Invisible Men

When men are the recipients of non-reciprocal intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships

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“Women and men are both capable of extraordinary cruelty … we must stop demonising men and start healing the rift that feminism has created between men and women. This insidious and manipulative philosophy that women are always victims and men always oppressors can only continue this unspeakable cycle of violence. And it’s our children who will suffer”.

(Erin Pizzey, founder of the refuge system, circa 1970)

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Signed: Sharon Amundsen

: ……

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ACRONYMS

AUT	Auckland University of Technology
IPV	Intimate partner violence
MQSR	Modified Qualitative Systematic Review
para	Paragraph
MOH	Ministry of Health
WHO	World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

This modified qualitative systematic review (MQSR) examines if socio-cultural aspects of masculinity norms and attitudes create barriers that prevent men as recipients of non-reciprocated female intimate partner violence (IPV) from reporting and help-seeking. Predominantly family violence literature focuses on women's experiences as the recipients of IPV rather than men. Men's voices contributing to the research of their IPV experienced by their female partners, and the responses to their experiences of seeking help, are seldom heard. On the occasions that these men's stories are told, they create confusion and discord.

A literature search was undertaken using EBSCO CINAHL, EBSCO SocINDEX, and OVID PyscARTICLES databases. A Google Scholar search was also initiated as a more informal type of search. The requisites of the search included: men as victims of IPV, women as perpetrators of IPV, barriers to reporting and help-seeking, and socio-cultural influence on reporting and help-seeking. The inclusion criteria for the search used statements such as men as recipients of IPV from female partners, women perpetrators, heterosexual relationships, barriers in men reporting IPV, and reference to masculinity. From these criteria, a total of 7 articles were selected and analysed. These articles came from the United States, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Finland. There were no Aotearoa New Zealand articles included due to the paucity of research in this area. The themes that emerged from the MQSR for discussion are the types of violence used against men by women, descriptions of the types of help-seeking, double standards in professional service, and barriers to reporting and help-seeking for men.

Masculinity as a cultural space and the need to break down barriers to reporting is discussed in conclusion, followed by recommendations on how this could be achieved. These recommendations include implications for practice, policy, and future research.

My study concludes that men's needs in terms of finding support and disclosing IPV are not inexorably linked to those of women; men, too, want to be heard and believed.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to explore the research question, 'Do socio-cultural attitudes toward masculinity create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non reciprocated Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) occurs from their female partner?' This chapter establishes the background to the research question and consists of three sections. The first section is an examination of the definitions of IPV and the context in which definitions of IPV are found. An overview of the types of IPV is provided in the next section and includes key terms and definitions referred to in this work. The final section looks at the research question with the focus on men as recipients of non-reciprocal IPV perpetrated by women and the relevant factors influencing this study.

My work in childcare protection, foster care, men's and women's correctional facilities, and as an educator in social work has afforded me the privilege of seeing the best and worst of humanity. Researching with the focus on women as perpetrators of IPV deviates from the usual focus of research into family violence. My justifications for undertaking this literature search are threefold: Firstly, I am drawing on my own experiences as a mature European female, with experience of male perpetrated violence but also conversely the experience of discovering that a male friend had experienced female perpetrated violence in the heterosexual relationship he was in.

Secondly, reflecting on my fifteen plus years as a social work professional, I have identified the need to challenge the stereotypical notions of men as always the perpetrators of IPV, without any recourse to a version of the story that sees them as potential victims of IPV. Men came to me with their stories of IPV in my social work practice and their stories had an impact. Having grown up in the era of the "It's Not Ok" campaign (Ministry of Social Development, 2007), where television was used as a primary medium for highlighting the issues of domestic violence, this television campaign consistently depicted the victims of domestic violence as women and the perpetrators as men. The Once Were Warriors movie (Tamahori, 1994) highlighting the harsh realities of violence against women in NZ - had me questioning my practice and whether I had become influenced and constrained by what has been the acceptable social norm, i.e., men are violent. In my professional capacity, I reflected on if I had unknowingly contributed to the reluctance of any men to report IPV because of my attitudes

and belief system and had I unconsciously held the belief from the perpetual urban legend that all men are violent?

Thirdly, in my time teaching as a senior lecturer to students who were completing a three-year professional degree in social work, I observed students' reactions to the idea that men could also be victims of IPV rather than perpetrators. The concept of men as recipients rather than perpetrators of IPV and the challenge of viewing women as potential IPV perpetrators rather than victims became a contentious issue in the classroom and created animated discussion but also the opportunity to examine value systems and inherent beliefs that would impact on social work practice.

What is Intimate Partner Violence?

IPV refers to any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those in the relationship (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mahendra, 2015; Centre of Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). The Human Rights Commission, New Zealand's website (2020), describes family violence (IPV) as

… a range of behaviours used to dominate or control a person within an intimate or family relationship. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Family violence is often a pattern of controlling behaviour made up of several acts over time that may seem trivial individually but result in the person feeling afraid and controlled.

An imbalance of relevant IPV descriptions for men

There are a range of definitions of IPV available and while all are non-gender specific, definitions of IPV are contextualised as they are routinely provided on websites that focus on providing women guidance in situations where there is family violence or harm. There is a lack of specific recognition of IPV for violence perpetrated against men by women in any similar context such as providing specific guidance or resources for reporting or help-seeking for men in situations where they are the victims of IPV. Standard definitions of IPV both shape and reflect societal understanding of IPV, and yet a key observation when examining the definitions that exist and their context, is that there is a lack of any specific definition that provides a space for acknowledging that men may experience IPV. There are also no corresponding descriptions embedded in the literature related to males as recipients of violence. The absence of

information that men could relate to such as that provided for women, emphasises the imbalance for men experiencing IPV as they seek to make sense of their own experience. Men's position in relation to IPV remains rooted in stereotypical frameworks that assume that men can only be perpetrators of IPV. Such frameworks do not allow for the positioning of men as recipients of IPV. Stereotypical gendered frameworks contribute to the invisibility of men as people who can and do experience IPV.

The World Health Organization does not comment on IPV committed against men, which indicates that this is not acknowledged as an area of concern by the organisation. While there is acknowledgement that "…women can be violent in relationships with men," this is then clarified and potentially justified with the comment that this violence by women towards male partners occurs "…often in self-defence" (2012, p 1). The positioning of women as primarily victims of violence and men as perpetrators of IPV is therefore reinforced. This statement is an example of how the perception of women as victims and men as perpetrators of violence are perpetuated by public health organisations.

The Ministry for Women New Zealand's website (2016) describes IPV as a "…pattern of coercion and control that may include physical, sexual and psychological violence, social isolation, and financial abuse" (What is violence against women? 2016, para 4). There is limited acknowledgement that women might be perpetrators of IPV and where there is acknowledgement, it is contextualised in the notion of fear that women will have, "…it is fear that often distinguishes men's violence against women from women's violence against men" (What is violence against women?, 2016, para 5).

Types of Intimate Partner Violence: An overview, key terms and definitions

Intimate Partner Violence is any act directed at another person that causes injury, pain, fear, or humiliation, thereby causing the other person to do something against their will or refrain from doing something they want (Isdal, 2000, para 10). Among the more commonly known types of IPV are physical, sexual, emotional and psychological violence. Isdal's (2000) definitions are used in this work for the different types of violence. Physical violence is best described as acts that cause physical pain to another, using physical contact, i.e., kicking, hitting, hair pulling, biting. Verbal abuse uses words or tone to frighten and harm, i.e., threats, humiliation, name-

calling). Sexual violence involves sexual acts or sexual approaches, harassment, rape, violation, abuse (Isdal, 2000).

Less well known is a category of IPV that is described as "intimate terrorism". Intimate terrorism covers a wide-ranging set of controlling behaviours from one partner to another and in which there is a general pattern of control. This control usually sits alongside sexual and physical violence (Johnson &Leone, 2005, p.323). Latent violence is recognized as violence that works by virtue of possibility. A person who has experienced the violence once will experience it again (Isdal, 2000). Intimate terrorism is (but not limited to) financial control, intimidation by using body language (i.e., threatening looks or gestures), name-calling, isolation from friends and family, checking up on the other's movements when they are out, stalking, using children against the other, falsely accusing the partner of violence, threatening legal action (Johnson & Leone, 2005).

Latent control is any act or behaviour performed by the aggressor to reinforce control of the victim, through their choice of mood/temper and tone of voice, through to comments on insignificant behaviours such as how a door is opened, or how a person leaves a room. The risk of further violence controls everything the victim does. Another lesser known type of IPV is material violence where the aggressor undertakes acts involving using violence to intimidate others by breaking inanimate objects and destroying things that matter to them (Isdal, 2000).

Why focus on men as recipients of non-reciprocal IPV perpetrated by women?

My research to explore men's reporting and help-seeking experiences as recipients of IPV from their female partners goes against the ethos of what we are conditioned to reading in the newspapers, social media, and government reports. The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse website shows statistics from 2017 that 35 % of women have experienced physical or sexual IPV. When combined with emotional or psychological abuse, 55% of women in New Zealand have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (https://nzfvc.org.nz/our-work/data-summaries). On the website, there is no equivalent data subset on men as victims of IPV, nor data subsets that pertain to female assaults male. This lack of data is arguably further evidence of the absence at both the policy level and in discussions of men as victims of IPV perpetrated by women in a heterosexual relationship.

However, my professional experience tells me that men are also recipients and victims of IPV in their heterosexual relationships. I have heard the accounts from men of their experiences of IPV. I have heard accounts from women who admit to being violent and aggressive to their partner – "just because." I have read court reports and police statements and witnessed women's manipulation related to child protection issues where they contend that they are the victim of IPV. Where are the statistics collected and collated as evidence that women are aggressive, and men can be victims/recipients of violence? Is there no data because men do not report the violence, or are the socio-cultural beliefs of men as the perpetrators of violence so ingrained, men are simply ignored and disbelieved if they try to report or seek help for IPV?

Insights from my practice

This section details insights from my social work practice, the influence of New Zealand's socio-cultural context, the challenging dichotomy of perspectives around IPV, and the relevance of the research to social work practice.

As previously mentioned, teaching social work practice and introducing the possibility that men who be victims of IPV caused discomfort amongst students, as potentially this conflicted with their understanding of gendered roles and societal norms. Students often reacted with embarrassed laughter and disbelief to the concept of a man being a recipient of physical abuse from his female partner. However, students' responses to this notion that men could be the recipients of IPV, created an opportunity for discussion on societal norms of violence which could then be unpicked and unpacked, as students sought to find some new understanding and to reconcile this challenge to dominant perspectives of societal roles. Arguably students who are the future social work professionals, who must meet a standard of practice within the framework set out by the New Zealand Social Workers' registration board, will continue to struggle with societal-driven concepts of gender stereotype and bias in their practice until these are consciously challenged and more diverse frameworks are developed.

The New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board (2020) clearly states in their Core Competence Standards (para 4) under the "Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice," that the social worker:

- Understands and commits to and advocates for human, legal and civil rights, social and economic justice, and self-determination.

- Understands and challenges mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and has the knowledge, skills, and understanding of how to leverage those that enhance power and privilege appropriately.
- Respects and upholds the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of people and creates an environment of respect and understanding.

Significantly, these competencies refer to *people* and do not differentiate on the basis of gender. Social work is a practice that is anti-discriminatory and preconceived ideologies of what and who a client is, have no place in that practice yet the responses of trainee social work students is a demonstration of the strength of the gender bias underpinning their thinking and understanding of men as recipients of IPV.

My experience as a social worker included men recounting their experiences of being recipients of violence. Over the years I worked in both male and female correctional facilities and I have had the privilege of hearing many personal stories. Women have told, related, or shared stories of violence, some premediated and some through anger, of how they have initiated and used violence in their relationships with men. I remember one woman in particular who recounted regularly belittling her husband before demanding sex because it "turned her on and he would do nothing about it." She laughed as she told the story of one occasion where he couldn't get an erection during her verbal "foreplay," so she picked up a pair of scissors and threatened to cut his penis off because he "was bloody useless" to her. I asked if he ever got angry and hit her because of how she treated him. She replied "no" and muttered that "was because he was a soft cock".

While the example may seem extreme, I have also listened to men in prison who recounted how they have had to defend themselves from female partners, who would swear, spit, hit and kick with no provocation. For some, there was a pattern in their partner's abuse, and for one man in particular, even when he sensed it coming, he felt he couldn't leave the relationship or situation because he was worried about the impact on his children.

Some men admitted to reciprocal violence, and some admitted to hurting their partner in self-defence. An example from one man was that he caused bruising to his partner's wrists as he had to hold his partner's wrists to stop her from hitting and punching him. On occasions when police were called, his partner would show her wrists, say that he had been hurting her, and he would be taken out of the house and expected to find somewhere else to stay. He reports that it always felt that the police taking his statement did so in a perfunctory manner and his perspective was not given due consideration. In this case, his partner was often under the

influence of alcohol at the time of the incident, which seemed to hold no bearing with police. As a result he was then deemed to be an unsafe adult by police and escorted out of the home. Under the influence of alcohol, the man's partner would be left at home with the children. He reported to me that "it got easier to just take the hiding" so he could remain with his children.

