO, 2012; Renzetti, Edleson & Kennedy Bergen, 2011).

Most supporters of gender symmetry in IPV would refer to a commonly used method to measure some aspects of IPV called Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS). This instrument asks questions to intimate partners about if or how many times one has performed specific violent acts during the last 12 months (Kurz, 1989:491). Results from the CTS claims that women and men engage in equal amounts of violence within heterosexual relationships. This gathered data points to gender symmetry of the used violence within relationships. Critique against the CTS consists of what it actually measures and how narrow it is. For example, the CTS is not making a difference between a slap and a knife stab, since it bundles the violent acts together (Dobash & Dobash, 1979:8). Furthermore, its focus on physical abuse undermines the psychological abuse that many women live with (Allen, 2011:247). As Kurz (1989:494-495) argues, the gathered data through the method of CTS, is flawed. There are no indications of, if the acts of violence were done in self-defense, who initiated the violence or who was injured. If these questions would be asked, there would also be a consensus that men abuse women i.e.

gender asymmetry (Kurz, 1989:494-495). Enander (2011:118-119) adds that violence within heterosexual relationships can never be studied as an equal phenomenon, since the social foundation of the violence differs. For the application of my theoretical framework on the gathered empirical data, I will use a gender asymmetry perspective on the used violence, which will be further discussed in the analysis.

To sum up my theoretical framework, it is based in feminist theory, with a structural view of violence. It includes gender, patriarchy and women's subordination as important components to understand the structure of IPV. The violence itself is understood to be based in societal structures, such as norms, customs, regulations and laws. Concepts who will support my analysis regards norms, power & control, and gender asymmetry. This theoretical framework has been developed to give a deeper understanding to the expressed words by change workers within the field of IPV.



## METHODOLOGY

In this methodological section, I will go through how I have practically collected and analyzed the empirical data. I will provide information regarding the chosen location for the study and how I, in the role of a Swedish female researcher, have had an impact on the study. This section will be finished off with my ethical considerations.

The produced knowledge in this thesis will not be objective in a positivistic understanding of the concept. Rather, the collected empirical data will be analyzed with the application of my theoretical framework through my thematic analysis. As Haraway (1988:581) states: “Feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*”. Knowledge cannot be seen objectively, instead it has to be placed within a specific context. Knowledge production comes from two people meeting at a specific time and place. As explained, the respondent’s knowledge of IPV will be presented within a certain context of; NGOs change work in Nairobi regarding IPV, from a worker’s point of view. As Haraway clarifies, knowledge is “views from somewhere” (ibid:590), not from the objective nowhere.

### Semi-structured interviews

I have chosen a qualitative approach, since my aim is to study how the work of change is expressed and what definitions & understandings of violence that exists within the field. A qualitative approach suits better than a quantitative approach, when my interest lies in words and meanings, rather than measuring, comparing and statistics. A valuable method for feminist researchers, to gain insight in the respondent’s world, is through interviews (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:114). Interviews was also the technique I found suitable, since I was interested in how the change workers understood and talked about change. I made 7 interviews in total, face to face with the respondents at their workplace, all held in English and audio recorded. I used semi-structured interviews, since I had a specific aim with them. To conduct semi-structured interviews, an interview guide needs to be created, with content areas that need to be covered during the interview (ibid:115). My interview guide (see Appendix 1) was used during the interviews to make sure I did not forget a specific area.

Using interviews as a method to collect data both has its advantages and limitations, as any other method has. What I consider as important is that the researcher is aware of the advantages and limitations. When interviewing individuals, the researcher can deeply

examine social and personal matters, compared to what is possible in e.g. focus group discussions. Though, the researcher needs to rapidly develop a positive relationship with the respondent (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:315). If the respondents have not viewed our relationship as such, it could have had a negative effect on the interview itself. Though, I personally perceived all the relationships as positive, but the respondents' perspective will remain unknown. Establishing a safe and comfortable location for the interview is also of value (ibid). This was ensured by me going to the location of the respondents and they were the ones to decide where we would meet.

### **Sampling**

The used technique for sampling has mainly been purposive. When using purposive sampling, respondents are not chosen randomly (Bryman, 2012:418). They have instead been chosen strategically, so they are relevant to my research questions. They were chosen through a snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling implies that the researcher samples a small group of people who are relevant to the research questions and they will later on suggest other eventual respondents (ibid:424). I found my first respondents through contacting the NGOs found online and they were chosen if they in any way worked with IPV, either preventive or responsive. I chose to interview local key informants since they are professionals within their field. Key informants are those with specialist knowledge regarding other people, process or happenings and they therefore become particularly valuable (Payne & Payne, 2004:134). The informants worked at six different NGOs in Nairobi. Two worked at the same organization, but in different sectors. They were two men and five women.

### **Thematic analysis**

The used technique for analyzing the empirical data is a Thematic Analysis (TA). The idea of TA is to create themes and subthemes from reading and rereading the transcripts that construct the data (Bryman, 2012:579). By reading my transcripts over and over, the themes emerged slowly. TA allows the researcher to identify and interpret patterns of meaning, which is referred to as 'themes' (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297). The main reason for using this technique is that I wanted the collected material to guide me, and not having an analysis that affects the collection of the data. By using this method, my vision was kept wide and it allowed topics to be revealed that otherwise might not have been. I have transcribed them manually & verbatim. Afterwards, I printed them to easier mark found themes and thoughts.

By printing them, I could easily go and back and forth between the transcripts. To create my analysis, I have applied my theoretical framework to visualize themes and subthemes, which is presented in my analysis and results, where I mix theory with results for a smoother reading. Due to limited economic resources, I have not used software to transcribe my interviews.

In a TA, the data within a theme should cohere meaningfully and there should be clear distinctions between the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006:91). My subthemes in the theme of social and cultural norms might seem intertwined to certain extents. The reason for this is that norms in reality are not unidimensional and do not depend on and circulate around one specific aspect. When defining and redefining one's themes, Braun & Clarke (ibid:92) point to identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about. I have attempted to do so and what is discussed in each subtheme mainly revolves around either norms of violence or gendered norms.

