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Men and Their Interventions in Violence Against Women:  
Developing an Institutional Ethnography.

CAROLE IRENE WRIGHT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
HUDDERSFIELD  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the social organisation of men's intervention in men's violence against women, and the men who work within this realm. The area of intervention chosen, known as 'domestic violence', has seen considerable voluntary sector growth during the past two decades. However, few studies have investigated the positioning of men's intervention within the wider context of 'domestic violence support and services, which, in the main, have been developed by women. Therefore, this study maps the interconnections of men's everyday workings within 'domestic violence' as professionals, public service providers, activists, and as men.

The study was underpinned by a feminist framework and attempted to synthesise theory, practice and activism. Dorothy E. Smith's approach of institutional ethnography was employed, and analysis was rooted in her concepts of 'ruling relations' and 'Ideological codes'. The entry point for research comprised professional men who worked with men who had been violent to known women, as well as men who volunteered their time in violence prevention campaigns. During the course of the research seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted, and thirty public and semi-public events around the theme of men's violence towards women were attended.

The main findings from this study include the identification of processes that have reconceptualised the social problem of men's violence towards women into 'the relations of ruling'. Findings also suggest that feminism as an 'ideological code' is a key organiser of social relations within the 'domestic violence' sector. Furthermore, although the majority of leadership, work and activism within the area of 'domestic violence' is carried out by women, and despite the relative smallness of men's intervention in 'domestic violence', the findings indicate that disproportionate opportunities for men to utilise their social power can be available in this area of intervention.

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# CHAPTER 1

## CONCEPTION, FOCUS AND STRUCTURE

### 1.1 Conception

The idea for this research grew out of my many years of political and social concern with all forms of violence. I have a longstanding interest in, and have been politically active against, issues of national, state, institutional, and structural violence. However my main focus is primarily men's violence towards women and children. My interest in men's violence intensified after embarking on an undergraduate degree course as a mature student, where I was enabled to begin thinking about violence in a more theoretical and scholarly way. This scholarly way of thinking supplemented my activism. It was also during these years that I was introduced to feminist theory which, for me, formed the missing piece of the jigsaw and played a key part in helping to make sense of the gendered nature of the world in which I participated. My relationship with feminism was initially quite straightforward. I was enthusiastic and it accompanied me everywhere.

In hindsight, I realise that I held a fairly unproblematic understanding of feminism. I was aware of the women's movement – which I could name and understood as an ideology with political goals – and I was also especially aware of two different types of feminism: radical feminism and liberal feminism – which I was unable to name and define with any confidence. My current understanding of the different strands of feminism and their inter/intra-relationships has developed into a far more complex realisation that feminism is not a homogeneous ideology or concept. Indeed, feminism can be a contingent and loaded term, saturated with meaning and emotion. Very often these meanings carry negative and pejorative connotations based on stereotypical understandings that work to constrain its goals. That is not to deny that feminism has had many successes, though, and Chapter four discusses some of these successful influences within the area of violence against women. Moreover, and despite no one strand of feminism being mutually exclusive, for the purposes of this research I would locate myself as

more closely identifying with radical feminism than with any other form of feminism.

The final decision on the focus of this research has not been that of a straight road either, but rather has consisted of a series of meanderings that, due to the development of my feminist thinking, often merge and cross at varying points. Initially, my PhD proposal centred around researching child sexual abuse as a *social problem* rather than the dominant discourses which tend to posit it as more of a *psychological* or *pathological* problem. As such, my preliminary intention was to interview men in prison who had been convicted of sexual offences towards children; however for a number of reasons my research shifted considerably. In the main this shift was due to my development of feminist thought, as well as a number of practical decisions. However, the shift occurred not around the wider topic of men's violences, but rather from the entry point from which I began. What follows is a brief sketch of how I arrived at the decision to study the field of 'violence intervention' and men who work in this field.

As a joint honours sociology/social policy undergraduate, my final year dissertation centred around the problem of child sexual abuse as a social phenomenon and, from a feminist perspective, looked at the public discourses surrounding this problem. Whilst writing the dissertation I became familiar with 'continuum of violence' (Kelly 1988), and my understanding grew to include the political, cultural, historical and temporal meanings that are often hidden within common definitions of violence – in particular the contentions between the terms 'domestic violence' and 'violence against women', which will be discussed later on in this section. This then led to an interest in the socially constructed relations between men and women and the dominant ideologies and discourses embedded within masculinity; femininity and sexuality and the complex ways in which these areas might relate to different forms of violences within society.

Feminists have identified, theorised and written about male dominance, patriarchies and patriarchal relations, and since the women's movement have pursued social, structural and political goals in an effort to change gender relations and practices. The extent to which these transformations have occurred, along with the extent of their positive benefits remains open to

debate (see Walby 1989/99). Gender relations and practices are adaptive and subject to constant shift, and to help me understand the nature of current gender relations my MA thesis set out to locate young people's understandings of gender relations (Wright 2006), in order to complement and provide some background to my doctoral study.

My MA research utilised single sex discussion groups and vignettes with young men and women aged sixteen and seventeen who attended sixth form at a local comprehensive school. Six vignettes were designed to initiate discussion on intimate sexual relationships, parenting, violence and sexuality. My analysis was set within the context of institutional and organisational forces and the ways in which they shape everyday experience and understanding. Focusing down, the information generated from the discussion groups was further analysed within the frameworks of hegemonic masculinity and sociological theories of education. My findings suggested that although these young people held some progressive views on gender, this was complicated by more conventional attitudes in relation to gender stereotypes. Traditional sex roles remained the core basis from which my participants understood their intimate and gendered relations which, arguably, underpins and aids the reproduction of the gendered social organisation of modern UK society.

These findings generated an intellectual puzzle (Mason 2002), regarding gender stereotypes and conventional sexist attitudes that might prevail within the area of what is known as 'domestic violence'. 'Domestic violence', as a social problem, is now firmly on the public agenda. Support and services for women have grown, as have policies, initiatives and legislation. However, this form of violence against women still prevails, and I began to think about why this still might be. The next section, then, contextualises the area of 'domestic violence', drawing out certain aspects that inform the framework that underpins this study, and details the process of reasoning that led to the entry point of my research

## **1.2 Focus of the Research**

There are three overarching subject areas that became apparent early on in this research: the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and its influences, current status and positioning within the area; the Third Sector and

the ways in which it has developed under the Labour government, and how it serves to organise the area of 'domestic violence'; and the men themselves, including the routes through which they came to work in this field, their understanding of feminism and how this is applied within and across the area they work in, and also how their work within this area is organised and intersects with women's feminist goals in general. In reality, each of these areas impact significantly on each other in intricate ways, through webs of ideological systems and practice. This section, briefly outlines the current situation in the area of 'domestic violence', then, for the purposes of this study, locates how both feminism and 'domestic violence' are understood and used in this research. It finishes by detailing the focus of this study and setting out the overall aims.

### **1.2.1 The Current Situation**

It is both puzzling and frustrating that despite the advancements in policy regarding 'domestic violence', sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape, that all these forms of violence appear to be as prevalent as they ever were. Indeed, some of these forms of violence have been overtly subjected to erosion and challenge. For example, the rates of rape conviction have declined, and violence against women or 'domestic violence' has not only been de-gendered but is also subject to arguments that claim women are **as** violent to men as men are to women. Moreover, policy itself is patchy and subject to a post code lottery. In their third annual independent report entitled 'Making the Grade' (2007), End Violence Against Women (EVAW) found that:

1. A third of local authorities have no specialised violence against women support services.
2. Most women have no access to a Rape Crisis Centre, and less than a quarter of local authorities provide any sexual violence service at all.
3. A third have no services on domestic violence.
4. Fewer than 10% of local authorities provide any specialised services for women and girls who face forced marriage, female genital mutilation or crimes in the name of honour. (ibid: p3)

EVAW assessed the Labour government's actions around violence against women and found they scored just two out of ten. With reference to EVAW's point 2, above, the problem of sexual violence against women was publicly taken up by David Cameron, leader of the Conservative Party when he addressed the Conservative Women's Organisation in London on 12.11.2007 with a speech entitled *The Need to End Sexual Violence Against Women* (Cameron 2007). Cameron addressed, the low conviction rates for rape, the failure of sex education in schools to teach children about sexual respect and consent, the need for a change of attitude in society, and, crucially, the lack of funding and subsequent closings of many Rape Crisis centres. This had far reaching effects, making the front page news and placing the difficulties faced within Rape Crisis England and Wales on the public agenda. As a result, early March 2008 saw a support campaign launched by the *New Statesman*, and a few weeks later government minister, Harriet Harman, pledged £1million of support to help Rape Crisis Centres survive until a more sustainable model is developed (Rape Crisis England and Wales 2008).

With regard to the above points 1 and 4, the Conservative run Ealing council changed their funding criteria in early 2008 which included withdrawing the £100,000 funding for Southall Black Sisters (SBS) who provide specialised services to black and minority ethnic groups. The £100,000 funding was then to be tendered for by any group that could provide the best all round services for the whole borough. This decision was taken to the High Court, where a judge overruled the council's decision and set a precedent for future specialist providers (*Ealing Times* 18.7.08.). These examples give a flavour of the uneven service provision within regions, and also demonstrates the publicity that powerful institutions and influential individuals are able to generate within central government and local authorities in different regions.

### **1.2.2 Locating Feminism**

Feminism is fundamental not only to the content, but also to the process of this research, but to define feminism as one homogeneous set of beliefs is not possible. Rather there are many forms of feminism, or feminisms (Maynard 1998) that have evolved from the diverse experiences of women as well as from 'malestream' theoretical perspectives (Bryson 1999). Very often

writers explain different feminisms as three distinctive traditions, those of radical, socialist and liberal. However, this is often misleading (Bryson 2003) as well as reductive. Each of these three traditions contain within them differing schools of thought regarding culture, race, religion, class, sexuality and so on. Moreover, other forms of feminism are also well established such as Black feminisms, lesbian and anarchist feminisms, as well as newer forms such as postmodern and/or queer feminisms, and those associated with 'third-wave' feminism (Gillis, Howie & Munford 2007), or indeed, feminisms that are integral to or influence contemporary social movements such as environmentalism and anti-capitalism.

The most widespread forms of feminism are those associated with liberalism. These feminisms work within existing forms of democracy to achieve 'equal rights' with men in terms of legal, political and economic rights (see Bryson 2003). To this end, much has been achieved on these terms, and few feminists would disagree with the freedoms that are bound up in their traditions. Moreover, the feminisms associated with 'equal rights' are often seen as 'common sense', and constitute the more dominant forms of feminism (Edley & Wetherell 2001, Riley 2001). However, feminisms that are based on just 'equal rights' can work to marginalise or devalue the traditional roles of women, and serve to maintain 'men' as the measure of what it is to be human (Bryson 2003:162)

Socialist and Marxist traditions of feminism developed from class analysis and capitalism and cover a wide range of political theories, ranging from revolutionary communism to reformist social democracy (Bryson 1999, Jackson 1998). Despite their extensive differences, they share a common set of features that posit both men and women's oppression within the economic social relations of capitalism and class struggle. Rather than individual freedoms, socialist feminisms call for working class collective action to eradicate oppression and exploitation. Particularly valuable in this approach is the gendered analysis of the division of labour in the home, where women provide private welfare for men to enable them to sell their labour in the wider structures of capitalist economies. Thus, the welfare that women provide in caring for children and men, and which was once seen as the norm, is made visible by combining Marxist analysis with feminist analysis (Rose 1981).

Other forms of feminisms can be described as 'radical' women centred political approaches (Bryson 1999). What unites 'radical' feminisms are their attempts to analyse women's oppression by formulating new theories that are relatively distinct from existing theoretical frameworks, and emphasising men's social control of women through violence, heterosexuality and patriarchy (Maynard 1998:53). As such, radical feminisms share the belief that sex or gender is a primary social division, and men as a group oppress women and benefit from their subjugation. One of the first theories to incorporate this thinking came from Shulamith Firestone (1971) in the US, who wrote *The Dialectic of Sex* and based women's oppression in the reproduction of children. For radical feminists, then, men dominate women in all spheres of life, including their private lives.

The concept of patriarchy, as understood by feminists, was first set out by Kate Millet (1970), whereby she attempted to explain and theorise male dominance as socially constructed patterns of gender relations between men and women. The power that men have over women is embedded such that it appears 'natural' and invisible. What feminists did was to name this power as 'patriarchy'. Patriarchal systems are not universal, but are configured according to nations, culture, religion and so on. Nevertheless, different configurations of patriarchy share the common characteristics of women's subjugation and men's dominance. As such, and because men are dominant in all spheres of society, including in their personal relationships, it is argued that men's social relations with women are political (ibid), hence the phrase 'the personal is political' (Hanisch 1969/2006).

There are many criticisms aimed at patriarchy, especially the debates between Marxists and Marxist feminists (Jackson 1998). Some Marxists perceive women's oppression as rooted in capitalist social relations, and argue that patriarchal analysis is antithetical to class struggles and a product of bourgeois 'feminism' (ibid, Bryson 1999/2003), whereas Marxist feminists, although sometimes reluctant to see patriarchy as a separate social system to capitalism, acknowledged male dominance as a systematic feature of contemporary societies without reducing it to a by-product of capitalism (ibid). Another common criticism is that its descriptive nature outweighs any analytical or theoretical use (Bryson 2003). However, as Bryson argues:



the concept of 'system' can usefully highlight the recurrent and patterned nature of male power, helping to reveal how its different manifestations reinforce each other, so that patriarchy is more than the sum of its parts. This stress on interconnection also suggests that feminist challenges to male power in one area can have knock-on effects in others. (ibid:170)

For the purposes of this thesis, I recognise the theoretical complexities as well as the shortcomings that can be critiqued with regard to patriarchy as a concept. However, and in line with Bryson, I also have much sympathy with the value of patriarchy in terms of its analytical abilities and its capacity to name a system of gendered power and oppression, especially with regard to men's social power, and the concept of patriarchy and male dominance is central to the analysis of this research.

Feminism and feminist theory is concerned with women's subordination. As mentioned above it has been customary to categorise feminisms into three loose traditions, or the 'Big Three' (Maynard 1995/1998), namely radical, Marxist and liberal. What this risks, however, is overlooking the richness and complexities within each tradition. It also marginalises Black women's thought, since the traditions are set primarily within a white, Western endeavour (ibid). Significantly, what it also misses are the overlaps between the traditions. This is especially true of Marxist and radical feminisms. In reality, there are many similarities between these two theoretical traditions, and Jackson (1998) observes that those who see women's subordination as a consequence of class, and those who see it as a consequence of patriarchy can be placed on a continuum. Indeed, much of the terminology and strategies of radical feminism originate in Marxist theory, such as consciousness-raising and sisterhood (Banks 1981). In addition, radical forms of feminism that perceive sex as the root of oppression, are using the concept of 'class' and substituting it i.e., overthrowing capitalism is replaced with overthrowing patriarchy. Moreover, overthrowing both of these systems are often the tenets of many radical forms of feminism.

Compounding the problems surrounding the 'Big Three' feminisms are their utilisation, especially radical forms, by masculinity theorists (see Hearn 1998b, Robinson 2003). Some theorists use feminism in reductive ways that

obscure the complexities and miss the subtleties, and these particular issues are discussed further in Chapter three. Also significant are the ways in which simplified versions of the 'Big Three' seep into public discourse. These three traditions have become part of an ideological code, that organises and can limit how feminism itself can be talked about. These processes are important, and one of the issues to emerge from this research are the different ways in which 'feminism' as a concept is employed, drawn upon and referred to by different individuals, organisations and institutions. To conclude this section, though, it is pertinent to locate myself in terms of the versions of feminism(s) that inform my ontological and epistemological outlook, and inevitably underpin the research process and influence analysis.

Catharine MacKinnon argues the following:

Feminism has been widely thought to contain tendencies of liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism. But just as socialist feminism has often amounted to traditional Marxism ... applied to women – liberal feminism has been liberalism applied to women. Radical Feminism is feminism. (1989:117)

On the whole, I have much sympathy with this statement, but I am also strongly influenced by much of the socialist or Marxist tradition for looking at and understanding how social relations are mediated through ideology and discourse. In this sense, I also include what might be considered postmodern elements regarding Foucaultian analyses and approaches of discourse, power and knowledge. I am a white, middle-aged, single parent woman of working class descent, and when I first became familiar with feminism, I understood it and embraced it in terms of the seven demands of the WLM. At this time I associated these demands with 'radical feminism'. In relation to this, Banks voices similar sentiments in her chapter introduction to radical feminism:

The origins of radical feminism – or, in the more popular terminology, the women's liberation movement – have often been described... (Banks 1981:225)

This initial position has never dramatically changed, rather it has remained the lynchpin of the way I 'do' feminism within my relationships, academia, and in my activist pursuits. Nevertheless, I also seek to incorporate the developments

of newer feminisms, where it is more fitting to view feminist theory as a dynamic, complex and evolving process (Maynard 1998), and endeavour to acknowledge and attempt to understand all forms of feminism. Having located my 'feminist self', the next section sets out how I understand 'violence', and how it is used in this thesis.

### **1.2.3 Naming Violence**

Violence is an imprecise term and becomes politically loaded and sensitive when we try to theorise or analyse it. The problematic assumptions that are contained in the concept 'violence' are particularly highlighted when we try to measure it methodologically or scientifically (Burman et al 2003). For some, violence is taken as the infliction of physical harm by one person to another, but this definition can differ subjectively and dramatically and is often contested. That violence is often viewed as something that is inflicted on the body rather than the mind, reflects just one of the dualisms that modern 'rational' societies operate under (ibid). For these reasons, some feminists view violence on a spectrum or as a continuum. One such writer is Liz Kelly (1988) who theorises violence as ranging from verbal and/or emotional abuse through to physical harm, sexual abuse, rape and murder. Despite feminists holding varied and complex positions in relation to working with the state and statutory agencies (Malos 2000), there is a general consensus that definitions impact significantly on the types of violences that are prosecuted against and those that are allowed to continue with impunity. This shapes the prevalence and consequently the perceived problem (or not) of particular types of crime.

Taking rape as an example, in a poll conducted by Amnesty International (2005), almost half of the 1095 people polled were unable to predict the number of reported rapes in a yearly period, with only 4% correctly predicting that it was in excess of ten thousand. Moreover, less than 15% of people were aware that convictions were between 1 and 9%. One third of those polled believed convictions were between 10 and 29%, while 10% thought convictions were between 50 to 59%. This shows an underestimation on the reporting of rape with a simultaneous overestimation on rape conviction and is indicative of a troublingly low level of knowledge regarding the incidence of rape. Thus, the definitions of violence and sexual offending impacts on, and

skews, how a social problem is perceived, thus allowing it to remain unaddressed, which in turn constitutes a major part in its (re)production and maintenance.

The naming and defining of men's different forms of violence towards women and children has been an ongoing and political issue in the women's movement and in feminist theorising. Theorising has stemmed from and is grounded in the experiences of women and children through consciousness-raising processes. In this sense, language is a powerful organiser of what can be spoken about, as well as that which cannot be. Thus, language is implicated in shaping *how* things can be spoken about. These problems and constraints are illustrated in terms of men's different types of violences. Sexual violence, for instance, covers a broad range of violences, including rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse. However, the emphasis and focus tends to be on the *sexual* aspect rather than the *violence* aspect. If the public discourse here were 'sexualised violence', then the emphasis would be on the *violence* aspect instead, with *sexualised* indicating the type of violence, and hence not deterring the focus from the type of violence being referred to. Nevertheless, 'sexualised violence' is also limited, as despite referring to men's violence it is gender-neutral, and also cannot take into account the more slippery problem surrounding the social construction of men's sexuality in general, which is based largely on stereotypical gender roles.

Radical theories on men's violences are rooted in women's subjugation by men, and analysis is based on patriarchal power relations. Liz Kelly (1988) writing on men's violences, particularly sexual violence, connects two interlinking aspects:

first, the proposition that male control of women's sexuality is a key factor in women's oppression; and second, that sexuality as it is currently constructed is based on men's experiences and definition, which legitimate the use of force or coercion within heterosexual encounters. (ibid:28)

Kelly argues further that men use power to gain sex, but they also use sex to gain power. On issues of power and violence, and especially structural violence, Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) notion of 'symbolic violence' is sometimes utilised. Symbolic violence is bound up in language and symbolic power and

the task is to make power visible in places where it is least visible and most misrecognised<sup>1</sup>:

For symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it. (ibid:164)

One notable scholar who synthesises Bourdieu with men's power and control is Clare Chambers (2005), who highlights the similarities she sees between the work of Bourdieu and Catherine MacKinnon. Chambers' framework also helps to formulate strategies for ways forward that include consciousness-raising processes.

One of the major ways in which men exercise power over women is in the home or the private sphere. The terms for these forms of violence are known as 'domestic violence', 'domestic abuse', 'battered wives', spousal abuse, 'family violence' and so on. The definitions around these violences generally include actual or the threat of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and financial abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called 'honour crimes'. The violence and abuse can come from intimate partners, separated ex-partners, and/or close family members (see Home Office 2009). In the UK, this form of violence is commonly known as 'domestic violence'. What all of these terms have in common are their gender-neutrality, which deflects attention away from gendered social relations as well as from men, who are the main perpetrators. 'Domestic violence' not only reflects the turn towards gender-neutrality, but is a description of a range of violences that have different meanings for different individuals and institutions. The term in and of itself says more about *where* the violence is committed, rather than *what* violence is committed and *who* has committed the violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Symbolic violence consists of pedagogic action, and promoting 'doxa' or ways of life and regimes of truth. This is done, in the main, through schools and schooling, but also in the home through parenting. 'Doxa' are social orthodoxies that work to legitimate and authorise certain values and beliefs, which include arbitrary divisions such as race and gender. The acceptance of these values equates to misrecognition. The acceptance of 'doxa' in all its forms, helps to distinguish the thinkable from the unthinkable, whereby challenges to arbitrary divisions become unthinkable and difficult to articulate. Symbolic violence, however, is just one way to explain how men's violences have become separated, in particular sexual(ised) violence and 'domestic violence'. It is at this level that the significance in the language used to construct the definitions of different types of violence can be seen (Bourdieu 1991).

Nevertheless, this term is imbued with messages and concepts that help to understand, in a very broad manner and via a collective public discourse, the type of offence: the broad age of the victim/survivor, the gender of the victim/survivor, and the gender of the offender.

Research from radical feminists has named the social problem of men's violences as 'violence against women', so as to include the many forms of overlapping and interconnecting violences that are not necessarily physical in the narrow sense of the word. However, as Radford, Harne and Friedberg (2000) point out, this limits the victim/survivor to adults and excludes children. Yet, if men's violences were termed 'violence against women and children' this is also problematic, as children includes both girls *and* boys, and at what point does a boy child become a man? The boundaries of adult/child begin to disintegrate when boys grow into (young) men and thus become the main perpetrators of violence. Perhaps, and in view of the fact that men are the main perpetrators of violence towards women and other men, then the term 'men's violences' might be more apt (Hearn 1998c).

Nevertheless, the violences exposed by feminists and that have been named as violence against women have become separated, and 'domestic violence', as one form of men's violence is now in wide spread use. Separation has occurred, in part, due to lobbying and campaigning for specific forms of violence to be criminalised. In order to do this the criminal justice system, due to the way it works, has attached sentencing tariffs to specific forms of violence (see Radford 2008). At the same time, service provision for each area of men's violences has also developed, and for services to continue many organisations have been drawn into neo-liberal ways of working where funding becomes competitive. Competition for funding can also work to reinforce the separation of violences, despite their overlap and interconnections. One important issue that was highlighted in this research was how the same processes can also work to constrain and regulate activism. In general, however, there is a continuing push from many feminists and organisations to reframe 'domestic violence' within a 'violence against women' framework that still incorporate patriarchy and power analyses, but also acknowledges the interconnections of men's violences. Indeed, at the time of writing this thesis, the government are in the midst of a 'violence against

women' consultation that will supposedly harness legislation around men's violences. In the meantime, initiatives, policy and funding on men's violences remain organised as separate entities.

For the purposes of this research, although I believe it to be an imperfect and inadequate term, 'domestic violence' along with the 'domestic violence' sector and/or area, will be used for a number of reasons, not least because this is the most widely used and known term. It is also an area that has witnessed considerable growth, organisation and partnership working between many different statutory and voluntary agencies. In addition, it is the one area of men's violence against women that has seen considerable input from men who want to intervene and work with men who are perpetrators of 'domestic violence'.

### **1.3 Aims of the Research**

My approach to this research is that men's violence does not occur in isolation, but rather in the context of political and cultural every day life, and the same is true for men's violence prevention groups. Using Smith's concept of 'ruling relations' (1987) helps to uncover specific public and private working practices as well as organising ideologies. Therefore, my entry point of men working in this field and their relationships to violence makes visible the many different institutions, academic disciplines and subject areas that are caught up in the organising systems that govern the field of violence prevention. Academic disciplines such as sociology, social policy, women's studies, cultural studies, philosophy, economics, education, criminology and law all come into play when attempting to research a wider perspective. Similarly, the subject areas that come into view are also vast and include violence, gender, masculinity and critical studies on men, femininity, feminism, the women's movement, social movements, social theories such as ideology and discourse, the sociology of knowledge, race and ethnicity, class, neo-liberalism, organisation and governance. These subject areas all bring with them different frameworks for carrying out analysis.

Using Smith's notion of institutional ethnography (IE) helps to see each subject area and academic discipline as an institution in itself, and along with the more conventional understandings and definitions of established

institutions such as law and/or the criminal justice system, makes visible the ways in which all these institutions are interdependent on each other. The IE perspective also draws attention to the erection of false boundaries between academic disciplines, subject areas, and the everyday practices that they influence and shape. In the context of this study it has been necessary to limit the focus somewhat and to select areas that seemed most pertinent to the findings and the politics within the sector.

Taking the aspects discussed earlier - current policy and legislation in the UK, the WLM and feminist goals, and men's violences - my overall aim has been to explore men's intervention in men's violence against women, and how it fits into the broader area of men's violences, developed by women. Recent years have seen a growth in the voluntary sector in the area of violence prevention, with programmes and groups aimed at men who have been violent to their partner or ex-partner, and I believed this particular area would be open to fruitful analysis. Men's violence does not happen in isolation or in a vacuum, yet it is often studied in isolation, where researchers are often compelled, with good reason, to 'narrow down' their focus. This thesis, however, aims to explore the area of violence prevention, or 'domestic violence', from a wider perspective, and centres around the accumulation of knowledge about the community as well as the individual men who work within it. I wanted to look for as many different kinds of information as time and resources allowed, in order to understand how this area works and to give an overall picture of how the work of violence prevention is organised. Men working in this field and their relationships to violence became my entry point. I wanted to locate the positions and interconnections of both their personal and public relationships towards feminism, and feminist goals, that advocate women's freedom from violence. To put it another way, I wanted to map the men's 'everyday' workings in the sector as professionals, activists, public service providers, and as 'men'.

Using Dorothy Smith's IE appeared to be a more complete approach that allows for different types of analysis. Thus, the concept of 'ruling relations', which is a term that expresses the pervasive structure of power, organisation, direction and regulation (Smith 1987:3) played a significant role in analysis. I have also sought to uncover the complex intersections of feminism



as the instigating and continuing force in the area of 'domestic violence, in particular making visible specific organising ideologies. Within the overarching aims I also wanted to explore how the men themselves came to be working in this particular field; and I was especially interested in exploring where the men's knowledge of feminism and violence came from, and how their knowledge added to, impacted upon and influenced knowledge about violence already in the public domain.

## **1.4 Structure of Thesis**

This introductory chapter has set out the personal and political motivations that have influenced the selection of this research subject, and has also provided some background to contextualise the subject, both historically and within the present-day. This chapter has also acknowledged the relevance and importance of my own feminist perspective, and as such the philosophy that underpins the research. Chapter two details this philosophy in far more detail, and sets out the workings of Dorothy E Smith and her approach to sociological research that she calls IE. The chapter also reviews a number of IE studies that have informed this research.

Chapter three engages with literature that is relevant to men's position in the area of men's violence. It reviews a selection of literature that discuss how men make sense of feminism, and the discourses they employ to justify their subjective identities in relation to feminism. It examines a number of studies that explore men becoming anti-sexist or profeminist, and goes on to look at masculinity as a concept, in particular Connell's notion of 'hegemonic masculinity. As well as this, it explores masculinity politics and men's movements, and looks at a selection of writing that critiques profeminist men.

Chapter four goes on to give a brief overview of the successes and gains achieved around men's violence towards women by the Women's Liberation Movement. It looks at legal responses, legislation and policy initiatives developed by governments, and summarises the voluntary sector, which underpins support and services for women as well as support for men to change their behaviour, and also serves to implement and reinforce government initiatives and legislation through partnership working.

Chapter five sets out the methods and philosophy that underpin the research, and provides details on the methods used to construct the data, including interviews, attendance at public, semi-public and private events. It also describes the demographics of the men and the types of organisations they worked in, as well as discussing the dilemmas and decisions that were taken throughout the course of this research.

Chapter six explores organisations that participants worked in, as well as participants' relations with other institutions that make up the 'domestic violence sector'. I also examine the 'domestic violence' sector in terms of its reconceptualisation, and the social relations that arise between institutional complexes. This is done using Smith's concept of the relations of ruling, and ideological methods of reasoning. In addition, I explore the opportunities that have arisen for men and the social power that is available to them.

Chapter seven looks specifically at participants' talk around feminism, and how feminism relates to invisible forms of political activity. The unorganised aspects of political activism are analysed through Smith's notion of ideological codes, as well as Mansbridge and Flaster's work on 'everyday activism'. Leading on from everyday activism, the chapter also looks at men's renegotiation of sexual politics in their personal lives, as well as the effects of this on their masculinity.

Chapter eight continues with the notion of ideological codes and explores the social organisation of 'domestic violence'. It examines the definitions of 'domestic violence' and its influence on key institutions, organisations and individuals. It highlights how discourses around gender-neutral, and gender-symmetry are utilised in relation to resistance towards feminism, and how participants in this study participated in and/or negotiated this resistance. This chapter also explores feminism and discourses of resistance as being contained within an ideological code.

Chapter nine departs somewhat from the previous analysis chapters in that it is concerned with the participants themselves, and their desire for intimate relationships with other men. However, it continues with the theme of feminism, and how the participants utilised certain features that are associated with feminism in order to help explain their desire for men-only groups and relationships. The chapter uses homosocial logic (Lipman-Blumen 1976) to

analyse men's highly complex relationships between feminism, masculinity and men's politics.

The final chapter summarises how I have gone about addressing the aims and research questions that formed the basis of this study. It then draws together the key findings from each analysis chapter and considers these in relation to the initial aims. Chapter ten also reflects on two key aspects of this research. Firstly, it reviews IE in terms of its limitations and its advantages, secondly it reflects on the term 'radical feminism'. The chapter finishes by discussing further areas of research that have been highlighted in this study.

## **1.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has described how this research was conceived, and has located my understanding and position in relation to feminism and violence against women. It has contextualised the current situation of 'domestic violence' in terms of legislation and policy, and highlighted the significance of feminism, as well as the complexities involved in naming violence, that are both integral to the current situation. It has also set out the aims of the research, and the focus on men who work in this area of men's violences with the hope that knowledge gained from this research will provide information on how this area is organised. In turn, and in the spirit of IE, it is hoped that this understanding will inform and contribute to other areas that are involved in men's violences, including those of practice and scholarship, but especially the area of activism, where new strategies in the pursuit of women's emancipation are an ongoing endeavour.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **DOROTHY E SMITH AND INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

There are a number of ways in which I could have approached this study, for example by the more conventional and familiar way of identifying themes and then exploring them. As with much social research the identification of themes is important, and this is not to say that I did not identify 'themes' in my own research. On the contrary, I was keen to identify themes, but rather than abstract them I endeavoured to explore them phenomenologically - that is, without separating the activities from the people, but exploring the ways in which they and their activities are connected to the wider social relations, and how these extra-local relations help to coordinate the work of violence prevention.

Dorothy E Smith's work, praxis, and sociological method of inquiry is ideally situated to carry out research from this perspective, and the aim of this chapter is to lay out in systematic detail her 'sociology for people' and her method of inquiry, or way of looking at, and writing, the social, which she terms 'institutional ethnography'.

Firstly, the chapter gives an overview of institutional ethnography (IE) and the perspective it takes, it discusses the ways in which this method connects with my own experiences as a woman, mother, volunteer, activist and academic, and why I believe it to be an invaluable tool of analysis. It goes on to put IE into context by locating it historically and discussing Smith's theoretical influences, paying particular attention to the role of ideology and discourse. I continue by examining some finer details and provide some examples of IE research projects. Finally, IE's limitations are highlighted and the ways in which I have developed and used it in my own research are discussed.

## 2.2 Institutional Ethnography

Institutional ethnography (IE) as developed by Smith is “a revision of the relations of knowing.” (1999:95). Although it is sometimes seen as a method of inquiry within qualitative research, Smith claims that IE is more than this: it is an alternative way of ‘doing’ sociology, a different way of ‘looking’. Indeed, in her book *Institutional Ethnography: A sociology for people*. she writes:

I emphasize, however, that institutional ethnography, as it is written here, is a *sociology*, not just a methodology (it tends to get assigned to qualitative methods textbooks and courses). It is not just a way of implementing sociological strategies of inquiry that begin in theory, rather than in people’s experience, and examine the world of people under theory’s auspices. I have described it a “method of inquiry”, and I know how that’s a bit misleading. But I describe it as such because the emphasis is always on research as *discovery* rather than, say, the testing of hypotheses or the explication of theory as analysis of the empirical. (2005:2)

IE aims to explore the everyday lives of people beyond their direct experience, by exploring institutional relations of ruling that co-ordinate their everyday ‘doings’. IE begins from the standpoint of individuals and neither its subjects nor the social are reified, with no ‘social facts’ or world over and against people to be found. This often requires an ontological or paradigm shift to enable the world to be conceived from the standpoint of actual everyday lived experiences. In this way the coordination of social relations can be explored and mapped within what Smith calls the ‘ruling apparatus’ and their associated institutions. As Smith puts it:

By returning us to a standpoint in the actualities of people’s living, I’m not proposing just an alternative method of enquiry; rather, I am also looking for a revision of the relations of knowing. The method of enquiry into the social I’m proposing would extend people’s own good knowledge of the local practices and terrains of their everyday/everynight living, enlarging the scope of what becomes visible from that site, mapping the relations that connect one local site to others. Like a map, it would be through and through indexical to the local sites of people’s experience, making visible how we are connected into the extended social ruling relations and the economy. (Smith,1999:95)

Institutional ethnography (IE) has developed from the work of Dorothy Smith and incorporates and builds on feminism and a number of social theories and concepts: ethnomethodology, phenomenology, Marx and Engels' materialist theory/praxis, discourse and language. Key to IE are texts and language, and how language, both written and spoken, is used to co-ordinate subjectivities, as well as social relations. The 'social' itself is not seen as phenomena distinct and apart from actual people, but rather is a concept which directs attention to exploring the co-ordinated activities of people (1999:3-12). The social is not extracted and made into phenomena or theory in itself, neither is it reduced to the property of individuals, but remains the lens from which we can explore the "ongoing concerting of people's actual activities." (ibid:7). From this, it is then possible to uncover the textual bases and discourses that organise institutions and everyday experience. Moreover, whilst the entry point is the experience or standpoint of people's everyday world or 'the local', IE is able to explore the complexities and dynamics of relations that are often beyond the knowledge of the local, yet they trans-locally work to co-ordinate and organise. At one level, these dynamics mean that inquiry is always open-ended and subject to revision as actualities can be unanticipated, unexpected or surprising. At another level, IE stems from activism in the women's movement and thus also incorporates a commitment to change, and a fuller understanding of the social world. Thus, along with a mapping of social relations, IE provides a more in-depth knowledge that enables the facilitation of change.

The next section sketches out an example of my own lived experiences and participation in the relations of ruling in order to elucidate the personal reasons and rationale for utilising IE.

### ***2.2.1 Locating Myself***

Around 1998 I began volunteering in a project for a large charity that provided 'supported' lodgings for young people leaving care. In my home town young people left care at age sixteen and 'supported' lodgings were provided as a transitional environment for young people up to the age of eighteen to gain independent living skills. One of the young men that came to live with me did not fit into either the professional ideology that children's social services

worked under at this particular time, nor did he slot into the ethos the charity appeared to be guided by.

Firstly, the social worker assigned to the young man had attempted, over a number of years, to maintain relations with the young man and his mother and siblings, and these attempts continued whilst the young man lived with me. The 'family' meetings were always fraught and rarely realised the aims of social services. On the few occasions that the family did endeavour to maintain relations this was sabotaged very soon after by the step-father. What was not included in the professional or 'family' ideology of social services was the way in which the young man experienced these constant meetings and the ways in which he perceived them as futile, yet simultaneously desiring a relationship with his mother and siblings. The young man's experiences also had a direct impact on the families that he lived with. Whilst the young man was living in my home he would become very upset and angry with his social worker, and these continued endeavours by social workers affected the lived experiences of all those in the household.

One of the key philosophies underpinning the charity project in their provision of transitional living for young people was that the young person should either be employed or in further education. As the young man was unemployed he was strongly encouraged to attend further education. Unfortunately, further education did not suit him, and the sanctions placed on this young man by the charity were such that if he did not attend he would lose his supported lodgings placement. Over a period of months the young man did indeed lose his placement for non-attendance at college, and the small amount of financial expenses paid to myself for supporting him was simultaneously discontinued. I was advised by the charity project workers to send him to a men's hostel, which I was unwilling to do for various reasons, not least because the young man implored me not to send him. In addition, the young man was only seventeen years old, and the local men's hostels in my area were often used as 'half way' houses for men leaving prison.

These circumstances put emotional stress on all members of the household, and as a single parent with a toddler and a twelve year old, a mortgage to pay, as well as working part time and claiming 'family credit' the situation also placed me in financial difficulties. However, the way the project

operated was in concert with other institutions and agencies, and after a month or so the young man's 'leaving care' worker managed to re-assign his housing benefit directly to myself which helped to ease the financial burden until the young man secured a tenancy for a single flat.

This period of time was difficult, fraught and frustrating as we were all, as Smith would say, 'out of step' with the professional ideological practices of these institutions and actual lived experience. The young man had, in effect, disappeared (as had my children and I) and I could not make sense of the system, nor connect our lived experiences with the ideologies or working practices of the varying institutions that so impacted on our lives. Clearly, the charity in question, social services, the local council and different benefits agencies all worked in orchestration, but they also all had their own ideological systems within which they worked. These different organisations can be described as institutions, and their working practices were co-ordinated through texts that regulated, organised and standardised, which were in turn activated by participating workers. My involvement in the project and provision of supported lodgings also highlights my own 'active' location in this system, or relations of ruling.

These events were instrumental in my studying a sociology/social policy degree course at the University of Leeds, in an effort to understand how policy was made and under what circumstances. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it was not until my MA year that I discovered Dorothy Smith and her work, but it made sense to me and helped me to understand the world from a slightly different perspective – a perspective that included actual people and their participation in the relations of ruling. The next section contextualises Smith's work, both historically and theoretically.

### **2.3 Contextualising Institutional Ethnography**

This section describes the historical conditions that Smith's work builds on, as well as her experiential and theoretical influences that combine to provide background and context to her thinking, her work and ultimately her sociology and investigative methods.



### **2.3.1 Historical Location**

IE takes account of and responds to three significant developments that have brought about major changes in social relations: the 'Enlightenment' era; the capitalist mode of production; and printing and communication technology (Smith 2005). The seventeenth and eighteenth century, or the Enlightenment era, saw an increasing development of the domestic split within the middle classes whereby, more and more, in Western societies men were becoming involved in the extra-localities of the sciences, the market, business and politics, while women (especially middle class women) remained in the particularities of the home and domesticity. Writers such as Landes (1995) connects the rise of capitalism and the era of 'Enlightenment' as excluding women from public discourse, and so defining the public sphere as organised through a gender order which excludes women.

During the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, Marx identified capital as relating to individual ownership and the capitalist enterprise, and consciousness with the individual. Alongside the development of the capitalist mode of production, the invention of print enabled the advancement of social organisation that was outside of the local - so becoming trans-local and extra-local. Print and technology facilitated new forms of social relations that were: "a) differentiated and specialised as specific social relations, and b) objectified in the sense of being produced as independent of particular individuals and particularised relations." (2005:14)

Technological development and the print industry enabled trans-local and extra-local forms of communication, which effectively split direct ownership from capitalist enterprise as conceptualised by Marx. The subsequent development of 'mass media' then facilitated the birth of corporations, whereby 'management' became a distinct function along with objective rather than subjective organisation. In order to organise large business and corporations, written rules and administrative procedures became important, not only for management purposes but also for evaluating the performance of managers. At this same time, and as envisaged by Weber, bureaucracy within the state developed, expanded and supplanted previous forms of bureaucracy (Smith 2005).

The culminations of these dynamics has transformed and appropriated what were once locally organised relations into trans-local and large-scale social organisation, thus changing the social relations between men and women and also between men and other men. One other important dimension features significantly in this trajectory, and that is the role of discourse, that is discourse as identified by Foucault, through which subjectivities are constructed. Rather than knowledge located in the individual, knowledge is created externally and helps to form and co-ordinate subjectivities. For Foucault, discourse is characterised by what is included, what is avoided, and what is excluded and hence establishes what is spoken of and what is not, and is discussed later in this chapter.

Public discourse has been transformed radically in terms of culture, media, information and textual technologies. A huge industry has developed which effectively objectifies culture. By this, Smith is describing the way in which storytelling, songs, pictures and art are now created not by individuals, but by inter-dependent organisations – especially those involved in television (2005:13-20) and in more recent modes of information technology such as the internet (see Hearn 2004a). This phenomenon can be explained through her concept of ‘ruling relations’, which is discussed later in this chapter. The next section contextualises IE further by detailing Smith’s involvement in the women’s movement and her theoretical influences.

### **2.3.2 *Experiential and Theoretical Influences***

Smith’s institutional ethnography grew from her endeavour to ‘do’ sociology from women’s standpoint. In 1974 Smith’s article *Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology* was published where she argued that traditional sociology was written from men’s perspectives. As a woman member of the intelligentsia *and also* a mother, Smith argued that occupying these two positions helps to identify a point of rupture, or bifurcation. Smith argues that mainstream sociology has traditionally been thought about, conceptualised and written by men. Women provide and mediate the welfare of men at many levels: in the home providing food, clean clothes, childcare and so on; and also in the workplace, providing secretarial skills, clerical work and the like. This alienates men from their bodily experiences and allows them to

work in a fully abstract mode. Moreover, the organisation of professional and managerial work, and the structure of careers and working practices depend on the provision of welfare by others (often women) so as not to interfere with participation and action in this abstracted mode of consciousness.

The place of women then in relation to this mode of action is that where the work is done to create conditions which facilitate his occupation of the conceptual mode of consciousness. ... At almost every point women mediate for men the relation between the conceptual mode of action and the actual concrete forms in which it is and must be realized, and the actual material conditions upon which it depends. (ibid:65)

These conditions amount to a bifurcation of consciousness. Thus, when sociological concepts are ascribed a premium and/or worked up into ideologies it is from the alienated and distorted position of men. It is crucial to understand then, that from their abstracted position, sociological concepts and ideologies become instrumental in creating social policies that are experienced by people in their everyday lives.

Returning to my own example regarding the lived experience of 'supported' lodgings, Smith's critique helps to formulate some understanding of how the system works, i.e., how professional ideologies interconnect to organise one group of people in society. But more significantly, the conflicts between these professional ideologies and the everyday experiences of those it organises point to varying reasons why it also may not work. Importantly, Smith's understanding of sociology and her development thereof is not limited to women only. Rather it has moved beyond what some might claim as an 'essentialist' perspective of the women-only standpoint, and has developed as a more inclusive 'way of looking' that begins from the standpoint of all people, and in particular those who are marginalised and/or oppressed. It is important to note that standpoint is not privileged, however, but merely serves as an entry point from which investigating the 'social' begins.

The foundations of IE, then, are firmly rooted in, and have developed from the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, along with the feminist commitment to displace masculine scientific research that made no provision for including the experience and standpoints of women. IE is also

heavily influenced by the empirical method employed by Marx and Engels in the *German Ideology*. Marx and Engels developed an empirical form of research that grounds social relations and does not abstract and/or superimpose a universal theory that renders people invisible and objectified. Ethnomethodology is also influential and, associated with Schütz (1962) and Garfinkel, is the study of everyday interaction. Smith draws on Alfred Schütz's ideas of multiple perspectives and how they emerge, as well as Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in an endeavour to make experience, as well as one's own experience, central to the research project (Campbell 2003). Language – the way it is understood, used and developed is a key concern within IE, and Smith draws on Foucault's understanding of the interrelations of power, knowledge and discourse, as well as on the earlier work of G H Mead and symbolic interactionism. These concepts are then linked with Russian thought on language, especially those of Bakhtin, Luria, Volosinov and Vygotsky. Lastly, the way in which texts mediate social life are also central to the approach of IE, particularly the ways in which texts connect actual everyday practices and discursive systems. Texts are material and can be read by many people, in many different settings and with many different interpretations. As such, text mediated relations are central to contemporary Western society and can be seen as the arrangement through which power is (re)produced, thus opening up for investigation the relations of ruling (Smith 1999)<sup>1</sup>. At this point, it is useful to give a brief explanation of ethnomethodology as a key principle influencing Smith's work.

### **2.3.3 Ethnomethodology**

Ethnomethodology was founded by Harold Garfinkel and is the term used to study the methods people use to make sense of their everyday world.

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<sup>1</sup> At first glance there are similarities between Smith's work and the work of Bourdieu. They are both fundamentally influenced by similar thinkers, both question and problematise the social relations within which sociology has developed and is practised, and both insist on the researchers' position being subject to critical analysis (Widerberg 2008). However, Bourdieu's notion of field is that of "a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy (1993:162). Although the concept of 'field' is potentially useful for thinking about violence prevention and its organisation, the previous quote suggests field comprises a theoretical concept borne from the social relations within definite conditions, and thus *reflects* social relations. To avoid theoretical confusion, this thesis does not use this concept, instead referring to the organisation of 'domestic violence' as sector or area.

Garfinkel was heavily influenced by Alfred Schütz and his ideas of phenomenological research, and was interested in the minutiae of everyday life, as opposed to 'great events'. For Garfinkel, there was no society or social order over and above people, and neither did society consist of phenomenon to be studied. People were not cultural dopes with their behaviour subject to the dictates of social facts, but rather they made sense of their own everyday lives via language and words. Garfinkel argued that words are not merely symbols but are used as active devices to aid people to create (and resist) their own social world. Classical sociology, especially in the Durkheimian tradition, tends to investigate 'social facts'; however Garfinkel turned this tradition on its head by investigating how facts are accomplished (ten Have 2004).

Central to ethnomethodology is the concept of 'indexicality': that is the different situated and specific perspectives that people employ, through their own biography and experience when making sense of events and situations. Everyday life is based on shared norms, values and assumptions, which can be exposed when challenged. For example, Durkheim investigated suicide rates through different types and levels of social integration; however, ethnomethodology is more interested in how sudden deaths are *constituted* as suicides, or how any set of statistics are used to explain social phenomenon or social facts (ten Have 2004). Because talk is 'active', some social research scholars, such as Bryman (2004), also argue that ethnomethodology constitutes the theoretical foundations of conversation analysis methods. Indeed, a similar approach can be seen in Smith's 1978 article '*K is Mentally Ill*' *the Anatomy of a Factual Account*. Here Smith analyses an interview that describes how K's friends came to define her as mentally ill, and identifies within the interview dialogue the organising text, which includes instructions for interpretation and also the authorization of its facticity.

All the above influences constitute a wealth of social theory from key sociological thinkers, and neither time nor space allow for a detailed analysis of them all. What is important to know is that Smith's IE is a culmination of her life's work and contains varying developments and aspects of her thinking. For the purposes of this research, I am particularly interested in identifying ideological methods of reasoning, the reconceptualisation of social relations

and ‘ideology in practice’: in other words, ideologies that stand over and above people’s practices, the ways in which it can then be expressed through discourses, how it is worked into consciousness, and then how it is practiced. Thus, I have been selective in the aspects of Smith’s influences that I want to expand on and have limited them to those that directly relate to this research. As such, the next section discusses in more detail ideology, discourse, Marx’s materialist method of investigation, and the way in which Smith utilises them in her thinking.

## **2.4 Ideology**

For the purposes of this research, and in order to identify ideologies in practice, it is necessary to define the way in which I understand ideology. The terms ‘ideology’ and ‘discourse’ are often understood synonymously when social theorists attempt to describe the way the social world operates. In particular, ‘ideology’ and ‘discourse’ can be, and often are, used interchangeably. Added to this, ‘ideology’ itself is a concept subject to major contention *within* the social sciences. There exists a huge body of social theory and knowledge that has contributed to the conceptualisation and critique of ideology both previous to Marx and subsequently. In order to make sense of the confusions surrounding these terms, this section sketches out a brief history of ‘ideology’, and sets out some contemporary critiques. It then discusses how Smith employs ideology in concrete ways, as well as how she synthesises Foucault’s work on objectification and discourse.

### **2.4.1 The History of Ideology**

To begin, I want to identify what exactly ‘ideology’ is<sup>2</sup>. The term ideology is attributed to the French thinker Destutt de Tracy and first appeared in 1796. Destutt de Tracy proposed the term in order to distinguish it from the ancient metaphysics and to denote the study of the ‘philosophy of the mind’ (Eagleton 1991, Rockmore 2002, Williams 1983). Rooted in the enlightenment period of reason and rationality, Eagleton informs us that the aims of the ideologists were that of developing a scientific enquiry into the *material* basis of

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<sup>2</sup> Eagleton (1991) is an excellent source book on ideology.

ideas, beliefs, superstition and traditions, and to re-build a new form of society based on rationality from the ground up. Ideologists, then, initially set out to study and demystify the traditional regime of ideas that governed social life, and spent much of their time bound up in the domain of human consciousness. Whilst their initial position held that consciousness did indeed have a material base deriving from social life, Eagleton (1991) argues that their mistake lay in their idealism: of believing that ideas were all there was.

In this view, it was believed such 'reason' contains inherent contradictions: to what 'reason' could 'reason' itself be critiqued against? If reason is able to scrutinise the whole of reality, how can reason itself be scrutinised, or does it stand outside of its own analytical scope? And what of the consciousness that analyses the ideology of human consciousness?

We might risk the paradox, then, that ideology was born as a thoroughly ideological critique of ideology. In illuminating the obscurantism of the old order, it cast upon society a dazzling light which blinded men and women to the murky sources of this clarity. (Eagleton 1991:64)

Ideology as the study of human consciousness soon took on an inversion and the term began to be seen as 'systems of ideas' rather than the 'study of ideas'. The implications of this inversion and subsequent developments assume a bewildering array of confusion, contradiction and inconsistency, and potentially means always being caught up in the 'who will educate the educators' paradox. How can one be sure that their way of looking at things is a true version of reality, when their own consciousness is bound up in the same consciousness that is critiquing consciousness?

The development of weaving reflexivity into social research overcomes, or even complicates, some of these contradictions, but reflexivity would have to systematically state and locate the author's position ontologically and epistemologically. On the other hand, it is possible to conduct analysis from an economic position whilst consistently maintaining the intersections and relations between material conditions, class, race, gender, age, (dis)ability, religion and so on. It is also possible to begin analysis from each and any of the above stated points without being economically reductive, and to widen analysis further, for example, in terms of hegemony and/or Foucault's thinking

on discourse and discursive practices. There are no easy answers to these dilemmas, but IE attempts to incorporate all of the above whilst using Marx and Engels' epistemology and method. The next section highlights the main texts that are cited in debates surrounding Marx's writing on ideology, as this is necessary for putting Smith's interpretation into context.

#### **2.4.2 Marx, Ideology and Criticism**

Much theorising on ideology refers to two particular pieces of writing: the first being *The German Ideology*, written by Marx and Engels around 1846; and the second being the *Preface to A Critique of Political Economy*, written by Marx in 1859 (McLellan 2000). Firstly, the *German Ideology* sees Marx and Engels develop and set out their critique of philosophical thought:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (Marx & Engels [1846] 2000:192)

The failure to realise these 'ideal expressions' of a dominant class results in the *camera obscura* - an upside down version of reality - in which concrete social relations become abstracted into *ideology*, working over and against those subjected to it. It is perhaps this particular statement that encourages one of the more general and narrow interpretations of ideology – that of: illusion, false ideas, or false consciousness that, in turn, helps to legitimate a dominant political power or class (Williams 1983). Abercrombie and Turner (1978) in *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* argue that this particular exposition has been traditionally interpreted as one class, i.e. the class owning the means of mental and material production, imposing their ideology on the subordinate class. The adoption of this same ruling ideology by the subordinated class then works to inhibit any revolutionary consciousness



developments, whilst simultaneously maintaining and reproducing the existing conditions (ibid).

One of the main problems with *The German Ideology* and this particular exposition, according to Eagleton (1991), is that the 'camera obscura' merely inverts empiricism:

Instead of deriving ideas from reality, it derives reality from ideas. But this is surely a caricature of philosophical idealism, one partly determined by the image in question. (ibid: 76)

Indeed, this could be seen as caricaturing the very same thinkers that Marx relies on to build his theory of human consciousness - that is consciousness as an active and dynamic force. Unfortunately, this works to inhibit and constrain the overall reading of the theory. For example, 'consciousness' and 'practical activity' can be seen as a stark duality, with 'illusory' thought disconnected from practical existence, but which serves the dominant interest. Or, consciousness may mean 'mental life' in general, but it could also refer to specific historical sets of beliefs, i.e. political, religious, judicial and so on. In any event, for Eagleton it is difficult, in this context, to see consciousness as an active social force (ibid).

In the *Preface To A Critique Of Political Economy*, however, references to 'illusion' have 'disappeared', so to speak. Here, Marx gives a brief autobiography setting out a summary of his earlier materialist conception of history (historical materialism) developed in the *German Ideology*, and introduces the concept of 'base' and 'superstructure'. The following quote from the *Preface* is, again, often used as the 'orthodox' exposition of this idea:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite state of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on

the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (Marx [1957] 2000:425)

Marx appears to locate ideology within the superstructure and creates a base-superstructure theory. This theory has been extensively criticised for its appearance as mechanistic, hierarchical, static and dualistic. In this sense, it does not set itself apart in any general way from the problems inherent in *The German Ideology*. Indeed, Abercrombie and Turner (1978) see little difference between the base-superstructure theory and the passage quoted previously from *The German Ideology*. This may have some bearing; however, a note of caution should also be exercised as Abercrombie and Turner's argument rests on the assumption that in the *Preface* 'social being' determining 'consciousness' actually means, and therefore *should read as 'class'*.

Dorothy Smith (2004) takes issue with the interpretations that many theorists have concerning Marx's theory of ideology, and thus her methodological approach involves a re-reading of Marx's work. Smith shares the sentiments of scholars, such as philosopher Tom Rockmore (2002), who argues that, in the main, Marx tends to be read in relation to *Marxism* and the *Marxist* movement of intellectual thought. This is a mistake for a number of reasons. Marx and Engels tend to be viewed as a unity or a two headed thinker and this causes interpretational problems. For example, Rockmore asserts that both Marx and Engels shared a political outlook, but *not* a philosophical one. According to Rockmore, it is very difficult to trace any serious philosophical thought in Engels' own work, but philosophical thought is woven throughout much of Marx's work. Moreover, many students are routinely taught that Marx inverts Hegel's own philosophical thought, yet some scholars, including Rockmore and Smith (2004), insist that Marx *further*s Hegel's core ideas, thus making Marx a Hegelian. Debates around interpretation and the different periods of Marx's life and thought remain current; however for the purpose of this research it is not necessary to detail them any further. The main point here is one that Smith shares and, again, details in *K is Mentally Ill*, and that is that we are instructed to read Marx in a particularly Marxist way. The next section will explore Smith's own interpretation and her utilisation of Marx's method.

### **2.4.3 Smith and The German Ideology**

Smith (2004) states that as a feminist sociologist she has been profoundly influenced by her own interpretation of Marx's materialist method as set out in the *German Ideology*. In her 2004 article *Ideology, Science and Social Relations, A Reinterpretation of Marx's Epistemology*, she explores her own interpretation of Marx's epistemology, which, she argues, is substantially different from the way in which it is generally viewed, and which also differs from the androcentric and objectifying training that replicates the ruling relations, which she received in her own training. Smith makes no claims to holding any authority with her interpretation, nor does she offer any general understanding of Marx; what she is concerned with is his *method*, stated clearly and systematically in *The German Ideology*. Smith's central argument rests on the publication of *The German Ideology* in its entirety, pointing out that most publications are selective in what is actually published, usually omitting several hundred pages of detailed critique on the German ideologists. Smith argues that most of the ideas referred to in the first part of the text directly refer to the critique in the second part, and as it is the second part that is so often not published this could account for the many misinterpretations that have been argued about over the years.

Smith reads Marx as not specifically developing a theory of ideology in the sense that some later Marxists, or indeed many of his critics have assumed (see also Eagleton 1991). Indeed, she argues that the profound confusion in the concept of ideology (as argued by Williams 1977, and quoted in Smith 2004:448) is that there is "no confusion". Rather, Smith interprets Marx as developing a critique of the *ways* in which the German Ideologists or philosophers thought, along with their *methods* of philosophising. Importantly, this also amounted to a self-critique for Marx, and thus a self-clarification (ibid:453). Smith's primary concern is with Marx's methodology, his way of looking at, or conceiving society, his ideas on the way knowledge was constructed and produced, and his development of a scientific or empirical method. This method, for Marx, was able to locate the *actual* ways in which social relations were objectified from material conditions, abstracted into categories and ideological concepts and then re-presented back to the social

as natural conditions from which consciousness, policy and governing then stemmed (Smith 2004).