In my social practice work, the women's stories of perpetrating violence were aligned with the stories that men shared of being victims of violence perpetrated by women. Having heard these stories regularly over an extended period of time, it became important to me to further inquire into the evidence for the experiences of men who are recipients of violence from women and what that experience is like in a world that would appear to disregard such a phenomenon.

The influence of Aotearoa New Zealand socio-cultural context

There are limited studies in the New Zealand context of male IPV recipients with an initial search of literature including web searches, newspapers, and university theses producing few studies of relevance. Evidence is usually embedded in literature that focus on the position of women such as that undertaken by New Zealand (NZ) researchers Morrison and Devane (2016, para 8) who found that "…the number of women serving sentences for IPV related offences is increasing and that the rise in the number of women in prison is rising at a higher rate than men". The Department of Corrections website shows that there is a growth of the numbers of women in prison and overall offences have risen from 493 in 2009 to 666 in 2019 (https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/ /statistics).

Once source of data specifically based in New Zealand is available from the Dunedin Longitudinal Study. Launched in 1972, this study of 1037 participants has been running for over 30 years. Starr (2018) comments that while this is not the largest study globally, the retention rate of ninety-five percent of the participants, makes this population the most closely examined group on earth. Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder (2005) interviewed 828 people on IPV experiences in their current and most recent relationships. They found that the severity of domestic violence experienced by men was greater than that experienced by women in the study because women tended to use weapons when instigating violence against their male partners. The study also found that 34% of women and 12% of men reported initiating assaults against their partner. It is unusual to find studies where women freely admit to instigating and engaging in IPV against their male partners. In this study, this contradictory reporting result, may be the result of the women being participants in the study for such a significant period of

time, so they felt the environment was a safe one for disclosure and more able to acknowledge that they have initiated violence against their partner.

A common assumption is that women are violent in self-defence yet a study undertaken by Carrado, George, Loxam, Jones, and Templar (1996) in the United Kingdom found that 80% of assaults that occurred from women against men were for reasons other than self-defence. Archer's (2000) study, a meta-analytic review of 82 studies, with a combined participant data sample of 64,487, suggests that contrary to many popular conceptions, women have been shown to consistently perpetrate acts of intimate partner violence at rates comparable to men. Nearly a decade later, Muller, Desmarais, and Hamel (2009, p.625) noted that in the United States, women "…initiate physical aggression as often, or more often, than men, rarely in self-defence, and motivated for similar reasons as men, typically to express frustration, to communicate or to control, or out of a desire to retaliate".

One campaign that highlighted on the issue of violence against women in New Zealand was the 'It's Not Ok' campaign (Family Violence – It's Not Ok). The media campaign began in 2007 and brought family violence to the forefront of New Zealand television screens with the increased profiling of women in the victim role in instances of family violence. A report published for the Ministry of Social Development, in 2010, by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation on the It's Not Ok campaign concludes the campaign was very successful in bringing the domestic violence issue to the fore in the wider community rather than as an issue for health professionals, academics and researchers. Following this campaign, there was an increase in the reporting of domestic and family violence. There was also an increased understanding of what behaviours constituted family violence. One of the ways forward for the campaign was listed to include "…more diverse voices (for example, women and children)" (Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, 2010, p.4). However, the document above did not mention any details on males as victims/survivors of violence or any existing initiatives supporting male victims of violence.

It is likely that there was an unrecognized impact of this campaign in its contribution to the entrenching of the belief that women are victims and men are perpetrators of violence. This campaign, therefore may have been counterproductive for men who were recipients of IPV in terms of their ability to come forward and seek help. At the time of writing, the website supporting the Not Ok campaign had available 45 personal stories (http://www.areyouok.org.nz). Of those 45 stories, 19 are stories from women describing direct IPV experienced from their male partner. The rest are stories of other family violence issues

and are mainly focused on children seeing their father abuse another parent or sibling. Only one story talks of a child's experience with a mother who was physically and verbally abusive. A paragraph stated: 'We receive many stories from people who have changed their lives and now live violence-free. Sharing those stories provides inspiration and hope for others." (It's Not Ok, n.d). However, there is no voice from men as recipients of IPV and no stories of their experiences of violence from their female partner. The question arises as to whether men were asked to contribute to the collection of stories, which would be an acknowledgment of men as recipients of violence. Or have dominant societal beliefs led to their exclusion in participating in the stories?

The challenging dichotomy of perspectives

The dominant socio-cultural gendered views of men as perpetrators of violence are arguably unconsciously well embedded in society and individuals, however there is evidence that challenges the dichotomy of perspectives of men as perpetrators and women as victims of IPV, that invariably then does not accommodate the notion of men as victims of IPV. One of the contestable pieces of evidence was a research trial that demonstrated gender bias against men. Hodell, Wasarhaley, Rose-Lynch, and Golding (2014) undertook a research trial using mock jurors. They found a higher conviction rate for male perpetrators of homicide on female victims compared to the conviction rate for female perpetrators for homicide in male victims. The authors concluded that this difference was related to gender bias.

Archer (2000) identified two dominant perspectives on IPV which offer radically different interpretations of the role of gender in IPV. Family conflict researcher Straus (1990), describe one perspective of IPV that involves mutual, reciprocal violence. They found a reciprocal type of IPV within some intimate relationships where the violent dysfunction within the relationship was equal for both males and females. However as far back as 1977, Steinmetz suggested that literature under-report female perpetrated IPV. Initial research by Straus and Gelles (1976) found comparable levels of IPV between men and women. The research was then repeated by Straus and Gelles (1988) around 10 years later, and again by Straus & Gozjolko (2014), nearly 20 years later, and the researchers continued to find comparable levels of IPV between men and women as perpetrators of IPV.

Fundamentally, many might challenge these findings including those from a feminist perspective as historically, what was known as domestic violence, was framed on the concept

of gender binary where men are perpetrators, women are receivers of IPV. Those holding a post-modern feminist view might theoretically consider that women can be perpetrators of IPV but oscillate between this and the influence of the dominant socio-cultural view of men as aggressors. However, Abrams (2016), who provides a contemporary voice in her work, 'The Feminist Case for Acknowledging Women's Acts of Violence', contends the feminist movement is struggling to address women as perpetrators, and tend to utilise a "containment" strategy to respond to the challenging notion of women as perpetrators. Abram describes a "containment" strategy as being used to monitor "exaggerations and misstatements about the extent of women's violence" (Abram, 2016, p.287). Abram considers whether the containment strategy is too blinkered and mercurial to endure and questions whether a more inclusive philosophy for the feminist movement that acknowledges women's roles in violence might ironically advance domestic violence reforms and the feminist movement. Abram (2016, p.288) suggests moving out of the "masculinist frame dominating domestic violence, beyond the pathologised and marginalised frame depicting women abusers." To acknowledge traditional frameworks is the first step in transitioning away from the notions of gendered violence always being associated with men as perpetrators. Developing a different framework where men and women can equally be seen as perpetrators of violence is crucial to the ability of men as victims of IPV to be able to report and seek help.

Abram's discussion highlights a feminist argument that accepts the actions of abuse perpetrated by women as largely in response to attacks by men. This aligns with the dominant understandings of the domestic violence movement, thus violence perpetuated by women toward male partners can be framed in feminism theory to generally understand "women's use of strength, influence, manipulation, control, and violence, including illegitimate uses" (p.287) as a justifiable response in the framework of gendered violence.

Holtzworth-Munroe (2005) provides a considered review of female criminality patterns throughout the 20th century. She identifies which societal changes might have influenced these patterns of criminality and in particular which aspects of the change in gendered roles of women and women's socio-cultural contexts. She argues for an array of changes in women's gendered roles and life contexts as influential including women as single parents; women as the matriarch in the family, and progressive employment opportunities. All these changes are seen as contributing to the decline of traditional societal and gendered roles along with weakening patriarchal influences in the lives of women (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Garland (2001, p.195) states that it is not inconceivable to think that women's criminality links with the

"collapse of informal norms of restraint" related to the loosening of women's societal boundaries. The question remains as women take on independent and more "male" type roles in society, whether the shift in concepts of gender, femininity, and identity will increasingly see women taking on the aggressor role previously seen as predominately the remit of males.

Relevance for social worker practice and choice of research methodology

Early humanitarian, philosophical, and theological efforts to find alternatives to poverty and inequality led to the foundation of what society calls social work today. Social work has a dual emphasis: firstly to encourage and inspire individuals, families, organizations, and communities to come up with their solutions to the issues and challenges that they face; and secondly to learn from individual instances of need, educate society at large about injustices in its midst, and take steps to improve the social structures that produce and perpetuate these injustices (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, n.d).

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is governed by the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2003. This act enforces the mandatory registration of all those who practice social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is tasked with governing and determining the scope of practice within the social work profession and the qualification a social worker must hold to become registered. As part of registration, an annual practicing certificate is required and must be renewed to allow continual employment and social work undertaking. It is also a requirement of the SWRB that social workers undertake 20 hours of professional development each year, and a record must be kept by the individual and produced on request.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers is an organization that supports social workers and their practice. A key-value set for social workers belonging to the organization is that social workers will use critical reflection and questioning to work through contradictions and complexity.

This systematic literature review comes from the desire to further inform social work practice and curriculum policy and programmes within social work and service agencies' teaching. Every individual, regardless of gender, has the fundamental human right to a life free from violence and fear. An effective social worker can see clients through many different lenses. This research aims to support social workers to be open to the possibility that men can be

recipients of IPV. This work comes from a position of reflection on social work and the dominant perspectives related to men, masculinity, and violence within heterosexual relationships. Such critique and reflection raises questions such as the possibility of ambiguity occurring when conducting interviews with men, and whether an unconscious bias in the listening of the stories occurs where women are claiming abuse, and the position of men in the story is not questioned but overlooked or even disregarded. There is a substantial amount of literature coming out of child protection work that examines the role of fathers that suggests that there is a pervasive negative stereotype of fathers and men within social work practice (Dominelli, Strega, Walmsley, Callahan, & Brown, 2011; Bellamy, 2009; O'Donnell, Johnson, D'Aunno, & Thornton, 2005).

For social workers, social justice is a critical element of practice (O'Brien, 2009). For me, it became a question of examining the possibility of inequality within the practice of social work and where this question of inequality impacts on a group in society, in this case men and IPV, and how someone whose role it is to advocate for men and women equally becomes aware of this and begins to address this unconscious bias within their own practice and in the profession of social work.

Hicks (2015) points out that much of the feminist social work writing considers gender as a basis for comparability. Hanmer and Statham refer to women-centred practice in social work which refers to a commonality in thinking where, as women comprise both being the majority of social workers and the most service users of social work, there is a commonality of gendered experience, along the lines of "…being female, and their relationships with men and children". (1999, p.18)

In an ethnographic study of a childcare social work team, Scourfield (2003, p.60) observed "an underlying dichotomy of men as abusers and women as carers." Scourfield explains that the ongoing disregard of men and their role in instances of abuse was explicit in the discourse and "those men were often described as dangerous, threatening, or absent/irrelevant" (2003, p.60).

As a former social work educator, tertiary programme development that continues framing IPV as a women's issue needs to be re-examined. Family harm, domestic violence and IPV, in any form, should be taught as gender-inclusive, and female aggression and IPV should be written into curricula for discussion. Research undertaken by Douglas and Hines (2011) suggests that help-seeking experiences of men who experience female to male IPV are often negative. Social workers are amongst the community's first contact for victims of violence and are thus

contributing to the difficulties male victims of IPV contend with in reporting and seeking help. Critical thinking skills are an essential factor of social work education because they are the cornerstone of ethical and practical successful front-line practice (Gambrill, 1990). Introducing the concept of men as recipients of violence in heterosexual relationships requires an open-minded search for an understanding rather than a presumptive conclusion. Kurfiss (1989, p.42) reminds educators that critical thinking is "…the process of figuring out what to believe or not about a situation, phenomenon, problem or controversy, for which no single definitive answer or solution exists."

Accepting that women are capable of non-reciprocal violence against men is critical alongside the need for reflection on the impact of this experience of IPV on men and how socially constructed ideals of masculinity need to be challenged and new understanding developed. The evidence is that changing gender roles is impacting both men and women. While some of the changes are more easily noted in the changing role for women where, some women have many of the characteristics that once, historically, would have been considered masculine. For example, women can be seen employed into traditional men's roles such as builders, auto mechanics, defence forces and police. Kachel, Steffens and Niedlich (2016) in discussing the changes in feminine and male gender identity and roles, refer to the work of Swazina (2016) who showed that functional characteristics have become more socially desirable for women and expressive qualities have become more socially desirable for men.

Allen-Collinson (2009) states that crucial knowledge and insights about IPV have been gained mostly by researchers from women recounting their personal experiences of intimate partner abuse by their male partners. However, men's voices contributing to the research of men experiencing IPV by their female partners, and the responses to their experiences of seeking help, are seldom heard. On the occasion when stories of men's victims of IPV are heard, these often create confusion and at times "generate much controversy and hostility, even in contemporary times" (Allen-Collinson, 2009, p.22).

