GENDERED NEGOTIATIONS: INTERROGATING DISCOURSES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I investigate intimate partner violence (IPV) against women in heterosexual relationships by analysing the accounts of women and men in the Anglophone Caribbean country of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Since IPV occurs in the context of a range of abusive practices (Dobash and Dobash 2004) participants' talk on the use and experiences of violent acts, violent threats, as well as other controlling and coercive tactics are examined as part of this study. Analytically, I focus on the points at which discourses of gender converge with narratives of violence. In other words, the current work examines the ways in which participants construct, (re)produce, disturb and/or negotiate gender in their accounts of IPV, and the kinds of power dynamics that are implicated in these verbal performances. I apply a feminist poststructuralist framework to the study of IPV against women. Synthesising feminist theories of gender and power, and poststructuralist insights on language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions, feminist poststructuralism holds that hegemonic discourses of gender are used to subjugate women (Weedon 1997; Gavey 1990). The points at which individuals complicate dominant discursive practices will also be assessed as part of this approach.

In-depth interviews conducted with 34 participants – 19 women and 15 men – between 2007 and 2008 are analysed by using a version of discourse analysis (DA) compatible with the feminist poststructuralist framework outlined in the thesis. My analysis begins by highlighting the ways in which narratives of gender inscribe asymmetrical relations of power. The focus then shifts to a comparison of women's and men's accounts on a range of abusive acts. Traditional scripts on gender are often used to police the boundaries of femininities and masculinities, tying these to female and male bodies respectively. This is the context in which control, coercion, violence and violent threats are discussed in these accounts. Understandings of manhood and womanhood also emerge in the analysis of the strategies used to explain violence. I conclude with a summary and discussion of the analysis, and I suggest possible areas for further research on IPV in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Key words: intimate partner violence (IPV), gender, feminist poststructuralism, discourse analysis, femininities and masculinities, manhood and womanhood

DECLARATION

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other institute of learning.

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For my father, Ashley Wadsworth (Hammers) Baptiste, my mother, Iceletha Veronica (Girl/Ici) DeShong, and my great grandmother, Viola (Mavie) Lewis. Thank you for your continued love and blessings. Thank you for insisting on the power of words!

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1 WHY GENDER AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)? AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The 1970s can be described as a watershed in feminist scholarship and activism on violence against women in intimate relationships. Since then, intimate partner violence (IPV) has been identified as a major social problem by feminist activists, the women's movement, feminist scholars, other academic researchers, and policy professionals. The research on IPV emerging from Europe, the United States (US), Canada and other developed countries is both varied and extensive. In contrast, there is a small but growing body of research on violence within intimate relationships in the English-speaking Caribbean states. The term 'Caribbean' will be used as shorthand for the English-speaking or Commonwealth Caribbean. This thesis was conceptualised with a view of contributing to knowledge on IPV in the Caribbean by focusing on the accounts of persons from the island state of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). IPV will be studied in the context of heterosexual relationships, acknowledging that this form of violence usually occurs alongside, and as part of, a range of coercive and abusive acts. For the purposes of this thesis and in keeping with the violence against women (VAW) tradition, men are considered the main perpetrators of IPV. This begs the question – what accounts for men's disproportionate involvement in perpetrating acts of IPV? With this question in mind I consider the complex gendered discourses, relations and practices that form part of participants' lived experiences. My central concern here is to examine the interstices of discourses of gender and this form of violence against women. To be sure, I examine how individuals draw on a range of culturally available explanatory frameworks in the descriptions of their experiences of violence in intimate relationships.

Using in-depth interviews, the meanings men and women attach to their experiences of violence and other controlling behaviours will be the focus of this thesis. This method is privileged as it allows analysis of the subjective responses offered by persons as they account for their actions and experiences. Feminist theoretical and methodological

perspectives were deployed throughout the process of conducting the research for this thesis. There is no unified feminist purview on IPV, given that there are a variety of feminist philosophies (Bograd 1988), so it is important to outline which particular feminist epistemologies inform the current study. I apply ideas drawn from Chris Weedon's (1997) formulation of feminist poststructuralism and the general field of discourse analysis to the study of violence in intimate relations. In brief, feminist poststructuralism embodies the view that a number of hegemonic discourses are often employed in speech to subjugate women (Towns and Adams 2000) with varying effects, since individuals range between endorsing and subverting these dominant ideas. In other words, discourses offer a variety of subject positions; some privileged, others contested (or both) as persons negotiate their gendered identities. Along with my approach to discourse analysis, the ideas that constitute a feminist poststructuralist approach will be outlined in greater detail in chapters two and three. In this introductory chapter, I address the context within which IPV is examined in this thesis and I also discuss my research aims and questions.

1.2 Why Study IPV

As mentioned earlier, the research on violence against women in developed countries is both extensive and varied. Hague et al (2001, 1) note that it was the work of the women's liberation movement of the 1970s that provided the impetus for IPV and other forms of violence against women to be "recognised as a social and 'political' issue." Following the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, and the subsequent conference document, the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Women to the Year 2000, emerging from the Third World Conference on Women (1985), Caribbean governments began responding to regional advocacy on the need to address and eliminate violence against women (Pargass and Clarke 2003). These events, along with public advocacy by feminist and women's organisation brought the issues of IPV (popularly referred to as domestic violence) to the fore (Pargass and Clarke 2003; Reddock 1998).

The institutional response to IPV in the Caribbean has both a criminal justice and social dimension. The criminal justice response has been largely predicated on the implementation, in the 1990s, of The Domestic Violence Act in several Caribbean countries, including St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Bernard 1993; Harris 2003; Pargass and Clarke 2003). This legislation outlines the circumstances under which protection and occupation orders can be issued. Domestic violence legislation was instituted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1994. The legislation does not criminalise IPV, but it is intended to protect applicants from further abuse through court orders. It is only if the perpetrator breaches the court order that a criminal offence is committed. These court orders can be sort without police intervention through the Family Court (to be discussed shortly). However, the applicant can simultaneously apply for such an order and inform the police. Usually, the latter is encouraged. Occupation orders prohibit perpetrators from remaining in or entering the place where the survivor resides. Under these orders the applicant may be given the right to occupy a portion of the couple's residential household. In addition, the Act makes provisions for non-molestation orders which seek to prevent a violent partner from waylaying the applicant or from coming within a specified distance of the applicant, or from making persistent telephone calls to the person's home or workplace (Bernard 1993).

A second criminal justice response to domestic violence is the establishment of Family Courts in various countries of the Caribbean. These exist in Jamaica, Belize, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Lucia. There are trained personnel at these specialised courts. In addition to a specialised court that hears family issues there are also probation, counselling and mediation services at the Family Courts (Lazarus-Black 2007). In this sense these specialised courts offer both legal and social responses. It is here that domestic violence cases are heard. According to Pargass and Clarke (2003, 61) this arrangement

> minimises court delays occasioned in the ordinary courts . . . St. Vincent and the Grenadines has reported that the presence of the family court which has full jurisdiction over the Domestic Violence Summary Proceedings Act, makes victims more comfortable to report cases of incest, rape and other

> crimes of violence with the result that women are not reluctant to seek redress in the courts.

In spite of the good intentions behind the implementation of this legislation and reports of some positive results accruing from the presence of the Family Courts, Lazarus-Black (2007) notes that the ability of the law to protect women from harm has had very little success. In her ethnographic study of a magistrate's court[1] in Trinidad and Tobago, Lazarus-Black (2007, 159) contends that while "law grants and protects in name [it] masks and even contributes in practice to continuing structural inequalities rooted in economy, class, politics, and gender organisation." It is for this reason we must always consider Hague's (2005, 192) view that "the voices of domestic violence survivors themselves are both heard and heeded by professionals." Women's voices of their experiences of violence and their immediate and long term needs should form the basis of any policy response to violence. To this Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) adds that men must also be engaged and confronted about their responsibility for perpetrating violence. The comparisons of women's and men's accounts allow for an examination of the complexities of IPV by offering various vantage points from which to view the phenomenon.

Accounts of women have pointed to the adverse effects of IPV on the psychological and physical well-being of survivors. The physical effects range from

> fatal outcomes such as homicide, suicide and AIDS-related deaths to non-fatal outcomes such as physical injuries, chronic pain syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections – the latter two largely as a result of being less able to negotiate family planning or condom use (Botts, Ellsberg and Morrison 2004, 10).

IPV also affects women's mental health. It may lead to conditions such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, as well as other behavioural outcomes such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual risk taking, and a higher risk of subsequent victimisation (Botts, Ellsberg and Morrison 2004). A World Health Organisation (WHO) Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence found that women with a history of physical and/or sexual partner abuse were as much

as three times more likely to consider and/or attempt suicide. In the 10 countries surveyed, they found that women who had experienced IPV at any point in their lives were significantly more likely to suffer from symptoms of emotional distress (Botts, Ellsberg & Morrison 2004, 11).

The adverse effect of violence against women in intimate relationships is amongst the most important of feminist concerns. The broad goal of Feminism is to end women's oppression by naming and resisting unequal relations of gender. It is for this reason that feminist researchers seek to analyse the character of these relations. Violence against women is one of the most overt manifestations of the asymmetrical relations of power that results in grave consequences for women. In fact, Hague (2005, 192) suggests that "gender-based violence forms the sharp end of issues of concern in a gender analysis." The fact that IPV persists globally is reflective of the perpetuation of patriarchal relations in which ideologies of male dominance take root across all societies. There is need however to understand how such relations are enacted in different socio-cultural contexts as we continue to embark on measures to challenge and change the status quo.

1.3 Defining IPV

Historically, a number of monikers have been used to name the violence that occurs between partners in intimate relationships. This study applies the use of the term intimate partner (IPV) to the study of violence against women in intimate relationships. It is important to spend some time explaining the term violence. Weiner et al (in Hoffman 1994, 289) suggest that violence is any

> physical force or threats of physical force that results in physical or non-physical harm to one or more persons . . . against the will or without the consent of the other person or persons.

Archer (1994, 2) qualifies the definition of violence by referring to it as "physically aggressive behaviours that do, or potentially could, cause injury or death." The added emphasis on the damage caused is, for Archer, the crucial distinction between physical violence and aggression. While aggression focuses on the act, violence focuses on the

consequences. Following from Archer's definition it is important to distinguish between violence and abuse in the context of intimate relationships. The two ought not to be used interchangeably as the latter signifies a range of violent, threatening and controlling behaviours (Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dutton and Goodman 2005). While Archer's emphasis on consequences is useful in distinguishing between physical and other non-physical acts, it does not address the nexus between acts of violence and a range of other controlling practices. To be fair, Archer speaks of violence in a generalised sense. As a specific form of violence it is important to acknowledge that IPV usually occurs in the context of other patterns of coercive control (Dobash and Dobash 2004).

More specifically, the term intimate partner violence (IPV) will be used to refer to forms of physical violence between intimate partners or former partners with the intention (or perceived intention) to cause pain or injury to another person (Brownidge 2009; Campbell et al. 2002). This includes both physical and sexual violence. However, for the purpose of the current study it is important to recognise that this form of violence usually occurs alongside, and in the context of, a number of controlling, threatening and abusive behaviours. A range of coercive acts will also be discussed as these often serve to curtail women's actions by perpetuating the fear of violence (Yodanis 2004).

Another reason for privileging the term IPV is the conceptual opacity that abounds when domestic violence is used in the literature. For instance, Buvinic et al. (1999, 8) use the term domestic violence to refer to "violence that takes place between people related to each other by blood, marriage or common-law." This definition also includes individuals who formerly cohabited. However, Wilt and Olson (1996: 77) in their review article "Prevalence of Domestic Violence in the United States" refers to domestic violence as "acts of physical violence perpetrated against women by current or former intimate partners, whether spouse or cohabiters." What these two studies show is that domestic violence may be used in a broad sense to refer to violence occurring within the family or it may be used to signify violence occurring between intimate partners. Moreover, there is also a tendency to use the following terms interchangeably: domestic

violence, dating violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, spousal abuse, wife abuse, marital assault, wife beating and battering (Moore 1999). The term intimate partner violence captures a particular variation of interpersonal violence that takes place between partners regardless to the legal status of their relationship. Certain terms (spousal abuse, wife abuse, marital assault and wife beating) tend to exclude large groups of persons who experience violence in common-law, visiting and dating relationships. Using the term IPV allows for all forms of intimate unions to be included in the discussion. It also facilitates conceptual clarity when discussing violence occurring in relationships.

It is also important to distinguish between battering and IPV. Brownidge (2009) suggests that battering is indeed a form of IPV, but he goes on to explain that less severe and more severe acts of violence are used as a distinguishing feature between IPV and battering respectively. For Brownidge, the latter implies the repeated use of physical force against a partner in an intimate relationship, whereas the former includes all forms of violence (repeated and infrequent) against a partner. As such, battering can be viewed as a subset of IPV (Brownidge 2009). However, it is difficult to discuss violence in such binary terms – for instance, severe versus minor, physical violence versus non-physical abuse and battering (frequent) versus IPV (possibly infrequent). Survivors of, as well as those who perpetrate violence attach various meanings to these events which often reflects a continuum rather than stark dichotomies. This is exemplified as participants' discuss the severe effects that a so-called minor act of violence (for example, a slap) might have on their emotional and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the meanings of violence for those who use and experience such acts are not always compatible with those produced by researchers on the subject. The complexities of defining and naming violence should be accounted for in any study of the subjective meanings produced by women and men about their experiences and use of violence in relationships.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ways in which dominant ideas about gender are often (re)produced, supported and sometimes subverted as individuals account for their involvement in IPV and other controlling behaviours. I investigate these practices through an examination of the accounts participants offer about their experiences and actions. The focus on heterosexual unions is not to suggest that IPV is not a feature of same sex and other intimate relationships, however, there are two main reasons why the problem is not analysed in the context of the latter unions. First, the social stigma associated with homosexuality in the Caribbean would have presented significant challenges in terms of gaining access to participants for the study. Second, it would have been unrealistic given the aims and limitations of this research exercise to do a comparative study of the different types of intimate relationships.

The current work sets out to analyse the narratives of women and men in heterosexual relationships using Chris Weedon's (1997) formulation of feminist poststructuralism. There is a need here to unpack the meanings individuals produce about violence in their accounts. In so doing, I attempt to shore up the ways in which notions of gender and power are negotiated and how these ideas intersect with meanings of violence. Of course, this is not to suggest that other social relations of power, such as age, race and economics, are not important. My reason for focusing on gender and power has to do with the asymmetrical use of violence in relationships, with men being the main perpetrators and women suffering greater injuries. This begs the question: what values support and sustain such arrangements of power? I suggest that the discourses framing people's experiences provide sites in which such arrangements can be analysed for the values they (re)produce. Moreover, I focus on the discourses present in these accounts, as well as the culturally specific values that inform participant's language.

To this end, the study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What strategies do men and women employ in constructing their accounts of IPV?

2. What can be gleaned from the accounts of women and men about how power is negotiated within intimate relationships?
3. How are narratives of violence and control sites in which gendered identities are negotiated/performed/constructed by both women and men?

These questions are intended to facilitate an examination of the interstices of gender, and violence and controlling behaviours against women in intimate relationships. The subjective accounts produced by individuals about violence and other coercive acts will provide the basis for the analysis. In-depth interviews with women and men were deemed to be the technique that would best facilitate this as the focus is on the meanings participants produce about violence and control. Of particular interest are the various ways in which individuals portray themselves and their partners, and the extent to which subject positions created reproduced or subverted traditional gender ideologies.

1.5 Country Description

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is a former British colony that was a site of dispute between the British and the French for much of the 18th century. After the last Black Carib War of resistance against the British in 1783, SVG remained under British colonialism until the country achieved independence on 27 October 1979. Like most of the former British territories in the Caribbean, SVG is governed by a parliamentary democracy modelled off of the Westminster system with the Queen as ceremonial head of state, which makes it a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. SVG is an archipelago, comprising St. Vincent (the mainland) and some 34 smaller islands and cays (the Grenadines) to the south of the mainland. In all, this group of islands and cays cover 150 square miles of land space in the south Eastern Caribbean. The 2001 census estimated the Vincentian population at 109,022 – 55,456 males and 53,566 females (St. Vincent and the Grenadines Statistical Office, 2001). In terms of ethnic composition population estimates are as follows: 80% of African descent, 3% of indigenous or Kalinago (Carib) descent, 16% mixed and the remaining 1% of Vincentians are either East Indians or whites (Caribbean Development Bank 2007). This explains why the vast majority of respondents self-identified as Black.

Historically, much of the economic activity was concentrated on agriculture, particularly banana cultivation and export to the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe. However, with the gradual removal of preferential arrangements for the agricultural products exported to Europe from the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) territories the focus of many of the economies in the Windward Islands (Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) have shifted (Clegg 2002). SVG's current significant economic contributors are bananas, tourism and financial services (Caribbean Development Bank 2007).

It should be noted that while SVG is an independent democracy the country has broader Caribbean ties. Marshall (2002) notes that countries of the English-speaking or Commonwealth Caribbean share a similar political system (Westminster-based), a legacy of plantation slavery, and class structures comprising old commercial oligarchies, petit-bourgeois subgroups of politicians, bankers and professionals, and black and brown working majorities. Bonds of a common history and development agenda have been buttressed by a long experience of intra-regional migration and official attempts at regional integration[2] along a number of functional areas such as education, sports, trade and culture. A discussion of the Caribbean research on IPV (chapter two) takes into account this shared sense of community.

In the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) "Human Development Report 2009" SVG is ranked 91 on the Human Development Index (HDI). As a subset of the HDI, the report includes a gender-related development index (GDI). Of the 12 English-speaking Caribbean countries listed, SVG ranks ninth, just ahead of Belize, Jamaica and Guyana. Also included are data on life expectancy and income. Vincentian women were reported to have a life expectancy of 73.6 years, while Vincentian men's life expectancy was recorded as 67.4 years. Vincentian women's higher life expectancy is consistent with trends in most countries across the world. However, there is a significant disparity as it relates to the average annual income for men and women in SVG. According to this report Vincentian women earned an average of US$5180

annually while Vincentian the annual average income for men was US$10219. This suggests that men earn almost two times the amount made by women. This disparity, in terms of income, points to differences in capabilities and choices between Vincentian women and men, with men possessing greater decision-making capacity given their significantly higher income in relation to women.

1.6 Prevalence, Incidence and Context of IPV

Over the past 30 years, various population-based studies across the world have estimated violence against women in intimate relationships at between 25% and 54% (Thompson et al 2006). A study conducted in the United States in 1989 found that an intimate partner committed approximately 50% of all female murders (Mauricio & Gormley 2001). Prevalence rates and incidence of IPV vary considerably reflecting the diverse measurement instruments used to estimate this form of violence. The National Crime and Victimisation Survey (NCVS) in the United States (US), the British Crime Survey (BCS) in the United Kingdom (UK) and studies employing the Violence Against Women (VAW) measures have found women to be at greater risk of experiencing IPV. Some surveys use measures from Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and revised versions of the CTS and have found symmetry in the perpetration of violence between men and women in heterosexual relationships. The disparity in findings that arises from the use of different measures will be further explored in the next chapter. However, it is worth mentioning here that like other research projects aimed at measuring violence those employing the CTS have found that women are more likely to report physical injuries, and the psychological and emotional effects of violence than men (Dobash and Dobash 2004).

A second issue that requires consideration when using survey data to explain the distribution of IPV is the distinction between prevalence and incidence. Walby (2007) cautions that measuring prevalence does not take into account individual acts. The concept of prevalence fails to address the severity and, often, the frequency of IPV,

which can lead to spurious findings (Walby 2007). Furthermore, the approximation to near gender symmetry, Walby argues, can have perverse implications for policy. Using the 2001 BCS to illustrate this issue she notes that when the concept of prevalence is applied it was observed that in the 12 months prior to the interview 4.2% of women and 2.3% of men were found to have experience IPV. On the surface this implies that women were 1.8 times more likely to experience violence then men in relationships (Walby 2007). However, she goes on to explain that when the concept of incidence is applied to the same survey data women were found to have suffered an average of 20 incidents while the average for men was 7 incidents. The latter approach suggests a greater disparity in the exposure to violence between men and women with women being more susceptible to frequent violence. According to Walby (2007, 14-15)

> When the concept of prevalence is used the gender asymmetry is rather mild; two thirds of the victims appear to be women and one-third of the victims appear to be men. When the concept of incidence is used, the gender asymmetry is much starker; 84% of the domestic violence incidents are against women and 16% against men . . . This means that the use of the concept of prevalence rather than that of incidence to underpin the operationalisation of the measurement of domestic violence will, on the same set of data, produce an appearance of only slightly gender imbalance, while the use of the concept of incidence to underpin its measurement will show greater gender inequality.

The distinction made between prevalence and incidence is important to note when reading and using survey data to contextualise and justify the study of violence against women in relationships. With this distinction in mind examples of the rates of IPV is discussed below.

Tjaden and Thoennes (2000b) analysed the responses of 8000 men and 8000 women in a US telephone survey in an attempt to measure and compare the incidence of violence in intimate relationships experienced by both groups. Women and men were asked the same behavioural questions about whether their partners or former partners had used physical violence or threats of violence; if their partner had forced them to have sex against their will and the circumstances around which this might have occurred; and whether they were ever stalked by a current or former partner. They found that women

were significantly more likely to report victimisation than men. Participants' reports indicate that 0.2% of the men and 4.5% of the women in the sample had been raped by a current or former partner; 7.4% of the men and 20.4% of the women reported being physically assaulted by a current or former partner; and 0.5% men as compared to 4.1% women reported that a current or former partner had stalked them. In short, women were found to be 0.23 times more likely to be raped, had a 0.02 greater likelihood of being assaulted and were 0.08 times more likely to be stalked than men by a former or current partner of the opposite sex. In addition, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000b) observed that women who admitted to experiencing violence were more likely than men who said they had experienced violence to be fearful for their lives. They found that 45% of women compared to 20% of men in these categories expressed fear for their lives as a result of threats and their experiences of violence.

The BCS seeks to measure rates of crime in England and Wales. One of the challenges of such an approach highlighted by Walby and Allen (2004) is that in some instances individuals do not consider some violent acts occurring in intimate relationships to be crimes. The result is that often some of these incidents are not reported. Notwithstanding this challenge, the BCS provides at least a partial view of the problem of violence against women in England and Wales. The 2005/2006 BCS found that women had a 0.6% risk of experiencing violence while the risk for men is 0.2% (Walker et al 2006). Walby and Allen (2004) reviewed the findings of the 2001 BCS. These findings suggest that 45% women and 26% men between the ages of 16 and 59 admitted to experiencing domestic violence, sexual victimisation or stalking at least once. Domestic violence in the context of the 2001 BCS signifies abuse, threats or use of force. Women were found to be considerably more susceptible to sexual victimisation with 21% of women reporting sexual victimisation compared to 5% men. The more extreme acts of violence and coercive control were overwhelmingly perpetrated against women and women were also more likely to experience repeated violence by their male partner. According to Walby and Allen (2004, vii)

> Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since the age of 16), 89 per cent were

> women. Thirty-two per cent of women had experienced domestic violence from this person four or more times compared with only 11 per cent of men.

Women's greater susceptibility to IPV is further evidenced in cases of sexual violence and aggravated stalking (which involved both physical violence and stalking). Women's self report of rape since the age of 16 indicate that the perpetrator was an intimate in 54% of the most sever cases. He was a husband or partner in 45% of cases and a former husband or partner in 9% of cases. In terms of aggravated stalking, women were more likely to experience this from someone known to them – an intimate partner in 37% of cases, someone known to the women in 59% of these reports and a stranger in 7% of cases.The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) analysed data from a number of worldwide surveys on IPV and found that across the globe women are considerably more susceptible to violence in intimate heterosexual relationships than men. Also mentioned in this report is the context in which women experience violence in relationships. There is greater likelihood for women to experience multiple acts over extended periods, and for women to be exposed to multiple forms of abuse. For instance, a study of 613 women who reported some form of abuse found that less than 10% reported experiencing physical violence only while 57% said they experienced physical and sexual violence and psychological abuse (WHO 2002). This thesis acknowledges the significance of studying IPV in the context of a number of coercive practices as such patterns of control demonstrate how unequal relations of power, buttressed by conventional ideologies of gender, are sustained, and the extent to which possibilities for change exist.

There are few recorded sources of data on the incidence and prevalence of violence against women in the Caribbean, and that which is available does not specifically address the distribution of IPV in the region. A 2007 joint United Nations (UN) and World Bank report entitled "Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean" included a subsection on violence against women in the region in which they reported on the crime of rape (UN and World Bank 2007). It was noted that while the average rate of rape globally is 15 per 100 000, the rates for all Caribbean territories is higher than the worldwide average. The prevalence of rape in SVG was recorded as 113 per 100 000, second only to the Bahamas with a prevalence of

133 per 100 000. Figures from the other territories are as follows: Jamaica 51 per 100 000, St. Kitts and Nevis 45 per 100 000, Dominica 34 per 100 000, Barbados 25 per 100 000 and Trinidad and Tobago 18 per 100 000. The rates of rape recorded in this study indicate that violence against women is a major problem in SVG.

1.7 Thesis Layout

In addition to this opening chapter, this work consists of six additional chapters. In **Chapter Two** current themes in the research on IPV are presented with a view of explaining why the study of IPV and gender are inextricably linked. Here, a feminist poststructuralist framework is outlined and proposed as the lens through which I examine this nexus between narratives of gender and violence. The chapter features a dialogue across the feminist scholarship on gender and power, and various research approaches to the study of IPV.

The procedures undertaken during the data collection and analysis are outlined in **Chapter Three**. This includes a discussion of feminist methodological principles and how these shaped my approach to fieldwork. A version of discourse analysis that is deemed compatible to the theoretical framework (presented in Chapter Two) will also be discussed in this chapter as part of the analytical procedures utilised in the study. Other issues relating to fieldwork such as access, research ethics, interviews and research relationships will be explained in greater detail in this chapter.

Participants' accounts of violence are analysed and discussed in **Chapters Four**, **Five** and **Six**. In the first of these chapters I review the narratives produced by women and men about their gendered identities. This provides the context in which the gendering of boundaries for men and women through various forms of coercion and control by men (Chapter Five), and the negotiations of gender identities in women's and men's talk of physical violence (Chapter Six) will be discussed. These three chapters focus on how traditional discourses of gender are (re)produced, negotiated, and/or subverted in these accounts. Moreover, the discursive strategies and resources utilised by participants to

explain violence, and the ways in which notions of gender are implicated in speech will be the focus of these chapters.

I summarise and discuss the central concerns and findings of the thesis in **Chapter Seven**. This final chapter ends with suggestions for future research on IPV in the Caribbean.

2 GENDERING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A DIALOGUE ACROSS LITERATURES

2.1 Introduction

For the past 40 years, academics and policy professionals have addressed the problem of violence in intimate relationships from a variety of perspectives. The result is a polemic that continues to characterise research on intimate partner violence (IPV). On one side of this debate there exists family violence (FV) researchers who use various versions of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) and have found symmetry in the perpetration of physical violence in intimate heterosexual relationships. In contrast, researchers operating in the violence against women (VAW) tradition argue that men are the main perpetrators of IPV. More recently, some researchers of IPV have adopted a combination of VAW and FV approaches in studying the issue. In this chapter, I explore and compare the research emerging from both approaches to research on IPV, with a view of demonstrating why I have chosen to situate the current study of IPV within the VAW and feminist perspectives. The research produced within the Caribbean about intimate partner violence will also be reviewed by way of contextualising the current work. In addition to critically examining how knowledge about IPV has been produced since the 1970s, in this chapter, I discuss the utility of a feminist poststructuralist approach to the study of women's and men's accounts of IPV. I argue that notions of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman – notions of gender – are inextricably linked to the perpetration of IPV. This is made evident in the accounts participants offer about their experiences of violence in their relationships.

Knowledge about IPV has been constructed from a variety of perspectives, utilising various methods. Much of the qualitative research has relied on survivors' accounts and, to a lesser extent, interviews with perpetrators, for understanding the problem of intimate partner violence. These works document both the meanings (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2003; Dobash and Dobash 1979 and 1984; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999) and impact (Campbell and Soeken 1999b; Hadeed and El-Bassel 2006; Malos and Hague

1997; Riger, Raja and Camacho 2005) of IPV by focusing on how women construct the violent event and on the effects of such violence on women's quality of life and the lives of those directly connected to them. Very few studies have focused on a comparison of the meanings that both partners attach to their experiences of violence in heterosexual relationships.

Several quantitative studies have emerged from North America and the United Kingdom using official statistics and victim surveys. These are usually characterised by positivist epistemologies. Official statistics tend to significantly underestimate the incidence of IPV, and survey research results vary significantly because they use different instruments for measuring violence. Incongruence in the conceptualisation of violence in intimate relationships has led to the development of two distinct views (symmetry versus asymmetry) on the perpetration of violence in intimate relationships. Although research in the Caribbean is not as extensive as in other parts of the world, a number of these approaches have been utilised in studies of IPV in the region. The following section reviews the research on IPV in the Anglophone Caribbean.

2.2 Caribbean Research on IPV

Caribbean feminists and women's organisations have been at the forefront of activism against gender-based violence. Reddock (1998) documents the growth of several feminist inspired women's organisation in the Caribbean in the 1980s. She explains that one of the most successful campaigns of these voluntary women's groups was the "Campaign against Violence to Women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1985-86" (Reddock 1998, 62). In spite of the attention that IPV receives as a major social problem within the region, there remains a dearth of scholarly research on the issue, particularly in the smaller Eastern Caribbean territories of which St. Vincent and the Grenadines is a part. This uneven treatment of IPV as a phenomenon worthy of research is evident when we consider work coming out of Trinidad and Tobago that investigates issues related to the treatment of domestic violence survivors within the judicial system and the legal responses (Lazarus-Black 2001, 2003, 2007), the distribution and patterns

of IPV perpetration (Le Franc et al. 2008), the formal and informal support systems available to female victims of IPV (Hadeed El-Bassel 2006), and explanations men and women offer about why IPV occurs (Gopaul and Cain 1996; Lazarus-Black 2007). In addition, studies on IPV have been conducted in Guyana (Danns and Parsad 1989; Red Thread 2000), Jamaica (Arscott-Mills 2000; Gibbison 2007; Le Franc et al. 2008), and Barbados (Le Franc 2008; Le Franc and Rock 2001). In contrast, there have been no similar scholarly work on this issue in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and few in the other Eastern Caribbean territories. This imbalance reflects, in part, the greater research capacity of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Guyana, as these countries benefit from local university facilities. This thesis contributes to the research on IPV in the Caribbean.

One of the earliest studies on violence between intimate partners in the Caribbean was work conducted by Danns and Parsad (1989) in Guyana. They employed two methods of sampling. First, women were contacted through the use of official statistics from police reports. Second, they used a random sample to determine the incidence of IPV in this country. In sum, Danns and Parsad interviewed 120 East Indian and 100 Black Guyanese women from rural and urban communities. They found incidence of violence against East Indian women in intimate relationships to be alarmingly high with 83% of women interviewed having experienced physical violence. Two out of three Black women interviewed had experienced some form of physical violence perpetrated by their partner. Black women were inclined to exercising greater autonomy when compared to East Indian women in intimate relationships, and were more likely to use retaliatory violence towards their partners (Danns and Parsad 1989). Using a sample in which 50% of respondents were confessed victims presents a major challenge in terms of measuring the incidence of IPV. This might account for the relatively high rate of violence against women found in Guyana when compared to other countries.

In 2000, Red Thread, an anti-racist women's organisation, published a study on reproductive and sexual health, and domestic violence against women in Guyana. The findings of this study was different to those of Danns and Parsad (1989), however, they

note that this may be a reflection of differences in methodologies rather than an actual decrease in the incidence of violence against women (Red Thread 2000). For the Red Thread survey 360 women were randomly selected. Four out of five women felt that violence against women in families is a common phenomenon, and one in three respondents reported knowing someone currently experiencing violence in their relationship. Of the 237 women currently involved in a relationship 27.7% or one in four had experienced physical violence; one in four or 26.3% had experience verbal abuse, and 12.7% or one in eight suffered sexual violence. Of the entire sample 20.7% of the women had experienced physical violence, 19.1% admitted they were verbally abused and 9.5% of women said they were sexually abused. When analysing the effects of violence of the 83 women who were in a current relationship in which they experienced violence, 53.5% had psychological symptoms, including depression and anxiety; 7% had sustained physical injuries, such as cuts, bruises and broken bones; and 20 out of the 83 women in a current relationship required treatment from the hospital because of the physical effects of their partner's violence. Nearly all of the women (83.1%) in the study explained that they have never initiated violence in their relationships. One of the difficulties in drawing conclusions from both studies is that no comparisons can be made with the male population of Guyana. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, both studies are crucial starting points towards a more comprehensive understanding of the problem of violence against women in the Caribbean.

For instance, Danns' and Parsad's comparison of Afro and Indo Guyanese women begins to explain the role of ethnicity in explaining IPV against women. They observed a difference in the construction and subsequent naming of violence against these two groups of women. Whereas East Indian women are accorded victim status by the society at large – their experiences are constructed as violence against women – the term 'fighting' is used to signify violence between Black women and their partners. This difference reflects stereotypes of Afro-Caribbean (and African American) women as strong, emasculating matriarchs, capable of fending for and defending themselves, with little or no need for social support (Brice-Baker 1994; Rowley 2002; Mama 1989). Conversely, East Indian women are often portrayed as passive, dependent victims,

worthy of rescue and incapable of resistance. Both depictions are problematic. In fact, Danns and Parsad found that close to 50% of East Indian women admitted to 'fighting back', which, in their view, debunks the image of the submissive wife. They also observed that in 83% of cases black women 'fought back'. Danns and Parsad posit that black women find solace in their own strength through verbal and physical counteractions, telling their partners to leave the home or threatening to leave him. Further, they argue that "this apparent attempt by Black women to assert a sense of autonomy and perhaps female dominance is reflective of the significant proportion of matriarchal family households among black families" (Danns and Parsad 1989, 90). While overt resistance is acknowledged as one of the several responses to violence against women in intimate unions, this conclusion inadvertently presents black women as capable of managing the violence they are exposed to in relationships. To view women as mere victims at the whim of their partners' rage is to miss the many modes of resistance enacted by women; but to stereotype black women as 'matriarchs' in control of their families and capable of defending themselves against violence preclude them from the various forms of support they require. Rowley (2002) challenges the stereotypical images of Caribbean women and Caribbean families in the early anthropological and sociological studies of the region. She argues that the idea of matriarchy (used in relation to black women) as a feature of the region masks subtle and shifting exercises of patriarchal power. Similarly, in explaining how social and structural oppression works in the context of the United States, Potter (2006) suggests that black women may avoid going to social services when violently victimised because they want to avoid the socially constructed stereotypical image of the single, Black matriarch. In Potter's view, there is generally a poor response from social services and the police to Black women's experience of violence. In short, these stereotypes affect Black women's access to social services.

Social support for Trinidadian women experiencing IPV is the theme of research produced by Hadeed and El-Bassel (2006). They conducted in-depth interviews with 17 women with a view of understanding their use of formal and informal networks of social support. Women's reports of their experiences in accessing and benefiting from the

formal mechanisms of social support indicate that these are not as effective as measures in place in North America. Women sited their lack of confidence in the ability of the social services to keep their cases confidential as the key reason for refusing to seek formal assistance. A related observation was made by Arscott-Mills (2001) in an analysis of 187 women who accessed the services of the Women's Crisis Centre (WCC) in Kingston, Jamaica. She found that although women who accessed these services experienced high levels of physical injuries, and psychological and emotional abuse, only a small proportion reported the incidents to the police. In fact, the responses of the police and courts were reported to be quite varied in the study by Hadeed and El-Bassel. Reports of police responses ranged from officers siding with perpetrators or trivialising situations as insignificant, to officers encouraging women to leave or to bring charges against the perpetrator.

The judicial response to intimate partner violence in the Caribbean is also not without its challenges. In her analysis of court cases and records in Trinidad and Tobago Lazarus-Black (2003) found that the law, in the form of the Domestic Violence Act, fails to function in the ways intended by activists and lawmakers. The vast majority of applications for protection orders are dismissed since in most cases the applicant does not pursue the matter. Lazarus-Black (2003) points to a range of reasons why women do not follow through with these orders. From her interviews with survivors of violence and court officials she found that women were encouraged to reconcile with their partners by family members; some were threatened by partners to drop the case; others feared the loss of financial support for their children; some women who filed complaints did not actually want a protection order; and one woman pointed out that she wanted her husband to know that she was serious about going public in order to shame him into ending his violence. Lazarus-Black (2003) notes that her findings are consistent with research done in other parts of the world.

In relation to informal networks of support, Hadeed and El-Bassel observed that several women were able to access assistance from family and friends in spite of their partners' efforts to isolate them. However, in some cases where parental support was available

the social isolation and control enacted by men over women prevented respondents from accessing these options. Support usually takes the form of finances, housing, childcare and advice on how best to cope with violence. Family and friends sometimes refused support in cases where they felt that women 'chose' to remain in abusive relationships. The complexities involved in seeking assistance and exercising autonomy is well documented in this qualitative study, as Hadeed and El-Bassel note that in some instances women are advised to 'behave themselves' and avoid provoking their partners into violence at the same time that they are seeking and gaining refuge from family members and friends. These myriad views among members of society about violence against women in relationships and how women should respond to such violence creates significant discrepancies in the provision of social and legal support as well as the assistance offered by family and friends.

Research on IPV in the Caribbean has either focused on the criminal justice responses or measuring violence through the application of surveys. These have been useful in assessing the success of policies aimed at assisting those affected by IPV, but less researched has been how individuals make sense of their experiences with IPV. Attempts to respond to violence against women in intimate relationships should consider the voices of survivors (Hague 2005) who have had direct experiences with this phenomenon; research that allows for an analysis of the context in which violence occurs.

2.3 Positivist Dilemmas in the Study of IPV

A large portion of the work produced on IPV is informed by positivist based epistemologies and relies on various forms of quantification. Highlighting the widespread nature of violence against women in intimate relationships, some positivist based studies offer support for activists and researchers alike in their attempt to justify facilities for victims and reformative programmes for perpetrators. However, many of these approaches seek to determine the "truth value" of statements (Thompson et al. 1989). This becomes important to note especially when we begin to analyse how

knowledge about IPV has been contradictorily produced. The meta-assumptions that underlie several of these mimetic approaches can be traced back to “the global philosophical rubric of ‘Cartesianism’ or ‘rationalism’” (Thompson et al. 1989, 134). In this schema, the central purview is that ‘reality’ can be deduced and mathematically represented (Thompson et al. 1989). Several studies of IPV rely on positivist approaches in their attempt to quantify and define violence in intimate relationships (Hampton and Gelles 1994; Rand and Saltzman 2003; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000a and 2000b; Wilt and Olson 1996; Xu 2005). Knowledge production of this orientation also focuses on the aetiology of IPV by analysing how a series of variables might be related to this phenomenon (Brownridge 2003; Caetano et al 2003; Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan 2004; Kesner et al 1997; Mauricio and Gormley 2001; Schafer et al 2004; Skuja and Halford 2004; Whitfield et al 2003; Xu 2005). Dobash and Dobash (1981, 184) note that

> most efforts have used a logical positivist methodology . . . oriented to the construction of abstracted concepts, theories and conceptual schemes . . . The empiricists’ and reductionists’ research in this area has focused on the distribution of the problem in society and sought to establish the distinct psychological or social characteristics of the offenders and/or victims.

As Dobash and Dobash (1981) explain, some positivist methodologies are applied to the study of IPV with the aim of establishing causation. An example of this approach is Schaefer et al. (2004) work on the impact of drinking problems, impulsivity[3], and a history of childhood physical abuse on both male-to-female (MFIPV) and female-to-male intimate partner violence (FMIPV) in the United. They found that higher levels of childhood physical abuse were associated with higher levels of impulsivity, greater probability of alcohol problems, and higher levels of IPV reports. Studies have also been done on establishing typologies of men who are violent in marital relationships. Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan (2004) for example, offered three categories for situating the level of violence enacted by these men: family-only (FO); dysphoric or borderline (DB); and generally violent and anti-social (GVO). However, they admitted that typologies could be abused in the law, as they can place women at further risks of being violently victimised (for example, by suggesting that a woman can return home because her husband falls into the category of FO). They caution, however, that “the

majority of men fall along dimensions of theoretical importance rather than forming distinctly identifiable groups" (Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan 2004, 1378).

The important point raised here is that while typologies in some studies begin to offer a picture of the persons who might be exposed to or might perpetrate violence, these findings can have serious implications for official responses to the problem of IPV. It should also be noted that individuals are far more complex than can be captured in any typology, and it is only with further interpretive analyses that some of these complexities might be observed. Also, even as such approaches are important in pointing to the prevalence and incidence of IPV they fall short of capturing the nuances of violent perpetration, events and victimisation.

2.4 VAW versus FV Approaches to the Research on IPV

One of the most contentious debates to emerge from the study of IPV is whether or not there exists symmetry in the perpetration of violence in intimate heterosexual relationships. Dobash and Dobash (2004, 326) identify two distinct approaches to the study of IPV: (1) the 'family violence' (FV) approach, and (2) the 'violence against women' (VAW) approach. While several studies report that men are the main perpetrators of IPV in heterosexual relationships, there are over 100 empirical studies suggesting that IPV rates for men and women are equivalent (Kimmel 2002). FV researchers contend that there is symmetry in the perpetration of violence in heterosexual relationships, whereas VAW researchers argue that men are the main perpetrators of IPV. This debate has dominated much of the scholarship on violence in intimate relationships. Disagreement among researchers about how violence between intimate partners should be defined and measured has led to differences in the findings on the prevalence and nature of IPV. What is rather striking about these variations in findings is that, in many cases, they are underpinned by an epistemology that purports to capture the reality of human experiences, through the use of large scale surveys.

The schism is a result of two different approaches to measuring IPV through the use of large-scale surveys: (1) crime victimisation surveys, and (2) family conflict survey based on the conflict tactics scales (CTS) and the revised conflict tactics scales (CTS2) (Kimmel 2002). Using victim surveys, Rand and Saltzman (2003) analysed data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) conducted by the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics to examine the nature and extent of recurring IPV. For their study, they identified and counted all incidents of IPV sustained by each female respondent within each six month reference period. They found that for the period of 1992-99 there were 7,266,460 intimate partner victimisations against women or an average of 908 000 per year. For this period, women experienced IPV at an average annual rate of 8.1 violent victimisations per 1000 women age 12 or older. The study goes on to identify the number of times that women were victimised and the nature of women's victimisation. For the full reference period, 91% of all victims reported they had been victimised 5 or fewer times and about 2% of all victims said they had been victimised more than 20 times during the previous six months. In terms of the nature of IPV, about 68% of all incidents were classified as simple assaults and about 16% were aggravated assaults. They concluded that the NCVS data demonstrate that recurring IPV is a significant component of IPV in the United States. A quarter of persons in this survey were victimised at least two times during the period. Based on the findings of this victim survey Rand and Saltzman propose that women tend to suffer significantly more than men as a result of IPV.

The problem with victim surveys is that they only ask about the violence that individuals experience and/or report to the authorities that they consider to be a crime; missing of course a range of acts that are not perceived or reported as crimes (Kimmel 2002). However, based on the reports from these surveys, and as exemplified in the study by Rand and Saltzman (2003), men perpetrate the vast majority of violence in intimate heterosexual unions. FV researchers on the other hand point to symmetry in the perpetration of violence in intimate heterosexual relationships.

In 1979, Murray Straus published a paper entitled "Measuring Intrafamily Conflict and Violence: The Conflict Tactics (CT) Scales," in which he describes the purpose of the CTS and the concepts which underpin this measurement instrument (Straus 1979). Straus (1979) explains that the CTS as a measure of violence is based on three modes of dealing with conflict. The first is the use of rational discussion and this is measured by the "Reasoning" scale. Secondly, the use of verbal and nonverbal acts with the intent to hurt someone is measured by the "Verbal Aggression Scale." Finally, he explains that the "Violence" scale measures the use of physical force against another person as a means of resolving conflicts. The CTS measures both the behaviour of the respondent and the behaviour of their partner. It attempts to show "the extent to which specific acts of physical violence, have been used. The CTS is not intended to measure attitudes about conflict or consequences of using violent tactics" (Straus et al 1996, 284). In the revised version of the CTS (the CTS2) they increased the number of questions in each scale to enhance content validity, and they added a sexual coercion scale (Straus et al 1996). They also included an injury scale. In spite of these revisions, the CTS has been criticised, mainly for its inability to contextualise violence occurring in intimate relationships (Bograd 1988 and 1990; Dobash et al. 1992; Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dutton and Goodman 2005; Nazroo 1995; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Starks 1995).

Research generated from CTS-based measures has attracted a great deal of attention both in academic circles and the media (Dobash et al. 1992). Dobash and Dobash describe (2004, 327) the CTS as an 'act-based' approach which assumes an individual will "provide unbiased, reliable accounts of their own violent behaviour and that of their partner." These responses are treated as unproblematic and are used to estimate the prevalence of IPV and to develop explanatory frameworks (Dobash et al. 1992; Dobash et al. 1998; Dobash and Dobash 2004).

It is also important to note that the CTS, in all of its manifestations, only counts violent acts, and fails to address the context in which violence occurred (Dobash et al. 1992; Nazroo 1995; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Dobash and Dobash 2004). The

motivations for and the consequences of violence are left unaddressed (Bograd 1988 and 1990; Dobash et al. 1992; Nazroo 1995; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Dobash and Dobash 2004). Nazroo (1995, 478) opines that "it obscures the context in which any violence occurs." It does not consider who initiates the violence, the nature of the relationship and the size and strength of those involved (Kimmel 2002). It is only in the area of physical injury that differences in male and female perpetrated violence have been revealed. Applying the 'act-based' approach in isolation researchers are unable to account for these differences, except to suggest that a strike by a male is more damaging than one by a female (Nazroo 1995). FV researchers admit that women are between six and ten times more likely than men to report physical injuries, as well as, emotional and psychological effects, as a consequences of their male partners' violence towards them (Dobash and Dobash 2004). This disparity in the effects of violence on women and men also needs to be contextualised. It contradicts the very idea of symmetry in perpetration of violence propagated in CTS-based studies. Used alone, the 'act-based' approach is too narrow to address the problem of IPV. It does not consider the context, consequences and intentions associated with violent acts. Also unexamined are the meanings and consequences of violence for survivors and perpetrators (Dobash and Dobash 2004).

In addition, the CTS has been critiqued for conflating violent physical and sexual acts with non-violent acts of abuse, such as shouting; the effect of which is to refer to these acts collectively as either 'violence' or 'abuse' (Dobash and Dobash 2004). The conflation occurs when defining the problem to be studied, when measuring 'acts' and when reporting findings (Dobash and Dobash 2004). A respondent only has to admit to having perpetrated one of these items in a given year to be considered violent. Dobash and Dobash (2004) explain that it is a matter of how these terms are defined and what actually counts as violence. They differentiate between violence and abuse by suggesting that violence refers to malevolent physical and sexual acts used to inflict physical or psychological harm, whereas abuse includes, but is not limited to violent acts (Dobash and Dobash 2004). Abuse also includes non-physical acts, used with the

intent of frightening, intimidating and coercing the individual (Dobash and Dobash 2004).

Apart from the apparent lack of any contextual analysis of violence and a failure to adequately define concepts, studies that find symmetry in the perpetration of violence between intimate partners fail to analyse gendered negotiations in these relationships. Straus (1979, 85) himself argues that "the importance of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) stems from the assumption that conflict is an inevitable part of all human association, including that of the family." However, CTS or 'act-based' studies avoid any analysis of these "human associations."

VAW researchers argue that in order to understand violence it ought to be studied in the context of intimate relationships (Dobash and Dobash 1984; Dobash et al. 1992; Nazroo 1995; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Dobash and Dobash 2004). In fact, Dobash and Dobash (1984 and 2004) advocate a focus on the wider context of actual violent events occurring in these relationships. In their own work they found that "men's physical and sexual violence against women is often associated with a 'constellation of abuse' that includes a variety of additional intimidating, aggressive and controlling acts" (Dobash and Dobash 2004, 328). Conversely, women's violence is often associated with self-defence and retaliation against years of physical abuse from male partners (Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dobash et al. 1992; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Nazroo 1995). The 'act-based' approach to researching IPV "assumes that gender is not related to the perpetration of violence nor to accounts provided about such events" (Dobash et al. 1998, 384). Whereas FV researchers find sexual symmetry in the occurrence of IPV, VAW researchers have found that men are the main perpetrators of violence, in terms of the nature and extent of this phenomenon. Research using the latter approach usually includes an analysis of gender within relationships. Like Dobash et al (1998), Kimmel's (2002, 1344) argues that

> what is missing, oddly from these claims of gender symmetry is an analysis of gender. By this I mean more than simply a tallying up of which

> biological sex is more likely to be a perpetrator or victim. I mean an analysis that explicitly underscores the ways in which gender identities and gender ideologies are embodied and enacted by women and men. Examining domestic violence through a gender lens helps to clarify several issues.

Studies that depend solely on survey data are intended to provide insight into the magnitude of the problem of IPV. However, many of these studies fail to address the issue of power in relationships where IPV is used to resolve disputes. Although surveys provide a usual means of data gathering they miss nuances that exist in individual experiences. In short, while these studies are useful in pointing to the magnitude of the problem, we learn much less about an individuals' involvement in IPV. Kimmel's intervention speaks to the very purpose of the current study. The intention here is to identify the interstices of particular gendered practices and the use of violence in heterosexual relationships. The qualitative research in the field often allows individuals to speak to their immediate experience with IPV. The focus here is less about the accuracy of the accounts and more about what we can learn about the way persons construct and presents themselves. This way we are afforded a window into discourses and ideologies that inform the practice of IPV.

2.5 Gendering IPV

Most qualitative studies adopt the VAW approach to the study of IPV in their attempt to contextualise this phenomenon. Qualitative research facilitates greater focus on cultural specificities in people's experiences of IPV. The purpose of most of these studies is not to generalise about populations, but rather, to extend theoretical perspectives on IPV. Nash (2005) is especially suspicious of universalising women's experiences of IPV. In fact, she argues that "social hierarchies, community mores, and race/gender development [are] key agents in the organization of abuse" (Nash 2005, 1423). Qualitative studies of IPV are underpinned by a variety of epistemologies, and they provide deeper understandings of the problem. Rather than reducing the study of IPV to finding causal links or counting incidents, these approaches are more concerned about

the meanings of violence as well as the impact on this form of abuse in intimate relationships.

2.5.1 Setting the Agenda of Gender as an Analytical Resource

It is difficult to ignore the notions of gender which feature in the explanations individuals offer for the violence they commit and/or experience. Gender in the context of this study is not to be confused with its reductionist usage; it is not simply a matter of counting male and female bodies. The use of the sign 'gender' has become so commonplace that it is worth spending some time clarifying its use as an analytical resource. Barriteau (2001, 25) speaks to the confusion which arises when the term gender is used in both popular and academic discourses:

> at one level gender has come to stand erroneously as a trendier synonym for the biological differences and signifiers implied by the word 'sex'. Now, on almost all questionnaires there is the mandatory category 'gender' in which one is supposed to reply male or female.

She is careful to note that the sign 'gender' has been used historically in the grammatical sense (masculine gender, feminine gender and neuter gender), deriving its identity in the disciplines of biology, linguistics and psychology. However, feminist scholarship appropriated the term to signify the complex social relations between women and men that is historically characterised by a disproportionate distribution of power (Barriteau 2001). She defines gender as

> complex systems of personal and social relations through which women and men are socially created, maintained and through which they gain access to, or are allocated status, power and material resources within society (Barriteau 2001, 26).

These power relations feature within intimate unions, and are of key analytical import to feminist research on IPV.

It is important to note that definitions of gender appear from several theoretical perspectives. American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1964) applied sex role theory to explain how a series of normative attributes become attached to various members of the

nuclear family through the process of socialisation. Men are allocated the instrumental roles of courage, roughness, self-reliance and aggression, whereas women are designated the expressive roles which embody timidity, tenderness and dependence. Masculinity and femininity become attached to male and female bodies respectively and they are regarded as occupying opposing poles. The main critique of sex role theory is that it reinforces biological determinism and it alludes to the existence of fixed gender essences. There is no discussion of how power is actualised in the policing of the boundaries of gender. The inadequacy of sex role theory to a study of Caribbean gender relations becomes quite apparent when we consider the privileging of the nuclear family form.

Caribbean feminist scholars and other social scientists have critiqued the early anthropological and sociological works on gender roles within the family for their emphasis on the Parsonian and other structural-functionalist models (Barriteau 2003b; Barrow 1996; Hodge 2002; Reddock 1994; Rowley 2002). In these early scripts Caribbean men are portrayed as absent and marginal in relation to a normative nuclear family, while Afro-Caribbean women were often constructed as matriarchs in families characterised by matrifocality (Rowley 2002). The perception of role reversal has been used to create images of families in the Caribbean as disorganised and dysfunctional (Reddock 1994). Women's putative power in relation to families is read as an emasculating act resulting in men's paralysis and disenfranchisement. A discourse which positions women as usurpers in the context of the family is based on the following assumptions:

1. That women occupy positions of power which manifest themselves in material and other benefits and;
2. That men's 'rightful' place as heads of households have somehow been hijacked in so-called atypical arrangements of power.

For Barriteau (2003) and Lindsay (2002) headship status should not be confused with economic or social empowerment, since there is greater likelihood for female headed-households to experience financial deprivation. It is also important to analyse whether

the absence or transitory nature of a male partner within some Caribbean households signifies a break with traditional ideologies of gender.

Apart from the study of gender in the context of the family, feminist theories have presented gender as social construct, gender as discourse (Weedon 1997, 2000), gender as performative (Butler 1993, 1999, 2000, 2004) and gender as institutional practice. All of these perspectives converge in their rejection of biological determinism. They are by no means mutually exclusive. Barriteau's (2001) definition of gender speaks to the notion of gender as socially constructed in her reference to those complex personal and social relations that feature in the process of becoming a woman or man. She also alludes to the institutionalisation of gender in particular societal practices. The institutionalisation of gender is evident as particular entities, such as the church, schools and the family, reinforce patriarchal relations, "in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby 1989, 214). However, there is need to unpack these relations of domination, oppression and exploitation, recognising of course that they are often multiple and multiply interpolated by other markers of difference. The points at which such gendered power relations are subverted also require thorough analysis. Judith Butler (1999) articulates a theory of performativity in which she offers a description of gender as something that is done, or performed (Butler, 1993, 1999, 2000 and 2004). The idea that gender is performative repudiates the view that there exists an internal essence of gender. Instead, gender is produced "through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body" (Butler 1999, xv). Her constant reference to the significance of bodies in perpetuating (and sometimes resisting) commonsensical ideas of gender rest primarily on the notion that particular texts are metaphorically written on to male and female bodies in a dichotomous and thus constraining fashion. Specific practices are expected and sometimes demanded of individuals depending on whether they are biologically female or male. These bodily constraints create a double marginalisation. They marginalise women and naturalise men's power, and they marginalise non-heterosexual performances of gender. Though there is a tendency to believe that we create our "own" gender or that our gender comes from within, Butler argues that gender is dependent upon that which is external to each of us. It is

contingent on "a sociality that has no single author" (Butler 2004, 1). In other words, one does not 'do' one's gender alone, instead gender is actualised as social practice. It is here that performativity intersect with the idea of gender as social construct. Finally, the idea of gender as discourse speaks to the ways in which notions of gender are produced, reproduced and even subverted in language. This is most often articulated within feminist poststructuralist frameworks, and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. There is agreement, in all three approaches to understanding gender, on the need to study the power dynamics which facilitate the policing of gender. This begs the question, what accounts for both the privileging and the marginalisation of particular gendered practices? Moreover, how might ideas of gender bear meaning for the study of IPV?