### **Area for research – Nairobi, Kenya**

The decision to use Nairobi as the area for this master thesis lies in curiosity and practicality. The main reason lies in personal curiosity, since Nairobi is the city where I currently live and it has been my second home during the last 5 years. I am therefore interested in conducting my study here, even though the NGOs work of change is carried out throughout Kenya, Nairobi is still their base. Practically speaking, since it is the city where I live, it becomes easier to meet the respondents in person. It is also economically practical when trips to meet the respondents become shorter and therefore cheaper. For my master thesis, I learnt a lesson from my bachelor thesis, which was carried out in Northern Kenya, where I needed to use a translator. By using Nairobi as the research area, where English is commonly spoken, I minimized an eventual language barrier.

### **Reflexivity**

My basic understanding of reflexivity is that it is about being aware of your own position as a researcher. Hesse-Biber (2006:129) explains that feminist reflexivity starts with understanding the importance of your own values, attitudes, lived reality and experiences in relation to the research process. This has certain implications for me, especially being a white, foreign woman in Kenya.

That I am born female and identify as a woman have most definitely affected my choice of research field. This has impacted the kind of questions I ask and the how I view the answers. For example, someone else might have seen other themes than what I found and that is why it is important to remember that this thesis is my subjective take on IPV in Kenya. Mann & Kelley (1997:392), show a good understanding of produced knowledge; “all knowledge is affected by the social conditions under which it is produced; it is grounded in both the social location and the social biography of the observer and the observed”. This is why this kind of knowledge production cannot be objective. Haraway’s (1988) expression of *situated knowledge* is much relevant, since the knowledge in this thesis is situated in a specific context.

As a white person in Kenya, I certainly stand out as a foreigner, even though there are a few white Kenyans in Nairobi as well. From living in Nairobi for some years, I have noticed that people expect you to have a lot of money if you are white. I personally trust this partly comes from seeing white foreigners coming to Kenya as either tourists or working for big international companies or the UN. Either way, you will be seen as someone with money. This could have had an effect on the interviews, since NGOs depend on external funding and I can be seen as a potential funder. Most of the respondents spoke about their lack of funds and since I could be seen as a possible funder, their answers on my questions could have been affected by it. They could have kept information away, twisted information to give a certain impression or spoken specifically about some things rather than others. Exactly how and if it had an affect will never be known, but I am aware of the possibility that it had.

The fact that I have lived in Nairobi for some years have given me a lot of knowledge of the context I carried out my thesis in. This makes me a little less of an outsider, since I am aware of the code of conduct and partly the language. It also helped me during the interviews when I already knew geographical areas, the political and legal structure, impact of tribalism and difference in tribes, as well as general knowledge.

## **Ethical considerations**

When studying people, or including people in one's study, I find it of utter importance to practice ethically correct research. The researcher has the ultimate responsibility to make sure research is of good quality and is morally acceptable (CODEX, 2019). To ensure my feminist research is up to the ethical standards, I have not paid my respondents nor exchanged information for gifts or other valuables. A significant ethical challenge for feminist research regards avoiding any potential harm for the respondents (McCormick, 2012:32). I have therefore focused my research of IPV surrounding the work of change and change workers, instead of the victims themselves, to minimize damage and to ensure the respect for human life. To maintain anonymity of the respondents, I have used fictitious names or when necessary, removed their names from the analysis. Since the number of active NGOs in Nairobi, within IPV, are relatively few, I have decided to keep information about them to the minimum. As Payne & Payne (2004:68) state, keeping someone anonymous extends beyond just changing their names, since some identities can still be recognized in some settings. The Nairobi context when it comes to the work of change in IPV is one of those settings, hence my precautionary measures. To obtain an informed consent from the respondents, they received a written informed consent form with an option to sign, if they felt comfortable, if not, an oral informed consent was obtained before the interview began. This form regarding informed consent was printed in 2 copies, one for me and one for the respondent. It consisted of information regarding anonymity, permission to record, what I would use the data for and how it would be handled to remain safe from outsiders (for more information, see Appendix 2).

## INTRODUCTION OF RESPONDENTS

### **Non-Governmental Organizations**

All of the informants worked at Nairobi based NGOs. Some NGOs were as small as 5 employees and some were pan-African and active in more countries than Kenya. The type of change work they were involved in ranged from economical, legal, psychosocial & physical interventions directed towards female victims of IPV, awareness creation of IPV and social change of norms and attitudes of IPV. Below, you will find a short introduction of the respondents under their fictitious names.

**Awa** – Works at an NGO that deals with VAWG, where IPV is one area. She works with policy & advocacy and is specialized within child marriage.

**Peter** – Works for an African organization that focus on achieving gender equality. He is an advocacy officer and is partly working with men to change their attitudes and comprehensions where IPV is one focus area.

**Lucy** – Head of the response section in an NGO. She is working with psychosocial support systems.

**Lilly** – Works at an NGO with preventive work focused on advocacy and trainings in GBV.

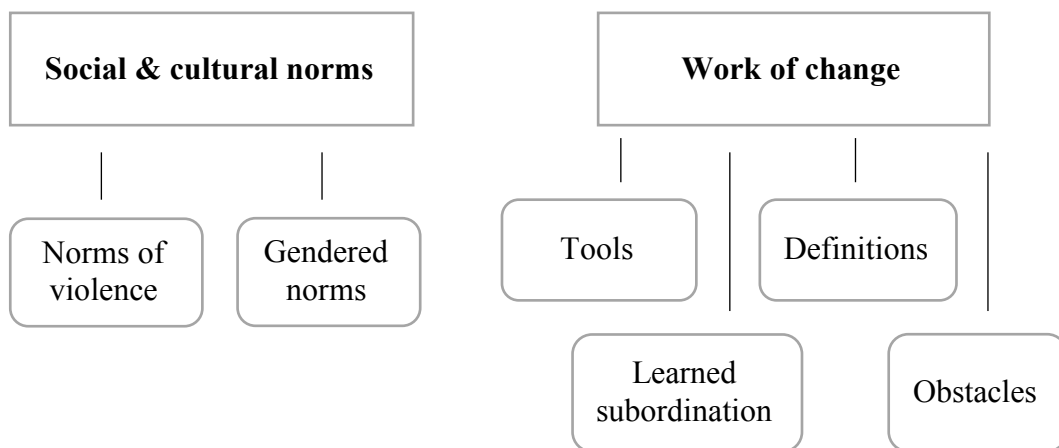
**Samantha** – Works on a voluntary basis for an organization that focus on creating awareness around GBV, including IPV. Is also in contact with victims of IPV that reaches out to the organization for advice.