From my experience, the need to fill the gap for men within the realm of social justice became significant. Social justice, the unifying word for promoting equality and equity in the world of social work, needs to be applied to all human areas of life and must encompass factors such as diversity in gender and roles.

Thesis Structure

Chapter one of this dissertation summarises the study's purpose and significance, the research question, and explains the choice of research methodology. Chapter two discusses the research method, a modified systematic literature review, which is used in this study to answer the research question: Do socio-cultural attitudes on masculinity create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non-reciprocated IPV occurs from their female partner? Chapter three discusses themes from selected articles, including types of violence, types of help-seeking, double standards in professional services, and barriers to reporting. Chapter four discusses the research findings and the implications and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

As noted in Chapter 1, this research utilises a Modified Qualitative Systematic Review (MQSR) method to answer the following research question: Do socio-cultural attitudes toward masculinity create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non reciprocated IPV occurs from their female partner?

This chapter includes five sections. The first section describes the reasons for choosing a MQSR as the study methodology in this dissertation and for using thematic data analysis for an analysis of the findings. The second section describes the research questions and inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the third section explains the processes of the database search. The fourth section summarizes the process of the literature research and includes the diagram and flowchart. Section five discusses the quality of this study.

A Modified Qualitative Systematic Review

A modified qualitative systematic review (MQSR) was used as the research methodology due to the relative "newness" of the topic and the likelihood that there are limited local and international studies. This method requires the critical collection and appraisal of existing research, and systematic analysis of the current research selections (Snyder, 2019). One of the key advantages of a modified systematic review is that it employs a well-defined method to identify and critically assess studies to answer the research question. Systematic assessments will determine where evidence on a particular aspect of a topic is missing and how to close the knowledge gap. One of the limitations of the MQSR is it is time-consuming due to the literature searches that are complex and process-driven in nature (Ham-Baloti & Jordan, 2016).

According to Dixon-Wood, Bonas, Booth, Jones, Miller, Sutton, Shaw, Smith, and Young (2006), a traditional systematic review is employed when it is known that a large number of qualitative studies are to be found. However, a MQSR is suitable for this research topic where the scholarly investigations and literature using qualitative studies are known to be limited (Ham-Baloti & Jordan 2016; ten Bhavsar & Waddington, 2015).

As a novice researcher, MQSR is an ideal method choice for this dissertation project because of the nature of its small size. MQSR provides a framework for the search strategy through

logical sequencing and explicit article selection criteria. The purpose of this MQSR is to uncover gaps and inconsistencies in the knowledge that is available and focused on men as recipients of IPV by their female partners, and to provide a synthesis of the chosen academic reviews based on the initial summary of the literature. I am aware of the limitation of scholarships published about IPV against males therefore also included are relevant online articles from media sources such as the website that hosts the material for the demystifying domestic violence campaign - '*It's Not OK*'(http://www.areyouok.org.nz/). This website offers a starting point related to a well-known Aotearoa New Zealand initiative, developed by the Ministry of Social Development, targeting family violence including IPV.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis process sits comfortably alongside the MQSR of the literature. Thematic analysis is a flexible approach that can be modified to the specific requirements of a study. Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that thematic analysis provides a platform that does not require a detailed theoretical or technical knowledge base for a novice researcher.

King (2004) states that thematic analysis is advantageous for investigating multiple understandings by emphasizing parallels and differences and highlighting the researcher's insights. However, Holloway and Todres (2003) contend that the very flexible nature of thematic analysis's can be cause for concern. The laxity and flexibility of thematic analysis can lead to "discrepancy and a lack of coherence when developing themes" (p.346).

The work of Braun and Clarke (2012) was used as a guide to complete the process of analysis. The first step taken in the process of thematic analysis was for the researcher to become familiar with the data by scoping what was available and reflecting on the data's relevance in answering the research question. The second step was to assign codes to the data, such as keywords or terms, i.e., "aggression + female." Documents were collated and scored as to their relevance to the area of study, using a numerical system with 1 being "most useful" and 3 being "might be useful." Phase three was a search through the coded data to generate themes and any subthemes arising from the data set. In the next step, the researcher undertook reflection on the quality of the themes and how well they seemed to fit with the research questions. The last step was to

define and name the themes and to ensure these were simplistic, meaningful, and relevant to the topic.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

IPV is a widely studied research topic, in violence against women perpetrated by men so a comprehensive range of inclusion and exclusion criteria was required to streamline articles and information to match the study topic.

The inclusion criteria was narrowed to full text, peer-reviewed journal articles for the formal database searches. The relevant literature included only male victims of violence as the primary research focus. A manual search was undertaken of the relevant articles by reading through the search results to identify and remove articles that focused on intervention and treatment methods, as this was not the primary focus of the research question. Criteria for article selection was a focus on investigating subject matter where the study included men as recipients of IPV, non-reciprocal violence, male recipients' personal experience, help agency reviews, female perpetrators of IPV, and socio-cultural challenges. A manual review of the articles resulted in a selection of articles with a narrower focus that included heterosexual relationships and non-reciprocal IPV. In combination, the utilisation of the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see table one below) culminated in a focused selection of journal articles reflecting male IPV recipients' perspectives. Table (1) summarises the Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

Table 1 : Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

RESEARCH QUESTION
Do socio-cultural attitudes toward masculinity create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non-reciprocated IPV occurs from their female partner?
INCLUSION
Is this study targeting men as recipients of IPV from female partners?
Is this study targeting women perpetrators of IPV?
Is this study on heterosexual relationships?
Does this study include barriers in men reporting IPV?
Does this study include the reference to masculinity?
EXCLUSION
Articles that discussed any other form of violence, men as perpetrators only of violence, women as recipients only of violence, same-sex relationship, LGBTQ, treatment studies, intervention studies, alcohol & drug comorbidity, reciprocal violence, child sex abuse, dating violence, homicide.

Articles that fell outside of the inclusion criteria, such as those where the focus was on a study group with specific characteristics such as the LGTBQ population, participants with drug and other addictions, bi-directional violence, or a focus on male perpetrators, were excluded. The lack of Aotearoa New Zealand literature meant it was necessary to include global literature.

Search Process

This MQSR began with the formulation of one clearly defined question. I chose a broad literature scope to determine what was generally available in this study area. It was necessary to formulate key character words to as part of the inclusion and exclusion criteria as a basis to enable the most appropriate and relevant literature to be undertaken. Relevant search terms were developed with the support of a senior AUT librarian. Completed outcomes of the searches undertaken were recorded in the researcher's Endnote Library. This search aimed to highlight what literature was immediately available in line with the research question. Using the selection criteria described in the previous section, literature that did not meet the criteria was extracted, and removed along with any duplications. The process used aligns with the guidelines of the Auckland University of Technology website, 2020 (https://library.aut.ac.nz/doing-assignments/literature-reviews).

Searches were done in the EBSCO Health database CINAHL and EBSCO SocINDEX database. These databases were chosen as they provide a good source of articles supporting health and social research. OVID PyscARTICLES was also included as a database. It has a strong psychological focus and thus enabled a search for literature relating to intimate partner violence against men. There were only two results for Aotearoa New Zealand content, and of these, only one was able to be considered. Therefore, it was necessary to complete searches of a more informal nature and to include studies conducted outside New Zealand.

Searches using Google Scholar were also initiated. These were fewer formal searches, using the same keywords as the EBSCO and OVID databases. These searches were sorted by the 'relevance' tab. The first twenty were appraised for appropriateness by the title and then a brief look at the abstract. A visual search was undertaken to remove duplicates from the pool.

Figure (1) below demonstrates the literature searches using three searching steps. The first search, titled Exploratory search, was a generic search to determine what literature was available on men as IPV victims. The second search step, titled the Purposeful search, introduced the topic of women perpetrators of IPV to their male partners. The third search, titled Target search, included the two previous search criteria, plus the search terms on barriers to reporting and socio-cultural influences on reporting and help-seeking. After using the initial phrases as part of the preliminary search, keywords were determined and generated for the

database searches. There was utilisation of appropriate database boolean phrases, including AND and OR. There were no date limitations set because the preliminary literature review had identified many earlier seminal works that were foundation documents for this research area. Part of the selection criteria was full text and peer-reviewed articles as these supports the rigor of the investigation of the literature. In addition, websites and media sites were canvassed, and if appropriate, results from these were included in the content. Figure 1 below explains the modified systematic review system. Figure 2 highlights the results of the data searches, while Table 2 introduces the seven key articles included in the study analysis.

Assessment of the Study Quality

The search choices for literature are explained in the following matrix. The process used ensured transparency and an independent, balanced, and objective approach to addressing the research question. The systematic search started with a generalised scoping search to determine the available literature. Key character words were applied to the searches, followed by manually using the inclusion and exclusion format as detailed above. This was undertaken to ensure the validity and appropriateness of the resources utilised. A manual attempt was made to remove duplication by skim-reading titles. It became apparent themes were recognizable through titles and abstracts, which became part of the thematic analysis process.

Figure 1: The Modified Systematic Review Process

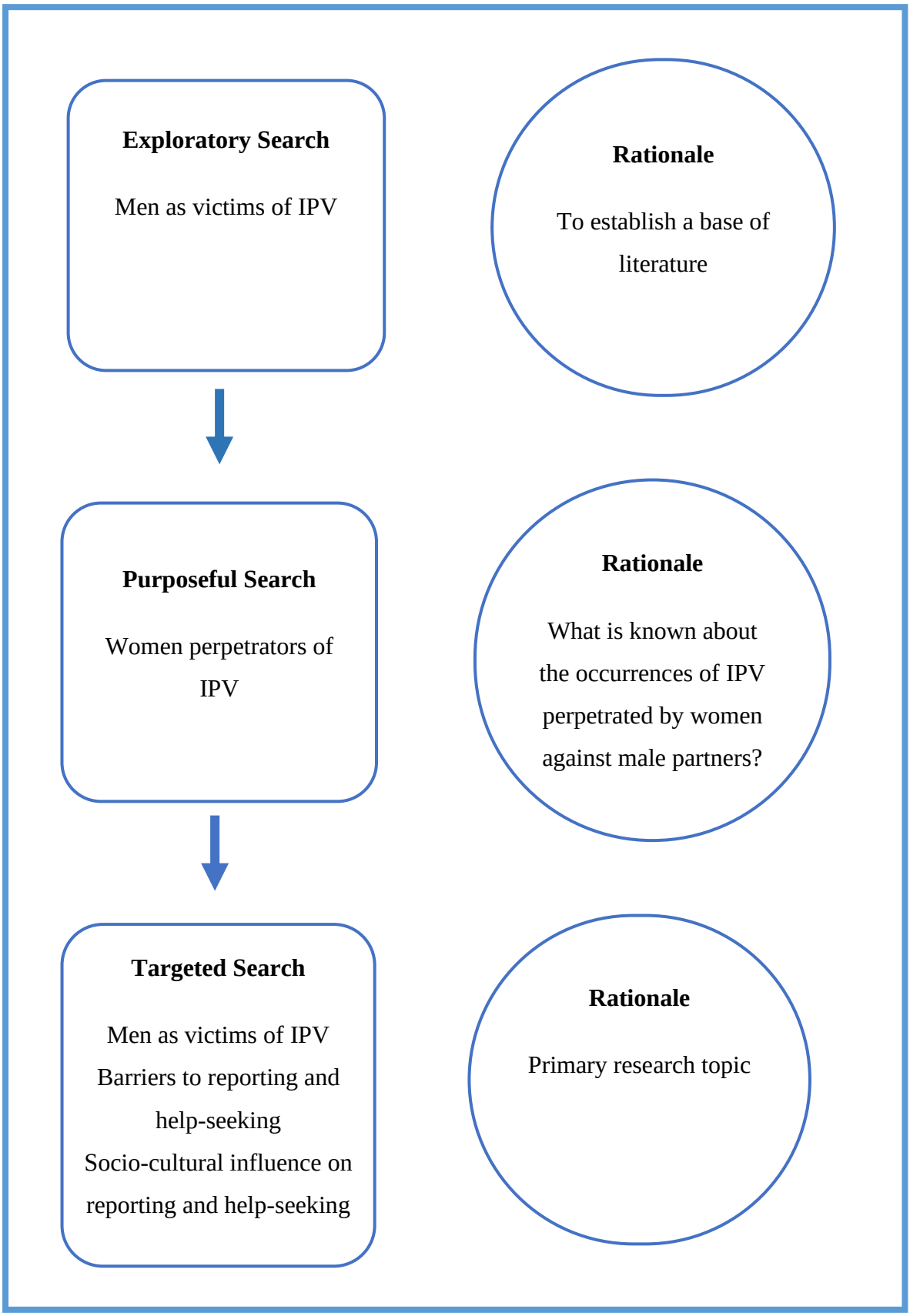
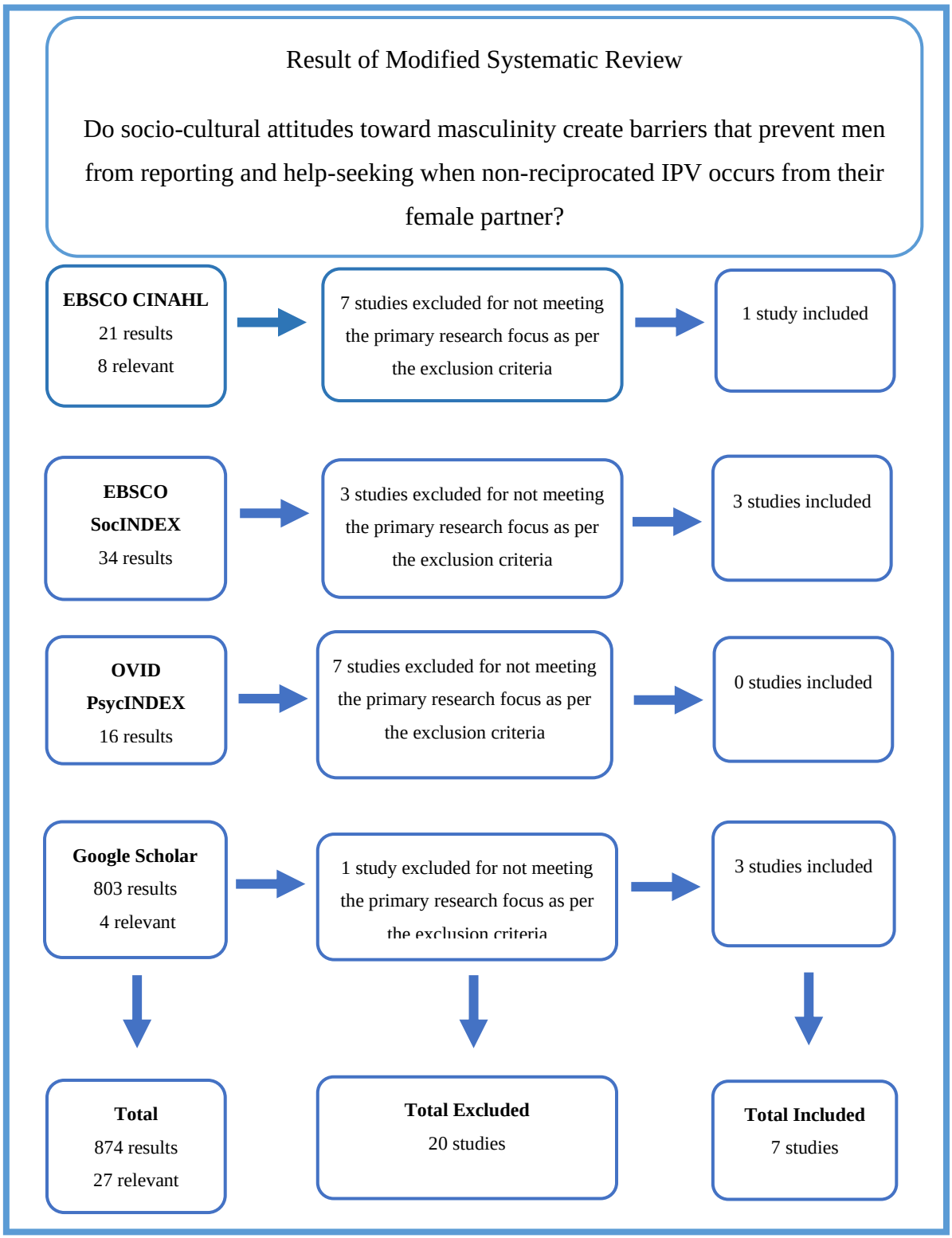