2.5.2 Sexual Violence, Control and Coercive Acts

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women takes place in the context of a range of controlling acts (Wolf-Smith and LaRossa 1992) in situations where unequal relations of power are exploited. Physical and sexual violence are the most overt manifestations of what Dobash and Dobash (2004) refer to as a constellation of abuse. In fact, Dutton and Goodman (2005) explain that within this framework of IPV, violence (physical and sexual) is viewed as a tool within patterns of coercive control with other tools including financial deprivation, threats, intimidation, abuse of children and other relatives, and isolation. Noteworthy is Yodanis (2004, 658) formulation that speaks to a "culture of fear" which creates boundaries for women's actions. The differential construction of manhood and womanhood means that such boundaries do not exist for most men in relationships. Yodanis (2004, 658) describes how "a culture of fear secures men's status over women." In her discussion of women's fear of crime she argues that "not every man must be violent toward every woman for violence to control women's behavior. Rather, knowing that some women are victims of horrific violence is enough to control the behavior and limit the movement of all women in society." Yodanis uses a feminist framework to explain how in male dominated societies, women's fear of crime can be explained by the pervasiveness of patriarchal structures and values. She notes that

although most violent crimes are committed against men, women tend to be considerably more fearful of violent crime than men. This, she explains, is a result of women's greater vulnerability to sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Her use of a culture of fear to explain this phenomenon can be likened to Dutton and Goodman's (2005) coercive power. The fear of being violently victimised creates subordinate subject positions for some women, particularly women who have experienced violence in current or previous relationships.

Research has shown that violence against women in intimate relationships is usually preceded by threats of violence (Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dutton and Goodman 2005; Felson and Messner 2000; Wolf-Smith and LaRossa 1992). Wolf-Smith and LaRossa (1992) argue that acts of violence against women do not occur in a vacuum; instead these acts exist as part of an overall pattern of oppression that takes place over time, and usually includes events leading up to the violence and sometimes acts of contrition on the part of the perpetrator. Moreover, researching IPV involves attending to the complexities of the violent episode and the context in which the episode takes place. A key component of these complexities is how power is negotiated with such contestations reflecting patriarchal values.

Violence within intimate unions also involves sexual coercion and sexual violence against women. Forced sex[4] is estimated as occurring in between 40% and 45% of cases in which women also experienced various forms of physical violence by a male partner in a community (Bergen and Bukovec 2006; Campbell and Soeken 1999b). Similarly, a study done on a perpetrator intervention programme for violent men in a metropolitan area in the Northeast of the US found that 53% of the 229 men interviewed had sexually assaulted their partner at least once (Bergen and Bukovec 2006). More specifically, Bergen and Bukovec found that 28% of these men used physical violence to rape their partners and 13% used violent threats to force their partners into having sex. Research also indicates that often, after women are beaten, they are forced and/or intimidated into having sex by their partners (Bergen and Bukovec 2006; Gelles 1977). The problem of criminalising forced sex in intimate relationships as rape or sexual assault is related to

the historical location of women as the property of their husbands (Gelles 1977; Yllo 1999). This is a reflection of the traditional asymmetrical relations of power between women and men. The underlying assumption about men's bodily entitlement in relation to women explains why several women and most men avoid naming these acts forced sex, rape or sexual assault (Bergen and Bukovec 2006; Gelles 1977). Difficulties associated with identifying and analysing sexual violence are well documented in the literature (Bergen and Bukovec 2006; Campbell and Soeken 1999b; Gavey 1992; Gelles 1977).

Similarly, Gavey (1992) analyses women's talk on their experiences of unwanted and coerced sex in heterosexual relationships. She observed that women's decision to comply with their partners' demands for sex, in spite of their own sexual desires, can be understood in the context of the dominance of heterosexual discourses. This she refers to as "technologies of sexual coercion" (Gavey 1992, 325). It is Gavey's (1992, 325) contention that the ways in which discourses on sexuality are produced "have the power to effect the material practice of heterosexuality in ways that subordinate women." Technologies of sexual coercion reproduce unequal power arrangements in which men's sexual desires take precedence. Coercive acts exist on a continuum, ranging from subtle acts to the use of direct force. Gavey deploys insights drawn from the work of Michel Foucault that speaks to the functioning of power. Using a Foucauldian analysis, she rejects a unitary approach for understanding power in which individuals are repressed and denied by some force from above. She finds particularly useful his notion of disciplinary power which orders human activities and produces 'subjects' and 'docile' bodies. Power is seen as constitutive of human practices. Gavey draws on Foucault's example of the Panoptican, which he uses as a template for understanding the functioning of power and regulation. The Panoptican is a prison designed to ensure that inmates are constantly visible from the watch tower. However, inmates are unable to see the guard who watches them. The effect is a constant surveillance without the need for someone to be constantly manning the said tower. According to Gavey (1992, 328), "in this model, power is both visible and unverifiable." Gavey admits that while the

concept of disciplinary power might be useful for understanding sexual coercion, particularly subtle forms, in heterosexual relationships there are indeed differentials in the operation of power based on ideas about gender. In other words, surveillance enacted by men has greater constraining and controlling effects than women's attempts to monitor men.

Briefly, Gavey observed that dominant narratives of heterosexual unions meant that some women felt it necessary to agree to have sex with a partner after some time had elapsed in the dating relationship. These narratives positioned women as passive and compliant, but not desiring participants in sex. She noted that women were often unaware of the view of consent as a matter of choice. According to Gavey (1992, 348), this is an effect of "normative prescriptions for heterosexual practice . . . given that women's sexual desires are often invisible [and] unspoken."

The threats of violence coupled with women's memories of violent episode serve to curtail women's activities within intimate relationships. The acts of physical and sexual violence ought to be studied in the context of a range of other coercive practices. Also, it is difficult to separate understandings of gender ideologies and power from research that examines the practice of intimate partner violence, particular when we consider the asymmetrical distribution of this phenomenon between men and women.

2.5.3 Interpretive Research on IPV

The meanings of violence have been the subject of much of the qualitative research on IPV. In these projects researchers seek to analyse the ideas about violence produced by men and women in intimate relationships. These ideas focus on naming particular acts violent (Muehlenhard and Kimes 1999); offering reasons why violence occurs (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1997, 1998 and 2004; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Towns and Adams 2000); explaining participants' attitudes towards IPV (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2003 and 2004); studying the effects of violence; explanations about why individuals remain

within violent relationships (Baker 1997); and coping mechanisms for survivors of violence (Baker 1997; Hadeed and El-Bassel 2006). Dobash and Dobash (1997, 268) point to four main sources of conflict leading to attacks by men against their female partners:

> men's possessiveness and jealousy, men's expectations concerning women's domestic work, men's sense of the right to punish 'their' women for perceived wrongdoing, and the importance to men of maintaining or exercising their position of authority.

Similarly, Malos and Hague (1997) point to unequal relations of power, and expectations of domesticity and childcare responsibilities as negatively affecting women's lives; particularly the lives of those women who are survivors of IPV. A recurring motif in several qualitative investigations of IPV is the issue of power. Many of these themes mentioned by Dobash and Dobash (1997) repeat themselves in studies done on individuals' accounts of violence (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004; Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1998 and 2004; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Gilgun and McLeod 1999; Hadeed and El-Bassel 2006; Towns and Adams 2000).

Survivors' accounts have been the main focus of IPV research with several studies using this approach in the construction of knowledge on IPV (Baker 1997; Basile 1999; Dobash and Dobash 1979; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Gavey 1992; Gelles 1976; Hydén 1999; Jackson 2001; Nash 2005; Pollack 2007; Towns and Adams 2000; Wolf-Smith and LaRossa). One example is research conducted by Eisikovits and Buchbinder (1999). They examined the accounts of female survivors of IPV and found that in the interviews women offered a range of responses to men's violence. By focusing on metaphors presented in these accounts they demonstrate that women's responses range from rationalising men's violence and self blame to the rejection of excuses offered by their partners. In short, women's responses were multiple. However, they submit that "a key motif in women's linguistic construction of reality is related to the concept of control" (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999, 848). To this end they choose to focus on articulations of control by women and the meanings of these statements. Using an approach that borrows from phenomenology and constructivism, they adopt a theoretical

framework that conceptualises language and linguistic symbols as a medium for constructing social reality (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999). In addition, they examine the meanings these metaphors give to violent events and the associated context in which violence occurs. Language structures and organises our experience of reality by creating a sense of continuity and coherence (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999). Language is regarded as having a surface structure and a deep structure. For Eisikovits and Buchbinder (1999, 846) metaphors function as "bridging devices between the surface and deep structures." They believe that "the use of metaphors is not random, but rather, it reflects the deeper existential and social meanings of the user that cannot be understood in any alternative thinking mode" (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999, 846). It becomes important then to examine the extent to which women's talk is governed by patriarchal beliefs.

Using this framework Eisikovits and Buchbinder concluded that women perceived their male partners as being in a constant struggle for self-control and they rationalise their partners' violence as a result of a failure in the struggle for control. To this end, the women tended to use metaphors of explosion to show men's "emotional states are translated into physical effects" (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999, 854). In their study, Eisikovits and Buchbinder noted that some women explained that the person who attacked them was someone different from the person they lived with. Using the metaphor of a stranger or rationalising men's violence as the result of a split personality can be read as a coping strategy for some women who continue to live with their partners after episodes of violence.

The focus on survivors' accounts reflects, in part, the work of feminist scholars in their attempts to give voice to women's experiences. It can also be seen as part of the feminist challenge to the public/private dichotomy that in effect continues to shape women's activities outside of and within domestic spaces. Moreover, the historical confinement of IPV to the realm of the private – the home – necessitates a view of women's accounts as a challenge to the socio-historical and forced silences that militated against in-depth investigation into this phenomenon. In fact, Hague and

Wilson (2000) in a study of IPV between 1945 and 1970 highlight the reports of women who explained the different ways in which they concealed the violence they experienced during the post-war period. In addition to concealing injuries and constructing cover stories with their spouses, many women felt it was their responsibility, and not that of an agency or service, to manage the problem (Hague and Wilson 2000). However, it has been argued that to focus only on women's accounts deflects attention away from men who are the most frequent perpetrators of violence in intimate relationships (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004).

More recently, studies that catalogue men's accounts have emerged. One such work is that of Anderson and Umberson (2001) in which they used a theoretical framework that characterises gender as performance. Drawing on Butler's (1999) work, they found that the men in their study "attempted to construct masculine identities through the practice of violence and the discourse about their violence that they provide" (Anderson and Umberson 2001, 359). They contend that the subjective accounts provided by men about their violence against their female partners reveal the ongoing gender practices of men in general. Similarly, a study conducted by Gilgun and McLeod (1999, 2) reveals that men's accounts of their violence contain "numerous illustrations of the intersection of culture and individual agency." They note the importance of identifying the particularisations of culture in men's discourse of the violence they perpetrate (Gilgun and McLeod 1999). This is imperative in determining the different cultural practices and social languages men draw on in the construction of their gendered identities and how these might be linked to their perpetration of violence in relationships. Men's talk about violence against women has the effect of justifying and concealing their actions, as well as supporting ideas of men's entitlement to power in relation to women (Adams, Gavey and Towns 1995). By analysing the "the more subtle uses of language," Adams, Towns and Gavey (1995, 388) observe that men's "perspective on reality tends to dominate that of women." They argue that men use several rhetorical devices in speech to justify ideas about ownership and control of women, while at the same time supporting women's subordination. These studies privilege men's accounts,

highlighting the importance of analysing these narratives in understanding the problem of IPV against women.

Recently, a few studies have emerged that compare both men's and women's accounts of violence (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004; Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dobash et al. 1998; Nazroo 1995). Dobash et al (1998) conducted work on violence against women in intimate relationships by examining the accounts of men and women. Using a context specific approach, they found that there was significant discordance between male and female respondents in the reporting of this violence. The differences were even more pronounced when they compared men's and women's reports of frequent violent acts. Men tended to minimise the violence they perpetrated against their partners. In a subsequent study, Dobash and Dobash (2004) applied the context specific approach to study both men's and women's use of violence intimate relationships. Rather than limiting the focus to 'acts' (as is the case when using the CTS), they focused on violent events. In interviews done with 95 women and 95 men "the overall pattern [was] one in which men and women generally agree that *men's violence* is 'serious' or 'very serious' and that *women's violence* is 'not serious' or 'slightly serious'" (Dobash and Dobash 2004, 340). Women tended to be fearful of men's violence, whereas men often defined women's violence towards them as insignificant (Dobash and Dobash 2004; Anderson Umberson 2001). Women also spoke of acting in self-defence when they used violence in their relationship. This is important to note as these contextual insights are not addressed in CTS-based studies of IPV. Studies by Dobash et al (1998), and Dobash and Dobash (2004) emphasise the need to examine violence in the context of the intimate relationships. They also begin the process of exploring the ways in which gender and IPV intersect.

Other studies have focused more specifically on the interstices of gender and IPV. Using a combination of narrative and discourse analytical techniques to examine the accounts of women and men, Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) found that participants construct particular gender identities that are sometimes contradictory and ambiguous. They contend that respondents tend to perform gender and enact hegemonic

constructions of masculinity and femininity in their talk about violence. These findings are supported by Anderson and Umberson (2001) who found that men's narratives contained discourses of masculinity and femininity, and these are relationally defined. Accounts also point to broader socio-cultural mechanisms that construct violence against women in intimate relationships as a serious social problem. These scholars conclude that men's use of violence serves to reinforce hegemonic constructions of masculinity (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004). Connell (1995) explains that hegemonic masculinity legitimates the dominant position of men by embodying patriarchal values. To this Beynon (2002) adds that it defines successful ways of 'being a man', which inadvertently renders other masculine styles inadequate, inferior, or, as Connell's puts it, subordinate. The gendering of violence is further captured by Boonzaier and de le Rey (2004, 446) who observed that "women typically described the violence in terms of consequences (such as fear and injury), whereas men most often described the functions of violence." Similarly, Anderson and Umberson point out that the men in their study describe their use of violence as effectual and their female partners use of violence as ineffectual. In other words, these men tend to trivialise women's use of violence as acts of hysteria, while at the same time presenting themselves as accomplished or effective in their use of violence. Such verbal re-enactments reinforce an image of violence as a masculinist[5] act tied to male bodies.

By performing masculinity through violence men also encourage performance of femininity by their partners (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004). However, these are also differentially defined in men's speech: masculinity as authority and femininity as subordination (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004). Issues of power arise as seen when men suggest that women usurp their positions by disrupting the binary opposition of masculinity as authority and femininity as submission (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004). Disruptions to these traditional relations of gender are used, in many instances, to justify violence against women in intimate relationships. The analysis provided by Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004, 455-456) also reveals that "men used particular strategies to characterise their partners as 'masculinised' . . .

controlling domineering and demanding." Conversely, women describe the strategies employed by men as enacted to maintain power in their unions. In a few instances, respondents subverted the gender role stereotyping that was common in most speech. Some men supported changes to the traditional gender order and women sometimes challenged "traditional constructions of passive femininity and authored new discourses, which offered positions of empowerment" (Boonzaier and de la Rey 2004, 459). The discourse analytical approach to analysing peoples narratives provides a means by which researchers could study the different social languages at work in the individual's attempt to attach meanings to their experiences. Speech is heterogeneous. Though traditional notions of masculinity and femininity appear to dominate these accounts, the presence of subversive speech offers the possibility for change in the unequal relations of power that often results in violence against women. It is here that a feminist poststructuralist framework which deploys discourse analysis as a methodological resource will be outlined for its utility in the research on IPV.

2.6 Feminist Poststructuralism: A Framework for Understanding Intimate Partner Violence

It is important to spend some time outlining the theoretical ideas that guide this thesis. This work is informed by two distinct yet intersecting theoretical traditions: feminism/s and poststructuralism. They intersect in the sense that both traditions challenge existing power relations that have the effect of marginalising individuals as well as groups. However, not all versions of feminism celebrate the utility of poststructuralist insights and those that do, do so with varying degrees of consensus. I draw on feminism in two ways. Firstly, it guides my approach to researching IPV in terms of the methods chosen and the manner in which fieldwork was conducted. Secondly, feminist insights on gender and power relations partially provide the theoretical basis for this thesis. I examine the language persons produce about their experiences of violence. In so doing I apply poststructuralist theories of language in analysing these accounts. The foregoing represents a synthesis of ideas emerging from these two fields with a view of providing the theoretical basis for this thesis.

2.6.1 Feminism/s

It is impossible to capture the diversity of the sign 'feminism' and the feminist movement in any simple definition. However, some explanation is required in order to anchor the argument that follows. In a broad sense, Feminism signifies, in the words of Weedon (1997, 1) "a politics directed at changing existing power relations between men and women in society." This provides the catalyst for feminist theorising. Contemporary critiques of feminist theories have problematised the all-encompassing subject of Feminism – Woman – as incapable of re-presenting the concerns of women from different social locations (Barriteau 2007; Collins 1991; Lorde 2007; Mama 1989; Mohammed 1998; Mohanty 1988). They argue that the generic 'Woman' reflects a white, middle-class Anglo-American womanhood. These criticisms have changed the face of contemporary feminist theorising, combining issues such as race, class and sexuality with the research on gender; and showing how these are often inextricably linked. Another significant intervention comes from the work of Queer theorists who have lamented the heterosexual bias of feminist and other theories. Moreover, contemporary scholars prefer to speak of 'feminisms' in order to capture the variation in approaches to feminist theorising. These variations include (but are not limited to) Radical, Marxist, Liberal, Psychoanalytic, Standpoint Theory and Intersectionality, Postcolonial, and Postmodern and/or Poststructuralist (the latter two are often conflated) (Collins 1991; Elliot and Mandell 1995; Lorde 2007; Mohanty 1988; Tong 1997; Weedon 1998 and 2000).

In addition, a retrospective gaze means that Feminism is conceptualised as having emerged in waves: first, second and third wave feminisms. Woodhead (2003, 67) supports this distinction and synopsises what characterises each wave:

- She describes first wave feminism as a 19th century phenomenon that propagated the notion of gender-blindness. The aim was/is to achieve equality between men and women by subsuming their differences under some common 'humanity'. Baxter (2003) adds that this late 19th and 20th century phenomenon was marked by the quest for female suffrage in the US and Western Europe.

- Second wave feminism is described as having flourished between the 1960s and 1980s, during which period essentialist notions of men and women were espoused (Woodhead 2003). Campaigns calling for women's liberation against the aggression of men were also feature of this period in developed countries. In terms of academia, this period is associated with the rise of Women's Studies.
- Woodhead identifies the 1990s as the period in which third wave feminism begins to dominate in its criticism against essentialist theory. In place of essentialism it explores gender differences as complex, multiple, constructed, situated and fluid, and loosely tied to bodies (Butler 1999; Lorde 2007; Mohanty 1988). This third phase, she adds, marks the shift from Women's Studies to Gender Studies in academia.

Woodhead admits that there is no smooth transition from one period to the other, but rather it is a matter of which ideas dominate at any given moment. Baxter (2003, 5) explains that "there is evidence to suggest that feminist writing in different times and places has been imbued with both essentialist and constructionist tendencies;" a point featured in the work of Wieringa (2002). The reference to waves emphasises continuity, shifts and sometimes ruptures in these conceptual endeavours.

The unifying principle of each period and each theoretical tradition is a commitment to the politics of changing existing power relations – Feminism. The diversity, polemic even, is made manifest in the myriad ways in which these power relations are understood, and the various propositions for change – feminisms. This thesis takes its direction from both the unifying and the diverging developments within feminism/s. On the one hand, I feel it necessary to try to break free from essentialist ideas about gender, and to locate this thesis within a paradigm that opens up possibilities for multiplicity and situatedness. In short, the moment earlier referred to as third wave. On the other hand, the egalitarian politics that unites feminist perspectives motivates the current work and guides my approach to fieldwork. The accounts of IPV of both women and men indicate that essentialist ideas about gender dominate in participants' understandings of themselves. However, these dominant beliefs are varied, and sometimes unconventional and/or egalitarian values appear in these narratives. This variation indicates that though

gender identity is both multiple and elusive, there is an historical commitment to male power and privilege which is spatially and temporally manifested in overt, nuanced and subtle ways; an idea that will be further explored in the discussion on feminist poststructuralism.

2.6.2 Feminist Poststructuralism

Feminist-poststructuralism is a mode of knowledge production that uses poststructuralist notions of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to analyse existing power relations and to suggest possibilities for change (Weedon 1997). For the purposes of this thesis, my point of departure is the examination of the power relations that are implied by these accounts, and the ways in which these are informed by culturally specific discourses. This framework endorses the poststructuralist view of language (and other non-linguistic practices) as constructing social reality, its rejection of universals and its embrace of the notion of multivocality or the multiple meanings present texts. In addition to its approach to language, this schema also employs poststructuralist understandings of subjectivity, power and discourse.

Poststructuralism emerged as both an extension and critique of structuralism. It extends mainly on the structuralist linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (2001). Both structuralism and poststructuralism share the view that meaning is produced within language or other modes of signification similar to language (Brooker 1999). Saussure (2001, 967) identified language as the means through which reality is constituted: "without language, thought is a vague uncharted nebula. . . nothing is distinct before the appearance of language." He refers to language as a system of signs and the sign as a "double-entity" which unites a concept or *signified* and a sound-image or *signifier*. Saussure asserts that the sign is both *arbitrary* and *differential*. By referring to the sign as differentially derived Saussure means that it is determined by reference to what it is not, rather than what it is – masculinity is what femininity is not and vice versa. When applied to understandings of gender the problem that emerges is that negatively derived meanings limit possibilities for both women and men. Historically, through a process of

‘Othering’, ontologies of difference have been applied to justify unequal relations of power which position some groups (including women, Blacks, East Indians and indigenous people) at the margins of society while at the same time privileging an Anglo-American male ‘Self’. Of course this has never occurred without various modes of contestation. ‘Arbitrary’ here refers to the idea that there is no natural connection between the signified and signifier. The connection is unmotivated. In this schema the individual does not have the power to change the sign once established by the linguistic community. Poststructuralist epistemology draws on Saussure’s view of language as structuring reality rather than reflecting the real. Saussure is however critiqued for his focus on *langue* – that is, meaning as ordered within closed linguistic or cultural system. In poststructuralist thought the focus is on *parole* – meanings of language as emerging within specific cultural context; language in use. The focus here is on discourse.

In trying to outline a clear definition for the broad field of works which have come to be classified as poststructuralist what is most striking is “the purposeful elusiveness of work that can be variously classified as poststructural and/or postmodern” (Agger 1991, 112). Agger differentiates between poststructuralism and postmodernism by arguing that the former is a theory of knowledge and language, while the latter is a theory of society, culture and history. As a philosophical movement, postmodernism questions universals and problematises “what ‘true’ or ‘real’ knowledge is” (Baxter 2003, 6). Some scholars regard poststructuralism as branch of postmodernism (Agger 1991; Baxter 2003). According to Agger (1991, 112) “perhaps the most important hallmark of all this work is its aversion to clean positivist definitions and categories.” Poststructuralism problematises linguistic referentiality, it emphasises heteroglossia[6], decentres the subject, rejects the idea that ‘reason’ is universal or foundational, criticises humanism and stresses difference (Leitch 2001). It emphasises plurality as opposed to homogeneity, and rejects the universalising tendency and binary oppositions which have both dominated much of Western philosophy.

Since poststructuralist thought privileges the importance of language and discourse in understanding human relations it becomes important to explain what these terms signify and how they relate to each other. Language as a system exists in historically specific discourses, constantly competing to give meaning to the world (Weedon 1997). Weedon explains that it is the common factor of analysis of social organisation, social meaning, power and subjectivity in poststructuralist theory. Language, in the form of socio-historical and cultural discourses, offers a range of subject positions. Mills (2004, 10) refers to discourse as "groupings of utterances or sentences, [and] statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by a social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence." It is the means by which we come to know the social world by drawing on culturally specific context and times (Adams, Towns and Gavey 1995). Towns and Adams (2000) posit that discourses govern people's actions, thoughts and feelings and are in turn produced (and reproduced) as individuals use language in talk and action. As we confront and navigate across these discourses, we create different subject positions or subjectivities. Language constructs subjects in socially specific ways (Weedon 1997). However, it is not simply a matter of choosing and rejecting discourses. Discourses have varying appeal and institutional support. Gavey (1999, 352) proposes that the most invisible of these verbal practices are the traditional cultural assumptions:

> While discourses offer subject positions that suggests particular ways of being in and experiencing the world they vary in their accessibility and power. Those discourses that are commensurate with widely shared commonsense understandings of the worlds are perhaps most powerful in constituting subjectivity, yet their influence can most easily remain hidden and difficult to identify, and, therefore, to resist.

In other words, dominant discourses are often normalised in everyday practices and speech. In the context of gender ideologies, they are presented as natural and immutable with the emerging power dynamics tending to favour men in heterosexual relationships. It is for this reason an analysis of power is central to poststructuralist orientated scholarship. In the case of gender discourses, Weedon refers to the appeal of the natural in sustaining unequal relations of power between women and men.

The works of Michel Foucault finds appeal among feminists who employ poststructuralist insights. His focus on historically specific discursive relations and social practices (Weedon 1997) provides a platform from which feminists can problematise the appeal of the natural. In Foucauldian theory the meaning of gender is socially produced and varies across different discourses. His formulation offers a useful approach to the analysis of gender power. Rather than viewing power as some transcendental element of society, he refers to power relations that are actualised in day-to-day acts (Foucault 1982). It manifests itself in various ways and is "brought to bear on permanent structures" (Foucault 1982, 789). The exercise of power often involves some degree of consensus and the threat of violence. Language is but one social locale for the contestation of power and it determines the subject positions available to individuals in their daily lives.

Foucault (1998, 1473) suggests that states of power are "always local and unstable." Power is indeed ubiquitous, not because it consolidates everything into its impregnable unity, "but because it is produced from one moment to the next" (Foucault 1998, 1472). Power is everywhere because it comes from everything, not because it encompasses everything (Foucault 1998). He does not agree that it is an institution nor is it a structure. It is the sign attributed to "a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1998, 1472). In this sense power is local. The exercise of power takes place from countless points, "in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations" (Foucault 1998, 1472). Foucault's formulation of power bears relevance to the analysis of participants' accounts of IPV. It facilitates a focus on how power is constructed by individuals from moment to moment within speech. There is no singular way in which power is exercised. This situation renders unequal gender relations all the more difficult to contest.

So, what are the implications of these insights for research on IPV? In some circles poststructuralism is regarded as inimical to the emancipatory goals of feminist politics. It is often censured as an exercise in relativism, in which the unifying subject of feminism, 'Woman', is lost. As a politics, feminism aims to change existing power

relations. It criticises the dominant and envisages new possibilities (Weedon 1997). In Weedon's (1997, 20) view "not all forms of poststructuralism are necessarily productive for feminism." In fact, some strands of poststructuralism, particularly Deconstruction, focus exclusively on the texts and tends to disregard the social power relations within which texts are located. These power relations manifest themselves in various forms. IPV is but one of these various manifestations. In Weedon's (1997, 24) formulation of feminist poststructuralism, she explains that it must take full account of "the social and institutional context of textuality in order to address the power relations of everyday life." She explains that in order for

> a theoretical perspective to be politically useful for feminists, it should be able to recognise the importance of the *subjective* in constituting the meaning of women's lived reality. It should not deny subjective experience, since the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society (Weedon 1997, 8).

A theory is useful for feminism if it problematises the exercise of social power. This dovetails well with the intent of this study. Indeed, an approach which privileges the analysis of power in speech satisfies the epistemological demands of the research. In the context of this thesis, feminist poststructuralism acts as the guiding principle in explaining how men and women negotiate different gendered identities in their explanations of violence in relationships. It facilitates the analysis of where women and men position themselves in discourses on gender and violence by identifying the cultural reproduction of meanings inherent in these accounts. Also, it allows a discussion of the meanings of violence for participants. I look at the range of acts that the participants name as violence and/or abuse. What do men say? What do women say? What might be the source of their talk on what constitutes violence?

2.7 Summary

Globally, researchers have developed different approaches to the construction of knowledge about IPV. These include studies of correlation in which the aetiology of IPV is the focus; risk factor research which assesses an individual's risk for exposure to

or perpetration of IPV; studies of the prevalence and incidence of IPV; research on the forms of support available to survivors and perpetrators of violence; and studies of the meanings of violence for women and men in intimate relationships. Although there has been extensive research on intimate partner violence (IPV) in recent decades, this remains an under-researched area in the Caribbean. It is worth mentioning, however, that a number of studies have emerged recently from the Caribbean, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago. This thesis aims to contribute to the growing body of research on violence against women in intimate relationships in the Caribbean.

Research seeking to determine rates of the perpetration of IPV between men and women was assessed in this chapter. These studies can be divided into those that suggest virtual symmetry in the perpetration of IPV and others that find men to be the main perpetrators of violence. This disparity has been the subject of much debate in the research on violence between intimate partners. VAW researchers have shown the importance of studying the meanings of IPV in order to make sense of survey data. Rather than recording acts in isolation, as in the case of CTS based studies, VAW researchers propose that violent acts must be studied in the context in which they occur and that such practices usually occur alongside other controlling and abusive behaviours. In addition, there is need to question the motives of men's and women's use of violence, as these are hardly ever the same (Dobash et al 1998). When these factors are considered the idea of symmetry in the perpetration of violence between men and women appears misleading at best (Bograd 1988 and 1990; Dobash et al. 1992; Dobash and Dobash 2004; Dutton and Goodman 2005; Nazroo 1995; Dobash et al 1998; Kimmel 2002; Starks 1995).

Kimmel (2002) points to the analytical value that a focus on gender can contribute to an examination of IPV. VAW researchers consider cultural specificities in their investigation. Researchers of this persuasion also point to the value of socio-historical explorations into the meanings of violence in intimate relationships (Dobash and Dobash 1981; Nash 2005). Recognising that men's and women's use of violent acts tend to differ significantly, many researchers engage in feminist analyses of the problem

of IPV. In this thesis, I apply feminist poststructuralism as a framework for understanding IPV. Insights drawn from this approach allows for an interrogation of the discourses participants produce about violence and control in their intimate relationships. The framework is particularly attentive to the ways in which traditional ideas about gender are negotiated in speech and how these intersect with narratives of violence. Feminist poststructuralism privileges language as the unit of analysis of social phenomenon by examining the various subject positions individuals create for themselves and others in talk. It assesses the power relations of everyday life through a study of the social and institutional context in which talk and texts are produced (Weedon 1997). Moreover, feminist poststructuralism interrogates the use of language to maintain, (re)produce or subvert traditional notions of what it means to be a woman or a man. In chapter three, I outline the use of an approach to discourse analysis as an analytical framework compatible with feminist poststructuralism for the study of the dialogue produced about gender and violence in the context of in-depth interviews.

3 RESEARCHING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) IN HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

The procedures involved in the collection and analysis of data for this thesis are outlined in this chapter. The ways in which the conceptual and theoretical ideas framing this thesis dovetail with techniques of investigation for the study of intimate partner violence (IPV) will also be discussed. On their own, methods cannot guarantee the quality of any research. Methods operate in tandem with the philosophical assumptions and intentions of the research. I explore the use of in-depth interviews to examine individuals' experiences of IPV. A number of procedures were utilised in order to satisfy the empirical demands of this thesis. I investigate the extent to which discourses of violence and control are sites in which gendered identities are negotiated by both men and women, and how these ideologies of gender might in turn explain the use of a range of abusive behaviours in intimate relationships. The research questions, and the theoretical and methodological approach are all related, but in a nonlinear sense. Of course, techniques of investigation chosen are informed by the feminist poststructuralist framework outlined in the previous chapter. In this chapter I discuss the ways in which the techniques of investigation used in this thesis have been chosen to satisfy the demands of the research questions and how they exist in tandem with the theoretical approach chosen to examine violence in intimate relationships. I also outline the procedures involved in the gathering and analysis of the data for this thesis.

3.2 Feminist Methodology/ies

In its infancy feminist methodologies challenged the orthodoxy of traditional positivist social science in which the natural science principle of objectivity and Western philosophy's preoccupation with rationality were applied to the study of human relations (Anderson 1995; Cook and Fonow 1986; Harding 1987 and 1991; Kirsch 1999). These approaches incorporate critiques of traditional social science and reflect on the sources and potentials of knowledge. Methodology specifies "how social investigation should

be approached" (Ramazanoglu with Holland 2002, 11). It is the overall conception of the project and provides the rational for applying particular techniques of investigation and analysis (Klein 1983). These techniques are called methods. In addition, methodology encompasses the manner in which one's epistemological purview determines the choice of methods used in any research enterprise (Oakley 2000; Skinner, Hester and Malos 2005). Feminist methodologies apply feminist principles to research and in so doing unsettle the foundational assumptions of positivist social science.

The polemic about whether or not there exists a distinctive feminist methodology was the subject of several text and journal articles throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Cancian 1992; Cook and Fonow 1986; Klein 1983; Harding 1987 and 1991; Oakley 1993 and 2000). It should be noted that there is no unified feminist methodology as feminists appear from a range of ontological and epistemological locations. Notwithstanding these variations and the 1980s-1990s debates, there emerges some consensus on the key characteristics of feminist research. There is a shared commitment to the reconfiguration of the current manifestations of gender inequality.

Cook and Fonow (1986, 5-12) outline five key ideas around which feminists approaches to methodology coalesce:

1. The need to constantly and reflexively attend to the significance of gender and gender asymmetry as a feature of social life.
2. The importance of consciousness-raising as a specific methodological tool and as a general orientation or 'way of seeing'.
3. The need to challenge the norm of objectivity that assumes that the subject and object of research can be separated from one another and that the personal and/or grounded experiences are unscientific.
4. Concern with the ethical issues that arise when feminist engage in research. These include "the use of language as a means of subordination, the fairness of gatekeeping practices, intervention in respondents lives and the withholding of information from [participants]" (Cook and Fonow 1986, 12).

5. Emphasis on the empowerment of women and transformation of patriarchal social institutions through research.

These principles are echoed, with slight variations by several authors (Cancian 1992; Cook and Fonow 1987; Fonow and Cook 2005; Harding 1987 and 1991; Harding and Norberg 2005; Oakley 1993; Skinner, Hester and Malos 2005; Weedon 1997). For instance, Cancian (1992) privileges the use of qualitative methods as a means of validating individual experience whereas Oakley (2000, 21) advocates using "the right method for the research question." Regardless to the choice of methods, these principles remain consistent across feminist research projects. In addition Skinner, Hester and Malos (2005, 18) note that these characteristics are not "solely the domain of feminist researchers [but] feminists have fundamentally influenced their use." Kirsch (1999, 6-7) posits that

> many feminist principles of research overlap, to some extent, principles central to new ethnographic, critical, and hermeneutic approaches to research . . . What distinguishes feminist research from other traditions of inquiry, then, is its deliberate focus on gender combined with an emphasis on emancipatory goals.

The focus on gender, central to feminist methodologies, is of particular import to the current study. These broad feminist principles dovetail with the philosophical assumptions informing this thesis and they also function as a sort of guide for my approach to conducting fieldwork. Of course the vagaries of fieldwork and limitations of time did not permit me to follow them in their entirety as will be shown in the following sections on data collection. However, Cook and Fonow (1986) submits that we should not judge 'how feminist' a study is by counting how many of these principles are evident in the work. Instead, it is important to demonstrate how epistemological concerns are related to the research design, methods and analysis (Cook and Fonow 1989).

Given the sensitive nature of IPV, a feminist methodology is appropriate given its privileging of women's safety and empowerment. Furthermore, its appeal for the current study is the challenge to the norm of objectivity in research. Feminist methodologies complicate the object/subject or researched/researcher separation that is

advocated in positivist orientated research projects. The relationship between the researcher and participants is analysed as part of the research process, with particular attention given to the power dynamics that ensue from these encounters, acknowledging how the biases of the researcher influence decisions made about the progression of the project, as well as the extent to which these decisions are contingent on exogenous factors. The following outlines the procedures involved in data collection and analysis of the interviews for this thesis. Throughout the influence of feminist methodological principles is discussed as these guided my approach to the collection of data on the sensitive issue of IPV.

3.3 Research Methods

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate IPV and other controlling behaviours perpetrated by men against women in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. My central aim is to analyse how notions of gender are imbricated within discourse on violence and control. I interrogate the narratives produced by women and men about the use of violence by applying a feminist poststructuralist framework. The methods of investigation are utilised with the intention of addressing the research aims and questions. Since the purpose of the study is to examine women's and men's accounts of IPV in an attempt to identify where these narratives of violence intersect with discourses on gender, the main technique of data collection was the in-depth interview. This section outlines the processes of gaining access and conducting interviews with women and men about violence against women in intimate relationships. I also discuss the ethical issues which arose during the research process.

3.3.1 Ethics and Ethics Approval

Ethical considerations are a fundamental component of any academic research enterprise. Making ethical decisions involve making judgements based on some explicit framework with these judgements informing the decisions we make throughout the research process (Preissle 2007). Participants' and researchers' vulnerabilities,

participant-researcher relations, the interpretation and presentation of data, anonymity and confidentiality are among those issues that require a focus on ethics. Several protocols for conducting research that adheres to ethical principles have been developed within the social sciences in an effort to protect those involved in research, as well as the information revealed about people's lives. These include ensuring that data is carefully anonymised and protected, ensuring confidentiality, respecting and honouring research relationships, acquiring informed, voluntary consent from participants, representing the multiple realities that form part of individuals' lived experiences when data is presented, and ensuring that the unequal distribution of power of the interviewer-interviewee relationship is not further accentuated by any untoward actions of the researcher.

Pursuing field research as a student enrolled at the University of Manchester involves applying to the Ethics Committee for approval. To satisfy the requirements of this Committee a statement outlining any ethical issues (See Appendix 1) that might arise during the course of the collection and analysis of the data was prepared in March of 2007. This statement comprised a description of the study, any relationships with and responsibilities towards research participants, issues of safety regarding both the participants and the researcher, and the ways in which interview data would be stored and analysed. I received approval to proceed with the study in March of 2007. Further ethical issues arising out of the research process are addressed in the forgoing sections.

3.3.2 Negotiating and Renegotiating Access

Fieldwork for this thesis was conducted over two phases in 2007 and 2008. When I first met with key informants (counsellors, police and prison officers, family case workers, and the Director of the Marion House) I gave a brief description of the project in which I explained that I was conducting research on people's experiences of violence in intimate relationship. The Marion House offers counselling on a variety of issues that affect persons living in SVG. In the past, the organisation has offered counselling and support to individuals affected by IPV. However, within recent years its main focus has shifted to assisting person with substance abuse problems (Ring and Fraser 2005). At this time,

I let informants know that I was willing to answer any questions about the different aspects of the research. Access to research participants in qualitative studies is greatly reliant on gatekeepers or key informants (Miller and Bell 2005). In phase one of fieldwork the counsellors at the Family Court in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) functioned in this capacity, except in the case of one male respondent, who was contacted with the aid of a senior prison officer. I explained to my informants that I was interested in talking to persons about their experiences of IPV. To be more precise, I spoke about my desire to understand both women's and men's experiences of IPV.

Phase one of this process began at the start of April 2007. Between April and June 2007 I travelled to SVG to begin the process of gaining access to conduct in-depth interviews. This process was preceded by several telephone calls to Ministry of National Mobilisation (in particular, the Family Affairs Division and the Gender Affairs Department in this ministry), the Family Court, the Marion House and the Central Police Station. From these calls I was able to arrange meetings with the director of the Marion House and a counsellor at the Family Court. All of these organisations were enthusiastic about the study and agreed that intimate partner violence (IPV) in SVG is a serious social problem that has received little attention from academic researchers.

In my meeting with the Director of the Marion House, she explained the function of this organisation. At the time of the study there were no clients who had been using the organisation for problems relating to violence in their relationships. The Director however explained that they had done this kind of counselling in the past. I was told that most persons who have problems with IPV tend to contact to the Family Court. At the Gender Affairs Department in the Ministry of National Mobilisation, the Director, echoed the advice I received from the Marion House. She added that the Family Services Department of the Ministry of National Mobilisation comes into contact with victims and perpetrators of IPV from time to time. This initiated a visit to the Family Affairs Department where I met with a senior family case worker. The Family Affairs Division caters to the social welfare needs of Vincentians. In this regard, it is responsible for children's welfare and it provides public assistance to the most needy.

Family case workers function in much the same way as social workers. They assess the complaints that come before them and determine whether these require further investigation and, ultimately, government assistance. Where necessary, they visit homes to conduct further investigations into complaints brought before them. When I met with the family case worker during my first visit she reiterated the advice coming from the Directors of the Marion House and the Gender Affairs Department, which was that most IPV cases were referred to the Family Court. In some cases the police would be called in, but only with the client's consent. In addition, they provided assistance for survivors who wanted to leave their abusive partners. This assistance is in the form of a monetary contribution towards rent for a period of six months.[7] Despite their contact with survivors and perpetrators of IPV and their willingness to assist in the research process, family case workers were unsuccessful in finding participants willing to be a part of the project during this first visit. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, the work load of a case worker is quite overwhelming and they are required to deal with a variety of cases. It meant that although they expressed a desire to assist the reality of their work commitment inhibited them from so doing. Secondly, once I made contact with the counsellors at the Family Court it appeared as if I would be able to complete all of my interviews with their assistance, so although I kept in contact with the family case worker, I focused most of my attention, during this first phase, on the Family Court.

During this first visit I was fortunate to meet with all four counsellors who, at the time, worked at the Court. They confirmed the information I had previously been given from the Marion House, the Gender Affairs Department and the Family Services. Throughout the 1990s Family Courts were established across the English speaking Caribbean with one emerging in St. Vincent in 1995. These are closed courts, established to hear cases that involve sensitive family issues that would have been previously heard in in camera at the magistrate courts. The Family Court hears all family matters excluding divorce. With regard to IPV, victims can make applications for protection or occupation orders. The latter is a legal document which orders the perpetrator of IPV to vacate the household. In addition, there are counsellors attached to the Court, who are responsible

for investigating complaints that come before the Courts. This usually takes the form of home visits. Besides these formal duties, counsellors meet with persons, either impromptu or by appointment, who need advice or assistance with family related issues.[8]

The counsellors agreed to assist by speaking to their clients about participating in the research. However, an official letter describing the project and seeking permission to conduct interviews with clients of the Court was sent to the Court's President, Magistrate Coleen McDonald. The counsellors kindly offered me a vacant office at the Court to conduct the interviews, which I was able to use during both phases of my field research. Permission was granted about one week later.

When I met with the Director of the Marion House, the family case worker and the counsellors at the Family Court I asked them to describe persons who came for assistance because they had suffered physical violence from an intimate partner. As I set out to analyse people's accounts of IPV and other abusive acts, I wanted these to reflect the array of individuals who used these social services. It soon became apparent from the responses of informants that women were the main victims of IPV with men perpetrating the more frequent and heinous acts of violence. This was later confirmed by the interviews. At no stage of this study did I specify that I was looking for female victims and male perpetrators. I wanted to learn who used these social services, for what reasons, and what the outcomes were. However, it is worth acknowledging the differences in prevalence rates of violence yielded by clinical versus population samples. Caetano, Schafer and Cunradi (2001) explain that the differences in the perpetration of violence between men and women is more pronounced in clinical samples as women survivors IPV tend to use social services on a far greater scale than men. They also note that although the gender divide is not as pronounced in population samples, in these studies men tend to underreport their use of violence. According to Caetano, Schafer and Cunradi (2001) one of the main differences between men's and women's use of violence identified in studies using both kinds of samples is that men's

violence against women in intimate unions is usually repeated and is more likely to cause injury or lead to death than violence acts used by women.

At this initial stage of pursuing access I wanted to ensure that I approach any organisation which might come into contact with potential participants. For this reason I sought a meeting with the Royal Police Force Public Relations Officer (PRO). The PRO of the Police Force revealed that police records were not collected in a way that would indicate those violent crimes involving cases of IPV. These were recorded under the general categories of assault, battery and grievous bodily harm. He advised that I meet with the Superintendent or the Deputy Superintendent of Prisons. I met with the latter who agreed to assist with my research. I was informed that at the time there was only one inmate who was convicted of a violent crime against his partner, and that he had agreed to participate in the study.

My first visit yielded a total of 12 interviews, 11 persons were contacted through the counsellors at the Family Court and one participant was an inmate of Her Majesty's Prisons for male offenders. In this first phase five men and seven women were interviewed. I felt assured at this point that all of the interviews for the final stage of my fieldwork would be facilitated by the Family Court.

Phase two began in March 2008. After contacting two of the counsellors at the Family Court to inform them of my return, I learned that one of the counsellors had retired and a second was going to be away for the duration of my visit. It meant that I was relying on just the two remaining counsellors to assist in locating participants for the study. The remainder of March 2008 passed without completing any of the interviews in phase two of the study. Miller and Bell (2005, 65) reminds us that "in focusing on less visible aspects of the social world, for example domestic violence, access to research participants may be tenuous." Negotiating participation is one of the many vagaries of fieldwork. In this study access was further complicated by concerns for victim's safety, a prevailing view of IPV as a private issue that should not be discussed outside the confines of the home, and the related public loathing of violence against women. It was somewhat naïve of me to assume that because I had 'established' access in the previous

year, and kept in contact with informants, that my transition back in to the research environment would be relatively seamless. Access usually has to be negotiated and re-negotiated at several stages of the fieldwork process. As a result, the interviews in phase two only began a month after my arrival.

In the meantime I decided to revisit my contact at the Family Services. Immediately she thought about a couple who she felt would be willing to participate in the study. Additionally, she referred to her field notes of past and present cases, and agreed to ask whether those persons affected by IPV would be willing to be interviewed. I was offered the used of an office in which to conduct these interviews. Even with this new commitment I felt that I might have to seek other sources for participants. Consequently, I returned to the Marion House and, again, was unsuccessful for the same reasons as in phase one. At this point I decided to revisit the Central Police Station and the Prisons. On my way into the Station I met an officer with whom I was acquainted. I used the opportunity to briefly describe my research and some of the difficulties associated with access that I had encountered to date. I spoke about the need to keep my research confidential in order to protect the privacy of participants. The advice he offered was crucial to the completion of the fieldwork. He said that my best option would be to visit the community police stations, and he kindly offered to speak to a senior officer who was in charge of one of these stations. He asked me to give him a few days in order to do this and gave me his number. When I contacted him he arranged for me to speak to this officer. The senior officer arranged for me to visit a rural community police station where I spoke to another senior officer who had already arranged for me to visit the homes of couples, as well as some potential participants, in order to introduce myself and describe my study. In this first visit I met with six persons, five of whom were interviewed at a later date. I was accompanied by the officer and a driver using a department vehicle during this first visit. At each home the officer introduced me to the participant. As a member of the community and someone who has advised residents, his endorsement of my research was crucial. The aura of officialdom was tempered as the officer was not in uniform and he was a resident of the community in which a number of persons relied on for advice and support. In our

conversation, he stressed that women tended to call the police to "talk" to their male partners who used physical violence against them. He added that most were reluctant for any arrests to be made, but they wanted their partners to be scared by the police presence in the hope that they would desist from using violence in their relationships. There is no mandatory arrest policy in SVG, but a partner can be arrested for assault, battery or grievous bodily harm. I was able to arrange a further two interviews at the prisons toward the end of my stay in SVG. I had to renegotiate access here as well because the Deputy Superintendent who had assisted me in the past was on leave. The Superintendent agreed to have a senior prison officer make some inquiries on my behalf. In the final week of my time in SVG, the officer contacted me and indicated that he had arranged for me to interview two male offenders.

All the information I received about potential respondents was done so with their permission. Miller and Bell (2005) reminds us that researchers should constantly reflect on how routes of access may affect the data collected. Also, controls that gatekeepers/informants exercise, vary and the factors that might influence these controls may be cultural, hierarchical, therapeutic or paternalistic (Miller and Bell 2005). These are important considerations as they may indeed influence the nature of the data collected. For instance, nine respondents (five women and four men) had received formal counselling at the Family Court, whereas the other participants did not, although they all may have received advice from friends, family members and others in their social network. It is important to consider whether these differences in access to social support affected participants' outlook and, by extension, their talk about violence. It is important also to acknowledge the relationship between informants and respondents and how this might influence the latter's decision to participate in research. My concern that persons might feel pressured into doing interviews was mitigated by the informants' insistence in protecting the privacy and welling-being of persons who had visited them in confidence. I used the first conversation with respondents, which took place via telephone, to try to gauge how they felt about participating in the research. This idea will be further developed in the section on interviews, but first the methods and composition of the sample will discussed in greater detail in the next section.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

Sampling in qualitative research is concerned with identifying and recruiting participants "who can best inform the study" (Fossey et al 2002, 726). This study used the purposive sampling approach to find cases that would facilitate the exploration of a specific phenomenon, IPV. Mason (2002, 121) suggests that "what is useful and meaningful needs to be seen in the context of how well it will allow you to generate data and ideas which advance your understandings, and these are always theoretically informed." Hence, the tendency in qualitative research is to collect a non-probability sample, based on the ideas which provide the basis for the study. Feminist social scientists have been instrumental in highlighting the importance of doing research on women's life (Barriteau 2003 and 2007; Cook and Fonow 1987; Harding 1987 and 1991; Harding and Norberg 2005; Oakley 1993; Reddock 1998; Rowley 2002; Weedon 1998 and 2000). Many of these studies have gone on to interview women about their everyday experiences. In fact and as earlier noted, most qualitative research on IPV is based on women's account. However, recent studies have highlighted the need for studying both men's and women's accounts in addressing the problem of IPV and its effect on women's lives (Dobash et al 1998; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2003). Since the 1970s, feminist researchers on IPV have studied the inequalities that feature in human relations embedded in our historical notions about gender (Adams, Towns and Gavey 1995; Boonzaier and Rey 2003 and 2004; Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1981, 1992 and 2004; Dobash et al 1998; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Jackson 2001; Kimmel 2002; Towns and Adams 2000). To understand the varied ideologies that disadvantage women in their intimate relationships feminist researchers have pointed to the importance of analysing the accounts of both men and women.

With these ideas in mind, a purposive sample was also used to select "members of a difficult-to-reach" population (Neuman 2003, 213). My intention here is not to generalise about the population of persons who experience violence in their relationships, but rather to investigate the ways in which ideologies of gender and violence intersect in individuals' accounts. Rather than aiming to be statistically representative of a population, a purposive sample must be able to provide access to

enough data to enable the researcher to address her/his research questions (Mason 2002). In an interpretive sense, the sample should be able to provide access to the phenomenon under question (Mason 2002).

Persons were chosen based on their experiences of IPV. In all of the cases presented in this thesis men were main perpetrators of IPV both in terms of frequency and the severity of violence. Women's use of violence did not have the same power implications as that of their male partners; a point that will be further developed in later chapters. This tended to expose them to further and the more severe forms of violence from their partners. Furthermore, they were far more likely to be injured after a violent episode than their partners. These conclusions are similar to those made by Dobash et al (1998). What then can we learn from the accounts of men and women about the cultural scripts which inform these rationalisations? The sample was drawn with a central idea based on the meanings of violence to individual women and men.

Participants were contacted with the help of state officials from the organisations mentioned in the previous section. Initially, I wanted to interview couples (each partner separately). The intention was to interview 40 persons from 20 couples. I had to reconsider this approach during my first visit to SVG because there was a greater response rate from women. Since the central concern of the study was to compare men's and women's accounts of IPV, the issue of them being interviewed as part of a couple was not an absolute requirement. I told informants that although I would like to interview couples I would also be willing to interview individual men and women who have had experiences with IPV. Participants' safety, particularly women's, was paramount. Fear of reprisals meant that some women did not want their partners to know they were being interviewed. This was the case even in instances where they were separated from their male partners. There were a few cases where persons agreed to be interviewed, but later refused. One couple who had initially agreed to participate in the study later withdrew. The female partner explained that her partner did not think it was necessary since they had resolved their problems. She said that while she would have liked to assist, she did not want any further trouble with her partner. It would have been

unethical for me to try to convince her to change her mind as this may have exposed her to further violence. One woman who agreed to be interviewed had to cancel because of the birth of her child. A further two men and one woman agreed to be interviewed but later changed their minds or were unavailable. One man explained that he was no longer comfortable participating in the project. He did not give a reason, but was adamant that he no longer wanted to be interviewed. After several attempts, the other two persons could not be reached using the contact information they made available. I should add that this does not reflect the total number of persons who refused to participate as informants only put me in touch with persons who agreed to take part in the study and they did not inform me of anyone who did not want to participate. Lewis (2007, 67) reminds us that "consent is not absolute and needs to be assessed, and sometimes renegotiated, particularly during the data collection."

In all, I interviewed 34 persons, including 19 women and 15 men between 2007 and 2008. I contacted 19 (12 women and seven men) interviewees through the Family Court, seven (four men and three women) through the Family Services, three men were interviewed at Her Majesty's Prisons, and a further four women and one man was contacted with the assistance of a senior officer at a community police station. Within this group there were eight couples. Pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of respondents, and also to differentiate between them. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 provide a general description of respondents. The first depicts general demographic features of the women in the sample, and the second presents those of the men.

FIGURE 3.1 Demographics: Female Participants

NAME		AGE	ETHNICITY	RELATION-SHIP STATUS	RELIGION	EDUCATION	
						Age left school	Qualifications
1	Angie	28	Black	Cohab.	Pentecostal	15/16	Sec. Comp.
2	Brenda	29	Black	Cohab. (new partner)	Adventist	15	Sec. Incomp.
3	Stacey	42	Mixed (Black & Kalinago[9])	Cohab. (new partner)	Adventist	15	Sr.[10] Comp.
4	Deidre	24	White	Cohab. (new partner)	Catholic (non-practising)	18	Tert. A' levels Accounting Degree student
5	Betty	26	Black	Cohab.	Adventist	16	Sr. Comp.
6	Eve	43	Black	Married	Baptist	16	Sr. Comp.
7	Tammy	38	Black	Cohab.	Roman Catholic / Methodist	15	Sr. Incomp.
8	Linda	33	Black	Single	Pentecostal	16	Sec. Comp.
9	Rose	29	Mixed (Black & Kalinago)	Cohab.	Anglican	15	Sec. Incomp.
10	Giselle	30	Black	Cohab.	Baptist	13/14	Sr. Incomp.
11	Yvette	41	Black	Married	Adventist	14	Sr. Incomp.
12	Janet	23	Black	Single	Pentecostal	16	Sec. Comp. (4 O' Levels)
13	Regina	24	Black	Single	Apostolic Faith	16	Sec. Comp. (4 O' Levels)
14	Sharon	39	Black	Single	Pentecostal	16	Sec. Incomp.
15	Isis	23	Mixed (Black & Kalinago)	Single	Pentecostal	18	Sec. Comp. (7 O' Levels
16	Sarah	39	Black	Cohab.	Roman Catholic	15/16	Sec. Incomp.
17	Dawn	40	Black	Cohab.	Pentecostal	15	Sr. Incomp.
18	Cheryl	46	Mixed (Black & East Indian)	Married	Methodist	16	Sec. Comp.
19	Chantal	30	Black	Cohab. (new partner)	Pentecostal	15	Sec. Incomp.

Cohab. – Cohabiting
Vis. Rel. – Visiting Relationship
Sep. – Separated
Tert. – Educated at Tertiary Level
Sec. Comp. – Secondary School Complete
Sec. Incomp. – Secondary School Incomplete
Sr. Comp. – Senior School Complete
Sr. Incomp. – Senior School Incomplete

FIGURE 3.2 Demographics: Male Participants

NAME		AGE	ETHNICITY	RELATION-SHIP STATUS	RELIGION	EDUCATION	
						Age left school	Qualifications
1	Bruce	40	Mixed (Black & Kalinago	Cohab.	Roman Catholic / Baptist	14	Sec. Incomp.
2	Floyd	33	Black	Cohab.	Adventist	16	Sec. Comp.
3	Lenny	40	Black	Vis. Rel.	Rastafarian	16	Sec. Comp.
4	Ben	40	Black	Single	Anglican	Not sure	Not sure
5	Scott	39	Black	Cohab.	Pentecostal	14	Sr. Incomp.
6	Lance	53	Black	Single	Roman Catholic	15	Sr. Comp.
7	Andrew	25	Black	Cohab.	None	18	Sr. Comp.
8	Gary	36	Black	Sep.	Pentecostal	15	Sr. Comp.
9	Dwight	43	Black	Cohab.	Muslim	15	Sec. Incomp.
10	Lionel	30	Black	Cohab.	Rastafarian	18	Sec. Comp. (5 O' Levels)
11	Brent	49	Black	Married	Roman Catholic (baptised, but non-practising)	15	Sr. Incomp.
12	Randy	28	Black	Single	Adventist	15	Sec. Incomp.
13	Roger	35	Mixed (Black & East Indian)	Single	None	16	Sec. Incomp.
14	Colin	44	Black	Single	Anglican	15	Sr. Comp.
15	Ricky	24	Black	Single	Methodist	17	Sec. Comp. (2 O' Levels)

Cohab. – Cohabiting
Vis. Rel. – Visiting Relationship
Sep. – Separated
Tert. – Educated at Tertiary Level
Sec. Comp. – Secondary School Complete
Sec. Incomp. – Secondary School Incomplete
Sr. Comp. – Senior School Complete
Sr. Incomp. – Senior School Incomplete

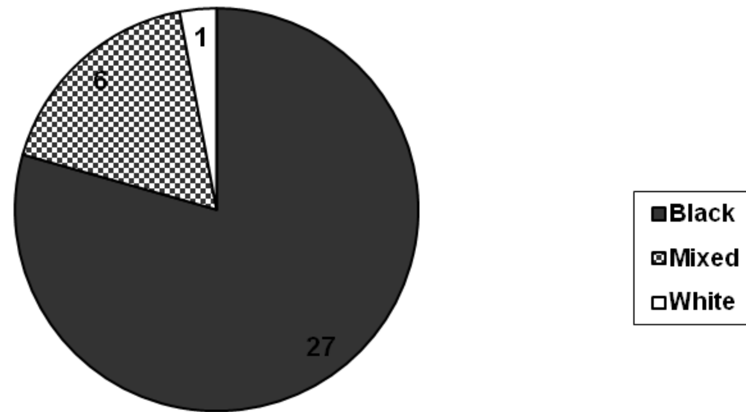
Persons who were interviewed as part of a couple are presented in Figure 3.3.