According to Smith, what Marx and Engels were critiquing in *The German Ideology* was the ideologists' method of reasoning: "ideology is a definite practice of reasoning." (ibid:452) The following passage from Rudolph Matthai exemplifies Marx's criticism of the German Ideologists:

Man's struggle with nature is based upon the polar opposition of my particular life to, and its interaction with, the world of nature in general. When this struggle appears as conscious activity, it is termed labour. (quoted by Marx & Engels 1976:508, in Smith 2004:452)

Marx has no problem with 'labour' as conscious activity, but what he does take issue with is the method of reasoning that locates the concept of labour as primary and the actual activity of labour as its manifestation. Marx illustrates this flawed method as follows:

First of all, an abstraction is made from a fact; then it is declared that the fact is based upon the abstraction...:

For example: Fact: The cat eats the mouse.

Reflection: Cat-nature, mouse-nature, consumption of mouse by cat = consumption of nature by nature = self-consumption of nature.

Philosophic Presentation of the Fact: Devouring of the mouse by the cat is based upon the self-consumption of nature. (Marx & Engels, 1976:508, in Smith 2004:453)

Of course this is parody, but its absurdity helps to understand abstracted ways of thinking. Ideologies, then, build on categories that do indeed express actual social relations; however, the direction of thinking shifts away from investigations into the actuality reflected and expressed in those categories.

When looked at in this way it becomes clear that all disciplines, for example, political theory or economic theory are merely reflections of actual social relations worked up in to the practice of ideological methods of thinking and reasoning. Importantly, in the case of economic categories, Marx argues that these are abstractions of the social relations of production, i.e. private

property and a capitalist mode of production. Indeed, by the time he came to write *Das Capital*, Marx was clearly continuing with the reasoning fundamental to his materialist method, which is evidenced in its *grounding* of concepts and categories regarding labour, waged labour and commodification. As such, economic categories can effectively map the historically determined modes of production, but whilst they are able to identify sites for investigation they are unable to open them up. Nevertheless, these abstracted categories and disciplines are given privileged status and work to organise social relations themselves (ibid).

Smith also argues that though relations determine the categories, they do not determine the thinker. The subject or knower's consciousness is determined by her activity, through language as social and active. Clearly, language is central to social relations and to the categories and ideologies that build on them and then express them back to us. But the organisation of social relations through disciplines and other institutions is necessarily also organised through language. Language and discourse are a major medium through which we know our social world, but what is visible to us, what we can speak of, and what we have access to is also socially organised:

There is an actual organization of social relations which generates or determines what appears to people – the jurist for whom ideas appear to rule; the philosopher for whom reality is an object of contemplation – these are experiences arising in definite social relations that are given theoretical expression. The ideological forms of thought express these relations but reconstruct them 'speculatively'. (Smith 2004:455)

The role of language and discourse in shaping what is visible to us is especially relevant in the Foucaultian sense. Foucault picked up Marx's critique of ideological reasoning, abstraction and objectification, and devised an archaeological method through which to map the ways in which objectified concepts and disciplines were given legitimacy.

Foucault's work thus plays an important role in the rationale underpinning Smith's conception of IE and the next section sets out the salient aspects of his work that have a direct influence.

#### **2.4.4 Foucault and 'Objectification'**

The work of Michel Foucault has been widely acclaimed for its dynamic theories on the subject and power/knowledge relations. For Foucault, discourse is characterised by what is included, what is avoided, and what is excluded, and hence establishes what is spoken of and what is not. Focusing on the objectification of the subject, Foucault attempts to illustrate that history is not determined by essential forces, but rather is contingent and comprises of numerous relations and forces, material conditions and competing social discourses (Foucault 1972). To this end, Foucault identified three modes of objectification of the subject, that, arguably, relate directly to Marx's concepts of abstraction, ideology and objectification. These modes have been brought together from a wide body of his work and illustrated by Rabinow (1991) as: 'dividing practices', 'scientific classification', and 'subjectification'.

Dividing practices are techniques of domination applied to marginal groups, and are apparent in Foucault's early works of *Madness and Civilisation* (1988) and *Discipline and Punish* (1991a). Foucault's examples here would be the confinement of the insane, the poor, prisoners, the isolation of lepers and so on (ibid). In each case the subject is objectified either within their own self or from others, through differing processes of dividing practices. These dividing processes can be historically traced from the classification of diseases, the rise of clinical medicine and especially modern psychiatry and their subsequent entry into hospitals and prisons. The convergent development of humanitarian rhetoric also helped to establish these different processes of division (ibid). Thus, dividing practices are essentially:

modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion – usually in a spatial sense, but always in a social one. (Rabinow 1991:8)

The second mode of objectification is scientific classification, which developed from modes of inquiry that bestowed upon themselves the status of sciences, and is related to, but independent from dividing practices – see the earlier discussion on ideological methods of reasoning and abstraction of social relations. Foucault studied the discourses of language, life and labour

that are structured into these disciplines, and which have achieved high levels of coherence and internal autonomy, and also examined their abrupt changes at several junctions that served to display conceptual discontinuities from the disciplines that preceded them. It is this area where direct connections between Foucault's work and those of Marx and his followers in linguistic thought are evident.

Foucault's third mode of objectification is 'subjectification', or the ways in which a subject actively turns him/herself into a subject. This contrasts with scientific classification and dividing practices where a person is essentially passive or constrained in some way (1991a). This self-formation has a long and complex genealogy, through various "operations on [people's] own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct." (Foucault, Howison Lectures 1980, quoted in Rabinow 1991:11) In addition, these operations consist of processes of self-understanding mediated by external authority figures such as the psychoanalyst (Foucault 1988).

The three modes of objectification share a similar form of analysis of discourse. Foucault (1972), rather than looking at the history of ideas, preferences an archaeological description of change and investigated the discontinuities in history and the ways in which discourses are arrived at through discursive regularities, i.e., the formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts, strategies and their total validation. By 'enunciative modalities' Foucault is talking about a multitude of (social) relations that give rise to a discursive field. For example, the field of medicine contains doctors, and thus enunciative modalities are developed through laws that govern how doctors (the 'expert') are given legitimacy to use medical language through their subjective and objective relationship to the field, which is also gained through multiple institutional sites (ibid:50-56). In addition, Foucault also investigated the conditions under which discourses (sets of statements) are formed, the ways in which they enter into the subject and the different types of knowledge they produce.

Foucault and Marx share many similarities and concerns. Foucault considers the areas of science, knowledge production, the abstraction of concepts into ideological methods of reasoning, and how this enables or constricts what can be known or talked about. The reasons for Smith's

synthesising of Marx and Foucault are therefore clear. Foucault's work complements and enhances Marx's materialist method by offering up an additional tool that can investigate the discursive practices involved in ideological reasoning. Moreover, Smith argues that she furthers Foucault's notion of discourses as conversations mediated by texts, by exploring how discourses are *actively* taken up by people, how they coordinate the activities of others and how they activate and order the practices of people (Smith 1999).

The next section expands on Smith's tools for applied investigation that build on Marx's critique of ideology and his materialist method, as well as Foucault's work on objectification and discourse.

## **2.5 From Theory to Application**

Based on her theoretical influences, Smith has developed a number of conceptual tools that form the ontological basis of her method of inquiry. Of these, 'ruling relations and 'textual mediation' are perhaps the most commonly used and understood. This section explains these two notions and then goes on to discuss her notion of 'ideological codes', which is an important analytical framework in this research.

### **2.5.1 Ruling Relations and Textual Mediation**

Ruling relations consist of an intricate network of objectified social relations that regulate and organise social life (1988,1990a, 1990b, 2005). As Smith defines in the following passage:

that total complex of activities, differentiated into many spheres, by which our kind of society is ruled, managed, and administered. It includes what the business world calls *management*, it includes the professions, it includes government and the activities of those who are selecting, training, and indoctrinating those who will be its governors. The last includes those who provide and elaborate the procedures by which it is governed and develop methods for accounting for how it is done – namely, the business schools, the sociologists, the economists. These are the institutions through which we are ruled and through which we, and I emphasize this *we*, participate in ruling. (1990a:14)

However, Smith cautions that although ruling relations are organisations of power they are not reducible to relations of domination or hegemony, rather



they form fields of coordinated activities (Smith 1999:79). Smith takes the position, then, that contemporary society is ruled by organisations and professional settings, governments, corporations, hospitals, universities and so on. These same organisations are made up of individuals, but at the same time:

their capacities to act derive from the organizations and social relations that they both produce and are produced by. The relations and organization in which they are active are also those that organize our lives and in which we in various ways participate. Watching television, reading the newspaper, going to the grocery store, taking a child to school, taking on a mortgage for a home, walking down a city street, switching on a light, plugging in a computer – these daily acts articulate us into social relations of the order I have called *ruling* as well as those of the economy. (2005:18)

Smith's project here stems from the perspective that knowledge is socially produced and that ruling relations, through discourse and text produces the knowledge that people take for granted. In taking women's standpoint, especially that of Western women, she argues that much of their consciousness is formed through their own particularising work in relation to children, households and spouses, or what is commonly called domestic work (Smith 1999). Within contemporary arrangements of ruling relations, women's consciousness is "obliterated" (ibid:74), as are many other voices from marginalised groups. What Smith endeavours to do is open up for investigation the "DNA of social organization", (1999:94): that is, to make visible social relations other than those of the ruling forms, or the differences between the actualities of everyday/everynight lives and the forms of knowledge of the social that might be developed for them (ibid).

According to Smith, much sociological research is carried out within objectified systems and procedures, and, although social research with the best of intentions seeks to explicate and make visible the standpoint and interests of people, it can often result in producing objectified accounts from a position established within the ruling relations. Smith (2001) problematises the ways in which sociological concepts are created, and in particular the nominalisation of verbs such as *organise*, *institute* and *coordinate*. These

verbs respectively become *organisation*, *institution* and *coordination*. For Smith, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with using these concepts, indeed she sees their use as inescapable and also useful. The problem of nominalisation, however, becomes apparent when women's standpoint is taken up, since:

the ontological ground of whatever is represented in these nominalizations is left wholly indeterminate. Concepts of organization and institution can be substructured by building up underneath them accounts of the local practices and forms of co-ordinating them that entitle reification. (Smith 2001:167-168)

The difference between Smith's and Marx's method lay in the historicity of social conditions. The social conditions in which Marx theorised consciousness as an attribute of individuals have developed into consciousness as the workings of a complex of objectifying organisation and relations, mediated through texts and computer technologies (Smith 1999:78-79) or 'organisational sociology'. In Marx's era standardisation and replicable working practices were not so prevalent, with labourers unlikely to be keeping sophisticated records. This is in contrast to the widespread development of trans-local, corporatised and accountable working practices of contemporary society. For Smith, therefore:

In exploring the everyday/everynight world in which organization and institution come into being, we find at every point the textual mediation of people's activities through standardized and standardizing genres such as forms, instructions, rules, rule-books, memos, procedural manuals, funding applications, statistical analyses, libraries, journals, and many more. Texts are integral to people's daily and nightly activities on the job. (Smith 2001:173)

All of these standardising procedures become properties of organisation grounded in the materiality of the text and subject to increasingly complex technological expansion.

Texts, then, must be seen as *material*: in their replicability, and reproduction of one meaning across multiple sites, local settings and at different times, where they are seen, read and interpreted, and where they continuously organise people's everyday activities. That is not to say that texts

are mechanically effective or that organisations can be reduced to texts, rather it is to say that the textual mediation of people's activities can be opened up for empirical investigation into how they enter into actual courses of action<sup>3</sup>.

Intrinsic to Smith's concept of text mediated ruling relations is discourse in the Foucaultian sense, characterised as shaping people's subjectivities discursively, and also in terms of power and knowledge. For Smith, Foucault's work is highly innovative, however, although she admires his commitment to subjugated knowledges she asserts:

Theorizing the subject as a creature of discourse provides no ground on which different perspectives could arise. There is in his theory (though not, of course, in fact) no place other than discursively determined subject positions to speak from and no language other than that which intersects with 'the law of the father' (Lacan 1977) in which to mean. (Smith 1999:94)

Neither does Smith agree with the popularised view that knowledge is necessarily a relation of power:

The intersection of knowledge and power is an effect of the integration of the ruling relations, establishing subject positions within discourse from which experience can be known only externally and from within an order of domination. (ibid)

Notwithstanding, Smith endeavours to build into Foucault's work the aspect of materiality. Thus for Smith, discourse includes text and language as the medium by which social relations are *actively* organised and co-ordinated. Texts are *constitutive* of organisations and institutions and not just forms of communication within them, they carry information which is activated by others (Smith 2001). The active text and participation by people is crucial for institutions and organisations to work. They are unable to work on their own. Thus, Smith develops a theory of language based on selected linguists and psychologists who emphasise the ways in which language is essentially social and who do not separate the phenomenon of language from its social context. Whilst there is not the space to discuss these theorists, suffice it to say she utilises and combines Volosinov's notion of 'interindividual territory' in which

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<sup>3</sup> See Smith 2001 for a fuller discussion.

speech is interactive and conjures up objects and experience; Bakhtin's theory of direct and indirect experience, or primary and secondary speech genres; and Vygotsky's use of the social in the psyche and in psychological development.

To sum up, texts for Smith, as for Foucault, are extended to include television, film, art photography and so on, and are active phenomena<sup>4</sup>. They are not inert, but rather they operate to mediate everyday life in numerous ways: filling in forms to attend conferences; writing cheques or filling in direct debit forms; using public transport, including bus or rail passes, and the numbers on the front of buses which coordinate with timetables. Some texts, such as academic texts, operate predominantly within the realm of intertextuality and appear to speak to each other independently. Other forms of texts, such as memos, policy documents, spread sheets etc., are directed at specific areas or specific people and are predominant in the coordination of organisations. What is key is understanding how texts are always active in one sense or another and at varying levels, and that texts carry language which is expressed through discursive means.

The next section considers how concepts, categories and ideological methods of reasoning can work in practice, and Smith's analytical term 'ideological code' is also introduced.

### ***2.5.2 Locating Ideology and Ideological Codes within Ruling Relations***

Sociologists, and indeed lay-people, all work with concepts and categories. Take, for example, what is at first glance the relatively simple concept of 'family'. 'Family' is both a concept and a working category that has sprung from actual social relations and refers to specific 'units' of people. The ethnocentric, Western understanding of 'family' consists of an organisational 'unit': two heterosexual parents, usually married, residing together in one place, with their children, if they have them. Often, the notion of 'extended family' is included within the concept. In actuality, the lived social relations of any given 'unit' or group of people is dependent on culture, the mode of production that dictates the economy, the contemporary and gendered

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<sup>4</sup> See Smith 1990b chapter 5.

patterns of the division of labour, sexuality, race, class, religion and so on. To widen this analysis further, these aforementioned factors are also related to temporal attitudes and acceptability, or the norms and values of society, thus the concept of 'family' must always be historically located. Under closer scrutiny it becomes apparent that the concept of 'family' contains within it other concepts, the 'economy', 'heterosexuality', 'homosexuality', 'two parents', 'the division of labour', and so on.

Clearly, the concept of 'family' becomes far more complex under interrogation. Each of the component concepts contained within the concept of 'family' can be deconstructed and analysed, and no doubt each of the component concepts will contain other component concepts and categories, for example, men as 'breadwinners', women as 'mothers'. This compares closely to what Smith calls an 'ideological code':

... an 'ideological' code' coordinates multiple sites within the intersecting relations of public text-mediated discourses and large-scale organization. (1999:157)

Thus, concepts and categories originate in actual social relations, and are built up into ideological methods of reasoning that merely reflect back the lived experiences they were grounded in, but which are elevated in significance and work to *organise* social relations. Compounding this phenomenon further is the ability for ideological concepts to shift and accommodate new ways of thinking, or emerging discourses. For example, single and same sex 'families' have become more common, and within a Western context have worked to reconfigure the concept of 'family'. That is not to say, however, that the traditional, heterosexual, two parent concept of 'family' does not operate simultaneously, bringing with it its own problems regarding new policy and/or regulations and laws. Indeed, it is this simultaneous operation of an ideological code that organises social relations, and that is often invisible to people unless or until they experience a disjuncture.

Smith (1999) uses the tool of ideological codes to investigate the social organisation of Standard North American Families (SNAF). Smith, and her colleague Alison Griffiths, had previously studied the work single mothers do in relation to their children's schooling. Their research stemmed from their own

experiences as single mothers and their problems of being categorised as 'defective families' as opposed to the professional ideology of 'intact families' by which US school systems operated. Smith identified SNAF as a version of 'the family' that masked people's actualities and implicitly judged and evaluated those supportive emotional relationships that did not conform to, or accord with SNAF. Moreover, after a reflexive treatment of her experience of doing research, she found that her own interviewing questions were also caught up in the ideological organising of SNAF. Smith's interview questions to mothers with small children regarding paid work was introduced as "work outside the home" (ibid:164). Although the interview questions were designed to redefine work outside the home as normal, there remained an implicit reference to SNAF codes that view employment for mothers with small children as a deviation from the SNAF norm. Smith found that SNAF, therefore, was an organising schema of 'family' that infected governmental text, policy, statistics, as well as sociologists' interview questions.

Smith's analytical tool of ideological codes is highly significant in this research and is explored throughout Chapters six, seven and eight. The next section, however, takes a selection of what might be termed more 'orthodox' IE studies.

## **2.6 Institutional Ethnography studies**

There is now a body of IE studies carried out in various areas from different scholars and with different subject matter. This section highlights studies that have inspired and influenced my research, as well as illustrating the different ways in which IE can be utilised. In a sense, this section could be read as part of my literature review prior to that discussed in Chapter three.

### **2.6.1 Applying Institutional Ethnography**

One excellent example that illustrates the textual and discursive organisation of the incidence of domestic violence is a study by Ellen Pence (2001). Pence maps the course of action from the point where women who have experienced violence make a 911 call. From this point, the woman's experience is transformed into that of a text as reports are written according to sets of ideological rules set out in other texts. The textual document, that

portrays the woman's experience, travels through the criminal justice system where other people take action and move the incident along by creating more texts. This effectively processes the woman's experience into a 'case' or an incident that 'has happened'. Pence found that within this textual system there were no administrative principles for prioritising the safety of women during the process, and no capacity for these textually mediated forms of social organisation to anticipate what violences and intimidation may occur from the perpetrator during the process, or in the future. Ultimately, what Pence was able to do through her research was to identify a process that did not serve women's best interests, and thus managed to actively change and transform policy into that which suited women's needs better.

In a study on doctor-patient relationships from the perspective of patients who were HIV positive, Liza McCoy (2005) uncovered direct links between medical care, ruling authorities and institutional processes. McCoy's rationale behind her research was not to turn the experiences of people with HIV into conceptual terms that reflect the interests of professional and research discourses such as *Care-seekers* or *adherence*, but rather to use the participants' comments in order to:

clear a space outside professional and managerial discourses so that the modes of knowing and related practices of health professionals can in turn become the objects of critical study. (McCoy 2005:804)

What McCoy uncovered was that access to health care was ideologically organised and that the full range of support was not accessible in terms of referral, information, emotional support, advice and treatment, for more marginalised and vulnerable groups. Highly educated HIV+ participants were mostly treated with respect, whereas marginal social groups did not always receive the same treatment, and felt doctors judged them according to their life circumstances regarding their use of street drugs, prison incarceration, or their levels of income. In addition, participants sometimes felt forced, pushed or threatened into taking certain medication, and while some doctors held an understanding of participants life circumstances and worked within those constraints, other doctors would withdraw support and services (ibid).

The accounts of McCoy's participants directed her to question the institutional practices that shaped patients' lives in consequential ways. To this end, her research resulted in further questions and areas for study, such as the institutional practices that shape what doctors are able to do for their patients. For example, how is it that some doctors provide positive care and understanding for socially marginalised patients who are looking after their health? What can other student doctors learn from these aforementioned doctors? And, in the area of education, rather than just providing information, what resources are needed to facilitate understanding for patients? (ibid: 804-805)

Jill Weigt's (2006) study concerned US neo-liberal welfare restructuring and low paid mothers. Weigt looked at the very complicated ways in which women with children, forced to leave welfare, managed low paid employment and their childcare. Weigt's point was not to describe the impact of welfare restructuring, but to use women's experiences to identify the forces originating *outside* of women's lives which organised and shaped their management of carework. In short, the material conditions of women along with neo-liberal ideology, involuntary entry into low paid employment, inflexibility of employment and a lack of time and resources combined to make mothering and low paid work extremely complex. Women experienced poverty, hardship and stress and tended to have to work much harder in order to remain in paid work. Within this context, women were especially concerned about not caring for their children in ways that they perceived as adequate (ibid:338). Women used both the SNAF and mothering discourse in a variety of ways: some to explain their situation and difficulties, some fully embracing the discourses, and some resisting or rejecting them (ibid:336-337). Thus Weigt identified both SNAF and mothering discourses as 'discourses in action', and as a template from which to interpret women's carework. These two discourses, along with the discourses of work enforcement and welfare policy were linked to the meta discourse of neoliberalism, and made visible the complex ways in which social relations are played out and shape the women's everyday experiences.

Other studies that feed into or cut across my own research more directly, come from Naomi Nichols (2006), who looked at 'activism' through Smith's (1999) concept of 'ideological codes'. Nichols traced the standardised



knowledge that is 'activism' outwards in order to uncover the way in which it has become subsumed within corporate ideology. Nichols argued that the everyday experience of activists in Canada now includes the negotiation of the market and the use of corporate ideological language in order to procure funding, make alliances with both the civil and state sector and achieve charitable status. This is not necessarily representative of how activists identify themselves. Nevertheless, it has become almost an imperative if social change is to be sought and implemented, and activists consciously frame their funding proposals within a corporate and accountable discourse. On the other hand, funders also frame their regulations and requirements within an activist framework. Whether activists embrace or resist corporate discourse is indicative of the ways in which corporate ideologies shape the everyday experience of activists, and is explored more thoroughly in Chapter six.

Staying with ideological codes, George W Smith's research (1998) located the word 'fag' as an ideological text that shaped masculinity and sexuality in schools. Smith examined heterosexual/homophobic regimes in Canadian schools through the experiences of gay teenagers. He did not study the teenagers themselves, but rather explored the dimensions of the regime from the standpoint of his informants. Using a documentary method of interpretation, Smith looked at the ways in which a fixed underlying pattern – fag or homophobia – is expressed through various texts. These texts can vary from writing on toilet walls (graffiti), dress, gossip, verbal abuse (talk) and so on. What Smith uncovered were the ways in which the 'ideology of fag' were accomplished and how this is primarily a *practice*, and how making visible this 'ideology in practice' helps to understand how integral homophobia is to hegemonic relations of gender and heterosexuality (ibid).

Finally, perhaps the closest piece of research to my study is a book by Gillian Walker (1990) *Family Violence and the Women's Movement: The Conceptual Politics of Struggle*. This research looked at the women's movement and women's organisation and campaigning around men's violence in Canada, and the subsequent Canadian government's commitment to 'stem the tide of family violence in Ontario' (ibid:14). Walker, in analysing events occurring in the 1970's and 1980's, opened up for examination the political processes of control that worked to shape and direct issues through the

process of institutional articulation, and identified the transition of women's grass roots local work and knowledge into generalised administrative procedures. This transition was brought about through the use of ideological practices and discursive frameworks that organise and order ruling contemporary society, and as have been highlighted in the aforementioned selected studies. Walker's work has been particularly influential, especially in writing Chapter six.

The next and last section considers the limitations of IE, and then discusses the way in which I utilise IE in my own research.

## **2.7 Merits and Limits of Institutional Ethnography**

This section evaluates some of the criticisms aimed at IE, as well as considering its limitations. It then discusses the ways in which this research utilises IE.

### **2.7.1 Critiquing Institutional Ethnography**

Critique of Smith's work is beginning to increase, which indicates that her work is growing in its application. Because IE utilises a number of social theorists, this means there are a number of areas in which IE can be critiqued, which I will discuss as follows. IE is highly influenced by Marx's materialist method of inquiry, and thus is also subject to the interpretational critiques that beset Marx's epistemology<sup>5</sup> as discussed in this chapter. Another major problem rests in its theoretical complexity, which makes for a challenging and difficult to access approach. Understanding and having a working knowledge of the social theories that Smith utilises demands a certain level of education, along with lengthy periods of time in which to familiarise oneself with the theories. For these reasons, IE is probably best carried out in collaboration, rather than as a solitary project.

Scholars who favour Smith's work, such as Liz Stanley & Sue Wise (1990), note Smith's commitment to a 'pre-textual' experiential approach and question, quite rightly, "whether anything can be said to be pre-textual." (ibid:36). On a different level, Kevin Walby (2007), also an advocate of Smith

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<sup>5</sup> see also Callinicos (2002), Giddens (1971), Hearn (2004), Hughes & Sharrock (1995).

and IE, highlights the problem of reflexivity and non-objectification. Walby argues that it is impossible for social science to exist without objectification (ibid:1014). Smith's purpose, in developing IE, was to overcome the objectification found in much of traditional social science and to:

open up that site where our own activities as participants in discourse enter into and contribute to forces that stand over and against us and overpower our lives. (2005:228)

However, Walby questions this and argues the following: social research itself tends to produce the presence of the subject rather than preserving it; interviewing is constitutive of the account; transcription is an interpretive process; and reflexivity can only happen to a degree, therefore degrees of objectivity must be present (ibid:1009-10). Walby argues further that IE demystifies the conceptual practices of power by locating them in their context of production, but then proceeds:

to re-mystify knowledge production (to a lesser degree of objectification) in its own method of configuring the social relations of research. (ibid:1010)

Moreover, Walby argues that there is an inherent paradox within the process of reflexivity: the purpose of reflexivity is to reduce objectification as far as possible in social research; however, objectification is actually the condition that is needed in order to be reflexive and for reflexivity to be an intelligible scholarly practice (ibid). Degrees of objectification, dependent on the configuration of the research relations, are not in themselves problematic, but in the context of research, and when knowledge production and authority are central products, then objectification becomes highly significant:

The point is to reconfigure the social relations of research toward a lower degree of objectification. (ibid:1015)

To do this, Walby proposes that researchers' own textual practices should be subject to ongoing scrutinisation.

It is difficult to disagree with Walby's argument. Rigorous research should include this type of self check in order to preserve the presence of the subject and lessen objectification. But this constitutes a difficult and complex task as trained researchers, by definition, will be steeped in the concepts,

objectifications and ideologies of their particular discipline. The irony contained in this method of inquiry and the institutions that govern research procedures, for example PhDs, are not lost here; however this does not mean that the same attention to care in research design is neglected. What needs to be included in research designs are statements of methodology that carefully explicates this method of inquiry for those organisations and institutions that are involved in decision-making and/or the awarding of funding. Nevertheless, the problem of sociologists working *within* the ruling relations does not escape Smith either, and researchers must always be aware of this (Smith 2005).

The most common criticisms directed at IE are aimed at its implicit standpoint theory. These are well rehearsed debates, for example, between Hammersley, Gelsthorpe and Ramazanoglu in *Sociology* (1992), between Sylvia Walby, Harding and Sprague in *Signs* (2001), or even more directly between Heckman, Harding, Hartsock, Hill Collins and Smith in *Signs* (1997). Standpoint theory is discussed in more detail in Chapter five, but in short, the main problem for critics of standpoint is relativism. However, Smith clearly states that IE makes no claim to universality, and that standpoint is merely the *entry point* or *door that opens up* social relations for investigation (2005). Moreover, the debates around standpoint can be reduced down to that of epistemology, or philosophical questions of knowledge and truth production (see Brunskell 1998, Jayaratne & Stewart 1991).

In relation to standpoint and inclusivity, Stanley & Wise (1990) also question Smith's form of inquiry as representative for all women. For example, Smith does not share a standpoint with black women or women who abuse. However, as stated above, Smith's form of inquiry begins with ideology and social practices that work to shape social relations, and her standpoint knowledge is merely a tool and, therefore, a point of departure for any oppressed, marginalised or deviant group (Grahame 1998). Of course pure empathy may not be present before investigation begins (and might never be with some groups), but the objective is to understand the social positions of marginal groups through reflexive methodologies that are designed to expose social relations (Mann & Kelley 1997), and effect change from thereon. Indeed, prominent black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1991/1997) have been influenced by and share the principles of Smith. Furthermore, the

developments in gender and standpoint theory mean IE is ideally located for studying *men* as well as *women*. As this research has men as its entry point, this denotes a key reason for affiliation with Smith. Indeed, the next and final section details how IE is applied in this research.

### **2.7.2 *Institutional Ethnography in the context of this research***

IE gathers together the most important social theory and blends, synthesises and makes them available for drawing upon in order to investigate different aspects of the social and the social relations within. The social theory that Smith draws upon also helps to articulate my own epistemological, ontological and political positions. Whilst I may not work precisely within an 'orthodox' IE, by way of methods, topics and the areas that IE is more commonly known for, I do share the underlying philosophy that constitutes a different way of looking at the world. There are not many IE studies in existence that utilise 'ideological codes' and public discourse to investigate areas, nevertheless, it is the analytical tool employed and developed in this research in order to explore how the 'domestic violence' sector is socially organised.

Ideology, for Smith, is rooted in institutional practices and knowledge production, and the discourses that are produced from ideological methods of reasoning are saturated with gender, class, race, religion and so on. In this sense IE is ideally placed for exploring the social relations within the area of men's violence prevention, in order to map out the connections and interrelations between other institutions, in an attempt to identify ideologies and discourses that help shape it. What is particularly salient for this research is that men's violence prevention is rooted in the goals of the Women's movement, and IE is valuable in its analytical ability for situating the women's movement and feminist activism within the current social and political conditions that the 'domestic violence' area is located within. IE is also utilised in this study to connect activism and experience with theory and practice, as is its capacity to include many different standpoints, both individual and institutional, without privileging any one. In this way, it is hoped that no overriding interpretation is superimposed onto the experiential knowledge of

individuals, instead, each experience is assembled in a complementary manner in order to place it relationally (Smith 2005).

Smith's wide definition of 'institution' is also useful. Understanding institutions in this way helps to grasp the context of people's lives and the social relations that are constantly at play. Close attention to the workings of these institutions offer up analyses that reveal the gendered, raced and classed intersectionalities that are often hidden within ideological methods of reasoning. Therefore, in this research IE is used to make visible the 'ruling relations' that organise 'domestic violence', and men's intervention within this area. The use of ideological methods of reasoning and reconceptualisation in this research is employed to uncover co-ordinated activities across different sites that are extra-local to everyday experience. It is also used to uncover the way institutions are inter-related, and inter-dependent on each other, and how people *necessarily* participate and are active in orchestrating and co-ordinating the workings of institutions.

One other key reason for using IE centres around the structure versus agency debate. The debate, like so many other debates, tends to be polarised in such a way that either confines people to living within structures where they have no autonomy or independence, and where they are determined to be passive and inactive, or conversely, where structures are no hindrance and people take full responsibility for their own actions, and the conditions they live in or under. With varying levels of success, theorists have attempted to explain society either in ways that include both structure *and* agency, or that specifically attempt to bridge the gap, notably, Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984). Sociologically speaking, structures are like systems, they are invisible and cannot be seen with the naked eye and thus have an abstract quality about them.

Rather than talking about agency, Smith tends to talk about *action*: people are *active*, they have to 'actively' get themselves to their place of employment; or 'actively' get their children to school in order for them to receive an education and so on. At another level *talk* is also active and therefore constitutes action. With talk people can and do reproduce dominant ideologies and their concomitant discourses, for example the idea that children are naturally better off with their mother because sex differences denote

women to be naturally caring and nurturing. These values help to maintain ways of thinking that are directly related to 'ruling relations' and the organisation of the social. However, the social is not static, but subject to change. Neither are people wholly constrained to act in any particular or given way. People have different relationships towards ruling relations and institutions, and their actions can work in a number of contingent ways that can resist, reform, subvert, change, challenge or maintain and reproduce social relations. In whatever ways people participate in social relations they remain active and their actions constitute work - which is not restricted to paid employment but rather encompasses anything that requires effort. Within this framework, Smith makes it possible to look at forms of work done by women, men *and* children that are either under-valued or beyond recognition.

From this perspective of structure, agency, ruling relations, ideology, discourse, action and talk, this thesis explores how discourse becomes institutionalised and taken up by people who then write it in to policy procedures and activate both the discourse and the policy. Furthermore, it investigates the ways in which policy and discourse might be resisted and challenged by others in their everyday work. By using this framework this thesis explores the influences from activism, and the work of activists in both the public and private spheres.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has given an overview of institutional ethnography, and located it both historically and theoretically. It set out the theoretical aspects that shape IE as a whole, and examined in detail the key features of ideology, discourse, ruling relations and textual mediation. The chapter also discussed ideological methods of reasoning and reconceptualisation as processes that help to shape and regulate social action, and considered how these processes can be opened up for investigation, particularly through utilising the analytical tool of ideological codes. It evaluated the limitations and advantages of IE, and highlighted the main criticisms directed at it. Finally, it clarified IE's epistemological and political influence on this research, paying particular attention to structure and agency, and explained how and why ideological methods of reasoning and ideological codes form the basis of analysis in the

research. The following chapter continues with the influences that underpin this research by engaging with a selection of literature that discusses the politics of men in a number of ways: how men understand and engage with feminism; the processes involved in becoming profeminist; hegemonic masculinity; and masculinity politics and men's movements.



## CHAPTER 3

### A SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LITERATURE

#### 3.1 Introduction

The task of writing a literature review is difficult due to the exploratory nature of this research and the wide reaching aims of wanting to uncover knowledge and practice in the area of violence prevention. Furthermore, the approach of IE is also wide reaching, and as Smith points out, is more a way of doing sociology, and not just a methodology (2005:2). I set out to explore how men's intervention in the voluntary violence prevention sector works and is organised. What this means in practice is focusing on *men* who worked in the area, and men's everyday experience of working in their particular organisation, which included the production of knowledge and how they bring the personal into the public. As the project developed, I found it to be highly complex as the interconnections uncovered and mapped within the area of violence prevention were many, and are infused with ideological practice and discourse. In this sense, I must stress that necessity has forced me to be selective in examining both the findings and, by implication, relevant literature in addition to that discussed on IE in Chapter two.

As pointed out in the introduction, this study could have focused on social movements, governance, neo-liberalism, relationships between men and social work, and so on. However, my interest lay more in the personal (as well as public) politics of men. Being selective risks the possibility of criticism, but I would justify my selectivity in that I have been guided by my findings. The themes and issues that have been uncovered in my research are many, but I have limited them to those that continue to occur in one form or another; those that appear to be most significant; and those which best allow the revealing of their interconnections. Briefly these are: the men's historical renegotiation of their sexual politics; their own and their current or previous (female) partner's public/private activism; their differing relationships to feminism and the public

discourses used to articulate this; and notions of masculinity, especially hegemonic masculinity.

To this end, the first section in this chapter provides an overview of the literature that has influenced my thinking. At this stage it is important to explain the rationale underpinning the *order* in which I discuss the literature. My starting point is the women's movement and feminism. As stated in Chapter one, I identify most closely with radical feminism. Therefore it made sense to begin with literature that discussed how contemporary men make sense of feminism, in particular the ways in which men talk about feminism and the discourses they employ to justify their subjective identifies in relation to feminism. I go on to look at profeminist men, that is, men who identify and engage with feminism(s), and the critiques of profeminist men by various writers. Next I review three separate studies by Connell (1990), Christian (1994) and Pease (2000) who suggest through empirical analyses how men become profeminist. I then look at Connell's notion of 'hegemonic masculinity', which generally constitutes dominant frameworks for theorising masculinity constructs within the context of gender relations. Finally, I look at masculinity politics and men's movements using Messner's (1997) model of political tendencies. Although all of these area reviews are set down in a linear manner, each area is not separate, but rather part of a complex picture. These areas interweave with one another, they overlap, and can operate simultaneously as well as independently. However, for the purposes of my own research this order gives a sense of the context in which contemporary men's politics and movements have evolved, and locates them within the field of violence prevention, albeit with different rationales underpinning different organisations.

### **3.2 Influential Literature: Overview**

At this stage of 'writing up', I remain unaware of any other research that is exactly the same as this. In part, this is perhaps because IE as a conceptual tool for research is not as popular in the UK as it is in Canada and North America, although Dorothy Smith is well known for her feminist theory. In addition, the institutional ethnographies carried out in these countries and

regions tend to focus more on intertextual mediation within the everyday work of state funded social work and other public agencies; or locating and mapping the areas that subsume people as simply *texts*, and uncovering extra-local knowledge that identify where social change can be made. My research could have followed the above aspects, but it was more interesting to move away from this and concentrate on locating Smith's notion of 'ideologies in practice' and their influence on the social organisation of violence prevention. Along with the IE studies discussed in the previous chapter, the literature most relevant to this research stems from my initial entry point, which was influenced by two specific pieces of research on men becoming antisexist or profeminist by UK based Harry Christian (1994), and Australian based Bob Pease (2000). I later became aware of a piece of research by Raewyn Connell (1990) on the effects of feminism on men in the environmental movement. Studies directly relating to men *becoming* antisexist or profeminist are very few (although see Stoltenberg 1989, 2000 *Refusing to be a Man*, and *The End of Manhood* 1993, 2000), though there is a body of critical literature on men and men's movements (Ashe 2007, Goldrick-Jones 2002, Hearn & Niemi 2006, Messner 1997, Strauss 1982), and a growing body of literature analysing and critiquing profeminist men (Ashe 2007, Holmgren & Hearn 2006 & forthcoming). There is also literature examining men's relationships towards, and constructions of, feminism (Edley & Wetherell 2001, Gough 2001, Riley 2001).

In addition, an enormous amount of research exists surrounding the construction of masculinity, based on Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (see Connell 1995, 2002 and Connell & Messerschmidt 2005), which is discussed later on in this chapter along with critiques of the concept. There is also a wealth of research from men writing about men's violences from within a number of academic traditions (see for example, Campbell & Muncer 1994, Hatty 2000, Hearn 1990, 1998, Messerschmidt 2000, Stanko 1994, Whitehead 2005, Winlow & Hall 2006), which although related to this research I chose not to review due both to space and the framework of analysis I used. What follows next is a review of a selection of literature regarding the ways in which men make sense of feminism.

### **3.2.1 *Feminism and Men***

How men make sense of feminism is important not only for the pursuit of feminist goals, but also for the construction of subjective identities, and within the public arena responses are not always positive. For example, responses arguing that the balance of power is now in women's favour have been vocalised by men's rights groups and also academics such as Farrell (1994). To this effect, Edley & Wetherell (2001), Gough (1998, 2001) and Riley (2001) all look at the discursive strategies and practices men use in order to make sense of feminism and attempt to maintain their power.

What the above studies have in common is the reproduction of sexism. Gough (1998) explored the discourses of second year male psychology students and found two broad patterns for accounting for male superiority were practiced. Difference and egalitarian ideals were utilised to maintain the men's superiority. Gough also argues that paradoxical accounts of liberal feminism were articulated to support sexism, which parallels the 'new racism' discourse. The discursive strategies that Gough's participants used could be seen as ideological in that they assumed natural, 'common sense' arguments which serve to disguise power relations and oppression. Gough's later (2001) study again sampled undergraduates and the way that they would hold their tongues and suppress thoughts. For example, in intimate relationships housework would be shared to some extent, but the men often felt that they were doing their female partner a favour, and tended not to complain in order to keep the peace. Here, Billig's (1997) interesting notion of 'Ideological dilemmas' could be seen at play, with the heterosexual men's sense of masculinity often conflicting as they negotiated new demands within old habits. Gough's (2001) analysis of this study centres around suppression, and he also picks up on political correctness codes, which the men would operate in different contexts, such as not talking about profeminist ideas in the company of their old friends.

Riley (2001) studied discursive practices with forty-six professional Scottish men, and argued that feminist values have been decoupled from feminists. One way in which this has happened is in the mainstreaming of some feminist values along with the promotion of a contemporary gender-neutral approach. This, Riley claims, allows feminist values to be given

support, whilst feminist women themselves are constructed in negative ways. It also allows some men to claim these feminist values for themselves, which in turn facilitates men to redefine these values. Similarly Edley & Wetherell's (1998) study looked at men's discursive practices that utilised two repertoires that constructed *feminism* as very different to *feminists* – one was acceptable and the other hideous. This effectively set up a Jeekyll and Hyde repertoire that helped men to accomplish their masculine identity. These repertoires also managed to reconfigure different schools of feminism and construct liberal feminism as the orthodox and acceptable face of feminism.

The next section looks at profeminist aspects of masculinity construction and masculinity writing, both inside and outside of academia, and within activism and mobilisation.

### **3.2.2 Profeminism**

Male theorising on masculinity has grown considerably since the mid nineteen eighties, and theoretical premises are wide ranging. Feminist writing (for example, Kelly 1988, McIntosh 1988, Parton 1990) highlighted the problematic of gender and men at a more macro and structural level - for example in locating female oppression through the male body, patriarchy and the sexual division of labour, and many masculinity writers have retained these analyses throughout their work, but have also taken into account post-structuralist theories of pluralism, subjectivism, discourse and the cultural production of masculinities. Thus attention has been directed to the micro level where oppressions such as homophobia, heterosexism, racism, class hegemony, male domination and so on intersect with masculine identity (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003).

Men's theorising on masculinity has been critiqued by feminists and by profeminist men. Hearn (1998a), looking at social theory, for example, identifies six discursive practices that men theorising men can use singularly or in combination:

- Absence, fixed presence and avoidance – either the topic of men or the author are absent, avoided or are present but non-problematic.

- Alliance and attachment – in which both the topic and the author are present, yet both or either remain non-problematic.
- Subversion and separation - which both the topic and author are problematic and subverted.
- Ambivalence – in which the topic and/or the author are problematic and ambivalent.
- Alterity – in which the topic and/or the author are problematic and made other.
- Critique – in which the authors critically and reflexively engage with both themselves and the topic, within an emancipatory context. (ibid:786)

Hearn addresses and critiques these discursive practices, and in so doing retains a critical reflexivity (Robinson 2003).

Staying with profeminist writers, profeminism itself is not homogeneous. Rather it occupies varying theoretical and ideological positions, and has been critiqued by a number of feminist theorists. One of the major issues contained in profeminist writing is the lack of inclusion of a range of feminist theory, in particular radical feminist theory. Radical feminism is often caricatured, demonised and seen as reductive essentialism (Robinson 2003, McCarry 2007). These attitudes have endured, with some feminist writers themselves also contributing. For example, in her book *Slow Motion* (1990), Lynne Segal attacks radical feminists such as Catherine MacKinnon, Susan Brownmiller, Catherine Itzin, Mary Daly, and in particular Andrea Dworkin. (ibid::207-232).

Nevertheless, Segal is often used to represent feminist writing by a number of different masculinity writers, such as Connell (1995, 2002), Christian (1994), Horrocks (1994), Peterson (1998), Pease (2000), Whitehead (2002). Horrocks, for example, heavily criticises Beatrix Campbell for her radical feminism and employs Segal as symbolic of socialist feminism. Stephen Whitehead (2002:161-168) in his section on men's sexuality, utilises Segal's analysis of the above radical feminists referring only to Segal's analysis and not citing any original readings. This kind of usage effectively conceals the complexities within the different schools of feminism, dismisses the work

already accomplished by different feminisms, and reproduces these attitudes to new students of masculinity.

Criticisms of profeminist writing, and studies on men and masculinities in general, are discussed and debated in different arenas, from differing theoretical positions and using different emphases on their object of concern (see Hearn 1998a, McCarry 2007, Robinson 2003). Thus, the tensions surrounding studies on men and masculinities and profeminist writing are complex, and the lines of argument are many. Whilst there is not the space here to write a comprehensive review and analysis, it remains pertinent to highlight a few areas of debate. Writers such as Ashe (2006:76) and Robinson (2003), for example, discuss 'gender tourism', 'forced entry' and men's appropriation of feminist theory, without necessarily moving beyond exploitative gendered relationships. Robinson & Richardson (1996) discuss teaching in the academy, the dilution of feminist theory and diversion of funds and resources.

Moving on to specific profeminist campaigns against violence, one of the most well known is the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), which began in 1991 after the shooting of 14 women at a Montreal college campus on December 6th 1989. The WRC has been criticised at a number of levels. Luxton (1993:366) notes the feminist scepticism over violent and/or abusive men wearing white ribbons: "masking their sexism with a veneer of apparent support and even gaining public approval for their support." Feminists have also questioned whether men who take up public support against violence against women will attract more legitimacy, acknowledgment and praise for actively supporting what women have been campaigning and working for many years for (ibid). Or as Ashe (2006:91) notes, men in campaigns such as the WRC can become the new 'male experts' on domestic violence, actively pushing women to the sidelines. Where funding is concerned, the WRC in Canada attracted media attention very quickly and soon had office space donated and enough money for a part time member of staff. Whilst this does not discredit the work of the WRC, it does highlight the privilege that men have (ibid), and the relative under-funding that women's anti-violence groups attract (Goldrick-Jones 2002).

Nevertheless, there are profeminist writers who engage with these questions and debates, such as Hearn, Morgan, Pringle, Connell and Pease, and who have all redefined the sex/gender distinction, as well as recognising black and gay masculinity. The next section highlights three studies on men becoming profeminist or antisexist.

### **3.3 Men Becoming Profeminist**

This section reviews three studies that explored the processes involved in men becoming either antisexist or profeminist, and the issues, dilemmas and similarities that men experienced during this process.

#### **3.3.1 'A Whole New World: Remaking Masculinity in the Context of the Environmental Movement.' R. W. Connell (1990)**

Although a whole body of masculinity studies has built up over the last few decades, studies of *how* men become antisexist or profeminist are relatively few. In the main, Raewyn Connell's body of work is on masculinity and masculinity politics, as distinct from men becoming profeminist. However, she (as now) published an article in 1990 on a life history study with six male environmental activists. She was interested in the preconditions and limits of feminism, and how feminism impacted on different groups of men. In this sense it is relevant to my research, as she explains:

The focus was on identifying key moments in the dialectic of change. (A dialectical 'moment' is not a point of time but a logically distinguishable and necessary step in a process of contradiction and change. A moment may recur in time or coexist with another...) (ibid:456)

For Connell, as with many other writers, masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity within a gender order that sanctions power relations between men and women. From an existential psychoanalytic framework she explored the men's 'moment of engagement' with hegemonic masculinity and the reproduction of patriarchy, for example, their identification with competitiveness, career orientation, repression of emotions and homophobia (ibid:459). Crucially, Connell also explored their 'moment of separation' and the remaking of their new selves. With some of the men, Connell identifies an



initial re-negotiation of their oedipal separation with their mother, this change is significant for future identification with other women. Indeed, for one of her participants, Connell suggests "...that the adolescent reconfiguration of family relationships was the emotional basis of his dissident gender politics in early adulthood." (ibid:461)

Unlike mainstream politics, the characteristics of environmental politics comprise challenges to conventional masculinity. The characteristics that tend to run through the environmental movement include:

- The practice and ideology of equality
- An emphasis on collectivity and solidarity
- The practice and ideology of personal growth
- The ideology of wholeness and organicism (ibid:463-4)

All six men in Connell's study found their way to environmental activism through different paths; and all men had a number of their needs met, such as emotional, personal worth and solidarity, on a number of different levels. This, along with the central characteristics of the movement, enabled them to engage with producing a progressive gender politics.

Central to the men's "undoing the effects of oedipal masculinization" (ibid:470) and reconstructing their masculinity was the theme of 'renunciation', which included renouncing career choices and the ability to 'provide' for the family in the conventional sense; their male privilege and masculine style; their emotional repression; and their sexuality. In relation to sexuality, the men had problems reconciling their male initiative in sexual relationships, which was seen as another male demand on women. Consequently, the men tended to adopt a more passive stance in their sexual relationships and were uncomfortable until they met feminist heterosexual women who were happy to take the initiative (ibid:467). Connell understands this moment of separation from hegemonic masculinity as "choosing passivity" (ibid), and rightly sees an inherent contradiction in 'actively' choosing to be passive.

Limits to the men's progressive gender politics were what appeared to be a slight homophobia that arose in their reconfigured relationships with other men, which suggested that their changed practices had not questioned the

“heterosexual sensorium” (ibid.469). The body was also seen as separate to the self. Whilst the men had changed their personal politics, masculinity as socially embedded in the body was not addressed, but rather seen as naturally occurring. In addition, Connell speaks of a “frozen time perspective (ibid:469), in that although men had disengaged with conventional personal futures in terms of, for example, careers, none of the men appeared to have re-imagined their futures. Other insights from Connell’s study included feelings of guilt, with some men understanding feminism as an accusation, and three of the six men felt worthless, and experienced personal crises at the twin moments of separation and re-making their new self (ibid:66). These problems are also strong themes within my own research and will be discussed further in Chapter nine.

In terms of the feminist movement, and also directly related to my own research, Connell argues that although the men were highly positive about feminism their understanding was limited. Very few of the men showed an understanding of institutionalised patriarchy or gendered economic inequalities, or indeed had an awareness of differences within the feminist movement itself. In practice, “... their outlook focused on roles and attitudes and thus individualised feminism and gender politics.” (ibid:466). Having said this, the men’s understanding widened and became more real if and when they began to live with a feminist woman whereby they could *practice* doing feminist heterosexuality.

One last aspect worthy of note in Connell’s research is a sentence from one of the study’s participants who says “I never accepted the normal precepts of this society so I didn’t have to fight them away.” (ibid:465) This is interesting, as it implies that a previous countercultural or paradigm shift in personal politics may well prove to be significant in recreating gender relations.

### **3.3.2 ‘The Making of Anti-Sexist Men.’ H. Christian (1994)**

In his book *The Making of Anti-Sexist Men* (1994), Christian explored the life histories of men who were politically engaged in antisexism and also men who were not necessarily antisexist, but who were trying to live a non-sexist life. Christian’s objective was to look at men’s positive responses to the

challenge of feminism, and the effects that feminism had on them. Using theoretical sampling, Christian interviewed thirty men who were or had been in men's groups, and included a number of topic areas that aimed to identify life experiences conducive to producing antisexist attitudes. Christian's main findings were that the majority of men interviewed had experienced a configuration of two interrelating influences in their early and later life: a childhood that included experiences of non-conventional gender conformity; and in adult life a close relationship with at least one actively feminist woman. Twenty-four of the men had experienced the former, and twenty-eight had experienced the latter (ibid:18-20).

Christian's pre-disposing features of early family life included the influence of one or more of the following: positive identification with nurturing fathers; non-identification with conventional fathers, for example, fathers who were macho, had strong convictions about gender roles, or who were often absent; strong mothers; parents who did not conform to traditional domestic roles, especially where the mother took paid work outside the home; older siblings; younger siblings, especially where some of the caring work was carried out by participants; and childhood friends, both inside and outside of school, with either sex and where gender was de-emphasised (ibid:20-25).

Outside of the home, school appeared to be an arena where the boys practiced their non-conformity of traditional masculinity, and found solace in friendships with girls. In early adulthood the few men who did attend higher education were receptive when introduced to feminist ideas and activism. Likewise, in early employment many of the men accepted the changing roles and duties of women within the workplace as a positive, for which Christian argues that family life helped to predispose them. (ibid:25-29)

The major factor in adult life, as mentioned previously, was the influence of feminism and particularly intimate relationships with other feminists. For the few men who had not actually had a close relationship with a feminist woman, their involvement with feminists in organisations, exposure to feminist literature, or an application of egalitarian views onto gender had effectively facilitated their anti-sexism (ibid:29-32). As with Connell's research, these

commonalities appear to be facilitating factors, and indeed are also borne out in my own research to a certain extent.

Equally as significant are the few men in Christian's study who applied their egalitarian politics onto gender. This is similar to the extract from one of Connell's participants quoted above who felt that his counter political world view meant that an appreciation and involvement in profeminism was not so difficult. Christian also finds some similarities with Connell regarding feelings of guilt and/or the deconstruction of their 'masculine' selves, in that many of his participants joined men's groups for emotional support and help to enable them to deal with their female partner's feminism and activism.

Also interesting in Christian's research is the way in which some of the men spoke negatively about the extremes of feminism and held firm ideas about the *style* of delivering information regarding feminist ideas. The following extract from 'Vince' highlights this:

Feminist influence might get my hair up on end if it wasn't delivered properly. I'd think 'Somebody is standing on a soapbox shouting.' If it's not being hammered down your throat it's more acceptable. I could be stubborn if I felt it was being hammered into me. I'm interested in what Sue is involved in but otherwise I'm not interested in politics.  
(ibid:175)

Firstly, Christian's participant echoes Connell's observation regarding individualistic understandings of feminism. Secondly these views chime with later findings from Edley and Wetherell's (2001) study entitled *Jekyll and Hyde: Men's constructions of Feminism and Feminists*, in which their participants talk about the acceptable face of feminism while bemoaning those feminists who had taken equality and/or women's rights 'too far'.

Staying with men's constructions of feminism, feminist and profeminist academics have begun to research the discursive tools that help to construct and maintain 'new sexism' in western contemporary society. For example Gill (1993, 2007) analyses sexism and the media, Gough (1998, 2000) analyses the talk and discourse of students and their attitudes towards feminism, and Mills (2003) looks at humour and political correctness. Smith (1999) also looks at public discourses and political correctness and applies the notion of

'ideological codes' to explain how political correctness serves to repress and constrain what can and cannot be challenged. The concept of 'ideological codes' is a useful tool for exploring my own participants' talk on feminism and will be discussed in more detail in Chapters six, seven and eight. Equally as noteworthy is an article by Riley (2001) who notes the incorporation of feminist values into mainstream thinking and policy, but argues that the separation of *feminism* and *feminist* is an important discursive strategy that is used to portray egalitarian attitudes and values, whilst simultaneously maintaining sexist power structures. Again, this particular area is discussed in more detail in Chapter eight.

Returning to Christian's work, it is important to note that his research is innovative, insightful and significant in laying down a good foundation for future research to build upon. However, he seems to draw heavily on family and early socialisation, i.e. on some configuration of those features listed earlier, and states early on in his book that:

It is unlikely that adult men will develop an anti-sexist outlook or be converted from a conventional sexist one without having some aspect of their early life experience which has prepared them for this (ibid:21).

These sentiments are reinforced again in his conclusion when he talks about the positive influence and effects of feminism and feminists on his participants.

A generous reading of his findings might suggest that single factors on their own, such as non-identification with a traditional father might constitute later anti-sexism. However, this 'non-identification' remains grounded within the realms of early socialisation. Furthermore, without being overly critical, Christian's judgment constitutes a spurious leap. It is one thing to find that the majority of the thirty men who took part all shared some similar configuration of non-traditional upbringing, but quite another to reverse that finding and suggest that men who do not share in these commonalities are unlikely to be converted to anti-sexism. In view of this, I agree with Christian that much more research is needed on early life experiences but, and equally important, much more research is needed on later contributing factors and experiences.

### **3.3.3 *Recreating Men: Postmodern Masculinity Politics*. B. Pease (2000)**

The third study on men becoming profeminist is Pease's book entitled *Recreating Men: Postmodern Masculinity Politics* (2000). As the title suggests, Pease looks at profeminism from within a particular postmodern framework, preferring Hirschmann's (1992) distinction of postmodern feminism:

She agrees with those who argue that the tenets of postmodern theory make the concept of unitary women and feminism impossible, but maintains, I think correctly, that there can be a postmodern feminism that uses deconstruction and other postmodern methods to deconstruct patriarchy and allow the marginalized voices to be heard. (ibid:27)

Pease views the term 'men' as a problematic generic category as it implies homogeneity, thus preferring to identify difference and to state quite clearly which men are being talked about or analysed at any given time – much as Hearn (1996) argues. Indeed, Pease also appears to sympathise with the materialist feminist analysis of masculinity, as argued by Hearn (1987), and agrees that the economic basis of social relations also constitutes important factors in the construction of masculinity. Factors such as the sexual division of labour at home, as well as at work, caring for others, child rearing and sexuality (Hearn 1987), are significant in shaping men's experiences and their sense of 'being men'.

To help him avoid the dualism of voluntarism and structural determinism, Pease also employs Giddens' theory of structuration, which identifies ways in which structures are maintained through practice, but which also emphasises agency or individual capacity for action (Pease 2000:24), and which is not too dissimilar from the social theory contained in Smith's Institutional Ethnography. As a result of his particular mix of analysis, Pease does use the term 'men' throughout his book, albeit reservedly, and recognises: "that it embraces a multiplicity of experiences, representations and projections." (ibid:8). Like Connell, Pease applies this same logic to that of any singular 'masculinity' and rejects its normative implication of representing men in general.

There are two parts to Pease's research: theorising masculinity and male power and, more strategically, seeking to inform a profeminist politics through collective collaboration and to devise ways of promoting change:

... the aim was to elucidate the shared historical situation the participants found themselves in as a group of self-defining profeminist men and to articulate the social logic of their response to that situation. (ibid:7)

A combination of three methods were used with his research participants, who consisted of eleven known men who identified as holding a profeminist stance. Pease used a feminist methodological approach, and feminist standpoint epistemology to research the men, as well as a participatory approach – drawing on emancipatory action research. The three methods used were consciousness-raising as research; collective memory-work; and sociological intervention(s) in masculinity politics. This last method is from Alain Touraine, who devised a method for researching social movements that involves self analysis and an awareness of any disharmony between the organisational practices and ideals of a movement. One important central feature of this method is to introduce people with opposing ideologies with the aim that the people in the group are confronted with having to understand, analyse and answer to different interpretations. This then facilitates a modified understanding of opposing groups, which in turn encourages critique of their own ideologies. (ibid:143-147).

The methods Pease used are significant at a number of levels. The anti-sexist consciousness-raising method assisted thought and ideas about the future and how the men could be different. The memory work brought the unconscious into the conscious, challenged their previous social relations, and provided new discursive frameworks with which to articulate their past experiences. The memory work thus helped to position new subjectivities. Dialogues with allies, and those who opposed profeminism, helped again in creating new subjectivities, but also crucially provided political possibilities on the way forward, that were explored in collective ways. These methods, applied on their own, each inform and advance Pease's research, but taken together they combine to give a more rounded analysis whilst helping to draw

out the dilemmas, contradictions and difficulties each of the men experienced in their relationships with other men and women. At the same time these methods were instrumental in developing strategies for change (ibid:136-140).