Figure 2: Flowchart: Results of the Modified Qualitative Systematic Review



This table was accurate as of 02 March 2021. Of the seven articles used, three came from the United States, three from the United Kingdom, one from Portugal, and one from Finland.

Table 2: Results of Data Search

Summaries of Key Articles from the Modified Qualitative Systematic Review

Reference	Size (N)	Place and Study Population	Research Objective	Methodology	Masculinity	Issues with reporting	Relevance
Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan, & Matos, M. (2017)	10 men aged 35-75 years	Portuguese men Portugal	Difficulties that men face in the process of seeking help, namely differences in treatment of men versus women victims	Qualitative	**x**	**x**	Included in study Key article
Eckstein (2010)	28 men Aged between 28 -58 years	United States	This study explored, communication of gender identities and varying masculinities in terms of heterosexual men when	Qualitative Interviews Phenomenological approach	**x**	**x**	Included in study Key article

	Caucasian (n= 26) African American (n= 1) Asian American (n=1)		disclosing female perpetrated IPV				
Durfee, (2011).	48 men Average age 36 years 1) 2163 filings of protection orders (PO) 2) Random selection of 101 PO of those in heterosexual relationships and first filings 3) Additional 39 cases where petitioners were men	United States	Scrutinizes how men negotiate the competing narratives of victimization, hegemonic masculinity, and stereotypes about domestic violence	Qualitative and Quantitative	**x**	**x**	Included in study Key article

McCarrick, Davis-McCabe, & Hirst-Winthrop, (2016).	6 men 40 – 65 years	United Kingdom	The current study aimed to explore men's experience of the UK Criminal Justice System (CJS) following female-perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV).	Qualitative Interpretative phenomenological analysis	**x**	Included in study
Bates, Kaye, Pennington & Hamlin, (2019).	122 men & women 18 – 61 years	United Kingdom	Explored the impact of stereotype priming on attitudes associated with IPV victimisation and perpetration and further examined behavioural responses related to hypothetical gendered scenarios of IPV.	Qualitative and Quantitative	**x**	
Kingsnorth & MacIntosh (2007)	8461 cases of heterosexual IPV Asian American, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White	United States	This paper examines the role of suspect gender in prosecutorial decision-making. Suspect gender was found to be statistically significant about all four outcomes in favouring female over male suspects		**x**	**Included in study**

	7434 male defendants					
Venäläinen, (2020)	Discussion threads from 2007 - 2016 98 discussion threads, Total 3190 comments Collected in April 2017	Finland	Using online discussions from social media chat forums, this article examines how female-inflicted intimate partner violence (IPV) has gained increased visibility in the last two decades. These discussions put victim positions on offer for men that stand in stark contrast to more widespread associations between masculinity and the perpetration of violence.	Qualitative	**x**	**Included in study**

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology undertaken to complete this literature review. The MQSR (Modified Qualitative Systematic Review) was used to explore other researchers' work. Selection criteria for studies that were used included men as recipients of IPV from a female partner, women perpetrators of IPV, heterosexual relationships, barriers to men reporting IPV, and masculinity. Articles that had a focus on socio-cultural perceptions related to masculinity and how that perception impacts on male victims' help-seeking behaviours and attitudes when experiencing IPV from their heterosexual partners were seen as particularly pertinent to the research question. Ethics approval was not required for this literature review as a study to address the research question. Those articles included studies conducted in Portugal, United States, United Kingdom, and Finland. Thematic analysis was used to determine themes in the literature, and these themes and findings are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

The search for data enlisted CINHAL, SocINDEX, PyscINDEX databases, and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used; masculinity, masculine, manhood, gender, intimate partner violence, male victim* of intimate partner violence or domestic abuse, help-seeking, barriers female perpetrator* or woman perpetrator* or women perpetrator*. The searches yielded a total of twenty-seven articles, and of those twenty seven, seven articles were selected as suitable for inclusion. Of those seven articles, three key articles were determined; Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan, & Matos (2017) in Portugal; Eckstein (2010) and Durfee (2011), United States.

There were four themes found after thematic analysis of the seven articles. The themes discussed in this chapter are the types of violence, types of help-seeking, double standards in professional services, and barriers to reporting and help-seeking. As a brief explanation of the determination of the themes, definitions were used for clarity. Types of violence include direct and indirect violence. Direct violence is violence that is applied directly to the recipient while indirect violence is involved innocuously so the perpetration of violence is manipulated to be delivered through another agent. Help-seeking falls into two types of informal and formal help-seeking behaviours. The informal included seeking support from family and friends. The formal help-seeking is the use of, front-line responders and professional help agencies. Double standards in professional service describes where there is an inequity and inequality of service for men as recipients of IPV compared to services that are available and accessed by women as IPV recipients. Barriers to reporting and help-seeking included patterns of men experiencing further emotional harm, trauma, and victimisation, compounding into adverse effects for some participants who reported IPV. Barriers to reporting included a fear of losing masculinity and being less of a man for being the recipient of female perpetrated IPV and the conflict between masculinity and victimhood as male recipients of IPV struggled to maintain their sense of masculinity as well as trying to maintain a sense of control, while still acknowledging victimhood.

Summaries of the Articles Selected

Machado et al.'s (2017) study used a qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews. The research involved 10 Portuguese male participants, aged 35-7, who had sought

legal help by contacting agencies or police following intimate partner violence from their female partners. The education of the participants ranged from elementary school to doctorate level. The average length of the participant's relationships was 15.5 years, with most participants since leaving their violent relationship at the time of the research. The violence reported was unidirectional i.e. not reciprocated by the male recipient.

The study revealed the harmful effects of the violence on the participant's lives. Additionally, this study outlined the difficulties the participants encountered through the process of seeking help. There were variances in response from help agencies. Some men were disbelieved and ridiculed while others were treated with the same respect and empathy that the participants felt women are privy to when reporting. Of considerable importance is the outcome that Machado and colleagues draw attention to which is the negative emotional impact that help-seeking had on most study participants. Finally, this study has raised significant consequences for help professionals and front-line responders (such as the police) and highlights the need for a social campaign to raise awareness of this phenomenon.

Eckstein's (2010) study included 28 participants, all heterosexual men, with a mean age of 45.8 years. The ethnicities of the men participating were identified as Caucasian (26), African American (1), and Asian American (1). At the time of the interviews, 24 men had left the abusive relationship. Twenty-six men reported staying in the relationship for years after the IPV perpetration began. Of the four men still in abusive relationships, Eckstein (2010) says that 2 indicated a desire to leave, one hoped to work the relationship out, and one wanted to stay until the children were grown up (p 65). For this study, Eckstein (2010) used data from a previous 2009 study that had not been included in her earlier work. The original data was collected via semi-structured interviews. All interviews were rechecked for accuracy by the participants, prior to inclusion into the new study. No interviews were duplicated between the two studies. Eckstein focused on notions of masculinity and how men communicated their issues around gender identity to the researcher when recounting their experience of female perpetrated IPV.

Durfee's (2011) study examined more than 2200 protection orders (Table 2) and selected a final sample of 48 men with a mean age of 36 years old who were in a heterosexual relationship and were also the petitioner of a protection order (filed the protection order). The study listed 27 participants as 'white' and ten were 'black,' with 11 not recording their ethnicity (p.10). At the time of the study, most (22) were married to the perpetrator, 12 were cohabitating with the

perpetrator, and the remainder were separated from their previous partner and in a dating relationship with a new person. Six participants had children in common with the respondent. Types of abuse reported were verbal abuse (42 participants), physical abuse (39 participants), and both (27 participants). Durfee stated that within her study, 21 men (44 percent) received a protection order, far fewer than the 80 percent of women who received a protection order in a similar study that Durfee undertook with a similar sample group of women (Durfee, 2011). The 2011 study identified how heterosexual men, as IPV recipients, described themselves, their abuse, and their abusive partners in their protection order petitions. Durfee's (2011) main objective was to examine the socio-cultural contexts of what it means to be a "man" and a "victim," alongside institutional and cultural milieu in which their narratives are created and shaped.

McCarrick, Davis-McCabe, and Hirst-Winthrop (2016) reported the findings of men's experiences of the Criminal Justice System in the United Kingdom as recipients of female perpetrated IPV. Participants self-referred to the study after self-deciding if they met the criteria so this is a weakness of the study. The criteria were determined as male, over 18 years old, and experienced the Criminal Justice System due to female perpetrated IPV. The researchers employed unstructured face-to-face and skype interviews for data gathering purposes. The six participants were 46 – 65 years of age. No other demographics of participants were detailed in the study. The overarching theme for the participants was trauma as a direct result of the abuse suffered from their partners and further impacted by their experience through the criminal justice system. The participants in this study described the justice system as treating them like the perpetrator instead of victims. They reported feeling they were not being heard or believed by those in authority. McCarrick et al. (2016) also found some similar themes that identified findings relating to male victims' masculinity and societal stereotypes.

Kingsnorth and MacIntosh (2007) utilized a sample of 8,461 cases of heterosexual IPV to examine the role of gender in people who were being prosecuted for IPV. The study took over 2.5 years with the data being taken directly from police arrest documentation that was sent to the District Court. Within the study data used, there were 7434 male defendants and 10277 female defendants. This study found themes relating to masculinity, reluctance to report, and double standards in practice.

Bates, Kaye, Pennington, and Hamlin (2019) studied the impact of stereotypical beliefs when participants were faced with accepting IPV male victimisation, using hypothetical scenarios.

The study focused on what participant's intentions would be related to reporting incidents, when faced with men being seen or noted to be recipients of IPV. Bates and colleagues found that generally, men were perceived as perpetrators and less likely to be seen in the context of IPV recipients and as a result, reporting of IPV when men were the victim, was lower. This study also identifies that generalised social and cultural beliefs are strong and support the perception that violence against women is more severe than violence against men and that there is a need to address societal perceptions of women's aggression to match the evidence more closely.