FIGURE 3.3 Couples

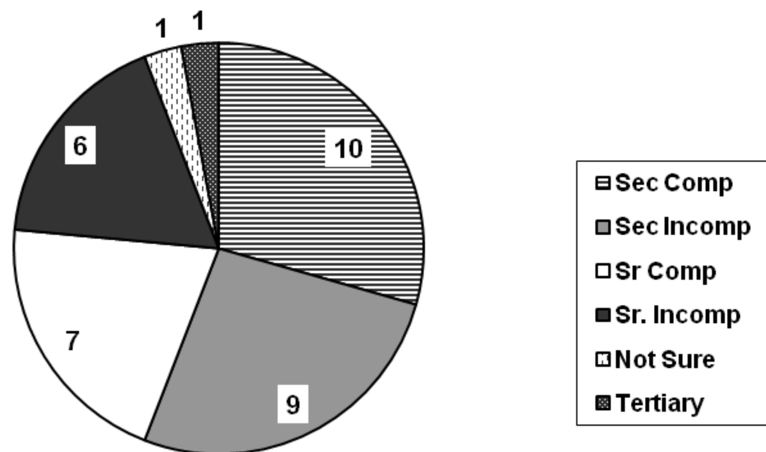
	Female Partner	Male Partner	Relationship Status
1	Angie	Bruce	Cohabiting
2	Tammy	Scott	Cohabiting
3	Linda	Lance	Separated
4	Rose	Dwight	Cohabiting
5	Giselle	Lionel	Cohabiting
6	Yvette	Brent	Married
7	Janet	Randy	Separated[11]
8	Regina	Roger	Separated

A number of demographic features of the sample can be identified from the information presented in the figures. The average age of participants in this study is approximately 35 years (34.9). Men were generally older than women in the study, with an average age of 37.3 years and the average age of women was 33 years. When the ages of the men and women interviewed as part of a couple was compared, the female partners had an average age of approximately 31 years (30.8) and the male partners had an average age of approximately 40 years (39.6). For all of the couples men were older than their female partners, except for Giselle and Lionel who were both 30. The largest age gap was 20 years and this was between Linda 33 and Lance 53.

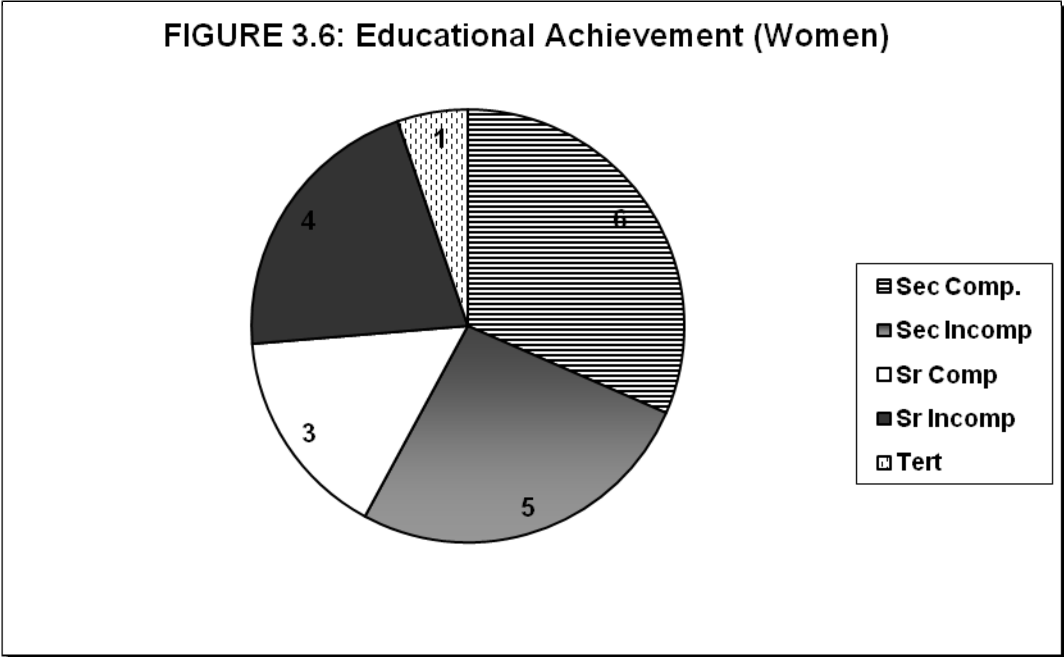
In terms of ethnicity, of the 34 persons interviewed 27 identified their ethnicity as Black, six said they were mixed and one person identified as white. A pictorial representation of ethnicity is presented in figure 3.4:

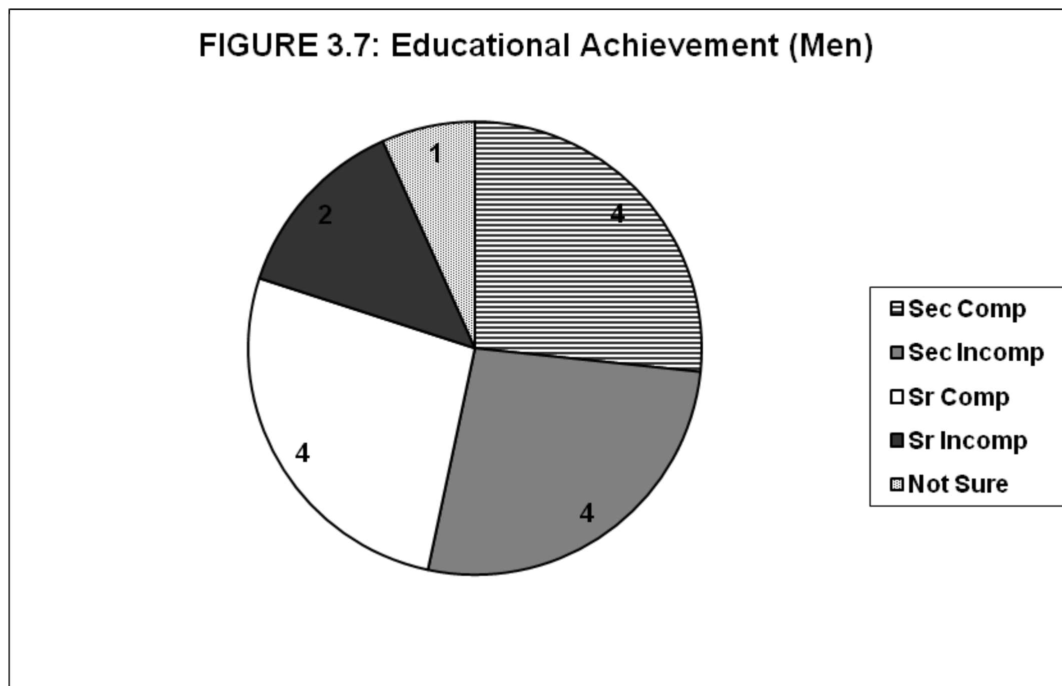


Educational achievement was also compared for men and women in the sample. Figure 3.5 represents the different levels of educational attainment of for both men and women, whereas figures 3.6 and 3.7 offers a comparison of education levels for these two groups:



Most participants would have either completed secondary school (Sec Comp) or attended secondary school but did not complete (Sec Incomp). Whereas as the others completed senior school (Sr Comp) or attended but did not complete senior school (Sr Incomp). One female participant completed her A' levels and was currently engaged in further tertiary level training (Tert) and one male participant indicated that he did not remember how far he had gotten in school.





Figures 3.6 and 3.7 indicate that women were slightly better educated than men, with a greater proportion of women completing secondary school than men. However, a greater proportion of the men had completed senior schools than women. These figures demonstrate that the men and women shared a similar level of educational attainment. A comparison of men and women from the eight couples indicated similar educational achievement. In some cases women were more educated than their male partners whereas in others men were more educated than their female partners. Generally participants left school around the age of 15 or 16.

Finally, except for two men who did not identify with any religion, interviewees described varying degrees of ties to a religion. Some described themselves as baptised or christened in a particularly faith, but considered themselves non-practicing Christians.

The construction of the sample for this thesis involved some degree of compromise. Although the initial intention was to interview couples who had accessed government sponsored social support services for problems with IPV, very early in the fieldwork process this had to be reconsidered. In the end, only eight couples were interviewed which meant that just over half of the sample was individual men and women. This

compromise did not derail any efforts to examine issues of gender, and violence and control in relationships as participants had all had some experience with IPV. Additionally, the route to accessing participants was by no means straightforward. It involved several detours, a few of which appeared in the form of cul-de-sacs but, for the most part, travelling alternative routes facilitated further access to meeting with interviewees.

3.3.4 Interviews

Interviews were conducted over a period of about five months in 2007 and 2008. In an attempt to secure informed consent from respondents, at the beginning of each interview, I read out a statement in which I spent some time discussing the study with respondents. Participants were told that the information they offered would be confidential as I would not use their names or any other details that could connect them to what we discussed. I said that the interviews would be recorded; they were informed that they could stop at any time during the interview; and I thanked respondents for agreeing to participate in the research (See Appendix 3). All participants were comfortable to continue the interview having been given this information at the beginning.

Because the formality involved in acquiring written consent from participants might alienate some individuals (Miller and Bell 2005) I refrained from asking respondents to sign formal consent forms. This could have been further complicated by the sensitive nature of the topic. The notion of 'informed' consent is not without problems. Miller and Bell (2005, 65) asks: "what are participants consenting to when they agree to join a study?" This is why it was so important that participants were made aware of the range of issues that would be covered at the beginning of the interview so that they could decide whether or not they wish to proceed with the exercise.

General details about the participants were collected at the beginning of the interview including information about: age, ethnicity, level of education, marital status, religion,

employment status, living arrangements, and they were asked to provide the same general details about their partners. Interviews were completed within one sitting except in the case of one man who was called out to a job during the interview. However, this interview was completed one week later. Interviews lasted, on an average, between one and half to two hours, except for the one interview that was done in two parts which lasted a total of three and a half hours.

In this study, I am interested in the meanings that individual attach to their experiences of violence in relationships and the ways in which the accounts of violence are sites in which genders are performed. With this in mind my choice of technique to capture these issues was the in-depth interviews. I used an interview schedule which was adapted from Dobash et al's (unpublished interview schedule) research study evaluating programmes for violent men entitled, *Men's Programmes: A Research Evaluation*. In this evaluation there were two separate interview schedules, one tailored for men and the other women. This study was aimed at evaluating programmes for violent men. The sections adapted from these two studies included living arrangements, respondents' image of self, respondents' image of their partner, social networks, family network and routine, assessment of relationship, history of family violence, and finally violence in relationships. To these I added questions related to a person's sense of self – in particular ideas about what it means to be a man and woman – as well as a debriefing section in which we discussed issues related to lessons learnt from their relationship experiences, and their hopes and aspirations for the future (See Appendix 3). At the end of each interview, I had used incident cards which were part of the original *Men's Programmes: A Research Evaluation* interview schedule. Using these cards persons were asked whether they had committed a series of acts against their partners or whether their partners had ever perpetrated these acts against them. Participants were also asked how often these acts were committed. Summary data generated from these cards give an overall sense of the specific acts of violence men perpetrated against their partners and the types of injuries that resulted from men's violence.

Women reported a range of violent acts used against by their intimate partners. Of the women in the sample, 17 out of 19 recalled that they were pushed, shoved or grabbed by a partner; 14 reported that they had been choked; 14 said their partner had slapped them in the past; 9 explained that they were kicked by their partner; 11 reported that their partner had used a weapon or an object to hurt them; 8 women recalled that they had been punched in the face; a further 8 explained that they were punched on the body; 8 reported being dragged across the room during a violent incident; 8 women said that their arm was twisted; and 4 women reported that they were hit (kicked, punched or shoved) in the stomach during a pregnancy. In contrast men reported perpetrating fewer incidents of violence. Of the 14[12] men who completed the cards 2 admitted to choking their partner; 5 said they had punched their partner in the face; 7 admitted to punching their partner on the body; 12 recalled that they had slapped their partner; 10 reported that they had pushed grabbed or shoved her; one man said he had dragged her; 2 admitted to kicking their partner; 7 reported twisting the arm of their partner; 1 man admitted to kicking his partner in the stomach while she was pregnant; and six men reported that they had used a weapon or an object to hurt their partners. The disparity in reporting is even more pronounced when we consider reports on sexual violence. Of the 16 women who reported that their partner used force to make them have sex, 4 women said that their partners did this very often and a further 4 recalled that their partners forced them to have sex often. Conversely, two men admitted that they used force to make their partners have sex with them sometimes.

A further comparison can be made between the men and women of the 8 couples interview. Women from the couples interviewed generally reported more violence than men. This is especially true in relation to sexual violence. Six of the 8 women interviewed said that their partners used physical force to make them have sex. Of the 6 women 2 women admitted that this occurred very often; one reported that this happened often; for three of these women forced sex occurred sometimes; one woman reported that occurred on a few occasions; and one woman said that her partner never used force to make her have sex with him. All except one man from the couples interviewed reported that they had never used force to make their partners have sex with them.

Although the numbers for such a comparison is quite small (8 women and 8 men), the trend in reporting on sexual violence is consistent with work done by Dobash et al (1998). In their interviews with 144 women and 122 men, they concluded that only a few men (6%) admitted to forcing their partners to have sex. This contrasted with the reports of over a quarter women who reported that their partners forced them to have sex. Although men generally discussed their thoughts about violence and their rationale for using violence in the interviews, it appears as though there was a tendency to underreport their use of against women in general .

Though a guide was used, the sessions were characterised by a reflexive dialogue between interviewer and respondent in order to elucidate meanings women and men attach to IPV. For the most part, respondents were allowed to speak at length about their feelings and experiences. The information given prompted me to probe for greater details on specific issues. In short, there was no slavish adherence to the interview schedule. There were, however, a few occasions where I intervened to steer the session in a particular direction, but for the most part the respondents were allowed to give direction to their accounts.

I found that in most cases participants were willing to engage in a dialogue on the various areas of the interview. However, most men were less willing to disclose details about the violence they perpetrated against their female partners. There was one respondent, who I will refer to as Ben, who was unwilling to talk about the acts of violence used against his partner. While he was willing to talk about the other areas in the interview schedule once the question of violence was raised he wanted to end the interview. In keeping with the consent negotiated at the beginning of the interview, I had to terminate this session when the respondent insisted he did not want to continue. A second respondent, Andrew, did speak about the nature of his violence but refused to elaborate on his reasons for using violence. With the exception of these two persons and men's general tendency to minimise their violent acts, respondents discussed other topics with relative candour. There were, however, two men in the study who were explicit about their violence and did not appear to be employing strategies of

minimisations. These brief observations are indicative of the varied ways in which people talk about their experiences and the different meanings they attach to these practices.

This study does not purport to reflect any reality of the lived experiences of the participants of these interviews. Instead, and in keeping with the theoretical and methodological framework, it is the subjective accounts of individuals, the enactment of gendered subjectivities in their talk, and the discourses or the social languages that they employ that are of interest here. How persons construct their versions of reality is of greater significance to understanding IPV and its related practices than trying to grasp the elusive nature of their reality. The contention here is that these practices are informed by the many cultural ideologies engaged by participants. The interview acts as a means through which these can be investigated.

Of course, with the researcher comes with a complete range of values which cannot be separated from the project at hand. Even though the attempt is to (re)present possible meanings offered by participants about their lives, it is worth noting that the interests and biases of the researcher is brought to bear on all aspects of the project, the interview being no exception. These interests are what determine the choice of respondents, the questions raised, the portions chosen for analysis and the kind of analysis undertaken. Accounts are not

> treated as descriptions of actual processes, behaviour or mental events. Interview talk is by nature a cultural and collective phenomenon. The meaning of an answer is not a straightforward matter of external or internal reference, but also depends on the local and broader discursive system in which the utterance is embedded (Talja 1999, 461).

Moreover, this is not intended to be read as an exercise in objectivity, as should be the case in all modes of research, but rather as an equally accepted means of producing knowledge about people's experiences. In addition, the variability of participants' statements about a particular topic militates against the researcher taking a collection of similar statements produced by these participants as literally descriptive of social action.

Different actors tell different stories over an entire interview, so it is often difficult to reconstruct or summarize the views of one participant (Talja 1999).

It is also important to take note of the power differential which exists between the interviewer and the respondent in the context of the interview. Davies and Dodd (2002, 281) believe that ethical practice in research involves "the acknowledgement and location of the researcher in the research process." This marries well with feminist concerns for the ethical implications of a study. It is necessary to consider my own social and personal characteristics, participants' feelings about being interviewed and about the interview, my feelings about participants, the quality of the interviewer/interviewee interaction, and respondents' attempts to use the interviewer as a source of information (Cook and Fonow 1986).

With the researcher comes a great degree of power. This is evident in two main ways. Firstly, the researcher is responsible for protecting the data offered during the interview. Respondents were made aware, at the beginning of each interview, about the ways in which the data were to be used. Care was taken to ensure that the information in the extracts included in this thesis could not be used to identify any participant and pseudonyms have replaced the actual names of interviewees. The second way in which the power differential between the researcher and participants exists is in the differences in our socioeconomic locations. With the researcher comes a range of personal, beliefs, understandings and prejudices which are socially, historically and culturally derived (Arendell 1997; Harding 1987). My years of education place me in the category of middleclass, whereas most of participants come from a working class background. Also, while I have witnessed various forms of violence, I am fortunate to have never been exposed to intimate partner violence. For these reasons I wanted to be clear about the purpose of the research and I asked informants to do the same, even though this honesty might have discouraged individuals from participating. This information was reiterated at the beginning of each interview, so that persons could decide whether or not to proceed.

Conversely, participants exercised some degree of power. They exercised power over the information they provided during the interview. In fact, some persons were unwilling to pursue particular areas of the interview in any detail. One such example comes from Ben who exercised his right to end the interview when he was uncomfortable. However, this point must not be overstated. This power or right exercised by participants should not be confused with those of the researcher. The institutional and social dynamics within which the researcher is embedded offers the latter greater access to power, so although the right to withdraw participation might be exercised, interviewees often feel compelled to complete interviews. This is why the voluntary nature of the interview must be emphasised at the beginning and researchers should desist from coercing participants into continuing with interviews in which there are clear signs that the person wishes to stop.

Although the researcher has in mind the range of topics that she/he wants to gather information about and it is she/he who attempts to steer the discussion, the interview ought to be treated as a shared interaction. Participants offer explanations and information about their experiences and the interviewer should also provide responses to questions posed over the course of the interview. In her critique of the conventional guidelines for conducting social science interviews, Oakley (1993) notes that researchers have been advised to deflect attention away from questions raised by participants. Researchers have been advised to avoid engaging in reciprocal dialogue with participants. Oakley (1993) explains that when participants ask questions the conventional advice was to explain that as researchers we are here to find out about 'your' lives. This was intended to avoid bias in research. However, in her own study of women's transition to motherhood, she found that women ask several questions about this subject matter during the interview. Oakley suggests (1993, 48) that to regard participants as those who answer questions and interviewers as those who pose questions is "a purely exploitative attitude to interviewees as a sources of data." Though Oakley's (1993) analysis was based on women interviewing women, her larger point about the need for reciprocity of information as a means of empowering participants and adhering to a feminist ethic of care should be considered, particularly when conducting

research on sensitive issues. In situations where I was asked about my life and my experiences in interviews I always provided a response based on my recollection at that time. However, I found that participants, both men and women, rarely posed questions to me about my personal life. The questions they posed tended to be about my views on issues that arose during the interviews. I always gave an answer in situations where a direct question was posed to me and I found that this allowed me to maintain rapport with participants. While explaining his reasons for using violence one male respondent, whom I refer to as Andrew, asked whether I had ever been slapped by an intimate partner. When I said "no," he was surprised and he concluded that it was because I did not 'give trouble' in my relationships. This initiated an explanation that was centred on the provocation motif in which men used their accounts to blame their partners for the violence men perpetrate. In addition, with the approval of the Family Court and the Family Services I provided participants with information about the kinds of social support available at these organisations.

Once access had been established interviewees were generally cooperative during our sessions. Except in the case of Ben, respondents appeared to be comfortable to complete the interview process. However, men tended to be less forthcoming than women about the details of their use of violence. Instead, they elaborated on their motivations for using violence. Women tended to offer more details about the violent event and the effects of violence on their physical and mental wellbeing. Throughout the process of conducting the interviews I tried to remain aware of my biases as researcher and the ways in which power relations were actualised before, during and after the interviews. This guided my decisions in accessing participants, trying to maintain dialogue during the interview, the information offered to participants on support systems available to them and the treatment of the data after the interviews.

3.4 Discourse Analysis (DA)

The analysis of interviews was based on the assumption that language is a central component in the way that our realities are structured and (re)produced. Language acts

as a sort of mediator between the personal and the social. It mediates reality. These assumptions necessitate the application of an analytical technique that is attentive to such a view of language and one that is congruous with a feminist poststructuralist framework. As an analytical tool, discourse analysis (DA) is both compatible with a feminist-poststructuralist framework (Baxter 2003; Gavey 1997), and examines language as the main unit of analysis. DA involves a particular reading of texts by focusing on how "speakers draw from culturally available explanatory frameworks to construct the objects about which they speak and an array of subject positions" (Avdi 2005, 498). It is concerned with what language is used for (Brown and Yule 1983). In fact, DA examines the ways in which talk and texts are used to perform actions (Potter 2003). It is an umbrella term that captures a range of different approaches to the study of talk and texts. These approaches have developed from different theoretical traditions as well as from diverse disciplinary locations (Gill 2000). However, Gill (2000, 172) explains that "what these perspectives share in common is a rejection of the realist notion that language is simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world, and a conviction to the central importance of discourse in constructing social life." Interviewees drew on a range of social, cultural and historical resources in their talk about IPV. In so doing, they created a number of subject positions.

The discourse analytical approach to analysing people's narratives provides a means by which researchers could study the different social languages at work when individuals attempt to attach meanings to their experiences. As noted in the previous chapter discourse is a means through which we make sense of the social world (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). It fashions reality.

Many theorists agree that dialogue is a primary condition of discourse (Abrams 1999; Bakhtin 1994; Mills 2004). What can be gleaned from the several disciplinary perspectives on discourse is that it refers to "groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by a social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence"

(Mills 2004, 10). The dialogic feature of discourse suggests that it cannot be studied in isolation. Instead, the context in which discourses are produced and the utterances and contexts they beget must also be considered. The role of context or "situatedness" is important in understanding both the production of a given utterance and its interpretation (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). This is what is referred to by Gee (1999) as situated meanings. Situated meanings, according to Gee, refers to the image or pattern a participant produces on the spot as she/he articulates her/his past experiences. These meanings are negotiated between people in a discursive context or through social interaction.

The intellectual ether of the different strands of DA finds its roots in the 'turn to language' that occurred across the social sciences, the arts and the humanities. According to Gill (2000, 173) "this 'linguistic turn' was precipitated by critiques of positivism, by the prodigious impact of structuralism and poststructuralist ideas, and by postmodernists' attacks on epistemology." It is no surprise then that DA has different epistemological bases (for example, poststructuralism, constructionism, and constructivism) from other methodologies. Potter's (2003, 1) suggestion that DA "is not a method as such; rather it is a perspective that includes meta-theoretical, theoretical and analytical principles," captures the theoretical and methodological diversity that is involved in the field of DA.

Several approaches to the understanding of text and talk rely on discourse analysis. Given the complexity of the term 'discourse', discourse analysis itself can take on several meanings (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). In fact, Gill (2000) suggests that to say that an approach is a discourse analytical one does not necessarily tell anyone much. This is because of the polemical atmosphere that abounds within the general field of DA. However, Gill (2000, 173) suggests that "although there are probably at least 57 varieties of discourse analysis, one way of making sense of the differences between them is to think of the broad theoretical traditions." She singles out three recognisable traditions. The first is known as critical linguistics, semiotics or critical language studies. This has a close association with the discipline of linguistics, but is more

indebted to both structuralist analysis and semiotics. By studying close linguistic features of texts, analysts focus on the dramatic effects of these texts. The second tradition she identifies has been influenced by speech act theory, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. These all stress the action orientation of discourse. The focus is diverted away from how accounts relate to the world to what accounts accomplish and they look, in a detailed way, at social interaction. The third tradition is most squarely associated with poststructuralism (Gill 2000). This is sometimes referred to as Foucauldian/Continental DA. Other styles include critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1999; van Dijk 1993), discursive psychology (Edley 2001; Edley and Wetherell 1996; Potter 2003 and 2004; Wetherell 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Wetherell and Potter 1992), ethnography of speaking, pragmatics, conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002).

An eclectic approach to DA seems most effective in the context of this study. The approach to DA articulated here draws on ideas of feminist poststructuralism as well as the above mentioned discourse analytical traditions. These approaches are by no means mutually exclusive. As was earlier mentioned they are all genealogically aligned to the critique of positivism. What will unite the features from each variation used in this study is their commensurability with the theoretical framework for understanding the interstices of gender and violence. Towns and Adams posit that (2000, 562) "feminist poststructuralist theory . . . holds that language must be understood as emerging from and constituting discourses that influence the way we act." Accounts provide a form of verbal enactment of gender performances. For instance, explanations offered for the acts of violence men perpetrate against women allow for discursive understandings of men's gendered identities while at the same time creating gendered subject positions for women. These verbal performances occur through a process of dialogue and, when examined, this dialogue will reveal the social languages used to construct the realities of participants within this study.

A number of studies have employed the use of the discourse analytical methodology in order to investigate a wide range of phenomena. Here, I mention two such studies to

illustrate the broad fields in which this methodology is employed. Talja (1999) uses DA as a method for analysing qualitative interview data gathered from a study of users' library conceptions. Using the interpretive tools of subject positions and interpretive repertoires, she observed that participants' interpretations of what the library should be used for was more context-dependent and variable than normally recognised. The term interpretive repertoires is used in the area of discursive psychology almost synonymously with discourse (Edley 2001). The main difference lies in the view of subjectivity. In the case of the former, greater focus is on the individual as agent constructing a discourse. The individual is seen as subject to certain societal discourses in the case of the latter (Edley 2001).

In the second example, Wetherell and Potter (1992, 4) conducted research into racism using social psychology as a tool for studying cultures in New Zealand. The intention was to use social psychological methods and theories to analyse their communities and develop a critical analysis of codes and practices that sustain racism in New Zealand. Their empirical work was concerned with white middle-class New Zealand and its colonial history. They explain:

> in defining our task as mapping the language of racism in New Zealand we had in mind the notion of charting themes and ideologies, exploring the heterogeneous and layered texture of practices, arguments and representations which make up the taken for granted in a particular society.

In this work they describe DA as pre-eminently involving a practical engagement with text and talk. Using the work of Robert Miles as a point of reference they set out to study "the ways in which racist ideology distorts social reality, reflects economic and political structures, and also acts as a condition of the existence shaping those structures" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 13). The notion of interpretive repertoires[13] was used as the main mode of analysis for a discursive understanding of racism in New Zealand. They found that certain constraining ideologies were embedded in white New Zealander's speech about the indigenous peoples.

The analysis in the current study will seek to identify heteroglossia, that is, the multiple social languages which intervene in the construction of self (Bakhtin 1994). In other

words the analysis attempts to capture the multivocality (many voices) of speech as individuals account for their experiences of IPV. The accounts will be treated as hybridised social languages rather than monolithic entities. It is sometimes difficult to determine whether someone is switching from one social language to another, or mixing the two. However, Gee (1999, 87) suggests that it is "more important, in a discourse analysis, to recognise this matter than to settle it." Nevertheless, multiplicity does not lead to dilemmas of intelligibility because human agents aspire to coherence, so while there are many voices under the rubble of the statement, the listener is often able to grasp meaning and context. Ultimately, language and social context are indivisible. This is the point that Weedon (1998) makes when she refers to the need to focus on social and institutional practices even as we accent the importance of discourse. Invariably, establishing what constitutes the commonsense remains a political affair among agents in the struggle for meaning-capture (Marshall 2009). It is worth reiterating the point made in the previous chapter that the different discourses available to agents do not possess equal appeal. There are varying degrees of social and institutional legitimacy, and these are always contested.

The analysis is twofold. It "is concerned with what people do with discourses" (Stevenson 2004, 19), and how these verbal practices are linked to broader cultural ideas. How are women's and men's discourses on violence and control indicative of different societal notions on identity? This can be determined by analysing the discursive strategies persons use to enact verbal performances, and to position themselves. Furthermore, the different ways in which participants achieve these performances in talk will be another important point of analysis.

The intent of DA is not to unearth what is taking place in individuals' minds or in reality. Instead the focus is on the kinds of descriptions and accounts of events and topics that are made possible by individuals: "what kinds of evaluations they are based on, how do different modes of accounting construct different versions of the topic or produce different kinds of truths, and what do these versions accomplish" (Talja 1999, 469). Towns and Adams suggests that in a DA informed by a feminist poststructuralist

framework it is important to determine what is being done with talk at a particular point in time and within certain social context. Here, the focus is on how these versions of events and actions construct identities, and in what ways are these constructions related to the use and experience of violence and control in relationships.

3.5 Analytical Procedures

Ideas about the meanings of these interviews were formed even as interviews were in progress. Field notes about my thoughts on each interview represents the first phase of the analysis and these eventually contributed to the more systematic procedures performed in conducting the discourse analysis on each interview. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were read several times before any close analysis began. As a result of these readings, my understanding of the starting points and statements behind different ways of talking increased. A thorough analysis of a few interviews was undertaken initially in order to come up with a uniformed approach to the study of all of the interviews. Tentative analytical themes were written into the right and left hand column of the pages of the interview transcripts after the discourse analysis was performed on each interview in order to signal possible themes for broader topics (See Appendix 5 for an example of the discourse analysis performed). There were instances in which speech passages applied to more than one theme, and these were also noted. This process was followed for all 34 interviews. In addition to identifying broad themes across the accounts, I surveyed the transcripts for idiosyncratic features of the Vincentian vernacular and idiomatic expressions as these were important in capturing cultural variations of particular gendered practices. Interviews were analysed with the research questions (what strategies do men and women employ in constructing their accounts of IPV? What can be gleaned from the accounts of women and men about how power is negotiated within intimate relationships? How are narratives of violence and control sites in which gendered identities are negotiated/performed/constructed by both men and women?) in mind. Guided by these questions, as well as the principles of DA, a written analysis was done of each interview.

At each stage transcripts were interrogated to determine the actions being performed in speech and the ways in which these verbal performances were influenced by the interview dynamic. However, the analysis for this thesis focuses on the former. The data were interrogated with a view of identifying strategies used to construct accounts of violence and in so doing meanings about gender emerged. There was a separate section in which participants spoke about their views on manhood and womanhood. These separate narratives of gender were compared to the portions of accounts in which explanations of violence emerged.

The data were also analysed to determine participants' commitment to or departure from hegemonic discourses on gender. After each interview was analysed using the approach outlined, broad themes were chosen as main analytical frames for the study of accounts. Using Microsoft Word, I created a matrix in which all extracts which exemplified a particular theme was noted under this theme. The notation under each theme included the name of the participant, and the page number of the participants' interview where the example could be located.

The next step was the reduction of the data. At this point transcripts were examined to decide which portions best illustrated the analytical frames previously decided upon. The reduced data forms the basis of the analysis presented in the following chapters.

3.6 Summary

The research process comprises a series of stages during which decisions are made about how to proceed. For instance, in trying to establish routes to access the urge to complete data collection had to be balanced against the wellbeing of participants. Establishing and maintaining contact with informants was essential to the timely completion of fieldwork. The nature of their occupation meant that they appropriately privileged the wellbeing and wishes of their clients as opposed to the success of this study. Decisions were also made about the theoretical orientation of the study and the method/s best suited to satisfy the aims, research questions and ideas underpinning the

thesis. Over the course of this chapter I proposed the use of feminist methodological principles and a discourse analytical approach for the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The latter facilitates an examination of how individuals draw on culturally available discourses in framing their accounts of violence and other forms of control. The former acted as guidelines for conducting ethical research. Moreover, the methodological and analytical procedures outlined in this chapter are compatible with the broader theoretical approach (feminist poststructuralism) deployed as an overall framework for examining violence and control in intimate union. Feminist poststructuralism embodies the feminist challenge to the unequal exercise of power. It applies poststructuralist theories of language, discourse, subjectivity and power to the study of human relations. This thesis examines the accounts of IPV produced in interviews with women and men by applying the principles of feminist poststructuralism. The in-depth interview allows for an analysis of how language is used to create different subject positions for the speaker. It also facilitates an exploration of the various ways in which relations of power are actualised in day-to-day practices. The following chapters present the findings and analysis of these interviews in greater detail.

4 WHAT DOES IT 'REALLY' MEAN TO BE A WO/MAN?: CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER IN WOMEN'S AND MEN'S TALK

4.1 Introduction

People invariably convey impressions about themselves in their everyday verbal interactions. These presentations of self may be more carefully managed in the context of official interviews, and the promise of anonymity does not guarantee full disclosure from participants about their experiences and feelings. However, this study does not purport to mirror the precise realities of participants' lives. Instead, and in keeping with the theoretical and methodological framework, its focus is the on the subjective accounts of individuals. In this study, respondents offered varying degrees of detail about violence in their relationships. Women and a few men were more expansive regarding the nature of this violence, and both men and women were generally candid about their ideas and experiences outside of discussions of violent events. Here, the concern is with the points of convergence between discourses about gender and those about intimate partner violence (IPV). A close analysis of the interviews reveals that the meanings participants, men in particular, attach to violence are embedded with a number of conventional stereotypes about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. Scholars, using empirical research, have suggested that there is in fact evidence to support the idea that IPV is one of several forms of gender-based violence in which women are disproportionately victimised (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2003 and 2004; Dobash and Dobash 1981, 1979, 1984, 1992, 1997, 2003 and 2004; Dobash et al 1998 and 2000; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Jackson 2001; Kimmel 2001; Nazroo 2005; O'Neill 1998; Peacock and Levack 2004; Towns and Adams 2000). This prompted me to incorporate questions in the interview schedule that would encourage participants to talk about their conceptions of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a women; their conceptualisations of gender. Gender in the context of this study is not to be confused with its reductionist usage; it is not simply a matter of counting male and female bodies. Rather, it signifies what feminist refer to as complex social relations between men and women that are historically characterised

by a disproportionate distribution of power (Barriteau 2001). Because this thesis is concerned with accounts of men and women, it analyses these relations at the level of discourse.

A feminist poststructuralist approach coupled with discourse analytical techniques suggest that hegemonic discourses function to subjugate women (Gavey 1990). Such dominant discourses are usually supported by institutional and social practices. However, these are often contested and sometimes they are resisted. A feminist poststructuralist reading of these accounts allows for an examination of the extent to which text is governed by hegemonic discourses and/or patriarchal ideology. It is concerned with the ways in which gender is performed in these explanations. This idea guides the analysis conducted on the accounts provided by participants.

Participants were asked to describe a number of issues including their living arrangements, whether and how household responsibilities were shared, whether there was a clear head or leader of the household/relationship, who was responsible for the family finances, what does it means to be a woman/man, and their feelings about the relationship at different stages. Questions I felt would point to ideas about gender ranged from very overt – "what do you think it means to be a woman? – to more covert, "Who is usually responsible for doing the chores around the house?" The questions were intended to tie ideas – what do you think – to practice – what did each of you do; and to analyse how these are re-presented in speech. Moreover, what does all of this say about how individuals position themselves in discourses on gender and power?

The responses reiterated the notion that gender is something done from moment to moment as individuals navigate their experiences. Some participants were perplexed by the question, "what does it mean to be a woman/man," and required further explanation. Such responses are a reminder that individuals do not perforce reflect on meanings of identity in a conscious way, even though their talk and practices betray latent notions about selfhood. The discourses produced about the practice of violence reinforced

dominant ideas about gender. In these accounts, the tendency was to tie conventional ideas about masculinity and femininity to male and female bodies respectively. Men were more likely than women to engage in this practice, while women often bucked traditional images of gender and rejected the restrictive positions ascribed to them. This chapter seeks to unpack the ideas about gender present in the interviews with participants.

4.2 On Being a Woman

Participants' ideas generally endorsed, but sometimes subverted binary discourses on gender. They tended to assign conventional scripts of femininity and masculinity to female and male bodies respectively. However, the tendency is to dichotomise women's identity into "good" and "bad" femininity – the image of the Madonna being the measure of a good woman, while ideas about women as whores or jezebel are used to define the bad woman. Women often distanced themselves from the latter image, with the majority aspiring to the ideals of the former. Femininity was often defined in relation to and in opposition to masculinity. These were usually defined negatively – femininity is what masculinity is not and vice versa – and presented as idealised states of gender in some accounts since the practices participants claimed to be engaged in sometimes complicated the binary discourses on gender. Binary notions of the gender appear with varying levels of approval and rejection in the accounts.

In this first example, Rose outlines her ideas on what she thinks it means to be a woman:

> *Int.*: Ok, and for you, what do you think it means to be a woman?
> *Rose*: Well it's many things, most of all it, it's education, and you have to live up to your expectations, not other people expectations, and your mind.
> *Int.*: What do you think are some of those expectations?
> *Rose*: Well ok. I ha' [have] two girl children. I have to show respect for myself, show respect for my children, make sure I be a good role model for my children, so sometimes the things them that you do the children does look at that you know, you understand and copy from that. [Partner of Dwight]

She says being a woman is “many things.” Attaching significant value to education, Rose believes that she has a responsibility to be a good role model. While the idea of being a good role model points to a broader discourse on adult responsibility, for her this responsibility is enacted in specific ways. In this description of a good role model Rose speaks to the importance of having self-respect and respect for her children. Notions of femininity as the embodiment of good morals, particularly when her role as mother is considered, become the focus of her response. Embedded in what, from the outset, appears to be a gender neutral articulation of women’s identity, are latent meanings about the importance of women’s respectability in the construction of femininity.

Brenda’s account is also indicative of how various discourses co-exist in participants talk on identity. In the dialogue that follows she says

> *Int*.: What do you think it means to be a woman?
> *Brenda*: Me like to work you know. Me like to see my place clean. I don’t like to be on the road. I prefer to stay home and take care of my place and my children and see we skin clean when we going anywhere, but right now if any work come I go take it even if I have to carry my child to the day care centre . . . Most of all a woman should be faithful. If she have a boyfriend she stick to him, you know. If he nah [don’t] have nothing to give she still stick to him; thing go [would] come.

As part of her identity, she stresses the importance of being industrious, so as to support her children. This includes both domestic and paid work. Although she draws on traditional discourses of femininity – woman as carer, mother, homemaker – she also views paid work as important in defining her gendered self. Importance is placed on ensuring that both she and her children portray a good public image in terms of their physical appearance. She advocates fidelity among women, at which time she implicates the centrality of the breadwinner motif in the portrayal of male identity. She says “if he nah have nothing to give she stick to him. Thing go come.” Her statement not only alludes to a tacit understanding of men’s responsibility to provide for their partners and families, it also resonates with the vocabulary of matrimony, “for better or for worse,” in which women are expected to endure the vagaries of being part of an intimate heterosexual union.

Janet's account of femininity draws more specifically on traditional discourses about gender, but it also exemplifies the heterogeneity of the ideas informing her understanding of herself.

> Ok with me, there are basically two or three kinds of women out there. There are those who are just the family type, who take care of everything. They make sure that the world goes good. There are some who just thinks about themselves and what they could get out of you and some who don't know what they're doing. So, on that point I put myself as the kind that, as the family kind who wants to see the world a better place. [Janet, Partner of Randy]

She creates a typology of womanhood, identifying "two or three kinds of women." First, "the family type, who take care of everything," and "they make sure that the world goes good." This is akin to a femininity which draws on the nurturer-homemaker motif, in which women are considered carers. Second, she disapprovingly presents a construction of femininity in which women are described as self-centred and self-interested. This resounds with the derogatory image of some women as opportunistic and manipulative, evoking the colloquial moniker of a woman as a 'gold digger'. She enters into a relationship for material gain, rather than the more culturally esteemed motive of romantic love. Third, is a woman who is unsure of her role "some who don't know what they doing," oblivious to her responsibilities or her place in the familial and societal context. She positions herself as the family orientated type of woman, presenting herself as a humanist.

Like other societies, traditional views about a good wife feed the expectations of both women and men as power is negotiated in relationships. The idea of a good wife draws on the essentialist discourse on sex roles. In this sense, an accomplished female gender performance is based on women's mastery of domestic duties. For example referring to his partner, Ricky says "you come off work 5:00, so after five, after six, all 6:00 you could leave from your mother and come home and cook something for me to eat because we live in a house." There is the expectation that although they both work outside of the home, she must continue to fulfil the traditional duties assigned to a housewife. This is read as the 'true' measure of her identity. He laments how much time she spends at her parents' home at the expense of performing these duties. This

has been conceptualised by feminist scholars as they double day of paid employment and housework that is disproportionately borne by women (Freedman 2001). Similarly, Gary endorses a discourse on femininity based on women's role as housewives. Describing his expectations of a partner he says

> I would need somebody loving, somebody caring who always be there. You know, make sure, well, you have your lunch, your breakfast, always keep the place clean, you know them sort o' things. Make sure you comfortable at home. (Gary)

In describing his ideal partner, Gary engages a feminine subjectivity which draws on traditional symbols of women as housekeeper, carer and homemaker; the woman who looks after her home, and provides all of her partner's physical and emotional needs. His account has the effect of limiting the possibilities available to women in their pursuit of various aspirations.

Bruce describes the differences between a good woman and a bad woman, drawing on the archetype of the housewife. In reference to his partner he says:

> I always, since I growing up, I always say I would like to meet a nice woman. She could cook. She could clean. She could, like good in everything, although she so young. She start when she young coming up {right}. So them is the kind o' quality ladies, so that is why when she left I could ah leave and just let she go, but I know the kind o' [of] quality she be. [Bruce, Partner of Angie]

Bruce's ideas are indicative of the pressure placed on many young girls and women in Vincentian society to master the traditional art of home management, which remains a major marker of femininity. Of course, the same is not expected of men. In spite of increased educational opportunities for women there remains the belief that the transition from childhood and adolescence to fully mature woman is only actualised when a woman's domestic capabilities can be proven. The problem does not lie in women's work within the home or in their positions as homemakers or housewives, but the ways in which these practices have always been ascribed an inferior status to paid employment and have been almost exclusively assigned to women. In many instances there is a lack of opportunity for women to choose to do otherwise whether or not they

are engaged in paid work. The naturalisation of such roles serves to preserve power relations which place women at a disadvantage in relationships, limiting their ability to choose.

Some men point to the importance of women's success as housewives in maintaining the family's public image. In this binary account of gender Floyd talks about his beliefs about women's responsibility while at the same time lamenting his partner's failure in satisfying the demands of homemaker.

> *Floyd*: Well this is her thing, to keep a relationship close, she have certain things she supposed to do {mm hmm} like ok, so [as] long as I'm working she supposed to cook, wash, take care of the children and them, and the house.
> *Int.*: So this is like, this is some of the things you think she ought to do –
> *Floyd*: Right.
> *Int.*: As long as you're working?
> *Floyd*: Right, and Florence is a small place and since Florence is a small place the whole o' [of] Florence will go around sou-souing [gossiping] and thing {mm hmm}. That is why she doesn't, that is why she need to stand up. I ain't saying she doesn't stand up, but she need to take on more responsibility.
> *Int.*: You mean in terms of the home?
> *Floyd*: Yeah. Like I feel she kind o' neglectful. She doesn't really, [pause] like she move [carry herself] a kind o' don't care [in a carefree manner] . . . Well, she, ahm, she children o' them, she tired because she does have real [a lot of] work to do, so I say to her 'you don't have to do all the work one time. You don't have to do all the work. You do some today. You do some tomorrow. You don't have to wash cook, press, everything at one day, do some and rest'.

In this binary account on gender, masculinity is characterised by a man's ability to provide for his family and femininity by a woman's success at managing the domestic domain. Although he acknowledges that she gets tired because of the children and the enormity of her responsibilities, he expresses displeasure with her performance within the home, issuing advice about how she might better manage her responsibilities. In his view, this lack of success has the potential to tarnish the family's public image, since they live in a small community where gossip is rife. He suggests that her failure to give a convincing public performance at managing the household threatens to stigmatise the

family within their community. There is a sense in which his partner is expected to endure the demands of this role in order to keep the family's public image intact.

Tying domesticity to female bodies is a feature of several accounts. The problem does not lie in the nature of domestic responsibility in and of itself, but in the subordinate value attached to this form of work. Implicit in these accounts is that the responsibility of the breadwinner is of far greater importance than that of housewife. Whereas paid employment is presented as an option opened to women, it is considered an absolute requirement for men. These historical discourses on men's and women's duties and responsibilities has the effect of supporting asymmetrical relations of power in which men's role as breadwinner accord them dominion within the context of the family.

Yvette also assigns housework to women, but her account on women's identity is more extensive, albeit drawing from an essentialist scripting of gender:

> *Int*.: For you, what does it mean to be a woman?
> *Yvette*: Well I enjoy being a woman, but end up ain't getting the right, ain't satisfying myself by doing what I want . . . I never feel bad being a woman because that is how God make me and I never refuse from doing a woman work.
> *Int*.: What do you think like a woman's work is?
> *Yvette*: Well, be around she children, when she have children. Well at first have a boyfriend {mm hmm} so that you could have kids or have a husband, and you raise up the children and you have a house and you take care of the house and so. Well if you have an education and you have a career, well at least I didn't have an education, but I have a career {mm hmm}. I had something in mind because I usually do craft work; make fan and purse and things and so. I could do a lot of craft.
> *Int*.: And you do them and you sell them?
> *Yvette*: I don't do them anymore because I don't have the time. I have things home doing, but I can't get the time to sit down home and sew them. By the time I leave here it's already dark. On Sundays, I have to do my Sunday chores, cleanup, and sometimes I don't even get to finish clean up by the time night come in. When I done cook, I feel tired to sit down and eat. [Partner of Brent]

At the beginning of her response, Yvette declares that she embraces those conventional role expectations that have been scripted as part of a dominant narrative on what it means to be a woman. These expectations are presented as part of a broader set of

directions that comes from a higher power – God. She draws on a socio-religious discourse in which individuals are called to fulfil their duties according to the laws of a Christian God. Being a woman has to be something good in her view, as this is what God intended. This suggests a transcendental femininity with its attachment to bodies that are historically designated female. Defining the corporeal scripting of femininity, she privileges discourses on motherhood, marriage, home management and self-sacrifice. By transcendental femininity, I am referring to the notion of women's identity and roles as universal and thus spatially and temporally fixed. This is evidenced by Yvette's reference to traditional narratives of gender. To be a woman one's aspirations should embrace the heteronormative values of courtship, marriage, and child bearing and rearing. The privileging of a conventional femininity based on the archetypes of woman as nurturer, mother and homemaker contextualises the need for self-sacrifice. Yvette adds that educated women are expected to pursue their careers, but admits that she does not have a formal education. Although, she describes her craft work as a career, there is a sense in which she sacrifices her craft to satisfy the responsibilities of housewife. It is evident that having a career does not necessarily mean an abandonment of traditional relations of gender. By the end of the extract there is a shift in the tone of her talk about these role expectations. Whereas before she speaks of embracing her traditional responsibilities, by the end of the extract she depicts her life as dominated by a range of household chores with little relief or time to follow her own personal interests; this she ties to the notion of self-sacrifice which places certain restrictions on women who might otherwise pursue other experiences.

The idea of a transcendental femininity also features in Stacey's narrative. She regards her identity as an inherited script that ought to be embraced.

> *Int.*: Ok, now, ahm, for you what you think it means to be a woman?
> *Stacey*: What it means to be a woman?
> *Int.*: Mm hmm.
> *Stacey*: Well growing up from small, as you come up, well God bring you a woman so just leave to yourself and your thinking to bring yourself how you want it.

Religion is a central authority informing her discourse as she echoes the idea of a transcendental essence of womanhood, which hints at her reliance on Christianity as an authoritative force. It appears as though her self regulation is governed by Christian ideals about womanhood, positioning herself within a broader religious discourse on gender. She suggests that the potential for successful femininity is present, as God instils this capacity, but the individual also has to embrace the scripted ideals of femininity in order to satisfy the requirements of womanhood. Eve also engages the sentiment of an essence of womanhood when she states, "I want to be as a woman because I is a woman." Being a woman is a given, something innate, a biological fact.

Participants' accounts tended to support an essentialist reading of gender in which traditional values were used to define men's and women's identities. However, there were moments in which these values were subverted. Counter-hegemonic discourses on women's identity tended to be espoused by the women in the study. There were moments in the interviews when women countered traditional readings of gender, some women shifting between articulating dominant and subversive ideas on identity. In the example provided by Rose earlier in the interview, I suggested that embedded in her talk were latent meanings about the traditional idea about the need for women to be respectable. In the following example, Rose articulates ideas about the importance of women's autonomy:

> *Int.*: When would you say you're most comfortable as a woman?
> *Rose*: Well you see, I is a person like this eh, sometimes I does rather be alone, me and my kids them, I feel much better, because nobody there to come and harass me. Nobody there to come and tell me do this and do that, go there, you know what I mean {mm hmm}. I just relax. I get up when I want to get up. I move when I want to, you know what I mean {mm hmm}. Them is one of the happiest moment of my life. [Partner of Dwight]

Rose engages a counter-hegemonic discourse on femininity, in favour of a position which values women's autonomy. When asked about when she is most comfortable as a woman Rose refers to having no spatial limitations, no boundaries in her everyday practices, as offering a sense of empowerment. In this sense she engages in a discourse on self-determination that departs from the notions of male support and interdependence

between partners in a relationship. Moreover, she privileges the value of freedom in the construction of her gender identity, and it is almost as if this is an ideal, utopian even, alternative to a more restrictive, regimented everyday life.

Linda also talks about personal autonomy as a defining principle of her sense of self:

> *Int.*: And what do you think it means to be a woman because people and society have all these ideas about what it means, but what do you think it means?
> *Linda*: I think it's a tough, I think it's a kind o' tough job being a woman and once you have pride and thing with you, you will always be a woman. That is what I believe.
> *Int.*: Why do you say it's a tough job?
> *Linda*: Yeah because sometimes I think people would tend to influence you, you know {mm hmm} that if you're not strong enough you would rather tend to do the things that they, you know, tell you to do, but a real woman now would stand up and so no. I'm that sort. I put my mind for that and that's exactly what I'm going to do. [Partner of Lance]

She describes being a woman as a hard job, believing that having pride will preserve your womanhood. She also describes a passive, naïve and gullible femininity with which she does not identify. In positioning herself in opposition to this image, she deploys and supports a discourse that is grounded in the notion of the autonomy of the self, saying, "a real woman now would stand up and say no. I'm that sort." In addition, the idea of "a real woman" points to an essence of some transcendental femininity, which for her is characterised by personal autonomy. Although subscribing to an idea of a transcendental woman the archetype she creates can be juxtaposed against the socio-religious and other traditional representations of femininity as submissive. In comparison to Yvette and Stacey, Linda uses more assertive language in her self-presentation.

Dawn's account is an example of how participants' narratives are informed by both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. She declares her independence while at the same time endorsing a heteronormative narrative in which the heterosexual union is privileged as a marker of identity.

> Well, I does tell people I'm an independent woman. I don't sit down. I does go and work for my money . . . I does say me [I] nah [don't] just want a man fuh [for] things. Me want somebody fuh [to] keep me comfort and talk to me at night and we discuss how you want the things come [to turn out]. (Dawn)

Dawn's subverts dominant narratives on gender by resisting the historically subordinated positions of homemaker and what is culturally known as the "kept woman." The latter refers to a woman whose financial needs are met by a male partner and is usually discussed in the context of a transaction in which in exchange for financial provision, the woman is expected to remain fully committed to her partner. The term resonates with particular negative and reductive stereotypes of women as property of men. Instead, she places far greater value on independence. The ability to provide her own financial needs is the means by which she secures personal autonomy. Participants invest great importance in the intimate heterosexual union, in spite of their experiences of violence. For Dawn, a male partner should provide companionship and comfort. Her final statement appears to indicate strong societal support for the heterosexual union and its defining role in the pursuit of the social completeness of the individual. This might partly explain the initial reluctance of some woman to leave violent relationships.

Angie's account also exemplifies the push and pull of dominant discourses on gender. Parallels can be drawn between the accounts of Dawn and Angie for while they celebrate women's independence as a kind of epiphany, great value is placed on the heterosexual union.

> *Int.*: What do you think it means to be a woman?
>
> *Angie*: Hmm [pause]. Well you have to be independent. You have to be independent in oneself. That is the important thing right now for me. If you did ask me this a couple years ago I might have said being in a relationship. Being independent because if you independent you could have any relationship. [Partner of Bruce]

Angie registers two distinct stages in her development, which she uses to define herself as a woman. The first subject position she creates is that of the independent woman which encompasses ideas of liberation or freedom from oppression and freedom to

pursue one's ambitions. There is a sense in which her views have been shaped by her experience of her current relationship. She indicates that had she been asked the same questions a few years prior she would have defined her gendered identity as a product of being a part of an intimate union. Ideas of independence form part of the language on women's autonomy to pursue their own desires. However, there exist tensions between the ideas on women's liberation and the centralising tendency of a heteronormative discourse. She describes the ultimate goal of women's independence as a means of allowing women the choice of having the kinds of intimate relationships they wish to pursue. There is an overall sense that becoming a woman or successfully performing femininity centres on a persons ability to maintain a heterosexual union.

Isis also extols the virtue of independence, but she celebrates the position of being single as empowering for women. This is juxtaposed against an image of her partner as controlling. The following dialogue documents her beliefs about identity and her experiences:

> *Int*.: What do you think it means to be a woman?
> *Isis*: It means a lot. It really means a lot . . . Well for me a woman should always be independent. I want to be independent. I don't want to depend on anybody for nothing, absolutely nothing. I think a woman should always be independent, but living a single life right now, living a single life is very good for women these days.
> *Int*.: Why would you say that?
> *Isis*: Because the men them tend to, ok they want to control your life, tell you what they think is good for them and what you should do.
> *Int*.: And why you think it so important for a woman to be independent?
> *Isis*: You don't have depend on anybody for nothing. You don't have to ask a man for this. I mean I learn to be independent from the relationship because when I used to ask for certain things I used to get words for them, {mm hmm} insultive words for them, so that make want to be independent.
>
> *Int*.: From your experiences with your partner, what would you say he thinks it means to be a woman? What sort of things he expects from you for instance?
> *Isis*: What are some of things he expects from me?
> *Int*.: Ah ha.

> *Isis*: To do what he say. That is how, he was very controlling and he just wanted me to do any thing he say. If he say sit down there until 12:00 I should do it. That is just how I see it.