Overall, Pease's research is political as well as biographical and he himself is positioned as researcher and researched. Pease began research with anti-sexist consciousness-raising groups to elucidate themes that could be worked on further in the memory groups. Many themes consisted of contradictions that the men faced in their attempts to forge their profeminist subject self within their patriarchal experiences. For example, one participant experienced conflicting feelings when he viewed pictures of naked women on newsstands and so on. The participant understood the feminist argument of women's objectification and of rape being "at the end of every wolf whistle" (ibid:42), whilst at the same time appreciating the woman's body. For Pease these feelings are indicative of power and sexuality which, for many men, are closely intertwined and hard to distinguish between. What is encouraging about this research is that the men do not only discuss other men's abuses, but also put themselves into the mix and discuss their own sexual assumptions and past experiences; particularly those experiences that may have made them complicit in maintaining men's sexual dominance (ibid:42-43).

Like Connell and Christian, Pease and his participants also worked on their non-identification with fathers and their identification with mothers. Memory work concerning experiences with fathers shed light on patriarchal expectations, violence and fear of violence. The emotional work Pease did around fathering did not excuse father's abusive behaviour, but rather critiqued and challenged it. And in a move away from more traditional Freudian analysis regarding the biological necessity of fathers, Pease offers no ready-made 'solutions' to father-son relationships other than reconciliation should address previous abusive behaviour. Indeed, in some cases reconciliation is neither possible nor advisable, and dis-identification may be the best way forward (ibid:56-66).

Experiences such as being close to mothers is often seen in wider society, and to non-progressive men, as problematic. These men were aware of their positioning as 'mummy's boys' and the ideologies that underpinned this



subject position, but memory work elicited discussions that revealed distancing, devaluing and dependence. For example, mothers' nurturing behaviour was often enjoyed whilst ever it was contained inside of the home, but was resented if it was taken outside of the home, or witnessed by their peers. This contradiction, when reflected upon, stemmed from the systematic de-valuing of mothers and the feminine and the superiority of men and men's knowledge, which occurred with regularity inside and outside of the home. Again, similar to Connell and Christian, Pease argues that relationships and identification with strong women is a good thing. In their memory work, 'honouring the mother' created a discourse which allowed the men to frame and discuss the positive influences of their mothers. For Pease, then, attachment *and* separation compliment each other for healthy, interdependent relationships that help to produce caring, nurturing and empathetic men (ibid:69-75)

### **3.4 The Dominance of Hegemonic Masculinity**

At a more general level, masculinity studies have developed considerably over the last thirty years. One prominent writer in this area is Raewyn Connell, whose concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' has been highly influential across many disciplines. The development of hegemonic masculinity came about as a way of thinking about and critiquing the essentialist and restrictive aspect of sex-role theories, and focused on the "question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance." (Carrigan, Connell & Lee:154). Connell utilises Gramsci's theory of hegemony and argues that cultural representations of hegemony correspond with, (re)produce and work to maintain dominant forms of masculinity. This section focuses on the detail of Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, and also outlines the main critiques put forward by other writers.

#### **3.4.1 Hegemonic Masculinity**

There are two central tenets within Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity. One is the idea of a "*patriarchal dividend*: the advantage to men

as a group from maintaining an unequal gender order.” (2002:142). The other is the notion that masculinities can be hierarchically ordered in relation to other subordinated masculinities and femininities. One of its strengths is the ability to recognise “the political importance of differences among men *in gender terms* as well as in terms of class and race.” (2002:90). For Connell, hegemonic masculinity is a way of exploring the diversity of men’s subjectivities and lived experiences be they generational, class or ethnic differences, whilst at the same time recognising a culturally exalted form of masculinity (1987, 1995, 2002). This culturally exalted form of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) can be generally described as: Western, white, middle class, middle aged, able-bodied and heterosexual, which males aspire to, derive benefits from, and at the same time is used as a reference to which other forms of masculinity are measured and subordinated (1995).

Hegemonic masculinity is always historically located, always subject to struggle and always subject to change. In addition it should also be seen as *relational*. This dynamic is most obvious in the ways that ideal models of masculine conduct are constructed, promoted and celebrated by different institutions and organisations such as the state, mass media, or local culture (ibid). Importantly it is not necessary for ideal forms of masculinity to correspond closely to the daily social practices of ordinary men, or even powerful or rich men, but in a variety of ways they:

...express ideals, fantasies and desires, provide models of relations with women and solutions to gender problems and above all ‘naturalise’ gender difference and gender hierarchy. (ibid:90)

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) also argue that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has contributed to research in four significant ways:

by documenting the consequences and costs of hegemony, by uncovering mechanisms of hegemony, by showing greater diversity in masculinities, and by tracing changes in hegemonic masculinities. (ibid:834)

However, hegemonic masculinity is not a perfect concept, and its slippage is critiqued from a number of areas, and at a number of levels. One general example comes from Stephen Whitehead (1999), who notes that the concept is

often used in a static, uncritical and unproblematic fashion which often constrains the advancement of theory.

More specific criticisms include the lack of understanding in its origins, specifically, Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Collier 1998, Hearn 2004, Howson 2006). Hegemony describes the complex ways in which governing powers gain consent and leadership, intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, over those it subjugates, which then translates into 'common sense'. Hegemony is never final, but always relational and subject to conflicting and subordinate groups. It is here that the state directs and arbitrates these diverse interests on behalf of the dominant group, and in an effort to create and sustain harmony and equilibrium (Gramsci 1971/1981:197-199). It is from this point that Connell develops his theory of hegemonic masculinity, recognising that it is situated historically, constructed under certain conditions, and at the same time being central to a contemporary gender order (Connell 1997). Connell also recognises that the possibility for change is located within a range of antagonistic groups.

Staying with the concept of hegemony, Hearn (2004) asserts that it needs to be understood more precisely if it is to be used in relation to men's practices. Thus, Hearn provides a helpful, analytic foundation in returning to the ways in which Marx interpreted ideology, and proposes that 'the hegemony of men' could be a more useful way of looking at men and masculinity. Hearn also suggests that critical analyses of men are of more value when they stem from the concept of men's practices and social relations, i.e. what men do, think or feel, how they think about and what assumptions are held regarding other men. And, importantly, how they are connected to the multiplicity of discourses and oppressions (ibid:64). In addition, Hearn argues that more sophisticated analyses of men would not distract attention from women and gendered power relations, and would not be based on concepts of 'masculinity' per se, as masculinity is rather the result of social processes not the cause (ibid). Furthermore, Hearn argues that the different ways in which women may support some male practices and subordinate others (their consent to the hegemony of men) should also be included in analyses if a more complex and fuller picture is to be achieved (ibid).

In a similar vein, Collier (1998:16-22) discusses the ways in which hegemonic masculinity has been used in criminology. Collier argues that hegemonic masculinity arises from a gender analysis *within* the concept of hegemony, which is embedded within social structure, institutions, action, ideology and “the interrelation between gender systems and social formations” (ibid:19). However, hegemonic masculinity is often reified and then utilised in criminological research in two different ways. Firstly, it is often perceived as representing only the negative characteristics or traits that signify masculinity. Secondly, it is often used to portray the causes of crime and cites Messerschmidt (1993), who argues that hegemonic masculinity is something accomplished through, or the result of, a recourse to crime. Collier asserts that this type of analysis is in danger of being read as a tautological argument and that the interpretations and tensions within hegemonic masculinity require clarification.

What hegemonic masculinity does not adequately address, as Jefferson (2002) points out, and which Connell recognises, are the psycho-social aspects: how do people as individuals, attach meaning to masculine identity? How are complex patterns of inculcation and/or resistance to dominant forms of masculinity negotiated? These concerns are also shared by Whitehead (1999), who notes that many gay men and women can, and do, act in ways that are concomitant with dominant forms of masculinity: controlling, individualistic, aggressive, competitive, and so on. Many theorists also argue that gender is ‘embodied’ and ‘performative’, it is a role that is attributed to sexed bodies and acted out differently within different settings, with different people and at different times (Butler 1999).

Moreover, theorists such as Collier (1998) and Hearn (1996:210) argue that the concept of ‘masculinity’ is often unclear and is used to gloss over complex social processes, to the extent that the term can be rendered meaningless:

To assume *a priori* that masculinity/masculinities exist is to reify the social construction of sex and gender, so that the typical dimorphism is assumed to be natural. (Hearn 1996:212)

Similarly, Whitehead (2002:4-5) suggests that the concept of masculinity is illusionary. Masculinity is not something that can be specifically measured, therefore how can one know to what extent it is possessed, if indeed one can possess it, can it then be lost? More specifically, what exactly is masculinity? Whitehead suggests that “men and masculinities are symbiotically entwined, in so much as they coexist in a political landscape that assumes a natural gender order to things.” (ibid:5)

Notwithstanding this, Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) highlight a number of more sophisticated studies that utilise hegemonic masculinity. Nevertheless, it would appear prudent for researchers to bear in mind Collier’s (and Hearn’s) cautions. Care should be taken to clarify what exactly is being explored, and in what context. In addition, many prominent writers on masculinity have sympathy with Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity and recognise the value it holds as a backdrop, or framework, from which to advance theory, albeit with caution:

What hegemonic masculinity does so effectively is exemplify, at a macro-structural level, a masculinist ethos that privileges what have traditionally been seen as natural male traits. One could proceed to describe this in terms of a dominant ideology of masculinism: an ideology which seeks to sanction the cultural boundaries of ‘masculine behaviour’ while ‘naturalizing’ the sex/gender categories of man/woman. (Whitehead 1999:58)

Therefore, whilst the concept of hegemonic masculinity provides a significant chunk of the picture, other conceptual tools are also necessary in order to provide a wider analysis. Like Hearn, and Connell, other writers such as Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2003), Pease (2000) and Whitehead (2002) attempt to offer insights into the complex and dynamic intersections of subjectivity, identity, power and difference. In this sense, there is a tension between wholly materialist explanations of masculinity and/or the post-structuralist focus on cultural accounts, but as Hearn (2004:64) points out, this dichotomous form of analysis is decreasing and much recent analysis attempts to connect and synthesise the material, embodiment and discourse.

For the purposes of this research, I have some sympathy with Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity as it offers part of the framework for

researching social relations between men and women. However, in order to make sense of gender relations I would argue that Hearn's notion of 'the hegemony of men' is also useful as it provides a fuller analysis of the complex network of gendered relations, whilst at the same time providing a place within that is able to situate and utilise Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity.

### **3.5 Profeminism, Men's Movements and Men's Progressive Politics**

Critiquing men's movements and critiquing profeminist men are difficult to separate as they rely on each other contextually, especially when a men's movement appears profeminist itself. How exactly can profeminist men's politics be defined? The form, structure and constituency remains indistinct and diverse. Pease (2000:3) notes that some writers see an existing profeminist men's movement, others see progressive men's practices as the profeminist wing of the men's movement, whilst others see profeminist men as becoming part of the feminist movement, although the existence of a continuing 'feminist movement' is sometimes questioned and is discussed in Chapter four. A general, but helpful definition of profeminism can be found on the web site of the Finnish profeminist group, *profeministimiehet*:

... men's solidarity and support for feminist struggles and issues. Thus just as there are various feminisms so there are various forms of profeminism. However, amongst all the different viewpoints, profeminists share a conviction to listen to feminism and women. Through this we aim to actively rethink and deconstruct male gender as the dominant and hegemonic gender. This involves actively changing both ourselves and other men – personally, politically, at home, at work, in the media, in campaigns, in law, and so on.

This section concentrates on Messner's (1997) work regarding men's organised political responses to the women's liberation movement and feminist politics.

#### **3.5.1 Men's Political Responses to Feminism(s)**

It is apparent that men's practices and gender relations have changed to some extent over the last forty years, and a number of gender conscious activities have emerged, but not always in ways that support feminist goals.

Gay movements and queer politics have also helped to subvert sexuality and gender constructions, as has Black feminism. One significant contributor towards sociological understanding of contemporary masculinity within men's movements is Messner (1997), who traced men's organised responses to feminism and masculinity politics in the U.S. from the early 1970s and outlined eight political tendencies:

1. Men's liberationists
2. Men's rights advocates
3. Radical Feminist men
4. Socialist feminist men
5. Men of colour
6. Gay male liberationists
7. Promise Keepers
8. Mythopoetic men's movement (ibid:11)

Messner created a conceptual analytic tool by bringing together a model consisting of three frequently recurring themes that men organised around. This triad consists of institutionalised privilege at the apex, and at the other two points the costs of masculinity and the differences and inequalities amongst men (ibid:38). He termed this the "terrain of the politics of masculinities." (ibid;11). In order to explore and make sense of the range of movements listed above he used this 'terrain' to compare the various political discourses and actions of groups, and positioned and located them within his model. Within his model, the terrain of anti-feminism extends around those groups who focus mainly on the costs of masculinity, i.e., promise keepers, men's rights advocates, mythopoetic movements and men's liberation movements.

In relation to Messner's triangular model, Holmgren & Hearn (2006, forthcoming) used the apex of Messner's triangle to develop a three dimensional tool with which to analyse and plot the positive positions of profeminist Swedish men. They focused on the theme of 'passing' as feminist men, or the 'politics of passing': that is the different ways in which men felt they had to prove they were feminist men, and in so doing constructed their own subject positions. These different practices included the embodying of distance from other men, self criticism, professions of inadequacy, questioning credibility and the need for recognition from other feminist women. Some of

these practices are echoed by participants in this study and are explored further in Chapters seven and nine.

Returning to Messner, he identified some of the limits and intersections of each of the eight political tendencies/movements. For example, he looked at men's liberationists which stemmed from liberal feminist ideas, and traced the split between these men and of what was to become the anti-feminist men's rights movement, in particular 'father's rights' movements. 'Father's rights' groups have been significant in the UK as well as in the U.S., and Messner argues that they have co-opted a liberal feminist rhetoric of gender equality in order to campaign for changes in divorce and family law (ibid:36-48). Since participants in this study discussed their associations with a number of these groups I will briefly summarise Messner's insights and analyses on those that are relevant.

Beginning with the mythopoetic men's movement, Messner argued that they could be seen as 'essentialist retreats' (ibid:16) from women. The U.S. Mythopoetic movement began in the 1980's and has grown to include thousands of, in general, middle class, middle aged, white, heterosexual, college educated and professional men. The movement includes men-only weekend retreats, and focuses on therapeutic spirituality, masculine rituals and rites of passage, and makes references to the 'warrior' at different levels and in an effort to reclaim "the deep masculinity" (ibid:17). One of the 'gurus' of this movement is Robert Bly along with his 'bestselling' book *Iron John* (1991). In this book Bly is supportive of feminism for women in that it has allowed them a voice for their feminine side. However, Bly also asserts that men have become passive and domesticated and advocates a reconnection with their 'Zeus' energy. For Bly, "Zeus energy is male authority accepted for the good of the community (ibid:61).

Messner is especially interested in the sociological reasons of why this type of movement is attractive to so many men. Building on and citing Schwalbe's (1996) research, Messner is of the same opinion that central to the movement is a contradictory and complex "loose essentialism" (ibid:18). This loose essentialism allows for the notion of old fashioned essential differences between men and women, and thus can maintain the category of men without



feelings of guilt or remorse. At the same time, loose essentialism allows for individual agency and for changing whatever men choose to change, especially changes that involve costs within a narrow notion of modern and rational masculinity, such as relationships with other men, emotions and emotional wounding.

What Messner points out is the movement's failure to acknowledge the feminist critique of men's power as a group, and the gendered patterning order of society. Whilst it may be understandably attractive to counter the costs of oppression and to re-establish homosocial relationships, there is no corresponding political recognition of male privilege and the ways in which men oppress other men, as well as other women. For the mythopoetic movement, sexism oppresses both men and women; a point which Messner argues depoliticises oppression and "obscures the social relations of domination and subordination." (ibid:22) That is not to say that men do not pay a price for being 'on top'. However, Messner argues that the costs of being 'on top' are not the same as gender oppression<sup>1</sup>. For example, there have been shifts in men's social practices that allow celebrity sports men, or powerful men to employ public shows of emotion, such as shedding tears. However, Messner argues that this is a shift in masculinity *style* as much as anything else, and argues that although men may not want to pay the costs of being 'on top' there is little desire to give up this position (ibid:22-23).

This non-political stance can be linked or even co-ordinated with an anti-intellectual/anti-rationalist stream that advocates masculinity and femininity not as a social construction, but as an essential 'thing', which can be seen as emotionally empowering for men on the one hand, but retaining their status quo on the other, and thus can be seen as anti-feminist. As Messner argues:

In short, the mythopoetic men's movement may be seen as facilitating the reconstruction of a new form of hegemonic masculinity – a masculinity that is less self-destructive, that has revalued and reconstructed men's emotional bonds with each other, and that has learned to feel good about its own "Zeus power." (ibid:32-24)

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<sup>1</sup> Pease similarly writes on male privilege and the costs of patriarchy for men. In *Undoing Privilege: Challenging Unearned Advantages from Within*, (in press), he explores gender(ed) inequalities not in terms of women's disadvantages, but from male advantage and privilege.

Outside of the U.S. this movement is growing through groups such as the Mankind Project, which is an international organisation with bases in Europe including the UK, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. This group focus on the 'New Warrior', that society represses (Mankind UK, 2008). The 'New Warrior' has learned to focus and take ownership of his aggressive energy in a way that empowers his masculine self. Their statement of purpose is as follows:

We are an order of men called to reclaim the sacred masculine for our time through initiation, training, and action in the world. (Mankind UK, 2008)

Weekend retreats are held regularly for men to find their authentic and deep masculinity. Following this, integration groups are held once a week for eight weeks for men to learn to apply the tools they explored on their initial weekend retreat. The mythopoetic movement appears to be gaining some ground, despite its obvious essentialist nature. Moreover, the close knit community of men who work with other men in violence prevention is an effective way of extending knowledge and information around this movement, and is explored further in Chapter nine.

Two other men's movements that Messner traces, which are also pertinent to this research are the radical and socialist men's movements (ibid:49-55). These groups began their time closely linked to men's liberation movements but became distinct strands of their own. Through consciousness-raising groups, and after feminist women began to criticise men's liberation groups, radical profeminist men began to formulate their experiences through a more structural analytic framework. Sexism was seen as a *system* as well as attitudes, by which men as a group dominated women as a group, and sexual violence was understood as being central to women's domination by men. For Messner, this focus on sexuality and sexual violence, although important, risks obscuring other concrete social divisions and sexist practices such as class, race, pay parity and child care. He also argues that this focus simplifies sexist politics and dissuades other men from engagement: "The analysis of male sexuality borders on a categorical essentialism that often leads to a politics of

individual guilt.” (ibid:55). In line with Connell and the previous section, the lack of regard for the *costs* of masculinity elevates men’s guilt further.

Nevertheless, the focus and clarity of men’s radical profeminist discourse has allowed for men to campaign against violence against women and mobilise around anti-violence. Notable campaign groups include the U.S. National Organisation For Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), and global campaign organisations such as White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), which has a wide range of internationally based groups.

The borders between profeminist radical and socialist men’s movements are blurred and often overlap. However, the major differences lie in socialist men’s movements and the Marxist ideas that are brought into the mix. Messner argues that socialist men widened their focus to include not only sexual orientation and men’s domination, but also the costs of masculinity as well as the *differences* between men, such as race and class (ibid:55-62). To this end scholars such as Willis (1977), and particularly Tolson (1977) attempted to articulate and analyse the contradictions of class-based masculinity. Tolson attempted to identify men’s experiences and the contradictory positions they occupied, such as breadwinner in the home, employee in the work place, and their overall political and economic positions.

However, the main problems within socialist feminism were also familiar to the socialist feminist men’s movement. In short, the theoretical issues between feminism and Marxism, which were captured by Heidi Hartmann (1981) in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism & Feminism* are internal, which include the invisibility of women’s labour and care in the home, debates around patriarchy and capitalism being a single or dual system, and the pornography versus anti-censorship debate. These tensions are long-standing and remain ongoing (see also Bryson 1992/2003, 1999, 2004).

Nevertheless, for Messner, the most inclusive of these two men’s movements is that of socialist men. Messner’s work contributes significantly to understandings of men’s politics. However, it is based in the US, and is therefore not directly comparable with the UK. More importantly, Messner’s analysis of radical feminism is also slightly troubling. As discussed in the section on ‘profeminism’, it is well documented that radical feminism has been

caricatured and misrepresented<sup>2</sup>, and there is a suggestion in Messner's work that he is influenced by this situation.

Closely connected to progressive men's politics is the area of study on men and social work. Although this research does not draw directly on the frameworks developed to theorise men and social work, there are some important links associated with men who choose to work in the caring professions and the development of men's movements and progressive politics. What follows, therefore, is a necessarily short sub-section outlining the developments and debates within this area.

### **3.5.2 Men and Social Work**

Social work, including occupations such as primary school teaching and nursing can be seen as 'feminine' or 'caring' professions, and therefore non-traditional occupational roles for men (Christie 1998, Williams 1995). Christine Williams argues that men in these occupations adopt strategies to distinguish them from women in an attempt to achieve ideal standards of hegemonic masculinities. The strategies used to differentiate themselves from women include emphasising the 'masculine' elements of their roles, obtaining higher managerial and administrative positions, disassociating themselves from their work and building on and emphasising particular areas of work that are associated with men and men's practices (ibid:123). As such, gendered identities are constructed differentially according to specialisms within social work, and further constructed in relation to class, ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability, culture, and organisational cultures. Chapter six of this study explores data surrounding multiple sites occupied by men within the 'domestic violence' sector, whilst Chapter nine looks at professional men's tendencies to distinguish themselves from women by participating in practices that can be viewed as homosocial, a problem also highlighted by Pringle (1995/2001).

Within this 'caring' area are aspects of surveillance and control (Christie 2001). In this sense, the probation service, which operates within the criminal justice system is important as it is predominantly associated with men, and has

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Robinson (2003), or the edited collection, *Radically Speaking* (Bell & Klein 1996), for an illustration on how important, diverse and complex this perspective is.

historically straddled both 'welfare apparatuses' and 'coercive apparatuses' (Franzway et al 1989). The past thirty years, however, has seen central Government placing more emphasis on the controlling and directing of offenders by the probation service (Annison 2001). In addition, probation has also moved towards working with men who have been violent to known women. Policy and practice have been developed and probation officers increasingly work with men on their violent behaviour in the form of men's programmes. Although men's involvement with probation services is complex as well as patchy and inconsistent, there is evidence that probation and other social service agencies are taking the problem of men's violence towards known women more seriously (Hearn 2001), and this is discussed in the following chapter. Pertinent to this study, however, is that the majority of professional men interviewed began their involvement within the probation services, and to some extent remain involved in various ways, and this is examined further in Chapter six.

Men's relationship within social work, however, is problematic (Pringle 1992), due in part to their tendency to occupy higher hierarchical positions, but also because of men's violence towards women and children and the positions they hold within social work to counter these violences (Christie 1998). The majority of social service professionals are women, but the majority of users of the services are also women as well as children. In addition, much of the social services sector deals with responses to different forms of men's violences. In relation to this, there have been debates regarding whether men should be working in the 'caring' profession at all, along with critiques surrounding the construction of masculinity, violence, caring and social work (Pringle 2001). Indeed, a number of studies have arisen regarding men's violences and their connections as professionals. For example, Colton & Vanstone (1996) studied child sexual abuse perpetrated by men who had purposefully entered occupations and professions that allowed them close contact with children (see also Pringle, 1995/2001). Taken together, these gendered configurations constitute a complex network of relations within, between and across men and social work (see Hearn 2001).

## 5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the relevant literature engaged with during the course of this research. It has reviewed responses to feminism, such as those voiced by men's rights groups and academics that argue the balance of power is now in women's favour, and has outlined some of the resulting discursive strategies and practices that men can use in order to make sense of feminism, and/or utilise in attempts to maintain male power and privilege. This chapter then outlined criticisms from feminists and profeminists on profeminist writing, including problems of 'gender tourism', 'forced entry', men's appropriation of feminist theory and the lack of analysis regarding exploitative gendered relationships. It also critiqued tendencies that either reduce 'radical' feminist theory to essentialism, or are lacking in exploration of radical feminist writing and theories. This chapter then reviewed three studies that explored empirically the processes that involve men becoming profeminist or anti-sexist. Finally, the chapter set out Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity, before tracing Messner's work on men's political and organised responses in the US to the women's liberation movement.

The next chapter sets out some background material that is necessary for setting my research findings within a UK context. It gives an overview of the women's movement and activism in the area of violence, it documents UK policy on men's violence, and gives an illustration of the current conditions in the rapidly changing 'third sector'. It then discusses the interconnectedness of these three areas.

## **CHAPTER 4**

# **ACTIVISM, POLICY AND PRACTICE AROUND MEN'S VIOLENCES**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to provide some background within which men's intervention in men's violence against women has arisen. It gives an overview of the women's movement and feminist activism around violence against women, it documents policy, practices and initiatives that have come about as a direct result of feminist activism, lobbying and campaigning, and goes on to set out the current conditions of the voluntary sector, or 'third sector' as an area that has developed and grown in order to carry out women's support services as well as men's changing behaviour services, and to implement policy and practice. Each of these three areas are complex, dynamic and deserving of far more space than this chapter can give them. As such, justice cannot be given to the abundance of research and analysis that has been conducted around each of these subjects. Rather, the aim is to provide an overview, in order to contextualise the conditions in which this research is grounded.

### **4.2 Feminism and the Women's Liberation Movement**

In the late sixties and early seventies, the so called 'second wave' of feminism burgeoned within a movement of women's liberation. This section provides a brief history of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) from 1967 through to 1978 within a social and legal context, but concentrating, in the main, on the events and Acts that are associated with violence against women.

In 1967 the Abortion Act was passed which made abortions legally obtainable, albeit if a woman's mental health was at risk, and with the consent of two doctors. Also in 1967 came the Homosexual Law Reform Act, where homosexual acts became legal between consenting adults in private. In 1969, the Divorce Reform Act automatically granted divorce after five years of separation, and made irretrievable breakdown of marriage the only grounds for

divorce. In 1970 the Equal Pay Act was passed, but which only came into force in 1975. In the same year – February 1970 - the first National Women's Liberation Movement Conference was held in Oxford. Protests aimed at the Miss World contest also occurred in 1970. 1971 saw the first gay/lesbian Pride march in London, and the publishing of journals and magazines such as Scarlet Women. 1971 also saw the passing of the first four Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) demands:

- 1. Equal Pay**
- 2. Equal Educational and Job Opportunities**
- 3. Free Contraception and Abortion on Demand**
- 4. Free 24-hour Nurseries**

In 1972, Spare Rib was published, and in the same year organisations and campaigns were developed, such as the Women's Liberation Front, and the National Campaign for Nursery Education. Erin Pizzey set up the first women's refuge in Chiswick, London. In 1974 the Select Committee on Violence in Marriage published its reports, and Women's Aid had their first national conference. 1974 also saw the adoption of two further WLM demands:

- 5. Legal and Financial Independence for All Women**
- 6. The Right to a Self Defined Sexuality. An End to Discrimination Against Lesbians**

In 1975 the Sex Discrimination Act was passed, covering direct and indirect discrimination in the public sphere. The National Women's Aid Federation (NAAF) was established, due to splits within the refuge movement between those aligned with the WLM, and those aligned with Erin Pizzey's philosophy and orientation. This year also saw the first violence against women conference, hosted by NAAF in London and the first women and health conference in Sheffield. Importantly, this is the year that Peter Sutcliffe began to murder women, which continued for the next five years.

1976 saw the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act, where judges could order men out of the matrimonial home whether he owned it or not, and allowed injunctions against men regardless of whether they were divorced. Significantly, these amended protections only applied to married



women. In 1976 serious divisions within the WLM became more serious, divisions between socialist and non-socialist women, radical feminists and others, intellectual and non-intellectual, working class and middle class, and gay and straight women. This was also a year when many conferences were held in the UK: in Cambridge, Sunderland and Bristol for Socialist feminists, in Leeds for Radical/Revolutionary feminists, and in Oxford and Bristol for Lesbian women on sexuality and sexual politics. NAWF divided into four different organisations comprising Women's Aid Federation (England), Welsh Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Aid, and Northern Irish Women's Aid.

In 1977 the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, recognised women victims of 'domestic violence' as homeless. This year saw two violence against women conferences hosted by WAF England in Leicester and London, one by Scottish Women's Aid in Stirling. Importantly, this was the year that developed the seventh demand for the WLM, and a conference was held in York - Yorkshire Region Workshop on Violence Against Women: Towards a Seventh Demand, to facilitated this. 1977 was the year that Women Against Rape (WAR) was established, along with local Anti-Rape Groups in Manchester, Bristol, Nottingham, and London. 1977 also saw the call out by Leeds Revolutionary Feminists Group for *Reclaim The Night* marches to be held in protest at women not being safe to walk the streets alone. As a result, over twenty towns held *Reclaim The Night* marches on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

The 1978 WLM conference debated and passed the seventh and final demand, based around violence against women:

- 7. Freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion regardless of marital status; and an end to the laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and aggression to women.**

During this same conference in Birmingham, two important points were debated. The first was that the following part of the seventh demand was rejected by a majority vote: **“Male violence against women is an expression of male supremacy and political control of women.”** What was at issue here was a polarised argument, where socialist feminists of various strands argued that the overthrowing of capitalism and the relevance of economic class

should be continued alongside women's liberation, and not as separate struggles. Radical and revolutionary feminists, however argued that women were oppressed as a class, regardless of where they were on other social divisions or structures. The second point concerned demand number six, which was split into two and the following statement was voted as an additional and overall assertion to each demand: **"The women's liberation movement asserts a woman's right to define her own sexuality."** This year also hosted nine different conferences on violence against women, including two that concentrated on rape. (Above chronology taken from Coote & Campbell 1982/1987, Feminist Archive North 2006)

The first four demands of WLM rest on concrete statements, and seek definite outcomes. The last three demands, however, are demands for change in the *conditions* in women's lives. The conditions of women's lives were identified by women coming together and using processes such as consciousness-raising, which included discussion and reflection on shared experiences. 'The personal is political', attributed to Hanisch (1969/2006), who also credits Firestone and Koedt for creating the phrase, was used to explain how issues around sex, appearance and domestic arrangements were 'personal matters' that should be worked out in private between individual women and men. Hanisch argued that these matters were not private but were political and related directly to men's oppression of women. Also that the consciousness-raising process used to share and identify these experiences was not 'therapy', as had been suggested, but was part of the political movement of WLM. Women, then, looked for patterns in power structures and in relationships of oppression, in order to work out and identify how their experiences fitted into a bigger picture of social relations (Radford 1994). Through the sharing of experiences in different forms of men's violence, women realised that violence against women was far more prevalent than was acknowledged, and this process encouraged some women and 'radical feminists' to theorise their oppression within the dynamics of men's violence against them.<sup>1</sup> This led to the recognition that legal processes, the law and

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<sup>1</sup> Women are not a homogeneous group, and these conditions also constituted a richness of debates and theorising around sexuality, class and race as sites of women's oppression. As such, women from different cultural backgrounds, black women, 'socialist' feminists, and

social services were inadequate to deal with this type of violence. In relation to these institutional limitations women also uncovered practices such as ideologies around woman blaming, and the trivialisation of their experiences at the hands of men's violences (Ibid). The way to go about achieving these demands is far less straightforward.

This section has necessarily been concise, but has drawn out the main initiatives and campaigns of the WLM and made brief references to areas of divisions that occurred throughout the first ten years. Although this in no way expresses the tensions and debates that contributed to the diversity and complexity of the WLM, this overview is necessary in order to provide the context within which freedom from men's violences became one of the demands articulated over three decades ago, and also to contextualise the motivation for this research. Since the WLM, women have continued to campaign and work hard to expose men's violences and their interconnections, and to provide services and support for all women experiencing it. On their own, however, services and support for women are not enough, and women's political struggle has also included a raft of other legal and social initiatives in order to effect change around men's violences. Social change includes the recognition of different forms of violences, both publicly as well as under the law, and also the call for men to change their violent and aggressive behaviour. The next section, accordingly, looks at policy and initiatives that have developed in the UK during the past thirty years.

### **4.3 UK Policy on 'Domestic Violence'**

The first decade of the WLM saw major achievements at both local and national levels. The provision of refuges, safe-houses and help lines from WAF and the Refuge movement helped to serve the needs of women and their children fleeing violence. Activists put the problem on both the political and the public agenda, and raised public awareness around the social problem of men's violences. However, despite assault of any kind being a criminal act, the law was uneven when it concerned violence against women, particularly in

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women whose sexualities were not the traditional or mainstream 'heterosexual', developed necessarily different theoretical and political priorities (see for example, Coote & Campbell 1987, Coppock, Haydon & Richter, 1995 for more detailed analysis)

their own homes. Police often failed to act or protect women, or were unsympathetic and unhelpful. Many feminist writers and activists argue that this amounts to collusion with violence against women, or a form of social control that is intricately bound up in and supports other patriarchal and structural forms of gendered power relations (Hague & Malos 2005; Hanmer & Maynard 1987; Hanmer et al 1989; Radford 1987). The feminist analyses that have emerged over the past thirty years and more have informed activism in this area, and much of it has also encouraged police and Criminal Justice System responses. Many women wanted better policing, better communications, enlightened attitudes, education and awareness, more women police officers and multi-agency working (Hanmer et al 1989).

To this end, monitoring and research in police practice was carried out and a number of detailed recommendations emerged. One set of recommendations came in 1986 from the London Strategic Policy Unit, who had worked with WAF (England) and refuge organisations, and the London Women and Policing Network. Another came from the Women's National Commission at a similar time, and appears to have had a significant impact on legislation and government thinking, including Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996, and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (Hague & Malos 2005:70). What follows next is a chronology of key legislation, initiatives and policies, besides those listed in the previous section, that have been established since 1979:

- 1987 National Domestic Violence Helpline established by Women's Aid.
- 1988 Local multi-agency forums on domestic violence established.
- 1996 Amendment to Family Law Act Part IV gives automatic powers of arrest where violence is threatened or used, gives more effective civil remedies against violent partners. (ibid:2009)
- 1997 The Protection from Harassment Act
- 1998 Crime and Disorder Act
- 1999 National strategic approach Living Without Fear, launched by women's ministers.
- 2003 Female Genital Mutilation Act.
- 2004 Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act.

- 2005 Official launch of the Forced Marriage Unit.
- 2005 Government fund independent domestic violence advisors.
- 2005/6 Announcement regarding establishment of 25 Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.
- 2006/7 Further Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, bringing total to 64.
- 2007 Gender Equality Duty Act. (Home Office 2009)
- 2007/8 Establishment of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).
- 2008 Launch of Forced Marriage and 'Honour' Based Violence Civil Protection Act (2007) (Home Office 2009)

All of these reforms in policing, criminal prosecution, monitoring, multi-agency forums, and police and social care liaison are progressive and necessary developments for an integrated strategical response. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, for example, introduced a duty of care between the police, local authorities and primary care trusts as responsible authorities (Hague & Malos 2005), which reinforces the message of multi-agency approaches. In addition, and although it is not the intention of this thesis to analyse legislation, it is also worth pointing out how more recent advancements legislate for the protection of women who are separated from their partners, or who do not fit the traditional concept of marriage, or who originate from outside of the UK. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 introduced new measures under both civil and criminal law, and also provided a link between them. This act was designed to tackle stalkers, and to give more protection to women, especially those women who no longer live with their violent partners. The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced new powers for the police and courts, for example, by making common assault an arrestable offence, and criminalising the breach of non-molestation orders. This Act also strengthened civil law by giving same-sex couples, and couples who have never lived together or been married, the same level of access as heterosexual couples to injunctions such as non-molestation and occupation orders. In addition some important immigration issues were addressed. Here, women married to UK citizens for less than the legal time required to gain leave to settle in their own right, can now apply for indefinite leave to remain if they

need to leave their husbands due to 'domestic violence' (Bradford Metropolitan Council, 2008). These new amendments are by no means perfect, however, as women from outside the UK face further complex difficulties regarding redress for 'domestic violence', and often have no recourse to public funds at all.

Nevertheless, the last few years have witnessed a significant shift in the government's thinking around 'domestic violence', and a cross-government consultation on violence against women was being developed at the time of writing, entitled *Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls*. Indeed, this was the largest ever consultation, with nine stakeholder events held across the country bringing together approximately 700 frontline workers. 2005 saw the introduction of funding for independent domestic violence advisors, as well as independent sexual violence advisors. There are now 104 specialist domestic violence courts in operation, and initiatives that attempt to bring together partnership and multi-agency working. One example of this is multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC), which aims to coordinate responses to women and children at high risk of domestic violence. MARAC's were first introduced in Wales in 2003, but now operate in most regions of England and Wales. In short they are a forum designed to share information between agencies such as the Police, Probation, Child Protection, Education, Housing, Health, Women's Safety Services and so on. The idea is that women and children identified as 'high risk' will be brought to the meetings by at least one of the agencies, and a plan of intervention worked out between the relevant agencies.

Notwithstanding the above, traditional responses to men's violence against women through the Criminal Justice System, along with multi-agency partnership working and services for women escaping violence provided by women's organisations, are not sufficient in themselves. The Criminal Justice System can only respond to men who have been dealt with by the court system, and these men must also have been initially reported to the police. In addition, and despite the availability of injunctions for women whether they live with their partners or not, many women do not report to the police for a variety of reasons, not least because of their still current fears of not being believed, or their fears being trivialised. Radford's (1987) study in Wandsworth showed

that less than 25% of women reported incidents to the police, Mooney's (1994) Islington study found 22% of women contacted the police, and Walby & Allen's (2004) analysis of the 2001 British Crime Survey also found that less than 25% of women respondents reported to the police. What is needed is for men to change their behaviour. In response to this, a number of voluntary sector men's programmes and campaigns have emerged over the last twenty years, and I turn to this next.

#### **4.4 Violence Intervention Programmes**

For many women working and active in violence against women there is scepticism regarding whether or not violence intervention with men works. Some women believe that whole-sale structural change is needed in gender relations before men will stop being violent. While others believe that men who have been violent towards their intimate partners should be in prison, as they would be for any other violent crime. Others, however, believe it is worth trying (Hague & Malos 2005). Nevertheless, the UK has seen a growth in men's intervention, or violence prevention programmes, especially in the voluntary sector.

Programmes for changing men's behaviour began in the US and have been imported into the UK. With regard to different programmes, the type of programmes used vary somewhat. In a U.S. report, Jackson (2003) describes the Duluth Power and Control model (Pence & Paymar 1990) as the most widely used across the U.S, and in its modified form, it also used widely across the UK (Dobash et al 2000). This model, which has been termed 'profeminist re-socialisation' (Gondolf 1993), is psycho-educational, is underpinned by feminist theory, and is based on patriarchal ideology and the unequal relationships between men and women in wider society as well as in marriage. Patriarchal ideologies, feminists argue, encourage men to control their spouses – often through the use of violence. In these types of programme men are encouraged to confront their patriarchal attitudes and are helped to develop different, non-violent strategies for dealing with their intimate relationships (Dobash et al 2000, Jackson 2003).

Some programmes include cognitive behavioural treatment (CBT), which are also common in the UK and are based on individual faults in

thinking, and focus on anger management and skills training. CBT, however, often fails to address central questions of why the man is angry, and why the anger may not be appropriate (Dobash et al 2000). Group practice is another model that focuses on multiple causes and combines CBT with psycho-educational models and individual assessments (Jackson 2003). This particular model draws on a range of therapies including the Duluth model, and forms the basis of much of the voluntary sector interventions in the UK.

Jackson also describes the psychological and criminal justice based programmes that work on 'typologies', which are becoming more prevalent in the U.S., along with 'couples' programmes, that view both partners as being responsible for disturbances in relationships (Jackson 2003). These type of 'couple' or family therapy programmes are also around in the UK, but are more controversial as they can work to shift the focus onto the victim (Dobash et al (2003), and place the blame for violence as partly the responsibility of the woman. Whilst this may be appropriate for some relationships, it is wholly inappropriate for most couples, as it fails to take gendered power relations into account (Jackson 2003).

Within the UK, committed profeminist men involved in men's programmes have established a national network: the National Practitioners' Network (NPN). The NPN is an informal group made up of individuals and organisations working with perpetrators of domestic violence. It was set up in 1992 during a conference hosted by CHANGE Scotland, and now holds two meetings per year in order to give support and guidance to each other and to other members. The NPN meetings also provide opportunities to discuss best practice in the perpetrator sector, and to discuss common issues (NPN Respect website 2009). In 2001 members within the NPN steering group decided to form a representative organisation, Respect, that was able to develop a code of practice, support practitioners and act as a voice. Respect is now the umbrella organisation for national perpetrator programmes and associated services. It holds charity status and acts as the mainstay for perpetrator programmes run by the voluntary sector, advocating minimum standards and principles of practice. In recent years it has moved to a process of accreditation for members to be included in its directories. Its guiding



principles and primary aims for best practice are outlined on their accreditation standards (2008), and are worth listing:

- To increase the safety of women, children and others at risk of experiencing domestic violence
- To provide information and support to women in order to empower them and to develop their ability to increase their own and their children's safety
- To assess risk in relation to domestic violence and communicate this effectively with other professionals
- To contribute to the management of domestic violence risks within a multi-agency response
- To contribute to the development of co-ordinated community responses to domestic violence
- To provide services that respect the diversity of the community in which they work, to apply anti-discriminatory practice to all aspects of their work and to ensure that clients are supported to access its services on an equitable basis
- To provide interventions which challenge, support and encourage perpetrators of domestic violence to engage in respectful relationships
- To promote the principle that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- To work with other professionals to ensure that men who use domestic violence are treated as responsible and accountable for their behaviour and for changing it
- To provide services which are of quality and transparent
- To involve survivors of domestic violence in the development and review of the services
- To promote the wider social changes that would support a community-wide intolerance of violence against women
- To work in a way which recognises the nature, prevalence, incidence, dynamics and effect of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These principles are similar to those put forward by Edwards & Hearn (2004:38). However, Edwards and Hearn identify one other important principle that is not included in those of Respect: "Resourcing of programmes must not divert funding from women's projects and services".

Clearly Respect's standards put women's safety first, and insist on men taking responsibility for their violence and abuse. Moreover, their position as an umbrella organisation has also developed and grown in significance, and their commitment to multi-agency working within the 'domestic violence sector' is apparent.

Changes in men's behaviour through violence intervention programmes, however, are notoriously difficult to measure, with the main issues occurring around research design, sources of data, follow-up periods and definitions of success (Heckert & Gondolf 2000). One useful report that acknowledges these difficulties was published by the U.S. Department for Justice, *Batterer Intervention Programs: Where Do we Go From Here?* (2003), and the research carried out here suggested that men's batterer intervention programmes had little or no effect. The evaluations were carried out in two separate counties: Broward County and Brooklyn. Broward used an experimental design with a control group sentenced to one year probation and no treatment, and a group sentenced to one year probation and 26 weeks of court mandated group counselling. Men were interviewed at adjudication, then 6 months later. Women victims were also interviewed at adjudication, then 6 and 12 months later. The Broward study found no difference between the attitudes of the control group or men who had been mandated for counselling towards domestic violence, or to women's traditional roles. Some interesting findings in this study were that those men who completed more of the domestic violence programme had fewer re-arrests or parole violations, along with men who were employed (Feder & Forde 2003:5-13).

The Brooklyn study was slightly different as its experimental sample was of convicted men who were willing to undergo treatment, and its control group was of convicted men assigned to standard community programmes, i.e. unrelated to violence. This study also differed in that it looked at 8 week and 26 week programmes and found, firstly, that men were more likely to complete the 8 week rather than the 26 week programme. However, only 27% of men actually completed the 26 week programme, and while they did have significantly fewer complaints, there was no statistical difference. Additionally, there was no difference in complaints between the control group and those

men attending the 8 week programmes. This suggests that treatment programmes may only check violent behaviour for the length of the treatment. (Davis et al 2003:14-21).

In contrast to the above findings, Dobash et al (2000) carried out a study in the UK using two sample groups of men who had been sentenced for offences involving violence against their partners. One group (group 1) comprised of 51 men (and 47 women) who had been sentenced and were required to complete an abuser programme as part of their sentence, and another group (group 2) comprised of 71 men (and 97 women) who had received another form of sanction from court. The men and their women partners were interviewed in-depth immediately after their sanction or sentence, and follow up questionnaires were sent out three months and twelve months after this. At the three month follow up, 80% of men and 83% of women in group 1 returned questionnaires. For group 2, the figures at three months were 72% of men and 77% of women. At the twelve month follow up, 57% of men and 60% of women returned questionnaires, while the figures for group 2 were 49% of men and 57% of women. The overall aim of the research was to establish whether court-mandated programmes for men who had been violent to their partners were more effective than other forms of criminal justice intervention at eradicating violent forms of behaviour.

Their study suggested that although men who had completed criminal justice interventions had decreased their victimization immediately and up to three months after, men who had completed an abuser programme were more likely to have sustained a decrease in their forms of violence after twelve months. Women partners of these same men also reported an increase in quality of life and a reduction in violence and controlling behaviours after twelve months. To this end Dobash et al claim that their research:

strongly suggest that criminal justice-based profeminist, cognitive-behavioural programs are more likely than other types of criminal justice interventions to affect the constellation of violence. (ibid:181

This research is used by many academics to support projects for working with men to change their behaviour, however, the results may be overly optimistic. When the figures are looked at more closely, the research is quite small scale,

comprising of low numbers of men. In addition, the results become dependent on the drop out figures. For example, if all or most of the 47% of the men in group one who did not return their questionnaires continue to be violent, then the likelihood of those men attending men's programmes reducing their violent and controlling behaviour are compromised and open to question. Moreover, the men's programme used for comparison was profeminist and based on the Duluth model. There are other types of men's programmes which are not so profeminist, possibly anti-feminist, and thus the type of programme chosen may also skew the findings.

In a report by Burton, Regan and Kelly (1998) they discuss what counts as success<sup>3</sup>. When evaluation is limited to men in relationships that are on-going, other forms of success can be missed. For example, the fact that men are completing programmes when they are neither court-mandated or community-mandated can count as one form of success. This is echoed by Gondolf (2002:218) who believes that men's programmes are:

sending a message that men can and must change their behaviour towards women. For these reasons batterer counselling deserves to be continued but with more attention to the interventions system as a whole.

Moreover, when men are attending these programmes one effect can be the enabling of women to leave the relationship within a safe time and space, or they may even encourage men to leave (Burton, Regan & Kelly 1998). However success is defined, it appears that men's programmes are here to stay, and they are now well embedded within the voluntary sector. The next section, then takes a brief look at what the voluntary sector is, and how it works.

#### **4.5 Third Sector, Charity Sector or Voluntary Sector?**

The difference between the private and public sector is not always clear cut. The terms and phrases that are used to refer to organisations and areas that are 'autonomous' from the state, yet are also not-for-profit are

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<sup>3</sup> Respect have designed a four year evaluation project on the extent to which men's programmes improve the safety of women and children, and reduce men's violence. Researchers in this project include L. Kelly, N. Westmarland, S. Hackett, C. Watts & C. Zimmerman. (Respect 2009)

problematic, with different people from different institutions writing about the 'voluntary sector', 'charity sector' and 'third sector' interchangeably. To employ a more commonly understood definition of this sector, I have used the Labour Force Survey (LFS) as a guide. The LFS is a quarterly sample survey of households designed to gather information on the labour market in order to report on, manage and develop labour market policy. The LFS for purposes of research, splits the labour market into two distinctive categories: the private sector and the public sector. The public sector includes any organisation or body funded or run by central or local government, and the private sector is everything else – this includes;

“Public limited companies ... small businesses ... charities, private trusts, housing associations or other voluntary organisations.” (LFS User Guide 2007:123)

For the purposes of this research, all the men in this study worked in organisations that were either registered charities, private Companies Limited by Guarantee, or both, and this section provides some background on where these type of organisation fit into the overall labour force of the UK. What denotes a charity depends on a number of criteria, and for the purposes of a common understanding the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) lists the following defining criteria for charities:

An independent, self-governing body of people who have joined together voluntarily to take action for the benefit of the community. A voluntary organisation may employ paid staff or volunteers, but be established otherwise than for financial gain.

The last sentence in this quote “be established otherwise than for financial gain”, however, is not strictly true, as charities can also be companies limited by guarantee.

There are a number of types and/or ways of forming companies or organisations. Firstly, Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLG) are private limited companies, with clear objectives but without a share capital, and whose members' liability is limited. Members are also guarantors and should the company be 'wound up' they pay a nominal fee: as little as £1.00 or as stated within the constitution of the company (the Memorandum & Articles of

Association or MAA). Because there are no shareholders, CLG's do not pay dividends and are ideally suited for the 'not-for-profit' sector, although the companies can and do make profit, for example by providing and delivering training to other organisations, including statutory sector organisations. The members of this type of company can appoint 'Trustees' or Directors who are responsible for creating and implementing policies. CLG's can also register as charities, however their Memorandum must be acceptable to the Charities Commission. Importantly, CLG's have a clear legal status, which allows for a democratic structure, the ability to own property in their own names, and to abide by the general rules and regulations that govern other limited companies in general (Small Firms Services 2009).

Registered charities are voluntary organisations with a legal and tax status. Registered charities are defined under law as charitable, and operate as unincorporated associations, trusts, or CLG's. Tax relief is given on income tax, corporation tax, stamp duty, VAT, rates, capital gains tax and inheritance tax. The charity must be registered with the Charities Commission and adhere to their regulations on accounts, finances, trustees and management procedures. To be able to register as a charity the voluntary organisation must fulfil a number of criteria: they must have clear objectives that are defined as charitable, which include "the relief of financial hardship, the advancement of education, the advancement of religion and other purposes that benefit the community." (Charity Facts 2009). Charities must also be not-for-profit and any surplus funds should be used to further the charities' objectives. Charities should be independent and not part of any statutory body, government department or local authority, neither should they take part in any political lobbying, or promote any political objectives other than at an educational level (ibid).

The key differences between CLG's and charities are that CLG Trustees and Directors can be remunerated, providing the CLG is not also registered as a charity, whereas charity Trustees or directors may only be paid expenses. As mentioned above, charities are also subject to preferential tax treatment. The main disadvantages for charities is that they are governed by charity law, which imposes strict standards of bureaucracy and regulation and prevents any political campaigning.

The voluntary sector, then, is regulated and supported by an infrastructure that includes the government's Office of the Third Sector (OTS), the Charity Commission and the NCVO. Nevertheless the voluntary sector comprises a complex mix of different types of organisations including social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, registered, and non-registered charities all delivering some kind of social service. Thus, they can be viewed from a variety of angles, and there is no clear cut consensus as to who or what should be included or excluded from the voluntary organisation criteria. In direct relation to this confusion, research carried out in 2008 by the NCVO, entitled *The Civil Society Almanac*, attempted to identify all kinds of organisations working within the different layers of 'civil society'. The research used a very broad definition of 'civil society' and included groups other than registered charities, such as co-operatives, housing associations, higher education, political parties and trade unions. In all, the research looked at 865,000 organisations to provide a map of civil society organisations and to establish their financial breakdowns. They found that most of the organisations were small and community based, but they also found that general charities, housing associations, universities and co-operatives dominated the economic landscape, and that the total income for this sector amounted to £108.9 billion. This research is by no means complete, but it does begin to draw together and map out levels of service provision, the direction the 'third sector' is taking, and changing forms of the state.

This brief overview of how charities and CLG's work is important at a number of levels. It demonstrates how grassroots organisations, and what might be considered activist work, have been drawn into what Smith calls the relations of ruling. Indeed, since 1997, there has been a concerted shift to partnership working *with* the state, which brings with it increased amounts of accountability and regulation on the one hand, and on the other, it decreases levels of autonomy. Much of these decreased levels of autonomy are a result of the Labour government's push to encourage a more 'active' partnership with the voluntary sector in the delivery of social services (Lewis 2005). To regulate this 'active' partnership the UK government set up 'The Office of the Third Sector' (OTS) in May 2006, in recognition of the significant role the voluntary sector plays in society and in the economy. Embedded within the ethos of the

OTS is the development of the Compact (2008) agreement which was designed to recognise the importance of the voluntary and community sector, and promote good partnership working.

Two of the key Compact principles rest on the state as a significant funder of the sector, and that the sector should retain its independence (ibid), which immediately points to compromise, and/or conflict. In practice, the framework does not always work in the ways the agreement specifies. In particular the government's undertaking to recognise and act on factors such as the practical costs of core administration and management, funding for three years at a time to enable organisations to budget, and consulting with the sector in time to make a difference, often do not transpire. In short, recent years have seen a raft of charity law requirements, policy initiatives and accountability procedures that work to harness organisations into a remit of social welfare delivery that can sometimes work against them.

The interconnections of these three areas of women's activism, legal Acts and policy, and the new working practices in the voluntary sector are now discussed.

## **4.6 Discussion**

The new laws, initiatives and regulations that have come into force are not perfect, but they are generally positive and progressive moves. However, their implementation is patchy, as highlighted in Chapter One. The new standardised processes that have come into play within the voluntary sector can be strict and inhibitive, with funding issues remaining a major problem. The difficulties associated with these new working practices, coupled with the uneven actualisation of policy reform makes for a complex and messy situation. The voluntary sector is compelled to work within a framework of mission statements and accountability and, as the Respect principles show, this includes a commitment to multi-agency working. It is fair to say, that charities such as Respect and other women's support services carry a good share of responsibility for liaising with other agencies and institutions in order to effectively realise the developments in 'domestic violence' policy and law.

What must also be taken into consideration is the character of the WLM and feminism. Feminist political endeavours have achieved a great deal, not



least in directly influencing public acknowledgement and responses to 'domestic violence'. However, not all feminists agree on the mainstreaming and legal remedies that have arisen around 'domestic violence'. For example, some feminist academics and activists argue that although specialist services for violence against women originate in women's advocacy, the separation of different forms of violence is 'artificial' (Hanmer 1989:93), and women should work to ensure the 'constellation' (Dobash et al 2000) of men's violences are joined-up and contextualised within existing gender relations. Other disagreements reflect the divisions and differences within feminism(s). The first section in this chapter alluded to the fragmentations that were occurring in the WLM, and by 1977 these divisions were becoming more serious. Moreover, the 1977 WLM conference elicited the following response in the Leeds-based Journal *Bread and Roses*:

The present day feminist movement for the liberation of women in this country is of late referred to as the 'Women's Movement' and the words liberation, feminism, and radical, are more and more omitted ... by allowing the moderates amongst us to formulate more acceptable 'requests' to replace our demands we are denying ourselves and our sisters the possibility of taking from men that which is ours by right ... nothing will be given to us that is worth taking. (Feminist Archive North, 2006)

These sentiments are echoed in various ways. Bart (2000), for example, argues that feminism has become institutionalised. Similarly, Walker (1990) contends that feminist demands for social change are diluted and stultified through their relationships with institutional ideologies and practices.

With respect to concerns around institutionalisation, some scholars claim, provocatively, that the women's movement is in decline (Epstein 2001), or in abeyance (Bagguley 2002). Others argue that the WLM was a complex, diverse and powerful movement of radical and socialist feminist vision, but that gender and race are interwoven with the social, political and economic relations of capitalism in far more pervasive and complex ways than was first imagined (Acker 2001). Whether the WLM is in decline is a moot point, and rests on matters of definition. Although there is not enough space to do justice to it here, what is important is feminist consciousness. The extent of feminist

and profeminist consciousness has become widespread, and is a direct result of the WLM (Epstein 2001). This is evidenced by the general developments and growing public awareness around men's violences towards women. To this end, configurations of feminist consciousness are explored in this research, and are woven through each of the analysis chapters. This is done both through institutional discourses, as well as from the subjective discursive positionings of men who took part in this study.

Also crucial to this study is that social changes have occurred, and are still occurring within an atmosphere of opposition towards feminism. Resistance is found in all areas that make up society, from media caricaturing to political and religious hostility, and not least from men, other women and their allegiances with different feminisms (Faludi 1991). Feminist women and profeminist men are thus compelled to formulate new strategies against what Faludi terms a 'backlash'. Again, this area cannot be given the attention that it deserves here, nevertheless, this research explores and substantiates some of the less visible forms that resistance can take, as well as highlighting some of the tactics and methods that are created not only by women, but also by profeminist men to overcome resistance.

In short, debate and contention abound within feminism and feminist activism, but it is this very area that has driven social reform and continues to drive it, very often from within the voluntary sector. The context of each of these areas involves a messiness not only distinct to themselves, but also since their boundaries are indiscreet their messiness overlap and interconnect. As such they form a complex network of social relations, which importantly also rest on relations between men and women, women and women, and men and men. The aim of this thesis is to use institutional ethnography to map out and unpick some of these relations, in order to gain insight into how they may have come about, how they operate, and the impact they have.

The next chapter provides an overview of the research process itself. It describes the methodology that underpins the research, sets out the research questions, and details the methods used in generating the data. It also provides some demographics of the men who participated in the study and the organisations they worked for.

## CHAPTER 5

### METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a detailed understanding of the research this thesis reports on. In summary, this research is a qualitative and feminist piece of research, heavily influenced by the work of Dorothy E Smith. It is an institutional ethnography (IE) which began with 17 semi-structured interviews with men working in the field of violence prevention, and included attendance at 30 public and semi-public events, as well as the investigation of policy documents and internet web-sites. This chapter first provides an overview of the research, including the research questions. It then discusses the dilemmas that underpin 'feminist research' and reflexivity, and deals with the more practical side: the demographics of the men and the types of organisations they work within; the different methods of data construction and collection; and the methods or tools of analysis. Throughout the chapter a number of key decisions that were taken during the course of the research are addressed.

#### 5.2 Area of Investigation and Research Questions

This section explains the rationale behind choosing to study the 'domestic violence' sector from the entry point of men. As such, it defines the area of research, and sets out the research questions.