**Ruth** – Works in a small NGO that has one of the few safe houses in Nairobi. The organization rescues women in need and also runs a day care for children, so the sole mothers can work.

**Alex** – Works for an NGO who focus on survivors of IPV and provides economic empowerment, business trainings, along with psychosocial support groups.

## ANALYSIS & RESULTS

I will here present my results and my analysis of the collected data, viewed through my theoretical framework of feminist theory, supported by the concepts of norms, power & control and gender asymmetry. My research questions will here be answered; how the work of change in the field of IPV is expressed by the workers in NGOs, what definitions and comprehensions are used within the work of change and how they affect the work itself. My analysis will be presented through these found themes and subthemes:



### Social & cultural norms

When discussing the change workers and the larger society's comprehensions of IPV, a common theme of social & cultural norms appeared. These norms of IPV regarded gender relations and expectations on men and women, husbands and wives. Most of the social and cultural norms that were expressed by the change workers during the interviews were not their personal ones, though it is through their eyes and it is their way of expressing them. The norms that were brought up are in the name of the Kenyan society in general. Since these are the norms the change workers meet through work and what they need to work with/against, they were also eager to talk about them during the interviews. By doing so, it created a better understanding of the context they carried out their work in and how these norms impacted their work. When it comes to IPV and changing norms that support IPV, the change workers meet great resistance, both from individuals but also structural resistance, such as traditional norms and regulations.

This theme is divided into two subthemes – *norms of violence* and *gendered norms*. The division of subthemes in a thematic analysis should be clear and properly separated (Braun & Clarke, 2006:91), which mine might not fully be, as discussed in the chapter of methodology. The norms concerning violence are also based in gendered imbalances and gendered norms also include violence. In reality norms does not only stem from one thing, which is why my subthemes can seem to be interrelated.

Two of the respondents, Samantha & Alex, described their view of violence with the words “*it is not right, it’s wrong*”. Alex also added that some communities “*don’t treat DV as really something that is wrong*”. This leads us to the first subtheme of *norms of violence* or norms that support IPV.

### *Norms of violence*

IPV has traditionally been seen as a private matter, which it still does in some contexts, but it has also been made a public issue. As Gillum (2018:2137) stated, there is a norm in Kenya that violence between a husband and a wife is a private matter. This cultural norm was also expressed by Alex, who said that “*it’s not very easy [to find survivors of IPV] because it’s something that is very private*”. Awa also confirmed this norm by expressing that IPV “*is a minefield, it’s hidden*”. This norm clearly works in the advantage for men to maintain their powerful positions without being questioned for their behavior. If violence is being treated as private, it will also be hard to challenge it.

As mentioned above, there is a norm of IPV as something that is not really wrong. It is commonly justified in most communities (Peter, Awa & Lilly). This norm is upheld by both men and women in the Kenyan society and becomes a problem for change workers. Why would you want to change something that you do not view as wrong? Alex expressed that women’s justification of violence comes from their background of being socialized into it. Lassier (2011:40) concludes that women internalize norms that justify physical and sexual violence, which can in this case explain why women would accept the violence subjected towards them. Awa expressed it as “*a woman should be beaten [...] she needs to be disciplined and by disciplined they mean physical*”. Awa would hear women justifying men’s violence against women when saying “*she [the wife] has quite a mouth on her and deserves to be beaten*”. Though, the norm that women should be beaten has its limits and is only



accepted to certain extents. Awa would hear men talking about women who have been stabbed or have burns all over and saying “*a woman should be beaten but not that much, that’s a bit too far. Maybe a slap here and there*”. This norm that women should be beaten but not “*too much*”, is discussed as a “good beating” by Jakobsen (2014). To establish what a good beating is, the bad beating needs to be defined first. Jakobsen (ibid:546) states that a bad beating could be excessive injury or an injury that required medical attention. When bad beatings are being condoned in a community, at the same time it justifies the “good beatings”. “A good beating” is the used violence to maintain inequality, where the more powerful uses violence on the less powerful (Walby, 2009, in Jacobsen, 2014:549).

Lassier (2011:6) writes that violence is so common in some communities that it becomes a part of the culture and it can also become normalized. As Peter expressed it: “*it is very normal to be violent as a man*”. That men are violent has then become something that is not problematized and questioned, it is instead seen as normal. This has in Kenya been taken to its extreme, where there is an existing norm that “*if your husband doesn’t beat you, he doesn’t love you*” (Peter). Awa confirms this belief when saying that “*there is an understanding that, misunderstanding that if a man doesn’t beat you, he doesn’t love you*”. These findings confirm those of Odero et al. (2014), that IPV is an expression of love. This cultural norm that violence equals love, has also affected women who then wants to be beaten by their husbands, because they have been taught that’s how love is shown. Awa expressed that:

*“You might be the only man in the community that doesn’t beat his wife [...] your wife is going to come home and say: why can’t you be like Mr. so and so? [...] there is a social sanction on you. You might feel pressured to talk back to your wife or slap her.”*

(Awa)

From the above quote, we can see that there are both men and women who justify and even encourage IPV, if there is a belief that violence = love, or social pressure to use violence. In patriarchal societies, violence can be encouraged to maintain the unjust power relationships between men and women and to subordinate women (Bograd, 1990; Marin & Russo, 1999, referred in Basile, Hall & Walters, 2013:852). Some communities have socialized their members into believing that you should be beaten as a wife, which facilitates for husbands to protect and remain in their powerful positions. Within marriage, the wife’s subordination is taught and since some women are deprived of alternatives to marriage, they become trapped

in inferiority (Dobash & Dobash, 1979:33). I view this as applicable in Kenya, especially in the rural areas, where women are expected to be married off and stay in marriage no matter what. This was also brought up during the interviews and will be discussed in the next subtheme.