For Isis, being a woman means being independent. Her talk is counter-hegemonic to those discourses supporting the importance of the intimate heterosexual union. Being single is presented as a means through which a woman could gain and maintain personal autonomy. Her advocacy of independence needs to be understood as a consequence of her experiences of being in an abusive relationship that was characterised by violence and control. She also alludes to financial deprivation and verbal abuse in this relationship. This, in part, explains her rejection of the traditional male-as-breadwinner motif in her account. Her support for women's autonomy is juxtaposed against her explanation of her partner's expectations of her. She presents him as someone who supports the view that women ought to defer to men, and that there is a constant need to police the former to guarantee obedience. Unlike several of the other female participants she does not accept, in this instance, men's power as some right bequeath them as a consequence of conventional beliefs.

Women sometimes shifted between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas about femininity as they defined themselves. Endorsing personal autonomy, in some cases, appears to be the result of past experiences of being violently victimised and controlled by their male partners. Participants often positioned women within traditional discourses in which an essentialist scripting of gender was privileged: the transcendental woman as a creation of God. An emergent trend in the negotiation of gender in these interviews is that although conventional ideas about gender in general, and women's identity in particular, have a centralising tendency in these accounts, these are sometimes destabilised by the presence of counter-hegemonic discourses which support the idea of personal autonomy as a value to be pursued by women.

4.3 The 'Villainous' Woman

Constructions of femininity represented in participants' accounts sometimes resonated with the image of women as whore or jezebel. Some participants distinguished between archetypes of the "good" – the Madonna image – and the "bad" – the jezebel – woman. Women admitted that their partners often attempted to attach the latter image to them, but they rejected these positions in their talk on identity. Women also supported the notion of the "bad" woman with loose sexual morals as a form of contrast to their articulations of personal identity. In the examples that follow both men and women privileged an idea of a virtuous femininity as the ideal to which all women should aspire. Women's attire was sometimes used as a marker of particular kinds of gender performances. Some participants pointed to women's dress sense as a signifier of their loose sexual morals. Consequently, they advocated modesty in dress for women as an appropriate female gender performance. In addition to sexual practices, the idea of the villainous woman is exemplified as an effect of women's participation in tabooed socio-religious practices in their attempt to control men. This was viewed as a means through which women usurped power in intimate relationship.

In the first example Lionel describes the views about women emerging from conversation with his male friends:

> *Int.*: When you'll talk about women, what exactly would you say?
> *Lionel*: Well, sometimes it could be a good story about woman {mm hmm} I mean sometimes we don't really want call woman bad because we love them, but sometimes definitely it have some girls you does have to talk 'bout [about] and say you ain't go like how she dwelling [dealing] with a man because it don't [it's not] easy sometimes to see a man going out and work in the hot sun and she there home and when he gone you see you call in another man to give you a work out [to have sex with you] and the man that home now you playing you ain't want me touch you and them kind o' [o'] scene there, and it don't right, it don't right. You think it easy you working in the hot sun, you come home back, you cussing the man and all them kind o' thing there behind the man back and the man still ha' turn 'round [and give you money [the man, in turn, has to give you money]. You must talk about them thing there. Some people don't like when we talk about it, but if she wrong, she wrong. [Partner of Giselle]

In his description of the conversations he has had with his friends about women in general, Lionel draws on notions of the bad woman, read whore/jezebel. He attempts to tap into a person's sense of morality as he presents a hypothetical scenario in which a man goes out to work, only to have another man visit his partner to engage in sexual intercourse. The terminology he uses to refer to the sexual activity, "give you a work out," creates a subject position for women that has an objectifying effect. Sexual intercourse, is treated as something 'done' to women; when 'done' with a man other than one's partner, it represents a form of bodily defilement. What is more, she refuses to acquiesce to her partner's sexual request, when he is working hard to provide for his family. In this story he constructs the female partner as villain, and her industrious long-suffering partner as the victim. There is an overall sense that this is a common occurrence in intimate relationships making men a target for this sort of victimisation. Although he says that they sometimes discuss "a good story about woman," he opts to centre his talk on an anecdote about a "bad" woman. It is important to mention that in reference to women the word "bad" in Vincentian parlance is synonymous with whore, bitch or jezebel. It suggests that she has loose sexual morals, or that she is promiscuous. The man as provider discourse is deployed as he depicts a hard working man engaging in manual labour in order to provide for his family. The level of the man's commitment is emphasised in his reference to the man labouring in "the hot sun." The way he tells the story seems to convey the impression that he identifies with those men who have been 'wronged' by their female partners.

Lance and   present women's sense of dress as a signifier of morality. In both instances they lament the loss of modesty among women as a turn to a vile femininity. In particular, Lance describes what, in his view, is a loss of modesty by his partner.

> *Int.*: In your opinion what do you think your partner thinks it means to be a woman?
> *Lance*: Well of late I start looking at her and the way she start carrying herself like, like than before.
> *Int.*: What do you mean, what was different before?
> *Lance*: Before the kind o' [of] clothes she used to wear, like of late now she start wearing some pieces o' pants going down the road now. She was even leaving home without underwear. She never used to do that before so I have to say something wrong. [Partner of Linda]

He argues that his partner's (Linda's) view of womanhood shifted from one in which she valued modesty in dress to wearing clothes that, in his view, were revealing and sexually suggestive. Lance describes the act of leaving home without underwear as signifying a change in her moral purview. It alludes to his views of a loss of respectability and her subsequent (suspected) infidelity. There are points of convergence and variance in the accounts of Lance and his partner.

> A woman should be a decent woman, and I think nowadays women not doing that anymore. They tend to be doing all sorts o' dirty things, you know. I think decency is what they should show . . . And respect, but good behaviour is what they should have . . . lack of self esteem is a problem. Come on the way some o' them does dress and so on it's just sick. [Linda, Partner of Lance]

Linda laments a loss of decency among women, and supports the idea that women's identity should embody the idea of respectability. In particular, both Linda and Lance, advocate a dress sense for women based on the principle of modesty. In both accounts, dress is used to symbolise an inappropriate and over-sexualised woman who has departed from the iconic image of the Madonna, with its allusion to a pure/virginal femininity.

The chapters which follow discuss in greater detail how rationalisations of violence are often linked to the discourse on a villainous femininity. Men often describe being provoked into violence because of women's infidelity. In fact, women describe various forms of violence and controlling practices meted out against them because their partners believed they were having sexual intercourse outside of their relationships. There is a sense in which men's action point to some need to suppress women's proclivity for sexual intercourse, with women's sense of dress used as a measure for such desires. The regulation of women's dress thus becomes one of the many practices used to police femininity in an effort to maintain respectability among women.

Betty also believes that she can determine a woman's character by their manner of dress.

> *Int.*: Ok. What do you think it means to be a woman?
> *Betty*: What it means to be a woman?

Int.: Mm hmm. If you were describing what a woman should be what would you say?
Betty: Woman should have discipline in their self and control and look forward into their self. Dress normally like a woman, act like a woman and never you put yourself to act like a child.
Int.: You say dress like a woman?
Betty: Yeah.
Int.: How do you mean?
Betty: Like normally, wear something below your knee and like, you know –
Int.: Dress conservative?
Betty: Yeah.
Int.: I was going to ask you because you said women should have control, when you say that what do you mean?
Betty: Like control on themselves, look down on themselves because most the young people today, right, some people, sometimes you might go out the road dressing awkward and other people might see you and say, like dress awkward and say, she have to be a crazy woman and this and that because mostly when I go to town I normally look at ladies and see the way they dress to know if them is woman or bad girls or good girls. Normally sometimes I see people dress with all they body outside, belly-breaker, little short mini skirt, little g-string in them bottom, this is not the way to dress. You dress normally like me . . . Well when you home you could dress how you want to dress inside of your house, but when you going out you dress normal, make sure you skirt or pants over your knee or not too long.

Similar to Lance and Linda, she privileges modest dress sense as a marker of successful femininity. Manner of dress is used as the criterion for attaching the labels "good" and "bad" to female bodies. Implicitly, she suggests that particular garments coupled with images of exposed bodies signify loose sexual intentions and practices amongst women and the subsequent loss of an esteemed, virginal femininity. She chastises what in her opinion is a loose sense of dress for women in her description of a scenario between her partner and his ex-partner. She says

> he had this girl living with him before and she just awkward. Every time she there home she dressing in this big jersey [t-shirt] and a panty alone and he always used to talk to she and she does walk away because she don't want nobody tell she how to dress and he say, them is not no [any] kind of woman for him and so, and she don't hear what he said. (Betty)

Implicitly Betty engages in a ranking of herself and her partner's ex-girlfriend. The latter is constructed as disobedience and lacking good morals based on the way she

dresses and her refusal to adhere to her partner's rebuke. In this example Betty appears to endorse an arrangement of power in which women defer to their partners. Support for women's obedience to their partner's is embedded in broader cultural discourses on men's power, leadership and moral guidance; it reinforces particular patriarchal norms.

The idea of the "bad" or villainous woman sometimes revealed other socio-cultural and socio-religious discourses. Participants alluded to women's involvement with proscribed rituals in order to control men. Both male and female participants discussed this issue in the context of intimate relationships. In the following, Bruce describes the traits of a bad woman:

> I have a friend {mm hmm}. He go [would] have to stay home with the baby and she gone party, party, and he can't say nothing. You go [would] tell him you see she such and such and what he would do now is to go and he would tell she what you say. He done [already] addicted. He would go and tell she boy Bruce, Bruce tell me blah, blah, blah, so not even if I see my brother girlfriend or my good friend girlfriend anywhere messing around I would say anything. I just leave them. Me ain't ha' nothing to say again. [Bruce, Partner of Angie]

Bruce distances himself from the image of the bad women. A bad woman can embarrass a man by acting outside of the boundaries dictating culturally acceptable gender norms. Such unconventional practices have an emasculating effect. The idea of his friend staying at home with the baby departs completely from the conventional symbol of a good woman as nurturer/carer. Also, the public sphere is often defined as reserved for male recreation. His account draws on a popular discourse that speaks of the wiles of women as they engage mystical or magical powers to trap men. It is a popular belief in Vincentian society that men can be trapped by women's use of Obeah, hence his statement "he done addicted." Interestingly, the reverse (a man's use of Obeah) does not obtain, as trickery is usually associated with the image of the Jezebel, the manipulative woman. This appears to be an assumed extension of women's inherent deceit that must be curbed. Collins (1995, 147) describes Obeah as

> An Afro-Caribbean practice that utilizes herbal remedies, possession by ancestral spirits or African based deities, and diagnosis or divination through trancework. This practice is used not only to cure physical illnesses or wounds but also to work out (or intensify) social problems.

It exists as a form of magical-spiritualism and is believed to possess the ability to alter biological, economic or socio-cultural relations (Collins 1995). I grew up hearing about people who had visited the village's Obeah man or woman for sinister reasons. Although works have emerged which try to shore up the socio-cultural value of these practices, the dominant idea about Obeah is that it exists in the realm of witchcraft and sorcery and that only those with malicious intent engage in such practices. When Bruce says "he done addicted," it means that his friend has fallen prey to trickery; he has been emasculated; he is at the whim of his partner; and he cannot be trusted to deal with his partner in a way that would redeem his maleness.

Like, Bruce, Yvette distances herself from these practices. Actions that are deemed to be attempts by women to control their partners are labelled as having sinister origins. She says "I never hit him because I don't want nobody say I controlling him and I give him thing to eat and all them thing there, 'cause you done know once woman doing all them things there to man they does say well the man stupidy [foolish] and all them thing." She suggests that her reason for not using violence against her partner is that she does not want to be identified as a woman who controls a man. Yvette implicates a vile femininity in much the same way that Bruce does in his talk. The kind of woman who hits her partner with no fear of reprisal possesses a power derived from some sinister force. Yvette subscribes to a particular socio-religious worldview that is partly responsible for shaping her views on men's and women's place in the context of the family and relationships. In a section which follows she describes men as head of the household as a title bequeathed dictated by the laws of God. This, along with a socio-religious and cultural discourse on Obeah as witchcraft and trickery, is used to explain how some women use evil forces to derive power over men in relationships. This kind of evil is implicitly presented as usurping the natural order between men and women intended by God. Her statement "I don't want nobody say I controlling him and I give him thing to eat," refers to a popular belief in Vincentian society that rituals can be performed and portions prepared for men from the so-called Obeah man or woman and given to men in their food. This, in turn, gives women the power to control their

partners, keeping them committed forever to these relationships. Such practices are felt to rob men of their natural dominant identities, while at the same time emphasising women's capacity for evil.

Angie distances herself from a construction of femininity that draws on images of women as sexually promiscuous. Like her partner Bruce, Angie's talk on gender is informed by dominant ideas of the "good" and "bad" woman:

> *Int*.: How does it make you feel when he hits you?
> *Angie*: Well it doesn't make me fell good. People are people, but there are people with standards and people without . . . The woman is a bad woman. He could o' bring AIDS to me and he doesn't care. [Partner of Bruce]

The popularity of public information on the need for protection against HIV and AIDS, as well as other STDs reaches far and wide and affects individuals' sexual decisions. This contextualises the concern she has for her own sexual health. However by issuing the judgement that the "the woman is a bad woman," Angie distances herself from the construct of woman as whore. Women also seek to prove their virtue to their partners who accuse them of infidelity.

The final example in this section on the discourses of 'the villainous woman' presents an excerpt of the interview with Eve in which she describes her partner's views of her. She too distances herself from the stigmatisation associated with assumed promiscuity among women.

> *Int*.: And your husband, if he were to describe you, if he were to describe you to someone what kind o' things would he say?
>
> *Eve*: Well if he discussing anything 'bout me, although he discussing 'bout me he go say me bad, and this and thing and all kind o' thing like that.
> *Int*.: And why you think he would say that?
> *Eve*: Well he all time say so.
> *Int*.: When you say "bad" what do you think he means?
> *Eve*: He say me's a whore and all them kind o' things.
> *Int*.: And why do you think he would say that?
> *Eve*: I don't know.
> *Int*.: And how would you describe yourself?

> *Eve*: Well I go say I am a good person because for the amount o' years me and he together now he does say that I have people besides him and I know I don't have anybody else {mm hmm} and it ha' [have] people does tell me play the game, blame the name and play the game or something so and me does tell them no me ain't doing it.

She says that her husband would describe her as "bad," a "whore," but she rejects this subject position, insisting that although persons have encouraged her to have sex with other men since her partner has accused her of cheating, she would not consider engaging in such acts. Women are wont to defend their feminine virtue, their reputation, in the face of accusations of infidelity. Men use women's assumed penchant for promiscuity as justification for attaching the label whore to their female partners. Women's accounts reveal that this rationale is used to justify men's attempts to control women's movement between the domestic and social spaces. Such practices are influenced by broader societal narratives on gender in which female respectability and male reputation is revered.

4.4 On Being a Man

Ideas about male identity in accounts tend to endorse traditional discourses on gender. The most common theme emerging from these accounts is the idea of men as the providers or breadwinners of their families. This theme features in the accounts of both men and women, with varying levels of advocacy and rejection. The section which follows, on power in relationship, will explore the extent to which the provider motif is used to justify asymmetrical relations of power between men and women. However, the current section begins the discussion of the meanings of these narratives to understandings of particular gendered practices. Masculinities are also defined using other, albeit conventional, scripts on gender. These included ideas about men's entitlement to freedom to navigate between domestic and social spaces, the naturalisation of men's presumably higher sex drive relative to women, and the image of men as protectors of their partners.

In the following dialogue, Rose describes what she believes to be her partner's view of what it means to be a man:

> *Int.*: In your opinion, what do you think your partner thinks it means to be a man?
> *Rose*: Well he must be ["must be" means probably] feel by having, by putting a woman in a house, having a woman in a house that is all of it. It's not so {mm hmm}. That is not all of it.
> *Int.*: Why you say so, that is not all of it? What else you think it means?
> *Rose*: It means a lot. It means a lot. Being a man, it means a lot o' things because you know sometimes it ha' [have]
> some man does gi' [give] you things and when they vex they call back for it and all kind o' thing, all them kind o' thing. [Partner of Dwight]

She suggests that her partner's definition of his manhood centres on the provider motif; his ability to provide her with shelter. At first, the tone of her response suggests that she is opposed to this conceptualisation of what it means to be a man, but her subsequent statement indicates otherwise. She supports the positioning of him as provider, but adds that there is more to being a man than providing a home for your family. There is an overall expectation that men provide for women and their children and that the terms of a relationship dictates that once something is offered it ought not be retracted at a later date. She positions him as provider, but suggest that this should not be the sole indicator of manhood.

As previously stated, the portrayals of gender provided by participants are by no means monolithic. Shifts between rejecting and endorsing the provider motif point to the significance of this narrative in constructions of masculinities. In spite of the dominance of this discourse, participants' accounts are often embedded with other meanings about gender. This is the case as Lionel talks about what it means to be a man:

> *Int.*: From your conversations with her, what do you think your girlfriend would say it means to be a man?
> *Lionel*: Her manhood is like you have to be working, you know. A working man is a man to she.
> *Int.*: Do you share those feelings?
> *Lionel*: In a sense yeah, in a sense no {mm hmm}. The yeah part is that you have to work to maintain certain things. I agree with that, but, ok, if you know I been working all the time and just because I ain't working now you go just leave me out because I can't give you a dollar like before because right now you done know I ain't, you supposed to stick up with

me and say 'yeah boy when he working he does make sure I alright. Now he ain't working I could give him a little ease up to say well, you know', so that is why, that is why, that is why, a woman should always say not because you working that is why she does say you is a man. A man does be, a man ain't have to work to be a man. He could do things in the home to ease she because if she going out to work, because it have certain times when she going work I didn't working, but home-wise when she come home she didn't have to do nothing so because I make sure I done do certain things and I around my daughter . . .

Int.: Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt less than a man?

Lionel: Well to be truthful, sometimes eh. You know sometimes, sometimes eh, you does wish you have a little more finance to help out a little problem, not just for me, you mother, you daughter, as a matter a fact, your whole family sometimes. You wish you could just give a helping hand. You wish that sometimes. Sometimes when I in a broken state I does say 'boy, boy my pocket real low dread'. [Partner of Giselle]

There are several voices in Lionel's talk on manhood. He shifts between egalitarian and asymmetrical discourse on gender. Initially, he suggests that men's identity should not centre on the male-as-breadwinner discourse, as there are times when a man would be out of work, but later in the interview he explains that he is most comfortable as a man when he has enough finances to take care of his family. His initial position functions as a counter-hegemonic discourse on gender as he declares "a man . . . ain't have to work to be a man. He could do work in the home to ease she." He endorses an egalitarian discourse which supports the best work arrangements for the overall benefit of the family. His scenario reverses traditional roles assigned to men and women, and he avoids a devaluation of housework. However, there are conflicting voices in the interview. He later admits that feelings of emasculation ensue in moments where he does not have enough money to support his family. The latter position reflects both the conventional sex roles assigned to men and the lived realities of working class families. In the case of the former, masculinity is defined as a man's ability to take care of his family financially. There is a sense of emasculation captured in his statement, "sometimes when I in a broken state I does say 'boy, boy my pocket real low dread'."

The idea of men as providers was endorsed in a more open way by other men in the study. For instance, Ricky talks about the need for men to take responsibility as a defining moment in becoming a man he says

> *Int*.: What does it, for you, what does it mean to be a man?
> *Ricky*: What it means for me to be a man?
> *Int*.: Mm hmm.
> *Ricky*: Let me see now. Let me see how to put it [he laughs]. Responsibility [mm hmm] that is one. Most of all you have fuh [to] tek [take] in life. Me used to move a kind o' lackadaisical towards that. Sometimes when you and your friends having a nice time sometimes you does go overboard, and forget that you have family values fuh tek care of. Me admit that me wrong on them things {ok}. Yeah, me used to move lackadaisical towards my responsibility.

Ricky mentions the importance of taking responsibility as the defining principle of his manhood. He contrasts the responsibility of looking after one's family with the nonchalant existence of having a good time with friends. There are two competing archetypes of masculinity. He advocates a masculinity based on the notions of responsibility and good family values, while at the same time lamenting an indifferent or "lackadaisical" masculinity base on the principles of freedom, personal autonomy and no restrictions. There is a sense in which he has the choice to determine which of these scripts of gender he should assume. His decision to set aside the latter form implies a process of self realisation, of maturing and of becoming a man by relinquishing boyish things.

Floyd's beliefs about men's identity resonate with popular cultural narratives on the possible fallout when men fail to fulfil their obligations as providers. His response to the question about the meaning of manhood is cited below

> *Int*.: What do you think it means to be a man?
> *Floyd*: Well you have to take responsibility. You can't expect somebody else to do it for you. If you have children, you have to take care of them. If you not working you find yourself in a lot o' trouble because if you sit down and don't go look for work and ain't go do anything, you girlfriend go get tired o' that and let me put it this way. You go find she go butt [she would cheat on] you. Any woman go butt you because you go find that she ain't got nothing to go by, no money and thing so she go butt you. You children and them, you need to look up to you children and them as they look up to you because it come like you can't sit down and

> watch you children and them hungry and you yourself hungry and everybody just watching one another in their face.

He cites the significance of the provider motif in the construction of his gendered self. Not fulfilling this role could lead to, in his view, his partner's infidelity. He explains that the role of provider is a societal expectation. In his view, women's infidelity is justified when men fail to satisfy this obligation. These principles are often reproduced in Calypso music – an important musical tradition emerging within Caribbean societies whose roots can be traced back to plantation society and the enslaved peoples. One such song that became popular at the early 2000s is "You Looking Fuh Horn" rendered by Trinidadian calypsonian, The Mighty Shadow. The word "horn" is used in the Caribbean to refer to a person's experience when his/her partner has been unfaithful. It has the same resonance as cuckolding (de Moya 2004). In St. Vincent and the Grenadines the terms "horn" and "butt" are used interchangeably. Below are excerpts from this song:

> You working? No
> You joking? No
> You stealing? No
> You dealing? No
>
> You looking for horn
> Plenty, plenty horn boy
> You looking for horn
> You want to get horn boy
>
> Why you want to marry?
> You don't have no money
> You ain't working no way [where]
> You don't have a payday . . .
>
> Without money to buy honey
> You heading for misery
> She want hairdo and callaloo [a green leafy vegetable used in Caribbean cuisine]
> And you ain't have nutten [nothing]
>
> Somebody will horn you
> You better believe it
> Somebody will horn you
> I hope you could take it, partner [The word partner used her signifies friend]

There are obvious parallels between the sentiment of this song and Floyd's response. The young man in the song is cautioned about his decision to marry because he is unemployed. Besides the noticeable reference to men as provider, the song portrays women as expecting men's support. The writer alludes to the emasculation that results from being "horned": "I hope you could take it partner." In the late 1990s Vincentian Soca (an offshoot of Calypso music with a more up tempo rhythm) band, Touch, released a song entitled "Man Can't Tek [take] Butt," in which they poked fun at men's feelings of emasculation when they believe their partners are unfaithful. They cite a range of responses pursued by men, including suicide and mental illness. Floyd's ideas on manhood are encompassed in both forms of calypso. Calypsonians try to capture an array of social and political views, as well as popular beliefs within the contexts of Caribbean societies (Rohlehr 2004). Both the songs and Floyd's accounts exemplifies the pull of the discourse of men as providers in the construction of Vincentian masculinities. Women's infidelity is considered to have a destabilising effect on men's identities.

Women sometimes support the traditional scripting of gender in which, men's identity and power is based on the idea of men as providers. And example of this is Yvette's views on what it means to be a man. She says

> *Int.*: On your opinion, what do you feel it means to be a man?
> *Yvette*: Well seeing that he around a woman he does do a lot o' things, a lot o' things. He go [would] buy Kentucky. He go buy clothes, you know. He go do different things, but sometimes he go like nail up things in the home when he in a good mood, otherwise he mostly want to pay somebody. I does tell him you don't pay you don't pay people to do things because it have time men pay people things in their house and the men end up with they [their] wife, you understand. You have to learn to do things in you home as a man, so that you children could see you doing things and they could in turn join with you, and able to come up to be along with you. [Partner of Brent]

She identifies two markers of masculinity. First, she positions her partner as the family's provider, "he does a lot o' things, a lot o' things. He go buy Kentucky. He go buy clothes, you know." She defines this position as a man's obligation because he has a partner. The second marker has to do with his duty to perform masculinity in a

particular way that could act as an exemplar for his children, particularly the image of the man who does the repairs on his home. She attaches great value to this function, arguing that men, who avoid performing what she presents as male orientated duties, are in fact inviting another man to replace him as patriarch. Importantly, she makes certain demands of him in the domestic sphere. These are presented as a sort of masculine performance that reminds women of their partner's self-worth, their value and success at being men. They also serve to reinforce the gendered division of labour in which men and boys are usually assigned outdoor chores, as well as repair work. Later in the interview, she says:

> *Int.*: I just wanted to ask you, what are some of the roles society expects of men?
>
> *Yvette*: Well I find they should be able to have certain respect for their children so people could see that and at least you would usually work and bring home a dollar and so, but with the women them they looking for them to be in the home all the time, if you go out is a problem and all them kind o' thing. I find that a woman should have the same rights as a man, as long as she not doing anything that is wrong, like to disrespect or like to break the relationship, like to butt him or anything, I find she have the right to go when she want to go {ok} because if I can't tell you not to go, how you want to tell me not to go. [Partner of Brent]

There are competing voices in this particular example from Yvette. In the first instance she deploys a traditional discourse on masculinity in which she positions men as role models for their children and as the breadwinner within the family. There is also an expectation that women allow their partners freedom of movement between domestic and social spaces. She then engages an egalitarian discourse and declares that men and women should have equal rights, but these rights come with particular conditions. She advocates that freedom of movement be granted to women who are faithful in their relationships. The same condition is not mentioned for men in relationship. In Mohammed's (2002, xiv-xv) explication of "the essentialist contouring of gender" she remarks that "the gender system has recurrently relegated the activities and lives of men and women into two ideologically separate spheres: that of male to a public realm and that of the female to the private and domestic domain." This might explain why men's freedom to pursue their public-social activities is normalised in Yvette's account as a right bequeathed all men. However, she rejects the constant tying of women to the

home when calls for women's freedom to pursue their own activities outside of the home, but the call is made in the context of gender relations in which the most significant threat to female respectability and to dominant masculinity (based on male reputation) is women's infidelity. This helps to contextualise her inclusion of a condition to women's pursuit for autonomy as they attempt to their navigation the supple boundaries of public and private spaces.

In contrast to participants previously cited, Deidre subverts the traditional stereotype of men as breadwinner, in her talk on men's identity. Instead, her account privileges the value of equality between men and women. The following is an excerpt of the interview with her.

> *Int*.: Again thinking about society, what do you think society expects of men?
> *Deidre*: Ahm, I think basically they expect men to work. I mean women would expect men to help out, which men don't.
> *Int*.: How do you feel about these societal expectations, though, like expecting men to work you know being the main breadwinner?
> *Deidre*: Personally I don't like it because as I say I believe in equality {mm hmm}. I think almost everything a woman could do a man could do and vice versa . . .
> *Int*.: What do you think it means to be a man?
> *Deidre*: Ahm, I think, like if a man knows what he wants and knows what he's out to get, he's very ambitious and determined, and I think, I don't know; along that line.

She rejects the societal expectation that men ought to be breadwinners as a limited viewpoint in the shaping of men's identity. Instead, she advocates equality between men and women. Employing an egalitarian discourse she believes that women are capable of doing all of the things men do. When asked what she thinks it means to be a man she engages a similar set of values that she used previously in describing what she thinks it means to be a woman. The value of having ambition is privileged in her discourse about manhood. There is no binary gender constructions present in her response to the question of what it means to be a woman.

A number of other markers of masculinity are present in participant's accounts. For example Lionel identifies sexual intercourse as an important factor in the construction of masculinity:

> *Int.*: As a man what are some of the things that are important to you?
> *Lionel*: Sex, sex boy.
> *Int.*: Why is that so important?
> *Lionel*: Because dread [he uses 'dread' in much the same way some Americans would use the term 'man' – c'mon man], what I know with man in general, that is why they does say you see love, it funny [strange] you know. When a man love he love. A man go [would] get he woman he love in the whole world. He don't think o' nothing. All he does want sometimes is a little something and he cool again, but some woman does play nah [not], she ain't want give him, but she go [would] give another man. How you go [would] want move [behave] so with the man dread? You overs [understand]? Man ain't want sex you know. Man in need o' sex. [Partner of Giselle]

His masculine construct centres on the notion of men's virility or sexual prowess. In his view, men's love should be rewarded by women's willingness to engage in sexual intercourse upon men's request. He endorses a heteronormative discourse on the insatiable desires of men in which women are obliged to satisfy these desires, ensuring that the relationship remains intact. Sexual satisfaction is presented in Lionel's account as a universal basic need that men share. Attempting to engage what he perceives to be my sense of reason, fairness and morality, Lionel describes female infidelity as an unconscionable act. Although his partner confirms his views about manhood, there is a sense in which she sees it as a limited expression of gender:

> Int.: In your opinion, what do you think he thinks it means to be a man?
> Giselle: Sex, that is what he would say, sex.
> Int.: Being able to have sex?
> Giselle: Sex making them feel them is man. [Partner of Lionel]

She confirms the importance her partner places on sexual intercourse in the construction of his gendered self. However, her tone suggests that she disapproves of his centring of sex in his identity construct.

In his construction of masculinity, Brent focuses on the issues of independence and legacy as the defining principles of his gendered identity. He says

Being a man, I mean to say, I ain't get the best education or whatever. I go secondary school, I ain't thing but a man should be independent, you know what I mean. Being a man, a man should try to do his best in life because that is about all we could do. Ok. Do he [his] best and leave a good name because when you dead what you do? When you dead and gone that is it. [Brent, Partner of Yvette]

He speaks to the importance of education in defining manhood, in spite of his lack of a formal education. He also explains that men should be independent. He points to the importance of legacy in defining masculine identity. This, he explains, has to do with leaving behind a good name once a person has died. He centres his talk on projecting a positive public image.

Betty also focuses on the theme of the importance of public image in the construction of masculinity, but she uses men's attire to determine acceptable and less acceptable masculine performances.

Int.: What do you think society expects of men?
Betty: A man supposed to dress like a man, not dress raggedy with pants down on them bottom and me, I don't like men dress that way because I does feel a kind o' how [she means that she feels uncomfortable] because a man supposed to dress with their pants up here and their belt, but some men don't like that. Men like to see there pants down here, drop-waist and they shirt button out [shirt open at the front showing their chest], you know, bad boy thing.
Int.: Bad boy style?
Betty: Bad boy style and I don't like those things. I think a man should dress good inside the street, your pants inside, your shirt inside your pants and look like a gentleman inside the street.

Betty returns to the theme of a person's dress sense as a marker of manhood. Her narrative suggests that there are different kinds of masculine performances that can be observed from the way men dress. There are normative practices from which men ought to draw in order to satisfy the requirements of appearing manly. She says "a man supposed to dress like a man." The instructions for dressing like a man includes wearing his pants on his waist, using a belt, buttoning his shirt and wearing his shirt inside of his pants. On the contrary, she depicts and rejects what she refers to as "bad boy thing": "raggedy," "pants down on them bottom," "drop waist" and "shirt button out." These modes of dress are presented as reflecting a sort of negative youth sub-

culture from which "real" men should actively dissociate themselves. In fact, the signifier "boy," rather than "man," is attached to male bodies wearing the symbols representing this youth culture. In her view, the process of becoming a man involves detaching oneself of such boyish things.

4.5 "Who's the Man"? Arrangements of Power in the Intimate Relationship

"*Sometimes I don't even know who is the man from the woman*." [Lionel, Partner of Giselle]

It is important to consider participants' interpretation of the question "would you say that one of you was in charge of the relationship or head of the relationship/household?" For some persons this was interpreted as holding on to or conceding power; the overall power dynamics within relationships. This was the original intent of the question, to elicit these meanings. However, some participants focused on the management of the household in terms of planning the family's activities, preparing meals, cleaning and other general household chores. The latter interpretation meant that women were sometimes identified as head, whereas the former interpretation, which was the more popular of the two, positioned men as head of the household. Most participants identified one partner as the head of the family or relationship. Men's positioning as the head of household is supported by the discourses on their responsibility as the main breadwinner. However, this is sometimes complicated by counter-hegemonic discourses that support egalitarian values and women's autonomy.

Although traditionally associated with men, women deploy the archetype of provider or breadwinner as a measure of their entitlement to greater power in their relationships. The dominance of the discourse of men as providers and women as homemakers is incompatible with the lived realities of a wide cross section of Caribbean people. Barriteau (2001) reminds us that historically Caribbean women have utilised a number of strategies to survive economic and other hardships, and the extent to which women are involved in various sectors of Caribbean economies is often missed. This point is

echoed by Hodge (2002, 474), who explains that the tradition of the male as breadwinner, often presented as a universal historical legacy of nations, does not readily apply to the Caribbean as, here, "breadwinners are both male and female."[14] That so many participants engage this narrative is in part a reflection of the resilience of colonialist discourse, in particular the value placed on Victorian ideals of the family. Both men and women position women as the head of the family, identifying women's superior organisational skills as the rationale for women's leadership. In some cases men and women engage in talk which normalises men's authority by implicating religious discourses that have the effect of naturalising men's power in relation to women.

The archetype of breadwinner is the most significant attribute that is used to assign power to individuals in intimate relationships. In the binary script of gender the idea of the family's breadwinner or provider has been historically linked to male bodies, with paid work accorded greater value that domestic duties. However, in some situations where women are the only partner involved in paid work they position themselves at head of households. Some men and women describe the latter as head of household based on organisational skills within the domestic domain, but they hardly ever speak of women in positions of authority or influence outside of these limited spheres. In some instances men lament what in their view is their partner's attempt to usurp men's assumed will to hegemony. The statement above by Lionel suggests that there ought to be clearly demarcated roles for men and women in intimate relationships, and that sometimes women usurp men's power.

There are two rationales that are deployed to position women as head of household. Firstly, women are described as head of household in situations were they were the only partner in the relationship with paid employment. The second reason for naming women head of household is linked to women's duties within the home. The former is presented as having greater potential for women's access to power than the latter. In situations where men positioned women as the person in charge of the relationship, this

was often linked to women's domestic duties. This is the case as Giselle explains why she names herself head of the household:

> *Int.*: Would you say that one of you was in charge of the relationship?
> *Giselle*: I was in charge of everything.
> *Int.*: Why you say that?
> *Giselle*: Because I spending the money. If he was spending the money he would o' been like, you know what I mean, head, but he don't care whether he spending money. He just want to be a bully, but he can't be a bully. [Partner of Lionel]

Giselle positions herself as the person in charge of the relationship because she provides the financial needs of the family. Using a disapproving tone, she criticises what in her view is his refusal to engage in paid work. Authority in the relationship is centred on one's ability to provide the family's financial sustenance. Her account creates a paradox because while she engages in a conventional discourse that centres on the notion of power residing with the breadwinner, her response is also counter-hegemonic as there is no implication that the provider archetype is aligned to anatomically male bodies. However, she suggests that had he been earning money for the family she would have conceded headship. The statement has the effect of normalising asymmetrical relations of power in which men are privileged as leaders so long as they assume their responsibilities as provider.

Dawn also positions herself as head of the relationship because of the financial contribution she makes. She criticises her partner's lack of support in the following extract:

> *Int.*: Now who would you say is the head of the household, is the head of the family?
> *Dawn*: Like home by me?
> *Int.*: Yeah.
> *Dawn*: Me.
> *Int.*: And why would you say that?
> *Dawn*: Because you ha' fuh [have to] say ah me ah do everything dey [I'm doing everything] {mm hmm}. He don't do nothing dey [there]. Is me [It's me] {ok}. Ok, well, ahm, for instance he used, when he just get he money, he used to bring eh [the] envelope and put down the envelope like ahm, how he know me don't really study [think about] money so, he know me go tek [I would take] out way [what] me want fuh [to] spend

fuh buy like food stuff and thing, but from since with the thing happen dey, he stop.

Dawn explains that she takes care of the family finances and for this reason positions herself as the head of the household. She describes a change in him since there was a dispute between the two of them. Whereas before he would allow her to freely take money from his salary towards purchasing food for the household, he has since changed and is now withholding monies from her. In this example, power in the relationship is economically defined as an effect of a person's willingness to support the financial obligations of the family.

The second explanation of women as head of the household is based on women's supposed function as caretakers of household. Both Gary and Roger indicate that their partners were head of the household because of their involvement with housework. This is not to be confused with articulations of power that has an influence on the couple's decision-making practices. Betty's comments reflect how women designate themselves leaders based on their management of domestic responsibilities. However, there is a sense in which she positions her partner as the overall authority figure because of his responsibility as provider of the family's financial needs.

Int.: And would you say that one of you is in charge or head of the relationship or head of the family?
Betty: Like?
Int.: Head of the family?
Betty: The home?
Int.: Yeah.
Betty: Me.
Int.: Why would you say that?
Betty: Because I am the woman. I supposed to responsible for everything in the home.
Int.: But in terms of the relationship and the family who you think is head of the house?
Betty: The man is to be the head of the house.
Int.: Why do you say that?
Betty: Because them is the one who working and bringing in thing in the home so they supposed to be the head of the house.

In terms of power in the relationship, she separates responsibility for domestic duties from providing the family's financial needs. In this division of power, her partner is

positioned as head of the household and greater significance is assigned to paid work. She attaches the conventional discourses on gender to explain what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. Explaining why she names herself as head of the household Betty says "because I am a woman. I supposed to be responsible for everything in the home . . . The man is to be the head of the house . . . because them is the one who working and bringing in thing in the home so they supposed to be the head of the house." Her response endorses a masculinist discourse in which men's power is naturalised as a by product of their traditional responsibility as providers. Implicitly, housework is attributed a secondary status to paid work. The former is also normalised as women's work. This is exemplary of how essentialist notions of gender function to sustain asymmetrical arrangements of power within intimate relationships.

In the next example Chantal describes a paradoxical situation in which she presents herself as the person in charge of the relationship, but explains that she is limited in her capacity to exercise autonomy because of her partner's extreme methods of control.

> *Int*.: Ok. At the time when you'll were living together would you say one of you were in charge of the relationship?
>
> *Chantal*: Well me. He wasn't in charge of it because he didn't care [Mm hmm]. All he just want a women to do is when he want sex, and when he want he clothes wash and something to eat.
>
> *Int*.: Did you feel like he was bossing you around?
>
> *Chantal*: Yes. He didn't even want me to go by my Mom and my Mom did live Deacons and did live Atkins. He didn't want me to go cross to where my mother living. My mother never even used to come and look for me [My mother never used to visit me]. It's now my mother does come and look for me.

She situates herself as the one in charge of the relationship because he was unconcerned about issues related to the relationship. In her view, he considered women objects for his own sexual gratification, and as necessary to take care of him. Even though she identifies herself as head of the relationship, the implication of her response is that power resides with him to dictate the roles that she ought to fulfil. Thus her positioning as head of the relationship carries with it no sense of personal autonomy. She goes on later in the interview to describe his extreme forms of control over her movement

between the home and public spaces. His restrictions to her freedom of movement indicate that it was him and not her who exercised authority in the relationship.

The most common responses to questions on the distribution of power within the relationship named men as the ones in control. These responses ranged from men's role as providers to tacit acceptance of men's power based on the biological and religious scripting of gender. Brenda talks about the power dynamics of the relationship by anchoring her response within the provider motif:

> *Int*.: What are your expectations of someone you're in a relationship with?
> *Brenda*: Make sure your home there good. Make sure you have things to eat. You have to talk to you girlfriend and show she good from bad, and [pause] you have to look for work too. You always have to look for work because if you lose one job you have to be able to find another one and make sure everything good.
> *Int*.: Who was the head of the relationship or the family setting when you'll were together?
> *Brenda*: Me [I] go [would] say he.
> *Int*.: Why?
> *Brenda*: Well he used to go out and earn the money.

Supporting the man as provider model in her account, she positions her partner as the head of the relationship/family. She expects her partner would provide the needs of the family, and also provide her with moral leadership: "you have to talk to your girlfriend and show she good from bad . . . you have to look for work too." She positions him as head of the relationship as he is the one who earned the money. Brenda endorses a scripting of gender relations in which ultimate value is attached to paid work, which is in turn presented as men's work.

Male participants often supported the men-as-breadwinner discourse with its power effect as they responded to questions about who is in control of their relationships. Brent focuses on his purchasing power in responding to the question about power in the relationship:

> *Int*.: And who would you say is in charge of the household?
> *Brent*: Household, everything is I buy {ok}. I go see the need for a washing machine, I go say 'girl we have to get a washing machine'. If she see the

> need for a stove she go say 'yeah, we have to get a stove'. We go discuss that, like, and we try work to that. [Partner of Yvette]

He says that he provides all of the family's finances. When asked who is in charge of the household he returns to the provider motif, "household, is everything I buy." Here, he implies that in his position as the breadwinner, power resides with him. He subsequently engages in a discourse on equality, explaining that they discuss needs of the home and then work towards achieving those needs. However, his focus on economic provision is evidence that his conception of power centres on conventional gender norms.

Conventional gender norms dominate men's account on identities and power. There is a tendency to engage in essentialist discourses in order to describe the arrangements of power within intimate relationships. Lenny draws on two discourses of gender and power in the following dialogue:

> *Int.*: I just want go back to something because you were saying that you're the head of the household. Could you just explain that to me, what does this mean?
>
> *Lenny*: Well actually, I responsible. I responsible for she. She away from she mother, so anything she has to look to, anytime she in trouble, if she in trouble with the police it's me {mm hmm}. I'm the one who working. I'm the one who bring in the finances. I'm the one who providing for the kids them, for them to go school, preschool and stuff like that, making sure they ain't go hungry, make sure leave money home, food home so they ain't have to go and beg no neighbour or anything like that, so I have a very hard responsible to fulfil, but I intend to do it eh.

Lenny is assertive about his function in this relationship. His masculine performance draws on two different, yet equally conventional, archetypes of manhood. First, there is the idea of men as protectors or guardians of their female partner and family. He presents himself as assuming the role of her parent now that she is in a relationship with him. Girls shift from being subordinate to their parents to being subordinate to their partners. The second archetype is one which features in the accounts of both men and women; the idea of men as breadwinners. He emphasises his importance as provider by a cataloguing of his obligations. There is an overall sense of the enormity associated with the myriad financial responsibilities he undertakes. The emphasis on his role as

provider would appear to suggest that this is the more significant of the two in support of his position as head of the household.

The centralising tendency of the provider motif as a rationalisation for men's power is evident even when participants articulate egalitarian values. This is illustrated in the following examples from Lance and Linda. There are contrasting positions on the negotiations of power in the relationship in Lance's account. He shifts between conventional and egalitarian views on gender in his description of the arrangement between himself and his partner.

> *Int.*: Who would you say was in charge, who do you say was head o' the household or the relationship?
> *Linda*: I.
> *Int.*: Why would you say that?
> *Linda*: Because of the task I had to carry out. My uncle helped me. His money was for the casino [Partner of Lance]

> *Int.*: Who would you say was head of the household or in charge of the relationship?
> *Lance*: Well the both of us was in charge, but it's obvious if I going out to work and she there, but I still didn't call myself the head of the household because both of us was still two grown adults, so both of us would take care of each other if anything happened she call on me. [Partner of Linda]

There is discordance between the two accounts. Linda positions herself as head of the household because she provided the financial needs of the family and took care of the household. He says that he took care of the family finances as he was the one who worked, whereas she said that she depended on her family members to provide for her household because he spent his earnings on gambling. There are competing voices in Lance's account on the distribution of power in the relationship. On one hand, he suggests that they are both in charge, "well the both of us was in charge." On its own, the statement conveys the impression of symmetrical relations of power between Lance and Linda. On the other hand, his subsequent rationalisation of the arrangement of power between the two is intended to appeal to the listener's sense of logic, "but it's obvious." The implication here is that as the family's breadwinner, "I going out to work and she there," he is entitled to authority in the context of their relationship. The latter

statement simultaneously privileges his position as provider and trivialises her everyday activities, "she just there." Discursive understandings of power in Lance's and Linda's accounts centre on the breadwinner motif. Lance appears to be reluctant to name himself as head of the household/relationship, even though this is implied in his account. He reverts to a discourse on equity and personal autonomy towards the end of his response "both of us was still two grown adults."

Some women present experiences of being constantly controlled by their partner. This has the effect of positioning women as the possession of men and placing men in what appears to be positions of absolute power. I asked Isis "would you say that anyone of you was in charge of the relationship?" Her response was as follows "He because he always want you to do this, do that, don't go there, don't do that, which I think it should have been equal but he always want to be up there, so." She positions him as head of the household based on his extensive attempts to control her movements and actions. He directs her every move and there is a sense in which she is unable to resist his control. The effect of his power is to eliminate any sense of autonomy on her part. In her response to the question "why would you say he was in charge though, was it, did he explicitly want that, to be in charge" Deidre says "no, but the way he used to behave. He used to behave real aggressive and controlling." This is similar to Isis' rationale for naming her partner as the person in charge of the relationship. In both examples, men's power centres on their capacity to exert forms of coercive, aggressive and violent intimidation and control over their partners. Deidre's response also suggests the threat of violence, "he used to behave real aggressive," was a means by which he exercised this control. The theme of control and men's power is more fully explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

Men's power is often stated as biological fact. In addition, dominant discourses on masculinities centred on men's right to rule as a consequence of history, religion and culture. These beliefs reinforce the difficulties associated with challenging patriarchal norms. Often men explain their use of violence as a consequence of their partner's recalcitrance. When tied to conventional constructions of masculinities women's

perceived disobedience as a rationale for violence place men in positions of power in relation to their partners. The following examples demonstrate the normalisation of men's power in speech.

> *Int*.: Who would you say is the head of the household or the relationship?
> *Eve*: The head?
> *Int*.: Yeah.
> *Eve*: Well me have to say he because he is the man [she laughs]
> *Int*.: Could you explain that to me?
> *Eve*: Me say so because you have to say he is the head I can't head over.
> *Int*.: And why you say so?
> *Eve*: Because me does always say that the house is his own and me can't rule him in his own house.

Eve draws on a conventional discourse on gender which has the effect of supporting patriarchal relations. She identifies her partner as head of the household "because he is the man." There is a tacit understanding of men's power to rule households based on an assumed natural order of things. To rule over him is read as an attempt to usurp power. Power also comes as an effect of his ownership of the house they occupy. The implication here is that she has to know her place in his house or risk displacement.

Similarly, Cheryl positions her partner as head of the household by offering religious support for his status:

> *Int*.: Would you say that one of you is the head of the family or household?
> *Cheryl*: Well I always the man to be the head of the family. I can't discredit him or demote him from that.
> *Int*.: Why, why?
> *Cheryl*: Because biblically that is it, so I leave that to him. You supposed to be the head of the family. If you instruct I go follow your instruction . . .
> *Int*.: What sort of other things you'll don't see eye to eye on?
> *Cheryl*: Well it's like this, for example a news item might come up. It might be read in a kind o' way that sounds wrong so I might say 'she make a mistake' and he go say 'no she ain't make no mistake. She say XXX'. Ah say [I would say] 'no. She say YWZ'. . . Ah say 'let we bet' and start to argue. He don't want to know he's wrong, so it's like whatever being said he must be right . . . You don't want hold no argument over that so most of the time you just have to give in. Let him take the right, even when he's wrong you can't correct him.

Cheryl deploys a patriarchal discourse, which is supported by religious ideas proclaiming that the man is head of the household. She implies that she never seeks to unsettle this arrangement. Her talk is performative of the notion of the obedient wife who follows the laws of God by deferring to her husband. The discourses which support men's authority are myriad. From the traditional narratives of men as breadwinners to locating men's power within the context of a biological script on gender, both men's and women's accounts support the asymmetrical relations of power. In the second part of the extract, she describes a scenario in which she usually concedes during disagreements because her partner would never admit to making mistakes. She explains that these arguments could stem from the most mundane situations, nonetheless she would compromise her position in order to avoid, the situation escalating. Her response alludes to a culture of fear which dominates and influences how she interacts with and reacts to her partner. Her decision to concede in these situations might be read as an effect of threats of fatal violence (an example of these threats is featured in chapter six) and the experience of physical violence perpetrated by her partner. Conceding in such might also be explained as part of her belief in the her partner's right to authority.

Angie's reference to men as head of households is indicative of socio-cultural understandings of gender that have the effect of normalising men's power. She suggests that she was socialised into this way of thinking which forms part of her belief system.

> *Int.*: And what do you think it means to be a man?
>
> *Angie*: Well, I grow up knowing man supposed to be the head of the household, but in recent times , man, men now breaking that bond because everybody you talk to they [they're] having problems with the guys and they things that they saying. It's either they [they're] cheating or they [they're] doing something that, because most o' the woman, I'm not saying every woman would be faithful, but most of them are faithful until they find out differently and then they get the worst of it because you might be living with a man for how much years, like me and my boyfriend and you know, about twelve years, and when I left I had nothing that I could say I get from him. Like for instance, that piece o' land we get from the government I put forward my foot to get it and when I went to the minister because I thought we were going to start a family, I didn't bother to think of putting my name on the piece o' paper and it come like he going to use that against me, but we haven't paid for it yet so I say have it if you want it. [Partner of Bruce]

Angie notes that traditionally men are positioned as head of the household. She alludes to a popular thesis on the current state of Caribbean manhood that is often referred to as the 'men in crisis'[15] thesis (Miller 1991). The breakdown of the nuclear family model and associated problems such as violence against women is explained as a result of some crisis in masculinity. The problem with such a thesis is the presumption that the nuclear family model is the dominant form in the context of the Caribbean, and that problems are emergent and associated with this crisis. It privileges dysfunction as a malady of the Caribbean family structures because of its homogenising tendency. Whereas promiscuity is often used to define a dominant masculinity based on the notion of male sexual prowess, she chastises men's promiscuity. She also supports the idea that the act of cheating is more a feature of men's life rather than women's. In fact, she argues women's infidelity is often precipitated by their partner's own unfaithfulness.

Some men in the study also shared the view of men's natural place as heads of households. Colin declares that all men are heads of households. He implies that being a man is a privileged existence because of the associated wisdom and power.

> *Int*.: For you, what do think it means to be a man?
>
> *Colin*: It's good because if you check it out a man is a leader in every household and as a man the same how [way] you want the other individual to give you respect you have to give them respect and take care around the house so things could work. See that is living happy. Make sure they eat and drink and every thing is well, you know. Sometimes you take the garbage outside and throw it 'way [away] and thing like that. Keep round the yard clean and things like that. But it's good, good when you is a man.

There is a tacit endorsement of men's power as head of the household. In other words, his talk has the effect of normalising men's power. He engages in a discourse of men's role in the context of the household. He endorses a division of labour in which men are responsible for performing the chores outside of the physical structure of the house; keeping those areas tidy. Men are expected to do the gardening, keep the yard clean, and generally engage in the more labour intensive tasks. This can be likened to Yvette's ideas that a man should complete jobs around the house to ensure that he protects his home and partner from other men. Colin suggests that women are incapable of doing

some of the things that men do and that men have knowledge that only they possess. For him, it is important that men impart wisdom and display leadership to ensure the successful functioning of the family unit. This leadership is defined as a quality possessed only by men. Colin's subsequent explanations of violence point to his partner's disobedience as a motivation for his actions. This rationalisation of violence in understood in the context of his construction of masculinity.

These direct articulations of power were a feature of several men's account. Sometimes they were stated as if to correct the researcher's apparent ignorance regarding interpersonal relations. This was the case as I interviewed Andrew:

> *Int.*: Who would you say is the head of the relationship, who's in charge?
> *Andrew*: The head, me is the head. Come on. [He chuckles] I is the man. No other man can't come in my place that is all I know. Since I name man, nobody can't run things more than me.

Andrew's expectation is that I should have known the answer to this 'obvious' question. The statement "come on" and his subsequent chuckle signals his disappointment in my lack of understanding of human relations. It is almost as if he is surprised both by the question and my lack of knowledge. This also indicates that for Andrew, men's power is something natural, a privilege bequeathed all men as a consequence of their biology: "The head, me is the head. I is the man." In this articulation of masculinist/macho discourse, the idea of power as residing with men is normalised. He expresses readiness to defend his authority in the event of any challenges from another man. Inadvertently, he suggests that although another man might attempt to challenge his authority, it is inconceivable that a woman might attempt to do the same. Andrew's talk is performative of a dominant masculinity in which he reproduces ideas about men's natural right to have dominion over their household. The naturalisation of men's power is exemplified by the overall sentiment of his response that such power 'goes without saying'; no explanation is required. It just is.

Like, Andrew, Floyd embraces the notion of men's authority. In the following he describes his feelings towards what he deems to be his partner's public display of insubordination.

> Yeah, what should I say, well I does feel she run things. In a sense she is not part o' the head, but it's the way she does behave. Like when me and she now get in [pause] she used to want to speak to me any how, so I say it not going to work. If you have something to tell me, wait until you reach home. Don't like pull me up in the street. (Floyd)

He presents an imperilled sense of masculine identity when, in his view, she subvert his authority in public. He positions himself at the apex of a hierarchy and laments her actions, which he interprets as disobedient and inappropriate. He gives the impression that it was necessary for him to assert his authority early in the relationship to ensure that she understands where she ought to be positioned in the context of their family. His response also emphasises the importance of reputation in the construction of masculinity which is seen when he shows his displeasure for her display of defiance as they walk through the village. There is an expectation that a woman defer to him as the person in charge of the relationship. Other evidence of Floyd's rejection of her so-called defiance is the statement "she is not part o' the head;" although her actions reveal otherwise. His suggestion of her resistance indicates that women do not necessarily accept the subordinate positions that some men attempt to carve out for them. In Floyd's view, power is not to be negotiated, rather there is an expectation that each person understands and accepts their role within the family.

Ideas about the distribution of power in the context of the relationship often draw on different discourses which shift between patriarchal and egalitarian. Lenny's example, featured below, shows how people's ideas about identity are informed by separate and sometimes contradictory positions.

> We know that men are the head of the home, but really and truly, if, if you have a balance, if you and, me ain't go [I wouldn't] really want be above my girlfriend. Me ain't go want be above my wife. Me go [I would] want be equal, but if a decision to he made we use the best one out of the two of we. If her ideas are better than mine I go use her idea instead of my idea. It go be easier. It go be more cheaper and we don't have to get no hassle at all {ok}. It ain't go be no hassle at all. (Lenny)

His account has the effect of normalising the notion of men as head of household. He presents this as a transcendental truth. Cloaked in an egalitarian discourse on gender is an understanding that ultimately decision making power rests with men. He talks about

wanting equality or balance with his partner, but paradoxically, his position of authority is reinforced by the statement "if her ideas are better than mine, I use her ideas instead of mine." The decision about whose ideas are best within a given situation ultimately resides with him.

4.6 Objectifying Female Bodies: Women as Possession/Property

Women's accounts often hinted at men's attempts to control them by employing a number of strategies. Discussions of their experiences within and feelings about their relationship often placed women in subordinate positions in relation to their male partners. Their accounts demonstrated that some men tended to view women as possession or property. The notion of the objectification of the female body draws on these two themes: women as objects of men's sexual desires, and the idea of women as men's possession or property. Although participants' account sometimes positioned women as objects of men's sexual desires, female participants tended to reject these views. The latter theme overlaps with ideas about men's authority and a presumed right that some men believe they possess to dictate women's thoughts and actions. The view of women as the property of their male partners might explain why women experience both acts and threats of violence once they ended the relationship. Some women reported incidents of being stalked and harassed by ex-partners as a consequence of their decision to leave.

The first example comes from Lionel who extends the discussion on men's "need" to be sexually satisfied. In the process of the discussion, he positions women as objects of men's sexual desires. He says

> I mean sex ain't all of it sometimes you know. I mean we is man. We go want it too. Come on, it go hard to say that you is my friend. You coming by me everyday and you look sexy no mother cunt [He emphasises the feelings of sexual attraction he has for some women] and you want tell me I can't tell you so. I don't know. I ain't might [might not have] plan[ned] it. A day might come and I might say "babes you look real good dread" and that might lead to a little percolation, but it's up to she because me ain't on no rape scene. Me ain't there on them scene there. I mean I go say "baby you look real good and you there by

me everyday. Me ain't go like for see another man eat you out and me ain't get nothing. Man let me eat since you does be by me nah." [Lionel, Partner of Giselle]

His talk has the effect of normalising men's sexual desires and drives as something natural "I mean sex ain't all of it sometimes you know. I mean we is man. We go want it." The implication here is that it is expected that as men desiring sex is a natural component of what it means to be a man. This resonates with a discourse on male virility which dictates that to accomplish a successful hegemonic male performance a man must prove that he is virile. There is a second effect of his verbal performance. He engages a language which has the effect of objectifying women when he says "I mean I go say 'baby you look real good and you there by me everyday. Me ain't go like for see another man eat you out and me ain't get nothing. Man let me eat since you does be by me nah'." He uses a metaphor in which he likens the female body to food to be devoured, with the effect of rendering this generic woman inanimate and voiceless. In his account, women are positioned as objects for male conquest, effectively legitimising men's putative power in relation to women. There is a tacit articulation of men's power to control female bodies and women's sexuality.