##### 5.2.1 *Defining the Area of Research*

This research uses the approach of IE in order to explore the social relations and organisation within the area of violence prevention. By 'violence prevention' I specifically mean the area of intervention *by* men around men's violences towards women. To position this area more precisely, I understand the wider area of violence to take many different forms, such as state violence, institutional violence, gendered violence and symbolic violence, and the area

contains many actors, both men and women, from many different walks of life. This list is not exhaustive as definitions of violence are temporal and political, and thus sensitive to change and development. In addition each form of violence interconnects with other forms in complex ways. As such the wider notion of violence has no clear boundaries and no definitive and/or collective understanding. Nevertheless, from this imprecise definition of wider violence I focus on the area of gendered violence, which is also subject to all of the conditions and complexities mentioned above, and which is more commonly known as the 'domestic violence' sector.

The 'domestic violence' sector has been established and developed by women, and contains many different actors - activists, academics, civil servants, state actors, media actors and so on. Prominent in this area are women only organisations such as Women's Aid, Refuge, Rape Crisis Networks, along with other women's organisations dedicated to providing support to women who have survived different forms of men's violence. The women in this area necessarily work with other organisations as well as the state, state agencies and local authorities, in order to obtain funding, coordinate services and resources, raise awareness, campaign, lobby, fulfil targets and so on. The women in this field also work with other men, not just in the capacities listed above, but also with men who work with other men who have been violent to their female partners. For the purposes of this research, men's intervention was looked at in terms of voluntary sector provision. Intervention can be provided in a number of ways across different social areas, for example through religious and cultural settings, through counselling settings at an individual, couple or family level, and at the criminal justice level by working with men who have been convicted, and who may or may not be serving prison sentences. Intervention within the voluntary sector, often known as the third sector or charity sector, provide group programmes for men who have been violent to their partners. Both types of intervention by men have grown from women's activism, and necessitate working with and consulting with women, both types also deliver co-facilitated programmes, that is male and female facilitation. Furthermore, most voluntary sector men's programmes have at their heart the ethos of women's safety, which commits them to providing ongoing support for female partners. The third sector constitutes the

focus of this study, and the reasons for this choice are discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

### **5.2.2 Research Questions**

Initially, my interest lay in men who were not violent and took a politically active stance on this. I was concerned with the social processes that had led them to this position, along with the differences and commonalities that politically active men shared. Over a short period of time my interest shifted slightly, and I decided to begin my investigation from the standpoint of men who *appeared* to be against violence. This combined with my own politically active stance in men's violence against women and children, particularly 'domestic violence'. The past 15 years or so has seen a significant increase in men's pro-active development of projects and programmes to change the behaviour of men who have been violent to their partners. In addition, and as discussed in Chapter three, although there have always been anti-sexist men's movements that supported women in the area of men's violence, more recently political campaigns around stopping violence against women and children that involve men or are occupied solely by men have also become more visible. I locate both voluntary campaigns and the professional workers in the voluntary sector within the area of violence intervention, and thus chose the two following groups of men to help me explore the area:

- Men who worked in the third sector field of violence intervention in an attempt to change the behaviour of men who have been violent to their partners;
- Men who volunteered their time in organised campaigns/groups to raise awareness of men's violence against women and children.

As detailed in Chapter two, ideology and discourse are key interests and I was concerned with the following questions: How do men talk about violence? How does discourse imbedded in policy influence and reflect ideology? If the men in this study are anti-violent does this necessarily lead them to being anti-sexist? Does there exist an identifiable institutional system, or set of systems, under which the area of violence prevention/intervention (and also by

definition, *violence*) operate? Where do men's campaign groups fit into this operation? Where are men's intervention projects and men's campaign groups located within the area of 'domestic violence'? Do men recognise and acknowledge the women's liberation movement, and if so how? How do the men in this area talk about feminism, feminist goals and other women's organisations? From these overarching questions, or 'intellectual puzzles' (Mason 2002) I developed the following set of research questions:

1. How does men's intervention in men's violence against women fit into the broader area of intervention in men's violences developed by women?
2. What are the contributing factors that led the men to work in the area of men's intervention in violence against women?
3. How does feminism and feminist understandings of violence contribute to the men's understanding of violence against women?
4. How is feminism and feminist knowledge around men's violences incorporated into institutional, organisational and individual practices?
5. Does working in the area of men's intervention in men's violence against women impact on social practices of masculinity?

How this study set about investigating these questions was within a feminist framework, and the next section defines my understanding of feminist research.

### **5.3 A Feminist Research Framework**

This study begins with certain theoretical assumptions concerning women's oppression, and as such will always be open to critique and questions from other scholars with differing ontological and epistemological perspectives. As Kelly et al point out:

Feminist research involves recognizing that the knowledge we create, and the process of its creation, will always be contested, since it begins from theoretical assumptions and has intended practical implications about which there is unlikely to be a consensus. (Kelly et al, 1994:46-47)

The task is to state as clearly as possible what these assumptions are through the use of reflexivity. In turn, the concept of reflexivity should be defined in terms of a researcher's social position, as well as "the personal, interpersonal, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological and ontological influences on our research." (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002:125). This chapter addresses all of these elements, beginning in this section with explanations of feminist research, standpoint theory and reflexivity itself.

### **5.3.1 What is Feminist Research?**

From the outset, this research project has been underpinned by feminist praxis: a feminist political commitment, feminist theory, and feminist research practice. Of these three areas perhaps the most contentious is feminist research practice. The term 'feminist' refers to a wide and diverse group of women with differing political positions, but who usually share the following views:

- a. That women are often oppressed, exploited and devalued.
- b. The desire for change in these exploited conditions.
- c. The adoption of a critical stance toward 'dominant intellectual traditions' that justify and or ignore women's oppression (Acker et al 1983:150-151).

The rationale behind critical feminist research was to critique the positivist and quantitative paradigm of scientific research and takes the stance that reality is multi-faceted, complex and diverse (Maynard 1994, Stanley & Wise 1983). During its emergence in the sixties and seventies, debates on feminist methodology concentrated on bringing to light the experiences of women. Feminists argued that traditional 'scientific' methods tend to hide stages of investigation (ibid), and to uncover these stages feminists should "reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process." (Fonow & Cook 1991:2). These hidden stages include hierarchical relationships between the researcher and the researched, over generalisation, political bias and gendered and sexist bias<sup>1</sup>. Also key to

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<sup>1</sup> See Eichler (1988) for a detailed definition of seven types of sexist bias found in much traditional and/or positivist research.

feminist research is the problematic of 'knowledge production' – who produces knowledge, how is it produced, where is it produced, how is it legitimised, and in whose interests? Thus, as Ramazanoglu (1992:211) points out, when all these problematic aspects are taken into account “feminist methodologies expose unreasonable assumptions about the superiority and neutrality of reason.” In addition, feminist practitioners such as Marjorie DeVault (1999), specifically include paying attention to talk and the language of research itself as playing a central part in feminist research.

Despite the differences and debates on what actually constitutes feminist research, and although there is no single answer as to what feminist method is, there are common features that can be identified as intrinsic to the process (Acker et al 1983, Blaxter et al 2001, Maynard 1994, Sarantakos 1993). These are:

- an attention to gender; a concern for oppressed or marginalised groups using standpoint epistemology
- a critical stance towards the 'taken for granted' dominant intellectual traditions that contain sexist bias, androcentrism, ethnocentrism and objectivity
- a minimising of the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched
- a reciprocity between the researcher and the researched
- a critical reflection of the researcher's position in the process of knowledge production
- the attention to talk and language (DeVault 1999).

In addition, this type of research is often-action orientated and includes a commitment to work towards achieving political goals and/or social change<sup>2</sup>.

There are clear similarities between feminist research practice as a methodological approach and Dorothy Smith's endeavour to practice a 'sociology for people', and it is important to recognise that this framework is not

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<sup>2</sup> There is a huge body of literature in existence concerning feminist research and methodology – in addition to those cited above, see also Brunskell (1998) Jayaratne & Stewart (1991), Oakley (1981/1999), Maynard & Purvis (1994), Mies (1991), Stanley & Wise (1983), (1990) for insight and debate.



specific to feminism alone. It is often utilised by other research areas, including disability, anti-racism, queer studies and so on. It is also ideally situated for studying men. Indeed, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) point out that although feminist methodology is shaped by feminist theory and gender politics, this does not mean that women are always seen as innocent in their abuses of power, nor that the same methods can not be used to study men. Moreover, and in the spirit of this research project, Hearn (1996) also argues that it is essential that men's own experiences are researched if a fuller picture is to emerge. Bringing men's experiences into the mix, then, necessitates an engagement with men, giving them (a different kind of) voice, and analysing their multiple standpoints within a feminist praxis. To do this, it is helpful to take a brief look at standpoint theory, and the next section outlines the debates surrounding it, and its position within IE.

### **5.3.2 Standpoint Theory**

A researcher's epistemological stance informs the research experience from the methodological framework and the methods chosen to generate the data, through to the analysis, findings and dissemination stage. Epistemologies are simply 'ways of knowing' yet they underpin all debate regarding social research, indeed, the 'science' question itself is essentially about basic epistemologies, which to all intents and purposes remains untestable (Jayaratne & Stewart 1991). Within IE, taking account of multiple standpoint positions is important, as it used as the entry point for investigating the organisation of social relations. Making the everyday world problematic consists of exploring the social world from standpoints and local settings that can be either inside or outside of institutional discourses, or a combination thereof, and requires that we:

look for the 'inner' organization generating its ordinary features, its orders and disorders, its contingencies and conditions, and to look for the inner organization in the externalized and abstracted relations of economic processes and of the ruling apparatus in general ... It can begin from the position of any member of the society, explicating the problematic of her or his experience as a sociological problematic. (Smith 1987:99)

As with feminist research practice, it is not possible to do justice to the development of standpoint theory in such a short space. However, with standpoint forming such a crucial aspect of IE, it is necessary to outline some of the debates and developments.

Initially, feminists argued for the privileging of all women's experiences (see Stanley & Wise 1983). However, feminists like Kelly (1988:4) pointed out that: "prioritising experience at the expense of reflection and theory can lead to a 'politics of identity'." More strenuous criticism has come from research academics such as Hammersley (1992:125), who argued that:

In my view arguments that privilege the view point of some category of person, or that declare all points of view to be equally valid, are not a sound basis for research methodology.

Hammersley further argued that standpoint suffers from problematic relativism, and "provides no basis for the rational resolution of disagreement." (ibid:194) Feminists such as Ramazanoglu responded to these accusations by asserting that while standpoints have no ready made solutions to validity they cannot be dismissed "on the grounds of the assumed superiority of a rational scientific community." (ibid1992: 211)<sup>3</sup>

At a more pragmatic level, Mason (2002) notes that the problems with standpoint lay more with the people who try to use them as validity for their research. But at another level, what remains problematic about these debates is the unpleasantness directed at and between different feminists. As Stanley & Wise (1990) observe, the uncharitable ways in which critics read others' published works amounts to the: "creation and damnation of 'other' and the promotion of self." (ibid:47). These practices work to: "construct false difference and disagreement within feminism where these do not exist, or do not exist in the form suggested." (ibid). This, then, aids the construction of dominant forms of feminism – an orthodox feminism or a feminist hegemony.

A reasonable proportion of standpoint debate constitutes a misreading, and Ramazanoglu sums up the core concepts of feminist standpoint as such:

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<sup>3</sup> See also the more recent debate involving Harding (2001), Sprague (2001), Walby (2001), in *Signs* 2001, Vol. 26, No. 2.

Feminist methodologies are not privileged ways of accessing 'reality' but they are varied explorations (some more adequate than others) of how we can validate knowledge which is produced from different standpoints. They raise difficult problems about truth and knowing which different schools of sociology have resolved or evaded in different ways. (1992:209/210)

Debate<sup>4</sup>, however, has contributed to understanding and has encouraged many theorists to develop and refine their position on standpoint epistemology<sup>5</sup>. Harding (1999), for example, argues that:

Standpoint theories have carefully tried to open up an epistemological space beyond absolutist and relativist stances... Standpoint theories are critical social theories, with affinities to other such post-Marxian approaches. Their critics have been unable to conceptualise such a space, accusing standpoint theories of some form or other of absolutism or relativism. (1999:132 )

Indeed, it should be noted here that Harding (2001:534) now describes standpoint not as a theory, but as a political stance and methodological strategy, and is therefore closely aligned with the work of Dorothy Smith (1974, 1987, 2005), who has been highly significant in developing standpoint epistemology, and has influenced many of the aforementioned feminists. Furthermore, significant theorists, such as Hartsock (1983), link standpoint to power, and argue that the standpoint of the oppressed can be more important than that of the oppressor, as the former has an interest in revealing power relationships, while the latter has an interest in concealing them. Hartsock's thinking on standpoint is rooted in a Marxist historical materialist perspective, and is shared with Smith.

Standpoint, in relation to its application in this research can be exemplified by DeVault:

I begin with an observation central to much feminist thinking: that language itself reflects male experiences, and that its categories are often incongruent with women's lives. (1999:59)

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<sup>4</sup> See especially Heckman (1997) and subsequent comments from Collins (1997), Harding (1997), Hartsock (1997), and Smith (1997).

<sup>5</sup> See for example Gelsthorpe (1992), Harding (2001), Mayall (2002), Mies (1991), Ramazanoglu (1992), Sprague (2001).

Most women experience mundane everyday tasks in the 'private' sphere of their lives that impact on and create further social experiences. Often, these experiences are not given any importance, or do not figure in any public accounts as significant. DeVault's work began from an interest in identifying aspects of housework that were often neglected and difficult to articulate, specifically the work of feeding families. Although she shared commonalities with the women she interviewed, she also recognised the profound differences. In this sense, many feminists who begin research from a particular standpoint in order to locate social organisation recognise the significance of intersectionalities in relation to standpoint positioning, and are careful not to subsume people's characteristics under the umbrella of gender alone, or an essentialised universal woman or man.

DeVault's research, like IE, very much acknowledges that standpoints are shaped by multiple factors and intersectionalities. Black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1997, 2000) have been major forces in the development of Black feminist thought and view the inclusion of race, class, sexuality, nationality, as well as gender, as being profound contributors to shaping lived experience (see also Maynard 1994, Smith 1987, 1997). For many feminists, standpoint is used to discover social relations, social organisation, and organising ideologies and discourses. It is about shared experience, and is not put off by discovering differences, indeed the standpoint in IE looks for differences. IE is not concerned with privileging any one standpoint, but rather attempts to map out the ways in which social relations construct and organise different standpoints. Feminists such as Maynard (1994) share this approach and argue that:

Feminism has an obligation to go beyond citing experience in order to make connections which may not be visible from the purely experiential level alone. (ibid:23-24)

Women's lives are taken seriously, but at the same time, the ability of feminist theory to contribute to analyses of women's experience is also crucial.

As discussed in Chapter two, there exist many disjunctures between women's lives and professional discourses or ideological methods of reasoning. There also exist many disjunctures between language and

women's lives, what DeVault terms as *linguistic incongruence* (ibid:61). My endeavour in this research was to make visible 'ideology in action', and to locate discourses that operate at a taken for granted level, so much so that there may not be a language with which to articulate it, but which, nevertheless, assists in the organisation of violence prevention. This research begins from the multiple and diverse experiences of men working in a particular space, at a particular time and in a particular place. The men occupy different positions and different roles, and have different motivations for working in the area of violence prevention. The intention is to explore both the biographical dimensions of men working in this area and their shared experiences, and to gain insight into how the area is socially organised. This kind of research demands a great deal of reflexivity. The everyday world must not be made into an object of study as conventional science often demands (Smith 2002), but must be understood in the context of those who create and experience it within a material context (Olesen 1998). The next section, therefore, discusses the way in which reflexivity is used in this study.

### **5.3.3 Reflexivity**

It is argued that reflexivity within research acts as a validity check, and constitutes a check on the quality of research. As with most concepts, the ideology of reflexivity has also been a site of heated discussion for some time, and Marcus (1998) helpfully outlines four styles of reflexivity:

- 1) 'Baseline', which is associated with self-critique and some feminist research. This is often seen as self indulgence or solipsism by its critics.
- 2) The Bourdieu type of reflexivity which seeks to sustain distance, objectivity and the abstraction of theoretical discourse.
- 3) A 'politics of location', which is a self-critical reflexivity that seeks to define its own voice and establish its own subject, and is found in experimental ethnography.
- 4) And lastly, 'positioning' reflexivity, which is similar to the politics of location but is the developed form of standpoint epistemology associated with feminist practice and a commitment towards the situatedness and partiality of all claims to knowledge (ibid:394-403).

The search for an alternative, non-positivist validity through a reflexive process carries importance. However, when processes of reflexivity are used only as a means of validation this is problematic, and can ultimately be seen as artificial and cynical. Lincoln & Denzin (1998:414) argue that validity can be unmasked as 'authority', which then becomes the boundary line that separates good research from bad (inclusion or exclusion). In addition, lack of validity can be interpreted as lack of claims to 'truth', and therefore, no trust in the claims to validity that a text or a piece of research strives for. Epistemological validity comes to be seen as a desire for power – that is the text's power over the reader. The postmodern reading, then, notes that the assumptions and rules organising contemporary qualitative research rest within previous eras of positivist and natural scientific method, however "Such claims now become the text's warrant to its own authoritative re-presentation of the experience and social world under inspection." (ibid:415)

In terms of this research, a major aspect of IE is to preserve the position of the researched rather than to produce it, and thus to avoid objectification. However, I have much sympathy with Kevin Walby's (2007) argument, discussed in Chapter two, regarding complete avoidance of objectification in the research process. Indeed, much phenomenological research would suggest that experiences are examined from outside of (bracketing) taken-for-granted assumptions, attitudes and the biases of everyday knowledge (Langdrige 2004). This concept, known as 'epoché', advocates bracketing off in order to investigate talk and experience. That this process requires the researcher to work in a highly objective manner, and whether this 'state of objectivity' is ever achieved is fiercely debated (ibid). Therefore, whilst reflexivity is a crucial endeavour for overcoming objectification, it can only ever happen to a degree. What is important is that this paradox is recognised by researchers so that higher levels of reflexivity can be achieved. As well, reflexivity should be carried out, or borne in mind, for purposes of the research. That is, as a researcher's tool to aid analysis, findings and, thus, rigour, rather than to merely tick the criteria box of validity for the sake of demonstrating what may amount to a spurious quality in qualitative research.

With respect to reflexivity, and to certain assumptions that I may hold, a brief biography of my personal background is in order. I am a white British woman brought up in a working class (with middle class aspirations) family. I attended state school, and secretarial college and began full-time work at the age of seventeen in an engineering company. I married at 22, and was separated at 25. I have experienced multiple forms of violence, both in my childhood and as an adult. I came into academia as a mature student, and began my first degree in my mid-thirties, as a single parent of two boys aged eleven and one. On completion of my first degree I was encouraged by my Department at the University of Leeds to apply for an ESRC 1+3 competition studentship, which I won, and which placed me in the relatively privileged position of receiving a bursary whilst carrying out this research. During my MA year my Director of Studies left Leeds, and I made the decision to transfer my ESRC bursary to the University of Huddersfield in order to work with a new Director of Studies.

Around the same time I began studying for my first degree I also became politically active, that is active under the academic definition within organised and public activities. I have been involved in volunteer work since my early thirties and am currently on the management committee for a local Rape Crisis organisation.

I believe that male dominance and heterosexuality manifest gender practices that oppress women (and also men, in different ways), and that these gendered practices include violences against women. Therefore, the ethos underpinning this research is that of opposition to oppressive gendered practices, or patriarchy. On the whole, I agree with Hunnicutt's (2009) definition:

Social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically – hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space. (Hunnicutt 2009:557)

However, I also acknowledge the many different cultural and national forms that patriarchy can take, particularly with regard to macropatriarchy and micropatriarchy. I have held these beliefs for as long as I can remember, but it

is only in recent years that I have discovered the feminist theory that has facilitated articulation.

All of these aforementioned material and mental experiences have helped to shape my ontological and epistemological views. Thus, throughout the whole of this research process I have endeavoured to keep in mind the ways in which my life history might feed into and influence the research, and also to question any biases, assumptions, or preconceptions I hold.

The next section goes on to deal with the more practical aspects of carrying out this research.

## **5.4 Conducting the Research**

This section sets out the practicalities of conducting the research in terms of decisions made to select the voluntary sector, access, sampling and ethics. It also introduces the participants in relation to their demographics and the type of organisation(s) they were involved in.

### ***5.4.1 Choosing the Voluntary Sector***

My specific area of research is the voluntary sector, and was chosen for a number of reasons. This area has seen much growth in recent years, in part due to the 'compact' partnership established in 1998, and discussed in Chapter four. Because of the political ethos underlying this research, I was also interested in organisations who work 'outside' of or on the peripheries of the state, in order to maintain a level of autonomy whilst still having influence in the shaping of policy. In addition, most men who are violent to their partners are not convicted and do not attend court mandated programmes, thus, the voluntary sector has potential access to considerably more men than fall within the remit of the criminal justice sector. To expand on this last point, this is an area that has developed for men who have not been convicted and who voluntarily want to change their violent behaviour.

In Chapter two and in this chapter, I outlined how IE is beneficial for studying groups of marginalised or oppressed people. The men I interviewed are not particularly marginalised or oppressed, but they do comprise a minority group of men working in an area that deals with the social problem of men's



violence. This group of men is not universally representative, but rather serves as my entry point into exploring the area of violence prevention. I have not looked to ascribe any universal characteristics or experiences to the men who work in this area. However, I hope that compelling commonalities and similarities are indicative of shared experiences. In addition, both the area and the men have been explored within a particular historical time, and in particular geographical places, and therefore this study comprises of a snapshot, or a number of snapshots of how this area is organised.

Geographical decisions were made early on in the research regarding which areas to include in the study, specifically whether men who worked in the London region should be included. After much deliberation, and for a number of reasons, I decided to leave out London-based projects and concentrate on the North of the UK. As the largest city in the UK, London may operate differently from the rest of the UK and might not be representative of the smaller organisations included in this study. In relation to this last point, regions outside of London are often a neglected area for research, but nevertheless can be included under the auspices of London-based projects. In addition, if my intention had been to carry out a regional comparative study on men's projects, then I would of course have needed to include London-based projects. However, this was not the focus of my study, and whilst a comparative study of men's programmes would have been interesting it was not the direction I wanted my research to go. At a more practical level, I have a young family and live in the North of the UK, therefore in terms of resources and domestic arrangements it was logistically easier to work closer to home.

Another related geographical decision was whether to include Scotland in my area of research. On the one hand, and as stated above, my objective was not to conduct a piece of comparative research. On the other hand, my use of snowball sampling led me to potential participants who worked in Scotland, but who also were connected to organisations in the North of England. Because I have family in Scotland, the practicalities and costs did not pose any major problems, and therefore I made the decision to carry out some interviews here. My decision was underpinned, in the main, by the strong connections that exist between the north of England and Scotland regarding research and policy, which I thought was important at the time. For

example, the CHANGE Project was developed in Stirling, and was one of the first projects in Europe to develop and implement a programme for violent men that also accounted for the interests of women and children.

#### **5.4.2 Sampling**

Access to participants was through a combination of existing contacts and snowball sampling. Mason (2002) argues that “the key issue in qualitative sampling is ... how to *focus*, strategically and meaningfully, rather than how to represent.” (ibid:136) Accordingly, it is the men’s experiences, and practices within relational and contextual settings that I aimed to explore, and was therefore looking to develop theoretical inferences, rather than establishing relationships between variables. My sampling strategy, then, is non-probability and is closest to ‘theoretical’ or ‘purposive’ sampling (ibid), which was first introduced by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960’s as a scheme for grounding theory (Seale 1999). Mason succinctly defines theoretical or ‘purposive’ sampling as being:

concerned with constructing a sample (sometimes called a study group) which is meaningful theoretically and empirically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory or your argument. (2002:124).

This strategy works on theory saturation, whereby samples continue to be selected until theory is saturated. Negative instances are also looked for to strengthen theory and findings (Seale 1999, Silverman 2001, Mason 2002).

I began recruitment by direct contact with the national (volunteer) coordinator, Matthew, of an international voluntary campaign, who then gave me three other volunteer leads, George, Sean and Oliver, all of whom agreed to be interviewed. I also made direct contact with the volunteer chair of another international voluntary organisation group who operated in the north of England, Lewis. Unfortunately, Lewis was unable to provide me with any other leads. In addition, a woman friend gave me a lead for the coordinator, Sam, of a City/County project. My Director of Studies (DoS) gave me three leads. One of these leads, Owen, had been active in a men’s movement, and was utilised for the ‘pilot’. The second lead given by my DoS was Jamie, the team

supervisor for a youth service. Jamie was the only man to be employed specifically with a statutory agency. Jamie was a duplicate lead, as he was also recommended by Owen. The third lead given by my DoS was Robert, whose main position in the voluntary sector is of a freelance nature, but he also belonged to other organisations in a voluntary capacity. Robert also recurred as a lead during my research on another organisation.

Other leads came about through conferences and seminars given by various governmental, professional and academic organisations. From a governmental seminar I met Alex who worked in a men's programme. At another conference I met and secured an interview with Michael, who volunteered his time at a men's programme, and Billy, who was employed at a men's programme. At this same conference I also met Adam, who was employed at two different men's programmes, but was reluctant to be interviewed. However, after I had interviewed Billy, Adam volunteered himself for interview. From researching one of the organisations that Adam worked for I also came across Robert again, and two new leads Joe and Aidan. Whilst corresponding with Robert to arrange his interview, Robert also offered to put me in contact with Joe and Aidan. Both Joe and Aidan agreed to be interviewed. Joe had held various positions within the area of 'domestic violence', both voluntary and remunerated and also did freelance work. Aidan was employed in two organisations.

What is striking about this snowball sampling is that most of the men who were remunerated had a biographical history in both men's movements and violence prevention, and had belonged to various organisations. In addition, many of the men belonged to other similar organisations aside from the ones they were involved with at the time of interview. Moreover, what became apparent was how small, in terms of the number of men involved, the area of men's intervention in violence prevention was. This could, of course, be read as tautological. However, many of the men either knew, or knew of each other, and were connected through several networking organisations, as well as attending the same public and semi-public events. These are interesting findings, and are looked at more closely in the next chapter.

In relation to the above, decisions had to be made on whether the unit of analysis would be the organisation the man represented, or each man

individually. Before the emergence of an apparent 'nexus', I had decided that the unit of analysis would be the participant along with the organisation he was involved with at the time of interview. However, during the interviews some men talked about their membership with more than one organisation, again this is discussed in the next chapter, but this meant I had to re-think my unit of analysis. On the one hand, I wanted to analyse how this area is organised, thus it made sense to use the organisation as the unit of analysis. On the other hand, I wanted to analyse the men's experiences within the area, that is, their working practices, the discourses they used, and their relationship to feminism, therefore it seemed prudent to work with the man as the unit of analysis. However, in addition, I also wanted to explore how men's intervention in men's violence fitted into the broader field of violence against women, which would include analysis of the inter-relations between men's discourses and feminism. In the end, participants' hold a combination of statuses: firstly, as key informants of the complex of social networks that organise the area, and, secondly, as individual men recounting their biographies.

Due to the relatively few men who work in this area, particular attention had to be paid to anonymity, confidentiality and ethics, and I turn to this next.

#### **5.4.3 Ethics, Anonymity and Confidentiality**

I followed the British Sociological Association's (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*, which outlines four main ethical areas to be considered when carrying out research. These are: harm to participants; lack of informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception. The nature of this study is both ethically and politically sensitive due to the nature of some of the questions, the men involved, and its political interest to others working in the area of violence prevention including feminists and activists. Politicians and journalists can be quick to misconstrue the nuances that underpin social research, and I remain acutely conscious of exercising care to avoid any harm either to the participants and the organisations they represent, or to women's organisations in general.

All the participants involved in the research were advised, both in writing and verbally, that participation was voluntary. I do not feel that any of the men who took part felt obliged in any way. Participants were also advised that as far as possible I would endeavour to provide anonymity, and confidentiality. A confidentiality clause was written into the consent form advising the participants that any information indicating future harm to themselves or a third party would oblige me to inform the relevant authorities. A copy of the consent form can be found in the appendix. In order to ensure, as far as possible, that no identifying features are divulged all of the participants were given pseudonyms. I arrived at the pseudonyms by using the most popular boys names of 2006 published by the National Statistics Office on the internet. These were randomly assigned to each participant by writing every fourth name from the National Statistics onto a piece of paper, putting the papers into a box and withdrawing one for each participant.

As stated previously, the number of men involved in men's violence prevention within the voluntary sector are relatively few, and a number of men expressed a concern about being recognised. I wanted my participants to be as open, honest and comfortable as possible, and decided to refer to each organisation only alphabetically. This was done in simple blocks, therefore the first block of seven organisations, 'A' to 'G', represent organisations in which men are paid to work. The next block of two, 'J' and 'K', represent the campaigning groups where men volunteer their time. The next block, 'P', represents the one statutory worker. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions, a list of support services was given to each participant at the end of each interview, a copy of which can also be found in the appendix. The next section introduces the participants.

#### ***5.4.5 Participant Details***

In all, seventeen interviews were carried out between June 2006 and March 2007, with fifteen different men who held a variety of positions, and belonged to numerous different organisations. At the time of interview the men were all aged between 35 years and 60 years, with both the mean and median age being 50. All participants were white, heterosexual men. All except one

were in long-term relationships, and all except four had children. Although class has not been part of the analysis in this thesis, two participants self identified as working class, eight identified as middle class, and five identified as originally working class, but were now middle class through education or their professional status

The fifteen men interviewed were involved with ten different organisations. In the main, each man interviewed was involved with one specific organisation, however, as discussed in the sampling section this was not straightforward as some of the men interviewed belonged to other organisations in the voluntary sector and in the statutory sector, and some of the men also belonged to more than one organisation in this research. Table 5.1 overleaf anonymously summarises each participant, his broad age at the time of interview, whether or not he was paid for his work in the area, the organisation(s) or campaign he was involved in at the time of interview, and the position he held within that organisation.

**Table 5.1**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Remunerated or Voluntary</b>	<b>Organisation or Campaign</b>	<b>Position(s) held</b>
Owen	60s	Voluntary	No organisation	
Sam	40s	Remunerated	Org. A	Manager
Alex	50s	Remunerated	Org. B	Leader
Billy	40s	Remunerated	Org. C	Leader
Adam	60s	Remunerated Remunerated	Org. C Org. E	Leader Manager
Robert	50s	Remunerated	Org. D	Manager
Michael	40s	Voluntary	Org. E	Worker
Aidan	50s	Remunerated	Org. F	Leader
Joe	50s	Remunerated	Org. G	Manager
Jamie	50s	Remunerated	Stat. P	Leader
Matthew	50s	Voluntary	Camp. J	Manager
Oliver	30s	Voluntary	Camp. J	Leader
Sean	40s	Voluntary	Camp. J	Worker
George	50s	Voluntary	Camp. J	Worker
Lewis	40s	Voluntary	Camp. K	Leader

As a key, the positions held by the men have been envisaged within a hierarchy: Managers includes self managed men and some men who manage and act as facilitators in men's programmes; Leaders includes those who organise and facilitate men's programmes; Workers includes those who facilitate men's programmes, but have not been involved in the organisation or design of the programme. Although the table provides a clear picture of the participants' employment and voluntary status at the time of interview, this is

made under a proviso. The table has been 'tidied up', so to speak, for two reasons: first and foremost, to protect the identify of the participant, and secondly, for sense-making purposes regarding analysis for both the reader and for myself. In reality the relationships between the different positions held, and the connections between different organisations for many of the participants is far messier and much more complex, and is discussed in more detail in the following chapters, along with more details regarding participants' intimate relationships.

The next section discusses the methods used to generate data, and how the data was subsequently analysed.

## **5.5 Methods and Data Generation**

As stated previously, this research is exploratory and set within a qualitative paradigm. Feminist research does not reject quantitative studies as this type of analysis can be valuable in providing direction towards further study. In the case of 'domestic violence', for example, quantitative data indicates costs to the state and employers at £5.8 billion – that is £3.1 billion to the state and almost £2.7 billion to employers (Walby & Allen 2004). Similarly, a *Cross Government Action Plan on Sexual Violence and Abuse* (2007), reported that sexual offences in 2003-04 cost society £8.5 billion, with each rape costing over £76,000. These figures may be significantly higher, however, if they included service provision funding for women who have experienced violence, and for men's voluntary perpetrator programmes. Nevertheless, these figures are readily available and to explore the area of 'domestic violence' from a political perspective, IE was the chosen approach.

### ***5.5.1 Ethnography in Institutional Ethnography***

The origins of ethnography lay in classical anthropology, but has been incorporated into social research and sociology in order to study social processes and/or gain insight into different cultures and social groups (Fielding 1993). Sociologists associated with the U.S. Chicago School developed ethnography by giving it a critical edge, using it to study marginalised social groups from their own perspectives. Goffman (1968), for example, argued that



every social group or institution had something distinctive about it, and studying groups in natural settings, understanding their symbolic world, how they made sense of their experiences and so on, would reveal the ways in which social relations are coordinated and regulated. Ethnography includes a mix of methods, which includes social interaction within the field of study between researcher and the study group; direct observation of relevant events; formal and informal interviewing; collection of documents and artefacts; and open-endedness in the direction the study takes (Fielding 1993). Ethnographers also become part of the setting, learn new languages and unfamiliar usage of words.

There are clear connections between the type of ethnography described above and the ethnography in IE. IE is an approach that looks at many different social settings in order to explicate or describe a culture, community, group, institution and so on, within a wider social and cultural context (Widerberg 2007). However, the aim of IE is not to study a group of people per se, nor is it confined to the 'institution', but rather it aims to bring into focus the connections between the local and extra-local, and make visible the workings of society. It is a way of thinking about and analysing the everyday social world, and requires the researcher to be led to different types of data, different standpoints or entry points, and different institutions (ibid). To this end, I attended conferences, seminars and training organised by professionals, academics, the state, state agencies and activists, and directed at the field of men's violence prevention. The training workshops centred around 'domestic violence' and included awareness, legal remedies and the problems women from abroad face. Conferences, consultations and seminars that aimed to bring men, masculinity and violence into focus were also attended, as were conferences that dealt with sexual(ised) violence. Aspects of these events also dealt with new thinking, practice, and policy strategies. All of these events helped to familiarise myself with the wider area of violence against women, as well as providing opportunities for analysis and comparison.

In reality, IE requires researchers to make key decisions regarding which data to collect, which data counts, and/or which types of data to pursue. Other methods used in this research was interviewing key informants, that is men who were directly involved in changing the behaviour of men who have

been violent to their partners, both at the professional and campaign levels. The internet was also used as a research tool, and these next sections set out how these methods were utilised.

### **5.5.2 *The Interviews***

The primary method used for obtaining data was interviews, which were semi-structured, and I this primary method for a number of reasons. This research is of an exploratory nature, and although there were areas of particular interest that could perhaps have been explored through questionnaires, questionnaires are unable to probe or challenge the participants, whereas interviews offer the opportunity to do this. Of course, questionnaires can be, and often are, used in conjunction with interviews. However, what was most important to me was the 'entry point', and interviews allow researchers to access individuals' understanding of their social world (DeVault 1999, Smith 2005). The use of interviews acknowledges that people are experts of their own experiences, and thus interviews have the potential to generate in-depth information about individual experiences. Interviewing, in the generic sense, covers a range of methods from formally structured and standardised question scripts, through to completely unstructured interview processes (Reinharz 1992). However, I sympathise with Mason (2002) who disagrees with the concept of totally unstructured interviews:

I do not think it is possible to gather data in a wholly unstructured way through a qualitative interview, because the decisions and judgements the researcher makes give some form of structure and purpose to the data generation process. (ibid:69)

My methodological position emphasises that knowledge is contextual and situational, and that data is co-constructed by the researcher and the participant and not excavated or collected, as some researchers might argue<sup>6</sup>. The way in which I conducted my interviews was more in line with Ruth Frankenberg's (1993) study on racism. Frankenberg interviewed US white women and developed a dialogical approach to her interviews, sharing with her

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<sup>6</sup> See for example Gray (2004), Seale (1999).

participants her own analysis of racism as it developed during the research process. Frankenberg also confronted the women on occasion, in order to reveal how “color-evasive” ideologies were essentially racist. This overtly dialogic method of interviewing is open to criticism regarding the ‘leading’ of participants, and encouraging them to say what they think the researcher wants to hear. However, this method can also have a democratising effect on the balance of power, in that the researcher becomes more visible rather than remaining the powerful hidden hand that selects and makes decision throughout the research process (ibid).

My data was generated through semi-structured interviews consisting of a number of wider themes that were of interest, in order to capture ‘lived experiences’ and highlight the complexities, confusions and contradictions of socially constructed practices. Semi-structured interviews also provide a flexibility that allows for adaptation and unexpected themes (Mason 2002), and this was indeed borne out during analysis where a multitude of further, more focused themes were identified. The interviews consisted of three sections. The first section was designed to obtain personal background information, and included questions about childhood, sexuality, class, relationships, and why they had become involved in the field of violence prevention. The second section asked the participants about their understandings of violence, and asked more sensitive questions regarding their experience of violence. The third section asked the participants to talk about their everyday work in their particular organisation, including funding, working with other organisations, employment and feminist influences or protocol. The last question asked whether the participant involved himself in other political activity that challenges men’s violence. A copy of the schedule can be found in the Appendix.

Initially, the interviews included questions regarding the participants’ history around politics and political affiliations, both personal and party politics. These questions were asked in the pilot interview with Owen, and also the first interview with Sam (who was interviewed twice). However, although this was very interesting, it made the interviews far too time consuming. In addition, political history also amounted to four separate sets of questions to work on and analyse. Thus, after conducting the first two interviews I made the

decision to leave out the specific questions on political history in the further interviews. Notwithstanding this, during the course of the interviews many of the men did in fact talk about their political history without prompt. Therefore, along with the last question regarding other political activity, the interviews still provided rich data on politics and political activism.

Reliability is important in qualitative studies, and Seale (1999) argues for five strategies that help with this: low inference descriptors, multiple researchers, participant researchers, peer examination, and mechanically recorded data. Multiple researchers is not possible within the structure of this research, however, peer examination was carried out in the form of conference and seminar attendance. I have endeavoured not to over-generalise by using mechanically recorded data and low inference descriptors for conversation analysis to avoid the ambiguity that 'tidied up' transcribed speech often creates. Therefore, all interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim using the Jeffersonian/Jefferson-lite method (Hepburn & Potter 2006). This included all utterances such as "erm", "hmm" and so on, and all pauses that appeared outside of standard speech, which were indicated by the number of seconds in brackets. Also included were any self-corrected words, stressed words (transcribed in bold), whispers, tone of voice, and any obvious emotion such as laughter and sighs, as well as interruptions and over-speaking from myself and/or the participant. The transcripts included bracketed question marks with numbers on the rare occasion of not being able to identify speech.

In all, the number of people interviewed was relatively small, however the interviews lasted, on average, one and a half hours each, with individual interviews ranging from around forty minutes to three hours. In total I amassed more than thirty hours of interview tape and over 800 pages of A4 interview transcription.

### **5.5.3 The Events**

The events, although all similarly concerned with the problem of men's violences, can be split into three broad groups. The first type were events organised by professionals and/or academics around men's violences, with a loose element of activism, but with the well-being of men as a core element.

The goals of these events, in the main tended to focus on *how to* educate men and change their behaviour. The second type of event were those organised, in general, by professional, academic, and activist women around the *consequences* of men's violences and how these could be addressed. The objectives for these events included dissemination of new research, as well as sharing information on the pitfalls, struggles and positive experiences in lobbying, obtaining funding and organising support and resources for women who had suffered or were fleeing violence. The third type of event were training-oriented, and centred around awareness and remedies for 'domestic violence'. I also attended one cross governmental consultation on violence against women, one invitation-only governmental consultation on changing men's behaviour, one fund raising event for the 2008 'Million Women Rise' march in London, and one theatre performance on masculinity. Table 5.2 overleaf depicts these events in more detail. The summary is in chronological order and indicates in broad terms the subject of the event<sup>7</sup>, who it was organised by, the approximate percentage of women and men at each event, and the size in term of attendees, ranging from small (under twenty), medium (50 to 75), and large (76 to 125).

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<sup>7</sup> Note: any events that were specifically named as 'violence against women' have been abbreviated to VAW.

**Table 5.2**

<b>Subject of Event</b>	<b>Organised by</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>'Gender' Split</b>
Sexual violence	Academics	Large	75% Women
Feminist commemorative	Academics Activists	Large	95% Women
Policy consultation on men's behaviour	Government	Small	40% Women
'Domestic violence'	Professionals	Medium	70% Women
Feminist conference	Academics, activists	Large	90% Women
Men's emotional health	Academics, Professionals	Large	60% Women
Sexual violence	Activists	Large	95% Women
Masculinity	Academics	Large	65% Women
'Domestic violence' and men's health	Men's health	Large	75% Women
General conference	Academics	Medium	50% Women
VAW	Academics, activists	Small	All Women
Women's health	Activists	Large	All Women
'Domestic violence'	Academics	Small	99% Women
'Domestic violence'	Professionals	Large	80% Women
Masculinity workshop	Academics	Small	50% Women
Masculinity seminar	Academics	Small	60% Women
Masculinity theatre	Theatrics	Medium	50% Women
'Domestic violence'	Professionals	Large	60% Women
VAW – fund raiser	Activists	Large	98% Women
Sexual violence	Activists, professionals	Medium	All Women
'Domestic abuse' training	Local council	Small	98% Women
Sexual violence	Academics, Activists	Large	90% Women
Feminist conference	Activists, academics	Large	90% Women
Feminist commemorative	Academics, activists, professionals	Large	85% Women
'Domestic abuse' training	Local council	Small	95% Women
'Domestic violence' training	Professional	Small	98% Women
Sexual violence	Activists, professionals	Medium	All Women
Men as perpetrators 'domestic violence'	Academics, professionals	Medium	90% Women
VAW	Government	Large	95% Women
'Domestic abuse' training	Local council	Small	95% Women

Although women were not formally interviewed in this research, due to time constraints, I was in conversation with many women at the various events I attended. During all of these conversations I presented myself as a researcher in men's intervention in men's violence, to ensure that everyone I met and conversed with was informed as to my reasons for being there. The next section discusses the type of documents used for analysis.

#### ***5.5.4 Internet Based and Documentary Analysis***

Hard copy documents and internet based web-site pages containing public information on the organisations participants were involved in were also read and analysed. Amongst the internet based documentation, relevant government policy and regulating bodies, such as Respect and Companies House were looked at. In particular, the financial returns published on the Charities Commission web-site were examined to find out where funding was obtained for the community-based projects participants were involved in. Internet research also consisted of researching the names of participants and their associated links.

Table 5.3 overleaf summarises the different methods of data generation and the types of material produced.

**Table 5.3**

<b>Method of Data Generation</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Types of Material Generated</b>
Semi-structured interviews with male participants		17	Tape recordings Transcripts Interview Notes
Institutions, organisations & campaigns		10	Paper based - documentation Web based – documentation
Events attended	Conferences Workshops Seminars social events	30	Documentation issued on behalf of - the event. Own Notes Observations Conversations Memories

The next section discusses how I went about analysing the different types of data generated from this research.

## **5.6 Analysis**

This section first discusses discourse analysis as an assisting tool for exploring and locating Smith's concepts of ideological methods of reasoning, and ideological codes. It then goes on to summarise how I went about analysing the various research methods utilised in this research.

### **5.6.1 Discourse Analysis**

There are many different versions of discourse analysis, and a number of disciplines that contain the analytic tools required for analysis, such as general linguistics, socio-linguistics, pragmatics, stylistics as well as discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. For a more sociological analysis of discourse I found CDA to be the most helpful tool for 'how to do it'. However, *how to do* discourse analysis books are relatively thin on the ground. One



reason for this might be due to scholars such as Fairclough (2002:121), whose view on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is that “it is as much theory as method.” Another reason might be related to Billig’s (2004 [1988]) politically-driven views on how to do CDA, which is not to become caught up in any strict methodological prescriptions. Likewise, Van Dijk (2002:95) asserts that he has no “ready-made method” to offer researchers, nor does he “lead or represent an ‘approach’, ‘school’ or other scholarly sect that seems so attractive to many scholars” (ibid). This, to Van Dijk is contrary to a critical perspective. Like Billig, and in line with Smith’s work, Van Dijk argues that:

Without being eclectic, good scholarship, and especially good CDA, should integrate the best work of many people, famous or not, from different disciplines, countries, cultures and directions of research. In other words, CDA should be essentially diverse and multidisciplinary. (ibid:95/96)

CDA is concerned with the relations between language and power (Wodak 2002), and although there are different schools of thought and tradition within CDA, they all share a perspective that is ‘critical’:

CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. (ibid:2)

Indeed, CDA shares many of its features with discursive psychology. In particular, Potter & Wetherell (2004) point out the following:

- talk and text as social practices
- talk as action, construction and variability
- the rhetorical organisation of talk and texts

To elaborate slightly, *Talk as action*, although closely connected to linguistic form and grammar, focuses on the social rather than linguistic problems. *Talk as action, construction and variability* focuses on talk and/or writing as performing some kind of action. The way this is achieved is, in part, through constructing discourses of various styles, and using linguistic and rhetorical devices. Discourse analysis attempts to uncover these processes, which necessarily then leads to variability found, for example, within the discourse itself as different descriptions of phenomena produce different actions (ibid).

Lastly, *the rhetorical organisation of talk and texts*, as concerned with discourse analysis focuses on rhetoric or argument, and is helpful in highlighting the argumentative devices that people use to counter or undermine competing discourses (Billig 1991).

What is compelling about CDA is its honesty in situating itself on the political left, and its commitment to social justice and emancipatory politics. It is concerned with inequality and exposing power relations and hidden ideologies in talk and text:

CDA is a –critical – perspective on doing scholarship: it is, so to speak, discourse analysis ‘with an attitude.’ It focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. (Van Dijk 2002:96)

CDA is transdisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary, it can be used in conjunction with other social theories within the social sciences and the humanities, and compliments other research methods such as ethnographies (Fairclough 2004, Van Dijk 2002). As such, this “theoretical perspective on language” (Fairclough 2002:121) is directed at all the texts in my research, and is in line with Smith’s theoretical framework and the diverse social theorists that she is influenced by. In particular, it complements and enhances the work of Smith that looks at ideological methods of reasoning, public discourses, institutional discourses and ideological codes.

The next section summarises the practicalities in analysing the data.

### **5.6.2. Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to the organisation of all that has been seen, heard, read and experienced within the course of the research process. Seal (2004) argues that many researchers feel compelled to state in precise terms the type of approach they have adopted, which results in the researcher saying they have done ‘discourse analysis’ when what they have done is to pick out interesting themes and develop them. Seal calls this ‘qualitative content analysis’ or ‘interpretive analysis’ (Ibid:299). Seal is not being critical here, quite the opposite, he argues that this phenomenon concerns, in part, researchers’ lack of confidence. In my own work, then, as discussed in the

previous section, the CDA perspective helped to guide the way I identified themes within my interviews and the subsequent coding. But the ways in which I understood and processed most things that I heard, read and experienced throughout the course of the study was underpinned by the political and theoretical perspectives of Smith and her sociological framework.

It would be wrong to say that analysis began at the analysis stage, rather analysis was at play as soon as the research commenced and continues past the writing up stage. Relationships, insights and themes began to emerge from the first event I attended, and I continuously made connections between participants' accounts during the interviews and my more detailed impression of the area as a whole. In addition, government policy, news items and my growing insights into how women's organisations operated through my voluntary work, all contributed to analysis.

With regard to analysing the interview transcripts themselves, I decided not to use a computer software package. The over-arching reason was that my computer platform is an Apple Mac, and there are few programmes that work with this platform. Those programmes that do work on Apple Mac platforms have been adapted and contain many problematic areas, therefore the choice to use any software package, especially the most common one, NVivo, was very limited. As such, I decided to analyse the interviews manually.

I began the manual interview analysis by coding broad themes such as intimate relationships, organisational relationships, funding, class, feminism and so on. I then listened and re-listened to the interviews whilst identifying and coding more specific themes from the broader ones. I was looking for concepts and categories that might be indicative of a specific ideology, or that may contain normative assumptions, ideological beliefs and/or ideological methods of reasoning. In particular, I wanted to identify any public text-mediated discourses, and/or ideological codes (Smith 1999). Smith argues that ideological codes produce standardised understandings of the social world and a framework for employing textually mediated discourses across many diverse organisational sites, as well as in people's everyday lives. They also direct evaluative opinion into what is distinct from the norm, i.e. deviant or defective cases. The way in which people take up these ideological practices

in talk and action denotes a powerful form of ruling, and it was my aim to uncover discursive practices that coordinate and influence people's work in local settings (ibid).

Lastly, I was looking for what DeVault calls *linguistic incongruence*. This is unarticulated experience and the way in which people manage the incongruence of everyday speech, and tend to translate this experience with the language they are familiar with, and with the expectation that the hearer will understand what they are trying to get across. For DeVault (1999) linguistic incongruence occurred between women's experience and articulation of 'feeding the family'. I also looked for what was *not* said by my participants. However, it was not so much looking with the eyes at the transcript, but rather *listening* to the transcripts and tapes, and trying to *hear* what was not being said, or what I was expected to understand without it being explicitly articulated.

As mentioned previously, considerable time was also spent 'online' researching participants, the organisations they were involved in, government policy, regulating bodies, and some women's organisations. This involved constant to-and-fro between web-pages and documents, checking and re-checking documentary facts, carrying out searches on names to establish other connections in the area, and then following them up and searching for public documents for evidence.

In terms of the events, field notes were taken after, and sometimes during, each event, with thoughts and quotes written down as soon as possible. Whilst attending each event, I also took note of the number of male and female delegates, and collected as much documentation pertaining to each event as was possible.

The next and final section addresses concerns as well as positive outcomes regarding the research as a whole.

## **5.7 Reflections**

This final section reflects on the research process and considers issues around interviewing, the insider/outsider dilemma, and closes by highlighting some methodological and research limitations.

### **5.7.1 Interviews**

The interview setting can have a significant impact on the manner in which the interviews are conducted. Firstly, it depends on where the interviews are carried out. Most of the interviews were carried out in university rooms, in cafés, or in the participant's place of work. In the event, interviews carried out in cafés, although convenient, were very hard to transcribe due to the surrounding noise. Interviews carried out in participant's workplaces were for the most part mutually conducive, but in two cases the participant's place of work was in their own home. This was fine on one occasion, as there were other people in the house, but on the other occasion there was only myself and my participant in the house, which was unexpected. On another occasion, and because I could not think of anywhere else to conduct a particular interview with a man that lived in my area, the interview was carried out in my own home, whilst a friend was upstairs. I initially thought I would have the upper balance of power in my 'own territory', and found myself relinquishing this power to even out the balance. In this situation, then, I became aware that I was acting in a very polite way, and found myself anxious about challenging or questioning the participant. After this, I resolved not to carry out any further interviews in my home, and to come up with creative solutions about where interviews could be held.

In terms of the interviews themselves, I learned much throughout the process. I quickly learned how to deal with different people, and people I didn't feel very comfortable with. I also learned how to deal with the type of interview different people *give* you, i.e. some are more confident than others, some more open than others, some want to enter into an explicitly dialogical conversation, some are more forthcoming than others, some are more reticent and/or secretive, some want to protect other people/organisations, some want to talk candidly about other people/organisations/theorists and so on, and these signals have to be picked up.

The next section discusses issues regarding the status of insider/outsider.

### **5.7.2 Insider/Outsider**

Both insiders and outsiders can lay claim to the different forms of knowledge they generate, and this situation has been subject to debate for some time, now (see Griffiths 1998). Although few studies have tested each position simultaneously (Widerberg 2007), Diane Wolf reports on one such study (Tixier y Vigil and Elsasser 1976 in Wolf 1996:15) carried out with Chicana women. In this study a Chicana researcher and an Anglo researcher both interviewed Chicana women with the same set of questions. What the researchers found were two different types of information: the Chicana women talked more openly with the Chicana researcher about discrimination, whilst they talked more freely with the 'white' women regarding sex and bodily functions. Studies like this would suggest that there is no 'better' or 'worse' knowledge to be gained from the different statuses, but rather that different knowledges are gained through different social positionalities, and that no one positionality can be privileged.

There are obvious connections, here, to debates around standpoint theory, and Smith (1990a) acknowledges this herself:

A feminist sociology must, it seems to me, begin with actual subjects situated as they actually are; it must be, therefore, an insider's sociology, a sociology of society as it is and must be known by people who are active in it. Hence, there can be no theory, no method, and knowledge as a product of these that is not made by men and women and made from a definite standpoint in the society and in the interests of those who make it (1990a:2)

My own position as a woman interviewing men within the wider situation of male dominated social relations, will most likely have effected the interviews. gendered power relationships will have been at play during the length of the interview regarding how the men viewed me and how they talked about themselves. However, power relations between the participants and the researcher constantly fluctuate, and whilst it is true that the researcher may control their own research design, participants also actively select the information they make available to the researcher (Reynolds 2002). For example, the men interviewed occupy a position in a predominantly female field, and this will have effects on how they view me as woman interviewing

them about their violent experiences. At one level I am a feminist woman, active in the wider field of violence prevention and, since September 2007, have held a management position at a Rape Crisis Centre, and have both a material and theoretical familiarity with funding issues. At another level, as a girl and as a woman I have experienced a number of different forms of gendered violence from men. At yet another level, I am an academic and a researcher, and therefore hold the final decisions regarding the research, what to include or exclude, the framing of, and the arguments I want to put forward, and the audience I am writing/researching for. These various social locations that I occupy tend to overlap, and are not easily separated, indeed they constitute a number of subjective positions that impact on and influence the way I think about things, and the ways in which I present myself.

Naming these different subject positions is partly the practice of reflexivity and my relationship to the study, but it also raises questions about my relationship *with* people I study. Do I belong to the same group? Am I an insider or an outsider? Widerberg (2007:12) argues that researchers occupy a number of positions: “insider/outsider/both/neither”. Whilst Smith argues in the quote above that we are always insiders in some sense as we live in a socially constructed world, she also asserts that whatever position we occupy, our knowledge is always partial and situated and known from ‘within’. I see no absolute answers to these dilemmas and would argue that the extent to which these multiple positionalities affected the interviews is, in my view, not measurable in a quantitative way.

The next section discusses some of the limitations to this study, both in methodological terms and in practical terms.

### **5.7.3 Methodological Limitations**

Methodology, as it is currently understood, argues Billig (2004), involves following procedures regarding the collection of data and analysis, focused reading and creating the conditions whereby any two researchers would arrive at similar results. As such, individual bias is supposedly avoided within the research process. Billig, however, advocates the return to more traditional approaches to scholarship and research. One aspect of traditional scholarship,

according to Billig, is the researcher/scholar should be widely read, which is similar to the intention underpinning Smith's approach. However, this leads to the main methodological limitation. Smith's work is infused with a variety of complex social theory, and this makes it theoretically as well as methodologically challenging, and runs the risk of the researcher becoming 'Jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none'.

The other key methodological limitation is deciding on which aspects of IE to concentrate on and utilise for analysis. IE can be seen as a system for combining the social theories of Marxism, ethnomethodology, discourse and language analysis, organisational analysis and feminism. It is not necessarily a coherent framework, as some aspects can be relied upon and utilised more than others, hence the potential of many configurations. This theoretical eclecticism, although positive in the sense that it allows for a multitude of ways to focus on a given social problem, can also be open to criticism. There is no ultimate solution to this problem, other than defining throughout the research which aspects are to be used for analysis purposes.

Finally, IE research can be never-ending. Because it is able to connect and map a multitude of institutional relationships, the researcher must make decisions as to where and when to stop. In relation to this, IE opens up and makes visible many different areas for examination, thus, researchers must also make difficult decisions as to which areas will be pursued. This problem is compounded by the related practical problem that besets most research, which is that time and space dictate that not everything can be analysed and/or written about. My research design offered up sets of questions that generated an enormous amount of information, as did attending the public events and looking at policy and organisational documents. Thus, it was necessary to make both theoretical as well as practical decisions on what to include and what to exclude.

#### ***5.7.4 Research Limitations***

Common to other qualitative research, one of the main limitations of this research is the interview sample size. In all fifteen men were included in the semi-structured interviews, and thus it is impossible to make generalisations on



their experiences or biographies. Although participants have some experiences in common, such as their re-negotiation of sexual politics, my other aim was to situate their experiential knowledge within the context of men's intervention in violence against women, and in this sense the participants were the 'point of entry'. Moreover, because the fifteen men are members of a small area, set within the wider area of violence against women, the interviews may yield more significant findings than absolute numbers would also suggest.

Participants themselves were aware of the area as a relatively 'small community', and within the interviewing process some clearly censored and limited what they were prepared to say about other groups. For example, some participants would say they were critical of the ethos underpinning certain programmes, but would say no more than this, whilst other men would make their criticisms clear by their body language, or with disapproving facial looks which are impossible to capture in an interview transcript. Although some of the participants spoke 'off the record', I have no way of knowing to what extent others limited their answers in the interview process. In addition to this, there is always the problem of 'socially desirable' answers. Although I assured the participants that everything they said would remain anonymous, I did ask some very sensitive questions. There is no reason for me to disbelieve any of the participant's accounts, but the extent to which participants answered in socially desirable ways is always a difficult task to gauge.

Another limitation related to the smallness of the community, was how to write about the various connections the men had to other groups and organisations without revealing the identity of any participant. To this end, much of the 'online' documentation could not be discussed, as despite documentation holding a public status the risk of recognition was too high. This limitation constitutes a problematic dilemma. As the researcher, I am aware of important connections to other well known organisations, but have to find ways of analysing these connections without putting any of the participants at risk.

One of the key problems with looking for ideologies and discourses, as it is with CDA (Fairclough 2003) concerns the locating of ideologies and discourses. Ideologies that are blatantly sexist, racist and so on can be

uncovered, however, ideologies with which we agree can be overlooked. Similarly, Smith talks about 'institutional capture,' whereby although we might be looking for institutional discourses, we can also use institutional language ourselves and be unaware of it. In this study, there are areas in my interviews where I use sociological jargon without being aware of it, and where I also assume my own agreeable ideologies. In terms of my own agreeable ideologies and discourses, I think it is difficult to talk without including them; however my use of institutional language is not strictly necessary. To try and alleviate this issue, I make every attempt to recognise the occasions when I do this.