When it comes to social and cultural norms that support sexual violence within intimate relationships, there is a belief that no marital rape exists. Wives cannot be raped by their husbands. This was expressed by Peter, Lilly, Samantha and Ruth, who expressed a belief that many people in Kenya do not think you can be raped within marriage. Norms that support this was that a wife should never refuse to have sex. Samantha said that if you do, “*you are a bad wife*”. That women are socialized into believing that you are bad if you deny your husband sex, can be seen as a socially constructed norm, so men can remain the dominant and powerful part of a marriage. This results in that women would also blame themselves for not accepting to have sex, thinking “*that it’s their fault*” and that they are “*bad wives*” (Samantha). Women in Kenya are socialized into the role of being ‘good wives’ and “*most of the Kenyan women, they were taught how to please a man. But were they told how to enjoy sex? No*” (Samantha). According to Schippers & Grayson Sapp (2012:32), cultural practices and traditions are created to serve the interests of men and to ensure their superior position. The tradition of teaching women how to sexually please men is a perfect example of one of those traditions. When women’s subordination is tied to traditions as in this case, I see that it could be even harder to change those practices, since people might view their traditions as sacred.

Other norms that supports the belief that rape does not occur in marriage, consists of the taboo and stigma surrounding sexual matters. Lilly, Ruth and Samantha stated that there is a lot of stigma & taboo surrounding marital rape, as well as IPV in general. Renzetti, Edleson & Kennedy Bergen (2011:67) also conclude that violence against women remains a sensitive and stigmatized issue. When people cannot talk about sexual abuse within marriage, it supports the belief that it does not exist. Lassier (2011:31) writes that the shame and stigma surrounding IPV often results in women not disclosing the causes of their injuries. So, the taboo & stigma surrounding sexual matters, works especially to silence female victims of IPV.

### *Gendered norms*

There are norms and expectations on how you should behave as a woman and as a man, as a wife and as a husband. These norms will, as all other norms, differ depending on the context. They are gendered, i.e. they differ depending on your role and who you are. They are also connected to violence since they surround the subject of IPV but they will in this thesis be viewed as first of all - gendered. Gender is an important frame for organizing both structure and interaction i.e. the social relations in society (Ridgeway, 2009:145; Jakobsen, 2014:542). I will here present some of the gendered norms that emerged from my thematic analysis.

Lucy mentioned gendered expectations on girls from low ages. In school, girls were expected to do good in other subjects than boys, i.e. *“the softer subjects”*. Expectations on girls follow and change as they become women and get married. There is a cultural norm that women should stay in marriages, no matter what. This norm applies only to women and not men.

*“If you are beaten as a woman [...] if you report to your mother, your mother will tell you ‘I have lived with that all my years and I have never left your father, what is wrong with you? You need to stay. Hold on. It will be fine’. But then it doesn’t become fine.”*

(Peter)

As a woman, or as a wife, you are encouraged to stay in marriage. If you would seek help from the church elders, instead of your mother, they *“would not advise you to [...] leave and go somewhere else. They don’t advocate for separation or divorce”* (Alex). If you guess someone’s sex as female, the category “women” is assigned and the person becomes accountable for society’s idea of how a woman should behave (Jakobsen, 2014:543). In this case, the norm is that a woman should stay in marriage and if she does, the societal gender structure is upheld and reproduced. As Peter says: *“marriage is seen as the panacea to everything. Even if it’s abusive. Even if it’s violent. Even if it’s dangerous. You are encouraged to stay in marriage”*. So, what happens if you do not stay? The blame is put on the wife. *“You’re the one who will be failing in the first place. You have not been chased away by your husband”* (Alex). Since the wife is expected to stay in a marriage, she is also the one who is blamed if she does not. If we instead look at the husband’s scope for separation or divorce. As seen in the last quote, the husband has not chased you away, referring to that the husband can decide to chase the wife out of the house, if he prefers. The man has the power and more options than the woman when it comes separation or divorce.

This leads us in to the gendered norms that affect the men and the husbands. According to Lilly, many people believe that: *“the man is the head of the home”*. Similar belief from society is that *“men believe that they are the ultimate in the families”*, *“you actually show the man that you are still the authority in this house”* (Alex) and *“men have unquestionable rights over women”* (Peter). Jakobsen (2014:551) describes the gendering of violence as: *“to be able to beat is to be in authority, and to be in authority is to be a man”*. So, for men to prove and show that they are the authority and ‘the head of the house’ - they use violence. By doing that, they enforce their role of being a man and being in control. Within the patriarchal society that Kenya is, men have also been taught and socialized into acting in a certain way. Patriarchal societies do encourage the use of violence to maintain gender inequalities and a power imbalance (Marin & Russo, 1999, in Basile, Hall & Walters, 2013:852). Awa reminds us that *“they [men] are much a victim of the patriarchy as we are”*. Samantha states that *“some of these men don’t know any other way apart from violence”*. She further explains that these men have seen their mother being beaten since they were small and their father told them that violence is the only way to keep a woman in line. This can seem like excuses for the violence men are subjecting women to, or it can be used as knowledge for a wider understanding of perpetrator’s backgrounds and their socialization into violent behaviors. That knowledge can later on be used for interventions of change.

Dobash & Dobash (1979:89) write that traditionally seen, the man’s primary commitment to marriage regards financial support. There are still traditional gender norms in Kenya that uphold this picture that men should be the sole breadwinner. Both Samantha and Alex expressed that men are worried that if their wives earn more money than them, they will *“become the man and he is going to become the woman”*. According to Renzetti, Edleson & Kennedy Bergen (2010:176), men who subscribe to traditional gender norms, e.g. masculine men are the breadwinners, are also more likely to feel threatened by women’s employment. This seems like cases that Samantha and Alex describe. These men feel threatened on their role as ‘head in the house’, if the wife earns more. Samantha expressed that she: *“usually tell men, you always encourage your woman to be the best woman she can be. She can never be a man and clearly, we are not trying to be men. We love being women”*.

To sum up the results from the theme *social & cultural norms*, all norms emerge from a patriarchal society with a hierarchal power system, where women are subordinated to men.