Venäläinen (2020) examines 10 years of online forum discussions in Finland related to female perpetrated IPV and men as recipients. There were 98 different threads examined with a total of 3,190 comments. In the forums the participants used pseudonyms so the gender of participants cannot be determined. The analysis of the discourse in the forum resulted in perceptions of men in victim roles that contrast sharply with more widespread comparisons between masculinity and violence perpetration. There are two recurring types of positions for men: neglected victims and naturally superior perpetrators. The data from the forums suggest that there has been an increase in awareness of female perpetrated violence. Much of this change has coalesced with the rise of anti-feminist sentiments and men's rights groups' advancement. In these forums, women's violence was a subject of open debate. The language of men's rights is focused on claims of systematic male sexism and the assertion that, in many respects, in today's culture, men possess a lower degree of influence than women. Venäläinen's (2020, p2) views masculinity as a fluid construct, relational to feminist practices that are informed by a "larger societal, cultural and structural formation."

There were sixteen articles from the database search that were not included in this study as they did not meet the criteria set (see Table 1). Some articles did not solely focus on heterosexual relationships (Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman 2007; Huntley, Potter, Williamson, Malpass, Szilassy & Feder, 2019). Articles that discussed reciprocal violence or violence that was used as a type of currency within a heterosexual relationship were also discounted (Melton, 2005). Studies that had a focus of men as perpetrators of IPV and not as recipients of IPV were excluded (Keller & Honea, 2016; Allen & Bradley, 2018). Articles that focused on child victimization were removed (Howells & Rosenbaum, 2008; Russell, 2013) and opinion articles such as that written by Espinoza and Warner (2016) that did not provide participant demographics, research methods, or outcomes, were also excluded. Several articles focused

on the characteristics of female perpetrators of violence and IPV, which is not a criterion for this dissertation (Dowd, 2001; Light-Allende, 2004; Wigman, 2009; McKeown, 2014; Larsen & Hamberger, 2015). Carlyle, Scarduzio, and Slater's (2014) study was excluded, as this had a strong focus on the social marketing of IPV interventions.

From the seven articles included in this study, there were four themes identified, and these themes are discussed below.

Types of Violence

Studies by Machado et al. (2017), Eckstein (2010) and Durfee (2011) found that female perpetrated IPV was unlikely to be a one-off incident and was usually an ongoing pattern in the relationship. Machado et al. (2017) and Eckstein (2010) identified and described two categories of IPV: direct and indirect violence.

Direct violence: Physical violence, self-harm, and intimate terrorism

Direct violence refers to violence that was perpetrated directly against the victim. In Machado et al. (2017), direct violence was characterised as psychological, physical, or financial in nature and in addition there was violence through stalking, and legal administrative violence which is the use of the legal system to the other's purposeful detriment, usually involving falsehoods . Participants generally described being recipients of multiple forms of violence, typically cumulative physical and psychological violence. Participants also described different tools or strategies used by their female partners including behaviours such as throwing objects, being ditched in unfamiliar places and left alone there manipulative self-harm (i.e., self-mutilation) and intimate terrorism.

> "*… from throwing things that I liked the most. For instance, I had gone on a trip to Canada (...) I brought a footprint of a bear and (...) a statue (...). And it was on the table not even eight days before she threw it right at me and broke it all...; The other situation is psychological torture (...) Many times she left me somewhere and left with the car (...); on the weekends she turned the lights off on me and cut the water (...) The torture is to feel that I am there under her control, and that she does what she wants*." (B., 35 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p.5)

In Eckstein's (2010) study, all 28 participants stated they experienced intimate terrorism, and severe emotional/physiological abuse. Intimate terrorism is described in this study as debilitation, (physical and psychological abuse to weaken mind and body) dread, (degradation and threats) and dependency, (controlled resources supplemented by kindness) (p. 63). All the men reported acts of domination /control from the perpetrators. The narratives provided by the men also described severe physical injury (23) and sexual abuse and rape (4).

Indirect violence: Through malicious use of children and making false allegations

Indirect violence refers to violence that was not directly against the recipient and is implemented through another means. Some participants in the Machado et al study (2017), described indirect violence as violence by the abuser engaging agencies under false claims of being abused. For example, threatening to call police and falsely allege that the men had been violent against them, and the use of legal threats all of which heavily impacted the men. Men reported that children were often used as emotional weapons. At times, children were vicariously impacted through the process of IPV. A poignant description from the study encapsulates the impact.

> *"This is always connected to the problem of children, isn't it? It is always connected to the blackmail that is made and the violence that is done using the children and that children are exposed (...) My daughter was subjected to brainwashing about me, the most barbaric things involving intimate life scenes, where I was painted as a perfectly wicked person and a pervert".* (A., 45 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p.5)

A key finding from Eckstein's (2010) study was that where IPV occurrence against male participants affected other family members (namely children), the account from the men was positioned as a failure within the hegemonic roles of provider and protector. That is, identified as an own failure to uphold a masculine identity of power and control (Eckstein 2010, p.68).

A quote taken from Eckstein's study identifies one participant, who recognized his inability to preserve a masculine identity of power and control and the internalization of hegemonic norms when addressing his victimisation in his terms.

> *"Yes. Victim. I don't like to say that because I hate that term. I don't like people saying they're victims 'cause everyone can fight for themselves. But I've gone to the courts with*

> *the truth, and all the studies, all the proof in the world, and it was just turned against me and made me look like I was the perpetrator. In that case, yeah, I feel like a human rights victim, definitely. And my kids are suffering because of it. That really pisses me off. "*("Bob," 38-year-old single manager, 4-year abusive marriage, out of IPV for 6 years) (Eckstein, 2010, p68)

An example of indirect violence is given by Venäläinen (2020), who writes from her study of online discussions regarding female perpetrated IPV, that the prevalence of "male-bashing" in the form of demonization is engaged and enabled by women, who are prone to making false allegations of men's use of violence.

Machado and colleagues (2017) report similar findings, with one participant describing a form of legal administrative violence when his partner self-harmed and then manipulated her report to the police to implicate him as causing her harm:

> *"She mutilated and scratched herself and made up that I had run her over. And since that incident, I was charged with DV [domestic violence] (...) I was notified to present to the court (...) identified and prohibited to leave the country."* (B., 35 years) (Machado et al., 2017 p.5)

Types of Help-Seeking

There are two types of help-seeking described by Machado et al. (2017), which are referred to as formal help-seeking and informal help-seeking. Informal help-seeking includes approaching family, friends, and associates at work for support. In formal help-seeking, IPV recipients look to obtain assistance from a Government or statutory agency mandated to provide a service, such as police. Alternatively, recipients of violence can approach a non-government agency, which operates as community support organisation, such as Victim Support.

Informal: Neighbours, friends, and co-workers

Machado et al.'s (2017) study concluded that for most participants, the first place they sought help from was informal sources. It was often from the informal source that men were directed or encouraged to contact formal help agencies.

> *"The other day, my neighbour saw me, and I was really down; she made me an appointment and took me to the doctor"* (F., 43 years) (Machado et al. 2017, p 519)

The participants in Machado et al.'s (2017) study showed that the help they received informally (friends, family, etc.) was constructive and useful.

> *"They [colleagues at work] support me all the time. They told me to go to see a psychologist, they told me to go to social services*" (E., 40 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p 520).

Formal: Police, social workers, hospitals, and courts

Most of the participants described their formal help-seeking experiences as unhelpful, especially the judicial system, which was consistently perceived by the men as having double standards (McCarrick et al., 2016; Machado et al, 2010). An IPV recipient can report or seek legal assistance from professionals such as first-line government statutory responders, police, hospitals, doctors, and some social workers. Non-government organisations are available in the community and include services such as victim support services, counsellors, and women's refuges and crisis centres.

The most common complaint from participants in their experiences when help-seeking from formal sources, was a perceived double standard of professional service, where men felt disbelieved, accused of having a role in the abuse, and of being the real perpetrator (Machado et al., 2017). In turn, this further victimizes the men as help seekers.

Barriers to Help-Seeking

A consistent theme in all the seven studies identified (Table 2) was that men expressed shame, humiliation, denial, and fears of not being believed when they sought help from formal agencies or when they were reporting to such organisations

Research shows there is a gender gap of men both reporting IPV and looking for support. This is supported by the studies of Machado et al. (2017), Durfee (2011), and Eckstein (2010), amongst others. One explanation of the lack of help-seeking and reporting from men as victims of IPV is that it is the result of internalised gender norms of masculinity (Eckstein, 2010). This

internalisation of masculinity may reduce men's willingness to seek support for any health-related problem, especially in the aftermath of abuse by a female partner (Eckstein, 2010). An individual's own beliefs and perceptions of masculinity may create a barrier because of the way he reports IPV when seeking help, especially if the report contains a type of 'macho-ness' from the male recipient of IPV (Durfee, 2011). This may contribute to creating a sense of non-belief from those working in formal help-seeking agencies such as help call lines, police, the wider judicial system, hospitals etc.

Machado et al.'s (2017) study describes the difficulties that men face in seeking professional help, namely the differences in the treatment of men as victims versus women as victims. It also highlights that the experience of formal help-seeking had a negative emotional impact on most of these men.

Perceived double standards in professional service

Male participants reported questionable responses to them as men experiencing IPV which emphasises the differences in responses from some staff at formal agencies based on the victim's gender (Machado et al. 2017; Eckstein, 2010). The men as victims of IPV experienced a myriad of responses from staff that were unacceptable in the context of a support services for victim and included a lack of emotional support, taunting, disbelieving, accusations and non-referral for medical examinations (Machado et al. 2017; Eckstein, 2010; Kingsnorth & MaIntosh, 2007).

Machado et al. (2017) study revealed the difficulties that men face in the process of seeking help. It also highlights that help-seeking had a negative emotional impact on most of these men. The study of Machado and colleague's (2017), has important implications for practitioners and underlines the need for more comprehensive recommendations to be implemented to raise about this phenomenon, including the need for changes in victims' services and advocacy for gender-inclusive campaigns and responses to IPV that equally support both men and women who are victims.

The men's voices were affected negatively by their experience with the police and the judicial system (Machado et al., 2017). When recounting their experiences, the participants described feeling further victimised by the attitudes and responses that their call for help elicited from others. Some participants experienced calling the police only to find that the police failed to

respond to their call. Others reported police attending but found they were being mocked by the police.

> "*A man calls the police (…), and do you know how many times I reported the incidents to the police? At least 6 or 7! And nothing (…) they didn't respond to it as domestic violence! My partner scratched me, called me names, and hit me (…) I called the police (…), and in the end, the prosecution doesn't consider it violence nor an offense"* (G., 61 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p 519)

> *"The officers made fun of men. I was scorned by the system. The officer told me: your wife scratched you, but the only thing that I have to say to you is you are worthless. You push her against the wall, give her two punches, and the problem will be solved."* (G., 61 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p.519)

The social work profession did not fare any better in terms of being recognised as an effective support service for some participants. Men reported bias and double standards and being treated as if they were the aggressor.

> *"The professional [from social services] always treated me as if I was an offender*" (M., 36 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p 519).

There were some positive responses found by the men from the people in the legal services they engaged with some helpful interventions experienced by a minority of the participants.

> *"They heard me, they didn't judge me, and they gave me support. Sometimes, only hearing what we have to say and having friendly words makes the difference"* (M., 36 years) (Machado et al., 2017, p 519).

McCarrick et al. (2016) also found similar issues in their study with police and the justice system. Their participants were consistent in reporting experiences of not being believed by the police and staff within the justice system. The participants spoke of a disparity in treatment and service, based on the fact that they were men. One participant referred to the attitude of the police as black and white.

> *"They're very black and white these guys [mm]. Erm, and I personally got the impression that, if you're male, you're a perpetrator, if you're female, you're a victim"* (Chris) (McCarrick et al., 2016, p 208)

One participant further described a billboard outside the domestic abuse unit (where men also report and seek help for IPV).

> *"The headquarters of the DV unit has a massive billboard outside its building, 'he's a big hit with the ladies, and it's a man standing over a woman, hitting the woman."* (Lee) (McCarrick et al., 2016, p 208)

Kingsnorth and MacIntosh (2007), identified the police and the judicial system as agencies that perpetuate the differences in response to male and female IPV victims. They state, “The victim is three times more likely to be arrested when the defendant is female” (p.469).

Fears of losing masculine identity: Being a tough cookie

The dynamic of masculinity and its impact on men as victims of IPV include fear of losing face and their masculine identity. All three studies revealed barriers to help-seeking for men and links to the conception of masculinity in IPV discourse (Eckstein, 2010; Machado et al. 2017; McCarrick et al., 2016).

Durfee (2011) discusses the additional difficulties men face as victims because of the complexity of notions of ‘hopelessness’ and 'powerlessness' which threaten the identity of men as masculine. She states that "hegemonic masculinity emphasizes men's power and control in heterosexual relationships. Thus, men claiming victimization by a woman partner face a difficult situation… they must emphasize their powerlessness, yet to be a "man," they must be in control” (p. 324).