## **5.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has set out in detail the theoretical framework that has influenced and guided each stage of the research process. It defined the area of research and research questions, and also defined feminist research practice as understood and used in this study. The chapter also discussed the practicalities of the research regarding access, sampling procedures, participant demographics, the methods used to generate the data, and how the data was analysed. In addition, the chapter pointed to a number of reflective issues and considered the limitations in both methodological and practical terms.

The following chapter sets out in more detail the analytical framework for focusing on two of the findings mentioned in this chapter: the size of the area, and the connections the participants have outside of their involvement with the organisation they initially represented. Also examined are the institutional complexes that the area operates within, as well as the mediating influences that draw the organisations into the relations of ruling.

## CHAPTER 6

### MEN AND ORGANISATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Throughout the last four decades women have made many gains, albeit unevenly, and have effectively brought into the public domain the problem of men's violences. The effect of women's political activity in this area has been the development and growth of what is commonly known as the "domestic violence" sector, although many activist women prefer to call the sector 'violence against women'. For Walker (1990), however, feminist demands for social change are diluted and stultified through their relationships with institutional ideologies and practices, and this is an important feature for women to negotiate or overcome if further gains are to be made. The sector, nevertheless, has opened up a space in which men themselves can be active in the intervention of men's violences, and this positioning of men's intervention is central to this, and the following chapters.

In order to gain a fuller picture, and in view of the sociological approach of institutional ethnography, it is important to include as wide an analysis as possible, including the many institutions that have come into view as part of the ethnographic research and the relations within and across these institutions. Therefore attention to the organisations themselves forms a necessary aspect of this research, as do the additional organisations that the men interviewed were active in, and which I address throughout this chapter. I do this by utilising Dorothy Smith's distinctive way of 'doing' sociology, as set out in Chapter two, to explore the participants and their organisations. How do men utilise the space opened up for them by women, and how does men's intervention in violence impact within and across the sector? It is through the lens of ruling relations and ideological methods of reasoning that I explore the complex set of social relations that the men's projects and campaigns are involved in. As a point of note, the term 'institution' is used as per Smith's (2005) definition, which builds on Goffman's (1961) understanding:

to identify complexes embedded in the ruling relations that are organized around a distinctive function, such as education, health care, and so on. The terms identify the intersection and coordination of more than one relational mode of ruling. State agencies are tied with professional forms of organization, and both are interpenetrated by relations of discourse, including the institutional discourses that are systematically developed to provide categories and concepts expressing the relationship of local courses of action to the institutional function. (Smith 2005:225)

I use the terms 'organisation' and/or 'agency' in the sense that they are part of institutions. They are formal bodies of people with particular purposes that carry out and coordinate everyday social relations within institutional complexes

Although the framework of Institutional Ethnography (IE) is used, I employ some aspects of Smith's work more than others, and the first section outlines the framework for analysis in more detail. I then go on to introduce and characterise the organisations the men worked in at the time of interview, and draw out their similarities. I then begin to map out their complex connections with other organisations by exploring the powerful mediating influences that the funding process produces. Next, I look at the criminal justice system and the conflict within institutional understandings that can arise. Continuing with the theme of institutional practices, I explore the participants' additional paid and voluntary positions in the 'domestic violence' sector, and draw out evidence that suggests the sub-field of men's intervention in men's violence against women is of relatively small dimensions. The last section outlines the public events at which the men represented either themselves or their organisations, and examines the events themselves: the type of event, their focus, their themes, their tone and so on.

## **6.2 Utilising Institutional Ethnography**

There are two overall aims of institutional ethnography (IE), one is to produce a map of the ruling relations and the institutional complexes that people participate in. In this way, knowledge that is extra-local to people's everyday activities can also be uncovered and produced. The second aim is to progress and develop methods around discovering institutional complexes,

and more generally the ruling relations of contemporary Western society (Smith 2005:51). To this end, IE brings together and synthesises a number of different theoretical perspectives, such that it is a difficult task to include all these perspectives in one piece of research. For this chapter, and the following chapters I now set out my own synthesis for understanding and analysing the institutions that men's intervention in men's violences are involved in. Language is crucial for determining what can be spoken about and how it can be spoken about. Language also produces particular knowledges, and this knowledge can influence courses of actions, as well as the ways in which actions are carried out. Using the same methodological process that Walker (1990) sets out, and which Smith (1999) elaborates on, the terms 'domestic' and 'violence' are both concepts that, although contested across multiple institutional sites, have been worked up into ideological knowledge by professionals, academics, researchers, theorists, and information disseminators. As such, the discourses associated with these ideologies carry distinctive properties that enable people to understand and use them, through much the same way as Foucault's (1972) process of 'discursive regularities', which enter the public domain as *connaissance* and *savoir* knowledge (see Chapter two). When these two concepts are put together, they create the further concept of 'domestic violence'. Whilst much of the initial work, i.e. public understanding of the singular concepts, has already been done, the next step is the development of a further discourse through the same institutional sites. What is happening simultaneously here is the naturalising of the two singular concepts, but also this process includes the aggregation of these singular concepts in order to create a concept that is larger than the sum of its parts: in the sense that institutions are also developed around it. The discourse developed on "domestic violence", thus generates features of society that are observable and can be acted upon. This process can be seen as the making of ideology and/or 'ideological reasoning' (see Chapter two). However, these features have been worked up from actual social relations that are then reflected back upon us, thus they are both produced by *and* also produce social relations.

The next step involves the particular forms of knowledge resulting from the ideological reasoning that "domestic violence" produces, the ways in which

it is viewed as a problem, and how the problem will be managed. At this point the social problem of “domestic violence” has entered the realm of ‘ruling relations’ (see Chapter two). To recap briefly, ruling relations are complex forms of coordinated activities carried out and participated in across multiple institutional sites, these sites include, professional settings, governments, corporations, universities, education, the law and so on. For the purpose of this particular study, ruling relations produce taken-for-granted knowledge around “domestic violence”, and also provide ways of dealing with the phenomenon or social problem. Although institutions and organisations are made up of individuals, their capacity to plan and execute courses of action “derive from the organisations and social relations that they both produce and are produced by.” (Smith 2005:18).

This analytic process is fundamental to the following chapters. Necessarily, I employ some aspects more than others, for example, I return to the language and discourse produced by ruling relations in Chapters seven and eight. However, in this chapter I focus more on the men’s participation in ruling relations by exploring their relationships and connections with other organisations.

### **6.3 The Nexus of Men and Their Organisation(s)**

In order to provide some background, this section first gives a brief summary of the organisations each man worked for at the time of interview. I then go on to discuss this in terms of their similarities, paying specific attention to funding. Organisational funding concerns and difficulties were experienced by most of the men, and this particular area is useful for drawing out the ways in which the men were hooked into ruling relations. Of consideration at this point is that although all of the interviewees were men who were active in violence prevention, the men fall into two groups: those who were unpaid and active in campaigns, and those who were remunerated in some way, either through paid positions in community programmes, or who offered consultancy and training to other statutory and non-statutory agencies. There were similarities between the two groups of men, and they also shared some overlap in the organisation they had connections with; nevertheless, in depth analysis reveals important differences. For ease of analysis, and from this point

onwards, the two groups of men will be referred to as the 'campaign men' and the 'professional men'. In this way, when the men are discussed as a group they can more easily be analysed.

### **6.3.1 The Organisations**

An important point to note here concerns the summarising of the organisations themselves, which represents a departure from the unit of analysis of men. This has been done for practical reasons: firstly, to situate and make sense of the interviewee, and secondly, to highlight the way in which individuals actively participate through their own organisation and how this connects to, and coordinates with wider social organisation, or to use Smith's concept of ruling relations.

**Organisation 'A'**, is a community-based project and works in partnership with other voluntary and statutory organisations, including women's organisations, as well as playing a coordinative role within the field of 'domestic violence'. Organisation 'A' develops workshops and programmes and also offers training, consultancy and support to other voluntary agencies within both the wider field and the sub-field of working with men. They are funded by various Government and public authority grants, as well as other charities

**Organisation 'B'** is a community-based programme that provides research services, training, consultancy and also delivers self-referral group-work programmes to men who have been violent to their partners. The organisation offers support for women partners and works in partnership with both the public and charity sectors. It is funded by a local Domestic Violence Service (DVS) and a local women's organisation. The local DVS is in turn funded by government and public authority grants, and other charities. Their clients are signposted from statutory agencies such as the police, health and social work, but they also have referrals from relationship counsellors.

**Organisation 'C'** is a community-based, self-referral project, offering training, consultancy, group-work programmes for men and women, as well as one-to-one counselling. The organisation works in partnership with other agencies, including women's organisations, and not only offers support for women partners, but also group-work programmes for women who have been violent. This organisation was funded through local authority grants and other

charities, and clients are directed here from a number of areas, including statutory agencies such as social work, police and other criminal justice services.

**Organisation 'D'** develops men's group-work programmes and also provides consultancy and training to both the charity sector and to statutory agencies. Organisation 'D' tends to work on a commission and paid basis, i.e., they are paid for whichever service they provide to whichever agency, be it charity or statutory.

**Organisation 'E'** is a community-based programme offering self referral group-work programmes for men. The organisation works in partnership with other agencies and is funded, in the main, by the health sector, but also receives small amounts of funding from other charities. In turn, most of their self referrals are sign posted through a range of areas within the health sector, but some are also received from statutory agents such as the police and other criminal justice services, and social workers.

**Organisation 'F'** is a community-based project delivering group-work programmes for men who have been violent. Organisation 'F' works in partnership with the statutory and charity sectors, including women's organisations, it also provides support for women partners. It is funded by Government and public authority grants, and also through other charities. Referrals come mainly through other statutory agencies and some voluntary agencies.

**Organisation 'G'** provides consultancy, workshops, training, the development of men's programmes, as well as devising and organising conferences. In terms of remuneration, some of the work carried out is paid and some of the work is voluntary – receiving no remuneration. This organisation liaises and works in partnership with statutory agencies, the charity sector and other campaigns.

**Organisation 'P'** is an anomaly – it is a statutory organisation, working with young people. Whilst it is not an organisation specifically established to deliver men's group work programmes, it does deliver anti-violence and anti-sexist workshops to young people through the school system, and also at its local community based centre. The organisation works in partnership with other statutory agencies and also the charity sector.



**Campaign 'J'** and **Campaign 'K'** are two anti-violence campaigns that men who were interviewed worked in. Both of these campaigns operate throughout the UK, in order to lobby government, raise awareness and educate on the causes and effects of violence towards women and children. Both campaigns are actively involved in creating and presenting methods of violence prevention. Campaign 'J' focuses on recruiting male members for its organisation and actions, whereas campaign 'K's' membership actively recruits both men and women. Both campaigns hold charitable status and are funded by individuals, other charities and other individual organisations. Both work in partnership with other agencies, including the statutory sector, the private sector, and other charities. Both also work with other women's groups and organisations.

### ***Similarities between organisations***

All of the above organisations and campaigns share the following features:

- They are all actively against men's violence towards women.
- All of the group-work programmes adhere to co-gendered facilitation
- Both campaigns, and all except one of the organisations have women workers – the exception is a solo consultancy organisation.
- All work in partnership with other agencies, including women's organisations.
- All except one of the organisations, and one of the campaigns operate with small numbers of people, i.e. between one and eight people.
- All require state, local authority, charity or individual funding

Implicit in the characteristics and the similarities, are their inter-relations with large institutions, that is the charity sector, the government and other statutory agencies, such as the NHS and the Criminal Justice System. In addition, many of the group-work projects worked hand-in-hand with women's organisations. In particular, and at the time of interview, the ethos for all the group-work projects was to provide support for women partners of violent or abusive men. In the main, support for women was provided through the commissioning of local women's organisations, often through Women's Aid. Without exception, all of the campaigns and the organisations were reliant in some way on obtaining funding for their maintenance. Even the youth worker did not know from year to year which community projects would continue to be

funded. To this end, most of the men had stories to tell about the difficulties they encountered, the insecurities that this engendered, and the problems and dilemmas regarding competition for funding with women's organisations in the wider field.

The next section looks at some of these stories and the resulting issues around funding.

### **6.3.2 Funding and The Relations of Ruling**

Funding is essential for all of the men interviewed in this study, and the act of obtaining and maintaining funding pulls all of the interviewees and their organisations into complex sets of ruling relations. As described in Chapter four, the process of becoming a charity, and/or company limited by guarantee draws organisations into business models that demand accountability, and carry financial and other sanctions.<sup>1</sup> For all the professional men, funding was a frustrating and highly complex process, and was often talked about throughout the second part of the interview. In particular, one of my questions was "is there anything about your work that you haven't already mentioned, that might be difficult or frustrate you in any way?" If funding hadn't already been mentioned it was raised by most of the participants in response to this question.

Procurement of funding for all the professional men required much creative thought. Funding was applied for and received from different bodies, often with one part of the funding being reliant on another part, as Aiden demonstrates:

A we've also got this very small pilot which was, which was erm, erm, which was funded slightly differently through the Lottery, where we had a thirty hour men's project worker and we, and we, erm, **comissioned** fifteen hours a week from the local women's support project to provide the partner service. That pilot came to an end and, and was evaluated and we're now rolling that out across the city. (2) **Not** with any more workers, so it's still a very small project, but it's no longer,

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<sup>1</sup> The Office of the Third Sector's (2007) report, *Research on Third Sector Access to Finance*, clearly highlighted the difficulties charitable organisations had in obtaining, and especially maintaining, funding. The report advocated three year funding for organisations in order that they can plan ahead and provide stable support, services and employment. This was also agreed as 'best practice' in the Compact Report (1998), yet such three year funding is rare.

C So who, who would fund that?

A Well, at the moment it's funded m, mostly by the [name of Government Dept]. An, (2) err, an, and in kind funding from within the council and the, the money for our partner worker which we've had a long battle over, over the last six months, but the funding from the partner worker, erm, is going to come from the [name of two Government Departments]. (Aiden:40/41)

In this passage, Aiden names three different government departments, a local authority, and the lottery who have all played a part in funding the project he is speaking of. Therefore, for one small project, five different funding bodies have been involved, all requiring application bids and accountability. This, in itself, is indicative of the administrative work involved, and of the creativity required to source and ensure sufficient funds are obtained.

The intricate management of resources, was not uncommon, and was confounded by having to keep up with new government initiatives. The complicated procedural thinking involved in maintaining resources is highlighted by Adam:

The NHS goes through all different sorts of stages. At that time they wanted Doctor's surgeries to become Healthy Living centres. So they set, they, they gave lottery money to set up some projects in Healthy Living centres in various places round the country and these, these Health Centres that got those grants (3) set up, erm, Healthy Eating projects as erm, step one, I don't know what step two was, but a whole series of, of projects. Youth projects, and so on. And then, (3) erm, erm, that funding came to an end and for six months we worked with no funding. So we did it voluntary, but, we, we had a free room somewhere. I can't remember where. Then, erm, the Primary Care Trust approved and liked what we did. So, at the moment we are funded by, the Primary Care Trust. ... We have been funded a little bit by Sure Start, but that's dried up just because they've, erm, (2) everything's changed, they've gone onto these children's centres and so you know, all their money's gone there. Erm, (3) and then, and then, various bodies around that just do these sort of things, you know, Allen Lane is quite a good one, it's, it's a charity, (2) doles out money from, it's got its favourite charities, 'domestic violence' seems to be good. (Adam:38-39)

Here, there are a number of aspects to consider. Firstly, government initiatives that can be tapped into are also capable of changing their underlying aims and

ethos, and this works to close down opportunities for further funding. Secondly, the popularity of initiatives decreases over time, and new initiatives are created. This means organisations must maintain their knowledge around government policy, so as they can re-define their own aims and goals to fit with new policy. Thirdly, these same initiatives are reliant on charities themselves for carrying the initiatives forward, as the NHS Healthy Eating demonstrates. Large funding bodies such as the Lottery are utilised and drawn upon to realise initiatives such as 'Healthy Eating'. Fourthly, organisations must familiarise themselves with knowledge about other charities who are sympathetic to their cause, such as the Allen Lane Foundation. The consequences, however, of gaining this knowledge regarding sympathetic funders is that of an increase in competition between community projects, which also adds to the difficulties around obtaining funding.

A further, but related, difficulty firmly embedded within funding is that of political imperatives. In the UK, many statutory agencies have shifted their framework of working to include risk minimisation and target-driven working practices (see Taylor-Gooby et al 2004, Taylor-Gooby & Wallace 2009). Many, if not all, community projects must comply with these target-driven changes, and most funding applications are standardised to include measurable outcomes. The following extract from Billy highlights his concerns around further constraints in the future:

[W]hat's, what scares-what I'm frightened of is going to happen with [name of project] now is (sighs) erm, I, this may not be the case, but I **think** we're getting more and more, it's coming across the board, more and more performance, erm, target related, performance related, erm, outcome related erm, work wanted. Erm, (2) so it **may** be, it **may** be, it may be we're only **allowed** to work with the g,guys who are continual repeat offenders, erm, in the **hope** that the courts can **see** a visible reduction in, in offences. And they'll see that as, as, erm, as evidence that domestic abuse strategy has worked, is paying off. Well I would question that, really! It's **one**, it's **one** indicator of it but it's, it's **far** more complicated than that. Er, but if you've got a funding body that wants to see results on grass, on paper, that's what they're gonna be looking at. (Billy:49)

Ideological methods of reasoning have reconceptualised violence against women into "domestic violence", which includes, in part, its management by

the judicial system. Billy's extract demonstrates his expert knowledge with this process, and anticipates the next stage. It is easily conceivable to Billy that a decrease in cases of 'domestic violence' would act as measurable outcomes, and would support a strategy on 'domestic violence'. Thus, a decrease in offences being seen by the court would act as spurious evidence to also support the decrease in 'domestic violence', and this creates a point of disjuncture for Billy, and also a paradox.

For the judicial system, decreases in offences are a required outcome, but the same is not true for those working on the ground. For front-line workers the problem is far more complex, and decreases in court appearances are only one indicator. The paradox for front-line workers and organisations are that these same judicial outcomes also constitute the criteria required by funding bodies. For funding applications to be successful, the inclusion of these judicial outcomes will act in support of a bid. Thus, it becomes pragmatic to include them, as leaving them out could potentially jeopardise their bid. However, this act of inclusion compels individuals and organisations to participate in ideological methods of reasoning that they do not necessarily agree with. Therefore, they enter into, and participate in, objectified forms of social knowledge that make up ruling relations. In other words, the capacity to act, and the courses of action to be taken, derive from individuals and organisations that both produce, and are produced by social relations.

It became apparent that most of the campaign men were not familiar with funding processes, and did not talk about it. Rather than ask them direct questions, such as where they obtained their funding from, which they may have faltered on, I approached the subject in a more questioning way:

- C ... do you know anything about funding erm and how you get the money to fund, to **fund** [name of campaign]?
- O Erm, at the moment not a great deal! Err, (2) I think, (3) I mean to, to do the campaign that we did we got the money from the Students, erm, Union to run the campaign.  
(Oliver:34)

Two of the campaign men, however, were familiar with funding. Matthew (Campaign J) was quite direct about what made his work difficult:

We get no funding! And I just find it quite a astonishing given the impact potentially that we could have, and the fact that there are lots of people trying to deal with the

consequences of male violence and there aren't enough people involved in trying to **prevent** male violence. And yet when you talk to people about the **costs** of domestic abuse and 'domestic violence', which err some people have estimated at twenty three billion **pounds** in the UK, I just feel it would be rather sensible to put more money in to trying to change the culture just a little bit. (Matthew:16)

Clearly, Matthew's problems surrounding funding are similar to those of the professional men, and he tries to make sense of the lack of funding in monetary terms. This immediately links him and the campaign into the economy and ruling relations. Matthew further embeds his campaign into the ruling relations in the following passage:

Erm, a couple hundred thousand pounds and we would be rocking, you know? And it doesn't ev, it's peanuts in terms of the cost that th of the violence that we're trying to alleviate. You know, but it has to come from somewhere. I mean, it would be good to have a professional office. At the moment we're still working out of, erm, a room in someone's house, which is not best. All, all these sorts of things I, I think it's inevitable that they will come. Erm, just by the amount of support we're getting from vast organisations – the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, you know, th the Home Office, Number Ten Downing Street it all happens, but nobody realises that we need some money. And of course with money will come strings and that's part of the problem when you then start to chase the money instead of getting work done. So there is bad sides about having funding as well. (Matthew:23)

In this passage, there are a number of aspects at play. Matthew highlights the lack of resources and having to 'make do' in a room in someone's home contrasting this with an office which he views as more "professional". Again, he links 'domestic violence' with economic imperatives, and talks in terms of the money the campaign could comfortably operate on. This is framed, of course, in an idealistic sense, but he also brings economics in once more, when he talks about the "bad sides of having funding". Having funding brings more administrative procedures such as ensuring monies are actually received. As well, Matthew sites a whole host of global and national institutions who support the campaign, and whom, by default, must have been contacted by Matthew. Therefore, quite unproblematically attaching and

forming ties with the varying forms of institution that coordinate and make up ruling relations.

Lewis, from campaign K, on the other hand, does not appear to have the same problems with funding that befall the other men. For example, Lewis's campaign put on a conference around violence against women:

C And can I ask where you got funding to put that conference on?

L We didn't.

C You didn't?

L No.

C So, where did you have the conference?

L Erm, at a local university.

C And did, did you have to pay them for the room?

L Erm, the organisation I work for is well respected, erm, from various organisations and therefore we have what I would class as *tacit* support from a large number of organisations. And because of that, those organisations either officially or unofficially will make facilities available to us. (Lewis:32)

Lewis received, what he terms as "support", from various bodies. The room at the university was donated for free, and the food was brought in by other volunteers in the campaign. Lewis's campaign also received donations from other companies and organisations that he did not want to mention, and I probe him further on this:

C Are these statutory organisations? Corporate organisations, or voluntary?

L (Laughs) Anyone! Anything! Literally in some situations you'd walk into a supermarket and have a word with the Store Manger and say, you know: "Look we're running this conference are you prepared to supply us with sufficient coffee, tea and juices to do it?" Erm, and they would basically say erm: "Give me a list, and give me a few days and I'll" or they'd just give it to you off the shelf to get you off their backs.

C And then would you say, would there be some, erm, text somewhere saying "Food was being donated by"?

L We would then, we would then ask that organisation whether they wanted to be acknowledged as a sponsor of the organisation. (Lewis:32/33)

Because the majority of donations to this charity are small, Lewis does not frame them as funding. However, without these donations the conference would not be able to go ahead. I would reframe the donations and free rooms

in universities as 'funding-in-kind'. What this campaign does effectively is approach potential funders from an activist position. There are no complex application forms to complete in order to obtain funding, rather funding-in-kind is identified and activists then seek out their exact requirements, targeting those bodies most appropriate. Lewis puts forward his reasons, in the previous quote, on *how* the campaign is able to directly target bodies for funding-in-kind: through the general respect associated with the charity in general. Because the charity is "well respected", funders attach trust to the name, and thus give more freely. It is also notable that the option is also available for funders to have their names or logos on materials associated with the charitable event. This option is directly related to the economy in relation to corporate sponsoring, marketing and public relations, which serves as a further entry point at which the charity picks up and becomes embedded within the relations of ruling.

It could be argued that Lewis relies on the charity *as an institution*. In other words the charity is already institutionalised, and its institutionalisation is exploited as a means for procuring funding-in-kind. The charity itself carries its own ideology, and included in this is the concept of international status and respectability. Lewis, therefore reconceptualises funding through a complex process of respectability, status and institutionalisation. Thus, although the charity may appear to be separate from objectified forms of social relations, the social relations produced by the ideology surrounding the charity is central to, and produces their everyday activism.

All of the organisations above are heavily involved in ruling relations. They all must enter into the complex accountability procedures and working practices of objectified ideological methods of reasoning. Each and every funding body requires accountability processes appropriate to the neo-liberal working practices that have become the standard, and which also often clash with the ethos of small voluntary organisations. Nevertheless, and to operate as a charity, organisations are compelled to become experts of the economic discourse found in funding procedures. These working practices are in line with Nicholls' (2006), study, where she argues that the texts of funding bodies actively transform charitable organisations into organisations merely eligible (or not) for funds. As a consequence, activist work is reconceptualised in terms of



funding eligibility, accounting standards, management practices and target numbers, which effectively subjugates and controls their charitable aims and activist work (ibid). The exception, or what appears to be the exception is campaign K. However, the charity that this campaign operates under is itself fully institutionalised and the charity's ideology works to organise the social relations between the campaign activists and other institutions.

The next section continues with the theme of men and their relationships with other organisations, but concentrates on the statutory sector, paying particular attention to the criminal justice system.

## **6.4 Working With Statutory Institutions**

In this section I explore the influences of other statutory agencies. All the participants worked with statutory agencies in some way. Some had positive experiences of this, and some were not so positive. As outlined in Chapter Four, interventions in 'domestic violence' now include multi-agency working. As illustrated earlier, for most of the organisations a significant part of working with other statutory agencies was related to their 'referrals'. Referrals often came from the NHS, GPs, social services and occasionally women's organisations. Organisations 'A' and 'P' also worked closely with schools. The campaigns also shared multi-agency working, for example, both campaigns work with the statutory education sector, and both campaigns work with various government departments in order to lobby and influence policy. In the main, however, the professional men mostly talked about various departments of the criminal justice system, i.e., police, probation, courts etc. Therefore the rest of this section explores their relationships, both past and present, with this institution.

### **6.4.1 *The Criminal Justice System***

The criminal justice system (CJS) can be viewed as a particularly important set of institutional complexes that coordinate ideas, discourses, public opinion and working practices. The ideology and working practices that constitute these institutional complexes organise social relations and, thus, the relations of ruling. It is significant that four of the professional men had, in the past been employed for some considerable time in the CJS, either in prisons or

as probation officers, working at the front line with men who had been violent to their partners. As such, these men were aware of the methods and good practice that has developed within this area. As a consequence, these men came into the voluntary sector qualified with a particular type of knowledge around working with violent men, and have utilised this knowledge in setting up community based programmes. Specifically, the CJS uses a version of the Duluth model (Pence & Paymar 1990) for work with men who have been violent to their partners, which is based on feminist thinking, looks at controlling behaviour, and is more educative, this is quite different from other more therapeutic models. Other benefits of working in probation and/or prisons, are the familiarity of the ideology and working practices, which can be useful for understanding the system, in terms of administrative procedures, sentencing, and structural organisation. In addition, knowledge of the workings of the CJS can be an advantage in terms of networking, identifying training needs, research opportunities and so on. Taken together, these benefits can also help with partnership working and securing funding for services 'outside' of the CJS, as was the case for all four of the participants in this study. On the other hand, the four men who had previous involvement with the CJS were also aware of the shortfalls and failings within the system, which can engender feelings of frustration, dissatisfaction and exasperation. These feelings are not specific to only those men who had worked in the CJS, however, but were common to all of the men working in the 'domestic violence' sector, as will be illustrated in more detail in this section.

The professional men understood that men who had been violent to their partners should be accountable for their violence, which in the UK is associated with the CJS. However, most of the men also found incongruences within this system. In particular, all of the professional men found that referrals from within the CJS brought problems of coercion, as this next passages illustrates:

C So the main problems you come, you come up against with other agencies is because they're, they're having their arms bent for want of a better word,

B Yeah.

C Rather than it being voluntary.

B Yeah, and it becomes a bit of a box ticking exercise, really. And that's, that's, I think that's just, that's, as far as I

can **see** that's (2) to a large extent endemic in the whole structure of the crim,criminal justice system and Social Services and local authorities is just, (2) just mind-bogglingly bad at times. (Billy:48/49)

Both Alex and Sam explain how different departments within the CJS, as well as men themselves, can use men's community programmes as bargaining tools.

There can be a **slight** confusion in the minds of some men and some solicitors from the family courts. We get men referred from the family court system where men are in court wanting ah, well dealing with issues around separation and divorce, and child contact. And we have had solicitors and men say: "Well, you know the courts have sent this man to do a programme." And we explain that the courts can't send men on to our programme (laughs). (Alex 1:10)

The **vast** majority are there because there's pressure on them to. It's not because they genuinely want to change, it's because their partner's left or the police have been involved, or social services are involved - with the voluntary sector, you know, self referral programmes. You know in a similar a way to ah men are court ordered on to a programme within probation so... (Sam 2:36/37)

Aiden, elaborates further on the use of bargaining, highlighting that making men accountable within the CJS is associated with risks and needs guarding against:

A men say to the Police "Well don't worry I'm going to this group, or." Or women-or men say to women "Don't call the Police I'll go to the group!" So, we have to be very careful that we're not **watering** down the message about how serious this is as criminal behaviour. Erm. (Aiden:44/45)

For Aiden, men's violence towards women should always be framed as a criminal offence, and the need to ensure that men take responsibility for their violence, without exploiting men's programmes as a method that avoids criminal records and/or sentencing. Nevertheless, this is not an easy task, as the CJS is made up of powerful institutional complexes that prove difficult to influence or counteract.

The adversarial nature of the court system actively works to collude with men's violences. For Aiden, conviction and sentencing are one part of the CJS

that determine and compel men to take responsibility for their violence. However, plea-bargaining works to subsume women's experience:

Erm, erm, **finally** you have erm, erm **not** succumbed to his pressure to withdraw the charges; **finally** it's gone to court erm, for an offence that the Police told you he's going to be charged with attempted murder; erm, and your children have been called towards the court, to the court, as, as witnesses to find that on the day the, the prosecutor comes down and says you're not needed as a witness and he's changed his plea. and she thinks, "Oh Thank Fuck! I don't need to go as a witness." Erm, and then she discovers that actually he's not changed his plea, he's plea-bargained it down, down to a common assault or a breach of the peace. (Aiden:52/53)

The plea-bargaining process comprises negotiations between prosecutor and defendant, with the expectation that leniency will be given. In reality, this consists of negotiations between the prosecution and defence counsels. Although the defendant must agree with the proposed deal, it is the two counsels who are proficient with the law, precedents and likely outcomes, and who facilitate the arrangements. Without their expert knowledge and input, plea-bargaining would be extremely difficult. But, as Aiden points out, the act of plea-bargaining absorbs a multitude of activities, and reframes them into legal and professional language that facilitates and triggers further actions. This process not only renders the woman's experience invisible, but, moreover, cannot set in motion any further actions for risk assessments regarding her safety (see Pence 2001). The unfortunate irony here is that collusion and subjugation of the woman is participated in by individuals and departments within the CJS.

Some, but not all, feminists have campaigned for men's violence towards women to be recognised as crimes in the same way that violence towards strangers are seen as crimes (see Chapter four). However, one of the unintended consequences around the reconceptualising of "domestic violence" is the way in which crime and punishment mediates social relations around men's violence towards women, and overrides the everyday social relations that cause it. The CJS is a powerful institution and, as part of the ruling relations, has its own set of ideologies that reconstruct "domestic violence" into a legal problem, which conflicts with grassroots, and front-line workers' understandings of the problem. Moreover, the adversarial and plea-

bargaining nature of the CJS works to minimise men's violence and thus colludes with and helps to maintain the gendered social relations that men's violence occurs in.

The next section, continues with conflicting institutional understandings of 'domestic violence', focusing on the police.

### **6.4.2 The Police**

This section explores two accounts that identify a similar theme concerning the police, and which demonstrate institutional conflicts. Both stories exemplify disjunctures between ideological methods of reasoning and actual practice.

As mentioned previously, many referrals onto men's group-work programmes came from a number of statutory agencies, but particularly the police:

Erm, again, (sigh) Police, er, Social Services, erm, a lot, alot of self-referrals, GP's, a lot from GP's. And (2) women's aid to an extent, but not so much. A lot come from the Police, a lot come from the DVU's. (Billy:44)

The DVU's mentioned here are 'Police Domestic Violence Units' where specially trained staff intervene and help people experiencing violence. They work closely with other organisations such as Women's Aid and solicitors. And when men have been violent to their women partners they can be referred to a local community-based project, if one exists. However, Alex illustrates how multi-agency working can omit crucial agencies from the loop:

The Police, (1.5) the Police will send letters following each 'domestic violence' call out. (2) Erm, both in relation to the woman about where she can go for support (2) erm, and they're sending letters to men, telling them about our programme.

C OK. And do you also get a letter at the same time?

A No.

C No?

A No. We haven't reached that point with the Police yet.

(Alex 2:9)

Alex is very matter-of-fact about the police and the fact that they have not yet reached the stage where men's programmes themselves are fully involved in partnership. This is troubling, as a major opportunity has been missed. If,

every time letters were sent to men by the DVU, advising men of their local men's programme, then men's programmes could record and check those men who did make contact with the programmes. At the same time, those men who did not make contact, and who were repeat offenders could also be monitored. This kind of evaluation would be valuable to a whole host of different organisations and institutions, as well as women's organisations. However, it would appear that men's programmes are used for sign-posting purposes only.

The second story comes from Billy, and concerns a public information media exercise. Beer mats were printed with the message that 'domestic violence' was a crime, and were distributed around and about different pubs. The message, in Billy's words, was as follows:

I think West Yorkshire Police did it ... "Relax, enjoy your pint, nobody, nobody in this pub can tell you're a wife-beater." And you turn it over and it says, you know, "Domestic abuse is a crime! It will, will be punished and we will find you." **Really** not helpful. **Really, really, really** not helpful. Done nothing. Just, just pushed the guys underground. If they'd put the **Respect phone line, do you want help with this?** You know, so it was an attitudinal thing. (Billy 51/52)

The message contained no information on services or telephone support, and thus merely acted as a threat. Again, an opportunity was missed, if men's violences were genuinely being engaged with, then the thinking around this exercise must go further than threats in relation to criminal offences. Thinking must also include intervention and possible solutions.

These stories share several similarities. With regard to decision-making, men's programmes are left out of the loop, and not consulted. Whilst the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' has shifted to a criminal justice framework, conceptual understandings of violence differs between workers, organisations, and institutions, and this is indicative of institutional conflict. The ideological methods of reasoning contained within the reconceptualisation of social problems are incompatible with the everyday activities of front-line workers. In addition, multi-agency working is unsuccessful when crucial organisations and/or front-line workers are either left out of decision-making or omitted altogether.

The previous sections explored participants within the context of the organisations they worked for, the following sections look more closely at participants in relation to other organisations and institutions.

## **6.5 Paid Work, Voluntary Work and their Interconnections**

This section looks in more detail at the relationships between individual men and other institutions and organisations. I explore participants' additional positions within the 'domestic violence' sector, looking first at paid positions, then at unpaid and voluntary positions. I then go on to explore the scale of the area through participants' relationships with other agencies.

### **6.5.1 Remunerated Positions**

Eight of the men interviewed were 'professional' and remunerated. Seven were unpaid volunteers, of these five were in campaigns, one volunteered for a men's programme, and one, who constituted the pilot interview did not belong to any organisation. What is significant is that most of the professional men were also involved in other work outside of the organisations they represented. This extra work consisted of a range of positions including additional paid posts, voluntary executive management posts, membership of other formal organisations, and membership of various forums. At this point it is pertinent to note that in line with upholding anonymity, to avoid identification of the participants this section will not use any of the pseudonyms to indicate which of the men were employed elsewhere, or which men sat on management groups, committees or forums as this could lead to recognition of the participants. Instead, this section will describe only in general how many of the participants held additional posts within the violence prevention sector.

Of the eight remunerated men, two were employed full-time in statutory sector positions that were outside of the 'domestic violence' sector. One man was heavily involved in violence intervention in his own time – some of this work was paid and some unpaid and voluntary. The other man incorporated violence intervention into his work with young people. Of the remaining six men, one was employed full-time in a community-based project, one was self employed full-time, and the other four worked part-time in community-based

projects. The four men who were employed part-time all held additional part-time employment within the 'domestic violence' sector. Three of these four men held additional employment around violence prevention within the statutory sector, and two were also employed in similar community based projects as well as having small private counselling practices.

In terms of full-time and part-time paid work, all of the men, then, worked in some combination in order to maintain a full-time income. This is in line with the gendered roles of conventional Western family units. For example, seven of the eight professional men, as well as the unpaid professional man had children, with four of the men's children still of school or university age. Interestingly, of the five campaign men, three of them did not have children, and it is these same three who devoted the most time to their campaigns. Eight of the professional men were also in long term heterosexual relationships, as was the pilot participant, and four of the five campaign men. Collinson & Hearn (1996) observe that studies on men, masculinity and paid employment have illustrated the power relations and the masculine values that are ingrained in the organisation of many working practices, such as the assumption of fulltime, continuous employment and the male family breadwinner model.

With regard to the additional part-time employment, this reflects not only the part-time nature of the projects, but also the wider structure of the voluntary sector itself. As discussed in the previous section, difficulties surrounding procurement and continuation of funding are prevalent in the whole of the voluntary sector. In addition, the difficulties in obtaining funding for core administration costs are also experienced by a significant proportion of community-based projects. Taken together, these difficulties exacerbate insecurity around employment.

That most of the professional men had a number of part-time paid positions inside and outside of the voluntary sector is indicative of the gendered nature, or possible 'feminisation', of this sector. *The UK Voluntary Workforce Almanac* (2007), a report published by The National Council for Voluntary Organisations' Workforce hub, states that in 2005 69% of workers were women and 46% of these women worked part-time, compared with only 21% of men. The report also found a higher percentage, 39%, of part-time



workers in this sector than in other sectors: 29% in the public sector and 23% in the private sector. Of all the women who worked part-time, only 9% worked part-time because they could not find a full time job, whilst almost twice as many men, 17%, worked part-time because they could not find full-time work. What is not very clear in this report is how many part-time workers held multiple jobs, and thus whether both men and women did not want full-time work because their income was supplemented elsewhere, as indeed appears to be the case with men interviewed in this study.

Following on from the above, one man, who was employed in a completely different statutory area but who also worked as a volunteer co-facilitator in a men's group, expressed his desire to transfer his paid employment into this area:

Erm, (4) with the job I do, I'd love to get into the, you know, big time, as a job, the, helping, in the, viol-err, vi-anger management and violence, but I've got the mortgage to pay and so I'm just, sort of tripping along, kind of. I enjoy this but it'd be really nice to get paid as well. If I could do it as a full-time job that'd be great. (Michael:23)

On the one hand, Michael's situation highlights the way in which the voluntary sector is structured: the reliance on unpaid workers. On the other hand, the same structuring also places Michael in that part of the population that is looking for full-time paid work in the voluntary sector.

What these men's stories suggest, coupled with the figures from the *UK Voluntary Workforce Almanac*, is that men become caught up in gendered working practices. Women have always played a central role in the voluntary services, due, in part, to the different forms of social care that this sector provides, which is associated with gendered divisions of labour and women. Daley & Lewis (2000) argue that the marketisation of care has been taken up by the UK in proportions not yet reached in other European countries. They also argue that the voluntary sector acts as a quasi-statutory service providing much needed social support. Moreover, Themudo (2009) argues that a gendered theory of the not-for-profit sector has not, as yet, been forthcoming. U.S. analyses on the giving of labour hours, and monetary donations all suggest that women are more inclined towards philanthropy than are men (ibid).

In this study, the male participants have made a choice to work in a predominantly female sector. However, as discussed in Chapter three, men and their relationships across and within social work is not so straight-forward (Christie 1998/2001, Williams 1995). The area they have chosen deals specifically with men, that is, they are providing social services to men in an effort to change either the men themselves, or at the very least their behaviour. Of course, changing men ultimately impacts on women and their safety, which should be the underlying ethos behind every perpetrator programme. Nevertheless, the women's movement, in providing services and support for other women, has opened up a space that men are able to share and/or occupy, and this space is a direct result of the ethos for keeping women and children safe. This raises questions surrounding the desire to work with other men at a number of different levels, and is explored further in Chapter nine.

The next section looks at professional men's volunteer work on other forums and management committees, where they hold varying levels of influence.

### **6.5.2 Further Work within the 'Domestic Violence' Sector**

Aside from their paid work, most of the professional men were involved elsewhere in the 'domestic violence' sector. Two of the professional men held voluntary positions as executive management members with an influential charity which focuses on men's violence, and another man joined the same organisation six months after interview. In addition, five of the professional men represented their organisations at various inter-agency and forum meetings around 'domestic violence'.

There are two related points worth noting here. Firstly, and in relation to my own observations and knowledge of this field, men holding down a number of voluntary positions within the field of violence prevention parallels women in the wider field, who also often hold management positions with various organisations as well as membership of violence forums. This could possibly be a direct reflection of the conviction, motivation and time required for volunteering for a particular cause. Indeed, within women's organisations around violence against women, it is often the same few women who are willing to give up their time and resources to help run an organisation. Within

the women's sector, however, there is a much larger pool to draw from; but for men who are working with men and who want to get involved at a management level, the reserve is much smaller. As a consequence, the potential for recognition and prominence is much higher, as is the potential for 'burnout'.

Secondly, in relation to the potential for recognition, men's intervention in 'domestic violence' in the voluntary sector is small-scale. In turn, the organisations that make up this sector often operated with between one and five workers. Thus men's intervention in 'domestic violence' comprises relatively few individuals who know, or at least are aware of, each other and who are often associated in some way. The closeness, or familial nature, of men's intervention in 'domestic violence' is due, in part to two national organisations: Respect and the National Practitioners' Network (NPN). All of the professional men in this study were associated with both Respect and The NPN.

The National Practitioners' Network, set up in the early 1990s, is an informal group made up of individuals and organisations in the 'domestic violence' perpetrator sector. This group works closely with Respect and provides bi-annual opportunities for members to meet up, discuss any issues, and consider best practice in the 'domestic violence' perpetrator sector. The NPN is specifically designed to introduce members to each other, to talk over any problems, to consider funding issues and create strategies for overcoming them, to form partnerships with other agencies and community projects, and to form new and innovative projects.

Respect ([www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net) 2009) is the UK membership association for 'domestic violence' perpetrator programmes. It acts as an umbrella organisation with charitable status, and was set up in 2000 by practitioners working in the field of 'domestic violence' and on behalf of The National Practitioners' Network. Its objectives are to support those running perpetrator programmes and associated support services in the UK, and its focus is to promote, support, develop and deliver effective interventions with perpetrators. Their key aims are:

- to support and promote the safety of those affected by 'domestic violence'  
– predominantly women and children

- to lobby government and other statutory agencies to put perpetrator issues on the public policy agenda
- to promote best practice in work with perpetrators
- to provide support, advice and information to its members. (ibid)

To obtain an idea of the amounts of people involved, the twice yearly NPN meetings are hosted by different bodies. Guidelines for hosting the meetings, written in 2007 (available from the Respect website), suggest hosts should cater for between 100 and 150 people. Respect operates a two tier membership and fees are calculated on a rising scale according to income. For full membership where members operate to Respect standards, an annual income of up to £100,000 attracts a yearly membership fee of £90, with annual incomes of £1 million plus costing £300. For Associate membership where members sign up to Respect standards, unwaged costs are £5.00 per year, rising to £300 for Statutory agencies and private companies. Respect do not publish membership numbers; however, in 2007, Respect's accounts showed £9,310 in membership revenue, and £8,007 in 2008. Whilst these figures cannot give precise membership numbers, they do afford an approximation of membership.

The existence of Respect and the NPN suggest a structure for men (and women) who work with violent men in the voluntary sector. Respect operates as an umbrella, the NPN operates as a networking tool, and most organisations delivering and associated with men's perpetrator programmes will be associated with them in some way. There has also been a significant push for all organisations delivering community-based perpetrator programmes to become fully accredited with Respect's standards of good practice, and this remains ongoing. The process of accreditation will have several impacts. In effect, Respect will act as a regulatory body for those who work with violent men in the 'domestic violence' sector, with accreditation serving as a professional and respectable measure. This process will doubtless pull in more organisations working with men and will increase the likelihood of contact and familiarity within the sector.

Standardising practices for working with men can, on the one hand, be a positive venture, it can act as a safeguard that ensures women and children's

safety, for example. On the other hand, it also has the potential to stifle creativity. Moreover, standardised and regulated practices are also part of the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence', and have been worked up into ideological methods of reasoning. This constitutes one of the ways that grassroots community projects are, again, caught up in and regulated by ruling relations. To all intents and purposes, Respect becomes a powerful quasi statutory body, and is incorporated into the ruling relations. In order to operate, community projects will have to demonstrate their good practice according to pre-set criteria, this, along with neo-liberal accounting and funding procedures coordinate to regulate activism ever more tightly.

Within this structure, the implications for individual men can be potentially high. When men occupy positions within 'domestic violence' forums, their voices will be heard. They will have the opportunity to put forward their ideas, views and concerns regarding how 'domestic violence' services are run in local authorities. Respect itself is a charity and so has an executive board of managers/trustees who are ultimately responsible for the way Respect is run. The management board is in a position to make decisions that ultimately impact on the whole of the sector associated with men's perpetrator programmes. Therefore, if men are inclined, they have the capacity to be influential in different areas of their sector, that is, the organisation they work in, in the regulatory body of Respect, and also in the wider remit of 'domestic violence' forums. The capacity for influence is further expanded through involvement with conferences and other public events, where the opportunity for disseminating ideas and policy can be significant, and this area is discussed next.

### ***6.5.3 Conferences, Seminars, Meetings and Gatherings***

During the course of my field work, and as part of the ethnographic aspect of this research, I attended 30 public, semi-public and invitation-only events. This generated a significant amount of knowledge, as well as documentation. Although there is not the space to explore these events in depth, I give an overview of them, as the type of event and the politics contained within are important. What is significant about many of the events is

that it is the same male speakers from the academy, the statutory sector, the voluntary sector and campaigns who tend to get involved.

The events I attended can be loosely divided into three groups. One group concerns events organised by women and/or professionals on issues around men's violence against women, such as intervention and policy. One group concerns events organised, in the main, by men, which tended to focus on men's well-being and health issues. The third group concerns training and awareness events organised, in the main, by local authorities for agency workers working across multiple sites.

At the majority of events, women far outweighed men in numbers. Events where men made up almost half of the attendees, however, were those such as the conference organised by Respect, and two conferences organised, in the main, by men, which focused on men's health: their well-being and mental health. The only event I attended where there were more men than women was an invitation-only event hosted by a government department. At this event there were ten men and eight women: however, if I had not taken the place of one of my supervisors, there would have been eleven men and seven women. At most of the events I attended, there was at least one of my participants in attendance, with two particular participants being at almost half of all the events I attended. Of the professional men, all of them spoke, or facilitated at least one workshop at the events I attended. Of the campaign men, only two regularly attended events, with one of them speaking very regularly.

The events where men were least represented tended to be those organised by women, such as events on sexual violence, although at one of these events one of my participants was a keynote speaker. At one event organised by women in academia on perpetrator programmes, there were around 57 delegates, of these 47 were women and 10 were men, and one of these men had a speaking position. At another event on 'domestic violence' and policy, which was well attended by professionals and also a government representative, the delegate list showed 90 delegates, but only 13 of them were men. Perhaps most telling is the government's violence against women consultation, which is ongoing as at 2009. Government departments hosted nine regional meetings for interested parties to put forward their thoughts and

ideas on violence against women strategies. At my local meeting there were around 80 delegates, only 9 of whom were men, and three of these men were government departmental facilitators. It is fair to say that of the events I attended on the issue of male violence, the vast majority of attendees were women.

Domestic violence and men's intervention in men's violence is a highly political area, suffused with political, feminist and gendered ideology. The 'domestic violence' participants and the campaign men in this study are heavily involved in the production and the dissemination of knowledge within this sector. Conferences, workshops, seminars and so on, can all be viewed as the in-between spaces of 'domestic violence', and individual men along with the organisations they represent occupy these spaces in varying ways. At a more general level, academia, organisations, policy, research and knowledge all operate between and in-between organisations and men. From one perspective, these events and the politics, ideology, policy and knowledge production contained within, can be seen as the glue that holds the 'domestic violence' sector together, and is a key aspect for the organising of social relations. At another level the presence and growth of these institutional complexes are evidence of an emerging 'domestic violence' institution.

I do not want to overstate men's power and influence, as the further work observed ethnographically, and the work the men talked about themselves, is usually unpaid, voluntary, and requiring significant amounts of time rich resources. It should not be forgotten that most of the professional men in this study were either employed full-time, or held a number of part-time jobs, most were in long-term relationships, and some also had school-age children, and therefore might be subject to time constraints.

From a feminist perspective, though, there exists the real possibility for a few committed men having a powerful influence in the area of 'domestic violence', and also the capacity to promote their own interests in the context of 'domestic violence', and also more generally. Male voices are still privileged over women's voices, in keeping with the existing patriarchal order, and it will be up to men who do exert an influence in this area to take their lead from women and their expertise. Indeed, the extent and impact of their influence will depend on several intersections, such as their own politics, an awareness of

class, cultural, ethnic, and religious interests, and their understanding of feminism and feminist politics.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has mapped out the ways in which the men and their organisations are caught up in ruling relations and institutional complexes. It demonstrated how social relations are *institutionally* mediated through ruling relations such as the government, law, charity and policy initiatives. In particular, institutions associated with funding and the criminal justice sector significantly influence working practices, and effectively subsume the experiences of women, as well as front-line and grassroots workers. The struggle to bring men's violence against women to the fore has been redefined into ideological methods of reasoning that shifts the work done locally into a more general and centralised system, that, in turn, reconceptualises the problem into a framework that regulates and coordinates courses of actions and responses (Walker 1995). This chapter also suggests that the 'domestic violence' sector acts as a mediator of social relations: through social practices, working practices, and by reconfiguring the ideology of men's violence.

The same is true for the campaign men. Although campaign 'K' operates slightly differently from the other campaign, its workers are also thoroughly caught up in the relations of ruling. Campaign 'K's workers are familiar with treaties, ratification government policy, but this is used to their own advantage in the sense that 'knowledge is power'. Their understanding of the discourse around human rights means that counter arguments can be made with the same type of professional language.

The change in men's behaviour that feminists desire is difficult without the political will of men. Nevertheless, women have opened up a space that men are able to occupy, and a few men have taken up this challenge through their development of intervention with men who have been violent to women. But how men develop the thinking within and around this space is of concern. As men are attributed with more social status than women, this means that their dominance in the 'domestic violence' sector might also prevail. Indeed, as the brief discussion on events show, most of the professional men and two of the campaign men are regularly invited to make public keynote speeches



and facilitate workshops. The implications of this can include an increase in men's status, and especially in their social power. Their level of impact in the sector will be dependant on their own politics and the intersectionalities of class, cultural, ethnic, and religious interests, as well as their understanding of feminism and feminist politics.

The next chapter, accordingly explores the inter-relating aspects of participants' politics and feminist politics. It looks specifically at individual feminist activism and how this has impacted on the participants regarding their understanding of, and attitudes to heterosexual relations and the gender order more generally.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **FEMINISM, POLITICS AND EVERYDAY ACTIVISM**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores participants' talk around feminism. It looks at how feminism relates to political activity that might not, at least at surface level, appear to be political, and it also examines the way in which participants understood feminism. Almost all of my participants had re-negotiated their sexual politics with strong or feminist female partners, which had led them to change their understanding and attitude towards traditional heterosexual relationships, and towards the gender order more generally. In addition, feminism itself was understood in different ways by each of the participants. By drawing together the different concepts and categories utilised by participants, I examine whether feminism can be analysed as a regulator of public discourse, in other words, as an 'ideological code'.

To explore the un-organised nature of political activism, in this chapter I set out Smith's (1999) understanding and use of ideological codes. I then go on to outline the developments made by Nichols (2006) on 'activism' as an ideological code, as well as discussing Mansbridge and Flaster's (2007) notion of 'everyday activism', in order to provide a framework of analysis. I then look at the participants' previous relationships with feminist women, and explore the effects on masculinity that these relationships provoked. Finally, I examine the way in which the participants talked about feminism, what concepts they drew upon in order to articulate their views, thoughts and opinions. I also pay particular attention to "radical' feminism', as this evoked the most passionate responses.

### **7.2 Ideological Codes**

'Talk' is active; it is done within a social context and therefore constitutes social action. With talk, people can and do reproduce dominant ideologies by using and replicating their associated discourses. In turn, this helps to maintain ways of thinking that are directly related to 'ruling relations'

and the organisation of the social. Within this framework, 'talk' can be opened up for analysis in such a way as to uncover how ideologies are (re)produced and maintained, and how they can be rejected, subverted, challenged, resisted or changed. Standardised knowledge and discourses can be contained within ideological codes that organise how subjects are talked about and dealt with. As discussed in Chapter two, Smith identified the Standard North American Family (SNAF), as an ideological code that organised discourse, thinking and policy within schools (Smith 1999). To briefly recap on Smith's definition:

"Ideological codes operate as a free-floating form of control in the relations of public discourse. They can replicate anywhere. They organize talk, thinking, writing and the kinds of images and stories produced on film and television. ... An Ideological Code is a constant generator of procedures for selecting syntax, categories, and vocabulary in writing and speaking, for interpreting what is written or spoken, and for positioning and relating discursive subjects."  
(ibid:175)

In a Canadian study carried out by Naomi Nichols (2006) on educational reform activism, she found that her own understanding of 'activism' differed profoundly from the standardised knowledge held by her participants. The conflicting understandings were apparent from the beginning of her research, when her attempts to recruit activists proved difficult. Nichols discovered that people were not identifying as activists, which led her to theorise activism as an ideological code.

My own analysis in Chapter six shows how activism has become standardised and subsumed within neo-liberal ideology, and in this way it is also regulated. Activists can resist becoming subsumed and regulated to varying degrees, through complex negotiations; however, many activists have become so successfully incorporated into the ruling relations that they do not recognise themselves as activists. Nichols argues that

Civil sector relations are organized by a conception of *The Activist*, which operates as a standardizing schema through which work in the civil sector is understood. The Activist allows people ... to assemble information about activism in such a way as to justify the ideological argument for activist accountability and state/funder/public surveillance. Thus,

The Activist is a concept that operates as an ideological code. (ibid:5)

Nichols highlights the problems she had in recruiting participants and discovered that the concept of activism activated an ideological code of 'radical', defiant, militant and unprofessional people that needed to be controlled, regulated and kept under surveillance. These commonly held understandings of *activists* are the main reasons why she had problems recruiting participants. The people Nichols understood as activists, and who worked in the regulated civil sector took up a defensive language in relation to activism and identified themselves within business focused terms such as not-for-profit, charity or fundraising – directly allying themselves with the ideological code that constructs activists as unprofessional and militant and which justifies the need for accountability and surveillance that is also contained in the ideological code.

Activism as an ideological code is a very useful framework from which to understand public discourse and popular understandings of concepts. However I would suggest that Nichols' definition of activism does not go far enough. Her definition includes: attending rallies, volunteer work for street festivals, charity runs, making art, community action, advocating for social policy change and so on. This definition, although wider than popular understanding, remains within the remit of 'organised' activity and does not account for individual activism, where furthering a political cause or movement can occur in everyday life, such as the home, or in places of employment. Mansbridge & Flaster (2007), have developed a theory on non-organised activism by exploring the term male 'chauvinism', and I turn to this next.

### **7.2.1 *Everyday Activism***

Direct action in the home and workplace provides a definite contribution to the outcome of political activity and social change. However, as Mansbridge & Flaster (2007) argue, exploring this route for social change has been somewhat neglected by social theorists (although see Taylor & Whittier 1992/1995). Mansbridge & Flaster plot the development of the word 'chauvinist' from its first documentation in France in 1830's, to its usage as

'White Chauvinism' in the 1930's Communist Party of the U.S.A. (CPUSA) in an attempt to stamp out racism. Its usage then decreased, but resurfaced to become popular again in the 1960's radical movement, where 'Male Chauvinism' was used "to describe the patronising assumption of male superiority" (ibid;642). From then on it has been retained as popular everyday discourse.

Mansbridge & Flaster argue that one of the key reasons the term became so popular was due to the added word of 'pig'. Pig granted the term an element of humour, which allowed it to be used by the wider population as well as intellectuals, as opposed to the term 'sexism' which is used far less in comparison. In 1992 and 1993 Mansbridge used various research methods to investigate how often women used the term male chauvinism. Their studies found that it's usage cut across race, class, education, political affiliation and whether or not the women identified as feminist. Their findings showed that many U.S. women use a political term made popular by the women's movement that incorporates anti-sexism. In addition, women used the term 'chauvinism' as verbal defiance, as a way of commanding respect and also understood that it referred to a wider system, or gender structure, outside of the home. Therefore, furthering the cause of a social movement through everyday activism.

Mansbridge & Flaster developed 'everyday activism' using the two following definitions of social movements put forward by Gusfield (1968): "socially shared demands for change in some aspect of the social order." and McCarthy & Zald (1977): "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (quoted in Mansbridge & Flaster 2007:650). By combining these definitions, Mansbridge & Flaster come up with their own definition:

We define an 'everyday activist' in a social movement as anyone who both acts in her own life to redress a perceived injustice and takes this action in the context of, and in the same broad direction as, that social movement. (ibid:629)

The actual work done by everyday activists is theorised through the work of James Scott's (1990) 'infrapolitics' and Goffman's (1959) notion of 'backstage'.

Infrapolitics literally means 'below politics', and is a hidden form of resistance, or "beyond direct observation by powerholders" (ibid:633). Mansbridge and Flaster combine these two theories and argue that this type of everyday activism:

is backstage only in the limited sense that it takes place in spaces that many theorists do not consider part of the public sphere, and it is hidden only in the sense of being ignored by a world that focuses on elite and organized activist behavior. (ibid:633)

It is within the framework set out above that I explore the participants' experience of everyday activism around feminism, both their exposure to it, and their own activism around it.