All the mentioned gendered norms show a hierarchical structure of the husband/wife relationship, where the husband is superior and the wife subordinated. The husband is the one abusing the wife but the wife is responsible for staying in the marriage and is blamed otherwise. The cultural norm of staying in a marriage and that IPV is a sign of love are keeping women in abusive relationships, as well as reinforcing women's inferiority. Violence within marriage is to a large extent justified in Kenya, but only to a certain degree, which was discussed as 'the good beating'. 'The good beating', where the more powerful abuses the less powerful, is used to maintain the gender inequalities. What further facilitates the reproduction of these gender inequalities is the stigma surrounding IPV. The norm that it is private and that women are not supposed to speak about it, will complicate the process to dissolve the stigma surrounding it.

### **Work of change**

The work of change that is carried out by the studied NGOs in Nairobi revolves around either response work or prevention work. The response work included one small shelter for battered women and girls, psychosocial support groups, trauma healing & counselling, legal support and economic empowerment for female survivors of IPV. The prevention work primarily contained advocacy and awareness creation, along with policy work, changing men's attitudes and comprehensions of violence, trainings in GBV, trainings in skills and economic empowerment.

This theme is divided into four subthemes. *Tools*, where I will bring forth how the NGOs are working and the used tools for the work of change. *Definitions* will revolve around the used definitions within the work and their implications, inclusions and exclusions. *Learned subordination* will discuss the technique of teaching women how to handle violence and the issue that some NGOs work with taught subordination, while others work against it. Last subtheme – *obstacles* will bring up the obstacles for the elimination of IPV and what areas that needs improvement.

### *Tools*

All the respondents brought up different ways of creating change and how they were working to bring on change. Both social change and changes within the legal system were desired, as well as individual change in survivor's overall health, wellbeing and development. Thanks to

the era we live in, with increased urbanization, development and societal transition, changes in gender norms are expected to follow. Though, changes in behavior has remained a challenge in societies that are characterized by a culture of violence (Lassier, 2011:39-40). Kenya can be seen as a country where a culture of violence is persistent and the NGOs are struggling to eliminate IPV. They used various tools to achieve their goals and I will present & analyze some of them in this section.

A commonly used technique was to create a connection from the NGO to a local person in the targeted community. This person was called change agent, champion or ally depending on who I talked to. Peter said: *“when we do an outreach, we identify men who can be allies”*. These allies will later be trained and given knowledge regarding gender issues. They can later find opportunities to create change in their communities with their new information and knowledge. *“The local member of the community is the one leading the process”* (Peter). By using this technique, the community gets *“one of your own, who is able to explain these matters to you, in an even better way”*. This is one of the advantages that NGOs have, that they can empower people to establish sustainable change and strengthen their local institutions (Nikkhah & Bin Redzuan, 2010:85). The change movement has then been sustained within the communities, instead of having outsiders coming to visit the communities, which is not as sustainable. This method was also used by Lilly, who talked about it as a *“ripple effect”*. They would for example train some of the counsellors, that would later teach the rest of the staff what they have learnt.

The importance of involving men to end IPV has been emphasized a lot recently (Flood, 2011; Sleghe & Kimonyo, 2010; Barker, Ricardo & Nascimento, 2007; Salazar & Öhman, 2015). As Flood (2011:372) states *“while some men are part of the problem, all men are part of the solution”*. This importance was also raised in some of the interviews. Peter’s job revolves around bringing men on board to end IPV. He is currently working to involve religious and cultural leaders, which has been an issue before. *“Using our strategy of men to men, we have been able to bring them on board”*. Alex also brought up the issue of involving pastors and priests and referred to that they always want to be politically correct and not address the issue of IPV. This can seem controversial compared to what the term politically correct stands for in other societies. But cultural leaders usually want to remain popular within their communities and that might change if you bring up a topic that is considered taboo by the majority of your followers (Lusey et al. 2016). Awa expressed a similar

technique to bring men on board, but with including herself. In those conversations, there would only be men in the room, her male colleague and her, though, her colleague would do most of the job.

According to Peter, a used method by others has been to use extreme examples of violence, such as chopping off hands, but people have then said “no, that is not us, we don’t do that”. To use extreme cases can be a tool to get people to react, but will they also be able to relate it to their own lives? Probably not. A smaller percentage might, but what about those who use less brutal violence on their partners? The used violence within relationships increase in severity and intensity over time, also referred to as the spiral of violence (NCK, n.d.). Those who use less severe violence at the moment of the intervention will most probably escalate in the used violence later on. It therefore lies a risk in using extreme cases of violence, since you might not reach out to most perpetrators.

One innovative tool to reach out to abused women was through an app, which was being developed. The app has been adapted to overcome abused women’s obstacles of being silent about the abuse, lack of information and finances. Through the app, women can get help in their own comfort zones without talking to anyone. The app provides information regarding IPV and through answers of a few questions it gives advice depending on your specific situation. Last noticed adaption of the app is that once the application is downloaded, it works offline, which is an economic advantage (Respondent kept anonymous due to the unique innovation).

Economic empowerment is a field where Awa, Alex and Lucy’s NGOs are active and it is a common intervention to help abused women. Women’s economic dependence on their husbands makes it harder to leave a violent relationship and men’s violence can therefore continue undisturbed (Kurz, 1989:497). What was interesting is that the NGO that Alex works for had realized that:

*“Empowering these women is not enough. You could be empowering a lady and maybe she is still going through violence in the house. So, she will not be stable tomorrow to open up a small business, because of maybe the whole night was just chaotic. [...] You cannot just be doing business, you also have to have a stable mind to be able to perform”.*

(Alex)

This was where the psychosocial support groups came in. They are now combining women's economic empowerment with psychosocial support groups, to ensure that the women will be mentally stable enough to keep their business running. The NGOs where Awa and Lucy are working also use this combined method to support the victims on more levels than only economic. Another aspect and consequence of women's economic empowerment is their strengthened independence, mobility and increased power, which might at first glance only be seen as a positive effect. What was not brought up during the interviews was the fact that this positive effect may lead to increased abuse (Lassier, 2011:7; Umubyeyi et al., 2016:9). If the power balance is threatened, which it is in this case, men's internal conflict and loss of identity may cause anger. This anger can lead to IPV, since it is a way to control women and reduce anger. IPV can also be used for men to regain their lost power and restore the power balance, or rather imbalance (Lassier, 2011:7).

### *Definitions*

Most of the NGOs were using WHO's definition of IPV along with UN's definition of VAW.