The conflict is that if the male petitioners of a protection order describe themselves in ways that preserve their sense of masculinity, then this is perceived as perpetuating control over their partner. Moreover, there is a risk of defeating the purpose of the order. The results of Durfee's (2011) study showed that 12 of the male petitioners, who were claiming to be recipients of IPV from their female partners, wrote narratives in their petitions that highlighted their control of the women aggressor.

The following quote is from Durfee's study (2010, p324):

> "*At around 4:00 a.m., myself and the respondent were engaged in an argument when she assaulted me with an electronic device (t.v. remote). I then got up to prevent her from harming me when she started to swing her arms and hands at me. I grabbed her by the coat and fell to the ground with her. While on the ground, she continued to swing at me, so I held her arms to the ground until she stopped. When she stopped, I let her up and told her to leave, and she left. Shortly after, her boyfriend called me inquiring about the incident. I told him I didn't hit her and hung up the phone. We both filed assault complaints with Renton police."*

At first glance, this may seem a fair and reasonable account of the incident. As Durfee (2011) points out, the recipient has described several ways in which the female perpetrator has acted violently against him, as required to complete that section of the form. The participant then outlines how he restrained the aggressor to stop her from physically harming him. The state only requires the petitioner to describe the recent act(s) of violence. The fact that he includes his actions in restraining the perpetrator emphasises his ability to fend off physical attacks and therefore complicates his need to apply for a protection order. The account of being a victim is now complicated, as "victims" are usually seen to be powerless against their abusers, and therefore more likely to need legal intervention. This conflict between notions of masculinity versus powerlessness has a significant impact on the articulation of policy and programmes, which are described later in the discussion and recommendation chapter.

When subject to IPV, a man's attempts to preserve masculinity were noted in excerpts taken from Venäläinen's (2020) study. The contributors to the online forum (research) wrote:

> *"Is he a man, then, who beats a woman after she hits him? I could have done it physically, a million times better than the woman who hit me, but I am, you see, a GENTLEMAN, who does not hit someone weaker, and I did not hit her, even then!!!"* (13 March 2009) (Venäläinen's, 2020, p 781)

> *"I have sometimes been bitch slapped, but I still under no circumstances will hit a woman. I have been raised so that only a man without balls hits someone weaker than he is, and, yes, I am - at least so far - stronger than my wife".* (14 March 2014) (Venäläinen's, 2020, p 781)

These excerpts show a tension between assuming a position based on an assumed masculine entitlement to use violence (hegemonic masculinity) against the shamefulness of hitting a woman, thus transgressing the norms of what could be considered honourable masculinity. Venäläinen (2020) refers to this "honourable masculinity' as a tool for deflecting a potential threat to their masculinity through refraining from violence, even when subject to it. This can be seen by the contributor's claiming masculinity and is exhibited by the use of impulse control in not resorting to retaliation or reciprocal violence.

Eckstein (2010) explains that for men who emphasised masculinity in their recounts, "…it may be that the societal system was a worthy (i.e., masculine, dominant, powerful) opponent to fight and against which to fail, but females and relationships were not" (p, 69). By giving examples of masculine behaviour (more potent, more powerful) and setting masculinity against victimization, an understanding of hegemonic norms concerning power relation were illustrated.

In the 2016 study by McCarrick and colleagues, it was noted that the participants spoke about their own physicality and strength compared to their female partners, who had committed the IPV. The notion of being abused by a female carried over to a personal sense of loss of masculine identity based on their perception of being "tough."

> *"The circumstances surrounding the ending the relationship sort of really magnified, for me anyway, magnified that, although I considered myself somewhat of a tough cookie, it didn't prevent me from ending up in therapy"* (Chris) (McCarrick et al., 2016, p 208)

It was also noted that the participants in this study developed a perception of inequality between genders in a societal context, that is, that men are mistreated throughout the chain of events when reporting IPV, due to societal beliefs around gender roles. One participant went further to describe a sense of being segregated from society due to the societal view of men who have experienced IPV. He likened his experience to Afro-Caribbean people arriving in the United Kingdom in the 50s and 60s, who were a community of people also treated like pariahs and segregated.

Kingsnorth and MacIntosh (2007) propose that within a cultural belief that highlights the concept of male control of females, there is psychological harm for male IPV recipients in drawing official attention to their intimate victimization, which is consistent with the other studies identified.

Fears of being laughed at, fears of not being believed

Bates et al. (2019) identify examples of barriers to help-seeking for men as fear of not being believed, fear of being laughed at, and fear of false counter-allegations. They conclude that men are looking for help in a system that is geared to support women as victims. Bates et al. (2019) report that police are often disbelieving of the reports of men seeking help. Police have not taken the case seriously or they have treated the man reporting the IPV as the perpetrator. The psychological impact can be significant through further perpetuating victimisation and leading to further trauma. This finding suggests that because men's views of their victimisation are conditioned by ingrained gender roles and social perceptions, these additional barriers and fears further prevent them from seeking support.

Venäläinen (2020) echoes the concerns about male invisibility, a subject that is starting to be raised in men's groups and academic debates.

> *Studies that are one-sided and misleading should be banned. Why weren't men's experiences investigated at the same time? Aren't men's lives and health considered valuable; isn't violence against men seen as an equally severe and essential problem? Aren't men seen as having the right to live without violence and fear of it?* (12 January 2014) (Venäläinen, 2020, p 777)

This quote illustrates how men are neglected as IPV victims. Prevalent gendered stereotypes contribute to undermining their victimhood. Shame is highlighted as a likely reason in the analysis of the online discussions for men not reporting incidents of female perpetrated IPV. Domestic violence by women against men may be even more frequent than men's violence toward women if few men report violence to the authorities on account of being afraid of being shamed. (05 January 2010) (Venäläinen, 2020, p 778). Gendered shame is commonly linked to men's victimization, and the associated difficulty in looking for help may undeniably be a reality for many men experiencing IPV (Venäläinen, 2020).

Negative impact of IPV on men: Exhaustion, self-harm and anger

Many participants in Machado et al.'s (2017) study described the adverse effects IPV had on their psychological, emotional, and physical well-being.

> *"…this is not easy, as it makes you often think about shooting yourself in the head, to disappear. It's a lot, a lot of a pressure"* (B., 35 years) (Machado et al. 2017, p. 518).

It was also noted that there was a negative impact on other social relationships. For some of the participants, their relationship, and the ongoing dynamics of the IPV directly affected their workplace performance and accountabilities.

> *"It's sad because, in my work, I was never late, you know? If I started to work at eight, I would be there at least fifteen minutes beforehand. And then there was a phase when I was really tired, you know? I could not rest because she would not let me, and I started to be late for work"* (E., 40 years) (Machado et al. 2017, p.518).

The participants in McCarrick et al.'s (2016) study identified a sense of unfair treatment within the justice system which contributed to their anger. The sense of inequality within the system can heighten the sense of victimisation for men and add to the confusion of being treated like a perpetrator.

> *"I've got a lot of anger towards the establishment as well, and the police [yeah] and I think the police, like the way they deal with perpetrators in domestic situations, is not right, because they're not, they're not fair*" (David) (McCarrick et al., 2016, p207).

The researchers point out that "the fact that David refers to himself as the perpetrator is reflective of his confusion over his role as victim or perpetrator" (McCarrick et al., 2016, p207).

Chapter Summary

This findings chapter discusses the socio-cultural attitudes that may prevent men from both reporting and help-seeking as recipients of IPV. From the thematic analysis, four key themes were identified; types of violence, types of help-seeking, barriers to reporting and help-seeking and double standards in professional services.

The central message derived from these themes is that participants experience multiple forms of violence, including both direct and indirect in nature. While the consequences of direct

violence are immediate, the effects of indirect violence can last for years after the abuse. Help-seeking often leaves the men further traumatised as fears of not being believed adds another layer of stress.

Masculinity and the way it is perceived by the male victim impacts the way reports of the IPV are recounted by the men. An intrinsic sense of masculinity may see men claiming status as a recipient or victim of IPV but also showing a need to claim a certain amount of control over the abusive incident (Durfee, 2011). This mixed messaging may confuse those in help agencies, and perhaps the men themselves. Most men report a sense of double standards in the service they received from front-line professionals such as police, the judicial system, and help agencies. The dominant subjective beliefs about masculinity held by professionals influence their attitudes when receiving reports from men as victims of IPV resulting in professionals responding with doubt and disbelief. The stories of the participants in the studies confirm that many people hearing the reports of male victims of IPV will accuse the recipient of being the aggressor or they will resort to ridiculing them. This type of response adds to the fear of reporting for male victims of IPV and creates further barriers for men when they need to seek help.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

To heal from abuse, an important first step is to acknowledge the problem...
(Tsui et al. p.129).

Introduction

This study used a Modified Qualitative Systematic Review to investigate the literature on men as recipients of IPV. The overall purpose of this study was to encapsulate the current body of knowledge known about males as recipients of IPV from their female partners and what type of help seeking they used and the barriers to help-seeking and reporting they experienced because they are men in a position that is predominately believed to be one that women experience. Using a social worker's lens, I envisaged capturing the representation of the men and the expression of gender bias; that men are perpetrators of heterosexual violence and never the recipient – the ideation of masculinity - and how these impacts IPV male victims for help-seeking and reporting. The question was also purported as to what and where changes need to be made in delivering curriculum to social work students as well in the training and professional development strategies for those working in help and service agencies to remove barriers to help-seeking and reporting for men.

The themes to emerge in the findings were the types of violence experienced by men, the type of help-seeking recognised by men, commonly found barriers to reporting IPV violence and seeking help. It became apparent that those working in some agencies are unconsciously biased against males who present as victims of IPV and that is because they are influenced by traditional stereotypes of masculinity. This prevents the men from being believed and being able to access the support they deserve. The men who are victims of IPV are themselves subjected to specific social-cultural constructions of masculinity that persist in current times and which complicate their response to being victims of IPV.

This chapter discusses the findings of the modified research and addresses whether the perpetuation of some socio-cultural views of masculinity such as hegemonic masculinity where men have traditional roles as protectors and providers, create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non-reciprocated IPV occurs from their female partner. This

chapter includes five sections: masculinity as a cultural space; reporting; recommendations; conclusion; and the last word. The discussion starts with masculinity as a cultural space.

Do social-cultural attitudes of masculinity create barriers that prevent men from reporting and help-seeking when non reciprocated IPV occurs from their female partner?

Masculinity as a Cultural Space

The findings of the study support Venäläinen's (2020) argument that the roles of men as expected by the socially constructed notions of masculinity, that is, the prescribed roles of men as determined solely by their gender within our societal and cultural space. This explains the barriers experienced by men as victims of IPV when they seek help. That men can only be perpetrators of abuse and not victims of IPV.

When reporting violence, male victims will therefore face a tension between learned societal expectations and their individual experiences as IPV victims resulting in feelings such as conflict and shame. Commonly the media contribute to the perpetuation of such stereotypes of masculinity with images that depict men are the aggressors and never the victim in situations of domestic violence. For men, the result is confusion on what is known of their cultural space – that is, the self-claimed space that embodies who they are as a man, versus the space where they are an anomaly in terms of a dominant social construct of masculinity as a victim of abuse from their female partner. Such a view of masculinity subsequently fails to acknowledge an individual personal expression of subjective masculine identity and voice. Excerpts in the findings chapter reinforce the challenges faced by male IPV victims in reporting and seeking help which is embodied in the unspoken question - he is a male and therefore must be the aggressor, yet he presents himself as a victim? (Machado et al., 2017).

Beynon (2002) explains the conception of "masculinity as a cultural space" (p.179). Culture includes artefacts, symbols, language, attitudes and behaviours, and social interactions. Likewise, masculinity within a cultural space is observed in cultural symbols, norms, interpretations, language, and social interactions. These characteristics of a particular view of masculinity are commonly manifested in institutional, political, support and health services. The findings of this study highlight the fear of male victims of IPV, versus public services' confusions in working with male IPV victims. I argue for this, an ingrained societal conception

of masculinity as having a significant adverse effect on the interpretation and subjectification of IPV male victims' support.

I also follow Morgan's (1992) argument that the concept that both masculinity and femininity are best understood from how men and women behave rather than biological. The ideation of masculine and feminine must transcend the sex of the person. Gender is a fluid concept, and it is beyond the binary male vs. female concepts or the 'the mind-body dualism' that may hinder a critical approach in addressing and responding to IPV for male recipients.

The MSQR in this study did not allow for an examination of the influence of feminist theories and the feminist movement in the context of women being perpetrators of IPV against male partners that arose. However, I wonder to what extent the ever-changing social, cultural, and economic role of women influences masculinity and gender relationships. Until a new concept of masculinity is both forged and accepted by men and general society, men will continue to struggle with the internal tensions of who they feel are expected to be as opposed to who they feel they are (Hancox, 2020). This contradiction of the self is likely to continue to hinder the reporting and help-seeking barriers men face.