### **7.3 Feminism as Everyday Activism**

People hold varying relational connections within, across and towards institutional complexes and ruling relations, but however people participate in social relations, they remain active and their actions constitute 'work'. The first example I use is taken from my research diary, and is a conversation I had with a woman at one of the public events on violence against women I attended. The woman, who was also part of a violence against women forum, told the story of being in a meeting at her place of work and speaking about domestic violence in a gendered fashion. She was told by her manager that this was no longer acceptable, and their policy now denoted that domestic violence should be talked about in gender-neutral ways. This situation disturbed the woman, and she challenged her manager about the policy and the new discourses that were constraining the way in which she could talk about domestic violence.

This story is important in a number of ways. Women's experiences have been absorbed into a gender-neutral discourse. It is indicative of the reconceptualisation of domestic violence, and shows how discourse becomes institutionalised and taken up within the ruling relations, where it is then written in to policy procedures, which activates both the discourse and the policy. In other words, it highlights the process of ideological methods of reasoning, and the power and authority that institutional complexes can wield. It also plots the different relationships people have towards institutions and ruling relations, in

particular the conflicting understandings that people hold. Moreover, it demonstrates the everyday 'work' that people do to maintain as *well* as resist and challenge emerging and dominant ideologies, in this example, the workplace.

The men's individual understanding of activism is evidenced on a number of occasions throughout the interviews. When participants were asked about their own political activity, some gave various accounts of organised activity, but many of the men tended to play down and under value their individual challenges or discussions with other women and men as not being activist. My prompts for this question were wide and listed organised activity such as taking part in demonstrations etc., but also included the challenging of other men's (or women's) sexist behaviour. Many of my participants told stories of challenging sexism in an individual manner in places such as the pub, or in the canteen at work. Other instances that fall under this framework happened at home within intimate relationships, where often the participant's female partner was challenging sexist or patriarchal views that the participant held. It is these particular instances that I focus on next, before going on to discuss how this subject prompted some participants to give rise to negative feelings about masculinity.

### **7.3.1 *Renegotiating Sexual Politics***

One question in the interview was designed to explore the impact of feminism on participants' lives. This question asked participants directly about their relationship towards feminism and feminist issues. There were three prompts for this question: close or intimate relations with feminist or strong women, the different strands of feminism, and the representation of feminism. I chose to use the word 'strong' women, as well as feminist women, in the event that some participants may not have identified women in their past as being 'feminist'. Many participants took this opportunity to talk about current and previous intimate relationships with women who had challenged them about their ideas of heterosexual partnerships and intimate arrangements.

Twelve of the fifteen men chose to talk about their past relationships with strong/feminist women. All said they had been influenced to varying extents by these relationships. Whilst most of the relationships involved a

strong/feminist partner, family members, such as mothers, grandmothers and siblings were also talked about, as Lewis demonstrates:

L (short laugh) Granny was a suffragette. So yeah (laughs)

C Was she really?

L We-err Pankhurst movement. She's got *medals* from the Pankhurst movement [and the Prison Reform

C [Oh right.

L A right little militant in her younger days. Erm, and my sisters-err younger sister went through a very, very strong feminist stage, and having two sisters all of this would be discussed and debated at home, and err, it was a standard 'put down', err in the sense "Oh **you're just being masculine** -typical!" type of thing. (Lewis:11)

Lewis was brought up in a family where feminism was familiar. But for Lewis this is also a place where women express their dominance by using the term 'masculine' as a pejorative or a jibe.

For other men, however, their consciousness started later on, and rethinking their masculinity did not appear to be a problem, as Jamie's extract shows:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I was, I was remodelled by a feminist. Yeah, erm.

C Remodelled?

J Yeah, yeah. I had some rough edges and all that stuff, you know. Who does the cooking, who does the house-work? All of that stuff. Who does the child-care? Who gets the crap jobs? Who gets the lower-paid jobs? The glass ceiling. I've got well-schooled in all that, by, kind of, (2) well, a series of partners, but then by, erm, (2) (laughs) I start, I started going out with somebody who was bi-sexual. Who kind of really did a lot of stuff, a lot of learning for me about opening up my eyes, about what some of the issues were around it. (Jamie:14)

Jamie is clearly stating a re-negotiation of intimate sexual politics, and also a profound 'remodelling' of himself and the way he did 'being a man'. For Jamie, close intimate contact with a bi-sexual woman further raised his awareness on gendered, heterosexual relations, particularly around sexuality. These sentiments were reiterated by Sam, whose gender awareness began at polytechnic:

... or a friend now who at the time had just got together with a lad who I was sharing a flat with, mmm probably six



months into the course, erm, she challenged what I was doing and she kind of questioned my behaviour, my actions, and erm, err, and I was pleased that she did, err, at the time I was pleased that she did and she became my kind of mentor, erm, in getting to grips with inequalities, erm gender inequalities, and, my, erm, erm the contradictions in my behaviour to my values and feelings. Erm, and so, you know that was the kind of the start of the, you know, of my kind of, erm, clear gender awareness.

Although Sam was not having a sexually active relationship with his woman friend, her influence on him was profound. As Sam says, she was his “mentor”, and pointed out the contradictions between the ways in which he was beginning to think about gender and oppression, and his behaviour that was more typically masculine. Like Jamie, Sam also changed much of his male practices, and rethought his ideas on the social relations between men and women.

Robert’s serious intimate relationships have always been with women who would identify as feminist. He has always believed that equality between men and women should be self evident and believed he had conducted his relationships with women accordingly:

... that women should be equal just seemed axiomatic to me, really. But when I started doing academic study around it and erm, I became more and more interested and erm, and reflecting back on my own life, erm, and I had been a bit-I mean I knew at that point that, I knew I’d been abusive in a-one particular relationship and then I started re, re-interpreting lots of other ways I’d behaved as a male over the years and (pause) **and understanding it more**, well, more, understanding it better. (Robert:4)

For Robert, higher education contributed to a deeper level of understanding, which led to reflection and reinterpretation on his own past behaviour towards women. Significantly, Robert’s reflections caused him to reconceptualise aspects of his behaviour towards women as abusive. Robert also talks about various individual feminist writers, in particular, Germaine Greer:

... I was just exposed to their literature and their novels, and, erm, (pause). And I do-sort of the, the one that did make that **first** big impact was reading Female Eunuch, Germaine Greer. (Robert:8)

Robert appears to have taken on feminist consciousness through a number of stages: with his intimate relationships; with feminist literature; and through academia<sup>1</sup>.

Adam also talked about stages of consciousness, and again had particular praise for Germaine Greer:

I quite liked that softer, nurturing, or feminine side of **me**. (pause) So I, I never had any, erm, (2) I didn't have any sort of, you know, argument with feminism, ev (2) ever. And one of the things that I, I still say femini, feminist's **did** for me, 'cos all my wives were feminists. ... So I, I always had a very, very sort of open sense of gender stuff without thinking about it too much. Erm, but when I started reading erm, you know, Germaine Greer, I mean she's one of my heroes, she's fabulous! And, and I've always **appreciated** that what feminists did **for me**, was they said to me - in my sort of, self-centred state, my sort of phallogocentric position - they said: "It's not like that from over here." And I had to listen because they were, you know, they were great. (Adam:8)

Adam's early consciousness stemmed from what he calls a "role swap", where he looked after his children at home, whilst his wife went out to work. Through a number of marriages, Adam has been exposed to different feminist women, but found an even deeper consciousness after he read Germaine Greer. He is appreciative of what feminism has done for him, and how this has created opportunities to change his masculinity. Unlike Jamie and Sam, he does not appear to dwell on his negative masculine attributes, but rather celebrates how feminism has allowed him to feel comfortable with the way he practiced his masculinity. Indeed, he utilises his consciousness around feminism as justification for feeling positive about himself, and accepting his "softer, nurturing, feminine side".

A number of spheres existed for participants in this study that provided opportunities for attaining feminist consciousness. By feminist consciousness, I am not referring to specific academic and/or theoretical understandings of the different strands of feminism. Rather, I am referring to a general awareness of male dominance and privilege, the inequalities between men and women within different areas of social relations, such as private and domestic

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<sup>1</sup> These stages are added to through more organised consciousness-raising with other men, see Chapter nine on homosociality and men-only groups.

relations, sexual relations, public relations and so on, as well as a general understanding of some of the processes and ideologies that reinforce gender inequality. The spheres that these men talked about were in the home as children, in intimate sexual relationships, in intimate non-sexual relationships, in higher education, and through exposure to texts from individual feminist writers. For some of the men, after their initial stage of involvement with individual women, further stages of reading and higher education gave them deeper understandings of gender and the social relations between men and women.

The majority of men, however, referred to the impact of individual women in their lives. Using Mansbridge & Flaster's (2007) framework of everyday activism, it is clear that the women in these men's lives have had a significant impact on their thinking and understanding around gendered social relations. Individual women have challenged the practices of men both within and outside of their sexual relationships. These challenges from individual women towards individual men have often happened in private, 'backstage', social settings such as the home. From a feminist perspective, however, the phrase 'the personal is political' can be seen at play, and is an apt framework from which to analyse everyday activism. Indeed, 'the personal is political' evidences the theory behind 'infrapolitics' as a hidden form of resistance towards dominance. Although non-organised activist behaviour can be disregarded by many theorists, there is clear evidence from this study that suggests many individual women are consistently working 'backstage' to challenge the wider gender structures that influence and structure their everyday lives. The everyday activism of these women is designed to carry forward the goals of the women's movement, in terms of domestic labour, child care, sexual relations and equality. The goals of the everyday activist women have been to challenge and resist their oppression in ways that are feasible and practicable in order to change their conditions in the 'private' sphere.

Although most of the men in this study have renegotiated their sexual politics within their intimate relations and changed their behaviour, this has not always been a straightforward and pain-free process for them. Resistance and a range of complex feelings have been experienced in a number of ways, and by a number of men, and I turn to this next.

### 7.3.2 *Guilt and negativity*

The reactions and feelings generated by the everyday activism of feminist women proved complex for some participants, with hurt and confusion proving significant. For example, at sixteen years old, Sean wanted to work in the crèche at a women's conference, but there was a debate about whether he was a man or still a boy. In the end he was unceremoniously asked to leave, which left him feeling humiliated and bitter. Similarly, Sam wanted to support the women at Greenham Common:

I support feminism, erm, err, and that takes me back to the time when Greenham Common was, you know, really taking off and erm, err, and wanting to support women at Greenham Common. And erm, err some of, you know, some of the women that I knew who were active there, ... saying, well you know, you know "we don't want you there." and me being **hurt** by that (laughs) wanting to be supportive. (Sam 2:7)

Although Sam felt upset by this at the time, he reconciled this by accepting that women-only organising is something women want to do by, and for, themselves.

Other men took on feelings of guilt and blame, and some felt they were being positioned as representative of all men. In the eighties, Owen was influenced by the women's movement in his area. He engaged with wanting to change his behaviour, and his change involved a 'radical' lesbian feminist movement he had marginal connections with. Owen accepted the analysis of patriarchy and male dominance and wanted to explore himself and his behaviour more deeply. But Owen also felt culpable as a man:

I can remember sort of starting to feel almost *guilty* about being a bloke and thinking well, I wanted to say "I'm okay!" But like, it didn't matter, coz I wasn't, I wasn't okay coz I was a bloke, you know. But there was another bit of me, you know the whole liberal "Oh yeah well we've got to go through what, you know, other minorities go through, or whatever, oppressed sections of society, yeah, so it's right, you know, it's pay back time! (Owen:14)

It is interesting that Owen's feelings of "guilt" are qualified through the use of what he calls a "liberal" framework. To make sense of his feelings of guilt, he equates the movement that elicits these feelings with the anti-racist movement.

However, rather than a liberal analysis, his comparison is more in line with 'radical' forms of feminism. Dworkin argues that: "sexist hatred equals racist hatred in its intensity, irrationality, and contempt for the sanctity of human life" (1974:93). Nevertheless, Owen's analysis regarding minority oppression is replicated by Adam:

'I'm a WASP', 'I'm a White Anglo Saxon Protestant male'. I, I never have the moral high ground, it's really bloody hard, you know. My black friends are having a go at me, my female friends are having a go at me, my gay friends are having a go at me, you know, you name it, I'm the enemy. I'm **always** the enemy! Hmm, (laughs) and it's almost like that's my only little bit of victim-hood (laughs loudly). I'm always seeing it, like, 'when's it my turn to have the moral high-ground?'. "Never! Shut the fuck up and just listen ya bastard!" (Adam:12)

Although there is humour in Adam's extract, he articulates a similar perspective to Owen. Adam is aware that he is white, middle class, protestant, middle aged and heterosexual, and thus occupies a privileged position. Nevertheless, he is not comfortable with this position and seeks out his own, ironic, minority, identity as "**always** the enemy!"

Billy also talked at length about his journey through feminism, in particular he talks about a previous relationship he had with a woman who he identified as a "radical' feminist'. Of all the men, Billy appears to have had an especially difficult time, and has experienced a whole host of negative feelings, which include anger, bitterness, guilt and unhappiness.

Yeah, erm, the first was, um, I suppose a very formative time for me was a relationship with a very strong, erm, radical feminist, I think she called herself then, radical feminist, or very strong feminist writer, when I was in my early twenties. Err (2) which was a big learning curve for me, shall we say. I went, I think I, err, (2) went through the mill. I learnt a lot. Erm, I felt very **raw** after that relationship. I felt shredded, almost by it and (2) I suppose partly from-as a result of that I thought: "Feminism, it can fuck off!" I just didn't, if that's the, if that's the ans-if that's the solution - I'm part of the problem and happy to be so! (2) I suppose. ... But yeah, I left with sort of, tail between my legs, whimpering, and sort of, (3) wanting to sort of, lick my wounds I suppose after, after that relationship ended. ... "I've **only** just **got** here and I'm being blamed for the last five thousand years of history". (Billy:10-11)

Billy, also saw himself as having to represent all men, however, unlike Owen, he did not feel resigned to this, rather his resistance to this generated bitterness and anger towards feminism. The subject of feminism constitutes high emotion for Billy, and he goes on to say that he felt: “very challenged, intellectually and emotionally.” (ibid:11). I am concerned, and question whether the relationship might have been abusive:

C Could I just ask you-would you, when you look back at this relationship would you view it as abusive or (2) just the point

B (sighs loudly)

C that it made you feel uncomfortable having to look at certain aspects?

B I wouldn't say it was abusive. It was erm, it was (2) I mean, it was abusive – well would I? (2) I suppose it was, I suppose I was being quite emotionally abusive at the time. That was what I was being challenged about. That's what I didn't like, really. As in fact, that's the essence of it. A lot of it I being, yeah emotionally abusive! Erm, and verbally. Erm (3) and was being taken to the cleaners because of that, and like I say, I mean being, being pulled on it all the time and not liking it at all. So I would say: “What the fuck are you talking about?” (2) and I'd stand or I'd get really defensive, or very aggressive verbally, or sulky, or allsorts. (Billy:12)

The memories associated with this particular relationship are very powerful and difficult, but Billy does continue to a point where he reflects on his resistance to everyday activism as being abusive towards his partner. Billy draws his stories about everyday activism to an end with the following conclusion:

that was, that was in my late sort of, of late, early thirties. (2) I suppose these days, I mean I said to, to my therapist at the time, a few years ago I said: “Bloody hell, I think I'm becoming a feminist!” ‘Cos things are starting to, I'm, I'm, I, because as I said before, I'm (shhhhs) more, I suppose. Things like watching, I don't watch much-I didn't used to watch much TV, I still don't, but when I started watching TV and looking at-particularly looking at **commercials**, (2) I think” “*That's bloody awful*, (2) what you're doing to women!” I mean, just very subtle things, about it's not, actually, overt exploitation, but how women **should be**. You know, clean and white and (1.5), argh, it's just, fuck-flipping awful! (Billy:14)

Billy's comment “I think I'm becoming a feminist” is self-mocking, and is a rhetorical device that effectively distances himself from feminism, whilst at the

same time demonstrating his intellectual ability to analyse the subtle sexism found in the everyday world, in this instance, television advertisements. However, there also appears to be a disavowal of feminism. Billy's intellectual knowledge and his analytical skills are likely to be a direct result of the everyday activism of his former partner. Without individual women's consciousness-raising, it is questionable whether he would have gained the critical faculties required to observe the subtler forms of sexism (re)produced in popular culture. Therefore, he holds a knowledge that originates with feminism and feminists, whilst simultaneously dismissing its origins.

It is evident that feminism has been practiced in the participants' early relationships, with the politics of feminism acted on, and out, in an every day setting. All three men, in their own way, highlight some of the difficulties and challenges that arise for women who work to redress the social injustice of the gender structure within their own personal and intimate relationships. Nonetheless, the reluctance of some men, along with their negative reactions is in line with Connell (1990), who found that although many men benefited from having their emotional needs met, some also understood feminism as an accusation. From Owen, this accusation was taken on board and understood, but for Billy, accommodation was more difficult and stressful. Some men, such as Jamie and Sam, found the deconstruction of masculinity more manageable, while other men felt worthless and shameful, and experienced personal crises. Connell also notes that the men in his study formulated a more spiritual self in order to compensate and substitute old masculine practices. It is perhaps no coincidence that Billy, in particular, has also embraced a high level of spirituality. This spirituality has been incorporated into the men-only groups that he talks about, which raises concerns regarding their homosocial aspects. This is explored further in Chapter nine.

The next section explores the participant's different understanding of feminism, the discourses they draw upon to talk about it, and whether feminism can be located within an ideological code.

## 7.4 Understanding Feminism

This section explores how participants talked about and understood feminism. In order to determine whether feminism can be seen as an 'ideological code', I highlight and draw out the concepts that were used to organise their talk. Each man who responded to this question, in terms of how they understood feminism, answered in different ways. Some men were not confident in their understanding, and others held quite straightforward understandings. What is significant, however, is the way in which the question prompted half of the men to draw on 'radical' feminism as a means by which to talk about and make sense of feminism. As a result, 'radical' and 'extreme' feminism were utilised discursively by men in several ways that helped to position them subjectively.

### 7.4.1 Making Sense of Feminism

For some men, the question on feminism posed somewhat of a problem. In the main, this was due to men being uncertain of the meaning of feminism, and/or lacking confidence in their understanding of it. Oliver for example, found the question difficult and drew on a number of concepts:

Well, you know, I (sighs) my understanding of, of feminism, what it is to be a feminist I suppose, is about (2) erm, I suppose, erm, **equality** for women and erm, (2) you know, fighting for the rights of women and for the right to be free from violence and intimidation and, and **rights**. All the-I mean equality on all levels, with equality of erm, work and pay and all those things, err. (3) I suppose I've got a fuzzy definition of it and I know (2.5) what I think of when I think of certain people. (Oliver:19)

Oliver, appeared to conjure up an image of feminist women he knew, in order to make associations and derive meaning around the category of feminism. Oliver actually held an informed understanding of feminism and WLM demands, but goes on to ask me for reassurance that his definition is correct. Similarly, when Michael was asked what feminism meant to him, his answer was posed in question form:

Feminism? Is it, equal, equal rights, equal opportunities for, for women as men? (Michael: 8)



Familiar to both these preceding quotes, are the concepts of 'equality' and 'rights'. Oliver, however, included the important concept of freedom from violence and intimidation. He also elaborated on equality by incorporating examples of equal pay and employment conditions.

Sam became politicised when he attended polytechnic, and this was the first time he came across the term feminism. He also highlights the fact that whilst developing his awareness of feminism, he became aware of the caricatured features associated with it, but does not elaborate on this. Although Sam has three children, a partner, a home, and significant responsibilities, he also applies his understanding of feminism to make sense of, and support, his earlier decision not to marry.

**initially** not wanting to be tied down, not wanting to be connected and responsible for someone – and them being responsible for me. Erm, but when I started to, to, learn about feminism and gender and, erm, that, it became backed up with “well I don’t want to buy into patriarchy, and that’s what marriage is.” You know, that’s, that’s where I was coming from and so, and I’ve stayed with that, I just don’t want to partake in this patriarchal structure. (Sam 1:17)

Sam has identified two further concepts associated with feminism: an opposition towards patriarchy, and (non)marriage. Not marrying, for Sam, denotes an act of resistance to the prevailing gender structure, and he employs this argument in a similar way to Adam, who, in the previous section, utilised feminism in order to celebrate the feminine side of his character.

A number of participants also drew on the concept of 'extreme'<sup>2</sup> to talk about feminism, which sometimes triggered hostile responses. Michael, for example, after putting forward his definition of what he thought feminism was, immediately went on to deride extreme feminism:

And I think, (2.5) you know, yeah, OK (3). But, (1) like, my partner, (2) she likes being (1) a woman and err, you know, not **expecting** me to open doors, but she **likes** the (1) chivalry, chivalry and you know. I've, I've opened doors for some women at that **conference**, (2) and I might as well've (1.5) punched 'em int' face. (whispers in an angry voice) “I

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of 'extreme' has become common parlance since the World Trade Centre bombings of September 2001. Its use in public discourse, however, is usually associated with religious extremism. See also Jeffries (forthcoming) for a linguistic evaluation on the use of 'radicalisation', and how its popular social meaning is now used, almost exclusively, to convey extremism and Islamic fundamentalism.

don't need you to do that. I can open me own door!" It's like well I'm just trying to be a gentleman! So, (2) extreme feminism has no place for-same as any extremes for any kind of thing, extreme, you know, thoughts on anything, there's no place for it! It's alright championing a cause, but you know, that's just my, my view. (Michael:8)

Michael's uses a number of concepts in his extract to convey his own understanding of the different forms of feminism: not-feminine or not-woman, independence, hostility and aggression. Firstly, he draws on his partner, "she likes being a woman", which implies feminists are either not women, or do not enjoy being women. To be fair, many 'radical' feminists would want to change the sexist structures that encourage women to conform with traditional 'feminine' roles. However, that is not to say that they do not take pleasure in being women.

Furthermore, Michael's account of being rebuffed for holding a door open is a strong memory that he remains angry about, but one where he also positions the woman as the aggressor. He sees her reaction as so extreme that he feels he must come up with his own extreme and violent formulation: "I might as well've punched 'em in't face." This seems a strange analogy to make in view of his position in the domestic violence sector. Similarly, Sean also used violent and extreme formulations to talk about feminism:

there was, err another time that comes to mind, there was a couple of other incidents with err, (2) particularly, actually the women, err from Bradford and Leeds University who seemed to lead the spearhead of this err radical, separatist, political lesbian dynamic, right, and acted as err you know, like a err, err I don't know, for some reason the word 'Nazi Storm-trooper' came, (laughs) you know. Their, their approach was really, really, err (3) aggressive. (Sean26)

Here, Sean is talking about a women's conference he attended, which was women-only, and this has clearly left a lasting impression. Unlike Sam, Sean has not reconciled women-only activities, and as an adult the memories appear to conjure up powerful emotions. The use of "Nazi Storm-trooper" evokes a horrific vision of violence and death, that supplants even Michael's use of violence, and seems peculiarly placed as a comparison to position feminist women. Like Michael, Sean draws upon hostility and aggression, but also

incorporates radical, political, lesbian, separatist, as well as fear, threat and intimidation.

Returning to Michael's extract, he illustrates how he is attempting to fit feminism into the existing gender structure, where men occupy roles of chivalrous gentlemen, and women occupy a weaker protected role. Overall, this is in line with Edley & Wetherell's (2001) study on the way men talk about and construct feminism. Michael is uncomfortable with what he terms as 'extreme feminism', and is unsure how to manage it. He positions himself as the victim and constructs feminism as the aggressor. 'Extreme' forms of feminism are constructed as unacceptable, while more orthodox forms associated with liberalism are constructed as acceptable. The next quotes explore this phenomenon further.

Joe, like some of the other men, was well informed not only on masculinity theory, but also on feminist theory, and appreciated the differences between feminist ideologies. In the following extract he critiques the 'radical' feminist view on male violence:

I understand the different kind of (2) **elements** that might be around feminism so I kind of appreciate, err, if you like the differences between say, **radical** feminism (2), erm, (3) and possibly a more (5.5) I'm trying to find err, different, different factors within feminism, but basically I can

C Liberal feminism?

J Yes, Liberal feminism and almost the kind of **Socialist** Feminism. For example, I am, I'm not a member of—currently a member of a political party, but I'm pretty strongly associated with some far-left politics and a number of, erm, **very** powerful women that I know would take quite a contradictory view to a number of **radical** feminists that I've also encountered as to the, the **factors** that underlie, err, violence. And so that could see basically a difference between say a **socialist** feminism and a **radical** feminism, an, and I suppose by **radical** feminism I would probably see it as it's extreme! Err, a, a kind of view that I think I certainly come across **less** now than I used to which would, for example, suggest that "all men are rapists" and so forth. I see that as being a kind of extreme manifestation of the radical feminist position. (Joe:7/8)

Several observations can be made from this extract. Joe is presenting himself as knowledgeable on the different strands of feminist theory, and the discourses he uses afford him some authority. 'Radical' feminists are set up as

'extreme', here, but Joe elaborates on the details of extremism by quoting the controversial phrase "all men are rapists!" associated with Susan Brownmiller (1975). As discussed earlier, 'radical' feminist theories are not unified, but rather are rooted in many different perspectives, such as Black, lesbian, cultural, materialist, separatist, and so on, and all have been developed with sophistication and complexity. The habit of reducing such a wide and complex field of 'radical' feminist theory to that of 'essentialism' and 'extremism' is disingenuous and unjust. The correct quote from Brownmiller, set in its context regarding the history of rape, should read:

From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear. (ibid:15)

By this, Brownmiller argues that all men participate in, and benefit from, patriarchal rule, and thus, implicitly support a culture of rape that helps to keep women submissive and fearful, the irony being that women require protection from other men in many spheres, including the judicial system, (dominated by men) that convicts men as rapists. The controversy arises around men being *consciously* aware of these processes, which is indeed problematic. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that this one phrase has become so well known, and is used as a device to caricature and demonise 'radical' feminism.

Joe's use of this quote also employs the rhetorical device of bringing in other people to support his perspective of 'radical' feminism as "extreme". By using other women, i.e., "**very** powerful women" or "socialist feminists" he infers that other feminisms are more reasoned, and, therefore, more acceptable. His rhetoric is made ever more powerful by declaring his own involvement in "far-left politics". By comparison, the 'radical' feminist perspective on male violence, which is underpinned by theories of patriarchy and male dominance, must be more extreme than "far-left politics". Finally, Joe utilises the additional concept of man-hating. The use of 'all men are rapists' suggests that feminists who believe this, by default, must not like men in general.

The majority of the professional men, like Joe, had a reasonable to sophisticated understanding of feminist theory and practice, as did campaign

men Matthew, Sean and Lewis. Most men were familiar with the popular caricature of 'radical' feminism, as the following extract from Jamie illustrates:

it's got a bit of a bad press now (1.5) I think, feminism, because, erm, it got that, that strident, dungaree-wearing, wearing, erm, separatist, loony kind of image thing, yeah. And I think everything needs its vanguard, I think every movement has different people within it, from your kind of, like, lipstick lesbians to your, your dyke separatists, yeah. And, (2) and why not? Every movement's got different bits of it. And you need different bits in order to effect any kind of change. And I think there has been, there was a kind of acceleration of change from the seventies to the eighties and then in the nineties there was a bit of a backlash, I feel, in like these lads magazines are just, (1.5) they would never have come out in the eighties, **never**. (Jamie:14)

Jamie identifies a popular caricature of women in the women's movement, using adjectives such as "strident", "loony" and separatist, and makes reference to their image: "dungaree-wearing". In popular discourse, the feminists Jamie describes are associated with 'radical' feminism, but he is much more positive about this than, for example, Joe.

Significantly, Adam, Aiden, Robert and Joe, all remarked on how women, including their women friends, do not call themselves 'radical' feminists anymore, drawing on the concept that denotes this type of feminist identity as out-dated. In addition, Robert, Alex, Adam, Jamie and Sam, all lamented on how women, especially young women, rejected or distanced themselves from feminism in today's cultural climate. Their analyses included how difficult it was to talk about feminism and be taken seriously, and how young women were unaware that the freedoms and equalities they enjoy today, were fought for by earlier feminists. Although the men's observations are about young women in general, the concepts they drew upon included the disavowing and repudiation of feminism, and/or feminism being of little importance, and perhaps embarrassing for some women.

One final way in which 'radical' feminism was raised was through the dialogical nature of the interviews. Aiden was one of the last men to be interviewed, and had brought up the term 'radical' feminism himself. He told me that few of his women friends still identified as 'radical' feminists, implying the term belonged to a previous era. I explained that I identified myself as a

'radical' feminist, and that I was heterosexual and had two male children. The following extract picks up half way through my conversation and includes Aiden's important response:

C But it was definitely said on more than one occasion that boys ar-ar-are very nice creatures until they are **taught** to be men! And, and she [Andrea Dworkin] very much did say '**taught** to be men'. So there was no **essential** difference, for her,

A Yeah.

C between men and women. And it's about men. You, you may, you may want to dismantle patriarchy; and you may want to dismantle male domination,

A Yeah.

C but you can't do it on your own. You know, you **have to have** the political will of men, as well.

A Yeah.

C and I don't have a problem-there's no **tension** for me being kind of a radical feminist, but I'm not a radical *separatist* lesbian.

A I mean I would have said you, that the position you described was as a feminist, I'd, I'd, err, yeah, (laughs) err, was a **feminist** position rather than a **radical** feminist. (Aiden:22/23)

Aiden was not alone in his understanding of 'radical' feminism, his views were aired and shared by at least two other participants. In the next extract I have said to Robert that *femininity* has been mentioned by only one of my interviewees, and Robert replies that although programmes are informed by feminism they are exploring masculinity and not femininity:

C in such a way that, you know, feminists, say, radical feminists who, who want to, erm, dismantle patriarchy, etc, **do** think about masculinity and[

R Do you have to be a radical feminist to want to dismantle patriarchy?

C Yeah. Well, if you're a liberal feminist you just want to reform,

R Ah

C and get into politics, and make it, make women equal **to** men. [So men are still the measure

R [One of Blair's Babes! (laughs)

C Pardon,

R One of Blair's Babes!

C yeah. So men are still the **measure** that we are, we are measured from, they're still the norm, so that's your liberal feminism.

R Yeah. OK

R Okay. ... Maybe I'm a radical fem-profeminist. Coz I just find it **logically** very **hard** to believe that patriarchy would reform. Patriarchy is there to protect the interests of men. (Robert:41-42)

It is interesting that both Aiden and Robert have not associated the eradication of patriarchy with 'radical' feminism, but instead understand this to be a standard 'feminist' position. 'Radical' feminist tenets, for these men at least, appear to have been appropriated by more orthodox and liberal feminism. It is not that these men are averse to 'radical' feminism, however, because their responses indicates not only surprise, but a shift in their own positions: from Robert: "maybe I'm a 'radical' profeminist.", and from Aiden "I would have said the position you described was a **feminist** position, rather than a '**radical**' feminist." In short there is evidence from many of these men that feminism is confusing. To untangle this situation further, the next section draws together the concepts used by the men to talk about feminism by situating feminism as an 'ideological code'.

#### **7.4.2 *Feminism as an Ideological Code***

Radical feminism – that wilfully misunderstood, frequently maligned state of political being, consciousness, and action that reputedly makes journalists snarl, funders wince, "post-modern" academics tremble, and strong men go catatonic – well, you ask, what is it *really*? (Morgan 1996:5)

Feminism can be viewed as an ideology, containing various characteristics, theories and ideals. As discussed in Chapter four, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) articulated seven demands that were 'radical' (addressing the root cause) and revolutionary. In an earlier extract by Joe, he alluded to the differences between socialist feminists and 'radical' feminists by referring to their theoretical beliefs/position on "the factors that underlie violence." This points to one of the key disagreements between 'radical' and socialist feminists. Many socialist feminists believe women's oppression can be found in capitalism and economic conditions. Whilst 'radical' feminists believe that women's oppression is rooted in male dominance, which is theorised under the framework of patriarchy. It is worth reiterating that 'radical' feminism, as with socialist feminism, takes many different forms, and begins from many different

perspectives. 'radical' feminism is sophisticated, complex and rich, containing positions that critique the *social construction* of gender, intersectionalities, and the social conditions created by capitalist economies. Although it is not a unified feminist position, the streams within 'radical' feminism do share some general principles, as Rowland and Klein (1996) point out:

The first and fundamental theme is that women as a social group are oppressed by men as a social group and that this oppression is the *primary* oppression for women. Patriarchy is the oppressing *structure* of male domination. Radical feminism makes visible male control as it is exercised in every sphere of women's lives, both public and private. (ibid:11)

This common principle underpins the ethos behind the services and support that women have created for women survivors of men's violences, and it might have been expected that most of the men in this sector would share these views. In the event, this was not the case, and many of the men positioned themselves on a continuum regarding negativity and/or hostility to these sentiments.

Taken together, the concepts used by participants to organise their talk around feminism can be grouped as follows:



1. Equality
2. Rights
3. Freedom from Violence
4. Political
5. Independence
6. Patriarchal System
7. Non-Marriage
8. Not-Woman/Not-Feminine/Presentation of Self
9. Sexuality (Lesbian)
10. Man-Hating
11. Aggression
12. Hostility
13. Threatening
14. Fearsome
15. Menacing
16. Militant
17. Radical
18. Extremism
19. Embarrassing
20. Out-dated/Old Fashioned
21. Repudiation

It is not my intention to generalise across all the men in this study regarding their understanding of feminism. Rather I have drawn out the men's *relational* connections to the notion of feminism, by detailing the concepts they used to talk about, and make sense of it. Nevertheless, it is significant that the first two concepts of equality and rights, were understood as belonging to feminist ideology by the majority of participants, which is loosely in line with the first two demands put forward by the WLM. These first two concepts, along with concepts three to six inclusive, can be viewed as positive characteristics of feminism, and which the majority of men did not appear to problematise or question. Although 'freedom from violence' and 'patriarchy' are seen as positive aspects, they were only mentioned by a few of the men, which is interesting in itself, as freedom from violence forms the basis of their organisations and campaigns.

Concepts seven, eight and nine are associated with how women look and act sexually. If feminist women's presentation of self do not fit with dominant values, for example, if their attire and image is not in line with heterosexual ideals of beauty, then they are 'othered'. Likewise, objectified values that position women as sexual beings for the gratification of men, can

mean they are ostracised from the category of women if they do not conform to these values. This objectification is brought more clearly into view when women's sexuality is linked with other women, and discriminatory language is used to discredit those who do not conform to heterosexual values.

Concepts ten to eighteen, can be seen as the more forceful, powerful and intimidating concepts, and It is evident that participants associated feminism with many more of these negative characteristics than with positive ones. More than half the men used concepts such as 'extremism' and 'radical' in a very negative manner, drawing on threatening behaviour, aggression, and hostility to talk about their experiences of feminism. Ironically, they used aggressive and hostile language themselves to convey their experiences. Significantly, even the few men who had sophisticated knowledge around feminist theory, and who also identified themselves with 'radical' feminism, used similar concepts to organise their talk around feminism. For example, Jamie put forward most of the negative concepts to demonstrate he was aware of them, but also that he was disappointed in the stereotyping and repudiation of feminism and feminist women. What is striking about these negative concepts is that they are more usually associated with so called 'masculine traits'. Moreover, there exists an ironic relationship between these hostile and masculine characteristics associated with feminism, and the way that feminist women become not-feminine and 'othered'.

Concepts nineteen to twenty one, are of a different nature, in that they describe situations and particular historical times, nevertheless they clearly have interconnecting relationships with each other. Concept nineteen depicts Feminism as invoking shame and negative feelings of self-consciousness, perhaps because it belongs in a previous time. Concept twenty implies that feminism is no longer relevant or valid. Concept twenty one is of particular concern. This concept denies the principles or tenets of "radical' feminism' as being of significance. Furthermore, and as demonstrated above, the tenets of "radical' feminism', far from being dismissed, are part of a process that actively re-associates them with more acceptable forms of feminism.

Moving on to 'radical' feminism as a concept, and the ways in which this was employed by many of the men to make sense of and talk about feminism, suggests it is a central or key element. That is not to say that it is always

employed in a negative way, but that it appears to be a characteristic of feminism that the participants used *relationally*. 'Radical' feminism, along with all its connotations, appears to be a crucial organising discourse within standardised understandings of feminism. It is also possible to see 'radical' feminism as dichotomous. The way in which it was utilised by the men in this study fall into two spheres: either 'extreme' or 'revolutionary'. Revolutionary is associated with positive attitudes, and extreme was used to convey negative standpoints. Sometimes both spheres were used simultaneously to convey subjective positions, such as the example from Jamie. Clearly the concepts of 'radical' and 'radical' feminism are powerful component parts contained within the ideological code of 'feminism'. The discourses of 'radical' and 'extreme', are drawn upon and replicated in participants' talk in ways that organise not only their thinking, but also the way in which they speak, the images they conjure up in their stories, as well as interpreting and making sense of their experiences.

'Radical' feminism itself, also contains restrictive qualities, and possibly acts as a taboo, in the sense that it is repressed and made invisible. Initially, only two of the men identified positively with 'radical' feminism. However, Robert, after realising 'radical' feminism was underpinned by the dismantling of patriarchy, claimed he was "a 'radical' profeminist". Moreover, 'radical' feminism's restrictive and repressed qualities were made remarkably visible by Aiden. Aiden had dismissed 'radical' feminism as out-dated, yet went on to describe an ideology that viewed gender as socially constructed, and worked to eradicate patriarchy as "a **feminist** position, rather than a '**radical**' feminist." For Aiden, 'radical' feminism had no meaningful function, but what has effectively happened here is the transference of 'radical' feminism's meaning and ideology to that of a more modern-day and *acceptable* form of feminism. Thus, in a strange paradox, 'radical' feminism, as a functioning and workable concept is repudiated, whilst its associated values and principles are simultaneously subsumed by an undefined form of feminism. In light of research that finds liberal feminism as dominant and the orthodox, it could be that 'radical' feminist tenets have been appropriated by liberal forms of feminism.

Of course, this process and understanding cannot be ascribed to all of the men in this study, nor can it be generalised across a wider context. Nevertheless, it remains indicative of the reconfiguration of feminism by some men in this sector, and has implications for how feminism is disseminated throughout and across the sector as well as other men's groups. In addition, and to return to feminism as an ideological code that regulates public discourse, thinking, interpretation and action, that some forms of feminism are masked or made invisible constitutes an important feature of the code.

To sum up, this section has explored data that locates the term 'feminism' as an ideological code. From Smith's (1999) explication of how ideological codes function, it is evident that 'feminism' contains a number of public discourses that regulate the way in which it can be talked about. Participants shared a number of common concepts and categories that were drawn upon to convey understanding and experiences around feminism. In addition, each man worked to discursively position himself relationally, by employing similar standardised discourses. The procedures for selecting categories, discourses and vocabulary for speaking are also apparent, as is their capacity for replication. Thus, the features contained in ideological codes that work to socially organise and regulate the relations of public discourse, can be identified and located in the ways that participants talked about feminism.

## **7.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

Mansbridge & Flaster's (2007) notion of 'everyday activism' is useful for analysing forms of activism that are outside of dominant understandings. Nichols' (2006) work on 'activism as an ideological code assists with employing a framework of analysis from which to further explore participants' previous heterosexual relationships. In addition, Nichols' definition of activism, although not wide enough, can be developed further using the notion of everyday activism. 'Second wave' feminism brought with it consciousness-raising and 'the personal is political', and women collectively, as well as individually, have succeeded in dismantling many of the boundaries between the public/private sphere. The individual action of participants' female partners appears to have been instrumental in developing men's consciousness around feminism and

gendered social relations. As such, these same women can be seen as everyday activists. Indeed, the men's reasons for working in this sector can be seen as politically motivated and due, in part, to the everyday activism of individual women, either in the home, at a higher education institute, and/or through the active reading of a text written by an individual feminist woman.

Consciousness-raising for the men has not been straightforward, though, and for some had caused confusion, guilt, pain and bitterness. For some participants, the transition to practicing new forms of masculinity was accepted as part of their journey, and benefited them significantly, especially in terms of meeting their emotional needs. For others, however, feminism was seen as an accusation, and feminism and feminist women have been apportioned blame. This was in direct relation to the way in which participants understood and positioned feminism, and in particular 'radical' and extreme forms of feminism.

This chapter also explored participants' talk around feminism, and identified it as an ideological code that regulates how feminism can be spoken about. As an ideological code, feminism "operates as a free-floating form of control in the relations of public discourse." (Smith 1990:175). Contained within feminism are standardised categories, concepts, discourses and vocabulary that were drawn upon in relational ways by the men in this study. Furthermore, this chapter identified the processes that repress and make invisible the common principles that 'radical' forms of feminism share. 'Radical' feminism is reduced to a caricature of separatist, hostile, threatening and man-hating extremism, while its positive and revolutionary principles are subsumed and attributed to an undefined and current form of feminism.

Nonetheless, through participants' choice of work as professionals, as well as their own individual and voluntary work, they can be considered as challenging the ideological values and norms that the WLM initially set out to do. They are disseminating to other men their feminist knowledge and awareness, as well as new and reconfigured practices of masculinity and relations with women. What needs unpacking in relation to the WLM goals, however, is how feminism is disseminated through their own work? Which kind of knowledges are (re)produced, and whom do they benefit? The next chapter continues exploring feminism as an ideological code by analysing ways in

which it orders 'domestic violence' at an institutional level, how it organises men's programmes and campaigns, and also how it organises talk on violence against women at an individual level.

## CHAPTER 8

### ‘FEMINISM’ AND ‘DOMESTIC VIOLENCE’

#### 8.1 Introduction

In ideological terms, the women’s movement created new meanings of violence, and widened both the understanding of, and the materiality of violence. Therefore, and in terms of the men in my study, the ways in which they understood and talked about violence, along with the ways in which these understandings are translated into men’s programmes denotes the furthering of the ideas of the women’s movement, the redressing of injustice, and the policies with which to do this, albeit in a now institutionalised setting, *and* within their own subjective positioning.

This chapter explores feminism as a *social organiser* of ‘domestic violence’, and uses the term ‘organisation’ in two distinct ways. Firstly, as in the previous chapters, it uses organisation to depict a formalised body of people with particular purposes, such as charities or businesses. Secondly, the use of *social organiser* portrays the more general meaning of social structuring and arrangements within the ‘domestic violence’ sector, particularly the forms of social organisation that shape and influence institutions and institutional complexes. The first section explores how feminism organises gender-neutral definitions of ‘domestic violence’, and the complex ways in which it influences key institutions, organisations and individuals. It looks at the development of discourses of resistance that have arisen to counter feminist analyses of ‘domestic violence’, and the resultant discourses that feminists writers have created in order to counter this counter resistance. It then situates gender-neutral discourses of ‘domestic violence’ within the wider context of resistance and opposition towards feminism. Finally, the chapter explores how feminism, although still present as an overall organising factor, has been subsumed at the levels of institution, organisation and the individual.

## **8.2 Feminism, Gender-Neutrality and the ‘Domestic Violence’ Discourse**

Participants all answered the definition of violence, especially ‘domestic violence’ in a standardised way. That is the current definition put forward by, and theorised by feminists regarding power and control. In addition, some of the professional participants also demonstrated their further knowledge around feminist definitions of violence against women by incorporating a continuum of violence (Kelly 1988). Following on from the previous chapter, and exploring feminism as an ideological code, I explore these definitions further, and draw out additional data that suggests feminism organises the way violence is talked about (or not), and disseminated within wider society. The first part of this section explores official discourses of gender-neutrality in ‘domestic violence’, and how this is navigated and resisted by institutions. The second part looks at organisations, and individuals, and the ways in which they drew upon, as well as resisted, the gender-neutral discourse of ‘domestic violence’.

### ***8.2.1 Institutional Uses of Gender-neutrality in ‘Domestic Violence’***

As mentioned above, the definitions around violence, and especially around violence against women, have been developed, widened, and put into the public domain by feminist women. The feminist definition of ‘domestic violence’ is underpinned by analyses of unequal gendered social relations and the problem of men’s violence towards women stems from their sense of entitlement, and is used to maintain power and control. This sense of entitlement is associated within a context of privilege and male dominance, and backed up by sexism within the private and public sphere, and within patriarchal structures. These definitions are politically charged, and always subject to temporal, historical and cultural conditions. For example, the current definitions published online by Women’s Aid Federation England, and the government now include developments on knowledge surrounding culture and religion, and have developed definitions that refer to forced marriage and so called ‘honour crimes’:

In Women's Aid's view domestic violence is physical, sexual, psychological or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include



forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'. Domestic violence may include a range of abusive behaviours, not all of which are in themselves inherently 'violent'. (Women's Aid Federation England:2007)

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality." This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called 'honour killings'. (Home Office, Crime Reduction:2009)

Women have worked hard to widen the social understandings of violence, and bring these understandings into the wider public sphere, and in this sense their work has been remarkably successful. Whilst it is clear that feminism has influenced the official definitions from the government, what also comes through in *both* these official quotes is the gender-neutrality contained within. Nevertheless, this gender-neutrality is combatted by both Women's Aid *and* the Government websites, as both go on to talk about statistics, and impart information in gender specific terms with regard to women as victims and men as perpetrators.

The gender-neutral language in the published definitions of 'domestic violence' reflects the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into that of a legal status. But this legal status has had to take into account and address the Gender Equality Duty (GED), which was part of the Gender Equality Act (2006), and which amended the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. The GED denotes that discrimination on grounds of gender should be addressed by all bodies, organisations and institutions. Therefore, for gender equality, and because some men are victims of 'domestic violence', official definitions must incorporate both men and women. On the whole, the GED is a positive move, but one of the unintended consequences is that the GED is open to interpretations that can have a negative impact on, and undermine, women-only organisations. Women-only organisations may have to prove and provide evidence to funders and other agencies that their organisation providing women-only services is essential, and in line with the GED, and does not discriminate against men (see WRC 2009).

Aside from the definitions, however, both sites use *gender-specific* facts, which distinctly positions women as being the majority of victims, and men as the majority of perpetrators. For example, the government site states that 89% of people experiencing four or more incidents are women, and that on average two women per week are killed by their current or former partner. For the purposes of this study, the other key organisation dealing with 'domestic violence', is the Respect website. Respect is the umbrella organisation for men's perpetrator programmes in 'domestic violence', and their definitions on domestic violence differ slightly. Two of Respects websites are the Men's Advice Line, which is supported by the Home Office, and provides telephone help for *male victims* of 'domestic violence'. The other website is the Respect Phonenumber, which provides support for *women experiencing* 'domestic violence', as well as for *men who are being* violent and/or abusive. On the Men's Advice Line, the definition is in gender-neutral language, despite being directed at male victims. However, on the Respect Phonenumber website, the initial face of the website uses gender-neutral language, but also states that the majority of 'domestic violence' occurs in heterosexual relationships and it is overwhelmingly men who are violent. The Respect Phonenumber website signposts both women and men to pages where the language denotes 'domestic violence' as being violence done to women by men. Respect, therefore, tends to use language that is gender-specific and incorporate the pronouns of "her" and "he" (Respect 2009).

Clearly, there is an incongruence between official definitions of 'domestic violence', which have been reconceptualised into gender-neutral language, and the ways in which these definitions are then backed up in the surrounding texts, where the use of gender-specific language is prevalent. In relation to men's intervention with men who have been violent to their partners, it is this feminist ethos of power, control and patriarchy that underpins most men's-work programmes, and especially those programmes that are accredited, or becoming accredited within Respect. There also exists a related dissonance in the ways in which people talk about 'domestic violence' in their everyday lives, or their every day work. The example from my research diary, set out in the previous chapter, regarding a woman who was told by her manager to speak about 'domestic violence' in gender-neutral terms,

exemplifies this. The reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into a social problem that is gender-neutral has been written into policy, and the associated discourse is taken up, activated and reproduced by various actors participating in the relations of ruling. However, this reconceptualisation also represents ideological methods of reasoning that are problematic to others, as the same example shows. The dissonance experienced by the woman, meant she actively challenged and resisted the gender-neutral language advocated by the official discourse and her manager.

What appears to have happened, and is still happening, is the development of discourses of resistance. By discourses of resistance I refer to different ways of talking about and analysing 'domestic violence'. Resistance can be expressed in many different way, and taken together they form complex social networks. In the Foucaultian (1991a) sense, resistance is expressed as an opposition to power, and resistance can usefully be understood by exploring the forms and techniques they take. For the purposes of this research, they can be understood by outlining them at four different levels. Firstly, non-feminist frameworks, where, for example, 'domestic violence' is seen as 'just a domestic'. These discourses used to be prevalent in the past, especially concerning police responses. Secondly, feminist analyses of 'domestic violence' which challenged non-feminist analyses, and constituted the first discourses of resistance. Thirdly, analyses that challenged feminist frameworks, such as gender-neutral analyses, which can be seen as counter discourses. Fourthly, feminist and profeminist analyses that have evolved to counter these counter discourses, and which can be seen as counter-counter discourses.

Discourses of resistance can be seen as an old struggle regarding violence against women, that has never really disappeared, but which has had to be reconfigured as counter-counter discourses, in order to resist the new rhetoric surrounding the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' as gender-neutral. In direct relation to the gender-neutral discourse, and working at different levels, is a further public discourse which has begun to circulate widely, whereby both women and men, when talking about 'domestic violence' or men's violences, activate an argument that includes women's violence towards men. This argument can be seen as a counter discourse. The

counter discourse of “women are as violent as men”, is more commonly known in professional and academic circles as gender symmetry, and has much to do with the ‘conflict tactic scales’ (CTS) developed by Strauss (1979). This counter discourse has gained significant currency across the media and in public discourse. Strauss’ CTS found that women admitted to as much violence as did men and, thus, he concluded that gender symmetry existed in ‘domestic violence’. Strauss’ methodology has been widely criticised by feminist, profeminist and other scholars for not taking context into consideration within the questionnaires they used. For example, questions regarding violence did not include meaning, motive or outcome, and neither does the scale include sexual violence, separation assault, stalking or homicide (see DeKeseredy & Kelly 1993, DeKeseredy 1999, DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz 2006). When DeKeseredy & Kelly (1993) adapted the CTS to include context, meaning, motive and outcome, a substantially different picture emerged, with only a minority of women actually initiating attacks against their partners.

Nevertheless, the discourse of symmetry, has gained much currency over the past two decades. Arguably, these type of discourses can be seen as resistance towards women’s gender-based campaigning to stop violence against women. Much of the opposition that arises towards gender-based violence also includes an antifeminist perspective. As a result of research that suggests women are as violent as men, writers argue that the single factor of gender is no longer relevant and argue for moving beyond feminist theories on violence against women (for example, Dutton 1994, 2006, Graham-Kevan 2007). It is worth noting here, that most feminist writers, theorists, professionals and activists do not shy away from or dismiss women’s violence. In point of fact, areas of research, such as same sex violence, have seen a sophisticated growth in recent years. Most feminist writers and activists also acknowledge men as victims of violence, and have no desire to negate this, indeed feminist women recognise that male victims of violence require support and services. Moreover, a feminist framework is well placed for analysing and explaining much of men’s violence against other men, particularly in terms of structural systems, men as a social category, masculinity, hierarchy and the need to prove physical prowess to other men. Feminist scholars also

recognise that violence is multidimensional, and include intersecting factors such as race, class, age, ability and religion. What researchers consistently find in studying women's violence, however, is that it is quantitatively and qualitatively different from men's violence. Therefore, single factors such as sex and/or gender remain significant and relevant in the etiology of intimate or 'domestic violence' (Renzetti 1994).

Those who participate in the rhetoric that counters feminist definitions of men's violence can be viewed as developing and furthering discourses of resistance, such that, counter-counter discourses must be developed that resists this rhetoric. Scholarly debates are one area that have worked to create new academic discourses for research and activism on violence against women. These discourses often include engaging with proponents of CTS and writers who seek to undermine feminist analyses (Morrow 2000, Renzetti 1994). In order to critique, counter and/or put this type of research into perspective, it is first necessary for (pro)feminist writers to set out and thus reproduce the language and texts of antifeminist analysis. In this sense, through the process of resistance and critique (pro)feminist writers ironically activate the antifeminist discourse and, thus, promulgate it.

The next section explores further how gender-neutral discourses and the discourse of gender symmetry was used by some of the participants, and also demonstrates how these discourses have trickled down into public consciousness.

### ***8.2.2 Men's Use Of Gender-Neutrality and 'Domestic Violence'***

The gender-neutral discourse on 'domestic violence' has been generally accepted in wider society, and has developed into a public discourse that helps to shape consciousness, and provide a new language to draw upon. In the main, none of the participants proposed a symmetry between men, women and 'domestic violence', rather some participants actively resisted this, and bemoaned the fact that gender-neutrality has worked its way into public discourse and constitutes a resistance towards violence against women. For example, Matthew, from campaign 'A', talked about institutions, organisations and individuals being positive towards the campaign, but does acknowledge that some individuals can activate the gender symmetry discourse:

So, all overwhelmingly positive. I can only think of few emails from individuals erm, all, all men who've said things like "What about violence against men? Why aren't you doing something about this, blah, blah, blah?" (Matthew:13)

Sean, from campaign 'A', also talked about the development of new discourses around gender-neutral 'domestic violence', and extended his analysis as the following extract shows:

**But**, there is something new happening. Now what it, what happened, when I actually began to concretely on the ground, began to start going round to people with materials that erm, were provided to me by the campaign to simply have that discussion with somebody, about would you carry this [campaign symbol] ... **This** was actually the trigger for **loads** of people of **all** ages, **males** (2) very tentatively discussing their experiences. And this was, this was and they were proud to wear the [campaign symbol] right, err and you know, but they also wanted to say that they were, that **they** were experiencing unprovoked violence and levels of aggression from you know, female p,people that they were in relationships with. (Sean:42)

The above extract illustrates how engaging in a discourse of men's violence activates the counter discourse of women's violence against men, albeit in non-hostile ways. Sean, himself, has experienced violence done to him by other women and has some sympathy for what men are trying to say about women's violence. The discourse, however, appears to be only partial, and not fully understood by many men:

but they had no yardstick for measuring and that they, and that they couldn't understand and erm, so young men, students at university, of 19, would, were telling me things like this, and you know, older guys trying to explain their complex things. (Sean:42/43)

Most men that Sean encountered tended to be cautious, hesitant and confused when they spoke about women's violence towards men, but Sean, also experienced an accompanying hostility with this discourse:

some people got really nast, nasty like. You could sort of tell (2) who were (2) perhaps, people who, you know, had their own shame and guilt and anxiety about their own actions and things like that, and they were getting nasty about (1.5) the issue. They were the ones who were saying, "no, well, I'm not going to wear the [campaign symbol] and I'm not, you know, I don't agree with this, 'cos

it's one-sided. Why should men, you know, stop being violent if women aren't stopping being violent?" You know. (Sean:43)

These attitudes draw on discourses of reciprocity and injustice, but also display a resistance towards feminist analyses of violence against women. The gender symmetry discourse is invoked unproblematically, and any critique of male power is effectively avoided and/or dismissed. Although Sean was critical of these hostile attitudes, and appeared to reason them away into men's own experiences of *doing* violence, he also goes on to support the new discourses of gender-neutrality:

A lot of people think about this nowadays, you know, how we can move towards, err you know, erm, true gender equality. (Sean:43)

By invoking the phrase "true gender equality", Sean is implicitly supporting the new discourses of gender-neutrality found in official definitions of 'domestic violence'. By drawing upon the concept of a "true" equality, he avoids analysing men's dominance in wider society, and is suggesting that without women's violence being addressed there can be no 'real' equality. Sean effectively relegates feminist analyses of men's violence as partial and unable to explain women's violence towards men, which works, again, to exclude any wider analysis on male power and social relations between men and women. This is also a continuation of the way Sean talked about feminism in the previous chapter, where 'extreme' feminists were seen as "Nazi Storm Troopers".

One participant, who was aware of the gender-neutral discourse and its location within gender equality processes, believed the government used it in a calculative manner:

The 'in thing', the Government's, just wants this to **look** like we're doing equality stuff here, or it's a sop to organisations like Father's for Justice. Erm, which is quite clever if it is, and Machiavellian, but actually, they know it's like, 'Respect' aren't going to come out with stuff that say that men are terribly badly treated in society. Erm, (2) it's like **playing off** areas, elements in the debate, against each other, erm. (3) But then the other side of it is there is a men's agenda, there are, there are **some** men, allegedly, (laughs) who are abused by women, erm, and, you know, those, that's difficult and traumatic and some of that stuff will be hidden. It seems

we learn something from women's experience of experiencing abuse, that, you know, for men to come out and stuff that will be another set of difficulties and barriers for them to come out and say: "This is happening to me!" Erm, (2) so it's a serious issue, it's just not, it's not a majority issue, (Robert:39/40)

Robert highlights the complex ways in which institutional responses are influenced by the gender-neutral discourse. The GED encourages all areas of society to ensure gender discrimination is addressed, and as such the government must be seen to be addressing it themselves. For Robert however, there is an obvious dissonance here between the policy and what actually happens in practice. As discussed previously, the Respect web site is one of the few sites that uses gendered pronouns in their definitions. Thus, Robert's remark about Respect not taking up the rhetoric of gender symmetry is in line with their web site language and text. Respect's position, then, is disseminated both to the general public who use the website, and also throughout their member organisations, to such an extent, that Robert, as an individual, takes up the resistance discourse and uses it in his everyday talk. Because these resistance discourses can be seen as opposing one of the components located in resistance towards feminism, they can also be viewed as a form of every day activism.

Robert also makes connections with both feminism *and* antifeminism. With regard to feminism, he acknowledges that men can be victims of 'domestic violence', and much can be learned from feminism and feminist frameworks for addressing this, especially in overcoming the barriers that men might face in seeking support. Robert also brings 'Fathers for Justice' into his analysis as an example of antifeminist organisations that utilise the discourse of gender symmetry, and who believe that women have more rights than men. In the case of 'Fathers for Justice', this is with particular regard to children and where they reside after separation and/or divorce. What Robert's text shows, is a sophisticated understanding of the debates in current circulation surrounding gendered violence, and his use of a number of pro and antifeminist discourses demonstrates how these discourses are actively taken up, used and furthered.