*“Intimate partner violence refers to behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors. This definition covers violence by both current and former spouses and partners”.*

(WHO, 2017)

*“Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”*

(UN, 1993)

Lucy mentioned that they needed to contextualize and localize the definitions, depending on the situation. Lilly added the need to simplify it, due to complicated terms, such as 'deprivation of liberty'. For interventions in areas where English is not spoken, the definition needs to be translated into the local language. The inclusiveness of the definitions was viewed in good ways by the respondents. Samantha had a positive view on that the definition includes



many types of violence, since she finds the need to explain to some women that e.g. psychological and emotional violence is also violence. The definition is broad enough to also include many kinds of intimate relationships, which is brought up as a positive aspect of it by Alex who says: *“we also have the street girls, street women. So, they have multiple partners, so basically we factored in every intimate partner”*.

What was found regarding the used definitions, is that the change workers did not view that their work got negatively affected by it, and women were not excluded due to the definition itself. Women were rather excluded due to other circumstances. Lucy saw that women with special needs become excluded, since the psychologists lack special skills such as sign language. Ruth noticed that women with both mental and physical challenges did not receive the help and support they needed. The structure of how IPV works was seen as an obstacle for women so seek help, since they, according to Alex, were scared that their partners would find out. If their partner would find out, the violence *“becomes even more worse”* (Alex).

Since WHO's definition of IPV is, according to Peter, academical & theoretical and does not include the concept of power, he would support it with discussions surrounding power. In the discussions, Peter would:

*“deconstruct power to be able to make it clear for everybody how powerful they are [...] if you leave it at what it is, women will not feel that they have the power to say no.”*

(Peter)

Even though men generally are in a more powerful position than women, thanks to patriarchy and the socially structured norms that support this power imbalance (Schippers & Sapp Greyson, 2012:31), it does not equate that women have no power at all, nor that all Kenyan women are abused. By informing abused women of the fact that they have the power to say no, they still have been informed of their rights, even if their ‘no’ is not always accepted.

As mentioned before, the commonly used terms by both me and the respondents were either DV or IPV, both which are gender-neutral terms. Using the terms wife abuse, wife beating or violence against women are all framing the problem in gendered terms, showing the assumption that gender stands in the center of the issue. Terms that instead points to gender

neutrality would be e.g. marital violence and domestic violence (Lawson, 2012:573). What can be questioned is why gender-neutral terms as DV and IPV are being used when it undermines the gendered structure of the violence? When the respondents spoke about violence, all of them spoke about violence against women, perpetrated by men, even though they used gender neutral terms. This was confirmed both by them using words as he/man and she/woman when talking about victims and perpetrators. It was further established at the end of the interviews when Peter and Samantha mentioned violence towards men by women and stating that it also exists. According to me, that would confirm that they have been talking about men's violence towards women during the bigger part of the interview. What should also be mentioned is that violence within same-sex relationships was not discussed much and the focus was usually put on heterosexual relationships. The reason for this could lie in the fact that it is still illegal by law and therefore even more stigmatized and talked less about.

A feminist perspective would identify the usage of gender-neutral terms as problematic, since there is strong notion of gender asymmetry in IPV (Lawson, 2012:582). Dobash & Dobash (1979:12) advice against the usage of gender-neutral terms, since it masks the centuries of oppression of women by neutralizing the word for describing the practice of wife beating. When all of the respondents spoke about men's violence towards women and not the other way around, it could also be seen as a verification that gender asymmetry does exist in IPV. This would also contest the results by the CTS and support Kurz's (1989:494) statement that the data is flawed. If men and women were equal perpetrators of IPV, why would all respondents focus more on men's violence than women's?

### *Learned subordination*

It became visible to me, that two of the respondents showed signs of a belief in *learned subordination*, through their models for work. The respondents taught victims of IPV how to adjust their behavior so they could avoid violence at home. This was perceived a good technique by the two respondents, since it showed proof of reduced violence and better relationships. The victims of violence would adjust themselves to the societal norms where women are subordinated. In contrast, the other five respondents worked against subordination and tried to find ways for women to escape it, instead of these two who had in some way accepted women's position and worked with it.

Lucy referred to that one of their mandates is not to separate families and that the women who go through their trainings either leave or stay with their abusive partner. Some “*have left abusive relationships, which sometimes works better for their children*” (Lucy). Through this statement, a belief that the best situation for a child is to live in a nuclear family with both parents, becomes visible. Especially when it is said to *sometimes* work better for the children if the parents separate, but not always, which implies that it is also *sometimes* better for a child to stay with both parents, even if one is being abused by the other. What is rendered visible is the view of the sacred family that need to stay together, no matter what. As Dobash & Dobash (1979:75) write, our most sacred institution in society is the family. The other part of women who go through their training and still stay with their abusive partner, “*would better their relationships through this training*” (Lucy). Lucy adds that “*there are those who have made their relationships better*”. What I question in this quote is how a relationship can become better when the victim gets treatment and training, while the perpetrator is left out? None of the respondents worked with the abusive men, only with the abused women. According to Alex, they were working with women first, because they are the victims and before working with men, they wanted to explore how they can protect women first. So, what are the women trained in to be able to make their relationships better? Straight up, they are partly being taught how to become even more subordinated, which will be explained below, through Alex’s words.

Alex is the second respondent who showed a belief in learned subordination. Similar to what Samantha expressed, Alex said:

*“We are not telling you to leave your husband. We want you to explore ways of handling the violence [...] We show you how to handle that, so that you don’t really reach a point where it now becomes physical”.*

(Alex)

Rather than women leaving violent relationships, she is encouraged to stay and learn ways to reduce the violence. Some examples were to not talk to him when he is angry and to offer him food, so he would not find anything to argue about. Teaching women how to act submissive will in the long run only strengthen and increase women’s subordination. Especially if it is shown to reduce violence, as Alex’s NGO have seen. He mentioned that the violence within relationships has reduced, thanks to how they empower the women through their economic

empowerment program. The women receive business training and business skills, along with psychosocial support and being taught how to 'handle the violence'. What I can see as problematic is that violence might have reduced thanks to other interventions, which can falsely promote the continuation of teaching women how to be submissive. Harshly spoken, this can be seen as a creation of structural violence, where women's rights are being denied and she is instead being taught how to handle the violence. According to Anglin (1998), the structural violence will deny people their rights and opportunities. Women's rights are being denied in this case, when she is encouraged to stay and handle the violence instead of leaving.