Reporting Violence

As noted earlier, findings from the study highlight that men have fears and hesitation in reporting IPV from their female partners. Reporting to frontline services often resulted in them experiencing disbelief of staff when they recounted the IPV. Instead they were suspected of having a part in the violence, and at times accused of being the real perpetrator. When services are not responsive, constructive, and reassuring, male IPV victims are unlikely to seek help from those services (Dutton & White, 2019). Multiple studies including those conducted by Machado et al. (2017) and McCarrick et al. (2016) findings conclude that men's personal experiences of IPV are complex and challenging. Knowing more about men's experiences as recipients of IPV and their reporting experiences will support changes in social structures that will ultimately support men as victims of IPV. A greater understanding may prompt further study into what is required to broaden public perceptions and ensure an appropriate network of support through challenging those working in agencies to understand their own inherent biases and the need to disestablish these to construct a view of men that incorporates them as potential victims of IPV. Dominant societal views of gender roles and what constitutes masculinity will continue to contribute to the greater reluctance for men, compared to women, to seek help for

IPV acts perpetrated against them and until there is a greater understanding in agencies and services involved with male victims of IPV, that their own bias is embedded in their current service delivery which is totally inadequate for meeting the needs of male victims of IPV.

Breaking down the barriers to reporting

Barriers to reporting for men are based on fears of losing their sense of masculine identity and fearing not being believed which is underpinned by the complexity of becoming a victim in circumstances outside of societal norms. The findings from this study using a MQSR of the literature confirms the findings from McCarrick et al. (2016), that reporting and not being believed created further trauma and victimisation for men.

O'Brien (2009) argues for the inclusion of social justice values in social work practice and this study raises the question of how the experience of men disclosing their experience of IPV is understood by both their men and the practitioners they are reporting to? There seems to be a critical piece of knowledge missing that warrants further research into the differences in the psychological and emotional responses of men and women as victims of IPV and the dynamic of the relationship that they are involved in as victims of IPV. Certainly a substantive change is required beginning with an examination of what measures can be employed to ensure parity and equity for men when engaging in professional services as victims of IPV.

Removing the fears of not being believed

To remove the barrier of fear related to reporting or help seeking is to remove the fear of not being believed; to remove the fear of not being judged by social workers, Police, hospital staff, the judicial system. These agencies must invest in professional development that educates about violence from a gender-responsive standpoint, with an understanding of what specific context, behaviour, norms, and relationships are influential across different genders. An action plan for agency gender-responsiveness will see a change in gender equality and gender sensitive plans in policies. Equal attention needs to be paid to the difference in how men and women respond as victims, considering their abilities to look for support, to report, to articulate and recall and write significant events. Durfee (2011) highlighted issues with literacy and communicating control so there were specific difficulties for men in admitting to a lack of control in their personal situation. Those in the help-seeking profession need to understand the

influence of their beliefs around masculinity and how this might be reflected in their responses to the male IPV victims.

A report written by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (2007) recognises that perhaps the biggest challenge for gathering data concerning male IPV recipients, is the possible reluctance among men to admit to the effects of IPV as easily as women now do, because of shame, embarrassment, or machismo. However, this study would question to what extent this report has been translated into responsive programmes or policies to fit the needs of men who are seeking help.

To consider machismo as a barrier to reporting is to understand the word in connection to a strong sense of male pride and exaggerated construct of hyper masculinity characterised by such things as swagger, muscle flexing, aggressive, possessiveness and protectiveness. Durfee's (2011), work identified how this sense of masculinity, and the need to reclaim this, can at times, influence the way men report victim issues.

Felson and Pare (2005) found that if male victims of IPV feel that they do not have the same support from family and help providers, as compared to what women may receive, there is a reluctance to report incidences of violence. Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan, and Matos (2017) report that men have negative emotional experiences when reporting violence. The men reported they received what they called sexist care from clinicians and agencies, and that seeking formal assistance also contributed to secondary victimization in the form of comments or actions from staff in the support agencies that caused them additional distress. These attitudes and behaviours of health and support service providers worsen victimization and stigmatization against male IPV victims. Subsequently, underreporting may result in the over-looking and understanding of the need for funding and establishment of resources to improve the experience for men (Bates, Kaye, Pennington, & Hamlin, 2018).

If we don't ask the questions, we won't get the answers

My research did not examine the language barriers in reporting and recording violence against males. However, from my practice I was made aware of biases and problems with definition and classification of IPV in policies and programmes, reporting, and statistics regarding IPV against males. Likewise, through my practice as a social worker and academic, it has been difficult to find data collected for male IPV victims in New Zealand literature. This leads me to wonder whether those working in help agencies, public health, social services are not asking

men the same questions around IPV that we ask of women. One strategy to respond to the lack of statistics is by reviewing how information is gathered, interpreted and reported.

Intimate partner violence occurs in all socio-demographic areas of society (Khalifeh, Hargreaves, & Birdthistle, 2013). This is certainly true from the accounts of IPV from men to me in my role as a social worker have come from men of many different religions, ethnicities, and employment and education levels. I have heard accounts from men who are doctors, lawyers, accountants, truck drivers, painters, engineers, builders - there is no "one size fits all" definition of the typical male victim of IPV.

This study has highlighted the gender bias evident in current discourses and throughout the literature. Both Lievore et al. (2007) and Mc Carrick et al (2016) say that historic and current research shows that more is known about male-perpetrated than female-perpetrated IPV. There is a noticeable divergence between the number of male and female convictions. Research has been aligned with the traditional feminist view of domestic violence, but under-reporting of male victims of IPV was also noted as far back as the 1970's by Steinmetz (1977), Straus and Gelles (1976 & 1988), and Straus and Gozjolko (2014). More recently Bates (2020) in citing work done by Stewart and Maddren, (1997) note that another of them again in the same era was that police personnel notably, held gender stereotypes that informed how they responded to men reporting IPV.

The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (NZFVC), the national centre for research of family violence in New Zealand, provides a platform for statistical information on violence collated from New Zealand Police and District Court sentencing outcomes. The data on violence against women is broken down into two subsets: Male Assaults Female Offences and Proceedings and then Male Assaults Female Convictions and Sentence Outcomes. There is no corresponding data set for female assaults male offences. This categorization has failed to recognize or include harm to men, which makes them invisible and worsens gender bias in services.

The New Zealand police definition of Offences shown on the NZFVC website defines 'Male Assaults Female', as "The act of intentionally applying or attempting to apply force to the person of another, directly or indirectly, or threatening by any act or gesture to apply such force to the person of another, by a male on a female …" (2017, pp.6-7). Notably there is no such description for female assaults on males.

The NZFVCH does not clarify in their data the subsets of people assaulted by women last year and the data cannot be narrowed down to assaults on male partners. The Department of Justice (2018) statistics offer a limited understanding of the rates of female assaults on male and is not broken do to subsets such as IPV. Again, this type of collection and publishing of results supports the invisibility of men in the data available and gaps in reporting violence between men and women.

The impact of the dominance of gender paradigm can be demonstrated in the available literature by examining where the data collections are sourced, Dutton and Nicholls (2005), and Baird (2000), highlight that often the data comes from women's refuges, the court instructed male perpetrator programmes, and police/prison statistics. This raises the question of whether the same process of questioning prevails in similar institutions for men as it does for women, given that there are few male refuges to collect data from and the court instructed programmes are automatically assigned for many different offences and not solely IPV. If men are not reporting IPV, then there cannot be balance and objectivity in the delivery of services based on the statistics. Johnson (2006) also contends that that how the data is collected is a concern as the inherent issues in the data collection are remnants of a society based on a socially forged patriarchal foundation. That is the belief that Dutton and Nicholls (2005) also allude to an inclination to defend women's rights, which affects the source of data collection. The lack of accessible services available to men as IPV victims means that there are little or no comparable clinical samples (Bates et al., 2018). As pointed out earlier, if women's refuges, in their role, are collecting data about women, where are the like agencies that are collecting data about men as recipients of IPV? Douglas and Hines (2011) accept that literature acknowledges that men are unwilling to disclose assaults and seek medical assistance and that this reluctance to report may, in turn, contribute to domination perceptions of masculine roles in society because IPV then remains hidden. This creates a cycle whereby the lack of disclosure feeds into hegemonic masculinity, which in turn feeds into fear of disclosure because of the fear of losing the masculine identity and thus the cycle is perpetuated. What can help break the cycle is the proposal in my recommendations.

A statement taken from the New Zealand Police Manager's Guild Trust website states, "…a growing number of men say that female violence against them is not treated as seriously as male assaults on women" (New Zealand Police Managers Guild Trust, n.d). It suggests that the New Zealand Police are aware that men are raising the issue that when they report incidents of

IPV, the respond in a different way than when women report IPV. They are aware of the possibility of discriminatory attitudes and practices being expressed both by an individual officer and collectively by police staff male victims of IPV. There was no further statement as to what actions the New Zealand Police are taking to remedy this.

Pettitt (2016), in his work, 'Mind the Gap,' outlined that men are not screened routinely for partner abuse in the hospital system yet the Ministry of Health has issued directives to the District Health Boards (DHB) that family violence screenings must be offered to all women. The argument from the DHB's for not screening men is that it "…isn't a significant health issue for men" (Pettitt, 2016, p.7). The issue with this difference in approach is that unless the DHB's routinely screen both men and women for IPV, the incidence of IPV against males will continue to be under-reported. The Family Violence Intervention Guideline: Child and Partner Abuse (Ministry of Health, 2002) recommends that men be assessed only if there is a *suspicion* that there has been a form of IPV. There was nothing in writing to indicate what a "suspicion" of IPV towards men might look like. The 2016 Ministry of Health (p.62) version of this document also shows the use of sexist language in the tools provided, such as "When women are experiencing the sort of abuse you have described to me…"

If it is known that men are reluctant to report IPV, how does this impact the published statistics within government agencies? Are men being asked the right questions (or questioned at all) by those charged with data collection, either formally through Government departments or informally through non-government help agencies?

In the New Zealand Social Policy Journal, Towns (2009) quotes Leibrech et al. (1995), saying that "…around a third of New Zealand men admitted to using physical violence against their female partner at some point in their lifetime." What is not known is if the same question is asked of women to find the incident rate of men who women may have abused, and begs the question, if not, why not? It would appear that nothing has changed since Towns (2009), to Pettitt (2016), and remains as an inequality of service and men's rights in 2021.

I argue that because analysis of how and where data is being collected is not occurring, then any interpretation of that data is subjective and is likely to contribute to a context that does not support men to come forward and report IPV. "Lack of public recognition" of this issue for men continues to make things difficult reporting IPV victimisation (Cook, 2009, p.107). When the frontline help agencies such as Police, social workers, and medical staff remain focused on

assessing only women for IPV, this attitudinal and cultural influence will continue to put men at risk with a lack of data to support the development of resources for when they wish to confidently report IPV and seek help to address the issue.

Limitations of study

There are limitations to this study. One of the study's limitations could be considered the number of the literature being reviewed and the relevance of this study to the Aotearoa New Zealand context. First, this study reviewed a small number (seven) of international articles from the United States, United Kingdom, Finland, and Portugal. Changing the key search terms to a broader range of keywords may have resulted in a better and bigger yield of articles to choose from. There was a lack of voice from Aotearoa New Zealand participants in the articles used. Further qualitative studies, based in Aotearoa New Zealand, would give rise to local representatives and inform a picture of men's extent as IPV recipients in heterosexual relationships within this country. Second, these seven articles reviewed explored male IPV victims' experiences in help-seeking behaviours. These seven articles did not include any counter-responses from the police, judicial system, and help professionals. Further study into this area on professional training, marketing, and shop front services within help agencies may help determine the level of bias and gender inequality (or not) from a service point of view. Third, I was interested in exploring the relevance of the masculinity framework in understanding the help-seeking behaviours of male IPV victims overseas. Therefore, the findings in this literature review might not be relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand's socio-cultural context. For example, further study in Aotearoa New Zealand might need to examine the impact of colonisation on men and masculinity in Aotearoa, New Zealand (i.e., Māori as the colonised population and Europeans as the colonisers). Such studies would understand the impact of female perpetrated IPV on masculinity in an Aotearoa New Zealand context.

I am conscious that I might have entered the research study with my own biases around the dominant societal views on gender stereotypes on intimate violence, i.e., that men are aggressive and only perpetrators of violence. As a social worker, my lived experience informs me that men can also be victims of non-reciprocal female perpetrated IPV. As a beginning researcher, I remain interested in the 'men's 'lived experience' and the story they have to tell, rather than my interpretation through my own personal and professional experience. This study provides a platform for further studies of men's IPV victims' lived experiences and how those

experiences are shaped by the socio-cultural, historical, and political context of Aotearoa New Zealand. More qualitative and in-depth studies are needed in this area.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the study are presented in three focus areas; Implications for practice; implications for policy; and implications for future research.

