

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Women's Experiences of
the
Policing of Domestic Violence**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts
In
Psychology

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

Diane Madeline Gillespie

2008

Abstract

Domestic Violence is a pervasive crime. It weaves itself into the network of our society. In Aotearoa/ New Zealand the Government has introduced legislation designed to reduce and prevent violence in the home and has seen an increase in reported domestic violence since its introduction. Despite some evidence to the contrary, when all types of violence are taken into account the majority of victims are women and children. Domestic violence can be best understood in terms of power and control in relationships, and gender relations in our society, and our socio-cultural-historical context. Given our current legislative context, policing is a critical dimension of effective intervention to reduce and prevent domestic violence. This research explores women's experiences of the policing of domestic violence in a rural, South Island locality. Alongside professional and university ethics, feminist research principles guided the researcher's engagement with women participants in semi-structured interviews. A narrative approach to research was used as a framework to gather, analyze and write up the accounts of nine women's experiences of the policing of domestic violence. Through this narrative approach a co-creative, fluid and dynamic relationship between the researcher and participants produced hybrid accounts and new insights and understandings in relation to domestic violence and the policing of this crime. Findings are presented as themes related to three clearly identified phases in the women's stories of policing: making contact, police responses and their impact, referrals and follow up. The research suggests there are still substantial problems for women's safety in relation to effective policing of domestic violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the standpoints of these women.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge a number of people, without whom this research project would not have been possible. Firstly and most importantly I wish to thank the nine women who told me their experiences of the policing of domestic violence. It is these experiences that form the basis of this work. The time and energy you gave to this project, your strengths and courage are truly humbling. I hope that I have captured your meanings and the essence of your experiences in this work. I also want to thank my supervisors (both cultural and clinical) for their support, insights and encouragement to take the breaks when they were needed and to get to work when that was needed. Thank you to my family and friends for their support and encouragement also. The final thank you goes to my thesis supervisor, Mandy Morgan. Your support, encouragement and unwavering belief that I could do this work have been the anchor to completing this work.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
 CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction and Literature Review	
Domestic Violence in General	1
Domestic Violence as a Power & Control Issue	5
Domestic Violence as a Gender Issue	6
Domestic Violence as a Socio-Cultural Issue	7
History of Women's Issues in Psychology	10
Domestic Violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand	11
Women's Experiences of Violence	15
Women's Experiences of the Policing of Domestic Violence	15
 CHAPTER TWO	
Methodology	
Locating Myself	18
Feminism and Psychology	19
Professional Ethics	19
Networking and Collaborative Approach	20
Feminist Research Principles	21
Feminist Standpoint Theory	22
Social Construction	27
Narrative Inquiry	32

CHAPTER THREE**Method**

Recruitment	36
Introduction of Participants	38
Conducting the Interviews	39
Ethics and Safety	41
Hic Ups and Hold Ups	42
Analysing and Representing Women's Stories	43

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis – Making Contact to ring or not to ring	
How serious is serious enough?	58
Don't cry wolf	62
The straw that broke is not my whole load	65
Neighbours and Friends	74

CHAPTER FIVE**Analysis – Police Response and Impact**

Timeframes	78
Who attends	82
Believe me	85
Protect us	85
Respect me	86
Respect him	87
Country Hicks	89
Alone/Support	92
What about the kids	94
Blaming the victim	96
Understanding/Knowledge of DV dynamics	100
Timing	106

Boundaries and Collusion	107
 CHAPTER SIX	
Analysis – What now Protection Orders, Referrals and Follow up	
Learning about protection – talk to me, tell me about my rights and how to do this	113
Call in the Refuges	117
Ongoing contact with the police	121
Managing breaches	124
Learned powerlessness	128
Understand my risks and realities	131
Ongoing training and supervision – collusion, psychology and dynamics of DV	133
Pick the good ones and ask for them	135
 CHAPTER SEVEN	
Conclusion	138
 APPENDICES	
1 – Power and Control Wheel	151
2 – Letter to Support Agencies	152
3 – Advertisement	153
4 – Invitation to Participants	155
5 – Email from NCIWR Research Advisor	157
6 – Information for Participants	158
7 – Definition of Domestic Violence	163
8 – Participant Consent Form	164
9 – Research Questions	165
10 – Consent to Use Transcribed Material	166

REFERENCES	167
-------------------	------------

FIGURES

Figure 1: Social Structuring of Patriarchy	9
---	----------