What some of the respondents did not focus on, was what the actual problem is. Changing how women behave towards men reveals a belief that women's behavior is the reason for IPV or what can stop it, even though they might not actually believe that. That is still what is being implied and sent as a signal to the rest of society. I can see another issue with this method and the effect it can have on women when it comes to blame and guilt. If women are told to act in a certain way to avoid violence, what happens if she does not act in that way, or is abused even though she acts in a certain way? If she is taught that the violence is tied to her behavior, then she can also be blamed for the violence or she might blame herself.

### *Obstacles*

The last subtheme that emerged from the thematic analysis was obstacles for the work of change. The brought-up barriers for the work to eliminate IPV regarded justice for victims, implementation of law, corruption, a good support system and social change.

From a feminist perspective, the legal system, which traditionally have defined battering as a private matter, is central to the process of change. A major issue affecting the work of change and victims of IPV in Kenya, does not concern the lack of laws. The implementation of law and society's knowledge are bigger issues in Kenya. As Awa says: "*We have such beautiful, beautiful laws but [...] they aren't being implemented*". Kurz (1989:500) confirms that even though battering has been criminalized, the critical question is whether the law will be enforced or not. As stated before, Kenya have passed the PADV law, but according to Awa, there are no guidelines to operationalize it, nor a budget, so the enforcement of it then becomes a problem. From my perspective, this lack of legal implementation and structural violence from the government affects those who needs the protection the most, the abused women. The lack of implementation is in turn affecting the authority's knowledge regarding

the law. Some of the respondents brought up the lack of knowledge within the police force and judiciary as an obstacle for change, as well as the issue of corruption. The majority of police officers are not aware of the new laws nor how GBV and IPV works, except for those with a personal interest who are “*passionate about it*” (Awa). The police would instead use the older laws that they were trained in, since “*they don’t get to go for refresher trainings*” (Peter). All resources allocated to ending VAW will be of little utility if the people with power are not willing to end it (Moore & Smith, 2008:315). These people with power, e.g. the government, need to enforce implementation to ensure the full effectiveness of the passed laws.

As written above, the PADV law is already in place, but society’s knowledge is also an obstacle for change. It is not only the police and judiciary who need to be aware of the laws, the rest of the society need to know as well. Almost all of the interviewed NGOs were working with creating awareness of various aspects of IPV. Moore & Smith (2008:314) state that legislation is critical and it can also serve a symbolic purpose to strengthen women’s rights. Alex expressed that the PADV act has helped women in some ways. It has been helpful to:

*“making women get aware of their situations [...] the law protects them in such a way [law on their side], even if they are not really confident that the law is going to protect them.”*

(Alex)

If women become aware of the law and their rights, the law can be “increasing awareness that these offenses are criminal” (Moore & Smith, 2008:314). Though, once again, law enforcement institutions need to be aware of the laws and enforce them for the to work in practice (ibid).

Another structural problem is the police force. It is known in Kenya that the police force is corrupt and people can easily get away with crimes if they bribe the police officer. Alex brought up this issue, since its affecting women’s trust in the police. They would rather report the abuse to other instances than the police. Samantha adds that: “*people have lost faith in the police*”. Lassier’s (2011:29) findings regarding IPV in Tanzania show similar results. The male power over women extends to the police force and reveals when women report abuse.

Women were often mistreated by the police, who demand bribes but gave favors to the male perpetrators (Lassier, 2011:29). The respondents for this thesis described similar cases in Kenya.

The respondents knew zero to one shelter each for abused women. Abused women can get shelter at hospitals for a few days but there are not any long-term options available. Lucy, Samantha and Ruth all said there is a great need of shelters and that none exists in Kenya. “*DV is very rampant in our country and women have nowhere to go*” (Samantha). Moore & Smith (2008:317) argue that crisis centers and battered women programs are crucial in responding to VAW and that the amount of shelters need to increase when awareness increases. Ruth expressed the need for a system that helps women after the physical recovery, since women otherwise would go back to the perpetrator, only to become a victim again. From my perspective, the lack of shelters will also make it impossible for some women to leave their partners. If they cannot return to their families, where are they supposed to go?

To sum up the results from the theme *work of change*, it has revolved around what the change workers expressed they do to create social change and eliminate IPV. Some of the used tools were to create local change agents for a sustainable change and to involve both men and cultural and religious leaders. A combined tool of economic empowerment and psychosocial support was used by some and learned subordination was another tool. Most commonly used definitions were taken from UN and WHO, but it was sometimes a localized and simplified version of the original that was used to fit the context. Gender neutral terms were used, but the violence was always expressed as gendered & asymmetrical, where men are perpetrators and women victims. The theme finished with presenting obstacles for change, which consisted of lack of legal implementation, shelters and knowledge within authorities.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has examined the work of change in the field of IPV, from the perspective of change workers in NGOs in Nairobi, Kenya. The focus has lied on the expressed change work and identifying definitions and comprehensions of violence within the field, to finally examine how those affect the change work according to the change workers. This final chapter will be divided into my three different research questions to further discuss how they have been answered.

The first question; *How is the NGOs work of change expressed by its workers in Nairobi, Kenya?* The NGOs were working in different areas, such as awareness creation, victim support and changing societal attitudes and norms, i.e. both preventive and responsive change work. All respondents expressed in general terms how they were working, including the used tools to create change. These tools included involving men, using relatable examples and creating a local connection from the NGO to communities, which can create a ripple effect of knowledge. What was commonly brought up when talking about creating change in society was the obstacles they were facing. There were both practical obstacles, as well as the lack of knowledge of existing laws and training of IPV related issues within the police force, lack of shelters and lack of implementation of law. The existing norms within society was also discussed, since they are a part of the change work. The norms were either a part of change work since they affect the work in some ways or that the NGOs were directly working with changing the norms.

Two of the respondents accepted women's subordinated position and worked with it, when the other five respondents actively worked against it and tried to change it. These two respondents, Lucy and Alex, expressed that women have improved their relationships or that the violence had reduced when they worked with the victims, *not* the perpetrators. They taught women how to avoid situations of violence by pleasing the husband and making sure he did not have much to argue about. I interpret this as the change workers taught women how to become even more submissive, tiptoeing around to reduce the violence, instead of working with the real problem - that men abuse their wives.