Similar sentiments are echoed in Cheryl's account. However, she rejects these ideas that have positioned women as objects for men's sexual pleasure. She says

> Men these days I find lack respect, particularly for women, for what reason I don't know. They will always be, well ok, they see women as a tool, I would say, that there to be used then they put aside and brag about it. You might, you might find it very rare that there are a few who might want to have a friendship and give you respect. (Cheryl)

Cheryl presents a masculinity that prides itself on sexual prowess and the conquest of several women; a masculinity that is based on the attribute of virility. Implicitly, she chastises the emotional detachment in such transactions. Bragging about these experiences constitutes a performance of a dominant and macho masculinity. She believes that women are not valued for the friendship they could offer men. Rather than recognising a women's humanity, most men, in Cheryl's view regard women as sexual

objects. She uses her talk to reject such hypermasculine performances as harmful to everyday relations between men and women.

Linda shares a similar opinion about her partner's view of women. She explains in the following dialogue

> *Linda*: He tend to use women a lot, you know.
> *Int.*: When you say use women –
> *Linda*: Ok, like have sex with them and then run them for no reason at all, you know. When he think he fed up o' you, he just beat you up and you know, so I think he was rather bad. [Partner of Lance]

She presents her partner as someone who uses women as objects for his own sexual gratification, after which he discards them. She presents her partner as someone who lacks empathy for women in general. Tied to this lack of empathy are acts of violence meted out to women once he no longer requires their sexual services.

Views on women's participation in sexual intercourse often vary. In spite of these variations, discourses on gender and sexuality are often intertwined. Whereas men's involvement in sex often betrays a sense of freedom in the pursuit of their sexual desires, women are offered restrictive positions in the discourses on sexuality. Deidre describes how her loss of virginity is used by her partner to induce feelings of shame on her part:

> My child-father used to always tell me oh I will never be nothing because I have a child. I will never be nothing. No other man ain't go want me nobody ain't go want me because I have a child, and I done used already. He had the best part of my life because he took away my innocence and all o' that, but I used to tell him no that is not true and that ain't go happen and all that but eventually when I looking, looking back now I see things that I been doing and it was because I probably felt that way because I did some things that when I look back I ask myself what was I thinking. (Deidre)

In her account, Deidre catalogues her experience of objectification by her partner. Having been involved in a sexual relationship and having a child are used as a symbol of her supposed defilement. Implied here is that a similar notion of bodily defilement does not obtain for men, reinforcing the double standard of sexual morality (Wilson 1969).

There is a privileging of the virginal woman as what some men imagine to be their perfect partner. Reference to her as "used" alludes to the significance of women's respectability in the construction of femininity. There is a sense in which women are expected to guard their virginity until they meet a partner for life, at which point they are expected to practice monogamy. This never features in the representations of men's identity. In this way, narratives of gender and sexuality are inextricably linked. However, Deidre distances herself from the image created by her partner of her as someone used, explaining that she no longer subscribes to this view of herself. Another issue raised in her portrayal of her partner's ideas is that completeness of self hinges on one's ability to attract a partner and maintain a relationship. This seems to be of greater significance in the construction of women's identities than it is in the creation and maintenance of men's gendered selves.

The next example documents Chantal's experiences of being following and harassed by her partner once she had ended her relationship:

> Ah [I] went Linton and live, stay with m' aunt {mm hmm} and everyday he used to come down there and harass me. My aunt call police and then {mm hmm} I calling police is a waste o' time because the police talk to he and he ain't stopping {mm hmm} that is why I end up and come back and meet him. (Chantal)

Men's sense of ownership of or entitlement to women serves as a form of objectification in that women are rendered men's possessions. This helps to explain women's experience of being stalked by their male partners, even after the relationship has ended. Stalking represents men's attempts at controlling women both before and after the relationship has ended. Women reported feelings of being terrorised and beckoned into returning to their partners who initially promise to change their ways, failing which some men used threats and acts of violence against former partners. Chantal describes being constantly harassed by her partner which resulted in her returning to the relationship. There is a sense of helplessness and lack of alternatives in this situation.

Similarly, Dawn describes graphic threats her partner issued to her were she to end their relationship and another man to move into the home that she shares with her current partner

> Me and he building a house so the downstairs finish. He say he want the keys change. I tell him I go [would] decide, if we go to courts, I go decide I go pay him for he [his] half. He say he want that {mm hmm}. Then he say when he lef [leave], me [I] go look for somebody else. That ah [is] eh [the] whole big botheration [dispute]. Anytime me bring anybody dey [there] he say he ah [would] come with he hammer and sledge [knock] down the house. (Dawn)

Dawn describes her partner's verbal intimidation in which he threatens to destroy the home if she were to end the relationship and invite another partner to live with her. There is a sense in which the presence of a new partner unsettles his sense of authority and sexual right to her, so that even if she pays him his share he cannot imagine another man living in the home they built while a couple. In fact, later in the interview she explains that he issued the following threat, "he tell me anywhere he meet me with any other man he go chop me and the man in fucking two." Threats of such graphic violence act as a means of asserting power and rightful ownership to her, while at the same time limiting women's decision-making capacity within intimate unions. The presence of another man as an intimate partner functions as threat to her partner's masculinity. His threat can also be read as a deterrent to women's autonomy and women's ability to make choices about a new partner.

4.7 Gendered Constructions of Love

In the main, respondents presented dominant portrayals of romantic love to describe either their feelings towards their partners or to describe the scenario of an ideal relationship. For some, love acts as a cohesive force which sustains the relationship. Decisions to remain within or to end the relationship are often discussed in the context of love between partners. Some participants problematised the traditional stereotypes of romantic love and rejected the prototypical forms of the heterosexual relationships. The suggestion here is that discourses on romantic love coexist with traditional beliefs about

gender and in this sense has implications for the experiences of individuals in the context of intimate relationships.

Regina discusses love by describing what women need in a relationship. In her explanation she draws on cultural constructions of love as an emotion. She says

> Sometimes we as woman need a companion in love, someone to give you hugs and kisses, you know, someone to make you feel like a woman, make you feel appreciated. The other thing when you live with someone and you see their ways you does try to cope. Me never butt [cheat on] him or nothing ah nah [you know], but it was too much. I feel so free, like a weight is off my shoulder. Sometimes I come home I used to have to be cooking, bathe my children, cleaning. If you see the amount o' work I used to have to do in the little time I come from work. By 8:00, I tired. No appreciation, some man don't show no appreciation to woman, none what so ever, and the kind o' words he used to used to me, oh my God, how my this yah [she does not want to repeat the word her partner was supposed to have used to refer to the vagina, so instead she uses the phrase "this yah"] stink and when the night come he used to want tell me how he sorry. He was angry. It's not an easy, it wasn't easy . . . You see he is a guy like this, he don't know how to show love. He's not compassionate. He's not passionate. It's just sex and go sleep. If you show him love he take advantage of you. [Regina, Partner of Roger]

Notions of romantic love, companionship, the heterosexual union and their associated practices – hugs and kisses – are tied to ideas about gender. In her view, femininity is affirmed when a man engages in such practices. Her fidelity is used to explain why his maltreatment of her is unconscionable. She explains that her hard work in satisfying the role of housewife – cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children – was not rewarded by any outward show of his affection. In fact, the ideals of romantic love she describes are not realised in her relationship with Roger. Her partner's actions are presented as antithetical to her views on love. She presents him as unreasonable, uncompassionate and unable to show love, "it's just sex and go sleep." There are overtones of her feelings of a kind of bodily defilement. "Just sex" has a reductive resonance. It is not part of the vocabulary of romantic love. "Just sex" implicates the other half of a binary, that is, "making love or love-making." Her depiction of how love ought to be performed draws from the archetype of the chivalrous lover that appears in many popular romantic fictional novels and films.

Cheryl distinguishes between men's and women's approach to each other within intimate relationships. She argues that women tend to be more aware of their partner's emotional needs than men.

> A woman needs to be loved, not to be taken advantage of, not to be under estimated. Like ah was telling Mrs. Smith [the counsellor] yesterday, when a woman would take the time to learn about her partner, to pin point every little aspect about him, a man will not take the time to know his. He will just see her there to cook, wash, iron, supply his bedroom needs and that's it {mm hmm}. As long as he gets what he wants that's it, but to think about what she wants, they don't take time to do that. (Cheryl)

Cheryl believes that there is a significant difference between men's and women's actions in relationships. She contends that women are more attuned to the emotional needs of their partners, observing and noting all of their idiosyncrasies. She rejects a functionalist discourse in which men consider women necessary in a utilitarian sense and presents romantic love as a human need that women share, consequently supporting a dominant heteronormative discourse. A binary view of gender is articulated in this account. Women are presented as sensitive and compassionate whereas men are depicted as domineering and brutish.

The idea of unrequited love is also a feature of some men's accounts. Some men talk about the loss of love, while others refer to experiencing the pretensions of love. Randy explains his perpetration of violence as a consequence of the latter.

> Ok, if I meet a, I just meet a girl right and she is a woman that, ok, you just meet a guy and you want to have sex and that is it, if they do that to me I will feel bad because I had a girl who did that to me already and I actually end up hit her. Her boyfriend was sailing and she meet me and tell me how she like me and stuff like that. She used me to have sex. She used to always come by me, you know always want it, you know and when she boyfriend coming back now she play she telling me [she has the audacity to tell me] she boyfriend been sailing and he coming back. So I feel hurt. If somebody just come and tell you that and you love that person and you doing anything for them what would be your reaction? {mm hmm}. First thing first my reaction was like "yeah right" because I ain't believe she go [would] do me that [do that to me] and then she tell me she serious and then afterwards I saw her crying so, you

> know, so I know is [it's] the truth, so I snap right there, so I end up I hit her and she run out. [Randy, Partner of Janer]

Randy describes a situation of nonreciprocal love. He justifies his use of violence as a consequence of his feelings of being used and deceived: "she used me to have sex." His discussion is atypical insofar as he presents a situation in which the body objectified, is a male body. There is an impression of his emasculation implied in the realisation that his declaration of love was in vain. He engages in the traditional language on love as rhetorically he asks "if somebody just come and tell you that and you love that person and you doing anything for them what would be your reaction?" The question functions as a persuasive device that intends to convince the listener about the power of love and it serves as a rationalisation of his so-called loss of control and subsequent violent reaction. Love means doing "anything for a person," or, according to a female participant, Angie, "giving your all." These statements exists as part of the vocabulary of love in which the notion of self sacrifice is present as a prerequisite of love.

In the next example, Lance conflates ideas about men as providers with the notion of being in love:

> The first time we been together every thing was fine you know. I was there. I was supplying everything she need and I don't know if she was expecting more of me or what, but you know in relationships people does get fed up o' people and I think that was it. She wasn't in love after a while. [Lance, Partner of Linda]

Constructions of love intersect with ideas about gender in this example. Lance talks about taking care of his partner's needs before the relationship had ended, but he suggests that what he provided may not have been sufficient to satisfy her. This is contrary to his partner's claim that she was the family's sole provider. His response suggests that she expected him to perform the role of breadwinner, and he presents himself as complying with this role. Evidence of this is when he says "I was supplying everything she need." Implicitly he suggests that providing for a female partner is a way of demonstrating love for an intimate partner. However, he suggests that there was a loss of love in the relationship. He uses the idea of being in love which points to a state

of happiness and contentment. Her loss of love is explained as a result of his inability to satisfy her financial needs.

Women's accounts on romantic love often resonated with heteronormative discourses in which having a relationship is regarded as an achievement and a defining moment in the process of becoming a women. Angie's account is indicative of the cultural significance accorded to traditional courtship practices:

> When I met with him, he didn't try to propose to me to say well he was interested. A man in my opinion, if he met a woman and he is so attracted to the woman, even if he's not ready to get married he could like show the woman he care by at least being engaged or something than the woman there grieving, wondering if she's going to marry him or something because she is not going to be the one to say 'are you going to marry me' or something. She not going to feel good doing that, so my thing about a man is to be a man. [Angie, Partner of Bruce]

Earlier in the interview Angie deployed a liberal discourse on women's independence, but also embedded in her talk were traditional ideas on the importance of the heterosexual union in defining her gendered identity. Here, she advocates traditional courtship practices as important to sustaining a relationship. She describes it as a man's responsibility to symbolise and formalise his commitment to his partner by the acts of engagement and marriage. These acts function as a form of public declaration of their commitment to and love for each other; a kind of social enterprise. Her talk exemplifies the symbolic value and societal pull of certain practices and discourse over others. She talks about women in long term relationships "grieving", "wondering" if they will ever marry. Marriage is presented as a marker of success, of one's self worth as a woman. In other words, 'she is a good enough woman to marry'. The last statement of the extract suggests that there is some trepidation among men when it comes to the commitment of marriage. Discourses on gender and romantic love dictate that, procedurally, women should not suggest marriage, instead men are expected to propose. In short, traditional courtship habits direct men to pursue women and not vice versa. When she says "my thing about man," the sign "man" refers to a person that is considered anatomically male; men in general. However, when she says "be a man" it is

as though she is calling on men to tap into conventional values of bravery, chivalry, boldness and responsibility, as opposed to what she sees as displays cowardice and nonchalance which prevent men from acquiescing to their responsibilities as 'men'. Positioning herself as wife or fiancé appears to reinforce her identity as a woman.

In contrast, Giselle subverts a heteronormative discourse as she describes the things that are important to her:

> *Int*.: As a woman, what are some of the things that are important to you?
> *Giselle*: Ahm, I deserve a decent home and all kind o' thing {mm hmm}. I deserve a decent home because when you children and all them thing you need to be more comfortable with them and like I don't really interested in no man thing, in this man thing as a woman. They are handy at sometimes, but I ain't believe in them so.
> *Int*.: Why?
> *Giselle*: Too much o' stress and harassment. Once a woman get a job, I think it's all well with she. Once a woman have a job she don't need to say 'oh yeah, I have a man'. [Partner of Lionel]

Giselle departs from conventional ideas about femininity and romantic love. She counters a hegemonic heteronormative discourse which impresses upon individuals the significance of heterosexual unions and love in the maintenance of the family and the preservation of societies. There is a sense of disdain as she insists that "I don't really interested in no man thing, in this man thing as a woman." She sees men as serving a utilitarian function, "they are handy sometimes." Indeed, there are conflicting discourses at work. On one hand, her account has the effect of reinforcing the men as breadwinner motif when she says that "once a woman get a job, I think it's all well with she." The implication is that men are only necessary in their role as providers in the context of the family. On the other hand, her rejection of the intimate heterosexual union is an anti-establishment position.

Unlike Giselle, Betty celebrates the complimentary remarks from her partners. She endorses dominant stereotypes of romantic love. She says

> He tells me that I am a good woman. He always usually use this kind o' word that he never met a woman like me before. You see he had this girl living with him before and she just awkward {mm hmm}. Every time she there home she dressing in this big jersey and panty alone and he

> always usually talk to she and she does walk 'way because she don't want nobody tell she how to dress and he say, them is not no kind of woman for him and so, and she don't hear what he said and he don't hear what she said, so it don't make no sense. (Betty)

The language of romantic love is extensive. Betty tells of how her partner views her as a girl he never met in his life, "I'm a girl he never met in his life, hold up so long and never disobey him and if me and he done today he never know if he would find another girl like me." The beginning of her statement resonates with the kinds with narratives of popularised love songs – 'one in a million' 'one and only' – and romantic fictions in the form of films and novels. Obedience is understood as a sign of her love and commitment to her partner. It is here that narratives of love intersect with traditional stereotypes of gender. Her description of him has similar resonances. Responding to the question "what attracted you to him," she says "he was like kind and gentle. He was like [pause] a wind. He was cool." The image portrayed here reproduces the archetype of the kind and gentle Prince Charming; a man that any woman would fall in love with. She continues "sometimes he would kneel down in front of me and tell me sorry and I does say "I would forgive you. You does have to forgive and take sometimes." The idea of him as kind and gentle is presented as his true nature. The impression conveyed here is that of a dual personality. The kind and gentle man that asked for forgiveness and the violent man are different personas altogether. Brenda was more direct than other the other women in this study about explaining her forgiveness as a consequence of her love for her partner. Similarly, during the interview I asked her about a violent episode: "how did you feel after it happened?" She responded "Me nah been [I didn't] feel too good, but still, me been [I] always love him still eh. I still forgive him." Brenda contends that is was her love for her partner that influenced her decision to forgive him after he was violent towards her. The language of romantic love includes the idea of love as everlasting and love as prevailing in tumultuous times.

In the context of violent relationship, some women depict love as a barrier that prevents them from leaving their partners. Chantal describes how she remained in her relationship with her partner because she loved him. However, she explains that once she had ended the relationship her partner continued to harass and threaten her. Her

description of these experiences is indicative of the broader narratives of romantic love and violence.

> *Chantal*: He calling my phone, he calling my fiancé phone and telling me fiancé how he go come up here and chop him up and he go on he work and do him all kind a things.
> *Int*.: He go [would] what?
> *Chantal*: He go [would] go on he work and do him way he have fuh [to] do him if he not giving me up.
> *Int.*: What does that mean, if he not –
> *Chantal*: Kill him, lash him and tell him if he can't have me, if he Larry can't have me, ahm Richard can't have me {mm hmm}, Juliet and Romeo. He go kill me, kill he self and kill Richard . . . When his mother find out he does abuse me she come down and tell me to leave him and run him [tell him to leave her home] {mm hmm} but I couldn't run him. When you love somebody don't care what they do, you like you blind to the love. You can't see it and that was with me. Don't care [It doesn't matter] what Larry do [to] me and people telling me to leave him, even my mother, is just like I, it going through this ear and coming through the next ['go through one and come out the next' means that a person is not heeding advice].

Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* is deployed in this declaration of fatal love. She presents her ex-partner as engaging narratives of romantic love in which unrequited love precipitates the threat of a murder-suicide. This narrative also positions Chantal as an object of male possession: "if he Larry can't have me, ahm Richard can't have me . . . Juliet and Romeo." Later in the interview she presents love as having a powerful, hypnotic, influence that prevents her from heeding the advice of family and friends. The idealised narrative of romantic love, particularly the notions that love is blind, that love endures or that love has the effect of veiling its victim, is used to explain why she remained for so long in this violent relationship. It is love that impairs her judgement. Jackson (2001, 307) contends that "the classical romantic love narrative reinforces the fusion of love and violence." In other words, narratives of romantic love can have debilitating effects for women who often rationalise their decision to remain in violent relationships as a consequence of being in love.

4.8 Summary

Women and men deployed a range of narratives that drew on culturally available explanatory frameworks as the constructed gendered selves in these accounts. Although participants' talk often reinscribed binary understandings of gender, there were several instances of subversive speech. Discourses of femininity – almost always tied to female bodies – often resonated with traditional narratives that value some forms over others. There was a privileging of depictions of women as mothers, carers and workers (paid work). Housework was usually defined as women's work. Although some men tended to liken their partners to images of the "bad woman" – read whore/jezebel – women always resisted such characterisations. Presumptions of women's infidelity, with such marker's as attire and sexual practices, were read as a departure from notions of respectability, which was often presented as idiosyncratic of a valued femininity.

There were several moments where such hegemonic discourses on women's identity were countered. Women often articulated notions of self-determination, and sometimes rejected the centrality of the heterosexual union in the construction of self. However, this was not a case of the subversive versus the traditional woman. Individuals usually engaged a combination of conventional, egalitarian and resistance discourses. Participants, particularly men, were more likely to subscribe to conventional views on women's identity. The idea of a transcendental femininity based on socio-religious and biological narratives were quite pervasive in these accounts. These ideas were often used to position women as men's subordinates.

The naturalisation of men's power in relation to women guarantees men freedom to navigate across various social spaces. There is a presumption of men's naturally higher sex drives relative to women. In addition to ideas about men's 'true' nature, a socio-religious discourse is also used to position men as protectors and providers; this notwithstanding Caribbean women's historical involvement in various levels of the labour force and in the general upkeep of their families. The shifts between egalitarian and asymmetrical discourses on gender also feature in discussions of manhood, albeit to a lesser extent than exist in the construction of women's identities. The resilience of the

breadwinner motif (a locus of men's power) is, in part, a residual effect of a colonial discourse that values Victorian ideals of the family. These continue to shape relations of gender in the Caribbean. For some women, men's power resided in their ability to exert forms of coercive, aggressive and violent intimidation and control which created boundaries for women, and severely curtailed their movement between the home and other social spaces.

In addition, ideas of romantic love, 'being in love' and love as a cohesive force were sometimes used to situate men and women in intimate relationships. These shaped participants expectations of their partners. Female participants felt that women were more attuned to men's needs than men were to women's needs. Women often characterised men as domineering and brutish which was juxtaposed against descriptions of women as sensitive and compassionate. In this sense love was often defined as a constraining force for women in these intimate unions. This is evidenced in instances where love was presented as a barrier which prevented women from leaving their abusive partners, and explains why some women positioned themselves outside of heteronormative discourses on love.

This chapter has focused on the (re) production of various discourses, archetypes and ideologies of gender in women's and men's talk. Participants' accounts of gender were multiple with varying degrees of commitment to the traditional dichotomous representations of manhood and womanhood. For the most part, participants subscribed to traditional stereotypes of gender roles within the family, but there were varying degrees of departure and commitment across any single account. Some participants were more resistant to prototypical accounts of gender than others, and women tended to be more subversive in speech than men. The analysis of narratives of gender produced by participants is crucial to an understanding of violence and control in relationships since the explanations of IPV provided by participants are often embedded within narratives of gender. This connection will be further explored in the two chapters which follow.

5 POLICING FEMININITIES, AFFIRMING MASCULINITIES: RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE, CONTROL AND SPATIAL LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the myriad ways in which women's personal autonomy is regulated in the context of intimate relationships. Here, I argue that acts of male perpetrated violence, coupled with the threat of violence and other forms of control, serve to limit women's possibilities in navigating between domestic and social spaces. Dobash and Dobash (2004, 328) remind us that men's physical and sexual violence often occurs within the context of "a constellation of abuse." The purpose of this chapter is to examine the discourses that are used to rationalise, justify and even subvert the different forms of control and violence perpetrated by men in order to maintain unequal relations of power. The idea of a 'constellation' of abusive acts as proposed by Dobash and Dobash (2004) suggests that a variety of practices are employed to regularise certain patterns of power. Although mention is made in the chapter of the different practices that constitute violence and other controlling behaviours, greater emphasis is placed on examining how individuals draw on a variety of social languages to explain their experiences, and how participants position themselves within these discourses.

The analysis revealed that women's accounts are characterised by discourses of oppression, imprisonment, entrapment and, to a lesser extent, personal autonomy. The talk that men provide tends to justify and deny attempts to govern and police women's actions and movements. It is here that discourses of gender intersect with justifications for violence and control by men. Boundaries created by these controlling practices, violence and threats of violence have the effect of policing femininities and affirming masculinities simultaneously. The kinds of gender identities articulated in these accounts position women as captives, governed by autonomous male partners, who monitor, confine and regulate women's activities. There are moments in which participants destabilize the dichotomous discourse on gender roles, particularly when some women describe their pursuit of economic independence and the achievement of

personal autonomy. However, these interventions remain marginal. Traditional discourses on the meanings of manhood and womanhood provide justifications for the double standards of spatial limitations in ways that perpetuate asymmetrical relations of gender.

5.2 Control and Spatial Limitation

> He was always like I cannot go certain places, even with his cousin. If I go to town with her it was like what we doing in town so long [why are spending so much time in the city]? Where we were and that kind o' stuff. Even when I was doing the course sometimes he would pass and check to make sure I'm there. He would be like 'right after class make sure you go home' and stuff. [Janet, Partner of Randy]

The talk men and women provide in the interviews indicate that violence and threats of violence are used to exercise power and control over women, who, in turn, are limited in their ability to move freely from the household to publicly designated places. This is a recurring feature of these accounts. The surveillance of women, as described in the example provided by Janet, was a prominent theme discussed in the interviews with women. Such surveillance is enacted through a monitoring of the spaces traversed by women thus ensuring that they neither trespassed nor transgressed. Besides the obvious attempts to monitor, Janet's statement conveys images of confinement and control. This tendency by men to dictate, control, monitor and limit women's activities is discussed in this section.

Women's attempts to challenge men's control and men's freedom of movement sometimes result in men's violence. This is one of the several means by which accounts of IPV are intertwined with discourses on gender. In this section, the theme of control versus personal autonomy is explored. The argument here is that men's attempts to regulate and/or police women's movements between culturally demarcated public and private spaces is enacted through violent acts and threats. Often, in these discourses on violence and control, women are objectified by their positioning as possession.

Conversely, subject positions created for men are those of regulator and ruler of these domains. There is a sense in which these spatial limits do not extend to men. On the contrary, men's personal autonomy is normalised. Such dichotomous representations render men powerful, while placing women in a state of powerlessness. What is more, these ideas are naturalised and normalised in the participants' speech acts.

As stated in Chapter 3, a range of issues relating to relationship dynamics, IPV and control were discussed with participants in the interviews. Discussions on participants' social network and engagement in social activities revealed that men tended to have a far more extensive social network and greater access to social spaces than their partners. The following two extracts are taken from married couple Yvette and Brent:

> *Int.*: How often do you like get a chance to go out with anybody else and like doing things you like doing? Like going to like church events and things like that?
> *Yvette*: Well sometimes I don't even like get a chance to go to church. Right about now it have a crusade going on and I ain't reach the crusade up to now.
> *Int.*: Why is that?
> *Yvette*: Because I does have to up and down here and by the time I done cook and clean up and have he mother up there and all thing I don't get to do anything else.
> *Int.*: What about him? Ahm, does he go out without you?
> *Yvette*: Yes. He goes different places.
> *Int.*: Do you know where he goes?
> *Yvette*: Yeah, by the, sometimes he does be by the block at the bus stop. Sometimes he does be by the rum shops drinking. [Partner of Brent]
> . . .
> *Int.*: I just want to ask you this. Do you like go out socially with friends and so on?
> *Brent*: Yeah at times. Sometimes you does feel for that. Sometimes you go feel for just –
> *Int.*: What sort o' things you'll do when you go out?
> *Brent*: Well, like friends, let me see, ok. I might feel like, sometimes when I used to drink plenty, I might go and just go by the shop and drink beers and gin and talk, like play dominoes or something, but then that is it.
> . . .
> *Int.*: Does your partner have many friends?
> *Brent*: Well she, I notice that she doesn't have friends, like, she don't go by people and thing so. That is one thing about she. She don't find time to go by friends and things. [Partner of Yvette]

The example of Brent and Yvette is quite typical among the men and women interviewed in this study in so far as it highlights men's freedom to socialise with friends and in public spaces. This can be contrasted with the restrictions experienced by women as result of popular beliefs about women's roles in relation to the family. In her account, Yvette positions herself as restricted by her responsibilities as a housewife and carer, roles traditionally associated with women. In contrast, Brent is described by both of them as free to pursue his social life, which involves drinking at the rum shop and spending time on the 'block'. The rum shop and the 'block' in Caribbean societies are public sites understood to be spaces for men. The rum shop has two functions. It is an establishment where villagers could purchase items such as bread, cheese, and other food items, although not on the scale of a supermarket. The rum shop is also a social space where men gather to have a drink and discuss topical issues (Dann 1994). It is a part of men's evening or post work experience. Dann (1994, 189) notes that the rum shop in the context of the Caribbean is a "male bastion of conviviality and alcoholic assemble." This explains why Brent frequents the rum shop, but not Yvette. The block is a similar social site for male bonding. The socio-cultural emergence of the block is quite varied. It is used to denote an area, usually on the side of a road, where individuals, almost exclusively men, congregate. Blocks may emerge around a particular kind of youth culture, and these could involve legitimate or illicit activities. They could exist as spaces of recreation, where men escape to play cards, dominoes, and engage in discussions both of serious and/or jocular nature. In this sense it is similar to the rum shop. Although women are accepted into these circles from time to time, these spaces are social understood to be the preserve of men. The accounts are underpinned by a hegemonic discourse on gender which supports the freedom of men to occupy and socialise in these spaces.

Both accounts are exemplary of the double standards which obtain between men and women in their ability to shift between public and private spaces. They allude to a dichotomous representation of gender practices, in which power is asymmetrically distributed in the relationship. Yvette draws on images of restrictions and confinement,

whereas Brent's account is characterised by choice and freedom. In both instances they reproduce traditional stereotypes of masculinities and femininities with the effect of perpetuating men's power in relation to women. Like several of the participants in this study, both Brent and Yvette present men's movement between the domains of the home and places of recreation as something that men do, leading to a sort of tacit acceptance of men's autonomy to navigate these spaces. This freedom acts as a means of affirming masculine identities. The theme of freedom versus confinement is also evidenced in the differentials between their social networks, with Brent having an extensive social network, while Yvette's consists of a few family members.

Brenda presents her own experience of confinement, which she contrasts against her partner's freedom:

> When I was pregnant, he used to go out, all on the beach and drink and he never used to tell me nothing. Just when he get up in the morning he would say "well I going on the beach," you know and he gone, and he used to just get up and go on the road and he would be there whole time until he know I done cook and then he would come back, eat and he gone again . . . He used to treat me real bad. He just would come and say you done cook or if he ask if I have anything to cook and I say no, he would give me the exact money to buy the things to cook. (Brenda)

This depiction exemplifies the ways in which women are disproportionately affected by this double standard of spatial limitation. She positions herself as existing in a state of confinement, with her pregnancy acting as a means of binding her to the home. In contrast, her partner exercises freedom to move between the home and other social spaces with the expectation that she continues to function in the role of homemaker. Her confinement to the home is sustained by ensuring that she has just enough money to purchase food items. Rejecting the state of isolation she finds herself in she says, "he used to treat me real bad." The juxtaposition created as she describes his and her experiences of navigating between domestic and social spaces reinforces the power imbalances that feature in intimate unions.

Similarly, Linda discusses her own experiences of restrictions in her intimate relationship with Lance:

> *Int.*: Now how often did he go out without you when you were in a relationship?
> *Linda*: Everyday. Actually he would leave on mornings. He would leave on mornings. He wouldn't even say he gone. Sometimes he would come in all 11:00, midnight. You live with him and you can't even ask him where he's coming from, you know.
> *Int.*: Why not? What would happen if you –
> *Linda*: He would look to fight me or he would slap me or knock me down with something, yeah. Sometimes I does feel so ashamed to talk these things, but it's reality.
> . . .
> *Int.*: And what was it like during some o' the worst times?
> *Linda*: It's like you're living in jail, doing a five year sentence where you only having a visitor once in a while.
> *Int.*: Why would you say that?
> *Linda*: Because actually, when we were living in the village, I didn't have the priority to go anywhere. I couldn't even talk to my neighbours and let him see. Only like when my auntie leave and come and visit me then I could've walked her out to the end of the road and back.
> *Int.*: And what would he do if he saw you, if you decided to talk to someone?
> *Linda*: Embarrass me. He would come in the middle of the road and say 'what you doing down here with them people here' and he would look to create a fight, you know. Sometimes all in the road, if I come to see my uncle and going home it's like what you doing here at this hour. Then he would look to create a scene just for nothing at all.
> *Int.*: Would he like look to hit you in the road or –
> *Linda*: Mm hmm. Many times. Sometimes, one night I recall I had to run and open my neighbour house door and run straight in the house like there was mine and he run away. [Partner of Lance]

Linda draws on discourses of imprisonment and freedom, as she positions herself and her partner, as captive and captor respectively. Cataloguing his daily routine, she points to the freedom he exercises as he navigates between the home, work and his social life. Another such example is given by Isis who says

> He never wanted me to leave the house because you had to lock the door with a key from inside and he usually would take out the key and he would take my phone, so I couldn't leave the house and I couldn't call anybody or anything. (Isis)

The physical act of locking her inside their home demonstrates the extent to which some men exercise power with a view of policing women's activities. In part two of the extract from Linda, she characterises her experience over the duration of the relationship as a prison sentence. In her account, this confinement is sustained through acts of violence perpetrated by her partner. Violence is used to punish attempts by women to subvert these rules and regulations. There is a sense in which discourses of confinement position Linda not only as captive but also male possession, which in effect acts as a form of objectification. Male perpetrated violence is, thus, rationalised as a response to female recalcitrance.

Violence is also rationalised as a reaction to questions to male authority, autonomy and privilege. Linda's questions to partner about his activities are interpreted as a challenge to his authority. Whereas his male privilege allows him to police her movement into public spaces, her positioning as a female subordinate denies her the option of asking about his movements. His violence is presented as a response to some perceived usurpation of power.

Ricky describes his negotiations with his partner to curtail her participation in social activities with her female friends:

> *Int.*: From the time you'll were together did she go out like socially with her friends and so on?
> *Ricky*: Yeah, Yeah she used to go out with she friends.
> *Int.*: How often did she do that?
> *Ricky*: Well is like only if I talk she go cut {mm hmm} she go play she stopping [He explains that it is only if he tells her not to go out with friends that she would stop]. If I ain't say nothing she would go, sometimes every other week because most o' the times I would tell she, like sometimes she want to lime [the word 'lime' is used colloquially in a similar way to term 'hangout'] and I would tell she 'girl this is me and your time, you know. She used to vex but still she used to stay, yeah, because two o' we live together but she used to vex.

In his account, Ricky uses a discourse of regulation. He justifies his curtailing of her movements as a consequence of her inability to self regulate. Although she engages in social activities with friends, there is a sense in which this is on his terms. He engages

social languages on commitment and responsibility to the intimate union. This resonates with discourses on romantic love based on societal notions of the importance of spending time together to build and maintain a strong relationship.

Sharon's narrative highlights the double standards of spatial limitations in these intimate relationships by demonstrating how violence is rationalised as a response to the questioning of male freedom.

> Well it had a time he went party and I can't remember what I tell him, you know. Something I say and he start to argue. I asked him if he ain't fed up with party and he have the children to help with and he beat me that time . . . M' [my] skin been swell up and ah feel sicky, sicky. (Sharon)

Her effort to question his traditional male freedom is met with the most extreme sanction in the context of intimate relationships. The account is performative (Butler 1999) of the cultural idea of men's role as provider. Having to deal with the harsh realities that many working class families face she reminds him of his familial responsibilities. Her admonishment of his actions is an indication that she rejects the unchecked freedom some men enjoy. Men appear not to be constrained by the same spatial limitations that are used to restrict women in their day-to-day lives. Whereas women's domestic responsibilities function to curtail their movement between public and private spaces, men's failure to satisfy their role as provider does not have a similar effect. Challenges to men's freedom of movement are punished sometimes by violence, and this acts as a reminder of male entitlement to this freedom.

In this depiction, Bruce describes reasons for a violent event between him and his partner.

> Ah think they went to church, and after they come back from church now, she tell me hold Laura [their young daughter], but she ain't tell me where exactly she going. She put on makeup and other things and she dress up. I wouldn't lie to you. I would tell you the truth. She tell me she going out. I say 'ok, you have to carry Laura'. A little thing come up, me push she. She push me back. Me end up me hit she. She fall down [she fell]. That was it. [Bruce, Partner of Angie]

In this negotiation of power, he rejects the position as childminder, as this departs from his ideas about each person's role in the relationship. Engaging in a dominant discourse that positions his partner as mother, caregiver or nurturer provides justification for his insistence on her taking the child with her. This is used to limit her ability to move beyond the confines of their home. The implication is that in these relationships women sacrifice a far greater degree of personal autonomy than their partners. When these imbalances of power are challenged the sanctions for women include violence, the threat of violence and other forms of control.

In the following extract, Giselle problematises marriage as an institution:

> I scared of marrying because {mm hmm} when you could get 'way from somebody when you is boyfriend and girlfriend, you won't get no chance of getting 'way when you is husband and wife because they want kill you and this house and this half o' this and half o' that [she explains that in divorce couples argue over who should get the house and other assets]. I don't want that. That is another thing of bondage. [Giselle, Partner of Lionel]

There is a sense of fear and apprehension in Giselle's talk on marriage. Marriage is presented as an institution of bondage for women. Her account supports a discourse on relationships as restrictive and imprisoning for women. Whereas the 'boyfriend and girlfriend' type relationship offers the option of escape, there is a finality that comes with marriage which for her instils fear. She engages a counter-hegemonic discourse in her rejection of marriage as an institution of bondage, preferring to ascribe to a sense of freedom to chart her own course within her intimate relationships.

The discourses produced on violence and controlling behaviours by participants reinforce the double standards in access to public spaces. Ideas about gender are often used as the basis for limiting women's movement outside of the home. Traditional images of women as nurturers, caregivers and homemakers are often used as the rationale for binding them to the home. The kinds of masculinities performed as participants discuss men's social network and their participation in social activities are

reflective of the traditional ideas about male freedom. In addition, the unequal distribution of power associated with patriarchal relations is apparent as men punish attempts to challenge their autonomy. In contrast, the identity construct articulated for women in participants' accounts perpetuate, for the most part, female subordination. The sections that follow examine these discourses and practices in greater depth.

5.3 The 'Double Standards of Sexual Morality' and the Policing of Female Bodies

The regulation of social spaces within the context of intimate relationships was often justified as a means of protecting a virtuous femininity, an idea usually juxtaposed against notions of women's innate carnal desires. In a 1969 article, Peter Wilson proposed that the source of the double standards of sexual morality between men and women was based on the notions of reputation and respectability. An idea grounded in role theory, Wilson suggests that women's and men's identities are explained as occupying opposing poles. Before marriage, females are constrained in their sexual activities and are expected to assume modes of conduct, such as modesty and obedience. Conversely "males are esteemed for their virility and are granted a freedom which they are expected to exploit" (Wilson 1969, 71). Men are permitted and expected to be sexually active, and they must also be virile (Wilson 1969). In his schema whereas women's identities centre on notions respectability, feminine virtue and modesty, reputation is thought to be the most salient determinant of manhood (Wilson 1969). Although the effect of this paradigm is that it ties masculinities to male bodies and femininities to female bodies, it points to hegemonic readings of the meaning of manhood and womanhood by drawing attention to polarised gender articulations. His work captures the extent to which respectability among women is celebrated, but left unaddressed is the putative duality of good/respectable femininity versus evil/sexually loose femininity, and the attempts to suppress the latter for fear of emasculation.

Explanations of violence and controlling behaviours offered by the participants reinforce the notion of the double standards of sexual morality and spatial limitations. It appears as though public spaces present opportunities to lure women away from the image of the

Madonna or sacred feminine by appealing to their innate carnal desires. Binaries in these accounts operate on two levels. Firstly, men's and women's identities are, for the most part, constructed as opposites. Secondly in the construction of female identities men, and sometimes women, use tropes of good and evil, the sacred feminine versus the Jezebel. Participants (particularly men) attached discourses of good and evil to female bodies, policing the kinds of gendered identities constructed for women by appealing to a sense of morality. The regulation of female identities reinforces and maintains male reputation. There appears to be constant threats to male reputation, so much so that violence and controlling behaviours are justified as a means of preventing and punishing presumed infidelity by women. The image of a virtuous femininity is crucial to maintenance of male reputation.

However, these boundaries do not extend to men. Male promiscuity is often presented as a right of passage into manhood, and a young man's prerogative. Some women express powerlessness in their attempts to curb men's infidelity. In fact, women talk about experiencing violence when they question their partner's presumed infidelity.

Chantal's account is an example of how the discourse on spatial limitations merges with that on sexual morality and female respectability.

> I can't go no where on my own 'cause if I go any where he telling me is man I going to meet . . . Is like he calling me phone when he there on work and telling me who man I have by me and this and all kind o' stupidness. If I call him and tell him my Daddy . . . send some money for me. When I done collect the money, I used to just catch a van and go out where he working and show him that I ain't telling him lie. Them boys used to ask him on his job, why he behaving like that, but he don't trust me . . . He didn't even want me to go by my Mom and my Mom who did live Deacons and I did live Atkins (Chantal).
>
> . . .
>
> It get worse, I saying that {ok} and this one here, by leaving him and get somebody in m' life {mm hmm} like this one here getting worse, 'cause he threatening this guy [she explains that the situation with her ex-boyfriend got worse when she left him and now that she is in a new relationship because he is now threatening her new partner]. I'm scared. When the guy go to work, I'm scared. I don't know. It's kind o' hard (Chantal).

Her partner's unpleasant ubiquity compromises her freedom of movement. These restrictions to her freedom have the effect of objectifying and reducing her to merely his possession. In her cataloguing of events on the day she goes to collect money from her father it would appear as if she acquiesces to his power. However, the threat of violence is a part of these women's lived experience, so going to his work place to prove that she only wentfor the money can be read as part of her survival strategy.

Going to his place of work also serves as a means of resisting a particular subject position that her partner creates for her. The image of the 'whore', tied to women's inability to resist temptation partially resonates with the biblical enticement story. The inappropriate sexual looseness it begets is used to define women as inherently immoral. These cultural narratives both naturalise and perpetuate the power that some men exercise over their partners. They are in turn used to create spatial boundaries for women, while at the same time justifying men's controlling behaviour. The implication is that, like the biblical Eve, if left unchecked women will stray. In their narratives, women tended to distance themselves from the image of the whore or "bad" woman; this is why she turns up at his work place. Perceived female infidelity is identified by both men and women as the single most significant trigger for men's violence. Ensuring that women's fidelity is kept intact ensures the preservation of male reputation.

In the next example, Dawn demonstrates that the restrictions which apply to her do not extent to her partner.

> I don't go out, don't go out again. Only because I was sick the other day I get to go by m' sister. I don't go nowhere because if I leave to say I going anywhere the man ah say is man I going look for and how if he meet me with any man he going chop me and the man in ah two {mm hmm}. Yes is so he does go on (Dawn).
>
> . . .
>
> *Int.*: You don't know if he would be home tonight or not?
>
> *Dawn*: Yeah, tonight because is partly [partly means almost] every night he gone.
>
> *Int.*: And does he tell you where he's going?
>
> *Dawn*: Nothing more than he say, sometimes he jump on he bike. If the girl upstairs ain't tell me when me ask where he gone, that look he jump on

he bike and gone, I don't know he gone away and all 12:00/1:00 at night he come back. So when I talk now he say I love botheration [Botheration means argument and conflict].

Dawn's account exemplifies this double-standard of sexual morality that features in some intimate relationships. Faced with the threat of serious violence, Dawn admits that she no longer goes out. She is denied access to the public sphere. This denial acts as a means by which men attempt to control women's sexuality by asserting male authority. It can also be read as men's attempt to control women in general. Her presence outside of the home is treated as an opportunity to compromise her respectability, and his reputation. Both men's and women's accounts are imbued with societal discourses of masculinity as authority and femininity as subordination. These discourses are maintained by the constant threat of violence. Along with the threat of violence, conventional ideas about female morality are used to restrict women from public spaces. Though she is uncomfortable with his nightly activities, she expresses a sense of powerlessness to influence change in him. Instead her objection is treated as unreasonable or as an attempt to initiate unwanted conflict. Her objection also resonates with ideas about female irrationality. Since male freedom is normalised as a right men enjoy, her objection is treated as an irrational response.

Tammy describes the double standard of sexual morality, and the subsequent violence she experiences as she engages in acts which subvert prescribed codes of behaviour for women:

> *Tammy*: One time he lash me because he had a girl down there. One time he had another girl down there, so I ask him about it and he say he get two girlfriends: "I have two women." And he did leave and after he come back from her place me and he argue and argue . . . So I leave home and after all the rain come. I did go 'round and start to make argument with him and he start to get on with he thing and them [he started to overacted – the practices he engages in here could range from verbal abuse to physical violence], so I say I not coming back and I take out my chair and them. Then I leave and rain come and meet me on the way. A guy who know me say 'Tammy you have anywhere to stay'? And I say 'no. The way how Scott behave with me I not going back by he'. So I end up and sleep by the guy and the next day I leave and he send a message for

> me. The next day he come down and start to beat me up and beat me up. He say he bring me down there so why I have to go and sleep by a guy.
>
> *Int.*: What exactly did he do?
>
> *Tammy*: He beat me up. Drop me all 'pon me chest . . . Because he want to say me leave and go sleep with the guy. [Partner of Scott]

There is an expectation in Tammy's account that she is obligated to accept his decision to "have two women." Scott is positioned as powerful, and her attempt to escape him is futile. The double standard of sexual morality is evident in her reporting of his declaration of relationships with her and someone else. It is presented as part of his male privilege. On the contrary, the act of leaving him and seeking refuge at the residence of another man is read as female subterfuge. Symbolically, spending the night in another man's home threatens his reputation and acts as a form of emasculation. It exists outside the accepted code of behaviour attributed to a virtuous femininity. The violence he perpetrates functions to punish her defiance. The viewpoint of women as possession is illustrated in these two statements "he say he bring me down there so why I have to go and sleep by a guy" and "I have two women." It is as though he has staked some claim on these women and the action taken by Tammy threatens her positioning as a belonging or object. Violence is rationalised as a means of punishing female immorality and restoring male reputation; as a means of asserting controls and boundaries upon the kinds of gender identities available to women.

Women's reports suggest that men attempt to protect feminine virtue by deciding which individuals their partners come into social contact with. Regina says

> You see he never want me have a relationship with my daughter's father, but he have a relationship with all the children he have mother {mm hmm}. That used to start up argument because I used to want to know 'how come you could talk to them and I can't talk to my daughter's father? Remember I did love the guy. We were living together. We have a child together so he would want to know 'bout his child. He used to vex. When I talk to him is like 'go meet your man'. He used to get on childish and silly. [Regina, Partner of Roger]

In Regina's depiction, the boundaries her partner attempts to effect reflect the ideas that there are different standards and moral codes for men and women. She presents him as

unreasonable and unfair in his attempts to deny her access to maintain a relationship with her daughter's father. She rejects his attempts to curtail her from communicating with him by appealing to a sense of fairness. She also appeals to a sense of history of love and parenting as her rationale for wanting to maintain contact with her daughter's father. Continuing to speak to her daughter's father represents a threat to her fidelity, and the possibility of her partner's subsequent emasculation. This is exemplified when she paraphrases him "go meet your man." Similarly, many women express being denied access to continue friendships they had prior to entering their relationships. Deidre explains:

> At first, I used to have a lot of friends. When I went into college I became anti-social because I used to have to leave school and go back home because he used to be home, so I never used to stay you know . . . I think he was a jealous person, so he probably would think that we going to do something. (Deidre)

It seems as though Deidre replaces time that she would have ordinarily spent with friends with time spent with her partner. She rationalises her decision as a result of his jealousy. Likewise, Janet laments her loss of friends and consequent isolation:

> *Int*.: Do you have anybody that you socialise with, that you hang out with?
> *Janet*: When the relationship started he started getting jealous about everybody, even when my friends would call me to say hi, he would get upset about it. He didn't want me to hang out with anybody. He just wanted me to be with him. I kind of distanced myself from them for a while and eventually they all just disappeared and I would just say hi.
> . . .
> *Int*.: Now I'm going to ask you about his social network. Does he have many friends?
> *Janet*: You could say that. When it comes to hanging out a lot of males. The females are who he meets about the place. [Partner of Randy]

In Janet's account, she characterises her situation as one where over time she loses her personal autonomy as her network of friends "just disappeared." Later in the interview her admission is indicative of a tacit understanding that men are free to continue their friendships even though they are within an intimate relationship. Both Janet and Deidre mention jealousy as the motive behind their partner's restrictions, and their consequent decisions to sever contact with their friends. The implication here is that by limiting women's social experiences with friends men protect women's respectability, again

drawing on the notion of a virtuous femininity, while at the same time protecting their reputation. Furthermore, men's continued involvement in social activities with friends serves to affirm their gendered identities. These unequal arrangements of power provide the basis for women's subordination within the context of the relationships, helping to explain the context in which violence occurs.

Men's accounts were characterised by a tacit acceptance of engaging with multiple female sex partners as a sort of right of passage. Wilson (1969) opines that the single most important factor in the construction of masculine identities is virility or male sexual prowess. While this might not be true for all men, the majority of the men in this study (11 out of 15) admitted to either having had several partners at the same time in their past or current relationships. This is one area in which men and women in the study concur. In contrast, men promote the notion of female purity when they describe their expectations of a partner. This double standard is captured in Ricky's account and echoed by Gary:

> *Int*.: What are your expectations of a girlfriend?
> *Ricky*: I expect you to be honest, loyal and real virtuous, you know.
> . . .
> *Int*.: Did you ever cheat on her?
> *Ricky*: Yeah that used to happen.
> *Int*.: Did she ever find out?
> *Ricky*: Yeah, but she never actually see me or anything. It's like hearing people talk this. Only one time she really ever see me is like walking down the street with a girl talking and the next day she might hear somebody say 'girl, I see your man and a girl on a little flex [going out together]', you know. From that she don't take nothing and let it slide. Sometimes I used to just let things slide, but she used to just bring it up back.
> . . .
> *Gary*: Before I met her, well you could say that I used to run women [He means that he had a lot of intimate partners at the same time] in them time.
> *Int*.: Run women?
> *Gary*: Ah ha. Yeah, like I used to still run women, so like when I really get into her I say like this is the lady I should really settle down with. We started to go out and she started to come home by me, but her parents didn't like me for she.

Ricky's interview captures the normalisation of different standards of sexual morality for men and women. He draws on cultural discourses of femininity as sacred and pure and this is what he looks for when choosing a partner. In fact, earlier in the interview he laments the slipping of his partner's feminine virtue now that she is apart from him and has the freedom to socialise with friends on a more frequent basis: "the kind o' friends she liming [hanging out] with right now does give she the wrong intentions, wrong thinking, through because of their lifestyles. Them girls love run around and I know my baby mother [his partner] is a nice girl." There are two different images of femininity present in this statement. In the first, he admonishes a kind of loose, promiscuous femininity drawing on the whore or Jezebel motif. He uses a disapproving tone to describe her friends "lifestyles." Secondly, he positions his partner as mother, "my baby mother," a title imbued with notions of respectability, and the idea of the Madonna (sacred feminine). What he wants is an "honest, loyal and *real* [my emphasis] virtuous woman." However, his statement is steeped in the belief of the corruptibility of a virtuous femininity; the innate carnal desire that women possess that ought to be guarded and regulated. In the previous section Ricky mentions having to speak to his partner in order to limit the amount of time she spent with friends.

Double standards of sexual morality operate in a way that grants men a great degree of sexual freedom. While there is a sense of fear that his partner is corruptible in the company of female friends with loose morals, there is no fear of his reputation being tarnished as a result of his infidelity. Gary's admission that before he met his partner he used to "run women" has the effect of normalising men's promiscuity as a right of passage or as a means of finding the perfect partner. Indeed, it ('running women') valorises hypersexual performances by men. In Vincentian parlance the phrase 'running women' is used to signify a man who is culturally considered a philanderer. It is a term used only in reference to men, and it does not carry the morally corrupt stigma associated with the monikers 'whore', 'Jezebel' and 'bad woman'. However, women are meant to avoid men of this persuasion in order that their feminine virtue might be protected. In Gary's account, this particular image of manhood is juxtaposed against

ideas about men's responsibility. There are two subject positions presented here. The first is a masculine identity that is constructed on the notion of male sexual prowess achieved through the conquest of several women. The second draws on notions of stability and responsibility; a sort of coming of age. The transition from one stage to the other is supposedly initiated when he meets his new partner.

Traditional discourses on gender provide the justifications for double standards of sexual morality between men and women. Dichotomous reproduction of gender norms appear as a kind of hegemonic discourse on gender. These polarised articulations of gender operate on two levels. There is a dual representation of female identity in which women are depicted as either the Madonna/sacred feminine or the Jezebel/whore/bad woman. The policing of the spaces women occupy through violence and other controlling practices by men acts as a means of protecting women's respectability, read sacred feminine and, by extension, maintaining male reputation. At the second level a binary opposition exists between the normalisation of male sexual freedom versus female monogamy or sexual purity. These asymmetrical arrangements of power are sometimes used to justify men's controlling behaviour and the subsequent violence that men perpetrate against their partners.

5.4 Conventional Gender Discourses and the Boundaries of Space

The motivations behind men's attempts to control and restrict women's movement between public and private spaces appear to be embedded in conventional discourses on gender. I have argued that similar restrictions do not apply to men in intimate relationships. This section expands the discussion on the ways in which traditional discourses on gender are used to create boundaries in women's lives, while at the same time protecting the freedom that men in enjoy. It also considers the departures from dominant discourses that sometimes feature in individuals' talk. Paradoxically, the presence of these counter hegemonic discourses has the effect of highlighting the difficulty associated with contesting these ideas. Conventional discourses on gender

feature in both men's and women account. They arise as participants describe their experiences and they are articulated as part of the individuals' world view.

> *Int.*: When are you most comfortable as a man?
> *Randy*: Knowing that I'm strong and I'm supposed to protect, you know like my family {mm hmm} and I don't have to do the things that women do like getting pregnant and seeing period and stuff like that and I does sit down and say a woman have to go through all of that you know. First thing they ha' [have to] get pregnant. They ha' carry that baby for how long. They ha' to say they even seeing their period. I tell you women does go through a lot that is a lot o' things, so that is why I say a woman shouldn't work. A woman should be just be home, a housewife and stuff like, so that is why, what, when I say I'm comfortable as a man. [Partner of Janet]

In Randy's account, he draws on a masculinist discourse in which there exists clearly defined roles for men and women tied to biology. Pregnancy and menstruation are described as debilitating conditions. In fact, pregnancy is presented as an inevitability. The burden of childcare responsibilities coupled with menstruation is used to support his argument about restricting women's participation in the labour force. He diminishes the contribution women make to the labour force as housewives in the management and maintenance of households. Pregnancy and menstruation are used to limit women's choices to the sole role of housewife. These discourses on female identity are contrasted against his ideas about male identity in which he privileges the roles of provider and protector to his family. He implies that these roles are based on his superior strength in relation to his partner who is positioned as weaker and considerably less mobile, and thus in need of protection. This discourse of biological determinism provides the rationale used to keep some women circumscribed in intimate relationships. It is used to justify his objection to women entering the labour force.

His partner, Janet, describes how she was denied the choice of returning to work:

> I felt trapped. I told him I wanted to go back to work. I told him when the baby get older I wanted to go back to work because people were there who could have stayed with her. He said 'no'. I'm not supposed to work. I said, 'ok I will kill the topic and bring it up another time'. When I realise what he was doing to me I turned to him and said 'I need to get a job'. He turned to me and said 'no' . . . He started developing a way. I

couldn't say anything, I couldn't do anything, so I just hush. [Janet, Partner of Randy]

There is agreement in the accounts of Janet and Randy about his rationale for denying her return to the labour force. She presents a situation in which she tries to negotiate the right to return to work. In some way, she acknowledges the constraints that child bearing poses for some women, as she feels obligated in her responsibility to see their child mature to a certain age before she returns to work, an obligation not shared by her partner. In her presentation of the negotiation with her partner about returning to work her account draws on discourses of entrapment. Also embedded is the notion of his power as absolute. Comparing both accounts, we see how masculinist languages and women's bodily experiences coalesce to perpetuate women's subordination in the context of intimate relationships.