'Feminism as an ideological code' can also be seen at work in Robert's extract. Feminism is drawn upon directly, in order to acknowledge and frame the difficulties that male victims of 'domestic violence' might face in coming forward, as well as accessing support. Thus, 'domestic violence' might also be seen as concept contained within feminism, and can be added to the list set out in the previous chapter. In addition, Robert draws upon the discourse of antifeminism, via women's rights and 'Fathers for Justice'. However, antifeminism is meaningless without also having an understanding of the concept of feminism. In this sense feminism/antifeminism are constructed as binary opposites, with antifeminism relying on feminism in order to make and convey meaning. As such, antifeminism, can, therefore, be seen as an additional concept contained within feminism, working at various levels, and in complex ways.

Furthermore, It seems that gender-neutral 'domestic violence' cannot be talked about without also invoking gender-specific 'domestic violence'. Whether either of the discourses on 'domestic violence' are invoked as a positive or a negative is not the main issue. The point is that gender-neutral discourses, because they have evolved from gender-specific discourses, rely on the gender-specific discourse for meaning. Thus, the gender-neutral discourse invokes or even activates the gender-specific discourse, and, in turn, the gender-specific discourse can often activate the gender-neutral discourse. The complexity involved in the back and forth exchanges of gender-neutral/specific discourses gives rise to their analysis within the wider social relations that make up feminist opposition.

The next section, therefore, examines how the gender-neutral discourse of 'domestic violence' can be located within the wider context of resistance towards feminism. It goes on to look at how processes within this resistive context can work to regulate 'domestic violence' through institutional, organisational and individual practices, and thus, hide and/or subsume feminism and the feminist struggle.

### 8.3 'Domestic Violence' And The Neutralisation of Feminism

Resistance, or counter discourses, towards gender-based, feminist analyses on 'domestic violence' can also be seen as constituting part of the wider picture of resistance, or 'backlash' against feminism itself (Renzetti 1994). To open up the undermining of feminist analyses of 'domestic violence', it is necessary to locate it in a context of wider hostilities towards feminism. A common term for locating the different forms of resistance to feminism and feminist theory is 'backlash'. However, the usefulness of 'backlash' is open to debate. Some scholars and activists prefer to use it as a framework and concept with which to oppose resistance, whilst others feel 'backlash' is simplistic, and/or a diversion of energy to those who resist equity, and/or a substitute word for discrimination such as sexism, homophobia or racism<sup>1</sup> (Canadian Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children 1996). I have sympathy with much of the critique on the term 'backlash', however, to date, I have not yet found another term or concept that is able to incorporate the complexities of different forms and levels of resistance. Therefore, for practical purposes I am compelled to use 'backlash' as a shortcut to refer to active resistance towards social change proposed or brought about by equity and diversity policies at both institutional levels, and within society as a whole (ibid).

This section examines how feminism is hidden and/or subsumed. The first part explores how feminism can be hidden, but still organise the way 'domestic violence' is represented at an institutional level. The second part goes on to explore the same phenomenon at the level of organisations, by looking at how participants talked about the incorporation of feminism within the men's programmes themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of 'backlash' and its definitions, limitations, tensions, as well the tactics used within, see the Canadian Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, *Exploring the Dynamics of Backlash*, (1996)

### ***8.3.1 The Subsuming of Feminism within Institutional Settings***

Feminist women have contributed an inordinate amount of research, around 'domestic violence'. Their struggle has paid out at many levels, they have provided services, support, changed policy, initiated the criminalisation of men's violence, and effectively pushed the social problem of men's violence into the public domain. However, women's struggle has happened in a climate of resistance and opposition, that has worked to complicate and exacerbate their action. One of the key features of the women's movement is to push for social change in gender relations and men's behaviour. At one level this social change can be seen at work through the mainstreaming of gender equality policy. Nevertheless, as part of the complex set of processes and social relations that makes up the so called 'backlash', the mainstreaming of gender equality can have unintended consequences that, perversely, can contribute to this 'backlash'. In opening up areas to focus on for social change, sites of contention are created at the same time. This is not, in the main and in general, a negative, as it instigates dialogue, critique and ultimately, development. Nevertheless, some sites that are opened up for analysis and change attract disproportionate resistance and hostility. In this sense, feminism, feminist analyses of men's violence towards women, and the reconceptualisation of this social problem into that of 'domestic violence', constitutes one of these sites.

It is unsurprising that the Home Office website does not mention feminism, however it is more surprising that neither Women's Aid Federation England, nor Respect publish themselves as being feminist or profeminist organisations. Clearly Respect's definitions on violence are underpinned by feminist theory and feminist thinking, and the Women's Aid website is saturated with feminist language, feminist references, and feminist research. Women's Aid England advertise themselves as "the key national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children." (Women's Aid Federation England 2009) Yet there is no explicit mention of their feminist ethos. This is in contrast to, for example, Rape Crisis England and Wales, who exist to support local Rape Crisis Centres, and work to eliminate all forms of sexual violence. Rape Crisis state very clearly on their website that they "are a

feminist organisation". All three of these institutions and organisations are talking about violence against women, yet only one is confident enough to publicly incorporate 'feminism' into its ethos.

Looking more closely at Women's Aid, there are marked differences across the England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and (Southern) Ireland websites. Beginning with Ireland and Wales, both websites state clearly on their home pages that they are feminist organisations. Women's Aid Ireland under its mission statement says the following:

Women's Aid is a feminist, political and campaigning organisation committed to the elimination of violence and abuse of women through effecting political, cultural and social change. (Women's Aid, Ireland 2009)

And Welsh Women's Aid, on a quote by Paula Hardy, chief Executive:

The logo reflects our key principles, that we are a feminist organisation, run by women for women (Welsh Women's Aid 2009)

Scottish Women's Aid, and Women's Aid Federations Northern Ireland and England, do not appear to state anywhere on their websites that they are feminist organisations. Nevertheless, on their 'about us' pages the Scottish mission statement states the following:

Scottish Women's Aid works to end violence against women by tackling its root cause, which is gender inequality. (Scottish Women's Aid 2009)

Whilst the Northern Ireland page states that they are:

always mindful that victims of domestic violence are a direct result of the general position of women in our society.

And Women's Aid Federation England say the following on their 'what we believe' page:

Domestic violence is a violation of women and children's human rights. It's the result of an abuse of power and control, and is rooted in the historical status of women in the family and in society (Women's Aid 2009)

At first glance, it may appear unimportant that England, Scotland and Northern Ireland choose not to mention feminism. On the flip side of this, Welsh Women's Aid and Women's Aid Ireland, do choose to state their organisations as feminist. England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, on their

accompanying website texts belie this choice, however. By using statements that are clearly feminist in their origination, regarding women's historical oppression through men's dominance, suggests strongly that they are feminist organisations. It would appear that women's organisations dealing with violence against women have had to come up with new strategies and ways of showing their feminist ethos, without actually referring to the word 'feminist'.

The tensions lay in 'feminist as political'. It is my personal experience as a member and activist of Rape Crisis England and Wales, that the decision to publicise Rape Crisis England and Wales as a feminist organisation was a political one. In part, this decision to state publicly that the organisation is feminist, relates to activism and the desire to retain the politics that initiated the women's movement. To many activist women, being 'feminist' is a political statement – political in the sense that 'feminist' is saturated with meaning, ideas, beliefs and strategies to further the struggle in alleviating women's oppression. Although the ideologies associated with feminism are not unified, retaining this political status is important for many women as it affirms feminism as a social movement, and motivates women in a negative neoliberal climate that effectively suppresses much activism around women's rights. Indeed, as chapter six discussed, the mainstreaming of activists into standardised working practices, and thus, ruling relations, can often dilute a movement's political edge. This is especially true of groups who transfer themselves to charity statuses. As chapter four outlined, charity law imposes strict regulations on political campaigning. Therefore, for organisations holding charity status, any political (in its widest sense) campaigning must be disguised as educational awareness.

It is significant that similar strategies to avoid using the term feminism also operate at a more local level. For example, at a women-only Violence Against Women seminar day I attended, a well known feminist academic and activist discussed the tactical methods she used herself when liaising with other professionals and institutions. She related, that she employed different arguments according to the situation and the people she was speaking with. To her, pragmatism was key to opening doors, securing communication and obtaining action. Therefore, in her experience, calling herself an 'expert' on

violence against women, rather than a radical feminist, tended to get things moving.

In the previous chapter, feminism as an ideological code, identified 'political' as one of the conceptual component parts contained within it. The act of some obviously feminist organisations not stating publicly their feminist ethos, indicates that feminism as an ideological code socially organises how they write about and express violence against women. Their counter discourse of resistance to this can clearly be found in the accompanying texts where there is dissonance between the ways in which they describe their organisation, which is gender-specific; the gender-neutral language they use to define 'domestic violence'; and the feminist language they go on to use when describing what 'domestic violence' actually is. It is also important to note that although 'political' constitutes a component part within the feminist code, its status is ambiguous. Both Women's Aid Federation and Rape Crisis England and Wales are feminist organisations, at least in their ethos and origination, and both hold charity status. In this sense, the question arises as to whether their decision on whether or not to publicly state their feminist criteria has an impact on their political activism, around violence against women. In what ways might this decision impact on, or constrain the type of political activity they engage in? And, does the conscious act of organisations publicly stating, or avoiding, their feminist criteria denote another key element in the regulating and mainstreaming of activism?

The next part in this section explores this phenomenon precisely, through examining and critiquing a professional practice based event I attended.

### ***8.3.2 De-Gendering 'Domestic Violence' and Disseminating as 'Expert Knowledge'***

In 2009 I attended a two day training session that was devised to train professionals to deliver 'domestic abuse' awareness workshops to other professionals. The region in which this is run, hold these 'domestic abuse' awareness courses for all professionals who might encounter 'domestic violence'. The training centre is funded by the local council, and its courses are usually held twice per month, and delivered to around fourteen attendees,

which equates to more than 300 people each year. The training is free to all professionals working in agencies such as housing, health, the criminal justice system and so on, and is open to both the statutory and voluntary sectors. The criteria for this particular training was to have attended an awareness course and another related course within the past two years. On this particular course there were seventeen attendees, of which fourteen were women, and three were men. The three facilitators were also women.

During the first day of training, the facilitators informed us that they had restructured their 'basic awareness' course, and would use the first day to deliver the revised course, and the second day would be organised in such a way as to practice delivering the course ourselves. The restructured course rested on 'the processes of abuse'. These processes were framed in Biderman's (1957) article on prisoners of war. Biderman developed eight strategic principles that he saw in the stages of brainwashing, and which were used to make prisoners compliant:

1. Isolation
2. Monopolization of perception
3. Induced Debilitation; Exhaustion
4. Threats
5. Occasional Indulgences
6. Demonstrating "omnipotence and "Omniscience"
7. Degradation
8. Enforcing Trivial Demands (Biderman 1957:619)

Importantly, the strategies used for obtaining compliance from the soldiers must also be done with their 'consent'. These principles were subsequently reprinted and utilised by Diana Russell in her book *Rape in Marriage* (1982/1990), in order to explain how emotional abuse is akin to brainwashing, and the tactics used to attain this. What the training course in question has done, is to take these eight stages of compliance and transfer them into the 'eight stages of grooming', as a framework to hang 'domestic abuse' on. Whilst it is clear to see why these principles are useful, it is not my intention to discuss the merits of this framework here, but rather to explore how it is used to justify a gender-neutral discourse, de-contextualise and de-politicise 'domestic violence', and what the potential impacts of this might be.

The eight stages of grooming are referred to as a *process* by which anyone can make another compliant. When people in the course talked about

'violence', the facilitators argued that 'violence' was not what they were there to discuss, as it could not cover the range of abuses that can occur within 'domestic abuse', and thus continually brought the discussion back to the *process* used to gain compliance. By using this *process*, gender-neutrality is easily achieved, and original feminist analyses can be simply avoided or forgotten. There are a number of problems with this strategy. Following on from the previous section and the dissonance between gender-neutral definitions and gender-specific texts, the facilitators continued, throughout the day to give examples of the eight stages of grooming by using stories about women they had previously worked with. Their definition of violence centred around physical harm, and is therefore extremely narrow in its remit. The *process* of domestic abuse is taken out of its social context of men and women's relations in the wider sense, and the gendered system more generally. In turn, this leads to looking at abuse as a process occurring in isolation, or, in effect, separating it from other connected and interconnected social relations that operate both privately and publicly. Moreover, what it also does, is to render the process of abuse into something individual or pathological – a framework that feminists have struggled to critique and counter for many, many years.

The whole of the first day made me extremely uncomfortable and frustrated, and I endeavoured to formulate a series of questions that would come across as diplomatic and un-challenging. Eventually, I expressed my challenge in the framework of confusion. I asked why we were reverting to gender-neutral education/awareness when statistics suggest that 'domestic violence' is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men towards women. Didn't this situation suggest that despite men being the minority, the fact that institutions and professionals addressed this by de-gendering 'domestic violence' demonstrated and reproduced the social power imbalance that men held in wider society? I was informed that we did not know the true extent of male victim abuse, as society prevented men from reporting on this. To which I replied, that feminist analyses were well able to explain the barriers that men might face in coming forward, and that men's support services could learn much from how women had developed their support services. I was, to all



intents and purposes, ignored, the questions were left unanswered and feminism was not mentioned again.

On speaking with a feminist woman after the training, she informed me that she would train professionals in the way that was being demanded, but in her head, whenever 'domestic abuse' was talked about, she would be thinking "violence against women". The woman's reasoning for this was that if she could "get through" to men in this way, then the dissonance seemed worthwhile. The woman also stated that she was frustrated and angry about feminism's negative reputation, but that in public she keeps this, along with her own feminist values to herself. Again, this is a good example of the strategies that feminist women learn to use in order not to alienate others, or indeed to put one's career at risk. I think it very unlikely that I will be amongst those short listed to deliver this training in the future.

This event constitutes a perfect example of how the discourses of gender symmetry and gender-neutrality are taken up institutionally and then acted upon, reinforced and disseminated into the wider community. This example showed how 'domestic violence', in line with gender-neutrality and symmetry, has been reconceptualised into 'domestic abuse', in order to explicate a *process* that is applicable to both men and women. This practice not only neutralises feminism, but extracts 'domestic abuse' from the political and social contexts in which it occurs. My gentle questioning of this elicited hostility and scorn from some members of the group, puzzlement from others, and what can only be described as avoidance from the facilitators. The facilitators insistence that 'domestic abuse' awareness be delivered in a gender-neutral way amounts to a powerful denial of the feminist struggle to expose this form of men's violence in the first place, and actively supports resistance towards violence against women and feminism in general.

Moreover, what it also does, is to create a space that allows men to occupy specifically for themselves. The facilitators were explicit in informing the three men in the group that not enough men were available to deliver this type of training, and they wanted to encourage more men to become involved. On the one hand, this type of informal recruitment has its advantages, as the political will of men is essential for social change. On the other hand, the discriminatory act of informal recruiting of men, along with the

de-politicising and de-contextualising of violence against women, means that they are also being handed a disproportionate amount of social power, that reproduces the wider gendered order.

In short, the women facilitators in this training can be seen to be producing 'expert knowledge', and thus the men, along with the women from this training will also be viewed as 'experts', and will continue to reproduce this knowledge. However, their personal politics are rendered irrelevant, and there is a risk that their hostility towards feminism, or at least certain forms of feminism will be disseminated amongst many other professionals and institutions. It is worth bearing in mind, that directly, and indirectly, this course will impact across multiple sites, and with more than 300 professionals a year being educated directly on the 'basic awareness' course, their capacity for further disseminating this knowledge amongst those they come into contact with is immeasurable.

The next section explores further how feminism is masked and/or subsumed at the level of campaigns, organisations and individuals.

### ***8.3.3 Subsuming Feminism: Campaigns and Men's Group-Work Programmes***

This last section is based on the second half of the interview questions, where I asked participants to talk about their everyday work through a series of questions. Before I began I introduced the questions in the following way: "This next section is about your everyday work, and when you answer these questions can you keep in mind things like feminist protocol, funding, employment, employment criteria, record keeping and so on." From the participants' responses to these questions, I draw out data that reveals the complexities between feminism as an ideological code, and the way it organises how violence is talked about and disseminated within the men's programmes themselves.

Most participants recognised that feminist analyses of 'domestic violence' underpinned rationales, both for the campaigns and the men's group-work programmes. However, for most participants there was no explicit acknowledgement of this connection, as Billy points out:

Er, (2) It's not carved in stone anywhere, erm, I think it, it comes through because, of it, for **me** because of where I've been. It, it comes out. I, I think (3) if someone, (2) saw me working, or, they'd say, "yeah, that's, that's basically, that's, that's got feminist, it's informed by feminism certainly." Certainly in terms or attitude **around** violence towards women and children, er, and the way we challenge (2) erm, (4) I was going to say, old assumptions, that's all quite current assumptions, around, (1.5) assumptions, that men **carry** around **ownership** of women, around power over women, around women's role in society and, and in, in the home. All those things are quite, erm (1.5), robustly challenged. (Billy:22)

Billy describes the framework used in organisation 'C' for working with men, which is clearly influenced by 'radical feminist' tenets. Significantly, Billy has to actively *think* about whether feminism underpins the group-work programmes, and brings in an unnamed other to act as objective onlooker, before he can then confirm that feminism does inform the men's programmes. This suggests that feminism is not talked about within this particular organisation, or at least not in the everyday situations that involve Billy.

Oliver worked in campaign 'J', and, as discussed in the previous chapter, was unfamiliar about the different forms of feminism. Oliver had asked me about the women's movement and feminism, and I had given him a potted history regarding the seven tenets of the women's movement, and how I saw radical feminism. He reproduces and utilises this in following extract:

Oh absolutely, yeah! I mean I think that from what you've said about the, you know the seven tenets of, of radical feminism, I mean I said I didn't think that sounds that radical - it seems like those would be fundamental, I think, to whatever... Yeah. (Oliver:24)

Apparently it was not difficult for Oliver to understand and accommodate this ideology, and incorporate it into the campaign's ethos. However, Oliver's remarks suggests that feminism is not talked about within the campaign.

The funding for organisation 'B', where Alex works, comes directly from Women's Aid, and the work he does is coordinated with other services that are provided to women:

That means that our ethos is, is likely to be feminist, because of their perspective on the way that we should do the work. (3) So I, I might, I might have a, I, I don't have a, a

different view about the work from, from them, but the way we do the work isn't, isn't determined by me alone. It's determined by the people that we're working with and how they know we should be doing the work. I think it's difficult for a man to state that (2) you follow a f,f, a feminist perspective, but I think that the work that we do, does to that way of thinking. (Alex 2:5)

For Alex, there is no question about whether the organisation he works for is feminist. It is feminist because of its connection with Women's Aid, whom they work very closely with, and who oversee the operation and style of group-work programmes. Alex also adds that the group-work is 'people-centered', in order to lend support to the appearance that he himself is not dictatorial, but rather that decisions around the operation of group-work is democratic. What is interesting about Alex's extract is that he, as a man, is not comfortable with men claiming they are feminists, or working to feminist frameworks; he would rather defer judgment of the criteria for this to other feminist women<sup>2</sup>. For Alex then, feminism clearly organises the operation of 'domestic violence' intervention. Nevertheless, it appears that the hiding of feminism within the group-work still happens, but through more complex processes. It occurs within a context of simultaneous assumption of feminism, as well as a nervousness, or apprehension, in claiming to be feminist. He is aware of his maleness, of the social relations between men and women and, he is also aware of feminism as a recourse to women's oppression.

This complexity is also demonstrated by other participants. Sam, who works in organisation 'A', trains other individuals and agencies to work with violent men. Sam is very knowledgeable about feminism, he engages with it in his every day life, and allies himself most closely with radical feminism. I have asked him about his training of others and whether he employs any feminist protocol, and he responds as follows:

So we look at theories where-those theories that kind of claim that men's violence against women is because they had a, err, they were abused as children; or because they saw dad hit mum; erm, or because of their alcohol use; or

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<sup>2</sup> Attitudes and thinking around whether men could be feminists came through in half of the interviews, which demonstrated an awareness of the debate around whether men could be feminists, or whether profeminist was a more apt concept. However, lack of space constrains any further discussion of this.

because of their drug use; or because of stress; or because of anger management; or because they had a poor relationship with mum. And err, you know so we go through all those theories with, with the delegates on the training, you know towards bringing them to the **theory** that **we** believe and that we would like them to kind of work **by**. Or obviously it's their choice whether they do, which is that, you know men's violence against women, erm, is rooted in their beliefs err of **rights** over women, which is socially em-inbuilt, embedded, and supported, erm, err for the, for the aim of power and control. Erm, which we promote as a feminist theory. Erm, err, but we don't promote it as **radical**, erm we don't go into different feminist thinking, we cl-you know, but we promote it as feminist thought. (Sam 2:39/40)

This is an interesting extract. Sam, in his training, dispels many of the individual or pathological explanations for violence against women, and actively works through some of the prevalent discourses of resistance towards conveying a feminist analyses of 'domestic violence'. On the one hand, Sam works with other people in a 'training the trainers' capacity, is not afraid to use the term feminist, and thus can be seen to be disseminating and furthering the goals of the women's movement. On the other hand, I would suggest that he is clearly outlining radical feminist tenets but consciously hides this from those he trains, and promotes it as general feminist thought. This strategy, at one level, supports work done by Edley & Wetherell (2001). By not referring to 'radical' feminism, it takes into account and attempts to overcome men's negative constructions of feminism and feminists. This is a pragmatic choice, much like the woman academic and activist mentioned in the previous section. Sam is still promoting radical feminist tenets, but as *general feminism*, and it is possible that the people he trains will misunderstand and mistake this form of feminism as liberal feminism, which is tolerated far more easily. Therefore, although Sam identifies strongly with radical profeminism and incorporates it at a practioner level, he nevertheless demonstrates one of the complex processes that can mask radical feminism.

Lewis, who works in campaign 'K', complicates feminism and it's organisation of 'domestic violence' even further, by bringing into play the concept of human rights:

So yes I have been very well exposed to this by my family, p-people who are very dear to me who I respect the opinions

of. Erm, and I have friends who I think would class themselves as radical feminists, erm, both straight and gay. Erm (2) now in terms of the influence of that on the campaign, I am sure that, err, account will be taken of feminist, erm, issues, within it. Erm, and that type of issue will be-come up in debate, but we would tend not to **label** it as feminist, erm because of the organisation is concerned with **human** rights, therefore the whole-one of the whole aims is to try to de-stereotype, erm, people into mm-feminine/masculine **etc.**, so it would be very much the approach-very much that this person is a human, erm and any form of inequality would be, erm (1.5) [frowned upon. (Lewis:12)

One point of note here is that Lewis brought up the term 'radical feminist' himself. Nevertheless, Lewis says that the campaign would not '**label**' itself as feminist. He also stresses the word 'label' in order to separate feminism from the underlying ethos that drives the campaign, which is human rights. The process of actively subsuming feminism is done by arguing that men and women are people and any inequalities are unacceptable. What this does, however is avoid talking about real power relations between men and women, and thus the forces that drive feminist activism. To compound this further, the 'human rights' concept is drawn upon as a reason for deconstructing masculine and feminine gender stereotypes; but the deconstructing of gender is central to feminism, especially radical forms of feminism. Thus, one of the key facets of feminism is effectively 'appropriated' by the human rights concept.

The next extract from Lewis exemplifies how the process of reasoned argument, allows people to neatly sidestep feminism:

C Except the campaign **does** say it's [about  
L [Yeah, that caused a **big** debate. Erm, yeah, because a-wh-yy when the, when the debate first-when the **campaign** first started, erm, I don't know, four – what are we, 2006? – four, five years ago? The, the real **problem** that people had to get their heads round was "why are we campaigning for violence against women? Why aren't we campaigning ag-for violence against humans?" Erm, the reason **why** (2) it was (3) agreed to, was one: because 52% of humans happen to be female, therefore we are campaigning for females ah-sor-for humans who happen to be female as well; and the second aspect of it was that there were certain types of violence which were committed on women which weren't typically committed on males: domestic violence, typically rape etc., things like this,

violence against men **tend** to be of a different type.  
(Lewis:12)

Drawing on democracy and the democratic nature of the campaign, statistics are utilised – 52% of humans are women - to justify why a campaign regarding violence against women is acceptable to its members. This debate lists out what feminists have struggled to expose regarding violence against women, i.e., ‘domestic violence’ and rape, but still manages to keep these social problems within a ‘human right’s discourse. As discussed in the previous chapter, feminism as an ideological code also contains the concept of ‘human rights’, however in this situation ‘human rights’ appears to conflict with feminism. Human rights as a component part of feminism, grows in significance and, in a series of acrobatic twists, swallows up feminism.

Significantly, Smith (1999) analyses the function of ‘political correctness’ and ‘human rights’ as ideological codes, and the way in which these codes translate into ‘public discourses’. Once we learn how to ‘read’ these codes we can become, what she calls, ‘institutionally captured’ by them. As a researcher, I do not stand outside of this phenomenon; however, the point is to ‘unpack’ feminism as a code. This must include feminism in general, along with *all* its concepts identified up to this point. Returning to Lewis’ account, ‘human rights’ as an ‘ideological code’, is given a high authority in public discourse because it is also *politically correct*, which, as stated, is also another ideological code and adds to an already complex network of discourses and counter discourses. As such, Lewis’ extracts exemplify highly complex procedures, and demonstrate how the ideological codes of ‘politically correct’ and ‘human rights’ can compliment each other and upgrade the rhetorical value of a given dilemma. What these extracts also show, are conflicting codes actively at work.

In this last section, I have drawn out evidence that suggests most of the participants are campaigning and delivering programmes from a ‘radical feminist’ framework – particularly in relation to patriarchal power. Yet, most of the participants neglect the use of the term feminism in their everyday work. The participants’ relationship with feminism ranges from assuming feminist frameworks and analyses of ‘domestic violence’ but not specifying this, to more complicated relationships. For example, the strategies Sam uses for training on

'domestic violence' allow him to arrive at feminist analyses of 'domestic violence' with trainees. However, despite being open about feminism in general, he simultaneously masks radical feminism, which points to feminism not only regulating how 'domestic violence' is talked about, but also points to feminism as an ideological code. At another level, Lewis has demonstrated further complexities on the use of ideological codes, that impact directly on the members of the campaign he worked in. In as much as ideological codes have caused debates within the campaign, this illustrates that the codes, and the discourses contained within them, can be contradictory and constraining. Moreover, ideological codes can be used in complex ways in order to counter feminist ideology, and effectively subsume it, thus acting as an additional discourse of resistance that contributes to the 'backlash' or opposition towards feminism.

## **8.4 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at how gender-neutral discourses of 'domestic violence' have gained currency in public discourse, how they have provided a new rhetoric from which to draw upon, and how they can work to shape consciousness. It has also shown how it is possible to situate and analyse the development of gender-neutral discourses of 'domestic violence' within a context of 'backlash', or opposition, towards feminist analyses of violence against women. This opposition towards feminist analyses of violence against women, can also be situated within the wider context of resistance towards feminism, where it constitutes an important factor in a complex network of resistance, counter resistance, and counter-counter resistance. The symmetry discourse of 'domestic violence' assists the gender-neutrality that is now found in definitions at institutional levels. Together, these two factors play a significant role in helping to neutralise feminism. The website data from key institutions, along with data from events and participants, demonstrates how these counter discourses and counter-counter discourses are institutionally endorsed and then taken up and activated by professionals, and by the general public. The highly complex ways in which discourses of resistance are used have been partially unpacked in this chapter, and have uncovered some of the techniques and strategies that are used to subsume feminism, or



at least avoid using the term. Following on from the previous chapter on how participants understood feminism, it would seem that many of the men's programmes operate from a 'radical feminist' philosophy, regarding patriarchal power and control, yet distance themselves not only from 'radical feminism', but often from feminism in the more general sense.

This chapter has also revealed how other ideological codes, such as 'human rights', carry an authority that works to downgrade feminism. Through an intricate set of processes, 'human rights', although a component part of feminism, manages to grow in significance and incorporate feminism, such that feminism, again is hidden and/or subsumed. When feminism is analysed in this context, other questions arise regarding the social power that men in these campaigns and organisations hold. The men in these organisations and campaigns are part of a wider net of social relations that produces 'expert' knowledge. However, there is a danger that this 'expert' knowledge might contribute to the incorporation of violence against women into the ruling relations, within which feminist 'work' is controlled, regulated, and subsumed.

In the sense that discourses of 'domestic violence' have evolved from feminist analysis, feminism as an ideological code can be seen as a social organiser of 'domestic violence'. Firstly, through analyses of violence against women and the subsequent separation and reconceptualisation into 'domestic violence', which work to incorporate men's violences into the relations of ruling. Secondly, the official gender-neutral definitions are offset by the intrinsic feminist analyses that are used to support the prevalence of 'domestic violence'. This helps to shape how 'domestic violence' is talked about in the 'domestic violence' sector: how it is represented by the organisations and campaigns involved in the sector; how it is talked about by individuals within these organisations and campaigns, and how it is talked about in the general public. Thirdly, the discourses of 'backlash' and resistance towards feminism and feminist analyses of 'domestic violence' result in further discourses of resistance from (pro)feminists. Within this space of counter discourse, the rhetoric of debate is produced at different levels and from varying institutions. Fourthly, these highly complex processes work as a constant generator and provide the available vocabulary, concepts, categories and discourses with which to think, talk and write about 'domestic violence' (Smith 1999).

The next chapter departs somewhat from the preceding chapters, and explores what can be described more accurately as second order data. In order to situate men who work in violence intervention within the wider context of feminist goals, it focuses on men's politics around men and how this relates to organisations both within and outside of the domestic violence sector. It looks specifically at participants' accounts of homosocial groups, including resistance to, and/or rejection of men-only groups, and also their desire for, and membership of, particular types of men-only groups.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **HOMOSOCIALITY AND MASCULINITY**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores participants' stories around masculinity and male practices with other men to assess how participants' involvement and knowledge regarding 'domestic violence' and gendered social relations was applied at a more personal level, and in relation to organisations within the 'domestic violence' sector. To do this, it examines throughout, participants' desire to share emotionality with other men. Prominent themes that emerged were rejections and critique of some types of homosocial groups, especially those associated with sport or the pub. Some of the participants also expressed their desire for men-only groups where they could create and share intimate relationships that were similar to those that women shared. The chapter begins with an overview of homosociality (Lipman-Blumen 1976) as a framework to analyse men's desire for intimate relationships with other men. Using this framework, it looks at women in all-male spaces, and then examines participants' critiques of homosocial spaces such as the pub. This is followed by exploring participants' desires around friendship and intimacy, and goes on to analyse these desires through their experiences with men-only groups, paying particular attention to mythopoetic groups. Finally it situates men-only groups in the context of a key organisation within the 'domestic violence' section, and finishes with a discussion.

#### **9.2 Homosocial Logic**

The desire for homosocial relations is part of a gender pattern that cannot be understood outside of its relationship to women and the wider gender system, and is contingent with other social divisions such as race, class, (dis)ability, religion and so on (Sedgwick 1985). Lipman-Blumen (1976), one of the first scholars to utilise the term 'homosocial' as a tool for analysing gender relations, defines it as follows:

the seeking, enjoyment, and/or preference for the company of the same sex. It is distinguished from “homosexual” in that it does not *necessarily* involve (although it may under certain circumstances) an explicitly erotic sexual interaction between members of the same sex. (Ibid:p16)

In order to call a set of social relations or a group homosocial, a number of factors should be present. All the members should *usually* be of the same sex, and members of the same sex should be the most important significant others in order to develop or maintain attitudes, politics and value systems (Meuser 2004:396). Other factors include ‘competition’, which is integral to supporting hegemonic masculinity. Competition can take many forms, but what is also important is the objectification of women and the boasting of sexual exploits (Bird 1996). In terms of how men talk and perform in homosocial groups, Kiesling (2005) identified four cultural discourses of masculinity that homosocial practices respond to and recreate:

- Gender difference discourse
- Heterosexism discourse
- Dominance discourse
- Male solidarity discourse (ibid:699)

For example, Kiesling suggests that transgressing an area of public taboo, such as talking explicitly about sex in ways that objectify women, comprises all four discourses, and also constitutes an important social practice that helps to (re)produce hegemonic heterosexual desire (ibid). These four discourses are useful tools, in that they aid identification of the more obvious aspects of homosociality, but they are also helpful in locating the more subtle enactments of hegemonic masculinity, especially in groups that might at first glance appear to be non-homosocial.

Exclusive groups of men need not always be seen as homosocial groups if women and their politics are there at a symbolic level (Meuser 2004). Some profeminist groups associated with consciousness raising, for example, would not constitute a homosocial group if their discourse centred around women’s political and social expectations. In terms of consciousness-raising profeminist men and anti-sexist men can meet together in order to support the women’s movement and to change their male supremacist consciousness.

Nevertheless, the criteria for whether or not groups are viewed as profeminist/anti-sexist or homosocial can be problematic (Messner 1997). Indeed there has been a general feeling amongst women and women's organisations that men's exclusive groups should be viewed with scepticism. These doubts are also echoed by masculinity theorists (Messner 1997, Pease 2000/2008). Pease (2000) points out the danger in men's consciousness raising groups:

collusion against women, misdirecting anger towards women, avoiding challenging other men's sexism and containing the experience within the group. (ibid 2000:41)

Pease (2008) includes himself here, and admits to witnessing men's "sexist and violence-supportive behaviours" in his own involvement with men's groups and states: "Some of these acts I have challenged and some to my regret I have not." (ibid).

It is not always necessary for members of homosocial groups to be of the same sex, for example, the presence of women can be incorporated into male groups if the women are viewed as 'one of the boys':

That is, if the woman adapts to the symbolic order of the male majority and their patterns of communication and interaction. (Meuser 2004:396)

Of course, it could be argued that the orthodox symbolic order, or wider gender system, is male by default and thus not difficult for many women to achieve. However, any deviation from this default is difficult and challenging, but is arguably what profeminist groups should have as their aims. The next section looks at two incidents that illustrate this particular phenomenon of women as 'one of the boys'.

### **9.3 Homosocial Spaces: Conduct and Emotionality**

As discussed, it is not always necessary for members of homosocial groups to be of the same sex, and this section looks at two accounts from participants concerning the social relations between men and women in predominantly male spaces. In the first case the woman is not accepted into the group, in the other the woman achieves the status of 'one of the boys'.

### **9.3.1 Honorary Men and Disruptive Women**

The first account, from Matthew, centres around the power of a particular group, of men who play football with each other once a week. This arrangement has been ongoing for more than ten years. Matthew is involved in a voluntary campaign to stop violence against women, but the football is separate from the campaign. The campaign's primary focus is on men and investigates creative ways in which to engage them. Matthew has first related a story about the exclusion of a man from the weekly football sessions by the group, and then immediately goes on to give an account of another exclusion:

M Another time, erm, which was several, probably six or seven years ago, a woman was playing, started to play with us for three or four weeks, and the 'group consensus' decided that she shouldn't be allowed to play...

C Oh right.

M Erm, and I was one of her main erm supporters in that particular, but she didn't want to really kick up about it and say err you have three-two or three of us say "right we're not gonna play unless you let her play." She just said "Ahw, that's it let it go." (Matthew:11)

Matthew gives no particular reasons for the group's decision to exclude the woman, he merely frames it within the context of 'group consensus'. However, he also points out that he was one of her "main supporters", and indicates that one or two more men would also support her by withdrawing their membership from the group, indicating that the decision was not a full group consensus. As far as Matthew is concerned, the woman did not want to cause trouble and conceded to the exclusion, but Matthew did not indicate any further discussions had taken place between the group. If the symbolic order is, by default male, then through the non-acceptance of women this group retained its hegemonic, homosocial status. By exercising the group's male dominance as a majority, asserting gender difference, and by garnering male solidarity, the gender logic of wider social relations have been observed.

The next account comes from Michael, who had completed the men's group-work programme in a community-based project, and had progressed to co-facilitating group-work. Michael brought the woman co-facilitator into a conversation whilst he was explaining how inside the group 'respect' for

women was encouraged. However, Michael admitted that was not always continued outside of the group, for example in the men's breaks:

We've got, we've got to show respect to women at all times. That even means when we're stood together. But we have a joke and that, you know, we have a laugh. And we still (2) like women, and we'll still say: "nice tits" and stuff, (3) we're just blokes, (1.5) but we're blokes with a different (3) it's alright to be a, it's alright to be a bloke. But we're not disrespectful. And if there were any women around we wouldn't be saying owt like that. It never gets, sort of, rude, when [woman's name] is there. (3) She's like us er, (1.5) she's us 'honorary man' - as a woman, is [name]. She's one of us! (Michael:32)

There are many aspects to be drawn from this extract. Firstly, the woman co-facilitator, in order to be accepted, and being the only woman in the group, is transformed into an "honorary man". This suggests that the men work to control the homosocial context of their group. The fact that the woman cannot be seen as 'a woman' also suggests that despite their group-work's subject focus, the men's attitudes towards women have not changed in any substantial way. From her de-valued position as woman, Michael elevates her to 'honorary man'. Michael's insistence that men: "show respect to women at all times, even when [they] are stood together" appears to be contradictory, as it is only in women's presence that this is shown. There are a number of interpretations possible here. It could be that sexist attitudes have not changed, but are merely withheld in women's company; or that what constitutes sexism is not fully understood. This may be a problem with the programme itself, or it may be related to an attempt to retain a sense of homosociality within the group. At a different level, it is also possible that Michael is trying to demonstrate his profeminist self through using a 'level' of honesty that implicates his sexism.

Focusing on the humour that the sexist language ("nice tits") is couched in is also a key factor in maintaining sexism, and for some feminists constitutes sexual harassment (see Kehily & Nayak 1997, Robinson 2005). Moreover, this 'break time' chat within men's group-work programmes is recognised as a problematic area (Wilson 1996). Break-time chats can resemble other homosocial groups, and thus may also (re)produce and reinforce male heterosexual, sexist, attitudes. The problem of colluding with men's violences

from agencies, group-work programmes, and programme facilitators (Hearn 1998a, Wilson 1996) is of considerable concern. The different forms of social support for men supporting other men, such as friends, family, group-work members, are also subject to critique (Hearn 1998a). What is important, is that wider gender patterns can be (re)produced in the co-facilitated groups, and in order to avoid this, groups must ensure they are configured along profeminist lines.

The issue of women in male spaces was discussed further in the context of desire for men only groups. Joe describes the current situation in community based perpetrator groups:

in the UK generally groups that work with men would go down a co-facilitating model, gendered co-facilitated work you'd work 'man and woman', and I'm OK with that, I don't have any difficulty with that whatsoever. I think probably that's fine, I am generally for engaging with one another as, as, as *people* erm rather than erm (4) so in other words I think that basically work that you might do with men in a room benefits usually from *hearing* women's voice. (Joe:20)

Joe then brings in the "British context" of how men's programmes have developed, and brings in the issue of women's trust:

now I think that probably women erm have the right to be **sceptical** erm, that men may give away some of this (2) business basically - go into a closed room and, and talk, and really-but there is also a **historical** assumption that we-that we really can't be trusted and. And I think, in a pragmatic nature, there are times when working in men's programmes where men and men can work very effectively and there are times when, you know, when women **absolutely** need to be there. (Joe:20)

Notably, Joe does not other himself or distance himself from the men he works with concerning women's trust. These two extracts form part of a complex, and well constructed analysis, nevertheless they also act as a qualifying rhetorical device for setting up what comes next:

There are some, there are probably some elements that basically men need to be trusted to get on with. Erm and err **generally** it's, err, you know, there are three facilitators and in this one basically we ask erm (2) [woman's name], say, that she doesn't participate routinely in this because we're focused on this as men and we think we'll be more honest and be here, and then we go back in to do the work. (Joe:21)



On the first few readings I assumed that the three facilitators would be two men and one woman, and would be interchangeable dependent on the subject being worked on in the group. I also assumed that this was an 'ideal' situation that he envisaged for future men's group-work. However, on closer reading, it is not clear whether this situation is already in place. Notwithstanding, what emerges from this extract is the idea that men are more honest when women are not present, and a similar notion of women inhibiting men-only groups was raised by Billy on two separate occasions.

For Billy, women change the internal dynamics of men's groups. The first occasion was in the context of men's programmes, where he believes co-facilitation demonstrate healthy relationships between men and women:

**Partly** because (3) myself and my co-facilitators **model** a way of relating, (2) so we can see how we relate to each other. It's a model of **hopefully** respect, respectful relating, err, which err, men, some men find, find sort of quite strange. And so I think, I think they learn a lot from that basis, just how we relate. (Billy:23)

However, Billy also tries to explain the benefits of men-only facilitation. He searches for the right words to articulate this, and instead provides an example:

An **example** of what, to, to describe, to explain that further, erm, I know (2) running a group once when I ran it on my own, and (1.5) I said, you know, "what's this like, how is, how is this different?" and the guys, one of them came back and said "It's **like**, it's as though we haven't got the snitch in the room anymore!" So, there's a sense that (3) the woman facilitator is there representing women, and is going back and telling women what, what these guys are like.

C Oh right.

B Erm, (3) that, that was his take on it. Erm, I can understand what he meant. And there's a sense that, I mean, that, that, one of the reasons was, it's, it's, it's essential we have a woman, woman in the room. Is, I mean, what the Australians and the New Zealanders are, are challenging is, err, err, if we **don't**, then all men will collude erm with the men. (2) Erm, (2) that's possibly true on a, on err, subtle levels. We've worked very hard not to do that, but it's possibly true. I wouldn't say it's definitely true. And I think there's a strong argument for having, for having two **male** facilitators because there's some stuff that men will

**just** will not talk about in front of women. (3) Or find it **very, very, very** hard to talk about in front of women. (Billy:24)

In the above extract, women are seen as 'spies' by some of the men and inhibit men's talk. Billy sympathises with these sentiments and brings in an international perspective to support his belief that two men facilitating a group can work just as well to overcome men's collusion. Whilst Billy does not articulate his argument in the same way as Joe, they remain similar. Billy is happy for co-facilitated groups, but also believes there is a place for men-only groups.

The second occasion, was in the wider more general sense of men's groups:

B And a big thing, and it's, it's a horrible thing to say, but it's true to say, if you get a group of men-put ten men together and one woman it would be so different if it there was ten men and no women. The whole-every dynamic will be different, everything changes as soon as a woman appears. Through, through no fault of the woman's, it's just what men do.

C So men censor themselves?

B They censor themselves, they start competing, they, we do all sorts of things. We just got through the whole bloody (laughs) comic, tragic, gamut of, (3) if I'm, if I'm being generous - darkness around women. (stutters) All sorts of things. If you take women out of the equation men stop doing that. (Billy:32)

Like Joe, Billy holds a complex analysis of men and women's social relations. However, although both men are in agreement that there are certain things, that men cannot talk about in front of women, both have effectively avoided giving me any indication of what these topics of conversation might be. Billy talks of a "darkness around women", but I have not questioned him further on this. It is possible that Billy is referring to perceptions or attitudes towards women that they feel ashamed or embarrassed about. Perhaps the feelings they have are painful, unacceptable or difficult to acknowledge. Or perhaps they feel that women would find it difficult to hear their conversations. In the latter case men could be exercising a form of protection for women. But whatever the possibilities, both Joe and Billy clearly believe that men-only groups enable men to acknowledge these feelings. If single-sex groups

constitute steps towards confronting, condemning or overcoming these feelings and attitudes then men-only groups are a positive step. On the other hand, these groups could also be used as a way of normalising or legitimising these feelings.

Billy insists that changing dynamics and a lack of complete honesty is not the fault of women, however he does not offer any alternatives as to ways in which men and women might relate in more honest ways. Rather, he uses a rhetoric that legitimises the need for men-only groups in order for them to be able to share intimacy with each other.

The next section picks up on themes around men's 'desire' and explores the men's complex relationships with homosocial groups.

## 9.4 Criticism and Desire

Most of the participants talked about friendships with other men, and often used homosocial groups as reference points to evoke memories, convey attitudes and to tell stories. One important theme that emerged, particularly from the professional participants was their individual relationships towards these groups, and the subject of rejection, desire, or a combination of both was strong. I begin this section on the powerful subject of football<sup>1</sup>.

### 9.4.1 *In the Company of Men*

Two participants, Joe and Owen, talked specifically about their dislike for football, and how this alienated them from other men:

Couple of other things in there that I think are worthy of note, um, err, (4), there's a missing gene somewhere in me, my old man was a great football supporter, as is my son, and I was crap at that, and err, I miss that in my life because I would **love** that connection, I would just **love that** connection that's there and. And there are some bits about that **masculine** thing that I would **really, really** love to have in my life. But that also means that basically I lost out in lots of other men's groups, i.e. playing at a football team. (Joe:15)

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<sup>1</sup> Stories around football were common across most of the interviews; however, although this is an important theme space would not allow more in-depth analysis other than being referred to within other themes.

I mean even if I meet, like, the guys in the men's group that I was in with these other people I've mentioned, for quite a long time, we ran them for about ten years or more, erm, when they started going on about football, then I sort of pheeew dismissed them as well. So I'm, I'm sort of cutting myself off quite nicely sometimes I think. (Owen:23)

Both of these extracts are interesting in the way they lament of their dislike for football. Clearly, football features significantly as part of popular culture in the UK, and Joe's inability to engage in this popular cultural domain is equated with a biological essentialism. Joe's comment on a "missing gene" was said with irony, but it does convey his longing for male solidarity, which is intrinsic to football. Owen who had previously been involved in men's groups, says a similar thing: "cutting myself off quite nicely". Owen fulfilled his desire for male intimacy in a men's group that he defined as anti-sexist, but when conversation turned to football he withdrew from the intimacy of the group.

Some men were also specific in their criticism of other male dominated environments, such as the pub:

I don't like going to the pub, I can't, I can't really be **bothered** with the pub very much. And that, that doesn't mean I don't - and that's, and that's probably because the town that I live in now these are very, err, (2) just loud kind of thoughtless male environments really. (Joe:15)

Here Joe is not saying that he doesn't like the pub in general, but that he doesn't like the homosociality of the pub. If pubs were not "a thoughtless male environment", then he would enjoy spending time there. Billy is also critical of the pub, but elaborates on his reasons:

Sort of lads, lads in the pub talk about the Mrs at home or whatever and that it's almost trying soap operas and sitcoms and as it's OK it's funny. Actually it's, you err, you. There's levels of abuse happening there! (2) Which are kind of erm (2), are condoned, really. I say it's become the norm, it's funny, as (2) all these blokes in the pub getting pissed talking about her indoors, or whatever. You know, it's just, it's actually not, it's actually quite, it's, it's something quite, well, I think it's something quite abusive. (Billy:7)

Billy's dislike of spaces like the pub centre around heterosexist talk by men. Although Billy says it has "become the norm", homosocial groups are defined by their heterosexual language and the objectifying of women. Nevertheless,

Billy does see hetero-sexist talk as 'abusive'. Billy continues his analysis of homosocial spaces later on in the interview:

what I'm trying to say, that, that behaviour gets intensified in prison, gets intensified in football, err, (2) sports game, gets intensified in blokes in the pub. It gets, it becomes a sort of err, a kind of cooking pot for it. So you do **more** so. You're being as **brave** and as **strong** and as **fierce** as you can be. You're being as kind of whatever you can be. 'Coz in the back of your mind somewhere, somewhere in your mind there's a sort of, a sense of, a feeling sense that, "to do this makes me more attractive to women," basically. It's a very old, set way of thinking, so, so it's a kind of pre-verbal kind of thought I think, it's a kind of instinctual thing, almost. (Billy:35)

By drawing on the context of other male-dominated spaces, Billy justifies the macho behaviour in male environments through the necessity for survival: "You're being as **brave** and as **strong** and as **fierce** as you can be." He then goes on to make an argument that it is "instinctual" and "pre-verbal". Both Billy and Joe's argument contains an element of essentialism. Whether this is intentional or not, genes, pre-verbal thought and instinct all help to construct a biological analysis that works to defend hegemonic masculinity as a given, or as behaviour that men just cannot help but display.

The defence of masculinity is also voiced by Michael:

The lads've got to be respectful. But outside we're having a cig and that and it's, it's a, (2) a bit more chatty, a bit more (2) laddish. And that's alright, (2) because there's still (2) levels of (2) laddishness and macho-ness that you're allowed to hit. It's alright to be a man, enough said, it's alright to be a man! (Michael:31)

Michael is talking about the tea breaks between the men's weekly group-work programme. Performing masculinity inside and outside of the group are clearly different, which suggests that the rules for performance within the group are stifling or restraining, they have to censor themselves. It is only outside of this environment that Michael and the rest of the men in the group can revert back to a more comfortable performance and 'be themselves'. Moreover, Michael associates levels of "laddishness and macho-ness" with doing masculinity and vindicates this with his comment "it's alright to be a man!" This suggests that for Michael, reconstructing masculinity in a non-violent way is only partial, and

includes retaining hegemonic and homosocial aspects to be performed as an when required.

#### **9.4.2 Friendship and Intimacy**

Half of participants, six professional men and two campaign men, expressed their desire for more intimate relationships with other men in terms of closeness, affection trust and/or emotionality. Sean talked about an unfulfilled need for intimacy from one of his good friends:

I had, I had one male friend who was really, really good but for his, erm, he ran off and err joined the Irish National Liberation Army during the, the 1981 hunger strikes, and we, we drifted apart, you know, but, erm, again we didn't talk about, err personal things, we, we didn't talk, you know, about (2) the relationships or whatever they were, that I was engaged in. He didn't talk about his things. What he used to talk about was, you know, a highly romanticised version of, you know, revolutionary politics and things like that. (Sean:33)

The politics Sean was active in during young adulthood brought him into contact with other like-minded people, thus he is describing a friendship that is based more on a solidarity of political alliance. Despite having much in common with his friend, his need for the sharing of intimacies was not fulfilled, and has left a lasting regret.

The emotionality of boys, and men, especially physical displays of affection, is unacceptable in most spheres of social life. However, this did not deter Sam:

with boys I was, you know, I had no issue giving a boy a hug. Erm, and erm, erm, you know, felt okay just dismissing you know, if, if someone, you know called us 'gay', erm, err, (2) it was kind of, I, I just ignored it. (Sam 1:9)

Sam endured name-calling for expressing physical affection with other boys. Being seen to be 'too close' to other boys invokes the feminine, which in turn is equated with 'gay'. In line with hegemonic masculinity and the gender logic of western societies, homosexuality is subordinate to heterosexuality, and any divergence from this results in sanctions, in this case labelling and name-calling. Nevertheless, name-calling did not seem to bother Sam and he goes on to illustrate the benefits of intimate friendships:

I think I've benefited **from** having those experiences. You know coz not **all** my male friends would (2) you know(1.5) would never dream of doing something like that; couldn't cope, you know, can't cope with having a **hug**. Erm, but you know I feel, erm (2) you know, gifted with the experience of, of having you know, friendships like that with, with men. Erm (2) coz that is, you know, and with women, erm, I mean with both men and women it is against the norm isn't it, so...? (Sam 2:17)

Clearly, Sam believes he has profited from those relationships he is able to display affection in. In addition, Sam's recognition that affectionate, platonic, relationships are against the norm also helped to increase his felt gains significantly.

Platonic relationships with women were also talked about by participants:

Even with someone who I know pretty well. ... I think, well it's just the fact that women are much more ready to talk about their *feelings* I think there's this lack of, you know those three guys that I've mentioned, they are ones who I think are probably fairly untypical, you know, and that's why I've stayed friends with them. But, you know, if I'm in all male company sometimes, and its funny really (wife) had a meeting most of them male, and it was like they were in the pub! And I, okay I can enjoy the banter to a certain extent, but it always goes beyond the point that I feel comfortable. Whereas I don't get that same thing happening with women, really. I am not happy in a room full of men. Definitely. No, no! (Owen:18)

Owen's extract states quite clearly the differences he experiences between friendships with women and men. Owen actively seeks out and prefers to be in the company of women. He distinguishes that women are happy to "talk about their feelings", whereas men talk "banter", and he is decidedly uncomfortable, as well as dissatisfied with this.

Adam reports that his intimate relationships with men have also improved his intimate non-sexual relations with women:

All of a sudden, I can have intimacy with women without wanting to fuck 'em. And that's, that's lovely! (Adam:21)

Err, how **I work** affects (2) how I think. (3) And so I'm, I'm, you know, I'm **really** pleased now that I've, I think I've **learned** about intimacy. And I've **learned** about intimacy **through** having intimacy with men and I didn't think it would

affect (1.5) how I'm able to have intimacy with women, but it has. Isn't that lovely? You know, I'm really pleased, I'm really, you know, it feels like a bonus. (2) It feels like an opening up (3) erm, (2) of my life and it's really, really, nice. (Adam:21-22)

Adam's new-found ability to have non-sexual relations with other women came after he learned to have non-sexual intimate relationships with other men. This shift in the way he does his masculinity is attributed directly with the work he does with violent men. His work has helped him to give and receive intimacy with other men and women and this new-found capacity has liberated him from the confines of hegemonic masculinity.

However, non-sexual intimacy can be reconfigured in any number of ways as Joe's account highlights:

So, erm, so, yeah, as far as being a man's concerned there's a change in who I associate with and the kind of things that I **value**. I've got some friendships with men that I will hold on to – that aren't sexist, aren't sexist because that just wouldn't be tolerated by-but I mean, but there would be just a **rejection** of a kind of touchy-feeliness for want of a better expression - which is a British thing - and I'll hold these, I'll hold these relationships close because they're import-they're important to me. So there's that bit of still hanging on to that man-to-man relationship, but there are other relationships that I have with men, you know which erm allow for emotional *trust* I suppose, and erm discussing the fact that you're scared of certain things and, all that. (Joe:15)

Joe connects his own reconstruction of masculinity directly with the friends he associates with and the type of relationship they have. He has made decisions about which of his friends he wants to keep, and those he wants to reject. He goes on to describe his intimate relations in terms of being non-sexist, and whether or not they include physical displays of affection. This suggests that for Joe there is a significant connection between men who are non-sexist and men's active displays of affection. Thus, he justifies the lack of physical affection from some of his friends as being "a British thing".

There is evidence that the personal development of some participants has come about through delivering community-based men's groups. In addition, these extracts also suggest an underlying theme of 'space', and the



next section explores the stories that participants told around their experiences of 'men's groups' and other 'men-only spaces',

## 9.5 Men's Groups and Men-Only Spaces

Some participants had previously been in men's anti-sexist groups, whilst others had rejected these groups. Their membership of men's groups was usually an expression of their desire to share non-sexual intimacy with other men, but also because they wanted to explore their own sense of masculinity. This section looks at the ways these groups were talked about, and then looks specifically at the mythopoetic type groups that four participants were involved in.

### 9.5.1 Men-Only Groups, Masculinity and the Women's Model

Some of the participants rejected men's groups outright, such as Aiden:

Noooo! No! I've not. I've not been involved in any wing of the men's movement - not the unpleasant misogynist wing, nor the cuddling wing. (Aiden:56)

This is an interesting dichotomy, as there are many types of groups, but Aiden has polarised their representation. Joe also rejected men's groups, but not quite so directly:

I haven't been involved in any-**well** it depends how you define that, I've never been involved in, say, **a men's group**. ... Erm, I, so, I have not really-apart from one or two visits to men's groups which are pretty rare in this part of the world! (Joe:14)

Oliver, on the other hand, had not been involved in a men's group:

exclusively men? No. No, I don't think so, no, no. (2) Erm, (2) Erm, (3) I've, I've, erm, (2) no, I've a couple of people I, I wouldn't really call them friends, but acquaintances I, I know have been in erm, you know, gay men's groups, where, where it's, it's not only men but it's, it's homosexual men, so. Those were more like kind of a, social and political in some sense, so, so campaigning for gay rights erm erm, yeah, I, I just feel for this partic-for [his campaign] I don't think it would be appropriate. (Oliver:41)

Oliver's definition of men's group, here, appears to centre round what is relevant to his campaign – violence against women. That he then equates Gay

Rights as exclusively for men, is somewhat confusing, as it excludes gay or lesbian women who are often also subject to men's violence.

Owen had been in men's groups, and wanted to change the way he did 'being a man', and was spurred on in the 1970's and 1980's by the women's movement. Owen associated the women's movement with his own sense of masculinity, which he did not feel good about. He did not enjoy the feelings of guilt around his being a man and wanted to explore it further with other men:

so when the opportunity came along to get into a men's group, then yeah, well then I welcomed it. And also I mean it, just basically to be, to be with men on a regular basis, which I wasn't. (Owen:27)

The women's movement and feminism clearly impacted strongly on Owen, and his feelings of guilt are in line with Connell's (1990) study. In general, feminism has impacted on other men as well, influencing the work that the men do as well as encouraging a reconfiguration of masculinity, as discussed in Chapter seven. The following extract from Owen illustrates one of the trends in the reconfiguration of masculinity:

and especially when this old 'new' men thing came in, and that was then seen as a bit derogatory and so on. But I did, I actually wanted to be, I wanted to be a *new man* you know, I really did. And I wanted lots of other people to be new men. (Owen:21)

Owen was optimistic about the opportunity for changing men, and engaged with the notion of 'new man'. However, the media-led 'new man' project is problematic. 'New men', supposedly, are gender aware and take on more responsibilities for domestic arrangements and child-care, but often these circumstances are exaggerated (Segal 1990, Whitehead 2002). Christian (1994) is of the same opinion and distinguishes between liberal 'new men' and 'Anti-Sexist Men'. For Christian, it is 'Anti-Sexist' Men who actively engage with feminist analyses of gender and power, and who work at finding ways to treat women in non-oppressive ways. Whereas the liberal 'new men' can be insubstantial and symbolic only.