The following recommendations for practice and policies in an Aotearoa New Zealand context are to include consideration of the effect on masculinity through the colonisation process, from the perspective of the coloniser and the colonised. Furthermore, consideration needs to be given to the role of the Treaty of Waitangi and the position this holds in ministering equality and equity for all. The loss of land, language, and culture on the back of an enforced "white" governance, led to a hierarchy of oppression, depicting European men as superior to Maori men, with Maori women subordinate to all (Johnson & Pihama, 1994). For people where historical thread shows a culture of men being providers, hunters, warriors, the impact on the male psyche when forced to European assimilation needs to be acknowledged.

Implications for practice

Recommendations include finding ways to integrate education on IPV in the curriculum for social work students and into the delivery of the education for social work students. A review of curriculum to identify gender bias and the development of new curricula that supports a body of knowledge that doesn't differentiate on the basis of gender in social work practice, would enhance screening and increase competency in practice. Learning about masculinity as a cultural space rather than focusing on patriarchy within social work curricula would allow the students to see society through a new lens and broaden their understanding of embedded stereotypes that influence their responses to others. It is imperative introduce to potential social workers the concept that men can be victims of IPV and men's reluctance to report the abuse.

It is also important to acknowledge that social workers may have triggers and hold biases from their personal experiences within their own family and extended networks. Past experiences of abuse for some social work students could present barriers to learning and their ability to explore the concept of men as IPV victims. This phenomenon, in turn, could put clients at the risk of psychological harm though not being believed, and create further trauma. Any revised curriculum needs to address stereotypical attitudes about violence. The curriculum that informs

social workers' education must be reviewed in response to IPV and the criteria changed if it is not inclusive of all genders as possible recipients of violence.

Ongoing professional development reflecting the gendered violence concept could be introduced into existing organizations including the process of reflection on gender bias and stereotypical norms that apply to men and masculinity which will enable a competent workforce as service providers for all users. The Gibbs Reflective Cycle template could be utilised as a tool to enable this learning (Gibbs, 1988).

In my role as the social worker, there is a narrative that exists whereby the Police are, in the 21st Century, still responding to incidents of IPV based on an acceptance of the gender binary system that perceives men only as perpetrators and women just as recipients of IPV. Police officers and others need to be open to the possibility and the reality that there are occasions where both men and women can be considered either potential victims or perpetrators. Assumptions should not be made based on a person's gender.

The shifting of this positioning is understandably not easy to do. High profile public professions, such as the Police and social workers, work from a risk-averse position and are mindful of the consequences of ‘getting it wrong’ and the public backlash in such instances.

Both the literature and narratives within the context of my social work experience emphasised the significance of the first point of contact after an incident and in particular the importance of how agencies need to respond and investigate, as this frame the rest of the journey for the man involved. Before the Police arrive at a female perpetrated family harm incident, the man will be managing his emotions of hurt and confusion and the anxiety of being believed. If Police come with a reflex attitude of 'here is the guy, he did it’, the male recipient of violence is put on the back-foot and will feel probably justifiably that he is being denied protection. He will likely be forced into a position of proving himself not guilty rather than feeling safe, thus compounding his initial mistrust in terms of the involvement of the police.

The first engagement with the Police frames the next steps. The focus becomes, 'you need a lawyer’, and not ‘you need support and advocacy.’ The immediate police request to remove him from the property, under a 'Police Safety Order,' continues to frame the male recipient as the aggressor. This fixed view of 'male as a perpetrator of violence’, in turn sets up the picture, the argument, and the facts for the court process.

More importantly, when Police or other help agencies arrive, there can be collusion in the system, whether conscious or unconscious, that compels men by default to acquiesce to the oppressor's role and negatively identify themselves further as being perpetrators. The power imbalance in the dynamics at the time of the incident will be confusing for the male IPV recipient. Contending with the complexities of hurt, shame, embarrassment, mistrust, or fear of not being believed by authorities it becomes easier for him to go along with what is being said or enforced and passively submit to the dominant messages from the authorities. Furthermore, there is an inherent danger in this dynamic that means the male recipient will not get the help and support they need in this situation and any children they have in care, that witness the IPV, will not receive therapeutic intervention. Female partners will have the message reinforced that it is okay for them to act violently without any consequences. The lack of consequences also means there is no therapeutic intervention prescribed, for the perpetrator and for their violence and anger issues. Children present may also receive ambivalent messages due to the behaviour of their parent's behaviours, particularly if it endorses women being able to hit men and also confusing messages about the role of the Police or other help agencies.

Front line responders such as Police, hospitals, counsellors, and social workers, have a responsibility to ensure that all persons they are assisting or responding to are aware of appropriate services and their availability. Service agencies, in turn, have a responsibility to make themselves known and visible to men and make more themselves easily accessible, so they can support men who are victims of violence.

Implications for policy

Data is collected and organised in Aotearoa New Zealand by the District Health Boards, and the New Zealand Police and primarily suggests that females as IPV perpetrators do not exist (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Conversations that I have been privileged to have shared with me, indicate that women are perpetrators of IPV against their heterosexual partner. The lack of comparative recording for male victims of IPV produces a gap in results and, therefore, in allocated resources. It is difficult to successfully look for gender symmetry in violence if there is a gender bias in how data is collected and the statistical data gathered remains structured so that female family harm (IPV) assaults against males are not easily identifiable and remain largely invisible.

Existing policies and programmes need to be gender-responsive. All relevant government departments must begin the process of removing discriminatory policies and programmes. The New Zealand Police, judicial system, District Health Boards, statutory social workers, researchers, academics, and those in positions of authority are accountable for ensuring service delivery that is 'just' and gender-responsive that is, services that are responsive to gender context-specific needs.

Government-funded organisations need to adapt their websites and information sources to acknowledge men as victims and be use language that is reassuring to men that gives a message that men too, can ask for help. Legislation in all areas of domestic violence and family harm should be congruent and be gender responsive.

The World Health Organisation (2011) states that individuals and groups that do not "suit" existing gender roles are often subjected to stigma, sexism, and social exclusion. This description encompasses all that is known in terms of the experience of men as IPV recipients by their female partners. Arguably by today's standards in terms of anti-discrimination, government organisations, frontline responders, and non-government community agencies, in the role of help service providers, should have need to move beyond notions of being gender-sensitive. A substantial change is required to create the momentum needed to take them past the notion of being gender-responsive to actively become organisations where the modus operandi is one of being thoroughly gender transformative (World Health Organisation, 2011). Organisations must address gender-based inequities in workplace policies and procedures and include ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles, and relations. Frameworks that promote gender transformation once adopted and successful will be recognised by the incorporation and promotion of gender equality and the fostering of continuous adaptation to address power relationships between women and men resulting in transformative practice (World Health Organisation, 2011).

Conclusion

In closing, this research concludes that actively depicting men as aggressive in the context of IPV and more generally in dominant stereotypes, binds men to an outdated view of masculinity. They experience obstacles to their right to safety because others are in denial regarding their situation. Furthermore, the lack of challenge to the gender stereotype of men as characteristically aggressive, reinforces unconscious and conscious gender-bias in policies and

programmes, and is arguably a hindrance in the prevention of any family violence initiatives. One of the fundamental flaws of holding an inherited or intrinsic socio-cultural view of hegemonic masculinity and men as victims of IPV is that it is synonymous with rigid and fixated beliefs that have been transposed into present social systems such as the judicial system, the police, and relevant organisations. Fundamentally, men's needs in the context of help-seeking and reporting of IPV are not diametrically opposed to those of women– they too simply want to be believed.

Last word

Lastly, I would like to share the following excerpt from Linda Mills (2002, p.3)

> *The child who I saw being hit by his mother is three times more likely to become violent in intimate relationships than a child who was not hit. The moment that he hits a woman, it is legislated that he be taken out of the context of his biography and into an automatic legal process in which he will be held absolutely accountable for any violence he committed. He will be defined as a product of patriarchy, and his masculine privilege will account for the sole source of his aggression.*

APPENDIX 1:

Literature not included in study

Summaries of Articles not included from MQSR

Reference	Size (N)	Place and Study Population	Research Objective	Methodology	Relevance
Huntley, Potter, Williamson, Malpass, Szilassy, & Feder, (2019).	Men age 18 + yrs 12 Studies incorporated 6 x United Kingdom 4 x United States 1 Sweden 1 x Portugal	United Kingdom	To understand help-seeking by male victims of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and their experiences of help-seeking for support	Qualitative Mixed methods	Excluded Not in included study as the study was not limited to heterosexual men and the data was not categorised into gay and heterosexual subsets

	All studies published between 2006 & 2017				
Espinoza, & Warner. (2016)	No details provided	United States	Discusses contemporary Issues with IPV, considering typologies, male victimization, and female perpetration. , This work examines .reporting, outcomes, re-victimization, and perceptions of male victims and female perpetrators.	N/A	Excluded Not included in study as no research data was included. An opinion article.
Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman (2007).	Analysed data from the 2001 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health 5219 men 6151 women	United States	Examined the prevalence of reciprocal IPV violence to determine if reciprocity is a factor to the violence frequency and injury rates.		Excluded On closer examination of their study, the results combined heterosexual and gay relationship data, and was based on violence from both men and women perpetrators as

	Age 18 – 28 Mean age 22				reciprocal violence.
Howells & Rosenbaum (2008)	675 College students 307 males 392 females Mean age was 18 yrs	United States	This study examined the impact of children witnessing parental IPV or experiencing childhood abuse. The question asked whether these children have higher levels of depression and aggression, then those who have not witnessed IPV of experienced childhood abuse.	Qualitative Quantitative Questionnaires	Excluded This study was excluded from inclusion in as the focus was largely on the impact IPV and child abuse has on children. This sits outside of the remit on this thesis.
McKeown, (2014)	92 female prisoners 39 women in a heterosexual relationship	United Kingdom	The purpose of this paper is to understand female offenders who perpetrate domestic violence. This controversial area of research is expanding and there is enough evidence emerging to suggest that men and women perpetrate similar levels of domestic violence.	Qualitative and Quantitative Questionnaires	Excluded This study has a focus on the characteristics of female perpetrators, recommended interventions and does not discuss the impact of their violence on male

					victims. Therefore the study been excluded from informing this thesis
Wigman, (2009)	Examines 3 previous studies 1) 8,000 men 8,000 women 2) 22,000 male & female 16 – 59 yrs	Tjaden & Thoennes United States 2000 Walby & Allen United Kingdom 2004	This study compares previous literature on characteristics of male and woman who stalk previous partners. More emphasis is put on the male perpetrator of stalking. The study asks if stalking is a precursor to further domestic harm.	Literature review	Excluded This study was not included into the thesis as it does not meet the criteria set, and concentrates largely in the characteristics of those who stalk and examines if this potentially leads to further harm.

	3) 1844 (gender not stated)	Purcell, Pathé, & Mullen Australia 2002			
Keller & Honea, (2016)				Qualitative	Excluded
	Interviews 13 participants No further info provided Focus group Ages 19 – 58 11x men 11 x women	United States	This article examines how variances in male and female views about IPV impact different responses to a prevention campaign. It examines social marketing campaigns that are set to encourage male perpetrators of violence respond to intervention programmes.	Quantitative Interviews and focus groups	This study has not been included as it has a focus on men as perpetrators of violence, and not men as victims of IPV. It is intervention based, which does not meet the criteria

Dowd, (2001)	N/A	Not stated	This paper is an attempt to gather and investigate the data that is already known related treatment issues, such as substance abuse, trauma, that are considered relevant to women who perpetrate violence. It describes a structured cognitive-behavioural group treatment program, designed to address women's needs.	Opinion Article	Excluded Does not meet the criteria for this study as the focus is on treat and intervention for women aggressors.
Larsen & Hamberger, (2015)	48 Articles	United States	This paper reviews literature on gender differences in the perpetration, motivation, and impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) in clinical samples published between 2002 and 2013. It focus on female perpetrators psychopathology traits, and drug use within the relationships.	Literature review	Excluded Focusing on drugs and psychopathology traits of female and male perpetrators
Melton, (2005).	N/A	United States	Conference paper discussing the implication of gender differences and similarities in IPV.	Conference paper	Excluded Conference paper Discusses men's and women's violence

Carlyle, Scarduzio, & Slater, (2014)	331 news articles 270 male perpetrator 61 female perpetrator	United States	This article researches the impact of and to understand the ways in which media images may be informing our understanding of IPV, This study content analysed portrayals of IPV in news media articles of both men and women as perpetrators.	Mixed method Quantitative and Qualitative	Excluded Focused on media studies and included men as perpetrators of violence.
Allen & Bradley, (2018).	358 participants from 2 universities 187 female 171 male 239 white 77 non white 42 data not complete Mean age of 20	United States	The study compared third party evaluations of bi directional violence between males and female and female and male, with regards to injury severity, criminal labelling and police contact.	Quantitative and Qualitative using scenarios	Excluded Content examines male as perpetrators of violence so does not meet the criteria

Russell, (2013)	N/A	United States	This book combined research on perceptions of female offenders.	eBook	Excluded This book did not meet the criteria as it contained contact from children and young adolescents.
Light-Allende, (2004)	172 female college students 18 – 64 years 86 % below 30 yrs	United States	Purpose of study was to explore aggression of female perpetrators towards their male partners.	Mixed methods questionnaire	Excluded This dissertation focused on the characteristics of female perpetrators of IPV

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