Angie describes the asymmetrical relations of gender that exists in her relationship with Bruce:

Int.: What do you think your partner thinks it means to be a woman?
Angie: Well a woman should probably just be at home – make the kids. Well, he is not the kind o' person who drives you to go and look for work because many times I go and get a job and he do certain things and then I just have to stop.
Int.: Sort o' thinking about society what sort of roles are expected of women, you think?
Angie: Now, today people expect women to be the breadwinner too, but times gone women were just the housewife {mm hmm} and nothing more.
Int.: What do you think about those expectations society has?
Angie: Well, a woman could be more than a housewife. Being a housewife is still a job {mm hmm} and, for instance, if I have a house and I'm working. I can't be in the house everyday, so you probably have to hire another woman and that's another job. That's their job, but if I'm a wife of a person, they're not going to pay me to do the job. They're going to expect me to be home looking after the kids and so on.
. . .
Int.: In your opinion, what do you think your partner thinks it means to be a man?
Angie: Doing what he like. It's like he like driving and drinking and that's the main problem. [Partner of Bruce]

Employing a discourse of restraint and female insubordination, Angie describes what she believes to be her partner's views on female identity. For her, he believes in the traditional image of woman as nurturer and homemaker. Her admission that, "he do certain things and then I just have to stop," describes the circumstances under which she was forced to give up paid work. His lack of encouragement towards her seeking employing is explained as an effect of his traditional views.

Her impression is corroborated in the example by Bruce, noted in the previous chapter, when he says

> I always, since I growing up, I always say I would like to meet a nice woman. She could cook {mm hmm}. She could clean. She could, like good in everything, although she so young. She start when she young coming up {right}. So them is the kind o' quality ladies. [Bruce, Partner of Angie]

The "qualities" celebrated by Bruce in women confine them to the domain of the home and, as stated before, these discourses have the effect of limiting possibilities for women in relation to work while at the same time devaluing housework as women's work. Angie engages in a counter hegemonic discourse by subverting the view that the work performed by housewives is of lesser value than the more formalised means of paid employment. She identifies a shift in societal views of women's involvement in the labour force by suggesting that in contemporary society "people expect women to be the breadwinner too." Nonetheless, there exists a paradox in her talk. On the one hand, she rejects the devalued view of the work of women as housewives, by suggesting it is a legitimate "job" which, in the absence of a female partner in the home, would have to be performed, for pay, by someone from outside of the household. On the other hand, she suggests that in the past "women were *just* housewives" and that "women could be *more* than housewives" (my emphases). The use of words "just" and "more" infer that other means of employment possess greater value. The phrasing of this shift illustrates the difficulties of trying to escape traditional hegemonic discourses on gender. In spite of these echoes of convention in her speech, her account points to new options open to women within the shifting of convention.

In the following depiction, Yvette supports men's power as head of the relationship, but issues a caveat:

> It have certain times I try to say certain things and sometimes I try to do certain things and he does just, and I does just get up in a rage, but he does say I want things my way, but sometimes I does, he does, I find he does bring certain things which I know I raise up and see certain things differently from he [sometimes he would raise certain issues that I disagree with because I was brought up or raised differently from him] and he, I might want to put it that way and he would say it is not so and he always have to follow me [he always have to go along with my way] {mm hmm}. I don't want all them kind o' things there for him to say he following me [I don't want all those situations where he says that he has to follow my opinion] because he is the man and if he ain't show you the right thing then therefore I have to do the right thing. You understand? But he saying like I want to control and all them thing. [Yvette, Partner of Brent]

Yvette engages a patriarchal discourse in which men's power to rule over households is taken for granted. She speaks to a moral responsibility that men are expected to fulfil as leaders of the household. There are religious overtones in her account as she tries to justify moments when she disobeys her partner's leadership as head of the household. Her account is characteristic of those patriarchal values that both men and women possess as they negotiate power in the relationship. By suggesting that as a man he has some right of leadership bequeathed to him, she perpetuates the rationale for her own subordination. She is also careful to suggest that she has no intention of controlling him. Instead, in instances where she does not take direction from him it is because his leadership is morally unsound. This reinforces the examples used from her account in the previous chapter. There is tacit support for men's control in the context of the family in Yvette's account, with the implication that resistance is only permitted in the context of flawed male leadership. Notwithstanding this objection, men's right to exert control over their female partners is justified as an effect of this traditional discourse on gender relations.

In this next depiction, Isis demonstrates the extent to which patriarchal relations and their associated conventional discourses of gender are both pervasive and normalised in everyday acts and speech:

You can't be wanting to control somebody's life, especially because like he wasn't married to me. He didn't have a child with me. I'm still free {mm hmm} and I mean you can't be controlling people's life telling them what to do, where to go, what not to do. I mean you can't be doing that to a woman. No, you can't be doing that to a woman and taking away their freedom and everything like that. (Isis)

In this narrative, men's control is justified through the institution of marriage, and women's child bearing capacity. The implication is that women relinquish their freedom to men upon entering these arrangements. The account draws on discourses of biological determinism and religious ideas about men's divine right to have dominion over other entities. The Biblical discourse as interpreted within Vincentian, as well as other societies, dictates that women defer to men. In this context, she presents her partner's control as an irrational act. In a previous example, Giselle referred to marriage as a system of bondage. Although not as strong as the image of marriage created by Giselle, in Isis' account there is an apparent view of marriage as an institution in which men's control is entrenched. However, whereas Giselle situates herself outside of this institution in her condemnation of marriage, Isis implicitly accepts men's power to control women in the context of marriage when she says "You can't be wanting to control somebody's life, especially because like he wasn't married to me."

In the next extract with Dwight, we discuss his feelings about his partner's friends:

Int.: Does she have many friends?
Dwight: Yeah she have many friends.
Int.: How many of her friends are men and how many are women?
Dwight: She have nuff man friends. She have more man friends than woman friends.
Int.: Do you have a problem with that?
Dwight: Yeah I have a problem with that.
Int.: Why?
Dwight: Especially when you're going out with your woman and they shouting she [greeting her].
Int.: You mean guys shouting her?
Dwight: Yeah. When me and my woman going out we supposed to be respectable. [Partner of Rose]

In this dialogue, Dwight implies that there are certain codes of behaviour that his partner fails to observe. He expresses resentment at her insistence on greeting her male friends

when they appear in public as a couple. To 'shout' someone in Vincentian vernacular is used to denote a verbal greeting that is done in passing and might also involve a hand gesture. "Shouting" 'his' woman, when they are in public as a couple, is read as an act of disrespect; a threat to his masculinity because of what that gesture might imply. This, for him, exists outside the accepted modes of behaviour he expects from her. In his talk he situates her as his possession, "my woman." The act of "shouting" his partner and her favourable response appear to function as a form of emasculation. The act can be read as subversive as he is unable to exercise control in this situation.

Conventions of gender feature in the everyday practices and talk engaged by individuals. These ideas help to explain the context in which violence and other controlling behaviours occur in some intimate relationships. Violence is justified as a response to a departure from traditional gender practices, and certain controlling behaviours are applied to maintain the status quo within these unions. Women often engage patriarchal discourses as they discuss their experiences in and thoughts on these intimate unions. Their resistance to these traditional gender practices and challenge to men's autonomy are sometimes met by harsh reprimand from their partners. Men tend to normalise male privilege in their accounts. In general, participants tended to support conventional narratives of gender, tying femininity and masculinity to female and male bodies respectively.

5.5 Financial Deprivation

Limiting women's ability to move between public and private spaces is often effected through the use of a variety of methods. Whether it is preventing women from entering the paid labour force or withholding money from them, women report that men exercise forms of financial deprivation with the effect of restricting their freedom of movement. Although financial deprivation may not be considered an act of violence in a strict sense, women's reports of lack of financial support from their partners and men's attempts to restrict their partner's participation in labour markets can be situated within

the 'constellation of abuse' (Dobash and Dobash 2004) and the subsequent control men exercise over women in violent relationships. Branigan and Grace (2005) contend that women experience financial abuse when men limit women's access to money. This may take several forms including actively seeking to keep women totally financially dependent; withholding access to bank accounts; excluding women from decision making rights regarding finance; denying women money to buy food, clothes and sanitary products (Branigan and Grace 2005); and restricting women's access to the labour market. Eleven of the 19 women interviewed reported some form of financial deprivation. However, men did not acknowledge withholding finances from their partners as a means of control, nor did they report experiencing any form of financial deprivation at the hands of their female partners. Like other forms of violence and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships, financial deprivation appears to affect mainly women as its victims and men as its perpetrators.

Janet describes her experience in the following excerpt:

> If I'm going anywhere he would ask what am I going there for and that kind o' stuff. If I had to go to the doctor with her he would just give me exact money to pay the van to go there and come back. I don't know if he used to think if I get anything else I would go somewhere else. Even though I spend all day at the doctor I would have to stay hungry until that time, even though I was breast-feeding her I would have to stay that way until I get home. He was like that – 'don't go anywhere else'. [Janet, Partner of Randy].

Janet's partner's action is a form of deprivation that allows him to exert control over her. For her to maintain her virtue he denies her the means through which she might be tempted into straying from the Madonna image, and those behaviours associated with being a good wife. Her movements are strictly monitored, and her account reiterates the curtailing and confining of femininity to protect notions of female virtue. Previously, she described his objection to her working. Providing her with just the bear minimum ensures that she remains dependant on him on a day-to-day basis. A job represents a degree of independence and autonomy, but it is an option which, at the moment she is unable to pursue.

Similarly, Isis talks about her partner's attempts to curtail her access to paid work. The following extract is taken from three stages of the interview with Isis, and shows different stages of her negotiation with her partner to find and retain work:

> Like, ahm, like it had this time I asked him for a $20 because I wasn't working. He didn't want me to work and things like that and I asked him for the $20 and he say, he say 'how you love money so? You love money. You love plenty money. I ain't know why you ain't start to whore for it'. And I just didn't like it {mm hmm}. I felt, you know, 'I'm not a whore. Why he telling that'? (Isis)
>
> . . .
>
> No, I wasn't comfortable. Nobody would be comfortable with that because remember in the first place he didn't want me to work and I played stubborn and I went I look for a work {mm hmm}, so then he used to kind o' like, what must I say, he used to kind o' pressure me then, make me do everything so, you know. It doesn't matter what time I get home. If I get home 8:00-9:00 I have to do something for *him* [her emphasis] to eat. I have to clean the house. I have to wash the clothes {mm hmm} and, you know, everything. He like he just used to pressure me. Like, to me he just used to like pressure me to give up and say I can't work and I have work home to do. I have work home to do and I can't work anymore so let me quit, you know. (Isis)
>
> . . .
>
> He started getting on and on. 'You have to stop work, you know. You better stop work with that company there'. Me say 'let me tell you something, I'm not going to stop work until I know I have something else to do', and he took up one of the plastic chairs and he hit me with it, right, and I took it up back and I throw it at him, yeah and then he didn't, then he throw back something at me? He threw back the chair at me, but it broke that time so I didn't do anything. (Isis)

In this account, Isis' situates herself as both confined and autonomous. Financial dependence on her partner represents her confinement and presents the opportunity for violence and a verbal assault on her personal integrity. There is an attack on her virtue, in the suggestion that her so-called love of money places her on a path to prostitution. The word whore is imbued with the idea of a devalued femininity and is tied to the archetype of the Jezebel. In the reporting of his views she explains that he attacks her sense of morality. However, she rejects this positioning.

In the second part of the extract, she describes his attempts to position her as having a primary function as housewife/homemaker. There is pressure for her to satisfy all of the

domestic responsibilities even though, like him, she is involved in the paid labour force. Her positioning as housewife/homemaker is used to exert dominance and to pressure her to abandon her job, thus rendering her financially dependent. Her partner's demands regarding domestic responsibilities are used to limit her autonomy and police her activities outside of the home. Because housework is normalised as women's work, there is a sense in which a job distracts her from fulfilling her obligation to him and to their home.

Isis engages in subversive speech in the final portion of the extract as she describes her resistance to his efforts to control her participation in paid work. The violence he initiates against her is in response to her declaration "Let me tell you something, I ain't going stop work until I know I have something else to do." She also participates in an act of 'violent' resistance as she throws the chair back at him. It appears as though work and financial freedom offers some women greater bargaining power in their relationships.

Consciously withholding money from women and restricting women's employment in relationships lead to experiences of shame, and some women reported that in the past they had been left without enough money to satisfy their children's and their own needs. In an example by Linda earlier in the chapter she positioned herself as existing in a state of confinement throughout the duration of the relationship. In fact, she says "well I actually held on for about six years because I didn't really have nowhere to live . . . and because he believe that he was the one paying the house rent that gave him the edge." She presents his power to rule over her as a consequence of her lack of choice. Her financial deprivation is thus discussed in the context of a series of other controlling acts by her partner. In the following dialogue Linda describes her lack of financial support from her partner:

> *Int.*: In terms of housework and taking care of the children, when you'll were together who was responsible for doing what?
> *Linda*: I was responsible for the role of man and woman.
> *Int.*: Why do you say that?
> *Linda*: Yeah, because even financial support, oh my God. When you see he works, he would sit down and he would gamble it off. Next thing now

nothing for me and the kids to eat. I would have to call my uncle and my mom.
Int.: This used to happen on a regular basis?
Linda: *Mm hmm* [Her emphasis].
Int.: And like doing like stuff around the house, like household chores, who would do that?
Linda: Me. Even the yard out there I would have to pay somebody to do it. [Partner of Lance]

Linda genders the role expectations of herself and her partner in her response "I was responsible for the role of man and woman." By implying that there are certain roles for men and women, she performs gender in her account. As the main breadwinner there is an expectation that he fulfils his family obligation, since she is satisfying the obligation of homemaker. What is more, there is an expectation that as a man he is responsible for the more labour intensive outdoor chores, like gardening. Her account appeals to a sense of fairness and morality. He is positioned as a failed man as he has avoided his responsibility to his family. The responsibility of supporting one's family was described by both men and women as central to what they believe it means to be a man. His privileging of a socially censured activity, gambling, over 'feeding' his family serves as a further questioning of his manhood.

Likewise, Stacey describes the lack of child support from her partner and the violence he perpetrated against her because she shares resources between his child and her grandson:

Int.: Ok, now when you were together how much time did he spend with his child?
Stacey: Well when the child born he did come and own it [identify that the was in fact his]. He never own it in me belly [while she was pregnant he questioned the child's paternity]. Me alone struggle with it.
Int.: He never own the child?
Stacey: In me belly. Me alone struggle with it and when the child born he own him and he used to come now and again and see him {mm hmm}, sit down a five minutes and go, but he don't give me nothing.
. . .
Stacey: The first time he hit me is for a medicine.
Int.: What happened?

> *Stacey*: He buy a tonic for the little boy and I take it and gave my little grandson some and this little girl for me talk and say I give Len [her grandson] the medicine, and he [her partner] take the medicine and pitch it in my face . . . If you buy something for your child and your woman use it for another child too that shouldn't be a problem.

Stacey explains that her partner's lack of financial support during her pregnancy was because he doubted the child's paternity. Lack of support is used as a punishment for presumed female infidelity. However, even after he accepted the child as his own, financial support was not forthcoming. The second part of the extract is indicative of the ways in some men try to exert control over the family's resources for which they have paid. Violence is rationalised as a response to what he perceives as a misuse of an item he purchased for his child. However, she rejects this position, insisting that she should have some influence on how the household resources are distributed. He is presented as lacking compassion and empathy.

In the final example in this section Brenda justifies women's promiscuity as resulting from men's renunciation of their roles as providers. Financial deprivation is described as placing women at risk of personal degradation:

> Some man does naturally make some women ha' [have] to go do things behind they back and I believe that is wrong, and some woman, some woman just greedy because some man would give them all they have and they mean they still going to knock about ['knock about' is used her to signify promiscuity]. It come like they not satisfy. Well me, I would satisfy, you understand. You supposed to satisfy with what you get, but the man and them ['man and them' – men in general] supposed to move different still because if they know they got [have] a woman and children, if they don't give them money you expect the woman would go and do something bad to get the money. So blame should go on them [men] and they go want kill the woman and beat up the woman when it's their fault. (Brenda)

Brenda's account appears to reinforce certain kinds of patriarchal values which have the effect of perpetuating men's power in relation to women. She provides support for the male as breadwinner model and chastises those men who renege on their responsibilities as provider. In her view, although men possess the power to protect women's virtue by fulfilling their financial obligations, there exists a kind of woman who will engage in

acts of infidelity regardless of this provision; those women who "knock about". Her reference to women who "knock about" is indicative of a gendered language. This, in Vincentian vernacular, is only used to refer to women who are considered promiscuous, and is imbued with notions of an immoral femininity; woman as "whore." It is never used to describe men's promiscuity and does not have the same resonance as when Vincentian's use the phrase "running around" to describe men's promiscuity. Whereas the latter suggests a sense of freedom to move from one partner to the other, the former conjures up images of being battered about from place to place; it acts as a form of female objectification. In addition, she rationalises women's engagement in sex for subsistence outside of the heterosexual union and she condemns men's violence as a response to these practices by women. Her argument is that as long as men fail to meet their financial obligations to the family women will seek another male source of support in which sex will be exchanged for goods to support the family. There is a paradox created here. Her statement simultaneously disrupts and supports traditional narratives of gender. On the one hand, she challenges the narratives of a virtuous femininity by arguing that out of necessity some women will be justifiably unfaithful. On the other hand, she appears to be admonishing women who are unfaithful when it is clear that their partners provide financial provision. In this sense she reinscribes the male as breadwinner discourse.

Women's accounts of their experiences of and views on financial deprivation imply that it is one of the several methods employed by their partners to maintain asymmetrical relations of power within relationships. Reports of measures utilised by men to maintain women's financial dependency include preventing women from engaging in paid employment; the withholding of moneys promised by men to contribute to the running of households; men's use of earnings indiscriminately to fund activities of less significance (in women's view); and men's appeal to a sense of duty to justify efforts to tie women to households. In situations where there is lack of financial support in the context of an ongoing relationship, and where women are unemployed, there is less room for negotiating power and choice.

5.6 Summary

In tracking the negotiations of the supple boundaries between domestic and social spaces, I analysed the kinds of discourses generated in these accounts. These accounts function as a kind of discursive substratum that support the range of controlling acts used to police women in violent relationships. The analysis demonstrates how discourses on gender, control and intimate partner violence (IPV) intersect. Much of the accounts are characterised by masculinist discourses, that is, those essential ideas about biological determinism that serve to maintain men's power in relation to women.

Women in the study mentioned experiencing some form of restrictions to their freedom, which included financial deprivation, restrictions to visiting family and friends, and limitations on their ability to move within and outside of their homes. These restrictions did not extend to their partners. Butler (1999) makes reference to those bodily inscriptions which bind individuals to certain kinds of gender performances. Forms of control reinforced dominant discourses on masculinity and femininity tied to male and female bodies respectively. Whereas femininity is associated with the private, in these accounts, masculinity is characterised by freedom of movement. Threats to these arrangements of power are sometimes used to explain men's violence against their partners. Men use traditional notions of women's position as nurturers and homemakers, and the idea that it is necessary to curtail female sexuality, to limit them to domain of the private.

6 NEGOTIATING GENDER IN ACCOUNTS OF IPV

6.1 Introduction

The analysis for this thesis focuses on how particular versions of events and actions construct gendered identities, and the ways in which these constructions are related to the occurrence of IPV. This chapter examines the strategies men and women employ in their explanations of men's violence and the effects of these explanations in creating particular subject positions for men and women in intimate relationships. The current chapter examines, in greater detail, the acts of physical violence and the meanings participants (re)produce about these practices. In other words, *how* do participants explain the use of violence in intimate relationships? Participants engaged a range of discourses on gender in order to explain the violence in their relationships. Both men and women positioned themselves within dominant narratives of masculinity and femininity. Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) suggest that in constructing gendered selves, individuals also construct the 'Other'. Ideas about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman often intersect with justifications, excuses and rationalisations of violence. Accounts reinforce ideas about men's power to govern women's sexual practices. The dichotomous reproduction of gender identities are actualised in depictions of violence in which men's violence is treated as effectual and decisive, in contrast to women's violence which tends to be trivialised in men's accounts.

Men attempted to support the idea that they were provoked into violence by their partners. They used language to create distance between themselves and the violence they perpetrated in their relationships. In their attempt to portray themselves as victims, men's accounts tended to endorse sex role stereotyping discourses. These discourses support dichotomies in which women are presented as irrational and men as rational. Women's accounts are characterised by metaphors of restraint, constraint and fear. In some instances they too endorse the asymmetrical arrangements of power in their

relationships. However, there are moments of subversive verbal performances in the accounts of both men and women.

6.2 Gendered Depictions of Violence

There is a marked difference between women's and men's presentations of violence. Apart from the fact that women reported more violent acts perpetrated against them and were described by both partners as suffering greater injuries, there is a sense in which men's violence is presented as achieving definitive ends whereas women's use of violence is trivialised and rendered ineffective. In describing the violence they perpetrate men engage in hegemonic sense-making of masculine identity (Wetherell and Edley 1999). Anderson and Umberson (2001, 363) in their analysis of men's accounts of IPV observed that "men depicted their violence as rational, effective, and explosive, whereas women's violence was represented as hysterical, trivial, and ineffectual." Lionel's description of a violent episode creates an impression of his partner as audacious: "she play she want pick up she hand and hit me." Explaining an incident in which his partner is on her mobile phone he says:

> I say 'who you really talking to'. 'Nobody'. 'What yuh [you] mean nobody? How you would be on the line talking to no fucking body and so long'? I say 'come off that phone there, man. What happen'? The person ring back. I say 'what the fuck'? I take the phone. Lick [smashed] it on the ground. Mash up she phone, you know. Then she play she want pick up she hand and hit me. That was her mistake. Man I give she two blows, dread [He uses "dread" here in much the same way one might use the phrase "of course"]. I tell she cool out she self ['cool out' is a colloquial expression which means behave or "chill out."]. Man, I take a broom stick and just give she a hard blow and break it on she then, because as God [In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, "as God" is a shortened version of "as God is my witness."], I didn't really want hit she. Ah give a hard slap in she face man, you know. After I tell she ah sorry too because it hurt me too because ah [I] know ah [I] ha' [have] me mother and me sister too and ah ha' me daughter too and I don't really want hit she too. . . I think she did get a mark by the face too eh, because she feel the slap. [Lionel, Partner of Giselle]

Lionel is more forthright about the nature of and extent of his violence, than most of the men in this study. His violence is presented as effective as evidenced in the following

statements: “I take a broom stick and just give she a hard blow,” and “she feel the slap.” It is decisive. The first part of the account acts as a justification of his right to use violence to ‘tame’ her. This is juxtaposed against his description of her violence: “Then she play she want pick up she hand and hit me. That was her mistake.” He positions himself as in control, while at the same time trivialising her use of violence. Implicit in the extract are notions of men’s physical superiority in relation to women. His is a dominant masculine performance that discipline’s female insubordination. There are contrasting views on femininity in his account. In some public discourses, women are esteemed as mothers, daughters, and sisters. Images of the bearer of life and the nurturer are felt to bestow an elevated status on women. However, such images are also used to marginalise women, as too fragile; not fit for certain domains. Ideas of the virtuous woman, drawing on the image of the Madonna, are usually assigned to mothers, sisters and daughters. In spite of this, it would appear that a masculinity which punishes female insubordination is more dominant than one which celebrates a virtuous femininity.

He also addresses the issue of provocation (a theme I shall return to later in this chapter) – the act of striking him, and her decision to disobey him and continue her conversation. In short, his partner’s departure from ideas about acceptable female behaviour in the context of a relationship is used to justify his angry reaction when he destroys her phone. His religious invocation “as God” is meant to speak to his intentionality in this situation. This reference to “God”, the one who knows what is really inside each of us, is meant to convince the listener of Lionel’s ‘true’ intentions, that is, “I didn’t really want hit she.” His violence is portrayed as a decisive means of subduing her.

In contrast, Giselle, Lionel’s partner, rejected the notion of his physical superiority. She states “well when he been break [broke] up my phone, he been upper hand me [he got the better of me] because he had a weapon, because he had a stick, right.” She acknowledges that he was able to overpower her in the situation, but rejects the

subordinate position created for her in Lionel's account. It was the weapon and not his physical strength that accounts for his dominance.

Roger's account echoes that of Lionel. He presents masculinity as authority. This authority is affirmed by effectual male violence. The former speaks of how he overpowers his partner in a way that demonstrates his physical prowess in relation to her:

> Well obvious the man does get the upper hand right, woman could get the upper hand too right, but all the time I getting the upper hand. When me and she get 'way it go lead to a fighting. In order for I to get she humble she self I ha' [have to] get the upper hand. Let me tell you, she bigger than me you know. She bigger than me, but the bigness don't fool me. I would make sure she get 'pon the ground, not box she down and them things or anything, you know. I go squeeze she. Fight with she like a man then. I go squeeze she off, choke she off. When I say choke she off not in a way to like kill she, but just so she could humble she self, you know, because the way how she does get on [the ways she behaves]. She does get on like if she could beat me. She can't beat me, regardless o' what. I go hold she 'round she neck [He performs the action as he explains] like hold she like so and if I could really put pressure to she that go fuck she up. No but I ain't go do that [I wouldn't do that]. I go do that [I would do that] just so she could humble she self. But she go want box me, pull a knife after me and I go be like 'humble yourself, you can't beat me, you can't this, you can't that', but she does insist. [Roger, Partner of Regina]

Even though she is bigger than him, he is man, and being a man constitutes physical superiority and greater skill when it comes to fights. His statement that it is "obvious man does get the upper" suggests that in spite of any attempt of a woman to overpower a man she will fail, and that failure is the result of some universal physical superior that men possess. He implies that fighting is something men do, so his decision to fight her like a man functions to remind her that if she assumes perceived masculine traits then she will receive the extreme effects of male aggression. His reference to "humble she self" suggests that it is women's duty to restrain themselves rather than to fight back. Violence is used to discipline femininity and to remind women of their inherent physical inferiority relative to men.

His account reinforces the value of examining violence in the context in which it occurs. The acts of pulling a knife or striking someone with a fist can be considered extreme threats and acts of violence in and of themselves. However, in Roger's accounts these acts are trivialised and dismissed as her unsuccessful response to his use of violence and threats of violence against her. Although he describes his use of violence against her as having a decisive effect, he implies that what he engages in should not be considered the more extreme forms of violence. Instead his violence is meant to subdue, rather than harm. He makes sure she goes to the ground, "not box she down . . . I go squeeze she off, choke she off. When I say choke she off not in a way to like kill she, but just so she could humble she self, you know." He presents his actions as a form of controlled violence, so that his partner is never in any fatal danger.

Some women concur with these dichotomous depictions of violence in their relationships. I asked Dawn "have you ever set out to hit him first?" She responded "Me? I can't beat him because is bear [only] kill and kill he talking 'bout." Her fear of initiating violence is underpinned by what she presents as his constant threats of fatal violence. Violence is presented as an option not open to her, since she lacks the ability to overpower her partner. Her belief in the effectiveness of his violence accounts for her decision to avoid the use of violence in their relationship. Likewise, Deidre speaks to her unsuccessful attempts to defend herself against the attacks of her partner. She says "In the last part of the relationship, normally he would hit me, but I would try to fight back, but he is bigger than me so obviously I ain't going get nowhere." There is a sense of hopelessness conveyed in this statement. Her attempt to use violence to defend herself is presented as futile. The effectiveness of his violence is presented as a consequence of his greater physical strength; a point alluded to by other men in the study. In this dialogue, there is a sense in which her partner's violence towards her escalated towards the end of the relationship.

However, not all women respond to their partners threats of and acts of violence by accepting the idea of men's greater physical strength in relation to women. Rose, whose partner admitted that he hit her because she would always visit friends when she should be home, talks about a violent episode:

> *Int.*: Could you tell me how the fight started then? What did each of you do?
> *Rose*: It's words, words. He tell me something, and I tell he back something and he slap me, and I don't like it and we wrestle up.
> *Int.*: So when he slapped you –
> *Rose*: I slap him back, yeah, I go [would] take a slap? We end up and wrestle and then we just cool it. [Partner of Dwight]

In her recollection of events, Rose unsettles notions of femininity as submissive, and she presents her violence as effectual as that of her partner. Her reckoning of events is counter-discursive as rhetorically she ask, "you expect I go take a slap?" This couple was atypical of the general sample of persons interviewed. Even though the acts described suggest equal perpetration of violence in the relationship, hers is presented as an act of retaliation to his use of violence against her, as a means of defending herself. Although the tendency in these accounts was to dismiss women's violence as ineffective and men's violence as achieving real ends, a few women, (and none of the men) debunked these claims.

There were a few instances in which the issue of women's use of violence was highlighted by participants. Women discussed their use of violence in the broader context of their own violent victimisation. In other words, women explained that they used violence as a means of defending themselves. Janet describes her action as stemming from her fear of being victimised by her partner:

> After he's there carrying on and behaving like he's gonna hit me I turn to him and say 'you lying to me', and stuff because she [her partner's ex-girlfriend] came and she said that she was pregnant yet he saying he ain't want anything to do with her, but to me it look like a different story . . . My friend boyfriend used to go by that house with him. . . She told me that the same way he beats me it's the same way he beats her [his ex-girlfriend]. . . so I started telling him about the things I've been hearing and what I been observing and he started getting violent and when he raise his hand to hit me I sprayed it [mace] in his eyes out of out of fright. [Janet, Partner of Randy]

In this depiction, Janet establishes her partner's history of violence in his relationships. He is presented as a serial batterer. She confronts him about another relationship that he is alleged to have had while he was with her, and she presents this as eliciting his violent reaction. The act of spraying mace into his face is discussed as an act of self defence. Unlike, previous representations of women's use of violence, this is portrayed as a decisive act. She describes that she was fearful of his violent reaction and as such acted to defend herself. There is a noticeable difference in her strategy for explaining her use of violence when compared to the men in this study. Most men tend to avoid talk about the nature of the violence they perpetrate. They avoid the use of the first person. In contrast, women are more forthcoming in their description of how they use violence. This theme is explored in greater detail in the next section.

Similarly, Dawn's violence is presented as a response to her partner's violence. Her description departs somewhat from that of Janet as she does not express fear, but instead she implies that she was justified in her response to use violence against him:

> He first ah pull thing at me [he was the first to pick up something to hit her] so me nah go sit down dey and mek he pelt thing and hit me [she would not sit down and allow him to hit her]. I pelt back thing and hit um [him] back too and sometimes that does cause the big botheration [conflict]. Sometimes, I dey dey [I am there], I tell you at night I can't sleep for how much [many] nights {mm hmm} the man coming dey [there] and mek [make] a whole set o' noise. (Dawn)

Dawn's account is indicative of her equal use of force in response to violence initiated by her partner. She rejects the idea that she should accept his perpetration of violence without attempting to defend herself. Her violence is justified as an act of self defence and there is an overall impression that both the actions of her and her partner have a similar effect. There is no gendering of violence in her account. This, she explains, is the source of conflict in their relationship. However, she suggests that her violent response triggers further conflict in the relationship and she goes on to give the impression of being constantly terrorised by her partner who makes it difficult for her at nights. Even though men, and sometimes women, give an impression of women's

violence as ineffective, accounts provided by some female respondents reject this portrayal of women's violence as trivial.

Some men describe their use of violence as a means of responding to female initiated violence. Unlike women, who define their violent response to men's violence in terms that resembles narratives of self defense, when men talk about their use of violence during episodes initiated by women they refer to their violent response as a means of subduing their partners, rather than defending themselves. Anderson and Umberson (2001) observed that men's denial of the threat of women's violence was a means by which men performed masculinities and reinforced notions of gender difference. They found that men presented women as incompetent in the practice of violence. In the following extract Dwight talks about how he subdues his partner:

> *Int.*: Now were there any time that she was violent towards you?
> *Dwight*: Yeah.
> *Int.*: What happened?
> *Dwight*: She used to push me. When she drink she used to push me. Sometimes I used to just hold she and give she a hard cuff to just cool she self. [Partner of Rose]

Dwight identifies the act of pushing him as a violent act, however, it would appear as though this has no adverse or constraining physical effect on him. He speaks of using greater force "I used to just hold she and give she a hard cuff" as a means of restraining her in her state of intoxication. There is a sense in which he presents himself as having both the physical power and capability to inflict violence in a decisive manner, whereas his partner does not.

Floyd describes the use of violent threats by both himself and his partner in the following:

> Well after she pull the knife right, I ask she where she going with the knife and she tell me. 'I just fed up o' you I go stab you up'. I say 'it ain't go happen [It wouldn't happen]. It's either the police come for me and the funeral come you. It ain't go happen'. (Floyd)

Whereas most women described feelings of fear, as in the case of Dawn, when confronted with the threat of men's violence, Floyd appears unaffected when faced with his partner carrying a knife, and threatening to stab him. His masculine identity appears impervious to any possible danger his partner might represent. In fact, there is no sense of being in danger as he portrays and dismisses his partner's action. In contrast, he suggests that his violence would be fatal to her. Implicit in this binary depiction of violence is a self presentation in which Floyd positions himself as powerful, and his violence capable of producing the most extreme effect, whereas he positions his partner as powerless and inept in her use of violence. Such dismissal of women's use of violence is understood in the context of a dichotomous discourse on gender in which aggression and physical power are understood as manly attributes.

In general, men's descriptions of violence reinforced the traditional notion of masculinity as authority and femininity as submissive, tied to male and female bodies respectively. This notion of authority is tied to ideas of men's superior physicality relative to women. The implication is that femininity is characterised by some universal physical weakness of women that renders them subordinate to men. These ideas are sometimes shared by women, but in a few instances they are subverted for ideas that appear gender neutral. This is evidenced in Rose's "I go take a slap." This is however, atypical, as most women avoided engaging in violence for fear of their safety.

6.3 Strategies for Explaining Violence

Participants engaged a number of strategies in their portrayals of violent events in the relationship. Men tended to offer far less detail about the events than women. They employed a number of strategies that created distance between themselves and the violence they perpetrated. Men avoided the use of the first person in the naming of practices they perpetrated against their partners as they attempted to rationalise, justify and even minimise their violence. Women's accounts tended to be more expansive

about the nature of the violence, whereas men tended to focus on the motivations for violence, offering far less information about the nature of these acts. This is similar to observations made by Dobash et al (1998) on the differences betweens men's and women's accounts of men's violence. Men's strategies had an overall effect of legitimising their use of violence against women. Participants also named the acts perpetrated in relationships, sometimes referring to these practices as abuse.

In this first example, Lenny explains that he used violence against his partner because she confronted him about treating his children from a previous relationship better than his children with her.

> *Int.*: Ok what was the worst time you'll had an argument and you hit her?
> *Lenny*: I don't even know [long pause]. Roughly about the same kind o' talk she bring to me about kids and stuff like that {mm hmm} and then I just lose control and she go get a hard pound [he hit her with his fist folded]. I never try to carry it so far because when she cry I know how it feel eh. When she cry I really enter her feelings.

Lenny places distance between himself and the violence he perpetrates. He does not use the first person to make a direct statement to explain his use of violence; instead he describes the outcome of his actions: "she get a hard pound." In his ordering of events, she raises the issue about his differential treatment of his children, he 'loses' control and she gets a hard pound. This ordering removes responsibility from him as the perpetrator of violence and places the burden with her for raising the issue, 'causing' him to lose control. The idea of a loss of control creates the impression of the loss of a core sense self; the loss of a stable, self assured self. This too has the effect of deflecting responsibility from him for the violence he perpetrates against his partner. Paradoxically, his admission that "I never try to carry it too far because when she cry I know how it feels eh. When she cry I really enter her feelings," conveys a sense of control. It conveys the impression that he is in command of his bodily functions and can decide how much force to use so she is not seriously hurt. The imagery of entering her feelings suggests that he empathises with her; that he is compassionate. It is difficult to reconcile the self performed in this account with the image of the abuser. Moreover, by failing to discuss his actions during this violent event Lenny minimises his violence,

choosing to focus instead on how he felt and the reasons why his partner's actions 'caused' him to lose control.

Several men employed similar strategies to ensure that they distanced themselves from the image of the abuser or batterer. For example Randy, Janet's partner says "I'm not a violent person," and later he claims "most of the times when she get hurt is when she try run from me and end up damage she self." Likewise, Lenny suggests "you see, I'm not really a violent person." Scott (Tammy's parter) insists "I didn't really abuse her like that much." Scott's statement implies that there are degrees of violence and abuse. These statements imply that the use of violence is not a reflection of their embodied identity, but the result of particular contextual factors.

In the presentation of violence, couples differed on how each partner discussed this issue. Women tended to be more forthright about the acts of violence perpetrated by their male partners. Of the eight couples interviewed a pattern emerged. Women remembered more violence perpetrated against them and more details of these events. It was only in the case of Randy and Janet that there was concurrence in the reports of the frequency and nature of violence he used against her, but their rationalisations of the events varied. In the accounts of Bruce and Lance, they reported that there was only one incident in which they used violence in their relationships. However, their partners, Angie and Linda respectively, disagreed. These women reported the opposite. They described their partners' use of violence in the relationship as regular and in some instances extreme. The following is a comparison of the differences in the reporting of violence in relationships. Yvette and Brent document Brent's use of violence against her:

> *Int.*: Has there ever been a time when an argument between the two of you became violent and you'll fought?
>
> *Brent*: Well she always remember a certain thing that happened, you know, because it have a certain time like when we used to thing [argue] before and you come home and you want little sex and she ain't give me and she start to thing and a time when she go through the back door. She say how me fight she for sex through the back door, and all thing, ahhhh, ok. She go [would] more remember that. [Partner of Yvette]

In his reckoning of events, Brent discloses very little about the details of the violent acts he perpetrates against his partner. He rationalises his violence as a reaction to her refusal to have sex with him. His talk implicates his beliefs about the roles his partner should perform in their relationship, reflecting an expectation that his partner ought to satisfy his sexual desires, regardless of her sexual desires, and in spite of the dispute that may have ensued prior to his request. This idea ties into to cultural beliefs about a wife's responsibility and duty to ensure that her husband is sexually satisfied. In addition, he presents the incident as existing in her memory rather than his "she always remember," "she go more remember that." This suggests that the incident is a distant memory and is not part of the person he presents in the interview. He does not make any direct statement about his actions, nor does he use the first person in his re-presentation of events. Instead he presents it as his partner's recollection of what transpired "she say how me fight she for sex through the back door." The effect of his approach to depicting the incident is that the event is presented as a claim made by his partner. It is up to the listener to determine whether or not these claims are valid. The overall impact of his account is that it creates distance between Brent and the violence he perpetrates.

In contrast his partner, Yvette, is more forthright in describing her experience of violence in their relationship:

> *Int.*: Can you tell what happened the first time he hit you?
> *Yvette*: Well that was a long time.
> *Int.*: Can you tell me how long that was?
> *Yvette*: That was about nine years ago.
> *Int.*: Do you remember what you'll were arguing about?
> *Yvette*: Well my daughter had a, she first child when she was 16 and she went back to school, a private school and this time when was to sign up for her subjects I couldn't find her because she was with this fella [a man – in this instance she means the man was her daughters partner] but she used to go to school still {mm hmm}. A fella come from Barbados and see she with the little girl and get to like her since the little girl was three months, and looking for her now I couldn't find her. Looking for her now, checking she out, I hear she say she can't go for the subjects again and two-twos [a little while] after, two days after she call me and tell me she in the maternity ward, she in the hospital {mm hmm}. I say "what you doing in the hospital?" She down in the maternity ward. I say

> “what you doing down in maternity ward?” She making a baby and she ain’t feeling good. He like he kind of get frustrated now and the little girl was there with me because she used to be up and down with me in them times. She would come and spend weekends with me. Well she was playing. He go in the bedroom and like he get frustrated. That is what he tell me: Bella [their granddaughter] done here and she gone to make another one and gone put more problem on he. Well I didn’t know that, but it’s afterwards we done thing [when the violent event was complete]. The little girl was outside watching television, so you know children small and they always up and down, so he tell she to stop make noise in the place. Well she stop a little while and she start back playing and thing. He went outside for piece a whip and he beat her. I was there lying on the ground and she start peeing and thing, so I just take my hand and say ‘what you beating the girl for’, not in no kind a way to be violent, but I just do so and hit him. He start to pelt, he start to kick me off right on the ground there and before me, before I could get, because he done know I ain’t taking any. By the time I could get up he hit me one lash in me ears. I couldn’t even hear through me ears. I had to go to the doctor and the doctor give me eardrops and so and I went to the police station and that is how the thing come up when I say I would o’ make a case against him. [Partner of Brent]

Yvette’s narrative tells a story in which she chronicles a series of events leading up to the first violent event in the relationship. In addition to providing information about what precipitated the violence, she describes both her and her partner’s actions during the incident, and what she did as a consequence of the violence. In contrast to her partner, her narrative is presented as having a beginning, a middle and an end. It has a similar structure to that of a story. In some instances, men’s narratives on violence were structured in a similar way, however, they were less forthcoming about the nature of their violence. If we consider that the beginning of these stories documents what, in the participants’ viewpoint, precipitated the violence, the middle describes the acts of violence, and the end presents the actions taken after the violence by participants, then men’s narratives presented far less detail in the middle of the plot than women’s. Returning to Yvette’s accounts, she offers a lot of detail by way of background, using a chronological structure in presenting the events. She describes the situation with their daughter as fuelling his frustration, implying that it was the financial and emotional strain of having to help out with their granddaughter. There is also a sense of disappointment that their daughter does not complete her education. Yvette rationalises

his violence against her and their granddaughter as the effect of his frustration over the issue with his daughter.

Regarding the violence between them, she admits to striking him “I just take my hand and say “what you beating the girl for”, not in no kind a way to be violent, but I just do so and hit him.” She divorces the act of striking him from that of a violent act. Her statement is indicative of degrees of violence and in this context she does not associate what she did with the image of an aggressive act. Her use of force is presented as a means of defending her granddaughter as she does not share in his decision that the use of physical punishment was necessary for a three year old. Conversely, his actions are presented as aggressive and violent with the intention of subduing both her and her granddaughter. His is presented as effectual: “He start to pelt, he start to kick me off right on the ground there and before me, before I could get, because he done know I ain’t taking any. By the time I could get up he hit me one lash in me ears.” Embedded in this statement is support for violent resistance as a form of self defence. She suggests that she would not have used violence if he had not acted in such haste and with such force. In this moment, her narrative has a subversive effect. The account ends with a description of the effects of violence on her and her subsequent actions. She is physically hurt and has to seek medical attention. She also decides to report the incident to the police.

The next example compares the issue of frequency of violence. When I asked Lance to tell me about the first time he used violence against his partner this is what he had to say:

> *Int.*: Could you tell me about the first time you’ll had an argument and there was a fight?
> *Lance*: It was just that one time. We never fight before, that time when she get hurt. [Partner of Linda]

By comparison, Linda says

> *Int.*: What usually happens when you’ll argue?
> *Linda*: Well we would fight because he would lash me and me ain’t taking that, you know, but then because he was stronger than I, I used to sustain a lot o’ hard lash, eh. [Partner of Lance]

Linda discusses his use of violence as a regular occurrence in the relationship. She also speaks of her attempts to use violence to resist. She describes the adverse physical effects of his violence which she explains is an effect of his greater physical strength. There are discrepancies in women's and men's accounts about the frequency and seriousness of men's violence. This is the case as Angie and Bruce describe these events. Angie describes her experiences of violence in the last year of their relationship:

> *Int*.: In the last year, how often has he hit you?
> *Angie*: Well that is the worst part of the whole relationship, probably mostly every weekend when we argue.
> *Int*.: Why do you think he hits you?
> *Angie*: He doesn't just come out and hit me. When we argue it does just get to that, but probably because he feels that I don't have anybody to back me up in a sense because the neighbour, she does do so much things, nobody ain't deserve to be hit eh, but the guy who she is with he can't go and make anything to like hit the girl because she ha' [have] she family around her. [Partner of Bruce]

In the previous chapter Bruce describes his use of violence as a response to his partner's insistence on going out without telling him where she was going. Later in the interview I asked Bruce "Could you tell me about the worst time that you had an argument with your partner and you hit her? He responded "that was the only time, so is not like to say that me and she does be fighting, fighting, fighting." He separates their experience of conflict in the relationship from the image of battering or sustained violence. In contrast, Angie's portrayal of her experience of violence in the relationship positions her as a 'battered' woman. Comparing the accounts of couples on men's violence, Dobash et al (1998) note that men and women tend to provide considerably different versions of these events. Angie's response that he hits her almost every weekend when they argue positions Bruce as a 'batterer'. In her view, his success at using violence to control her is maintained by her condition of social isolation. She compares her self to a neighbour, who is protected from being violently victimised because she has family support.

Participants also engaged in the act of naming violence and abuse in their accounts. In the naming of violence, participants tended to categorise their experiences into lesser and more extreme forms. They attached different meanings to the various physical acts

of violence in their relationship. Regina explains a turning point in her relationship with Roger, at which point he began to use violence against her:

> You see from when I had my son, there is where he really start to hit me and so. We never had an excessive violent relationship, you know, but he choke me and hit, but he never kick or hit me in any excessive way. So I go say that relationship was violent but it had violence in it both with words and hitting and so. I won't say he never beat me down, but he hit me already . . . That is the most he used to do me choke me down. He used to do that a lot. Ah feel he know that was me weak spot or something because when he choke me he not used to let go [Regina, Partner of Roger]

In this example, Regina cites her partner's use of violence against her as coinciding with the birth of her son. She speaks of degrees of violence. In her view the violence prior to the birth of her son was not extreme: "we never had an excessive violent relationship." She categorises the acts of choking and hitting as less extreme than kicking or an excessive strike. An excessively violent relationship, in her view, involves the latter practices. Choking is presented as an immobilising act, with the intent of restraining her rather than creating an adverse physical effect. Her partner, Roger concurs that this was his intent for using violence: "I go squeeze she off, choke she off. When I say choke she off not in a way to like kill she, but just so she could humble she self." She says "he never beat me down." These statements convey the impression that her experiences should not be likened to the worst excesses of IPV.

In contrast, Betty presents her experience of being choked by her partner as having a possible fatal effect:

> When he come in and meet me crying he just grabble on, on me and started choking me. I say what the reason why. Why he have to be choking me like this and after he slap me and I say 'no, I can believe this' and I wrestle up with him and we start to fight, so I hold on to his seed because it come like he strangling me to death, so I trying now to get to his seed so I hold on to his seed and that is why he let me go and is so the fighting start (Betty).

For Betty, choking is a life threatening act. This is in contrast to Regina's narrative in which choking is presented as a means of restraining her. Betty's partner's violence is portrayed in vivid and direct terms. She is also forthright about her response, squeezing

his genitals. She seems perplexed, not only by his use of violence, but by his choice of what she considers an extreme form of violence. Whereas Regina's account is performative of anger and frustration at her partner's use of choking to restrict her, Betty's talk is indicative of her fear. In the interview, Betty also stated that, "we had a fight already, but not really to cut up me." This indicates that she makes a judgement about which forms of violence are more extreme than others. Muehlenhard and Kimes (1999) contend that violence is a socio-cultural phenomenon. Media images, cultural discourses, and personal experiences are reproduced in people's talk on violence. There are nuances in participants perceptions about which acts are more and less extreme than others.

Brent also distinguishes between what he deems as extreme violence and lesser forms of violence:

> No me don't want no fight. Me doesn't want no fight because me realise, it have time when I would o' push she or something and she say 'oh you want' and when you realise, or you go want slap she and kick she and then go make love to she. That go be a problem [alright] you know, so we don't reach them distance there [it doesn't get as far as kicking and slapping] [Brent, partner of Yvette].

Implicit in this extract from Brent is a judgement about different degrees of violent practices. In the interview, he denounces violence by describing the acts of "mak[ing] love" and perpetrating violence as irreconcilable. His rationale for avoiding violence appears to be that it is not a functional strategy for sexual access. In fact, he describes the pursuit of both sets of practices, simultaneously, as "a problem". The juxtaposition of making love and violent acts such as slapping, kicking and pushing, has a persuasive effect. It is intended to convince the listener of his reformation. Also implied is that the acts of slapping and kicking are unacceptable in the context of the intimate relationship, but he never admits to having perpetrated either of these acts. However, he suggests that in the past that he "push she or something." Brent does not speak of his use of violence in definitive terms.

The naming of violence in interviews was sometimes a dialogic process. This is illustrated in the interview conducted with Isis:

> *Int*.: Ok, and how often did you argue?
> *Isis*: Real often. Seven days in a week, it would be five out of seven.
> *Int*.: What would happen during those times that you'll argue?
> *Isis*: He might end up hitting me.
> *Int*.: Did that happen often?
> *Isis*: I would say yes because he might toss me or push me {mm hmm} right. That is not hitting right?
> *Int*.: Well it depends on how you see it. Do you think it was hitting?
> *Isis*: Yeah, and most of the times I would be like crying.

Isis, in the process of documenting her experiences, seeks affirmation of her point of view. She refers to his actions as "hitting," but is not sure whether I would agree that what she experiences was indeed hitting. Participants used the sign "hit" to denote a strike with the hand. This might explain her doubts about using this term to refer to "tossing" or "pushing" her.

At times men's accounts had the effect of justifying the use of violence against women. Justifications ranged from female disobedience to women's failure to fulfil domestic responsibilities. Men appear to expect women to defer when an argument occurs. It is the refusal to submit which is frequently used to justify the violence men perpetrate. Andrew presents his view of women as 'hardened' (stubborn), and Bruce mentions his partner's refusal to reveal where she was going as the reasons for their use of violence. Dwight's accounts of the disputes between himself and his partner are described as the result of her refusal to heed his requests. Dwight was asked about his feelings towards the use of violence in relationships. His response is captured in the following:

> Men ain't supposed to do that [use violence against their partners]. That is a weak sign. A woman supposed to be doing the thing a man like and when a man see she things will always be right in the home. Well sometimes, sometimes some women deserve hitting, pulling up then. I won't say hitting you either, talk to them or something like that. Sometimes a man come home drunk and everything there for him, he hitting the woman and causing violence, which mean that is a wrong thing, you understand because if I ha' [have] my woman and I coming home from work everyday and I see food done cook, you see things in order which mean I ain't supposed to say nothing {mm hmm} your

> house in order, your child in order, I ain't supposed to say nothing [Dwight, Partner of Rose].

Support for punishing women's failure to fulfil the domestic role is typical of men's accounts. It is sentiment echoed by Bruce, Lionel, Lance, Scott, Colin, Roger and Andrew. These men make similar assertions about women's household responsibilities. However, there are mixed sentiments in Dwight's talk. The idea that only 'weak' men hit women is very much a part of the cultural understandings of human relations in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). A popular public response to witnessing a woman being beaten is to issue a challenge for the perpetrator to confront a man his own size. However, Dwight implies that women tend to provoke men into violence by their lack of conformity to what are 'essentially' women's roles. These include "the thing a man like," ensuring that all is well in the home. It is women's inability to conform that justifies violence: "sometimes some women deserve hitting, pulling up then." However, he seems to retract this assertion in exchange for the more socially acceptable approach of talking. As long as a woman performs her traditionally expected duties then it is unreasonable when men resort to violence. While there are moments in the interview with Dwight where he appears to reject IPV, this rejection only serve to reinforce patriarchal notions of women's work and responsibility in pleasing their male partners.

The following extract depicts Andrew's attempts to justify his use of violence against his partner. At first, he is reluctant to disclose details about his actions and motivations. He admits that he would have been more forthcoming if the interviewer was a man. In fact he says that 'I don't like [to] talk 'bout woman because you're a woman . . . I can't level [talk straight] with you because you is a woman'. Andrew makes a judgement about me, as interviewer, based on the fact that I am anatomically female. Identity is depicted in binary and universal terms. He suggests that I will automatically show solidarity with his partner because of our biological similarities; that I am unable to comprehend or empathise with his use of violence.

> *Andrew*: Women is not to be trusted a certain amount of the times. It's only like when you 'pon a level. Boy, I don't like [to] talk 'bout woman because you're a woman.
>
> *Int.*: So if a man was doing the interview would you have said more?

Andrew: Yeah it make a difference because you is a woman. I can't level with you because you is a woman. If been [if it was] a man because you being a woman, I can't just run down woman because you might think that a man would run you down the same way.
Int.: The thing is all of us are shaped by our own circumstances and because of the things I experience in my life I would think a certain way and the things that you experience might make you think a different way –
Andrew: Woman harden [stubborn] man. Me don't like talk one time and two time. They just don't hear.
Int.: You mean like women stubborn?
Andrew: If me talk to you one time {mm hmm} that is enough time. It mean after that expect a lash.

He adopts a nonchalant approach to his action, speaking matter-of-factly about his experiences. He prefers to use a hypothetical situation which places distance between him and the violence he perpetrates. There is no sense of regret and certainly no remorse for his action, and he feels that it is his right as a man to punish his partner's supposed recalcitrance. He portrays conflict in intimate relationships as a battle between adversaries with men on one side and women on the other. Andrew does not believe that I could understand his reasons for using violence so he is reluctant to answer. He also appears to believe that this would ultimately shape my approach to dealing with men in my own relationships. Notwithstanding this reluctance, his accounts reproduces negative ideas of women as subordinate and inferior to men which, serves to justify male dominance and the use of violence to maintain these unequal relations of power. The Jezebel/Madonna dichotomy features in his account: "women is not to be trusted," "woman harden." It is this reluctance to conform, along with women's inherent deceit that justifies the following: "If me talk to you one time {mm hmm} that is enough time. It mean after that expect a lash." There is a sense in which men are obliged to use violence to punish women's disobedience. In this sense his statement is an overt expression of men's power in relation to women.

A comparison of the accounts of men and women about men's violence reinforces previous research done on the differences between men's and women's reporting of violence (Currie 1998; Dobash et al 1998). Men tend to use strategies which had the effect of creating distance between them and the violence they perpetrated. Whereas

they admitted to engaging in the use of violent acts, several men attempted to separate themselves from the image of the batterer, “I’m not a violent person.” In some instances, they avoided making direct statements about the practices they engaged in during the violent incident. Conversely, women were more expansive about the nature and consequences of the violence their partners perpetrated against them. In naming the violence men perpetrated there are often different meanings attached to particular violent acts. For instance, the act of choking was described differently by Roger and Regina, and Betty. The varied meanings of violence are also exemplified as participants categorise violent practices into different degrees of seriousness. In short, several strategies for ‘making sense’ of violence are used in these accounts, with an overall effect of minimising, justifying, excusing, legitimising and condemning men’s violence in intimate relationships.

6.4 Discourses of Provocation and Blame

Men tended to engage in discourses of provocation in order to shift the blame for violence on to their partners. Not only does this create distance between these men and the acts they perpetrated, but the effect is to excuse men from the blame for their use of violence. In some cases men positioned themselves as victims of female irrationality and disobedience. The source of violence is presented as something external to the individual; something outside of his control. In some instances, men reported being overcome by rage or some external or embodied evil. In contrast, women place the responsibility for their violent victimisation with their partners, however, there are moments in some women’s accounts in which they too endorse ideas of female provocation. Presumed female infidelity and what men deem to be the constant threat of female infidelity is given as the most significant explanation for men’s violence against their female partners. Because it is so frequently mentioned by participants, presumed infidelity will be dealt with as a separate theme with the understanding that there are parallels between this theme and the notion of female provocation as a rationale for men’s violence. By shifting the burden of the violence on to women, men position

themselves as victims. These rationalisations are both supported and rejected by women, who move between feeling responsible for and victims of violence.

A few men in this study admitted to committing extreme acts of violence against their partners, however, without prompting they separated the acts of violence from the subject positions they created for themselves. As suggested in the previous section, they used rationalisations, excuses and justifications in order to try to create this effect. Randy's account exemplifies the theme of violence as a consequence of female provocation:

> If I could just tell you the story about how everything happened, you would understand. It's not that I am a violent person . . . The things and them she does say to me does get me in a rage. I does just get a flash back o' what my family did to me and I does just lose it you know. Ah go (I would) just end up and start, I go hit her. . . Everything just go blank . . . I come court because she bring me hear because I been hitting her and stuff like that, right but most of it is her fault. I don't just go, look I go be a crazy man to just go and start beating her like that, right. She did things to me. She know I get angry . . . I explain to her if I want to go down the road let me go and cool off my head and come back don't block me and then she bring me hear and telling people I just come and – I not that kind a crazy person who go just come and start beating her like that, so honestly is not my fault really, but then I take the blame because I ain't supposed to really do that [Randy, Partner of Janet].