Second research question was: *What are the expressed definitions and comprehensions of Intimate Partner Violence?* The used definitions of VAW and IPV did not vary as much as I expected them to do. Most of the NGOs used definitions from WHO and UN, which I view positively since it reflects a united and mutual understanding of what IPV is, how it works and how it affects people. Some NGOs needed to simplify and localize the definitions before using them, but they were still developed from WHO's and UN's definitions.

The expressed comprehensions were mainly social and cultural norms, which made up the first theme in the analysis. The norms justified IPV and were mostly gendered and showed a hierarchal structure of the man/woman and husband/wife relationship. This hierarchal structure is affected by a power imbalance. Specific norms and customs have been constructed so men can remain more powerful than women, as well as norms that are silencing women, so this can happen unquestioned. Some of these norms were: that it is normal for men to be violent; the extreme justification of violence by both men and women - that women should be beaten and that it is a way to show love; that women should stay in marriage and are blamed otherwise; and that marital rape does not exist. One created tradition that also upholds the hierarchal gender structure is that women are taught how to sexually please a man, but not that they themselves should enjoy sex.

My last research question - *How does definitions and comprehensions of violence affect the work of change according to the change workers?* Results showed that most respondents viewed their used definition as inclusive, which allowed them to work with the target groups that they needed. It was rather other circumstances that resulted in the exclusion of disabled people and people in same-sex relationships. Such circumstances could be lack of knowledge and skills within the staff, though, people in same-sex relationships would be referred to organizations specified on issues related to the LGBTQI community. The definition of IPV also included many types of violence, such as physical, psychological, sexual and emotional, which helped the change workers to explain the width of violence for women who were subjected to such violence. According to the change workers, some women did not know that e.g. psychological violence is seen as violence as well.

Results showed that all NGOs used gender neutral terms, such as DV and IPV when they talked about men's violence towards women in intimate relationships. Using gender neutral terms when the violence is obviously gendered will first of all undermine the violence women



go through. Secondly, it points towards gender symmetry in partner violence in accordance with results from the CTS. If gender specific terms would instead be used, it would highlight the gendered structure of violence, that the violence towards women by men is not equal to violence towards men by women. This is exactly what the CTS misses, which is why I would also strongly advise against using that instrument.

As mentioned before, the brought-up comprehensions of IPV were mainly norms, which affect the work of change in various ways. The cultural norms affect how the NGOs practically can work, e.g. men to men programs, since it is taboo for women to speak to men about sexual issues. Some respondents expressed that women and men have been socialized into norms that justifies violence & women's subordination. These norms have been embodied and a part of people's identities as women/wives and men/husbands. For example, the respondents expressed an understanding in society that physical abuse is okay to certain extents and that women are and should be subordinated to men. When these norms have been embodied and a part of people's identities, I view that the work of change becomes more challenging. It transforms to changing people's identities rather than their knowledge.

When people do not act accordingly to social norms that have been embodied, one might be judged as a bad person (Gatens, 2004:284), which is why people usually do act accordingly and this may obstruct change. Change is further obstructed by the silencing of victims, social stigma and taboo in the Kenyan society. Because, how can change occur if victims are silenced & encouraged to stay in abusive marriages and the rest of society is quiet about this? In addition, IPV have for long been constructed as a private matter where no one should intervene. Some respondents advocated for increased discussions regarding IPV to eradicate the societal stigmatization of victims, which I also stand behind. All of this affects the change work, since it obstructs change itself.

Even though there are some obstacles left to overcome before IPV can be eliminated, there is still hope in Kenya. As Ridgeway (2009:158) writes; "A single wave does not move a sandbar, but wave after wave does". Thanks to the change workers at the NGOs, change is slowly a fact. As Samantha said "Maybe my daughter, one day, will get what I'm looking for, but we are not going to give up".

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## APPENDIX 1 – THEMATISED INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Background + info

- Go through **informed consent**
- **Objective** of study
- **Layout** for interview
- Can you tell me a bit about your **position** at the org and your **work tasks**?

### Work of change

- **Focus area** for the change work at your org? What kind of change is the goal? How is this achieved?
- What **target group**? Why?
- Can you give some examples of how **people** become **excluded and included**? What types of **violence** becomes included/excluded?
- How has the **Act on DV** affected work, before/after?
- Anything to add?

### Definition & comprehension of violence

- Variations - VAW, VAWG, GBV, SGBV, Men's Violence Against Women, Domestic violence, IPV. **What is your definition**?
- Based on? Influenced by? Other org, national, international, law, own? Ever been redefined, how, why, by who, when?
- How is the organisation's definition used within your daily work? What situations? Directly/indirectly?
- **Reflected/talked/discussed** about the definition at work with colleagues?
- What type of **violence is included/excluded** in the definition? Certain acts of violence?
- **Includes/excludes who**? What are your thoughts of these exclusions and inclusions?
- Are there **other definitions of violence** that affects your work? Eg. Governmental, other organisations, the org and people you meet. When, how?
- Can you tell me about **other comprehensions** of violence that affects your work?
- Anything to add?

## APPENDIX 2 – INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for taking time to participate in this study. I truly appreciate it.

This interview is a part of my master thesis in Gender Studies at Umeå University in Sweden. The aim of my thesis is to examine the definitions and comprehensions of Violence against women/Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence and how those affect the work to eliminate violence against women. The purpose of this study is to create an understanding of how you work and why. I will neither compare organizations nor your work. Our conversation will only be used for my thesis and nothing else.

You will be anonymous and I will use fictitious names in my thesis, both for you and the organization you work for.

Everything that is said in this interview will be handled with confidentiality. With your consent, I would prefer to record this interview, to be able to recall our conversation. No outsiders will be listening to the record. The record & transcript will be saved on my personal computer, inaccessible for outsiders.

You have the right to end this interview whenever you may like. You answer the questions that you want and are allowed to not answer if you prefer so.

If anything is unclear or if you have any questions, kindly let me know. By signing this document, you verify that you have received and understood the information above.

Signature is optional.

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Respondent

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Researcher

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Place & date

### **Contacts**

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