In this dual depiction of selfhood, Randy presents images of a person enraged by female provocation, the memory of difficult childhood experiences and the loss of self, "everything just go blank." These all point to loss of control, and the loss of an essential self. He presents his essential self as nonviolent "it's not that I'm a violent person." This self presentation allows him to place distance between himself and the violence he perpetrates. Men's justifications for violence indicate an awareness that violence against women is loathed in public discourses and that there are state sanctions against such violence. Randy positions himself as a victim when he says "the things and them she does say to me does get me in a rage." He argues that her actions render him susceptible to uncontrolled emotions that have been cultivated from his childhood experiences of abuse. The reference to childhood experiences function as an excuse/rationale, and his description of her actions act as a justificatory strategy for his

use of violence. His violence and subsequent loss of control are the result of some outside stimulus. He taps into notions of logic when he says "I go be a crazy man to just go and start beating her like that." In his scheme of things, an external trigger removes the responsibility for his actions away from him and places it with his partner who 'provoked' him. Furthermore, his explanation that she causes the violence then takes him to court is intended to posit a view of him as victim. In that sense responsibility resides with her for the violence she experiences. Implicitly, he draws on notions of female irrationality. She provokes him into violence by the things she says to him and exacerbates the situation by restricting him from leaving.

Similarly, Scott engages the notion of being provoked into violence:

> *Int.*: You remember what you did?
> *Scott*: Yeah, the first time me and she did ha' thing [a violent event] I did, it's a piece o' wire I did get and give she [he beat her with a piece of electrical cable] –
> *Int.*: Hmm.
> *Scott*: The first time me and she did get in anything my mother used to come. Well she and me mother used to go down good [His partner used to get along with his mother well] and me mother used to come and tell she a whole set o' lies about me and all kind o' things, you know {mm hmm}. Then she used to discuss all kind o' things with me mother about me and next thing. It come [was] like she go up there and do the same thing, by the neighbours up there, and me used to upset because it used to be people say and people say and people say, so me get piece o' wire now and give she couple strokes.
> *Int.*: You mean you beat her with the wire?
> *Scott*: Yeah. Piece o' wire. [Partner of, Tammy]

Scott's statements "me and she did ha' thing" and "me and she ha' a little thing" serves to deflect attention away from him by suggesting that there was mutual perpetration of violence and thus mutual responsibility. These function to absolve him of his actions. He cites his partner's disobedience as the reason for using violence in his reference to her decision to talk about him, first with his mother and later a next door neighbour. His talk on violence draws on ideas about what is acceptable behaviour across the public/private divide within Vincentian society. There is a sense in which problems occurring at home ought to be dealt with within the household. To speak disparagingly about him is to humiliate and emasculate him within this small community. His

description of the situation points to his loss of power when his partner, at least in his view, insists on disobeying and exposing him to gossip and ridicule by discussing him with a neighbour. The notion of provocation is further evidenced by the following repetition "people say and people say and people say." This repetition is meant to convey his frustration. Despite his warning she continues to disregard his wishes that she refrain from speaking about him with members of the community. The repetition also highlights the importance of male reputation (Wilson 1969) in the construction of masculinity. He is obviously displeased with her presentation of him to persons outside of their household.

There is a second issue raised in his account. It reinforces the idea that women are far too concerned with idle gossip. Several women mentioned their preference for male friends giving women's love of 'comess' [gossip] as their reason for this choice. In a few instances this was confirmed by men when describing their partners' social network. This is cited as a feature idiosyncratic of women's lives, not men's. In his talk about the violence, Scott alludes to this idea, in his warning to his partner to desist from discussing issues about him with persons outside of their household. The repetition ("people say, people say, people say") acts as a statement about her engaging in 'idle gossip'. His violence can be read as a means of punishing this female 'vice', and by extension punishing a recalcitrant femininity.

Later in the interview, Scott continues to point to female provocation as his reason for using violence:

> *Int.*: Do you think you could have dealt with it differently, like done something else instead of hitting her?
> *Scott*: Them people there, I don't know what happen to their head. Like when you talk to them they not hearing what you say.
> *Int.*: When you say them people there who do you mean?
> *Scott*: Well she nah ['nah' used here means of course] because when you talk to she, she want get on . . . don't care [it doesn't matter] how much you talk to she, she going get on, get on, cussing me, cussing, cussing. I don't know, you can't cool she down so easy.
> *Int.*: Why do you think you hit her instead of doing something else?
> *Scott*: Because she push me to get anger {mm hmm}. She push me to get anger. [Partner of Tammy]

Women's irrationality is used to justify the violence he perpetrates against his partner. There is an expectation of obedience on his part "when you talk to them they not hearing what you say." He positions her within a particular group of persons, who fail to respect men's authority, and by extension he implies that she should recognise his authority and show deference. It is her perceived usurpation that he punishes. When probed about finding another means of dealing with the conflict he describes a situation in which violence was the only choice available to him because of his partners insistence on "cussing" and her refusal to "cool . . . down." The use of violence is presented as the sole means of reasserting his authority. Moreover, he blames her directly for the violence in his statement that "she push me to anger. She push me to get anger." The effect of blaming his partner is to deny him any responsibility for the violence he perpetrates and in so doing keeping his self image intact.

Understandings of violence as a function of women's provocation is further highlighted in following account. Here, Lionel implies that his use of violence is directly related to his partner's disobedience:

> I could be nice or I could be hard sometimes eh, and when I be nice sometimes she does want try be harden [stubborn]. I mean I allow she. Me ain't want get 'way [get into conflict] with she. She does want play a more, ok, you know some girls now go more humble [some girls would not talk back to their partners], she ain't go want to humble. She go more say nah [no], this that, answer, back talking, you overs [understand], getting on bad, so me leave she, but a man might say he soft, "he stupidy." No. If I to follow my mind and I plan [to plan someone is to hit her/him with the flat side of a machete] she what go [would] happen to me now because she might provoke me. She might tempt me so bad that I might ha' give she some plan next thing the police come and I end up with the worst of it. [Lionel, Partner of Giselle]

There is an overall impression that power resides with him in allowing her to be as rebellious as she is. He laments the fact that, for him, she lacks the humility of most women. His reference to "humble" women alludes to notions of the reserved woman who avoids confrontation by deferring to her partner. In his view her actions departs from these traditional ideas of femininity, and he tacitly endorses women's subordination in intimate unions. For him, "back talking" represents a challenge to a

generic male authority. He engages a masculinist discourse which has the effect of normalising men's power in relation to women. This normalisation men's power features in men's talk as they attempt to justify their use of violence against women. In this account, Lionel positions himself as the person in charge of the relationship, reinforcing how patriarchal relations are sustained within intimate unions. He presents himself as managing her resistance; this is done with his permission, "she does want try be harden. I mean I allow her." There is a dual expression of self presented in his talk, "I could be nice or I could me hard," read compassionate or stern. He implies that femininity should embody humility and deference: "you know some girl go more humble . . .she go more . . . answer, back talking . . . get on bad." He also describes femininity in dual terms, by juxtaposing ideas about obedience and humility against disobedience and resistance. There is a sense in which he rejects his partner's 'disobedience' as this threatens to have an emasculating effect. In this duality it is his "nice" self that could result in his public shame, it could result in him being considered a "soft" man, that is, if he permits unchecked resistance by his partner. The image of softness is traditionally tied to female bodies, so to refer to a man as a "soft man" is tantamount to effecting his feminisation. Such a moniker unsettles masculinities constructed on conventional values. Consequently, he justifies violence as an appropriate response to female disobedience. In fact, he refers to being tempted into the use of violence because of the public shame associated with his partner's resistance. Not only does he justify the use of violence in this account, but he also positions himself as victim, since his partner would be the one to have caused the violence. By positioning himself as victim, he separates himself from the violence he perpetrates against his partner, blaming her for any formal sanctions that he might face for this violence.

In the following dialogue, Andrew justifies violence as a response to his partner's so-called wrong-doing.

> *Int.*: Do you think you have a right to hit your partner?
> *Andrew*: Anybody does hit anybody when things don't go the right way. You don't feel so? When you small and you don't do the right thing then that is licks [spanked].

Int.: Yeah I remember getting spanked as a child a couple of times.
Andrew: So since you get big you ain't get licks?
Int.: No. My parents won't hit –
Andrew: No I don't mean like that, like none of your boyfriend never beat you up?
Int.: No
Andrew: Well you never do anything for them to beat you up.
Int.: No, whether or not I did something wrong –
Andrew: Like a slap?
Int.: No.
Andrew: I don't know eh. Me ain't saying it good to beat woman eh, but sometimes some woman does want like, they want lashing sometimes.
Int.: Why you say that?
Andrew: Some women does call for you to lash them in different form. They mightn't say beat me, but they does cause you to lash them because they harden [stubborn].

This is an example of how meaning is derived in the context of an ongoing dialogue within the interview. At first he argues that physical force should be used on anyone who does something wrong. He then engages in a parental discourse as he suggests that in much the same way spanking is an appropriate response to a child's disobedience, women's recalcitrance justifies a similar response. His response implicates hegemonic notions about an ideal hierarchy within the context of the family: children must defer to their parents and wives to their husbands. Andrew normalises violence as a response to female provocation by suggesting that the only reason I had not been beaten by a partner is because I had never done anything to provoke violence. For him, it is women's stubborn disposition that accounts for men's use of violence in relationships.

Participants cited men's dissatisfaction with women's ability to complete domestic chores as one of the reasons for men's violence. Men exercised power in relationships by positioning women as nurtures and homemaker. Violence was justified as a consequence of women's failure to fulfil domestic tasks. In the first example Floyd documents a violent episode during which time his partner lost a baby:

Int.: What were you'll fighting about?
Floyd: I don't know if you remember this movie, 'Generation'?
Int.: Mm hmm.
Floyd: I tell she don't watch that movie. Don't, don't encourage that.
Int.: You mean the soap opera?

Floyd: Yeah.
Int.: Why didn't you want her to watch it?
Floyd: Because like, like it causing people relationship to go astray. I say to she don't watch it. I come home nothing to eat. What I mean, like ok, she just start because everything is just the movie, so I, I, I start to make noise [argue] and, and, this is the thing every time you start to make noise with she, she always first to square up at you, and I lash her, and she is the kind o' person when you lash and tell her to hear, she doesn't stop. She feel she must get she revenge. Well if she can't hear she go have to feel some kind o' effect and me hand catch she belly, and I was sorry after. After she go down on the ground I think she would o' remain there or she just go down and cool off, but I left her there and go 'way. I didn't know it was so serious and so the child come call me and I take her to the hospital and she lost it, but I responsible, so I promise never to lash her again. I promise myself anytime this relationship broke up I'm out. When I mean out, I mean completely out.

The central motif in Floyd's explanation of his violence is his partner's disobedience. He objects to her fascination with this particular soap opera, finding it morally destructive to the wellbeing of the family. There is an expectation that his partner would acquiesce to his warning to refrain from viewing this programme. The idea of an idle woman who reneges on her domestic obligation to engage in the frivolous act of following a soap opera is captured here in Floyd's account. The programme is presented as having the capacity to corrupt feminine virtues. He alludes to a belief that soap operas advocate unchecked female promiscuity, and in general they challenge men's authority. Floyd's account reproduces cultural ideas about morality and women's responsibility in upholding the image of the family.

In explaining his violence, Floyd shifts between discourses of provocation, his partner's disobedience, and self-blame and regret, "I responsible . . . I promise never to lash her again." This declaration of responsibility is however related to the miscarriage. Floyd is quite expansive about the events leading up to his use of violence, but is less so about the nature of the acts he perpetrates against her. He presents his first violent act as intended to tame her. He resents her attempts to resist him, and there is an expectation that she would understand the errors of her ways and concede defeat to him. At this point, Floyd engages in a parental discourse. The phrase "who can't hear does feel" is an idiomatic expression used by parents in SVG as a warning to disobedient children. It

means when talking fails to make a child obey their parents, then the parent will resort to flogging. It is similar to the expression "spare the rod, spoil the child." Floyd declares "if she can't hear she go have to feel some kind o' effect" is drawn from this parental social language. It places him in a position of authority in relation to her and is used to justify his use of violence in order to control her.

Women's accounts also featured men's attempt to tie them to the image of homemaker. In the next example, Chantal discusses her partner's use of violence when she fails to prepare meals for him after work:

> *Int.*: In terms of housework, how did you'll get along deciding how you would share the chores?
> *Chantal*: Me. He not sharing. He don't want to do nothing. He just want to sit down whole day watching TV or on the phone whole day with woman {mm hmm}. If he go out and come back and don't meet food he want to lash you.
> *Int.*: If he doesn't meet food?
> *Chantal*: Mm hmm.
> *Int.*: And were you working at the time you were together?
> *Chantal*: Yeah I used to work with a community to group, like talking to young people.

Chantal's account is indicative of men's attempt to sustain particular arrangements of power in intimate relationship. Even though she worked while in this relationship, there is an expectation that she completes the domestic chores and prepares his meals. Failure to fulfil these obligations is punishable through his perpetration of violence. Even though Caribbean women have always worked (Hodge 2002), there is a tendency to tie women to conventional stereotypes of homemaker. Men attempt to use these stereotypes to tie women to the home and domestic responsibility. This accounts for her partner's expectation of his evening meal upon arrival. The accounts of Floyd and Chantal reproduce unequal relations of power between men and women in relationships. Traditional discourses on gender are used to justify violence against women who, in men's view, fail to complete domestic responsibility. These discourses are also used to blame women for men's use of violence against their intimate partners.

The idea of being provoked in to violence is sometimes shared by female respondents. This is exemplified in the account of Sharon:

> *Sharon*: It ha' one time when he been going party and I wet down his shoes [she threw water on his shoes] and that man gimme [give me] some real licks. From that I never meddle [interfere with] him . . . Me feel very annoy, very hurt, and me tell him me would never interfere with nothing for him again.
> *Int*.: Who do you think was responsible for the incident?
> *Sharon*: Well me, because me should o' never interfere with his thing . . . If I never did go trouble his thing he won't o' lash me so I blame me self for meddling him.

Sharon places the burden for his violence against her squarely onto herself. For her, it was the act of drenching his shoes with water that provokes a violent reaction, so in that sense she feels responsible. Her acceptance of the blame has the effect of excusing the violent act and reinforces the idea of female hysteria as the cause of male violence. Linda's rationale for self-blame is somewhat different from that of Sharon:

> *Int*.: Can you tell me about the first time you can remember that you'll had an argument and he became violent towards you?
> *Linda*: Yes that was one Friday morning. I saw he was bathing to go to work. Then I saw him leave for work and I was going to visit my auntie and then his vehicle passed with another driver, so I called him and I said 'where are you'? This is him 'what you want know where I am for'? So it's like I hang up. When I come home now I met him with another car, so I say 'come on, you don't even have the courtesy to come for us'. He say 'what happen? You ain't know bus running' [public transport is available]? So I say 'it come [seems] like I ain't good enough to ride in your vehicle'. Wow, it's like who tell me say that 'so if you ain't good enough why the fuck you don't get out o' my place'? From the time he say that, I say you know what, I say 'I would leave, but you have to take your child'. Who tell me say that is like one hard slap, you know, and then it's like me ain't taking that and then I hold on, on him and we start to fight, so it's like you couldn't say anything at all to get him mad he always ready to lash.
> *Int*.: How serious was that incident?
> *Linda*: Well actually I was being beaten until, the belt had hit me in my eyes.
> *Int*.: He used a belt?
> *Linda*: Yes, the belt he was wearing in his pants. My eye, it was swollen for four days.
> . . .
> *Int*.: And who do you feel was responsible for that incident, the first time he hit you?

> *Linda*: Well actually I was because I didn't have any reason to say anything to him. I think I didn't have any reason to say anything to him you know because he likes to lash so I should o' keep my mouth shut, so I blame myself.
> *Int*.: You blame yourself?
> *Linda*: Mm hmm. [Partner of Lance]

In this example, Linda explains the argument which ensued that lead to a fight between her and her partner. There are parallels between Linda's and Scott's explanations for violence. In both examples violence is presented as a response to female provocation. Linda questions her partner's commitment to her and their child. In her account, her partner uses violence when she tells him that if she leaves their child must remain with him. Linda considers herself responsible for the violence, arguing that she was wrong for saying anything to him about his actions. On the one hand, her interpretation of this violent event reinforces the idea of female provocation and women's irrationality when she positions herself as the cause of his violent reaction. On the other hand, her self-blame acts as a sort of reminder that in order for her to avoid being violently victimised by her partner she ought to avoid initiating an argument; it can be interpreted as a survival strategy. Her account is also indicative of one of the several means through which patriarchal relations are maintained. The threat of violence serves to maintain women's obedience to their partners; an arrangement of power endorsed by most men in this study and in some instances a number of the women as well. Later in the interview, Linda explains that there is a tendency by the wider society to blame women for the violence they experience from their male partners. She says "people would talk, you know, 'how come you have this man beat you up so? What you does be doing him so'? You know, I used to real be ashamed of myself." The idea of victim precipitation forms part of the socio-cultural understanding of IPV. This has the effect of relieving men of the burden for the violence they perpetrate against their female partners. The implied solution for IPV is that women should reform to ensure that their actions will not result in any future use of violence by their partners. In addition, the victim precipitation motif is a statement about men's putative entitlement to power and deference, rather than resistance, from their partner.

Generally, men's explanations of violence draw on a range of hegemonic notions of manhood. Their accounts are informed by masculinist notions which serve to assert the power they believe they are entitled to in their relationships. Moreover, the language they employ as they engage in identity construction echoes a range of dominant ideas about masculinity, femininity and men's power in relation to their partners. Violence is discussed in the context of threats to men's authority, and female disobedience. Colin attempts to justify his actions in the context of his authority and his partner's disobedience:

> She did tell me that they giving she a work [job] to clean down toilet and mop down and all kind o' thing. I tell she 'don't take that work I go look after you' and things like that. I phone home and ask for her and they tell me she gone to work . . . You can't be living in my house and you have to cook food and thing and taking them things up and I warning you. It ain't sanitary enough. I say 'go put down that mop and thing. You ain't doing this work. Come go home', and she tell some kind o' foolishness and I leave and went away. I went and I start to drink and my head get nice eh [This means that he was intoxicated] and I went back in her work and I tell she 'girl leave this work and come go home {mm hmm}. Why you don't hear'? And I deal with she case there . . . Well I did have a knife. I did get lock up for she. I tear down the thing [her clothes] she used to wear for the job and I cut she. I get intoxicated. (Colin)

In Colin's view, his partner threatens his role as provider and causes him public shame by accepting a job as a cleaner. He views the job of cleaner as debasing and he endorses certain negative societal stereotypes about janitorial work. His account also reinforces the public scorn experienced by persons working in this area of public health. In his view, the job compromises her role as homemaker because, as he puts it, "it ain't sanitary enough." There is a sense in which he wants her domestic services unhindered by paid employment. He positions himself as provider and head of the family, and in so doing there is no room for negotiation. For him, her role as his partner is to obey him and protect his public image. His account (re)produces the kinds of sex/gender role stereotyping that renders women subservient, naturalises patriarchal relations, and perpetuates unequal relations of gender. In addition, his talk about violence reinscribes a discourse that ties masculinity to notions of power and economic control. Colin's perpetration of violence is presented in the context of female disobedience. Women's

so-called disobedience can also be read as subversive. In spite of the threat of violence women often engage in autonomous acts that resist men's attempts to control and dominate their activities within relationships. Placing distance between himself and the violence he perpetrates, Colin points to two separate antecedents of his violence: his partner's disobedience and his intoxication.

The role of alcohol in men's perpetration of violence was raised by a number of participants in the interviews. There are variations in participants' views on how alcohol might have contributed to violence in the relationship. Some men and women blamed men's violence on intoxication, whereas a few women rejected rationalisations of violence based on their partner's alcohol use. In the following extract, Tammy describes what happened the first time her partner used violence against her in their relationship:

> *Int*.: Could you tell me the first time he hit you?
> *Tammy*: That is when he chop me [when someone is 'chopped' it means that they received a blow to the head with an object which results in an open wound].
> *Int*.: What were you arguing about?
> *Tammy*: He come here and start to get on. When I cook he take up the pot cover and knock the pot cover over and start to get on with he stupidness . . . And he take up a cutlass and start to walk up and down with the cutlass [machete], so me say 'ah what wrong with you? Rum does turn all yuh ['all yuh' or 'aryuh' is a colloquial expression which mean you'll] doltish'. He start to 'ah ha, mm hmm'. I say 'what does wrong with all yuh'? You just come here and meet people [me] lay down. You come with you damn rum. When all yuh drink rum all yuh does get on ['get on' means carry on or behave in a certain manner] like all yuh stupidy'. Then he start to make noise [argue] with me and he start to say 'don't argue with me. Don't argue with me'. So he take the cutlass, not the cutlass. He take a piece o' stick and he lash me with it and he chop me. He chop me in me face there [she receives a head wound]. He chop me. [Partner of Scott]

In this explanation, Tammy describes her partner, Scott, as engaging in a threatening act. He walks "up and down with the cutlass." She tells of the violent acts he uses against her and the injurious consequence of his violence. Notwithstanding the perceived danger of the threat of him carrying a machete, she dismisses the act as silly, and confronts him about it: "Rum does turn all yuh doltish." In her talk about the

violence she identifies alcohol (rum) as responsible for his seemingly irrational acts. If alcohol is responsible for changing him, it can be used to explain his violence. Scott's account confirms this outlook on the relationship between alcohol and violence. After explaining that his partner was scared as a result of his violence I asked "How did she get the scar?" His response was "well after I come out now, she run and I hit her now, I don't know what happened because I was drinking eh, yeah." Both Tammy and Scott's explanations construct images of Scott not in control of his faculties due to his alcohol use. He describes having no recollection of his actions because he was intoxicated when it happened. In both instances, the effect is to deflect blame away from Scott, because he is a different person when he drinks.

In contrast, Cheryl rejects the idea that her partner's use of violence was a result of his alcohol use. However, she points to something sinister, something external to him as the cause of his violence:

> *Cheryl*: He was drinking the after noon, but I believe he was in between.
> *Int*.: What do you mean?
> *Cheryl*: Maybe he wasn't all that drunk but he was presumed to be because a lot of fellas [men] tend to use alcohol as an excuse to do this stupidness.
> *Int*.: Ok. What did he say on those two occasions after he hit you?
> *Cheryl*: He don't know why, what come over him, why he had to do that even though he didn't have no reason to.

Cheryl does not regard alcohol use or abuse as a valid justification for IPV. She rejects what she perceives to be a tendency of men to use alcohol to excuse their violence. Although she admits that he was drinking at the time of his use of violence, she believes he consciously perpetrated the violence nonetheless. This departs from Tammy's and Scott's understandings. They position Scott at the mercy of his alcohol use. He loses control as a result of his alcohol use. Conversely, Cheryl suggests that her partner is in control of his alcohol use: "maybe he wasn't drunk at all, but was presumed to be drunk because a lot of fellas tend to use alcohol as an excuse for this stupidness." She believes that men consciously use intoxication as a means of deflecting responsibility for their violence away from themselves. Intoxication as a rationalisation for men's violence is also a feature of women's accounts according to Dobash and Dobash (1979).

She presents the explanation for violence offered by her partner: "he don't know why, what come over him." The statement is indicative of something external, some sinister force, as responsible for his turn to violence. It conjures up the image of being possessed. If something external influences his action, then is he responsible for violence? This theme is repeated in the accounts of some men as they explained their use of violence in relationships. Lionel describes why it is difficult for him to refrain from using violence:

> *Int.*: Do you ever think it's ok to hit a partner, whether it's a man hitting a woman or a woman hitting a man, under any circumstance?
> *Lionel*: Well as I say, I ain't agree for any one of them hitting one another eh. If you could solve the problem otherwise, solve it, but you know sometimes at the time you there is an argument or a rage with somebody, boy as I does say, the Devil does just come one time and say let me fucking lick you down [knock you down] yuh [your] mother cunt. All o' that does just chip in [result in loss of control] sometimes. [Partner of Giselle]

He presents his violence as uncontrollable and inevitable when overcome by rage and 'evil'. Evil is personified in the form of the 'Devil' who is given an omnipresent-like disposition and as such is more powerful than individual will. In a society where religion, Christianity in particular, commands significant cultural value, the idea of the Devil is a considerably symbolic and value-laden term. The Devil is the destructive adversary of God, the Creator. The former is the embodiment of evil and darkness, and represents a constant threat to individuals who are corruptible. By suggesting that the Devil overcomes, even becomes him, he distances himself from the violence he perpetrates. The source of violence is external to the individual. In his reckoning he positions himself as a mere vessel at the whim of an evil or satanic force. This theme is repeated by Colin as he describes his use of violence against his partner and says "I hear she start to scream and it start to ring this kind o' evilness in me." Whereas Lionel describes evil as something external that subsumes the individual, Colin suggests that her scream unleashes the evil within him. Despite the conceptualisation evil as external by Lionel and internal by Colin there is an overall sense that the use of violence is external to men's conscious will. To view violence as a consequence of an evil force

rids men of the responsibility for the acts they perpetrate to resolve conflicts in their relationships.

Discourses of female provocation and blame are used to rationalise, justify and excuse the violence men perpetrate against their female partners. Men appear to use these strategies as a means of mitigating the negative public image attached to IPV and their conceptions of self. Their narratives are performative of broader social discourses. These discourses sanction violence against women. Paradoxically, they also engage in discourses that normalise male dominance and excuse the violence they perpetrate. The tension created by the presence of such a paradox in men's utterances is evidence of the multiple positions that individuals assume in the construction of identity. Although there were a few instances in which women assumed blame for their own violent victimisation, for the most part, they felt that men were responsible for the violence in their relationships.

6.5 Governing of Sexuality and Sexual Violence

The single most common motivation cited in men's and women's accounts for men's violence against women is perceived female infidelity. Again this motif is tied to historical discourses on what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. In Chapter four I examined the ways in which Madonna image is often juxtaposed against that of the Jezebel or whore. Women find themselves in a constant struggle to prove their virtue and monogamy. Masculinities, enacted in these men's narratives engage cultural ideas about male sexual prowess. This is achieved when they are able to keep their partners satisfied and thus prevent them from seeking sexual satisfaction elsewhere. Men's narratives support the double-standard of sexual morality that justify promiscuity among men, but insist on women's fidelity. The dominance of the discourse on men's sexual prowess in the construction of masculinities means that suspected infidelity by women acts as a form of emasculation. Implicitly, violence is justified as a means of restoring masculine identity.

Women reported that men perpetrated violence against them when they posed questions about sexual and/or intimate relationships with other women. This raised the issue of the men's sexual freedom versus men's attempt to maintain women's monogamy. In these accounts, women positioned themselves as powerless to influence changes in men's sexual practices. These practices reinforce the binary articulations of gender which sustain asymmetrical relations of power within these unions. Asymmetries of power are overtly expressed in women's report of experiencing sexual violence in their relationship. A number of women reported being coerced into sexual intercourse by their partners. In extreme cases women reported being raped by their partners. It is important to note that men did not admit to committing acts of sexual violence against their partners, which might reflect a social loathing of this form of violence against women. This section explores the interstices of violence, sex and sexuality in intimate relationships.

In this first example Randy describes his reasons for using violence in his relationship with Janet:

> She was the first person who actually gave me a birthday party and she invite a man at my birthday party . . . It wasn't right, but I was kind o' angry seeing that I was trying to get out and she, it just flash to me that this guy was checking she [He means another man was pursuing her] and the way that she was dressing, she look so sweet and I was wondering if it was me that she did dress for or the guy. That is why I did hit her [Randy, Partner of Janet].

In the previous chapter, Randy talks about his views on women's roles and responsibilities in the context of intimate relationships. Pregnancy and menstruation were cited as debilitating and he used these bodily conditions as a rationale for women's confinement to the home. Janet, Randy's partner, made mention of the extent to which she was restricted to the confines of their home by the constant threat of his violence. She cites his jealousy as resulting in her loss of friends. Men tend to situate their controlling behaviours and perpetration of violence within the context of protecting some notion of feminine virtue. There is dual and oppositional depiction of femininity in operation in these accounts. A virtuous femininity preserves male reputation; the image of the whore, the loose woman when attached to female bodies is described by

men as having an emasculating effect. Men allude to the idea of an embodiment of this binary, so much so that violence and threats of violence are seemingly enacted as a means of suppressing/eradicating a vile femininity in order to shore up feminine virtue. In the above extract, the presence of another man makes Randy question Janet's motivation for organising the party. It unsettles his masculine identity. In his reckoning of the events, her dress sense is symbolic of this constant threat of female infidelity and its associated threats to his masculine identity. His reference to her manner of dress also resonates with the archetype of woman as temptress which, in the binary scheme of things, is located as part of a vile femininity. This symbolic act, coupled with his misgivings about her reasons for hosting the party, contribute to his emasculation, as he questions his exclusive 'right' to her. However, he claims that his motivation for violence was because she prevents him from leaving. Notwithstanding this justification, the fact that he focuses on his suspicions would imply that this has some significant bearing on the meanings he attaches to his violence.

The notion of provocation as fuelled by perceived female infidelity is also a feature of women's accounts. I asked Cheryl to explain what she thought caused the first incident of violence in her relationship: "it all stemmed from the same thing, accusations, accusing me of cheating . . . No evidence, just accuse." Later in the interview, as she was describing the second violent episode she explained:

> He apologised. He plead and blah, blah, blah. I took it all to be genuine. Within six days I was back home with him . . . Before the end of the month he started again, accusing and he promise me a bloody-bath for the holiday. When the young lady lost her life he tell me the next head to cut off was mine. I know that was just, I didn't take that point serious. The holiday come and it go. The next month he was working. He came home and he start carrying on [constant arguing], hounding [harassing or pestering] me, accusing me. I keep saying to him 'nothing wrong. Why you don't believe me'. Then he come in, box me cross m' ear. Then he box me to the back of m' head and that second box knock me unconscious (Cheryl).

From Cheryl's explanation, the threat of the most heinous acts of violence is used to instil fear, and to elicit her conformity. In December 2006, a 21 year old woman was murdered at the main bus station in Kingstown, the capital of SVG. This occurred in

front of a large crowd of persons who were, at the time, awaiting public transportation after work. The man had stalked the young woman after she rejected his request for an intimate relationship. He used a machete to severe her head from her body. This homicide and speculation about his rationale for the murder occupied the print and other news media in SVG and other Caribbean territories for a number of weeks. I interviewed Cheryl approximately four months after this homicide. The threats of violence she mentions would have occurred just weeks after the murder. The bold and violent nature of the crime meant that it resonated with a large majority of Vincentians, and places her partner's promise of "a bloody-bath" and death within a broader context. The promise serves as a graphic recreation of a horrific event. It is a powerful threat. The threat, "he tell me the next head to cut off was mine," brings to mind a sense of some shared responsibility for a range of violent acts against women; the idea that women's actions precipitate violence.

Her presentation of his actions leading up to the use of violence conveys an image of her being bombarded, even terrorised by his threats of violence, his "carrying on," and him "hounding" and "accusing" her. In this sense she is positioned as victim to a range of violent and controlling practices, which have an overall effect of rendering her powerless. She cites her partner as rationalising his violence as a response to her presumed infidelity. However, her defence of her fidelity serves as a rejection of the position her partner creates for her. Acts of violence along with constant threats of violence are used to curtail and discipline the kinds of femininities that are available to women while at the same time preserving dominant forms of masculinity in the form of male aggression and authority. There is an implied sense of powerlessness that women experience due to these acts and threats of male violence.

The following two examples compare the narratives produced by Lance and Linda in which they both account for his use of violence against her in their relationship:

> *Int.*: Could you tell me what happened?
>
> *Lance*: Her cousin used to leave and go to Canada and spend some time. This last time here he left her in the house again {mm hmm}. What she was doing before was going around there and then coming back a little

later, but this time around she wasn't doing that. She was going around there and not coming back, which I didn't have a problem with that, but every time I go somewhere, like when I go to the gas station somebody always tell me well they see my girlfriend with another man, and a guy came and told me that he saw my girlfriend in Rockley in a car; until one day now I coming down now and I saw her in the car and I stopped the car and I ask her to get out, but she never get out {mm hmm}. The guy told her not to get out, so I left and I just go about my business. So when I came home now she tell me, me and she finish. I say 'just like that'. She say, I ask her 'if we finish where do you want me to go now'? She doesn't care.

Int.: You asked her where does she want you to go?

Lance: Yeah, she doesn't care. So I left and I went away. No, I didn't go away. I slept in the house the same night and in the morning left and I went away. So I came back in the night now and I talking to the girl, I say girl, I ask her now how long this thing been going on {mm hmm}. She turned to me and tell me that's her effing business, which [at which time] I slapped her. [Partner of Linda]

In his account of the events, Lance describes changes in his partner's behaviour as prompting their split and his subsequent use of violence. His use of violence centres on what he deems as her infidelity, and refusal to provide justifications for her actions. His loss of power in influencing her decisions is captured in the following "I stopped the car and I asked her to get out, but she never get out . . . the guy told her not to get out." The presence of another man and what he perceives as an act of disobedience represent a challenge to his authority in the context of the relationship. This is accentuated by her decision to terminate their relationship. In the second part of the extract he questions her about his belief that she was unfaithful. He presents his violence as a reaction to her dismissal of his request for an explanation about her perceived infidelity. The details of the incident provided by Linda, Lance's partner, vary from that which he presents. However, their accounts converge on the issue of his perception that she was unfaithful. She says

Actually I had ended the relationship because of the way he was treating me and the kids, you know, so I decided that this thing must end and in order for it to end I have to do it myself and I have to be serious about it . . . It was a week since I put him out . . . When I was inside I heard my door lock like it click, so I jump up out o' me sleep and I say 'what'? I had to alert the child. I say 'get up. Lance in the house'. He started pulling me outside now. He got me out there. He asking me now 'how many times you been sexing with that guy'? I say 'what kind o' guy you telling

> 'bout'? 'I hear people me you have this guy', you know, so I say 'actually I don't know what you talking about', so he slapped me. [She goes on to describe extreme violence perpetrated by Lance against her, the details of which I cannot disclose for purposes of anonymity] [Linda, Partner of Lance].

Although there are differences in the cataloguing of events between Linda and Lance, the purpose here is not to determine the veracity of their claims, but to analyse the meanings produced about gender and violence in these accounts. In Linda's talk on the violent event there is an overall sense of powerlessness in her attempts to effect an end to the relationship. Their accounts reflect his need for an explanation of rumours that she is intimately involved with another man, a demand that implicates ideas about the terms and conditions of intimate relationships; the need for closure. The inclusion of what she presents as a direct question from him, "how many times you been sexing this guy?" positions her as whore because it suggests that she has compromised her respectability and virtue, while simultaneously damaging his male reputation. Comparing the historical justifications for IPV between England (Dobash and Dobash 1981) and the Caribbean (de Moya 2004) there are important parallels to be drawn. Referring to activities which date as far back as the 15th century Dobash and Dobash (1981) refer to practices of publicly ridiculing men who were thought to have allowed their wives to get out of control. De Moya (2004) makes reference to the *Fiesta de Cuernos* (cuckolding festival) held yearly in the Dominican republic in which the man whose wife was thought to bring him the greatest public shame because of her continued infidelity is usually dubbed the Cuckold of the year and made to wear the 'Crown of Horns'. In both instances public beating of women were justified as a means of restoring men's reputation. Although such antiquated practices no longer attract the same level of public support, there are resonances. Justifications for violence that centre on rumours of women's infidelity and the resulting public emasculation appear as vestiges of the practice of cuckolding. It positions women as male possession and reinforce ideas about men's power in relationships. The meanings people attached to practices, such as being seen in a vehicle with another man if a woman is in a relationship, speaks to certain codes of behaviour to which women are expected to adhere.

However, questions to men's fidelity also place some women in danger of being violently victimised. This double standard reinforces the gendering of sexuality in binary terms. On the one hand, men attempt to govern women's sexual practices with the intention of maintaining women's monogamy and sexual purity. On the other hand, men object to women's insinuation about men's unfaithfulness, and in some cases there is an expectation that women accept men's pursuit of other sexual and/or intimate relationships. The oppositional sexual scripts assigned to male and female bodies limit women's control of their own sexuality, while at the same time granting men sexual freedom. This is exemplified by Janet, who explains her partner's (Randy) use of violence against her. Earlier in this section, in the example provided by Randy he talks about his violence as occurring in the context of his suspicions that Janet was unfaithful. Janet presents a situation in which her violent victimisation was the result of questions to Randy's fidelity.

> He came home late. He came home like four day morning [the early hours of the morning between 4:00 am and 6:00 am], after five that morning. I couldn't sleep. I was up all night. I was trying to call him. He wasn't answering his phone. I was waiting to see if he was outside with his friends or what. There was no sign of him. There was no call. So in the morning when he came I said 'you couldn't at least call me and let me know you're ok? You know I'm here waiting on you. It's as if you don't care'. He said he didn't have money on his phone and I knew that the day before I saw him put money on his phone, so I said 'what you did with the money? Call another woman? Why is it the money finish'? I was on the bed lying down so I said let me get some sleep and I wanted to go to church. And in between I was so tired. I wanted to fall asleep and I heard him saying 'next time you tell me about other woman I would burst up your face'. So I turn to him and I said but 'you're not my father to do me that. I think only my father should do that'. And at that moment all I know is that I was just getting blows all over. He lift me up and he threw me off the bed. He threw me up in the air and drop me off the bed and he jumped down on me and started kicking me and stomping on me and stuff like that and he keep repeating "I will kill you. I will kill you." [Janet, Partner of Randy]

Janet describes her experiences of extreme violence. She explains a situation in which she confronted her partner about her suspicions of him being unfaithful. She expresses panic and concern for her partner; creating an image of her in a frenzied state borne out of her concern for his safety. Implicit in Randy's earlier account is his freedom to

question her motive for inviting another man to his party and, by extension, her commitment to him. However, in her account, the inclusion of what she presents as his own words, "next time you tell me about other woman I would burst up your face," indicates that, in his view, she is acting inappropriately. For him, questioning his faithfulness is not an option open to her. Attempts to discipline his sexual freedom are punished through the use of physical violence, and the threat of fatal violence. Her response does, however, endorse a particular form of male violence. She suggests that her father, through his parental authority is justified in the use of physical force against her, but rejects the use of violence from her partner. There is an overall impression of her being both victimised and terrorised, in this relationship.

Similarly, Angie documents her violence as a response to questioning her partner's fidelity:

> *Int.*: What happened?
>
> *Angie*: Like I had a, we fight. I don't know what happened . . . In those days it would be an argument about if he cheat or something and that was, that was like the last thing on my mind . . . It have times when I go up to him to talk to him and it would just turn into violence and after me see that method ain't working, I would go up to him we'll probably just argue and he would probably wait so I could do something so could hit me.
>
> *Int.*: Could you give an example of when something like that happened?
>
> *Angie*: It was about a woman. It's always about a woman. I met him in a position and he denied he knew the woman and after I keep hearing all kind o' things about him and this woman and this day he was supposed to come pick up a gas [a gas tank to refuel for cooking] for me and he didn't and I take the baby and me and she were going into town and he passed me like Kingstown there, and then the woman passed. The van that I was in stopped and I was like shouting him and he saw me and by the time he saw me he just take off on me and the woman was in his van and he still want to deny it wasn't her and stuff, you know. But the worst part is that he box me here [point to her forehead] when me and he were arguing. He box me here. I dropped. I fell on my ribs. I went to a private doctor. He said nothing wrong with my ribs and everything. They really didn't do a scan, but sometimes, I, I don't if it's when I study things, but the pain, the pain would come and just be hurting me . . . His friends were there but no one came to my rescue . . . After he feel like I going die he keep punching me, but then I probably came out of it. When I think about it I don't feel like I could ever go back with him. It just make me feel like I want commit [suicide] myself. [Angie, Partner of Bruce]

Angie rationalises her partner's violence as a consequence of her questioning his fidelity. When discussing the violence he perpetrated against Angie, Bruce had the following to say, "let me tell you something, I know I mess around [He was unfaithful], so that is why things been get so far, so right now I over that kind o' quality." He talks about his infidelity as an indiscretion, and offers this as the source of conflict in their relationship, but he also speaks of his reformation. In Angie's account, however, there is an overall impression that she has no right to raise her suspicions about his infidelity. She also conveys the idea that her partner welcomed forms of supposed provocation as a means of justifying his use of violence against her. In the second part of the extract, she presents his violence against her as perpetrated to punish her challenge to his authority and his honesty. It is presented as a public display of his power in relation to her. Her account is also indicative of the public shame associated with IPV and its effect on women. Her talk conveys feelings of desolation, helplessness and shame in the face of extreme forms of violence by her partner. There is an expectation that members of the public, including his friends, should intervene to end his violence.

In the next example in this section, Deidre's account reinforces justifications of men's violence as a response to challenges to their sexual freedom.

> He went away to work and when he came back, like he didn't care. Well he experienced a whole different lifestyle out there. He came back and he used to cheat. He used cheat in a way where I would know. Eventually, I would have known {mm hmm} and when I question him he used to want hit me when I question him until the abuse became more frequent. (Deidre)

In this account Deidre implies that her partner's exposure to a different world caused him to change. She presents him as brazen and callous because in her view he was unconcerned about whether or not she discovered his infidelity. There is a sense in which she, like many of the other women in this study, is limited in her ability to question men's faithfulness or to object to the idea of men's sexual freedom. In Deidre's account there appears to be a direct correlation between her questions to him about his faithfulness and the escalation of violence in their relationship.

In addition to this double standard of sexual morality which effectively policed women's sexuality while at the same time granting men sexual freedom, women also reported that men engaged in both physical and verbal coercive tactics to force them into unwanted sexual intercourse. In some instances women named their experiences rape. In fact some of these descriptions of sexual violence matched legal definitions for rape. Women sometimes explained that they engaged in unwanted sexual activities in order to avoid conflict in their relationships. These depictions often positioned women as the objects of men's sexual desires, rendering them powerless to make their own sexual choices. Eve explains that "if I don't want to do it. He go cuss and like when he done cuss he go come and do it." Eve's statement exemplifies how men used physical force to exert power over women's bodies and their sexual autonomy. In the following extract, Janet illustrates her experience of sexual violence in the relationship:

> I was having a problem. Sexual intercourse started hurting. I explained to him. If I didn't give him he would hold me down and take it. He would drink. He would come home and start beating me and telling me I have to give it to him and I can't say no and that sort o' stuff. [Janet, Partner of Randy]

In this account, Janet describes extreme forms of sexual violence. In fact, the experience she presents satisfies legal definitions of rape. Her talk evokes the image of a robbery, and her attempts to thwart his intentions are futile. He is presented as lacking compassion as, in spite of her explanation that she was experiencing pain during sexual intercourse, he is unconcerned. In part, she rationalises his violence as a result of his use of alcohol "he would drink." This is not presented in an overt way, in that, she does not say that it is the cause per se. However, the fact that she mentions that he was drinking suggests that this has some bearing on the meanings she attaches to his use of violence. His perpetration of physical violence explains how he establishes control over her sexuality and her daily life, positioning her as his possession.

Similarly, Isis chronicles her partner's use of violence to force her into unwanted sexual intercourse:

> *Int.*: Have you ever been sexually abused as an adult?
> *Isis*: Well you know that they usually say, what, what, what – You know how they would say, well with my boyfriend, lately, I never used to want

> to have sex with him and he used to rape me. I would say rape because I never used to want to have sex with him. And he used to hit me. He used to fight me just to get sex and that wouldn't be physical abuse. It would be sexual abuse.
>
> *Int.*: Yes. How often would this happen?
>
> *Isis*: Real often. Remember, like I said we used have arguments like say five times a week and after we finish arguing he used to want to have sex with me. How would I feel about it? How would I – I wouldn't feel comfortable to, you know, give him, so I used to like put up a resistance and he would still fight me.

Isis names her experience of sexual violence rape. She describes experiences similar to those of Janet. Explaining these events, she talks about him using physical violence to force her to have sexual intercourse with him. In fact, she distinguishes between 'physical abuse' and 'sexual abuse'. There is a tendency to use the umbrella term abuse to capture various forms of violence and coercive act. In everyday talk on violence individuals use the terms abuse and violence interchangeably. For her, the use of physical force as a coercive tactic by her partner to force her into unwanted sexual activity is part of her overall experience of sexual, and not physical, abuse. In spite of her efforts to resist his sexual solicitations, she describes being overpowered. This is another example of how men's exercise of force is used to demonstrate and sustain their positions of power in relationships. It serves as a means through which women are objectified in these unions.

Deidre explains what happened once when she agreed to go out socially with her partner once she had ended their relationship:

> He started, what I [she] been Trinidad for [why did she go to Trinindad]? I say 'that ain't have nothing to do with you. We ain't together', and then he start to carry on and cuss . . . What I go Trinidad for. I go Trinidad to give man sex and how I ain't giving he none. Me and he done because he always have this thing that although you and he done he supposed to be able to get sex from you because he take my virginity . . . I tell him that nothing happened. Eventually, I just started to tell him things that he wanted to hear to get to go home. Then he raped me. (Deidre)

She presents her partner as acting in a way that would suggest he had some exclusive right to her because he was the first to have a sexual relationship with her. This accounts for her objectification and positioning as his possession. Historically, a

woman's first sexual experience is treated as something sacred, something to be held on to until marriage, which is in contrast to men's first sexual experience which is treated as a right of passage from boy to man. There is a sense in which her 'loss of virginity' is linked to his attempts to govern her body and sexuality. These accounts of sexual violence reinforce the duality of gender identities. Masculinities performed in these accounts centre on men's power and dominance over women's body and sexuality. Conversely, women's identities are linked to notions of submission and obedience.

The coercive practices that women reported that men used to force them into having sexual intercourse did not always involve explicit physical violence. This is exemplified in the extract from Yvette:

> It have times at night if I don't want to have sex with him it's whole night he would have me harassing me and the children and them would be outside and they would be listening because I know that they would know that it's something we fighting over {mm hmm} so I say I have to stop this thing, this arguing and thing. Sometimes I don't even want to but I does just give up, just for peace sake. [Yvette, Partner of Brent]

She speaks of surrendering to his demands for sexual intercourse to avoid conflict and to keep peace between both of them. Although there is no specific mention of his use of physical force, her account is suggestive of other forms of coercion. There is a portrayal of her being harassed, terrorised even, within earshot of their children. Her submission is an effect of her effort to avoid further conflict in the relationship. Engaging in sexual intercourse with her partner is a reflection of the imbalance of power which is a feature of their relationship.

There are various means through which men attempt to govern women's sexuality. In women's narratives of sexual violence they often position themselves as powerless, with limited or no influence on the actions of their male partners. Conversely, men use violence to discipline women's sexuality and to ensure women's monogamy, and conformity. The questioning of men's sexual freedom indicate that women reject men's autonomy to pursue other sexual and/or intimate relationships, even though they appear powerless to effect change. They reject an arrangement of power which offers men

sexual autonomy, while at the same time restricting women's sexual freedom. It should be stated that women's accounts were not suggestive of the quest for multiple sexual partners. Women seem to favour mutually monogamous relationships. Their accounts represent a defence of their honour and fidelity to their partners, and to their relationships.

6.6 Summary

This chapter explored the various strategies participants employed in their talk about men's and, to a lesser extent, women's violence in intimate relationships. Their accounts, for the most part, implicate conventional discourses on gender. Embedded in men's talk were ideas which legitimised the violence they perpetrated against their partners. These legitimising discourses draw on traditional expectations of men's and women's role within relationships and within particular social contexts. Men justify their violence as an appropriate response to women's departure from these traditional images. In some instances, women rejected these constraining subject positions. Most women denounced men's violence as unjust and placed the responsibility for these acts with men. Indeed, there were a few occasions in which women engaged in the act of self-blame for their partner's violence. Self-blame reflected women's belief that in order to avoid being violently victimised they should refrain from raising any disputes with their partners.

Depictions of violence also varied along gendered lines. Men tended to dismiss women's use of violence to defend themselves as ineffective, while presenting their own violence as decisive. This was often supported by women who referred to men's greater physical strength as the reason for men's success at engaging in violence. However, the description offered by some women for their use of violence undermined these claims. The examples provided of women engaging in the use of violence as an act of self-defence did not attach any greater or lesser value to men's and women's use of violence during these episodes. Overall, the gendering of violence reinforced particular stereotypes of men as aggressive and accomplished in the act of fighting. Trivialising

women's violence serves as another means through which binary constructions of masculinity and femininity are maintained.

The intersections of gender and violence are also illustrated in discourses of provocation and blame. Women are blamed for their own violent victimisation by male partners in men's accounts. Discourses of provocation drew on a variety of excuses. These included women's disobedience, threats to men's authority, men's alcohol use, women's gossip, and women's failure to complete domestic chores. These excuses position men as victims of their partner's vices. The few examples of women's use of provocation discourses point to women's belief that they should try to avoid disputes in order to protect themselves from their partners' violence. Discourses of provocation and blame reinforced men's putative entitlement to power in their intimate relationships. Men also attempted to deflect blame by pointing to a loss of control. By claiming that their violence was the result of some powerful, evil force that was separate from their core personality, they placed distance between themselves and the violence they perpetrated. This was another means through which they justified their actions.

Finally, women's talk on men's sexual violence reinscribes the dichotomous discourses of gender identities. Masculinity is tied to men's sexual power and prowess, as they attempt to govern women's bodies and, by extension, sexuality. Women are positioned as objects of men's sexual desires and there is a sense in which women in relationships are expected to satisfy men's sexual desires whenever such a request is made. Women's attempts to resist are sometimes punishable by violence, and the threat of violence has the effect of securing women's submission. The interstices of violence, gender and sexuality features in men's most common justification of violence – a consequence of female infidelity. Men attempt to govern women's sexual practices as a means of protecting male reputation. Perceived female infidelity has an emasculating effect and this is indirectly offered as a justification for men's violence. The double standard of sexual morality (Wilson 1969) explains why women are punished through the use of violence when they question their partner's about other relationships. These accounts

demonstrate the myriad ways in which discourses on IPV and gender are inextricably linked.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Studies of intimate partner violence continue to apply a range of epistemological and methodological approaches with a view of mapping its various components and offering a number of measures for change. This study makes a contribution to a small but growing body of work on violence against women in the Anglophone Caribbean. As a central concern I examine the strategies participants use to explain violence and other coercive and controlling acts in their intimate relationships, and how such strategies implicate particular constructions of gender identity. In other words, the thesis analysed the points at which narratives of gender and violence converged in participants accounts. Men's disproportionate perpetration of violence in heterosexual relationships and women's greater likelihood of sustaining injuries as a result of this form of violence necessitates a focus on gender and its associated power dynamics (Kimmel 2002). Using a feminist poststructuralist framework in conjunction with discourse analytical techniques I examined the ways in which meanings of violence and gender were constructed in language, and the various subject positions created by participants in their accounts. In this final chapter, I address some of the limitations of the current study, reflect on the research process, summarise and discuss the analysis, and address the implications of the current study for theory, policy and further research on IPV in the Anglophone Caribbean.

7.2 Limitations and Challenges of the Current Study

The research process, from conceptualisation to completion, is invariably riddled with tensions, challenges, and limitations. The current study is by no means exempt from such experiences. Initially, my intention was to compare the accounts of couples. Comparing couple accounts allows for analysis of what individual members of these dyads privilege in their explanations of violence. In the end, eight couples were interviewed and these interviews allowed for meanings of violence to be analysed in the

context of specific relationships, as well as across relationships. As outlined in chapter three, constraints associated with time, availability of participants and other material resources prevented me from interviewing couples only. However, the final sample of 19 women and 15 men facilitated the comparison of women and men's narratives on men's violence and other controlling behaviours against women in intimate unions.

My choice to apply a feminist poststructuralist inspired discourse analysis meant that at times long portions of interview text had to be used to exemplify the various discourses at work in the reconstruction of events and to demonstrate the various subject positions created in speech. This not only posed stylistic challenges in terms of its presentation in document form, but I imagine that this also presents challenges for the reader. Related to the challenge of reading interview data is my decision to retain the Vincentian vernacular in participants' accounts and my subsequent reliance on explanatory notes. Again, this decision was influenced by my theoretical and analytical approaches in which the (re)production of cultural narratives in speech was an important point of analysis. Idiomatic expressions, nuances of the vernacular in use and other general culturally specific retentions in speech were important to demonstrate how particular ideologies that might otherwise apply in various social settings are interpolated by location. This thesis privileged the meanings participants produced in order to identify the cultural narratives within which these meanings might be located.

Participants' awareness of the societal views on violence may or may not have been heightened by their contact with one of several state institutions responsible for responding to violence in the family, either as a criminal justice or social services response. The scope of this study did not allow for an analysis of how a person's contact with such institutions might have influenced their outlook on violence against women. This becomes particularly important as researchers and policy makers set out to assess the impact of state responses to violence against women, and it presents an area for future research in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Finally, it is important to remember that in relation to the analysis of gender identities constructed within the interview, the group under investigation were involved in violent relationships. Thus the claim that persons within the study generally subscribed to traditional ideologies of gender must be understood within this context. It will be useful to compare (in another project) the narratives of gender produced by persons involved in non-violent relationships to analyse whether there is a difference between these groups. However, in keeping with previous research (Anderson and Umberson 2001; Bograd 1988 & 1990; Boonzaier and de la Rey 2003; Currie 1998; Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1981, 1992 & 2004; Dobash et al 2003; Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999; Gavey 1992 & 1999; Jackson 2001; Johnson 1995; Pollack 2007) this thesis has identified that discourses of gender often intersect with participants talk on violence and control in relationships. Feminist theorists have identified gender (coupled with its intersection with other markers of difference), and its emergent power relations, as an important feature of all human relations. This, along with the view that men are the main perpetrators of IPV, explains the focus on gender in this thesis. Notwithstanding these challenges, this thesis contributes to the interpretive research on IPV in the Anglophone Caribbean by emphasising the importance of gender to the study of relationship conflict.

7.3 Gendering IPV: Summary and Discussion

Narratives of gender often resonated with traditional scripts of femininity and masculinity. In what for the most part were binary accounts of gender women were positioned as men's subordinates. By closely analysing the meanings of manhood and womanhood in participants' accounts chapter four foregrounds the discussion of the interstices of gender and violence. These binary accounts, along with attempts to resist such constraining identity constructs, emphasise the resilience of particular versions of gender and their associated power relations which generally favour men in heterosexual unions. Often, roles carved out for women and men in these accounts were imbued with biological as well as socio-religious narratives. The normative scripting of gender had the effect of naturalising men's power in relation to women as some transcendental human condition. There were moments in which participants disturbed dichotomous

discourses on gender roles, particularly when some women described their pursuit of economic independence and the achievement of personal autonomy. However, these interventions were marginal.

There was a tendency to value particular versions of femininity and masculinity over others in speech. Two dominant and opposing narratives of femininity were used to position women in participants' talk on gender. On the one hand participants privileged certain versions of women's identity. These included women as mothers, carers and workers. There were differing views on women's participation in paid employment, but women were generally expected to take responsibility for housework. Women often embraced motherhood citing their children as their main responsibility. In relation to housework women sometimes felt overwhelmed, particularly those who were engaged in paid employment. Men generally expected women to fulfil traditional functions as caretakers of the home and failure to meet this expectation often resulted in conflict in the relationship. In fact some men in the study resented women's work outside of the home. These men employed both active and tacit strategies to prevent or to stop women from this form of work, including verbal and physical acts of coercion and control. Malos and Hague (1997) reminds us that men's expectations of women's domesticity and childcare responsibilities, and the unequal relations of power which simultaneously give rise to and perpetuate gendered relations of power, are more acute for women who are survivors of IPV.

On the other hand, the second dominant narrative of femininity was based on portrayals of women as sexually loose with the capacity to engage in sinister acts in order to control men – the 'villainous' woman. Such women were deemed to have departed from the ideal of a virtuous femininity in which the principles of monogamy and respectability were valued by both men and women. Subject positions created for women by men in these accounts often inscribed discourses of the "bad woman"/whore/jezebel on to female bodies with their associated negative stereotypes. Although women always distanced themselves from such characterisations, they too

engage in differentiating between good and bad femininity. Markers of women's loose sexual morals included women's attire, time spent outside of the home, interactions with other men and general presumptions of infidelity.

Similarly, respondents generally ascribed to traditional constructions of manhood. Men positioned themselves as protectors of their families, sexually virile, responsible, and heads of households. However, the most significant signpost of men's identity in participants' accounts was the notion of men as breadwinners or providers. When women were identified as heads of household it was usually in relation to their organisation of domestic chores and family activities. There were a few instances in which women positioned themselves as heads of households based on their earning power. This usually reinforced the provider motif for in these accounts women alluded to their willingness to defer to men as long as their partners 'resumed' their role as the main breadwinner. The commitment to aligning the archetype of breadwinner onto male bodies inscribes a normative discourse on men's right to power relative to women. I argue that this asymmetrical arrangement of power is a prominent feature in the very language used to explain men's violent, coercive and controlling acts against women. In other words, discourses on men's and women's identities converge with strategies deployed to explain men's use of violence and women's victimisation.

There are moments in which the dominant narratives of masculinities and femininities are countered in speech. Women were more likely to engage counter-hegemonic discourses as they positioned themselves in speech. Rejecting a heteronormative discourse they sometimes challenged the centrality of the intimate union. Some women depicted the intimate relationship as depriving them of personal autonomy while at the same time presenting men with spatial freedom as well as other forms of power. However, women's ambition for and achievement of independence was often described against the backdrop of their tacit and sometimes overt support for the maintenance of the heterosexual union. They often aspired to maintain their current unions or to

achieve more fulfilling future intimate relations with men. The resilience of traditional ideologies is evidenced even as participants engage these counter-hegemonic narratives.

Participants negotiated, performed and constructed gender through the various discourses presented that pointed to the differential access to publicly demarcated spaces. The policing of these imagined boundaries of gender appeared to be far more constraining for women than it was for men in the context of violent relationships. As women explained these constraints their accounts indicated varying degrees of spatial limitations. In extreme instances women employed narratives of imprisonment. They sometimes portrayed images of entrapment as a result of physical violence, the threat of violence, financial deprivation and men's constant surveillance. Citing women's domestic responsibilities and presumptions of infidelity, men often used accounts to justify practices employed to curtail women's access to paid employment as well as social activities.

Respondents engaged in a number of discursive practices as they explained their use of and experiences with violence. In much the same way as explanations of controlling and coercive acts were imbued with several traditional ideologies of gender, discussions of violence intersected with those popular cultural discourses on womanhood and manhood. The dichotomous reproduction of gender identities was also actualised in depictions of violence in which men's violence was treated as effective and decisive, in contrast to women's violence which tended to be trivialised in men's accounts. A similar observation was made by Anderson and Umberson (2001) who argue that men perform gender in their accounts by dismissing women's violence as ineffective while at the same presenting themselves as efficient in their use of violence. Anderson and Umberson also noted that men rationalised their violence as a response to women's irrationality, with women's use of violence presented as an irrational act.

A few women complicated the binary representations of men's and women's use of violence. Giselle talked about Lionel's successful use of violence as a result of his possession of a weapon; Rose suggested that she would respond with the use of force to defend herself and her honour when faced with violence perpetrated by her partner, Dwight: "You expect I go take a slap (Rose);" Dawn alluded to responding with equal force when confronted by her partner's violence; and Janet cited an example in which she sprayed her partner with mace as a form of self defence. In these examples women's use of violence is discussed as decisive practices enacted to defend themselves against men's violence. Most women, however, expressed fear of men's violence citing men's greater physical strength, men's fatal threats and a history of receiving injuries as a result of men's violence as factors which dissuaded them from using violence even to defend themselves. Such factors might explain why men's violence is presented as more effective. In short, participants' narratives supported the notion of violence as a masculine act which meant that men were more capable of enacting such practices to achieve definitive ends. As an option almost exclusively open to men, the image of men using violence, the threat of men's violence and, ultimately, men's violence in intimate relationships were used to control the actions of women.

In addition, there were gender differentials in the strategies used to explain violence in relationships. The conclusions drawn from the current analysis are compatible with those made by Dobash et al (1998) who compared men's and women's discussions of violent events, and those made by Anderson and Umberson study of men's accounts. In their analysis of men's violence against women Dobash et al (1998, 392-393) found that men's and women's accounts were vastly different. Men's accounts, they argue, "were sparse and abbreviated; they often started the narrative at a point that implicated their partners . . . Men were more likely to spontaneously describe the less severe types of violence." In contrast, women tended to report on "a greater variety and volume of violence. Women were more likely to spontaneously describe the more severe types of violence and injuries" (Dobash et al 1998, 392). Similarly most men in the current study discursively distanced themselves from the violence they perpetrated against their partners in intimate relationships. This was sometimes done in very subtle ways. While

several men presented various versions of what transpired during violent episodes they often avoided using the first person when talking about the violence they perpetrated. Another strategy was to engage in narratives of disembodiment by pointing to the loss of control or loss of self. The impression conveyed here is that when provoked men lose control of their usual stable selves. In these rationalisations, the violent act does not emanate from a person's 'true' self, but is an effect of women's provocation and men's subsequent loss of control. This is illustrated in statements like "I'm not a violent person." Anderson and Umberson (2001) explain that men tend to minimise their violence and present themselves as essentially non-violent actors. Even as men talk about violence there is a tendency to issue caveats such as the previously cited statement.

When comparing the accounts of the eight couples in the current study women tended to recount more violent episodes and more details about their's and their partners' actions. In some instances, men recounted a single violent episode over the duration of the relationship whereas their partners pointed to several incidents. In fact, the women in the study describe the violence they experienced in their relationships as regular and in some cases extreme. Women reported a range of injuries, including bruises to the face and body, feeling ill, cuts and scars as a result of their partner's violence. In addition, while both men and women were generally explicit about the actions preceding men's use of violence a marked difference between men's and women's accounts is in the detail women offered about men's violent acts and women's responses to this form of violence. Men tended to evade discussions of the violence they used against their partners. This may in fact reflect contemporary societal loathing of men's violence against women.

Social sanctions against violence against women coupled with ideologies of gender provide the context within which we might come to terms with men's use of discourse of provocation and blame. Men often used their accounts to position women as responsible for the violence they perpetrated. Discourses of female provocation and

blame had the effect of rationalising, justifying and excusing men's violence. There is a sense in which such discourses functioned as mitigating strategies aimed at managing the kinds of public selves projected during the interviews. Embedded in the language of provocation and blame were broader social languages on masculinities and femininities, and assumptions about men's power relative to women. Implicitly, violence against women in heterosexual relationships was presented as permissible under certain circumstances. Although there were moments during the interviews in which women assumed blame for their own violent victimisation, such interventions were infrequent. For the most part, women identified their partners as the ones responsible for the violence in their relationships. Men justified their violence as a consequence of women's irrationality and disobedience which created subordinate subject positions for women. This normalised male dominance by presenting men as arbiters of fairness and punishment when necessary.

A paradox was created in men's utterances. On the one hand, it appears as though attempts to avoid disclosing the detail of their violence and their use of provocation and blame narratives reflect the shame associated with perpetrating violence against women. On the other hand, engaging traditional discourses about women's and men's positions relative to the family and intimate relationships not only reinforced ideologies of men's dominance, but they also appear to excuse men's violence. In short, men shifted between implicating the shame associated with this form of violence and seeking to present rational selves in their use of violence. This tension is indicative of the multiple positions a person might assume in the construction of identity even as the pull is towards traditional articulations of self.

Presumptions of women's infidelity appeared to provide the most serious threat to masculinity and this was given as the main rationalisation for men's violence in both men's and women's accounts. There appears to exist a double standard of sexual morals for men and women which is a point made in the work by Wilson (1969). Women's reports suggest that men's suspicions of their infidelity or the threat of infidelity were used to justify men's violence, and other controlling and coercive tactics. However,

some women also explained that when they questioned their partners' fidelity this too resulted in men's violence. Participants' accounts of men's promiscuity did not reflect a devaluing of masculinity. Sexual freedom for men was sometimes presented as a right of passage to which men were entitled. The source of this double standard is the principles of respectability for women and managing reputation for men. At no point in women's and men's talk was a respectability based on women's monogamy challenged. Women always rejected the characterisation of 'bad woman', whore or jezebel as these signalled a loss of respectability to be replaced by loose morals.

Women's explanations of sexual violence resonated with ideas about women as objects of men's sexual desire and women as men's property. In these accounts there is an expectation that women would acquiesce to men's sexual desires on demand and that there was need to monitor women in order to secure women's fidelity as a means of staving off emasculation. Inequities of power were observed in accounts where women portrayed themselves as powerless to effect changes in men's sexual practices, but described themselves as being constantly monitored and restricted by men who seemed to be in constant fear of women's infidelity.

Violence, control and other coercive acts were presented as a means through which men attempted to govern women's sexuality. Women's discussions of sexual violence and sexual coercion existed on a continuum from the more subtle acts of verbal coercion to reports of rape. Some women explained that acquiescing to sex with their partners was a means by which they avoided being physically abused. The talk that women produce on their experiences of sexual violence not only position women as objects of men's sexual desire, but these women appear powerless to effect change in this regard. Sexual violence, actualised by the use of physical force or threats of violence represents yet another site in which asymmetrical relations of power are reinforced in intimate unions. Underlying these arrangements of power are traditional articulations of gender which may in fact be more acute in abusive relationships.

7.4 Positioning the Personal: Reflections on the Process of Researching IPV in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)

Positioning the personal in the research process is now regarded as an important site for reflecting on how knowledge is produced (England 1994; Kirsch 1999; Macbeth 2001; Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Merriam 2001). By positioning the personal, I refer directly to the effects of my choices as researcher, my personal values and my social location in shaping the knowledge produced about IPV in SVG. Personal reflections afford researchers the opportunity to critically assess the implications of the knowledge claims emerging from empirical research. A researcher's willingness to place her or his own actions and assumptions under scrutiny is a reminder that all knowledge is indeed political and embedded within particular relations of power. In this section, I reflect on my role as a Vincentian woman researcher conducting feminist research on IPV in SVG.

I started this process with the aim of understanding the problem of violence against women in intimate relationships in the country of my birth, SVG. Growing up in SVG, I was aware of campaigns to end violence against women as far back as the 1980s and 1990s, but it was not until I became a university student that I appreciated the importance of research in assessing and addressing the problem. It also became quite clear that there was little or, in some cases, no social research on violence in the countries of the Eastern Caribbean. It was in this context that I sought funding to conduct PhD research in SVG. My personal assumption about violence in heterosexual unions at the beginning of the research process was that it is, for the most part, a form of violence against women perpetrated by men. This central assumption was the result of my extensive readings of the empirical and theoretical work on IPV. This coupled with my own feminist politics was instrumental in shaping my research questions and aims. I then wanted to understand more about how ideas around power, privilege, and gender are so often tied to men's violence against women and whether this was the case for a group of persons from my own country. More specifically, I wanted to understand the cultural ideas sustaining these beliefs and whether they were the same for those who experience and those who use violence.

Even as I set out to explore the meanings individuals (re)produce about violence, I was always conscious that I was as embedded in the process of meaning making as those whose voices were being examined. Kirsch (1999, 46) reminds us that "inevitably, researchers are implicated in the process of speaking for others." As a consequence of this inevitability, I here reflect on the effects of my own biography on the research process. I approached this project as a Caribbean feminist concerned with the meanings of violence against women for women and men. My feminist politics preceded the start of my doctoral research, and was indeed instrumental in the framing of my ideas for the thesis. Throughout the process I reflected on my position as a black, Caribbean, feminist, university-trained, former teacher, and Vincentian woman; both 'insider' and 'outsider'. The notion of insider/outsider should not be read in clear dichotomous terms. Merriam et al (2001) remind us that we can be regarded as both insiders and outsiders by research participants at various levels and stages of the research process. They explain that "the reconstruing of insider/outsider status in terms of one's positionality vis-à-vis race, class, gender, culture and other factors, offer us better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one's culture" (Merriam et al 2001, 405). In other words, it is not enough to focus on those aspects of my biography and experiences which connects me to or separates me from participants. Positionality, the power dynamics informing the research process, and the ways in which the emerging data is analysed and represented are relevant points of reflection (Merriam et al 2001).

In relation to fieldwork, I benefitted from my official institutional affiliation to the University of Manchester as this relationship functioned to legitimate my intention in terms of access to interview participants. However, this is not to suggest that informants in any way compromised their professional ethics to satisfy the requirements of my research. In fact, the terms under which I would be able to interview participants were outlined in the very begin and these are captured in chapter three under research methods. Notwithstanding these precautions, my position as interpreted by the interviewees invariably shaped the stories told in terms of content.

Violence in relationships by definition is a sensitive subject matter, so interviews on this theme will always present some challenges. My experience was one where women tended to offer more in general about the various topics covered in the interview than men, and this was especially apparent when comparing the accounts of couples. In my interviews with women I think that I benefitted from my position as a black Vincentian woman. However, this so-called commonality must be read against my position as a university educated researcher interviewing women who were (for the most part) considered working class in relation to an implied social hierarchy. On the one hand, this reinforced ideas about my legitimacy and created a social distance that may have allowed for persons to trust that they would remain anonymous. On the other hand, it was important for me to recognise these power differentials with an understanding of the ease with which the relationship could become exploitative if respect and care for participants' safety and well-being went unacknowledged. One of my main concerns was the variety of responses that interviews of this nature could create given the subject matter. I was very careful not to coax anyone into continuing with interviews when the telling of their stories became difficult. This sometimes occurred in my interviews with women. There were times when I turned off the recorder to ascertain whether it was too difficult for persons to continue or whether they wanted to take a break. Given how much I was relying on and receiving from participants in assisting with the research, I always felt that I had a responsibility to assume an ethic of care and allow this approach to characterise the relationships. This sense of care and responsibility was crucial given the institutional power that was associated with my presence as a researcher. As noted in chapter three, it was also important to be able to provide women with information about their options for assistance however limited these are in SVG.

At the same time, we should recognise how persons we interview "subtly negotiate" power as often they determine when (and sometimes where) the interview will be done, and how much information they share (Merriam et al 2001, 413). It is also important to acknowledge, according to England (1994), that research is indeed a dialogic process, shaped by both researchers and participants. I was completely reliant on the availability of participants and often interviews had to be rearranged to suit their schedule. Some

persons who had previously confirmed their participation withdrew at a later date. However, by characterising the research process as dialogic I do not wish to imply that the same degree of power was accessible to both participants and me. In the context of interviews, I had the list of topics and questions that I wanted to address, but I also facilitated participants' desire to speak to issues of importance to them and to elaborate on those areas they saw as most relevant to the various topics. I endorsed and applied Oakley's (1993) notion of reciprocity in the interview by offering answers to questions posed to me and addressing any concerns raised by participants to the best of my ability. Questions ranged from my own personal experiences to the type of assistance available from state agencies. However, I felt that persons were prepared, from their conversations with informants and me prior to the interview, to be questioned about violence, so that the overall pattern was one where I posed questions or raised an issue and they responded. Upon reflection, it becomes apparent how, as researchers, we consciously and unconsciously orchestrate the actions that would unfold during the interview and this occurs during the process of gaining access. Each person enters the interview with an often unstated working understanding of their anticipated roles. Even with the ideas about reciprocity in mind my experience is that participants, once they had agreed to be interviewed, rarely unsettled these implied arrangements. This acquiescence, I would argue, can be explained as result of the power dynamics within which the research process is embedded and, to a lesser extent, participant desire to tell their stories.

At times I probed for information that persons were sometimes reluctant to share and would not ordinarily disclose in other contexts. This was difficult as I had to ensure that my probing for information did not result in an abuse of power or an abuse of the relationships established. Whenever, I recognised that a participant was reluctant to offer information on an issue I posed questions in a number of different ways, asked persons why it was difficult to talk about a situation, made a request for them to elaborate, found out whether they would mind if we returned to the subject at a later stage in the interview and when all these options were exhausted I ceased mentioning the particular issue. Participants ranged from acquiescing to these requests to outright

rejection. One participant, whom I mentioned previously as Ben, requested an end to the interview once we began to discuss violence against his partner at which point we ended the meeting.

Interviewing men presented a different dynamic from my interviews with women. Men were often willing to elaborate on their reasons for using violence and most were cooperative during interviews, except when discussing the specific acts of violence they used against their partners. This might have been due to a variety of reasons. Andrew's insistence that I would not understand his reasons for using violence because I am a woman exemplifies how popular beliefs about women's inherent differences from men did affect the extent and the nature of the information offered by men. I was more likely to be positioned as an outsider in my interviews with men. However, these silences were analysed for the meanings about gender and men's violence they produced. It is difficult to determine whether most men avoided speak directly about the acts of violence they used because they were being interviewed by a woman or whether these silences reflected a public loathing of violence against women and the shame associated with committing these acts.

Finally, by representing and interpreting data researchers are engaged in making judgements based on the narratives produced in the interview. My first concern with presenting the words of others in this thesis was to avoid the use of portions of the interviews that could be used to identify participants. Much care was taking to ensure participants remained anonymous even as their stories are presented in this thesis. Beyond the issue of anonymity is the issue of the textual appropriation (England 1994) and representation. My knowledge of the Vincentian vernacular allowed persons to speak using the variety of English most often used in their communities. This allowed me to explore various culturally specific values evident in idioms and phrases used in the Vincentian context, and this was of important analytical value when examining the broader meanings produced about violence in this study. The processes of choosing the material for presentation in this thesis and the analytical tools applied were strictly

autonomous for once I had completed the interviews participants were no longer actively involved in meaning making. As much as the quotes were portions of the stories told, I applied specific theoretical insights in my analysis. These are my interpretations of participants lives based on my knowledge of the specific situation, past research, my theoretical framework and in general, a critical feminist lens. It would be misleading to suggest that my analysis is a 'true' representation of respondents' lives. However, I would argue that it is an informed and carefully studied analysis of the meanings persons attach to the practice of violence. This is important because, as I have argued, such dominant discursive practices serve to sustain the very relations of power within which violence and a range of coercive acts are embedded.

7.5 Implications for Theory, Policy, Practice and Research

Social research provides the opportunity for us to learn more about various aspects of social life. In the context of the current work, the aim was to examine IPV against women in SVG. My investigations into the meanings of IPV for participants using specific social services, along with a few men who were incarcerated, brought particular systemic strengths and weakness to the fore. These issues were relevant to both the research on and response to IPV in SVG. In this section, I discuss some of the challenges of conducting research on IPV in SVG, the strength and weaknesses of the current responses to IPV, my recommendations for policy emerging from the experience of doing this research, I end with a brief discussion of how the conclusions coming out of this thesis can be situated within the current literature on IPV and I suggests areas for future research on IPV in the Caribbean.

One of the challenges I faced in SVG was in my efforts to collect data on the local rates of violence against women. I was aware that there had never been any nationwide surveys performed, but I expected that I would have been able to at least gather some institutional data from the Family Court, Family Services or the police. Records were not collated to reflect the number of persons applying for protection and occupation

orders by sex at the Family Court. Police records did not specifically identify violent crimes that were instances of domestic violence. The family services did not identify and count cases that came to them that reflected situations of IPV. I also inquired about whether there were hospital records of injuries and disputes between partners, but I was told that these did not exist. Acknowledging that there are obvious financial constraints that would militate against placing emphasis on data collection, there is still need for agencies to be aware of the patterns of IPV present in SVG as they seek to respond to the problem. A relatively straightforward recommendation is the adoption of a standard data collection protocol for the various agencies that will come into contact with persons affected by the various forms of gendered violence. Persons issuing complaints and seeking services in the form of treatment and protection can be asked for their cooperation at the time of their request to complete a relatively short information sheet on the nature and extent of the violent encounter. These will hopefully be administered by trained personnel in the respective agency (nurses, doctors, police officers, counsellors at the Family Court, and family case workers). This will give an idea of the reported incidents of IPV from a clinical sample, with information about who perpetrated the acts and the impact of the violence on the victim. Ideally, it will be useful to be able to gather information from a population sample so that prevalence and incidence rates can be assessed, but in the absence of resources it makes sense to be able to record the incidents that are brought to the attention of state authorities.

The Family Court in SVG provides a commendable service for persons affected by IPV in spite of the shortage staff in terms of counsellors. When I started the research there were a total of four counsellors assigned to the court, but the time my work was completed this had dropped to two. Counsellors are required to investigate claims, advise clients and make recommendations to the court. The advantage of the approach utilised by the Court is that there are trained personnel guiding the process. However, it is difficult to efficiently manage this process when there are only two persons assigned to the institutions and they are required to address all matters that come before them regarding family disputes (outside of divorce). The problem that arises from the shortage of personnel is that cases are often delayed as an investigation must precede an

application. There is an urgent need to augment the staff resources at the court to ensure the efficient handling of these very sensitive issues.

During my time in SVG I also sensed that there was a need for a more clearly defined policy on the ways in which different agencies respond to IPV in general. The Family Court is regarded as the entity that has been mandated to address IPV from a legal and social perspective. However, complaints are sometimes made to the police who then decides whether it is a matter for the criminal court or Family Court. When complaints are made to the Family Services they also make a judgement about whether the case should be transferred to the police or the Family Court. Their judgment is usually influenced by the complainant's willingness to take the case forward. However, there is no overall official policy or agreement between these institutions about what should be done based on the nature of the dispute and the complainants' desires. Decisions taken are usually based on the judgements of the officer, counsellor or family case worker responding to the complaint. An official policy on the state's response that is made public allows individuals to know what is available to them at each of these agencies and where might be the best place to lodge their complaints based on their desired outcome.

Hague's (2005) view on the need for policy professionals to be attentive to the voices survivors of IPV by hearing and heeding their requests is an important response if we are to account for cultural specificities even as we recognise that there are some shared patterns across culture. Culture becomes important in seeking to determine what would work for women in these circumstances. It is only by heeding these voices that we are able to understand why so many women avoid the formal services of the state and what coping mechanisms they employ as they make decisions about leaving or remaining in abusive relationships. Women's voices of their experiences of violence and their immediate and long term needs should form the basis of any policy response to violence. In addition, there is need to acknowledge the limits of official policy as there can be no single remedy to satisfy the needs of a heterogeneous grouping of individuals.

The extent to which men can be engaged in ending violence against women also requires attention. Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) and Peacock and Levack (2004) have highlight the importance of engaging men as partners in ending violence against women in intimate relationships. The work of counsellors in SVG who seek to confront men about their actions is part of this engagement. The current work has however pointed to the need to challenge Vincentian men (and women) about some of the more traditional ideas on men's and women's place in society as these serve to reinforce the asymmetrical relations of power within which IPV occurs. This can be done at the level of public education and a range of carefully thought through agency interventions (for instance, counselling, theatre, support groups, schools, and media products). This is of course an ongoing process, as the aim is to try to challenge and reconceptualise ideas about men's entitlements relative to women and the family. In the mean time, there is need for safe spaces for women, as many respondents lamented the lack of options for leaving the relationships when they felt threatened. Safe spaces may be in the form of shelters for women, but attempts should also be made to reorient communities' attitudes towards assisting survivors of violence. Families, churches, friends and neighbours should be empowered to assist women who often explain that the stay longer because of the shame associated with leaving and the fact there is often nowhere to go. Public campaigns should focus on eradicating the shame and silences that militate against women engaging communities.

In this thesis, I demonstrated the significance of the dominant ideologies of gender in understanding the meanings women and men (re)produce about IPV. I have argued that normative gendered practices and values are inextricably linked to the meanings of violence produced in talk. Such gendered meanings are nuanced by culture even as there are obvious similarities with other qualitative research on IPV. This study adds to the literature that conceptualises IPV as violence against women and affirms the need to address the gendered nature of this form of violence. My direct focus on participants' beliefs about gender allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the ways in which

narratives of violence implicated dominant beliefs about manhood and womanhood, and the difficulties associated with challenging these ideological relations.

While this thesis examined the ways in which participants negotiated gendered identities in their accounts of violence, violent threats and other coercive acts in intimate relationships, there remains a need to examine other dimensions of IPV in the Anglophone Caribbean. There is need for research which seeks to determine the incidence and prevalence of IPV and other forms of violence occurring in the family in the Anglophone Caribbean. There is also room to analyse the occurrence of IPV in relation to other forms of interpersonal violence with a view of determining whether there might be any connection between these various forms. Future work in the area historicising IPV in Caribbean might consider the legal, social and community response to this form of violence.

Further studies on IPV might also consider how research might be applied to improve state and non-state responses to women survivors of IPV. To this end, there is room to build on the work of Lazarus-Black (2001, 2003 & 2007) on the social and legal response in Trinidad and Tobago and the work of Hadeed and El-Bassel (2006) on the formal and informal networks of social support for women, also in Trinidad and Tobago. This work should also consider the challenges Caribbean women confront in attempting to end violent relationships. Women's report of post-relationship violence and stalking is another area that requires further work. Such actions by men have serious implications for women's quality of life once the relationship has ended.

Chapter One

[1] Prior to the implementation of the Family Courts in Trinidad and Tobago applications for protection and occupation orders in domestic violence cases were heard at the magistrate's courts.

[2] Between 1958 and 1962 there was a British West Indian Federation. The Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) was established in 1968 and lasted until 1972. CARIFTA was the forerunner to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Caribbean governments continue to commit to regional integration through there involvement in CARICOM, and most recently the Caribbean Single Market (CSM) was established to formalise issues around trade, intraregional migration and other economic processes.

Chapter Two

[3] Impulsivity, in this study, is defined as an inability to regulate certain behaviours, such as aggression.

[4] Campbell and Soeken (1999b) distinguish between forced sex and rape by arguing that the latter term is usually associated with sexual assault by a stranger. They also avoid the use of the terms marital rape and wife rape since these fail to capture the frequency with which forced sex occur in non-marital relationships. Notwithstanding these issues it should be noted that a women is more likely to be raped by someone known to her and the term rape is valued in its politicised uses for purposes of activism against violence against women.

[5] The word 'masculinist' comes from the word 'masculinism'. Masculinism is best described as an essentialist ideology of biological determinism (Aronowitz 1995). This ideology serves to justify and naturalise men's power and domination of the resources of society (Brittan 1989; Aronowitz 1995). It has also been described as the ideology of patriarchy (Brittan 1989). Masculinist notions naturalises differences between men and women as fundamental to human relations. Aronowitz (1995, 316-317) argues that "it imputes male superiority on the basis of strength and/or gender differentiation with respect to sexual reproduction, and posits gender-determined mental propensities." Furthermore, masculinism normalises and naturalises heterosexuality, the sexual division of labour, and the private/public dichotomy in which women are restrict to the domestic sphere and men can traverse freely between public and private spaces (Brittan 1989). Brittan is careful to point out that he is not suggesting that the connection between masculinism and masculinity is tenuous. Even though men may have multiple ways of practising their masculinities, temporally and spatially, "this does not mean that these masculinities have nothing to do with male dominance" (Brittan, 1989, 5). This is because masculinist discourses are "reproduced and reaffirmed in the household, the economy and the polity" (Brittan 1989, 6).

[6] Though originally articulated to refer to the literary text, Bakhtin's (1981 and 1994) deployment of the term *heteroglossia* captures the multiple social languages which intervene in the construction of self as individuals. Through a process of imbrication these social languages become part of the individual's discourse. He emphasises the importance of the dialogic or dialogue in this process of positioning oneself in speech.

Chapter Three

[7] Interview with a family case worker 5 May 2008.

[8] Interview with Family Court Counsellor A, 10 May 2008.

[9] Kalinago is the name used by the indigenous people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other Eastern Caribbean territories to refer to themselves. However, the early Spanish colonisers referred to them as the Caribs.

[10] Senior Schools were usually attached to primary schools and acted as a form of middle school. Persons who were unsuccessful at the Common Entrance exams or who could not afford to attend secondary schools went on the Senior School. The system has more or less phased out with the introduction of compulsory secondary education.

[11] The term separated used in Table three refers to the termination of relationships in general, irrespective of whether the parties were married, living together or in a visiting relationship.

[12] One respondent, whom I refer to as Ben, did not complete the incident card. He did not admit to perpetrating any acts of violence against his partner.

[13] The term interpretive repertoire is used instead of discourse within the subfield of DA referred to as discursive psychology. However, the former is used to signal conceptual and methodological positions that might be different from the poststructuralist use of the term discourse (Edley 2001).

Chapter Four

[14]According to Hodge (2002) only women in the Caribbean who might now be entering the workforce are women of the upper echelons of society. She continues to explain that since the bulk of Caribbean women were brought here during the slave trade from Africa, and later from India during the Indentureship period, women first worked as enslaved labour, then indentured labourers, and later as small farmers, cane cutters, domestic workers, seamstresses, market vendors, inter-island traders, washers, ironers, sellers of food on the roadside, child-minders inter alia.

[15] In 1986 and 1991 Arthur Miller published *The Marginalization of the of the Black Male: Insights from the Development of the Teaching Profession* and *Men at Risk*, respectively. Miller used data which compared the performance of male and female students at secondary and university level. He concluded that boys were being marginalised within the education system, the consequence of which meant that 'men were in crisis'. The phrases 'male marginalisation' and 'men in crisis' entered public discourses in a significant way and from the 1990s were being used to describe the state of men in a number of different arenas. Caribbean feminist has since written back to Miller's thesis, arguing that his work implies that women's success in education is responsible for the problems that some men face in contemporary Caribbean societies. They argue that the emphasis ought to be shifted to a focus on how we assign, from a very early age, differential roles to boys and girls, with the latter having far more responsibilities within the home. For further explication of these debates see Barriteau 2000 and 2003b; Miller 1986 and 1991; and Parry 2004.

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APPENDIX 1

Halimah DeShong
PhD Candidate
School of Law
University of Manchester

GENDERED NEGOTIATIONS: INTERROGATING DISCOURSES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

ETHICAL STATEMENT

Study Description

This thesis seeks to explore the phenomenon of intimate partner violence (IPV) within heterosexual relationships. The aim is to closely examine the accounts of men and women involved in domestic disputes in which they have experienced violence as victims, perpetrators or both. The study will take place in the Caribbean country of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is guided by a qualitative methodology. The current research seeks to examine how gender and IPV intersect empirically and theoretically. Of particular interest are the meanings individuals attribute to their actions and experiences. In-depth interviews will be conducted with persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have used and/or experienced violence in their relationships. The method of data collection is intended to allow individuals the opportunity to offer a range of explanations for their actions. This study privileges a qualitative approach, as what is sort is an in-depth understanding of the interstices of gender and violence. These interviews should allow for greater insights into the complexities of how people set up their activities. It is also important to examine how victims and perpetrators of violence think about, perceive and experience the worlds they occupy.

Relations with and Responsibilities towards Research Participants

Fieldwork will be conducted with the assistance of particular social service agencies in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These agencies include the Marion House, family court, and the Gender Affairs Department. The Marion House is a non-governmental organisation which provides a variety of services to the Vincentian public. It provides counselling services for victims of IPV and perpetrators are also court-referred to the Marion House for counselling. There is a great degree of dialogue between the agencies mentioned above on the issue of IPV.

Gatekeepers at these agencies have expressed their commitment to assist with this research by asking persons to participate in this study. There will be no contact between the researcher and potential respondents until they have agreed with the gatekeepers to participate in the study. Consent will again be sought or confirmed when the researcher meets with the participants for the first time. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality are paramount in this research endeavour. Participants will be briefed about the purpose of the study, the intended outcomes and how they might be affected by the study. They will be assured that the information will be kept

confidential (that is, only the researcher will listen to the interviews), their names will not be used in the study, and any other information which can identify participants (such as an address) will be omitted when the tapes are transcribed. Pseudonyms will be used when tapes are transcribed. They will be told that the equipment used in the study is the property of the researcher and will be carefully stored in order to maintain their privacy.

IPV field research presents some difficulties because of the sensitive nature of this issue. Participants' physical and psychological well-being is given priority. Once it is recognised that the study might threaten the safety of any potential respondents these individuals will no longer be pursued for the current study. In addition, it is hoped that interviews will take place at the Marion House where counsellors will be available to provide support for anyone who might find it difficult to cope with the issues raised in the interviews.

Safety Issues

It is also important to consider how the safety of participants' and researcher will be maintained throughout the entire field work period. It has already been explained that if the research poses any threat to a potential respondent then that individual will not be pursued to participate in the study. However, there are other issues to consider. All interviews will take place during the day and it is hoped that they will end by 3:00 pm. This is to allow the interviewees and the interviewer enough time to return to their homes before it gets dark. As earlier stated, the intention is to conduct the interviews at the Marion House which is a central location in St. Vincent. Venturing out into unfamiliar areas in any country may expose the researcher to potentially dangerous situations. This means that participants will have to be reimbursed for any transportation costs that they might incur to get to the venue of the interview.

Interviews will be done in private settings (an unoccupied room) to protect the privacy of the participants. However, it is important that someone is always made aware of the whereabouts and the timetable of the researcher, in the event of any unforeseen or difficult circumstances.

Through the various stages of this study (data collection, interpretation of results and presentation of results) there will be a commitment to honest scholarship. While the study recognises that research is a subjective process, as decisions are made about what kinds of questions to ask, the nature of data to be collected and how these data should be analysed, it is also important to re-present people's experiences in their own words. Sound evidence and reasoning should always support the interpretations made about people's accounts, and this should be done in a systematic manner.

APPENDIX 2

Dear Madam/Sir

<u>Re: Collection of Data on Intimate Partner Violence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines</u>

My name is Halimah DeShong and I am pursuing my doctoral studies at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. My research project focuses on intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I write to formally ask your assistance in facilitating this process. I am particularly interested in how individuals (both men and women) in intimate heterosexual relationships talk about their experiences of domestic violence. As part of this exercise, I am required to conduct in-depth interviews with couples who have experienced physical violence in their relationships. However, if I am unable to get couples to agree to participate I am willing to interview individual men and women. I am expected to complete at least 40 in-depth interviews with men and women. To this end, I might need to consult with you on those individuals who will be eligible and willing to participate in this exercise.

I recognise the importance of ensuring that respondents' confidentiality is respected at each stage of the research process. Participants will be guaranteed that neither their names nor any information which can identify them will be used in this project.

With your permission I would like to begin this process at your earliest convenience. I will continue to make the necessary contact with your office. I would very much appreciate any assistance that you will be able to provide. Thanking you in advance for your very kind assistance.

Yours faithfully

……………………..
Halimah DeShong
PhD Student, University of Manchester

APPENDIX 3

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PhD Research
Halimah DeShong
University of Manchester

Supervisors: Prof Russell Dobash
Prof Rebecca Dobash

Date:

Interviewer:

Respondent's I.D. Number:

Location:

Contact Information:

INTRODUCTION

I am conducting a study about people's experiences of violence in relationships. I hope to gain a better understanding of the effects of violence on individuals in their everyday life. Thank you for agreeing to discuss these issues with me. I just want to assure you that this interview is confidential. The interview will be recorded using this digital voice recorder, with your permission. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to stop at any time during the interview. This interview will be kept in a secure location. Your name will not be recorded or used at anytime in this study. I am the only person who will listen to the interview, and when the analysis is finished it will be erased. No one will be able to identify your answers when I write my final report/thesis. Once again, thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study.

We'll begin with some general questions.

A. RESPONDENT'S GENERAL DETAILS

A1 Name . . . .

A2 Age . . . .

A3 Place of birth . . . .

A4 Nationality . . . .

A5 Ethnic background . . . .

A6 Religion . . . .

A7 Primary School Secondary School Tertiary Institution

A8 How old were you when you left school?

A9 Do you have any qualifications from school?
NO
YES University Secondary Other

Qualifications?..

A10 Are your parents still living?
NO both dead
YES both living YES father living YES mother living

A11 What sort of work does/did your mother do?

A12 What sort of work does/did your father do?

A13 How many brother and sisters do you have?
No. of brothers No. of sisters

A14 Did you grow up with them?
YES
NO – Why not?

A15 Have you ever spent time staying away from your family?
NO
YES – Why? What was it like?

A16 Are you currently in paid employment?
YES – What do you do? How long have you worked here?
NO – How long have you been without employment? What was your last job?

B. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

B1 What is your marital status?
married ( ) cohabiting ( ) single( ) div/separated ( )
visiting relationship ( )

Get respondents to expand on the status of their relationship.

IF NOT LIVING TOGETHER:
How often do you see each other?

B2 How long have you and your partner been together?

B3 How many children do you have? daughter(s) son(s)

B4 How old are they?

B5 Where do they reside?

B6 Where are you living at the moment? (Get the respondent to describe the type of accommodation and the living arrangements)

B7 How many persons live there (including him/her)?

B8 Do you ever stay anywhere else? (Get the respondent to describe the type of accommodation and the living arrangements)

B9 How many long term relationships have you had?

C. GENERAL DETAILS ABOUT PARTNER

C1 Name . . . .

C2 Age . . . .

C3 Place of birth . . . .

C4 Ethnic background . . . .

C5 Religion . . . .

C6 Primary School Secondary School Tertiary Institution

C7 How old was she/he when she/he left school?

C8 Did she/he have any qualifications from school?
DK
NO
YES University Secondary Other Qualifications?

C9 Are her/his parents still living?
NO both dead
YES both living YES father living YES mother living

C10 What sort of work does/did his/her mother do?

C11 What sort of work does/did his/her father do?

C12 How many brother and sisters does he/she have?
No. of brothers No. of sisters

C13 Did he/she grow up with them?
YES
NO – Why not?

C14 Did she/he ever spend time staying away from his/her family during childhood?
NO
YES – Why? What was it like for him/her?

C15 Is she/he currently in paid employment?
YES – What does she/he do? How long have she/he worked here?
NO – How long has she/he been without employment?
What was his/her last job? Is she a housewife?

D. PARTNER'S LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

D1 Can you tell me where your partner is staying now?
with you   with new partner   other

D2 How many people live there (excluding her/him)?

D3 Who lives there?
Name   **Sex**   **R'ship**   **Age**

D4 Is this where your partner usually stays?
YES
NO
Where does she usually stay?

D5 Who usually lives there?
Name   **Sex**   **R'ship**   **Age**

D6 Does your partner have any (other) children?
NO
YES - Can you tell me about them?
Name   **Age**   **Sex**   **Where staying**   **With? (R'ship?)**   **Mother/Father**
her/him **or** other

D7 What is his/her marital status? (and length of)
Married ( )   cohabiting ( )   single ( )   div/separated ( )

D8 Do you know if he/she has had any long-term relationships other than with you?
DK
NO other relationships
YES – How many?

E. SOCIAL NETWORK – Respondent's Own Assessment

E1 Do you have many friends?

E2 How many of your friends are women and how many are men?

E3 How many really close friends do you have?

E4 How many of your really close friends are men and how many are women?

E5 Are there any members of your family that you're especially close to? If no, why not? If yes, who and why are you so close to this person?

E6 How often do you go out on your own or with anyone else? (times per week/month/year)

E7 How often do you go out without your partner? (times per week/month/year)

E8 So when you go out, who do you usually see?

Name	**R'ship**	**Where stay?**	**What do?**

E9 When you go out, what kinds of things do you talk about with your friends?

E10 Do you generally prefer the company of men or women? Why?

E11 Would you say that you feel comfortable/ok with women (male respondent) / men (female respondent)?

E12 Have any of the women/men (use appropriate sex depending on respondent) you have known in your life been **good** to you? Probe for explanation.

E13 Have any of the women/men (use appropriate sex depending on respondent) you have known in your life been **bad** to you? Probe for explanation.

E14 What kinds of **opinions** do **you** have about women/men (use appropriate sex depending on respondent)?

E15 What kinds of **opinions** do your **male/female friends and relatives** have about women/men (use appropriate sex depending on respondent)?

F. SOCIAL NETWORK – Respondent's Knowledge of His/Her Partner's

F1 How many friends does your partner have?

F2 How many of your partner's friends are men and how many are women?

F3 How many really close friends does your partner have?

F4 How many of your partner's close friends are men and how are women?

F5 Is your partner especially close to any of his/her family? If yes, who?

F6 How often does your partner go out socially with anyone else?
(times per week/month/year)

F7 What do you think about your partner seeing her friends and family?

F8 How often does your partner go out socially without you?
(times per week/month/year)

F9 What do you think of your partner going out socially without you?

G. IMAGE OF SELF

G1 How do you think your family and friends would describe you?

G2 And how do you think your partner would describe you?

G3 What sort of a person would **you** say you are? / What's your personality like? (Probe for good and/or bad qualities)

G4 As a man/woman, what are some of the things that are important to you?

G5 For you, what does it mean to be a man/woman?

G6 What does your partner think it means to be a man (male respondents) / woman (female respondents)? Do you share his/her feelings?

G7 Thinking about society, what is the role/s of a man/woman? Do you agree with these roles/expectations?

G8 Again, thinking about society, what is the role/s of women/men? Do you agree with this? What do you think?

G9 Have you ever felt less than a man/woman? What happened? / Why?

G10 When are you most comfortable as a man/woman?

G11 And what do you think it means to be a man (female respondents) / woman (male respondents)?

G12 Do you talk to anyone about things that bother you? Who? Does it help? If no, why not?

G13 Do you see yourself as an aggressive person? What makes you say so?

G14 Do you think that your aggressiveness is a problem? What makes you say that?

H. RESPONDENT'S IMAGE OF PARTNER

H1 How do you think your partner's family and friends would describe her/him?

H2 If you were asked to describe your partner, what would you say? / What's her/his personality like? (Probe for good and/or bad qualities)

H3 In your opinion, what does your partner think it mean to be a woman?
MALE RESPONDENTS

H4 In your opinion, what does your partner think it means to be a man?
FEMALE RESPONDENTS

H5 Do you agree with your partner? Why? Why not?

I. KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILY NETWORK AND ROUTINE

I1 How much time does your partner spend with the children?

I2 What sort of things does he/she do with them? (Probe for specific activities)

I3 How much time do you spend with the children?

I4 What sort of things do you do with them? (Probe for specific activities)

I5 How often do you do any of the activities you described all together as a family?

I6 In terms of housework and taking care of the children, what do each of you do?

J. RESPONDENT'S ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONSHIP – When Last Together

J1 Has your relationship changed at all since you have been with your partner? If yes, how?

J2 What attracted you to her/him? What did you like best about her/him?

J3 What would change about her/him if you could?

J4 What are your expectations of a partner?

J5 Does your partner meet these expectations?

J6 Who takes care of the finances in the family/relationship? Why?

J7 Who would you say is in charge or head of the relationship/family, you or your partner? Why?

J8 Tell me what your relationship has been like. (best time, worst time, now)

J9 What do you think has caused the changes? (Probe – children, alcohol, marriage, violence, jealousy etc.)

J10 How much time do/did you and your partner together? Has/did this change over the course of your relationship?

J11 What do/did you do when you are/were together?

J12 What sort of things do/did you and your partner **not see eye to eye** on? (Probe – money, housework, work, kids, family, friends, alcohol, violence, jealousy, sex etc.)

J13 How often did you and your partner argue?

J14 What kinds of things do/did you and your partner argue about? (Probe – money, Housework, work, kids, family, friends, alcohol, violence, jealousy, sex, 'other men', 'other women' etc.)

J15 What do/did you argue about most?

J16 Would you say that you argue more or less than you used to?

J17 When you argue with each other, what usually happens? Do you or your partner back down? Do either of you change the subject? Is there violence? Do both of you discuss the issue?

J18 What do you both usually do after an argument? (Probe – ignores him/her, goes to The rum shop, leaves the house, contacts others, watch TV, go to separate rooms, sulk etc.)

J19 Is there usually an argument before a physical fight?

J20 What do you usually argue about before the violence?

J21 Would you say that your violent behaviour is **harmful** to the your relationship? Why would you say that?

J22 Have you ever left? If no, why not? If yes, how many times and what happened?

J23 Has your partner ever left you? If no, why not?
If yes: How many times did he/she leave? Where did your partner go? How long did she/he spend away? What effect did this have On violence in the relationship? What effect did this have on the relationship?

J24 How do you think you would feel if your partner were to leave you?

K. HISTORY OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

K1 Were there any verbal quarrels and arguments in your own family? Can you tell me about them?

K2 When you were growing did you get into trouble (e.g. rude to parents, failed to do household chores, argued with siblings? What did your parents/guardians do about it?

K3 Were you ever hit by your parents or guardians? Can you tell me about that? (perpetrator, nature of violence, how often, what was the effect)

K4 Do you think that you were ever hit unfairly? Explain. How often did this happen? Do you think you were hit too much?

K5 Did your parents ever have physical fights? If yes, what happened (who was the perpetrator, how often, extent of injuries, argument, drink/drugs)?

K6 In your opinion, how serious was the violence?

K7 How much of this violence did you witness?

K8 How much did seeing this violence affect you? In what way did it affect you?

K9 Was there any other violence in your family? If, yes can you tell me about this (perpetrator, victim, nature of violence, how often? [Repeat K7 and 8]

K10 This is a personal question and I hope you don't mind me asking but can you tell if You were ever sexually abused as a child? If yes, can you tell me about it (perp., age, duration, effects)?

K11 Have you ever been sexually abused as an adult? If yes, can you tell me what happened? (perp., age, duration, effects)?

K12 Would you say that anyone in your family had a drink or drug problem? How serious?

K13 And would you say that you have, or have ever had, a drink or drug problem? If yes how serious? Can you tell me about it?

K14 So, generally, when you look back on your childhood, what was it like?

K15 What was your relationship with your mother like?

K16 And the relationship with your father, what was that like?

K17 Could you tell me a bit more about where you grew up? What was this place like?

K19 Tell about growing up with your brothers and sisters.

K20 Is there anyone and/or anything else that stands out from your childhood? Why?

L. Respondent's Knowledge of Partner's FAMILY VIOLENCE HISTORY

L1 How much have you talked to your partner about her/his childhood?

L2 Were there many verbal quarrels or arguments in your partner's family? If yes, can you tell me about this?

L3 Did your partner's parents ever fight? If yes, how often, perp., nature of violence, who was hurt, extent of injuries, argument, drink or drugs?

L4 How serious was the violence in your partner's opinion?

L5 Did she or he ever see any of this violence?

L6 Was there any other physical aggression in your partner's family? If yes, how much, perp., victim, nature of violence, how often?

L7 Did your partner actually see any of this violence? How much did seeing it affect her/him? In what way?

L8 Would your partner say that anyone in his/her family had a drink or drug problem? (Details – drink/drug, how serious, violent)

M. VIOLENCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP

M1 What are some of the things you and your partner(s) argue about?

M2 Can you remember the first time that an argument with your current partner became violent? Please tell me about it – argument, who was the perp., nature of violence, extent of injuries, drink/drugs, location, witnesses, duration.

M3 How serious would you say this incident was?

M4 Who do you think was responsible? Explain why?

M5 (If respondent is the perp) What did you hope to get when you hit your partner? Did you achieve this?

M6 Why did you **hit** your partner? (instead of alternatives – Do you think that you could have responded differently?)

M7 Did you think you were right to do this?

M8 How did you feel when it happened?

M9 What did you do immediately afterwards? What happened next?

M10 Did you talk about it? If no, why not? If yes, what kinds of things did you both say?

M11 Please tell me about the worst time that an argument with your partner became violent. (argument, who was the perp., nature of violence, extent of injuries, drink/drugs, location, witnesses, duration)

Repeat (M4,5,6,7,8,9,10)

M12 Within the last year, how often have you hit your partner?

M13 Why do you hit your partner? (instead of alternatives – Do you think that you could have responded differently?))

M14 What do you and your partner do or say after a fight?

M15 Do you feel justified in hitting your partner?

M16 How often do you talk about the violence? If never, why not? / What do you say?

M17 Do you apologise or do anything to show your partner that you are sorry?

M18 How do you feel about the use of violence to address problems between you and your partner?

M19 Now can you tell me about the incident which resulted in you leaving or coming in contact with the Family Court [or any other relevant entity]?

(how long were you together, argument, time, location, duration and witnesses)

M20 Can you look at this card and tell if you have ever done any of these things by calling out the letter that apply? How often? INCIDENT CARD I ASSAULT

M21 Is there anything else that you have done that is not on the card? If yes, explain.

M22 When an incident occurs which one of these things do you **most often do**?

M23 Can you tell me, by looking at this second card, if you have ever caused any of these injuries to your partner and how often? INCIDENT CARD I INJURY

M24 Has she/he had any other injury that isn't on the card? If yes, explain.

M25 When an incident occurs which of these injuries does your partner **most often** get?

M26 How many persons know that you are violent? Who are they? How do they feel about it?

M27 Have you wanted to stop hitting? How have you tried to stop being violent? Has it worked?

M28 Have you ever talked to anyone else or been to anyone for help about your violent behaviour? If no, why not? If yes, who, what did you say/do?

M29 Is there anything he/she could have done / could do which could have stopped you / which could stop you hitting your partner?

M30 Have you ever been violent to anyone else? Please tell me about that.

M31 Have you ever been violent to any other partner? Give details.

M32 Now I want you to tell me how often you do any of the following: Use INCIDENT CARD III CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

M33 What do you think about men who hit their partner?

M34 What do you think about women who hit their partner?

M35 Do you think that it is ever ok to hit your partner? If yes, in what circumstances?

Effect of Violence on Victims

I'd like to talk to you about how your partner's violence has affected you and the relationship.

M36 Can you tell me about the first time your partner hit you? How long were you together, was there an argument, nature of the violence, extent of violence, extent of injuries, drink/drug, duration, location, witnesses.

M37 How did you feel after it happened?

M38 Who do you feel was responsible? Why?

M39 Was there anything else that you felt contributed to the incident?

M40 What did you do immediately afterwards? And then what happened?

M41 Did you talk about it? What did you both say?

M42 Who do you think was responsible? Why?

M43 I would like you to tell me about the worst time your partner hit you. How long were you together, was there an argument, nature of the violence, extent of violence, extent of injuries, drink/drug, duration, location, witnesses.
Repeat M37,38,39,40,41,42

M44 In last year, how often has your partner hit you?

M45 Why do you think your partner does this?

M46 How does it make you feel when your partner hits you?

M47 How often do you talk about this violence? If no, why not? If yes, what do you both say?

M48 Does your partner ever apologise? Do you ever apologise?

M50 Did you talk to anyone else about it or go to anyone else for help? If no, why not? If yes, who, what did you ask for, what did contact say, what did contact do, how did contact react?

M51 Now can you tell me about the incident which resulted in you leaving or contacting the Family Court [or any other relevant entity]? (how long were you together, argument, time, location, duration and witnesses)

M52 Using INCIDENT CARD II ASSAULT tell me if your partner has ever done any of these things to you.
How many times in the last year?
How many times ever?

M53 Is there anything else that your partner did that is not on the card?

M54 Can you do the same thing with this card please. Has your partner ever caused any of these injuries to you. USE INCIDENT CARD II INJURY
How many times in the last year?
How many times ever?

M55 Now I want to talk about any other form of control that your partner may have used against you that might not have included hitting you. Could you tell me if your partner has/ had particular ways of threatening you that restrict/ed you in any way?

M56 Does/did your partner do any of the following in a way which you knew meant you to be careful? Use INCIDENT CARD IV CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

M57 Have you ever felt responsible for your partner(s)' violence against you? Why/Why not?

M58 What does your partner say after hitting you?

M59 What does your partner do after hitting you?

M60 Has your partner tried to stop being violent to you? If no, why not? If, yes what has he/she done?

M61 Have you done anything to try to stop your partner being violent? If yes, can you tell me about that? If no, why not?

M62 Do you think that your partner(s) feels responsible for this violence? Explain.

M63 When your partner hit you, do/did you seek help? (If no, why not?) Where from? Were you satisfied with the assistance you received?

M64 What do you think about men who hit their partner?

M65 What do you think about women who hit their partner?

M66 Do you think that it is ever ok to hit your partner? If yes, in what circumstances?

N CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

N1 What have you learned from your experiences in your relationships?

N2 Is there anything you would have done differently?

N3 Describe, for me, your ideal relationship.

N4 What are some of the things you hope to achieve for yourself and your children/family?

N4 Do you think we have covered everything or is there anything else you would like to say?

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS BY INTERVIEWER

Length of interview

Condition of interview

Impression of respondent

General comments

Interviewer's Signature
Date

……………………………   ……………………………...

APPENDIX 4

TRANSCRIPTION NOTATION

. . . Material omitted by the researcher

[text] Explanatory information added by the researcher

Italics Word(s) appearing in italics are those emphasised by the speaker during the interview.

{text} When the interviewer and the interviewee speak at the same time, the minor speaker
text is bracketed.

– When a one speaker's statement or question is cut short by the intervention of the
second speaker

'' Single quotation marks signals a speaker's claim that a statement included their
response is a direct quotation from someone else or something their own remarks made in a dialogue prior to the interview.

When the extract is a single statement by the participant the name of that person is placed in brackets at the end of the extract. For example:

> I felt trapped. I told him I wanted to go back to work. I told him when the baby get older I wanted to go back to work because people were there who could have stayed with her. He said 'no'. I'm not supposed to work. I said, 'ok I will kill the topic and bring it up another time'. When I realise what he was doing to me I turned to him and said 'I need to get a job'. He turned to me and said 'no' . . . He started developing a way. I couldn't say anything, I couldn't do anything, so I just hush. (Janet)

APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE ANALYSIS
(Excerpt from Interview with Andrew)

<u>History of family violence</u>

Int.: In terms of when you were growing up were there any quarrels or arguments in your family?

Andrew: Me father fighting beat up plenty woman. *[No emotional attachment; matter-of-fact]*

Int.: You've seen that?

Andrew: Yeah.

Int.: And, like, why would he do that?

Andrew: Well, woman harden [stubborn] a now tell you dread and they like tell you plenty lies. *[**DISOBEDIENCE**: His reference to women's penchant to disobey is presented as a universal characteristic of women. When he uses the term 'woman' is signifies women in general. He rationalises his father's violence as a need to discipline an unruly femininity.*
***DISHONEST**: Like disobedience, dishonesty is presented as a universal characteristic specific to women. Overall, his response functions to normalise and rationalise his father's violence, and he constructions essentialist notions of women's inherent vices with an implication that men are justified to administer discipline.*
***POWER**: The statement also functions to reinforce perceptions about men's entitlement to power in relation to women]*

Int.: So because of that –

Andrew: [He laughs] Women is not to be trusted a certain amount of the times. It's only like when yuh 'pon a level. Boy, I don't like talk 'bout woman because you're a woman.
[Again he raises the issue of women's inherent dishonesty, which implies a need to monitor as part of this disciplinary process.
***GENDER/WOMAN INTERVIEWING MEN**: an important site for analysis. This should not be read as a limitation as there is as much in the said as there is in the unsaid. He makes a judgement about me as female interviewer; binary identities depicted for men and women; there is a sense in which I would identify with women because we are anatomically similar; I could not possible understand his need to discipline because of my inherent values as a woman]*

Int.: So if a man was doing the interview would you have said more?

Andrew: Yeah it mek a difference because you is a woman. I can't level [talk straight] with you because you is a woman. If been [if it was] a man because you being a woman I can't just run down woman because you might think that a man would run you down the same way.
*[**GENDER/WOMAN INTERVIEWING MEN**: his response points to the issue of establishing and maintaining rapport. There is a sense in which he universalises the experiences of both men and women, and creates separate and distinct categories for both.*
Conflicts in relationships are presented as a battle between these two groups that are inherently different. He describes his reluctance to "run down" or speak ill of women in my presence as a consequence of him not wanting to affect my future relations with men.]

Int.: The thing is all of us shaped by our own circumstances and because of the things I experience in my life I would think a certain way and the things that you experience might make you think a different way –
*[**ATTEMPTS TO DIALOGUE IN THE PROCESS OF MEANING MAKING**: Here I present my views engaging in a discourse on nurture in the development of personality. The intention was to engage him in an alternative understanding of gender to see how he might respond; attempts to challenge stable constructions of gender. The use of the nurture discourse here is also an intentional move to get Andrew to look at me differently; the intended function is to maintain rapport and to get him to open up about his views on gender and his father's and his own use of violence. However, from the response below, it is clear that Andrew is quite wedded to traditional narratives of gender. My intervention here also reflects my own feminist politics.]*

Andrew: Woman harden man *[Again his reference to women's inherent dishonesty]*. Me don't like talk one time and two time *[Expectation of deference by women; points to broader ideas about men's entitlement to power]*. They just don't hear.

Int.: You mean like we stubborn?

Andrew: If me talk to you one time [mm hmm] That is enough time. It mean after that expect a lash.
*[**JUSTIFICATION**: His right to use violence is explained as an effect of women's disobedience]*

*[**DISOBEDIENCE & DISHONESTY**: his repeated reference to women as "harden" is the context in which he justifies violence. The Madonna/Jezebel dichotomy features in both the reference to women as harden/stubborn and women as dishonest, "not to be trusted"]*

Andrew speaks matter-of-factly about his experiences.

The overall ***PATTERN/STRATEGY FOR EXPLAINING VIOLENCE*** *is one where he justifies and excuses his violence. He blames women for their inability to defer to men; for their disobedience and dishonesty (i.e. adhering to the Jezebel image). He avoids elaborating on the specific acts of violence used.*