The re-imagining of masculinity and gender relations is not straightforward, though, as both Adam and Joe point out:

you're engaged in a kind of *journey* I think, as a, as a man moving into new territory, and you're kind of unclear about

(2) well maybe you're a bit clearer about the older identity but you're a bit uncertain about what the new one is. And, erm (3) I (3) I suppose if-true probably have a kind of (2) idea that some men's groups are (2) guys sitting basically (3) navel-gazing, erm, and being a bit precious. Err you know, and I'm not particularly keen to search that out, basically. (Joe:16)

I mean, I don't, I don't have, a sort of, you, err, a blueprint for the future, of, of, sort of, you know, **gender relations** or, **or men**, you know, I'm, I'm not that. I **like**, (2) I **like**, (2) I **like** (3) **being** with groups of men. I **like** men who are, I **love men** who have, have somehow **initiated** into that world of, sort of, emotional openness, I **love men** who **share** their hearts with me, I **love it**, I **love it**, and I want more of that, you know and wh,when I'm, I can get that from women. (Adam:20)

Changing the way in which Joe did 'being a man' was likened to a journey, and although on reflection this meant he had a firm sense of knowing what type of masculinity he did *not* want, he was far less certain about what his male identity would look like in the future. In Adam's extract, which is full of emotion, he appears to 'romanticise' men. Throughout his interview, Adam does not talk about men in a sexual way, however, it is clear that he longs for men to change in order that he can share emotional relationships with them.

Adam also draws on relationships with women in order to emphasise and support more comparable relations with men, and this use of comparisons with women was not unusual. In this next extract Robert utilises women's relations with other women, for re-imagining spaces for men:

Women **creating** the space to sit down as women and talk to each other as women and, you know, a lot of that, um, my experience of it and my partners, was just women, women having that space and going round each other's houses and: "Let's talk about this." In the **sense** of some men choosing to do that, um, is, following that similar model because you-**as a man**, if you just go down the pub, you know, you're just gonna get male bullshit. (Robert:47)

For Robert, women-only space is compared favourably with the more traditional men-only spaces. He is contemptuous of the pub, and the type of competitive men's talk that is expressed when men are in these types of environment.

What emerges, from participants, especially the professional men, is the longing for spaces in which men can explore their own sense of masculinity amongst other men. Whether these spaces are profeminist, however, proves more problematic, and the men who talked about their desire for men-only spaces were aware of this to varying extents. Robert, for example, believes in the possibility of men-only spaces that are profeminist:

Erm, so those, those men, those of us who **want** to explore stuff in a, yeah, I mean there is a sort of an element of smugness in an OK kind of way or in a pro-feminist kind of way. And we've got to have some space to do that and learn from each other and if we share that stuff together and, and want to **work alongside** women, and not in opposition, not against, (2) but, then, well absolutely rightly - why not be very suspicious of that? Coz, coz I would be. (Robert:48)

Robert is aware of women's mistrust around men-only groups, particularly those that profess to be profeminist, but he is also operating within an ideological dilemma. He believes that men-only groups would benefit men, and this in turn would also benefit ways of working with women, "alongside and not in opposition." At the same time, however, his awareness of women's suspicions lead him to empathise with this. Joe also holds a similar dilemma:

some of that historical mistrust comes from the States; comes from a therapeutic environment and comes from a position where basically there **was** a tradition of men getting in a room and doing the kind of *Iron John* thing, or men getting in a room and working through their own damage and stuff like that and basically that became the overriding priority. So men were mistrusted (2) to do, to do that work for a historical **reason**. I think, I think, basically it's not been checked out in the UK, now that's not to mean if we came the same way, no, sorry, that's not to mean that we want the right to revisit that experience. (Joe:21)

Joe's understanding of women's mistrust is grounded in the US therapeutic framework. In this framework, men's needs are of primary importance, and Joe's reference to "the kind of *Iron John* thing" denotes a men's movement named 'The Mythopoetic' Men's Movement, as discussed in Chapter three. Four professional participants, Robert, Adam, Billy and Joe, had much to say about this movement, and the next section explores their stories around this.

### 9.5.2 Mythopoetic Men's Groups

To summarise very briefly, the mythopoetic movement can be seen as an essentialist retreat from women, and tends to draw in white, heterosexual, middle class, middle aged, educated and professional men. One of the main contributors to this movement is Robert Bly, whose 1991 book entitled *Iron John*, was a best seller in the US. The mythopoetic movement is premised on spiritual and personal development, which focuses on the need to deal with men's pain and damage before men can become non-sexist (Messner 1997).

All four men talked in some detail about these groups, and, to varying degrees, were positive about them. Both Joe and Billy talked at length about their thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards mythopoetic men's groups, which translated into more than ten pages of transcript for each of them. To begin with I look at the ways in which the men described these groups. Billy was highly enthusiastic about the group he is personally involved in and works hard to articulate a detailed description of the conditions, the environment, and what takes place at the meetings:

you go away from your life into the mountains into this very **different** environment, and it's all men, obviously. Erm, first couple of days are spent (2) getting to know the place, getting to know each other in the group, spending some time in nature and telling each man, in various ways telling his story about how he's there, where he's come from, where he wants to go. And it's done in various ways. ... **that's** followed by a session of erm, a day of what we call deep body-work. Sort of, body psychotherapy work, where each man is invited to, kind of, really descend into his body, into himself, through various exercises and find out what's actually hidden in his guts, what's actually in there. And it's very powerful way of getting quite deep into your process quite quickly. (4) The second half of the retreat is **around** about constructing, putting together rituals - either individual rituals or group rituals or small group rituals. Erm, (3) to kind of mark where a man's **at**, in his life. So, depending on what the facilitators and the rest of the group have seen about that man over the first three, three days, you're kind of marking and honouring where he's at (3) and you're offering a threshold for him to step through into the next part of his life and to take a **risk**, to, to expand himself. To (sighs) look at a part of himself he finds uncomfortable or to (3) deepen his experience of living. (Billy:30)

The above description captures Billy's experiences at these gatherings, and provides an insight to women, who are not allowed into these spaces.

Billy is aware of the origins of these kinds of groups and their connections with *Iron John*:

It **arose** out of, (3) primarily 'cos of Iron John. Iron John, which you mentioned – Robert Bly – came out in the early nineties. And it kind of crystallised around that, what, what became known as the men's movement. Erm, it was lampooned, I suppose in the press and the media as groups of men going off to the mountains, off to the woods, hugging trees, dancing naked together and drumming, and, and generally having beards, that was the problem, as far as I could see. (Billy:28)

There does not appear to be any critique from Billy regarding the lack of gendered power relations that can be embedded within these groups. Rather, he lists the aspects that have been ridiculed and works to resist it. Interestingly, Billy mentions the aspect of men dancing naked together, a point that Robert also raises:

There was a really interesting, I, erm, (2) (sigh) I mean, this, this weekend there was a, a, a major chunk of it was this (3) was warrior stuff, you know and we'd be sort of dancing naked round fires, and blah, blah, blah, blah. Erm and being, I don't know, just for men to be comfortable in their bodies was a **huge** step. (Robert:49)

Clearly, the ability to be naked with other men, without the fear of judgement, is liberating for Robert. However, his use of the term "warrior stuff" conjures up images of aggression. This is supported by Adam, who humorously refers to *Iron John* to counter his 'softness':

My supervisor told me to read *Iron John* recently, I think he thinks I've, I've gone to the other side. (laughs) I don't think he thinks I'm fierce enough, and erm, you know, it might be right, you know, but err, (3) but there's, there's something about that, that sort of, harsh confrontational stuff that I find personally difficult and there's something very attractive for me in erm, a softer, softer approach, you know. (Adam:19)

Robert does not ally himself with *Iron John*, and is critical of the aggressive associations, but this is more on a personal level. Adam is also only talking about his own sense of masculine self. He prefers a softer, more genial approach to issues, and life in general, rather than confrontation, and

aggression. He says he is not afraid to lose anymore, and is happy with himself. Yet, he does not critique the ethos of these groups as a whole.

Both Joe and Robert, however, are critical of some of the aspects of these groups. Joe flags up the Australian and New Zealand men's movements that are currently popular, and offers the following analysis:

Erm, I'm-I think probably I have a kind of concern about some of the Robert Bly stuff, because it's *mythology*. You don't need mythology, we have mythology! Erm, and I think the kind of intellectual ground on which some of this stuff that erm, you know men are erm 'wounded warriors' and err "*need to find the warrior*" and the 'warrior's true way', I, I find that stuff you know is a bit-erm not terribly impressive. I, I think nevertheless that there are ways in which **groups** of men are trying to find different ways about re-engaging with men and young boys as important. (Joe16)

Joe is committed to developing new and different ways to engage men, and will explore and use his past experiences to create beneficial groups which will attract and facilitate change. Part of his past experience includes being raised in a working class community, where men often had to be "warriors" in order to survive. However, he struggles to identify which aspects of masculinity he should keep, and which should be cast off:

But there are bits I want to jettison, and there are bits that I am **wary** of, err, and that would be the kind of, that would be the kind of err, kind of stereotypical 'Iron John' type thing. But I'm also quite interested in some of the lessons that we **can** maybe pick up from say Australia and New Zealand about how we start to **re-engage** with men differently. I have to admit that in a country that's basically, you know, got a lot of working class young guys basically committed to a war on two fronts, and, err, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm **anxious** basically about their ability to commit to that and sustain it etc. (Joe:19)

Thus, although he is concerned about *Iron John* and the associated warrior element, his working class experience informs his opinion in a pragmatic way. He is aware that working class men who have learned to survive in violent and aggressive communities will find it difficult to engage with anti-sexist men's movements. Therefore he is pragmatic about the lessons that can be drawn from mythopoetic groups, and works to utilise those aspects that are proven to be most helpful in attracting working class men. Of all the men I interviewed,

Joe's analyses stood out significantly as utilising a class analysis, and his summing up of the men's movement in general highlights this:

I think one of my concerns about what might be termed 'the men's movement', first of all, is that it can be precious and it can be self-obsessed. It, it, it certainly can provide an answer to men from whatever background, but I would predict generally a kind of middle class background - and it gives them a kind of, it gives them maybe even some kind of secular path or whatever. That is absolutely fine. It gives them a set of **meaning** about how they might want to **construe** and **live** their lives differently. I also began your interview by saying I was middle class now, but I was working class **then!** I'm middle-class now, but I don't particularly want to sit around a whole bunch of guys that have been middle-class all their **lives!** And the other thing is that basically when I-you're working with guys in a prison or guys on [housing estate] or whatever, they're already warriors, these guys (laughs) are already warriors! (Joe:20)

This extract underlines Joe's conviction in engaging working class men, whilst at the same time acknowledging their working class roots, and their particular ways of doing being a man. The 'warrior' aspects of the men Joe talks about cannot be ignored, rather they must be addressed in any attempts at social change.

Robert is critical of a workshop he attended with approximately thirty other men on issues surrounding profeminist or anti-sexist identities whilst still thinking and acting in sexist ways. The group explored sexuality and the objectification of women:

there was a (2) a group of men in the room, who were ummmm (5) sort of, vaguely political men who were saying well: "What's wrong with fantasising about women?" and "It's **fine** for women to fantasise about men!" And they were doing the 'equal' stuff: "As long as we both do it, and, and we don't, we're not having fantasies that lead onto sexual offences and all that..." – there's a bit of a question mark **there** but, **for me**, but they saying, they were doing the equality stuff. And there was others saying that: "But it, it's not, it can't be equality, it's not a level playing field and there are real connections between this - this what **you're** portraying is like the healthy desire to have sexual thoughts about women and women's abuse." And **all** the men who were arguing this second point of view, all of us worked in domestic abuse and it was clearly, we, we were not yeah, yeah, the values of, well, the values of working in the majority sector of domestic abuse, pro-feminist work at odds



with these other men who were doing, doing the men's rights agenda. (Robert:49)

Robert separates the professional men from other men that were at the workshop, and attributes the professional men as having a more sophisticated analysis of gendered power relations. Robert also flags up a "men's rights agenda", which he situates within an ideological framework of equal rights, and is clearly concerned at the sexist views couched here. He is even more perturbed that these views come from those men he perceives as "vaguely political", which can be interpreted as "they should know better." The equal rights ideology is more in line with liberal feminism, and is indicative of the different forms that profeminism can take. Moreover, equal rights was discussed in Chapter seven as one of the concepts contained in feminism as an ideological code. Like 'human rights', 'equal rights', through complex processes contains a powerful capacity to override and be turned against feminism, ignoring oppressive gendered relations and acting out resistance to feminist goals.

The risks associated with mythopoetic groups stem from the lack of analysis on gendered power relations. This lack of analysis provides the space for men to change only as much as is comfortable for them (Faludi 1992, Messner 1997). What can emerge from these groups, in terms of masculinity reconfiguration, is a type of 'modern day chivalry'. By this I mean that men and women are essentialised, and privilege remains with the man. In this kind of thinking it is up to men to acknowledge their strength and follow a moral and social code whereby they restrain their privilege towards the 'weaker sex'. Hunnicutt (2009) describes this as the paradox of protection:

Chivalry renders women powerless because accepting protection implies neediness and vulnerability; meanwhile, the threat of being victimized requires acquiescence to the protection men offer. (ibid:565)

With both Joe and Robert the opportunity arose to voice these concerns, and their responses are as follows:

J Yeah. I understand exactly where you're coming from. I think probably, I think one of the big major kind of (1.5) **moral** issues in-with working directly with men is sometimes that erm-I think men are saying-you know, probably some

men are saying you know: "I want to stop doing this but leave me as I am!" (Joe:23)

**Yeah.** Um, Yeah, can't argue with that. Can't argue with it coz there is that-there's something **uncomfortable** about doing-coz there was definitely elements of 'warrior' stuff about it. Erm, and I can't, I can't dispute that, but it was for me, as one man, it was also, erm, (2) **good** to share, good to *talk* to other men, but good to (3) erm to share some other aspects of being, of being a man. But it, yeah, it's not necessarily (2) good for women. (Robert:48/49)

Both Joe and Robert acknowledge and agree with the modern day chivalry, analysis, and both feel uncomfortable with it. Joe points out the resistance some men feel in reconfiguring their masculinity any further than the non-violent aspects. However, Robert goes on to relate this to his own personal emotional gains, and appears to view these gains as a trade-off, whereby women's potential disadvantage and the warrior ethos are tolerated for the more positive experiences of emotionality with other men.

It is evident that all four men experienced positive emotional benefits from involvement with some kind of mythopoetic groups, and this is a key factor they would like to share with other men. Indeed, Billy and Adam both believed that these type of mythopoetic groups would complement and benefit men in the men's group-work programmes. For example, Adam believed that "initiated men don't abuse" (p23). Similarly, Billy held a passion for an imagined future that included mythopoetic retreats within the context of a rolling men's group-work programme.

To sum up this section, at the heart of men's involvement in these kinds of groups is the desire to be with other men in a non-threatening environment. For these men, mythopoetic groups appear to be an advancement on traditional homosocial groups such as sport and the culture of the pub. Adam loves men, and loves being with men, as does Billy, but Billy's passion overrides any practical critique regarding the groups' effects on men and women's relations. Robert's workshop story provides a good example of the potential dangers of mythopoetic groups reinforcing sexist attitudes and behaviour. By focusing on their rights as men, and viewing women as already equal, the gender logic is maintained. The only way that the unequal gender system can be questioned is for other men to challenge these views.

However, to do this, means that enlightened men must be involved in the groups at all times. Moreover, enlightened men must also possess the courage to challenge large groups of men, and this is discussed in the next section.

## **9.6 Telling Stories: The National Practitioners' Network**

As discussed in Chapters four and six, the National Practitioners' Network (NPN) is an important support organisation for people working with perpetrators in the voluntary sector. This section examines how single-sex groups are situated within this umbrella organisation, and analyses one particular incident in detail.

### **9.6.1 *The 'Hen House' and the 'Shed'***

The following story was told to me on three separate occasions during my ethnographic attendance at public events: once by a woman and twice by men. The incident appears to have left powerful and emotive memories. The woman who informed me of this incident did not experience it herself, rather she had been informed by a male friend, therefore I concentrate on the two separate conversations I had with men who were present at the incident.

At the biannual meetings held by the NPN, women and men are divided into exclusive groups to discuss feelings and issues regarding working in the sector and with the 'opposite' sex. I was informed that the space and time dedicated towards the men's group is termed 'The Shed' and the women's space and time is located in what is termed the 'Hen House'. Both of the aforementioned men, who were not interviewees, wished to remain anonymous, but were aware of my position as a researcher. I asked both of these men what was talked about in 'The Shed', and both told me that they discussed what it was like to work with women. Both men were reluctant to go into too much detail, however both men expressed feelings that the group can "sometimes go too far", and proceeded to tell me about an incident in one of the meetings, where one man in the group had talked explicitly about impending sexual activity with his female partner, who was also at the conference, that same night. Both men felt uncomfortable, but neither of them felt able to challenge the talk and thus remained quiet throughout.

There are two points of interest here. Firstly, the sexist language used to name the spaces dedicated for women and men's support work is reflective of sexist ideology and social divisions in wider society. Women are 'othered' and dehumanised by referring to them as animals. The clucking noise of hens is comparative with women talking together. This is representative of and works to maintain an ideology that subordinates women's talk as insignificant, whilst simultaneously reflecting ideologies that privilege men's talk. Men's talk escapes insult, and is not reduced to, compared with, or equated with another animal. On the contrary, the space allocated for men to talk with each other is legitimised by using a bona fide building: 'The Shed'. Women 'cluck', whilst men simply talk.

The second, but related point to note is the use of homosocial space and relations. Men and their 'sheds', like 'the pub', are where men (re)produce and maintain homosocial relationships; where they can escape and either sit and contemplate, relax away from women, or practice male bonding (Kiesling 2005, Lipman-Blumen 1976, Howson 2006, Meuser 2007, Sedgwick 1985). Within Kiesling's framework, this particular incident at the NPN conference clearly incorporates all four of the discourses for recreating hegemonic, or at least a stereotypical, heterosexual masculinity.

There is no way of knowing how many of the men involved in this incident experienced discomfort, but the fact that two men spoke to me directly of this, and other men voiced their concern with other women, one of whom also spoke directly to me, does suggest it as a powerful event that left its mark in men's memories. That both men experienced discomfort, and feelings of disempowerment, may be down to the sector the men are working in. Working with and/or on behalf of women might have produced expectations and rules associated with pro-feminist groups, and not the features and dynamics associated with homosocial groups. Furthermore, their discomfort and lack of confidence in challenging the inappropriate talk within the group may be due to the 'cultural discourses of masculinity' arising unexpectedly. Thus, the flouting of rules and/or contravened boundaries were incongruous with their expectations and served to paralyse or silence other group members, which then maintains an element of homosociality.

At one level it seems logical to provide separate men's and women's groups, where members can discuss issues. After all, many of the members are delivering programmes set within a feminist framework of male dominance and sexism, and where male violence is accepted as the cause and consequence of women's oppression. When group members encompass these values and politics, the feminist cause is not at risk, and the group cannot be categorised as homosocial. Indeed, one participant observes that it was within this profeminist spirit that NPN groups were created.:

I floated this with one other bloke and we said: "Shall we have a men-only workshop?" And it **seemed** like such a revolutionary thing, we thought, I mean, certainly I would **never** have dreamt of suggesting ten years ago, erm, 'cos of all-for **all** the reasons that this, you know: "We don't want men together, and we've got men and women, and got no .... " And we floated it and it's become a sort of **theme** through workshops, through networks, since that. (Anon 2:50)

This participant was aware of the potential problems surrounding separate groups, but believed strongly that they would be beneficial, and that any potential problems could be overcome. He also clearly felt that men in the NPN had established their gender analysis sufficiently enough to enable them to have exclusive male groups at their meetings.

The same participant uses the contextual framework behind the development of men's groups as parity for women-only groups:

we'll facilitate-have this men-only space and it's always-the sort of reactions about it: "Ooh, why are you having men-only space? If you're having a men-only space we can have a women-only space!" And I thought well: "No problem, there often **has** been women-only **space** there, and that's seemed, nobody's off-that's been fine. (Anon 2:50)

Here, the justification of women only spaces is arrived at through the acknowledgment of previous women-only spaces. However, what he does not mention, is that women established women-only spaces in order to raise their consciousness about oppressive issues, such as men's violence. There is a certain irony that if women had not developed services and support for survivors of men's violence, the NPN would probably not exist.

Notwithstanding this, the participant is aware that men-only groups might be viewed suspiciously by other members and met with some resistance.

I suggest to him that reasons for resistance might be around women's trust. The participant defends this by deflecting the issue of trust back to women and demonstrating, for him, a dichotomy of trust:

I suppose, I would just say, well, I mean very tentatively mentioning to this, that there's an element of, well, you've sort of gotta trust us as well, but I absolutely understand why you wouldn't. (Anon 2:51)

The participant feels the responsibility for trust lies with women, although this is softened by using "tentatively", and by voicing his understanding that women might not trust men-only groups. Nevertheless, he develops his argument further by providing anecdotal evidence for the benefits men can gain in exclusive groups:

when we first had that men's space I was aware the number of times at Network, men would say to me: "God, it's really good coming here, because I work in this agency; I'm involved in domestic abuse work; but I'm the only man in the agency." or, or "I work, you know I in a team with six women, and the only time I can actually **talk** to other men about what I do is twice a year when I come to network." – and I did hear that a, a lot, a lot of men saying that, or that would be part of like... it's a bit silly really, isn't it? (Anon 2:51)

In effect, exclusive men's groups are given a neutral status, and it is the *context* of the group that is important. However, his evidencing of men's benefits is a rhetorical device that can also serve to invalidate women's legitimate concerns around homosocial and men-only groups. Moreover, there is a danger that finding spaces to talk exclusively with other men can be viewed as more significant, more important and more beneficial than other available spaces, such as the work place, where men are only able to talk to other women, or in mixed-sex groups. The privileging of these men-only spaces, then, can work to maintain homosocial groups and at the same time under-value women.

To summarise, the social construction of masculinity is practiced on a 'double distinction': "distinction in relation to women and in relation to other men" (Meuser 2007: 44). For Kimmel (1996:7) "masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment", and homosocial environments are critical for constructing and maintaining masculine identity. Thus, the very fact that men and women are segregated feeds into the gender logic of social division, and

regardless of the attempts made to overcome it, social division is being practiced. Indeed, this practice is brought into clear focus through the name given to the women's group.

In addition, the competitive logic (Meuser 2003/2007) that is the basis for forming hegemonic masculinity, and is intrinsic in homosocial groups, becomes apparent when the four discourses of masculinity are practiced. Boasting about sexual exploits, as with the NPN group incident, constitutes a form of competition that supports hegemonic masculinity and the gender system. Whilst this is not to imply that it was a conscious effort on behalf of the man to objectify women, it does serve as a reminder that the group operates within a wider setting of sexist social relations, and that sexist social practices are liable to creep in. Not all men enjoy the games of competition, but refusing to play them can cast doubt on their perceived form of masculinity. Furthermore, these sexist social practices are compounded when men who perceive themselves outside of the masculine norm are unable to verbalise their objections (see Bird 1996). Indeed, Connell's (1990) research on men who avoid hegemonic forms of masculinity identified ambiguity, uncertainty, guilt and apprehension, and as Meuser (2007) also found in his study, this can lead to men using hegemonic masculinity as a point of reference even when these same men are trying to overcome it.

## **9.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed men's talk around the desire for non-sexual emotional intimacy with other men, and has traced the similarities of more traditional homosocial spaces, such as the pub and sport, with men-only groups that are supposedly less misogynistic. What emerges is that some of the more 'enlightened' groups, especially those associated with the mythopoetic, are actually reconfigurations of previous homosocial groups, but with a mask of acceptability. Thus, there is a clear risk of men's patriarchal dominance being reproduced within these groups. For the four men who were most positive towards mythopoetic groups, the reconfiguration of masculinity that they desire is, in the main, located within already established groups and the men struggle to adapt these groups to something less misogynistic. Undoubtedly, some of the participants took a critical stance, especially when

aspects that I have called 'late modern chivalry' were broached. However, from a feminist reading, the potential problems lay in the concurrent analysis of gender relations, which does not necessarily connect with some of the men's acute desire for men-only groups. In addition, some of these aspects of masculinity are being carried out within the 'domestic violence' sector, and together with men's disproportionate social power, the potential for furthering these social practices is concerning.

Men's continued desire for the company of other men can also be interpreted in other ways. Men-only groups can be a safe space in which to reconstruct their masculinity in a kind of 'celebrating men' approach, but in this sense they are seemingly caught up in homosocial complexities regarding their masculine behaviour and identity. Women seem to figure in ways that are negative. They are rejected, 'othered', devalued or traded off in lieu of men's desire for emotionally intimate relationships with other men. The 'darkness' around women and lack of honesty that Billy talked about is worrying if these conversations that are unacceptable to women are reinforced in men-only groups. On the other hand, if these same conversations can be confronted and overcome, then this is a positive move. However, and in relation to Chapter seven and participants' understanding of feminism, there were aspects of feminism associated with patriarchy and women's subjugation that were avoided or negated and there is a real risk that masculine behaviour can be reinforced. This is particularly true of male heterosexuality and women's objectification, as was illustrated in the NPN group, and in the workshop that Robert attended.

It is also significant that it was only the professional men who talked about the desire for men-only groups, although some were already involved in men-only spaces such as football, or the pub. In addition, it was only the professional men who talked about their masculinity and their sense of wanting to change it. In contrast, most of the campaign men, did not talk about their sense of masculinity in any detailed or specific way. This does not necessarily mean that the campaign men do not have an awareness, it could merely be that they are not familiar in talking about themselves in this way. On the other hand, it could also mean that the campaign men have not questioned their masculinity, or the way they practice their masculinity. If this is the case, then



it is potentially troubling that they are organising campaigns to stop violence against women, as they may exclude themselves from the category of 'men'. It is evident that the professional men have worked significantly on their masculinity and continue to explore this. Therefore, collaboration between professional and campaign men could greatly assist campaign men in their political endeavours.

One last issue is that emerging forms of profeminist masculinity have no taken-for-granted vocabularies. For men new to men-only groups, such as the work practiced at the NPN, or within the mythopoetic groups, their identity is not grounded in familiar forms of masculinity, rather they are part of a marginalised masculinity, and challenging hegemonic masculine talk from within this framework can be incredibly difficult. In addition, these same issues of uncertainty and lack of established forms of masculinity can steer some men into yearning for the old patterns of masculinity (Meuser 2007), and the search for a sense of belonging.

The next and final chapter draws together the findings from this thesis and discusses them in terms of the initial aims of the research, as set out in the introduction and in chapter five. It closes with some reflections and suggests areas that have been identified for further study and investigation.

# **CHAPTER 10**

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This chapter fulfils a number of tasks. Firstly it restates the aims and research questions, and then goes on to outline how I have gone about trying to address these. It then relates the research questions to four key findings, and discusses them in turn: feminism as an ideological code; gender-neutrality and discourses of resistance; everyday activism, and the regulation of organised activism; and finally men's social power. It then goes on to reflect on institutional ethnography and Dorothy Smith's work as a framework of analysis. It also reflects briefly on 'radical feminism', before highlighting other useful areas of research, and finishing with some concluding remarks.

### **10.2 Research Questions**

I began this research with three broad aims in mind. Firstly, I wanted to explore the 'space' that women have created, that can be loosely termed 'men's intervention with men who have been violent to women they know'. Secondly, I wanted to situate this area of men's intervention within the wider area of violence against women, and examine the practical application of feminist values. Thirdly, I wanted to explore the men themselves; how they came to be working in this area, their understanding of feminism and feminist values, and whether they were furthering and/or disseminating these values. To explore these aims, fifteen men from violence against women campaigns, and community-based projects that work with men who have been violent to their partners shared their stories with me. In order to discuss the main findings, and what has been uncovered in this research, it is necessary to reiterate the research questions, as set out in Chapter five:

1. How does men's intervention in men's violence against women fit into the broader area of intervention in men's violences developed by women?
2. What are the contributing factors that led the men to work in the area of men's intervention in violence against women?
3. How does feminism and feminist understandings of violence contribute to the men's understanding of violence against women?
4. How is feminism and feminist knowledge around men's violences incorporated into institutional, organisational and individual practices?
5. Does working in the area of men's intervention in men's violence against women impact on social practices of masculinity?

With these research questions in mind, I next go on to summarise the thesis, in terms of how I addressed them, paying particular attention to the analysis Chapters six to nine.

### **10.3 Thesis Summary**

Chapter one introduced the context within which this research is set. It defined the area for study: violence against women, and established the 'radical feminist' framework that motivates and critically underpins analysis. Chapter two of this thesis set out Dorothy E Smith's notion and application of institutional ethnography (IE), and gave a detailed and historical account of her work. In particular I discussed the key theoretical principles that have shaped the way in which she understands and 'does' sociology. Chapter two also proposed how Smith's perspective of ruling relations, ideology, discourse, action and talk, can provide a synthesised method of analysis that is amenable to exploring social relations, and how these aspects, in particular 'ideological codes', form the major influences in my own thinking and analysis for this research. To exemplify this, I discussed a number of relevant IE studies, such as Walker (1990) and Nichols (2006), whose work has been key to developing this study, before going on to evaluate both the advantages and the limitations of IE.

Chapter three went on to engage with the literature on men and masculinity politics that has either directly or indirectly informed the analysis chapters, especially Chapters seven and nine. The literature on men

becoming profeminist or antisexist from Connell (1990), Christian (1994 and Pease (2000), has been highly influential, as has the body of work produced by Hearn (1994, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2004) on the hegemony of men, masculinity and violence. The literature on men's movements (Messner 1997, Pease 2008) has also been valuable for contextualising men's antisexist and sexist politics, and for providing some empirical background.

In order to contextualise this research, and in terms of the women's movement and feminist politics, Chapter four set out the historical development of 'men's violence against women', and the subsequent developments regarding social change within the political, judicial, professional and policy arenas. Chapter five went on to locate the research within a feminist praxis, and discussed feminist research practice, feminist standpoint theory and reflexivity. Chapter five also dealt with the more practical aspects of the research such as anonymity, ethics and the demographics of the participants.

Chapter six relates specifically to research question one, regarding the wider area of men's violence (known as 'domestic violence'), and how men's intervention utilises this area. At a wider level it identified a number of processes through which the participants and the organisations they work in have been caught up in the relations of ruling, and incorporated into institutional complexes. It demonstrated how women's experiences of 'domestic violence' have been subsumed into ideological methods of reasoning that shifts local and grass-roots work into centralised ideologies and working practices. It also illustrated how the above processes contribute to the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence', and how this reconceptualisation works to regulate and coordinate courses of action and responses to the social problem of violence against women. At another level, Chapter six also identified the area of men's intervention in men's violence against women as relatively small in comparison to the area as a whole. The consequences of this point to a concern that men working in this area can gain kudos, opportunities and social power that simply replicates the gendered social order of wider society. This finding, then, also begins to answer research question four.

In Chapter seven, I identified a form of everyday activism from feminist women, that relates to research question two, regarding the contributing

factors that led men to work in the area of men's violence against women. These individual forms of activism are carried out at a more personal level, and are distinct from definitions that frame activism as organised, public, struggle. Everyday activism was also instrumental in the men's education and consciousness-raising around gendered social relations, and was a significant contributing factor for most men regarding the renegotiation of their intimate sexual politics. In addition, Chapter seven partly addresses research question four, regarding men's understanding and incorporation of feminism into their everyday work. The chapter distinguished feminism as an ideological code that organises the relations of public discourse. By identifying the recurrent concepts and categories contained in the discourses the participants used to talk about feminism, 'radical feminism' was established as a linchpin around which many of the more negative concepts circulated. On the one hand 'radical feminism' was often negated and its values appropriated to other more acceptable forms of feminism, but on the other, this process can be seen as singling out 'radical feminism' as symbolic of feminism in general, which in turn grants it a crucial position in the meanings associated with feminism.

Chapter eight further developed the notion of feminism as an ideological code, using it as a framework within which to analyse how feminism, although often un-stated, organises the discourses of 'domestic violence'. This chapter follows on from the previous one, and contributes further to addressing research questions three and four regarding the understanding and incorporation of feminism in men's intervention in 'domestic violence'. Set within the framework of ideological codes, the chapter looked at gender-neutral discourses of 'domestic violence', and how this has gained currency in public discourse. It then went on to situate the gender-neutral discourse, and the symmetry discourses of "women are as violent as men" in the broader context of 'backlash' and opposition towards feminism. At one level, it explored how these gender-neutral discourses have been taken up at institutional levels and how they can work to neutralise and dilute feminism in general. At another level, it also explored the complex networks of discourses of resistance, counter resistance, and counter-counter resistance, as part of a number of strategies and devices that are used to retain feminism and feminist rationales.

Chapter nine, departed somewhat from the preceding analysis chapters, in that it explored men's politics on masculinity and male practices, and relates specifically to research question five, regarding the impact that working in this area has on social practices of masculinity. In order to assess how participants' involvement and knowledge regarding 'domestic violence' and gendered social relations was applied in relation to organisations both within and outside of the 'domestic violence' sector, as well as at a more personal level, the chapter analysed the participants' talk around homosocial and men-only groups. For some men, and in direct relation to their past relationships with feminism and feminist women, a desire to be with other men was apparent. Whilst some men categorically rejected any desire to belong to men-only groups, others demonstrated a longing for the same, and actively sought out creative and spiritual ways of understanding their masculinity. The concern about these types of men-only groups, centred around the reproduction of homosocial values, and a reconfiguration of 'late modern chivalry'.

This chapter now moves on to discuss in more detail the key findings of this research, how they relate to the specific aims stated above, and their contribution to a wider understanding of the 'domestic violence' sector.

#### **10.4 Discussion: Key Findings**

This section concentrates on four key findings and their implications in relation to the research questions. It is important to note that the findings are neither exclusive nor a perfect fit with regard to the research questions, rather each of the key findings feeds into and partly addresses each question in different ways. Also important to note is that the order in which the findings are discussed have been selected for the practical purposes of degrees of congruence with the order of the data chapters. The first finding in this section considers the significance of feminism as an ideological code, and uncovers the sometimes invisible role feminism plays in shaping institutional policy and discourse, as well as individual subjectivities. This section also discusses the reconceptualisation of violence against women into 'domestic violence', how it becomes incorporated into ruling relations and the resulting regulation of activism. This finding relates specifically to research question one as an

important feature of social organisation in the broader area of 'domestic violence', but it also relates, in part, to the remainder of the research questions, especially questions two, three and four. The second section considers gender-neutral and gender-symmetry discourses within the framework of feminism as an ideological code. It discusses the re-reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into 'domestic abuse', subjective positions and how feminism and its resistance shapes and influences the ways in which 'domestic violence' is talked about. In part, this finding, again, addresses question one, but is also important across the remaining questions. The third finding identifies a form of feminist everyday activism. Once more, this finding relates generally to question one, especially in identifying how activist struggle is incorporated into the relations of ruling. However, it also relates particularly to questions two, three and four, demonstrating how everyday activism can shape gender awareness, and how it contributes to men's understanding of feminism and feminists. The last key finding reflects on the size of men's intervention in 'domestic violence', which is relatively small. In a sense, this finding provides another contextual level for addressing how men's intervention occupies a space within the wider area of 'domestic violence', particularly in terms of social power and the opportunities that this can create. This section also addresses questions four and five, and looks at social practices of masculinity within the area of 'domestic violence', as well as considering men's desire for developing men-only groups.

#### ***10.4.1 The Spectre of Feminism, or Feminism as an Ideological Code***

In order to situate men's intervention within the sector of 'domestic violence', it was first necessary to review and link analysis between the 'domestic violence' sector in general. In view of this, Chapters six, seven and eight incorporated analyses of the sector as a whole, in an attempt to harness a current assessment of women's struggle, and to attain a clearer picture of the extent to which their work has been absorbed by the relations of ruling. At the same time, this process also helped to highlight similarities within the area of men's intervention. What all the analysis chapters do, is illustrate how 'feminism' can be seen at work in a multitude of ways, acting as an underlying,

organising factor and influencing the sector as a whole, as well as the subject positions of the men who work in it. In this sense, there is empirical evidence to suggest that feminism is amenable to analysis as an ideological code. When analysed this way, it can be seen that feminism is able to replicate its organisation across diverse multiple sites, not just through legislation and administrative settings, but also through academia, popular writing, popular media such as television, and importantly through the violence against women sector. That is not to say that it is determinate, nor definite, but rather, as with any ideological code, it can be adapted and added to and can incorporate changing policy initiatives, as well as cultural changes. What is important is that the social organisation of ideological codes requires people's active participation, and this can be seen at work in a number of ways. For example, the organising capacities of feminism are seen in action in Chapter six through the more obvious positioning of feminist women as the initiators of campaigning and support services for women, and the development of spaces which men are able to occupy.

Staying with Chapter six, the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into a problem that can be dealt with by government policy and the criminal justice system, is also organised by the feminism code. It is here that feminist activity has contributed to the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence'. A key factor in the feminist struggle was to have 'domestic violence' publicly recognised and criminalised. This process, however, has unintended consequences. One of which is the problem that men's violence towards women becomes absorbed into the relations of ruling, and the responses are then shaped by centralised procedures, or ideological methods of reasoning. This means that the social problem of not only 'domestic violence', but violence at the more general level, is variously understood by different institutions, which, in turn, creates institutional conflict and confusion, which was demonstrated in the men's accounts. The separating out of different types of violence in order to set sentencing tariffs, to organise and regulate funding, and to deal with and respond to changing government initiatives creates an institutional complex that is also shaped by the feminism code, but which works to reinforce the power of institutions. Indeed, institutional conflict was a theme around which a number of participants demonstrated their frustration. For



many participants, institutional powers impeded their work, especially in terms of powers attributed to the criminal justice system.

Feminism as an ideological code also helped to unpack how feminism was understood variously by participants, and was examined in Chapter seven. It is here that the ideological code works to shape subjectivities and position people discursively. In total, the concepts identified through the participants' talk, which they drew upon to convey their understanding, and to position themselves in relation to feminism, amounted to twenty one, with two more concepts of gender-neutrality and symmetry added in Chapter eight. The majority of these concepts were negative, with some forms of feminism understood as 'extreme', hostile and threatening. Nevertheless, the same concepts were used by participants in relational ways, with some activating the negative concepts to enable them to establish their affinity with the feminist struggle, as well as demonstrating their sophisticated understanding of different forms of feminism. Other participants demonstrated their use of feminist tenets to inform their men's programmes, but at the same time distanced themselves either from feminism in general, or from 'radical feminism' in particular. This highlighted the ideological dilemmas that participants face in their everyday work.

What was particularly surprising, was that the negative concepts that circulate within feminism as an ideological code and organise how it is understood and spoken about, have direct associations with, or are derivatives of 'radical'. 'Radical', thus appeared to be a central and powerful signifier within the feminism code, which suggests that the principles associated with the women's movement, and with 'radical' forms of feminism, have had a significant impact on UK society. To an extent, these findings on participants' 'individual' understandings of feminism support Connell's (1990) study, discussed in Chapter two. Where the participants in this study differ, is in relation to participants' understanding of institutionalised patriarchy and gendered economic inequalities. However, this is not straightforward. Whilst most participants demonstrated a good knowledge of gendered inequalities, at the same time many were critical of the 'radical' forms of feminist struggle that had helped bring about these changes. This conflict drew directly from negative concepts identified in feminism as an ideological code. These

findings are also in line with Riley (2001), and support her claim that the mainstreaming of some feminist values, along with a gender-neutral approach, has allowed feminist values to be supported, whilst feminist women themselves are constructed in negative ways. Moreover, Riley's insights on the separation of *feminism* and *feminist* as a significant discursive strategy for portraying egalitarian attitudes and values, whilst simultaneously maintaining sexist power structures is also held up.

Due to the negative associations within feminism as a code, important connections can also be made with opposition and resistance, or what is more popularly known as 'backlash', aimed at feminism in general, feminist ideology and feminist struggles for social change. Opposition and resistance towards feminism operates within complex networks and dynamics, and at a number of levels. For example, Chapter eight demonstrated how the concept of 'human rights' could be activated in such a way as to exert power and authority over feminism, despite 'human rights' also being a concept contained within feminism as an ideological code. In Lewis's account, 'human rights' as an ideological code supplies the vocabulary, language and discourses that work to mediate a public discourse that is in direct conflict with feminism. The public discourse of human rights, in a deft manoeuvre, effectively removes itself from being a concept contained within feminism, to an ideological code in its own right that incorporates feminism as one of its own concepts. This is one of the strategies or devices that helps to subsume feminism.

The influence of these devices that work to hide or avoid feminism can also be seen in action in other ways. For example, Women's Aid Federation, who choose not to state their public affiliation with feminism on their websites; or the ways in which many of the participants delivered men's programmes that were underpinned by 'radical feminist' principles, but who, at the same time, distanced themselves from 'radical feminism'; or indeed, and as outlined in Chapter nine, in the ways that some of the participants' desire for other men-only groups utilised similar models or principles as women-only consciousness-raising groups. In each case the spectre of feminism is present.

The role of feminism as an ideological code is highly significant and immensely complex. It contains and provides any number of discourses with

which to resist, avoid, challenge, and draw upon, in both positive and negative ways. It can be explicit and obvious, or it can be avoided, hidden, subsumed or negated; nevertheless, feminism is always present. Its capacity to organise across and within multiple sites is apparent, and while its adaptive abilities are seemingly endless, there is empirical evidence to suggest that 'radical' remains one of the key component concepts, and quite possibly constitutes the linchpin of feminism as an ideological code.

The next section remains within the framework of feminism as an ideological code, but picks up the phenomenon of gender-neutrality, in relation to resistance and opposition towards feminism, and also as a generator of men's social power.

#### ***10.4.2 Gender-Neutrality and Discourses of Resistance***

In Chapter eight I argued that gender-neutrality plays a key role in neutralising feminism. I also argued that it is possible to analyse the gender-neutral discourse in a context of 'backlash' or opposition towards feminist frameworks of violence against women, and, locate this opposition within the wider context of resistance towards feminism. Situating the gender-neutral discourses of 'domestic violence' within resistance towards feminism helps to provide insights into the production of 'expert' knowledge, and how this 'expert' knowledge might work to perpetuate a network of social relations within which feminist 'work' is controlled, regulated, subsumed and/or subjugated. This finding relates to question one and helps to situate both the wider area of 'domestic violence, as well as the conditions that men's intervention work within.

The gender-neutral discourses of 'domestic violence' definitions, coupled with the symmetry discourse, actively mediate a public discourse that works to neutralise feminism. I have shown how gender-neutrality is picked up and activated by various institutions and actors, and how, in this current climate, it appears that gender-neutral 'domestic violence' cannot be talked about without also invoking gender-specific 'domestic violence', and vice versa. Empirical data also suggests that invoking the gender-neutral or gender-specific discourses on 'domestic violence' in either a positive or a negative way is not the main issue. The point is that gender-neutral discourses, because

they have evolved from gender-specific discourses, rely on the gender-specific discourse for meaning. Thus, the gender-neutral discourse activates (Smith 1990) the gender-specific discourse, and, as appears to be the case, the gender-specific discourse more often activates the gender-neutral discourse.

The complexity involved in the back and forth exchanges of gender-neutral/specific discourses gives rise to their analysis within the wider social relations that make up feminist opposition. These intricate dynamics are in line with Hearn and Parkin's (1987) work on sexuality and power relations within organisational and employment situations. They utilise Lukes' (1974) theories on power as direct and indirect behavioural control, and the control and influence of social structuring, as well as Giddens' (1979) framework of the changing and dialectical forms of power relations, to explain the complex processes involved in power and resistance. Hearn and Parkin identify at least four forms of power:

Power (Power 1) may create powerlessness; but (apparent) powerlessness will often bring forth resistance (power 2); moreover that powerlessness may obscure its own potential of counter-power (power 3) (as in labour-power); and that potential power is likely to bring forth the resistance of the powerful (power 4). (Hearn & Parkin 1987:59)

These four forms of power are similar to that which I described, in Chapter eight, section 8.2.1. Beginning with the social condition of women's oppression, which instigated struggle and resistance, which then resulted in a counter-resistance that included the gender-symmetry discourse, which then brought forth the counter-counter resistance that was needed to critique the gender-symmetry and gender-neutral discourse. These discourses of resistance operate at various levels, and can be variously reconfigured according to any situation or location, and depending on the actor(s) involved. What makes the counter-resistant discourses so powerful, however, are the institutional authority they can carry.

The example of training the trainers I gave in Chapter eight, is particularly noteworthy for its ability to demonstrate not only these discourses in action, but also the power and influence of *institutionally endorsed* discourses of counter-resistance. Here the discourses of symmetry and

gender-neutrality are taken up institutionally and then acted upon, reinforced and disseminated into the wider community as 'expert knowledge'. This example showed another stage in the development of violence against women. Chapter six showed how men's violence towards women has been reconceptualised into 'domestic violence' and absorbed into ruling relations that shape responses and curb activism. A further stage has now been suggested. As a direct response to the discourses and thinking around gender-neutrality and symmetry, 'domestic violence', at least in some regions, has been (re)reconceptualised into 'domestic abuse'. As a point of note, there has been, from some women's organisations, a parallel push to rename 'domestic violence' into 'domestic abuse'. The main reasoning behind this concerns women experiencing men's violence, but who do not perceive it as 'violence'. For some women, the 'violence' in 'domestic violence' is too strong a concept, and renaming it as 'abuse' helps more women to name their experiences. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a wider population of women has been lost in public discourse, and 'domestic abuse' cleverly manages to explicate a *process* that is applicable to both men and women. This practice not only neutralises feminism, but extracts 'domestic abuse' from the political and social contexts in which it occurs.

'Domestic abuse' has effectively become an ideological method of reasoning stemming from a previous ideological method of reasoning. To put it another way, violence against women was reconceptualised into 'domestic violence' and 'domestic violence' has been, or is in the process of becoming 're-reconceptualised' into 'domestic abuse' for reasons of gender-neutrality. This 're-reconceptualisation' is incongruent with many women's experiences of men's violence against women. The act of reconceptualising a social problem that is overwhelmingly associated with men's social practices, into a practice that is gender neutral reproduces the gendered social system of male dominance and patriarchy. Moreover, this reconceptualisation also creates a space that men are actively encouraged to occupy. On the one hand, men, as part of the problem, are also part of the solution and are being given, by women, the responsibility of helping to manage the problem. On the other hand, the availability of men's programmes are mostly ignored. Men's programmes as part of a wide range of support for women, were not

embedded within the training, which further dilutes the problem as being one primarily belonging to men. Men's responsibility, then, occurs within a gender neutral context, which does not challenge or problematise men's and women's social relations in general. Social power is ceded to men under conditions that reproduce the wider gendered order. Men's personal politics are rendered irrelevant and there is a risk that any indifference, or even hostility towards feminism, at least certain *forms* of feminism, will be disseminated amongst many other individuals, professionals and institutions.

This concern around men's social power is continued in the next section, after first discussing transformation within their personal politics through processes of everyday activism.

### **10.4.3 From Everyday Activism to Organised Activism?**

Chapter seven analysed data that showed most of the men in this research had experienced intimate relationships with either feminist or strong women, or with family members. These findings relate directly to research question two, and uncover some of the factors that contributed to working in the area of men's violence prevention. In line with Christian (1994), Connell (1990) and Pease (2000), the women in their lives had actively encouraged an awareness of gendered relationships and the imbalances this created. For many of the men, their involvement with feminist women had encouraged a renegotiation of their sexual politics, and facilitated an awareness around gendered social relations. This type of everyday activism could have been analysed within a framework of resistance(s), in that individual women have resisted conventional heterosexual relationships and have forged them on a more equal basis. However, Mansbridge & Flaster's (2007) work on everyday activism, and direct action in the home and workplace was well placed for articulating these experiences. In addition, Goffman's (1995) notion of 'Backstage', along with Scott's concept of 'infrapolitics', or below politics, were useful analytical tools for exploring processes that facilitate social change that do not fit within dominant social movement theory. Within this framework, other direct and indirect experiences that had further helped to develop gender awareness also arose. College, university and individual feminist scholars had

all helped to shape some of the participants understanding of feminism and social relations.

It is also significant that four of the professional men had, in the past, been employed for some considerable time in the Criminal Justice System, either in prisons or as probation officers, working at the front line with men who had been violent to their partners. As such, these men were aware of the methods and good practice that has developed within this area, in part due to the influence of feminism, and came into the voluntary sector qualified with a particular type of knowledge around working with violent men. This type of knowledge may also constitute another level at which feminism influences institutional practice. Notwithstanding, this knowledge has been effectively utilised in setting up community based projects. Because all four men held strong feelings around social justice, their work as individuals in bringing this kind of service into the voluntary sector, and thus into the domain of the public, might also be construed as individual activism. Participants were motivated to take forward these types of men's-work programmes to men who are not part of the criminal justice system in order to affect social change. As Alex pointed out, some feminists would perceive working with violent men, in order to change their behaviour, as activism.

In relation to research question one, situating the wider area of 'domestic violence', as well as the area of men's intervention, can be further analysed within the analytical framework of ideological codes. Nichols' (2006) work on activism as an ideological code helped to locate the work that men do within the relations of ruling. At the same time, Chapters six and eight depict how women's activism is also situated within the relations of ruling. What began as feminist activism in the area of men's violence has been curtailed and regulated through a number of neo-liberal working practices. Funding is one of the main energy sappers for individuals working in the voluntary sector. To operate as charities, organisations must be familiar with the economic discourse found in funding procedures, and people become caught up in complicated procedural thinking, in order to maintain resources. Changing government priorities and initiatives, along with targets, risk, monitoring and evaluation procedures all contribute to the regulation and suppression of activism. All these factors can be seen as institutional accountability

processes that have become the standard, but which often clash with the ethos of small voluntary organisations. Nichol's argues that the texts of funding bodies actively transform charitable organisations into organisations either eligible for funds or not, and these processes are backed up in this research. Indeed, activist work itself can be seen as synonymous with the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence', as it has been reconceptualised in terms of funding eligibility, accounting standards, management practices and target numbers, and incorporated into the relations of ruling (ibid).

#### **10.4.4 Men's Social Power**

The two previous sections have addressed the first four research questions by considering 'domestic violence' from the perspectives of feminism as an ideological code, and the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into a problem shaped by the relations of ruling. Within these perspectives, everyday activism has also been discussed. These perspectives are necessary as they are symbiotic with men's intervention work. Having situated men's intervention work within the wider context, I now want to focus on research question five and the men themselves. This does not detract from how men are situated within the area of 'domestic violence', rather it provides additional detail with which to locate men further, and connects this with what Hearn calls 'the hegemony of men' (2004).

Chapter six uncovered empirical evidence that suggests the area of men's intervention in 'domestic violence' is relatively small-scale. All except one of the professional men expressed concerns regarding their identity being revealed, and wanted to ensure as far as possible that they would not be recognised in the research. Indeed, seven of the eight professional men, and two of the campaign men were at many of the conferences, seminars and workshops I attended, especially those directly related to working with men and men's health. In part, the fact that many of the participants knew, or were aware of other workers in this area, was down to the umbrella organisations of Respect and the National Practitioners' Network, which were also discussed in Chapters six and nine. Moreover, participants were often at these events as keynote speakers or workshop facilitators. Most of the professional men interviewed were also involved elsewhere in the 'domestic violence' sector, in



an unpaid capacity. These voluntary positions included management or executive level roles, either in notably relevant organisations, or as representatives on local authority 'domestic violence' forums.

What is important, is the potential for recognition and prominence, in the sense that attracting and building personal status, credible reputations, and involvement in decision making is much higher for men. Because this sector, and the voluntary sector in general, is primarily made up of women, the reserves from which to draw male representation is, by default, much smaller. Women's political struggle around violence against women has thus opened up a space that effectively facilitates men occupying pivotal positions that can enable personal gain, the production of 'expert' knowledge, and also their involvement in crucial decision making. Of course, this is not to say that men will exploit their position or 'take over'. However, male dominance and patriarchal systems remain the overarching structure for contemporary Western societies, and one significant benefit or privilege enjoyed by men is the higher value placed on what they have to say. Men's talk remains valued over women's talk. This particular, and apparently invisible, aspect of men's social power was illustrated in Chapter nine through the NPN's derogatory use of terminology for men-only and women-only support groups; The Shed and The Hen House. These aspects of social power and privilege were also highlighted in Chapter eight with the unofficial recruitment of men to deliver multi-agency training on 'domestic abuse'.

Moving on to men's individualistic understandings of feminism, discussed in Chapter seven, these findings are in line with studies regarding the 'acceptable' versions of feminism (Christian 1994, Connell 1990, Edley & Wetherell 2001, Gough 1998/2000). This phenomenon was opened up further by utilising the analytic framework of feminism as an ideological code. Individualistic understandings of feminism and feminist analyses of violence against women constitute an important dynamic in the positions men occupy, and is another way in which social power can be exercised. Of major concern were hostilities towards forms of feminism that some participants termed 'extreme' or 'radical'. Despite most of the men wanting to change men's behaviour, many were comfortable with this only to an extent. Indeed, some of the men were openly hostile about women who appeared to have 'too much'

power. However, not all of the men displayed these attitudes. Half of participants, three of the campaign men, and five professional men, were comfortable with all forms of feminism, or at least did not agree with what other men deemed more 'extreme'. These findings suggest men's individualistic understandings of feminism are influenced by the availability of knowledges surrounding the different forms of feminism, which includes media caricaturing and negative resistance discourses. This leads to situations where 'radical' tenets are associated with more liberal forms of feminism. Nevertheless, the men themselves were all practicing various forms of masking, hiding, or subsuming feminism within their group-work programmes, which at various levels can feed into the current climate of opposition and resistance towards feminism.

Another way men's social power was demonstrated was through their desire to be with other men. In their own time, many of the professional men were working on developing men-only groups. This, in and of itself, is not problematic, but the politics behind some of these groups were not always progressive. Homosociality and hegemonic masculinity appeared to be reproduced in the NPN groups, as well as in some of the 'retreat', or more spiritual groups, but this went unchallenged. For one man, within a men's group-work setting, women were still viewed as honorary men. Developing this further, some of the more spiritual groups that were talked about, practiced a form of 'late modern chivalry', where it seemed that the power and strength of men should be used in more fairer and less aggressive ways. These findings are in line with Messner's (1997) work. He argues that central to mythopoetic movements is a contradictory and complex "loose essentialism" (ibid:18), which allows for traditional and essential differences between men and women. This helps to maintain the category of men without feelings of guilt or remorse, and also allows for changing whatever men choose to change, especially changes that involve costs within a narrow notion of modern and rational masculinity, such as relationships with other men, emotions and emotional wounding.

It appears that some men are caught up in the complexities of homosocial groups. While some men harbour a strong desire to change their masculine practices and behaviour, they also harbour an equal desire to be

with other men. Without a gendered analysis of wider social relations, this runs the risk of reproducing and reinforcing men's social practices, as well as reifying masculinity itself. Furthermore, retaining these traditional forms, runs counter to the women's movement goals of changing men's social and gendered practices, and can act as another complex form of resistance towards feminism. The costs of privilege are qualitatively different from gender oppression (Messner 1997, Pease in press), and whilst it may be understandably attractive to counter the costs of privilege and re-establish homosocial relationships, there is no corresponding political recognition of male privilege and the ways in which men oppress other men, as well as other women.

Another way to perceive this is through the framework of 'gender tourism' and 'forced entry' (Ashe 2007:76), or men's appropriation of feminist theory. It is argued that the declining legitimacy of traditional critical frameworks has encouraged men to use feminist analyses for their own gains, but without necessarily moving beyond exploitative gendered relationships (ibid, see also Robinson 2003). Here, the similarities between spiritual men-only groups and the lack of analysis on gendered social relations is salient. Tied to this, is the reasoning behind men-only groups that some men put forward, as being based on the feminist model of women-only consciousness-raising groups.

In short, the space created by women for men to work in has the potential to be used for developing and recruiting men-only groups where the politics are less progressive, or even anti-feminist, and can be seen as constituting further levels of resistance towards feminism and feminist goals.

The next sections moves on to reflect on key methodological and practical issues that have arisen during the process of this research.

## **10.5 Reflections**

This section reflects on the ways in which I have utilised IE, what it has enabled me to achieve, and where it has perhaps limited my research. It then goes on to look at 'radical feminism', not only as a major theme that underpinned this research, but also as a constant spectre that is at times visible and at others hidden.

### **10.5.1 Institutional Ethnography and Dorothy E Smith**

Institutional ethnography (IE), is a theoretically sophisticated form of analysis, but is also methodologically challenging. The theoretical concepts Smith uses are eclectic, but synthesise well. Having a working knowledge of all the social theories that Smith utilises is a demanding task, and one that can only be acquired through years of scholarly work. Therefore, social theorists such as Goffman or Bakhtin, have not been used in any significant way in this study. Rather, Marx's materialist methods of analysis and a 'radical feminist' epistemological framework have been primary to conducting this research. Within this framework, ruling relations, ideological methods of reasoning and ideological codes have been the key analytical tools used to address the research questions.

Smith claims that her method of inquiry constitutes a paradigm shift and a different way of doing sociology (2005). I have much sympathy with this, as her work does provide a different way of looking at everyday social life and social relations. Two of her crucial shifts are those of investigating everything from a gendered and/or racialised perspective, and questioning the assumptions that are embedded within much of main(male)stream research. As such, feminism is implicitly woven throughout her work, yet the different forms it takes are not explicit. Rather, Smith uses the women's movement as her anchor, as well as the activism, consciousness-raising and paradigm shifts that this facilitated. Neither does Smith appear to explicitly analyse governance in the Foucaultian sense, rather every aspect and social theory that she uses is infused with politics and the relations of ruling.

Part of the rationale that underpins IE is that of bottom-up inquiry, that begins with a certain standpoint and then leads outwards. This maps the ways in which people are caught up in ruling relations, how their work is in concert with others outside of their local knowledge, and how people actively participate in the orchestration of social relations. IE also helps to identify ideology in practice, or social practices that begin in social relations, but are then worked up into ideological methods of reasoning that work over and above us, obscuring the social relations they were initially extracted from. This research has identified how 'domestic violence' has been reconceptualised in

just such a manner. It has established this by taking as its entry point, men who work in 'domestic violence'. In the sense that IE is eclectic and researchers are asked to 'follow their nose', the area of 'domestic violence' consists of many different component parts. I have, of course, been eclectic in the areas I have opened up for more detailed analysis, however, this selectivity was also borne from 'following my nose', and exploring the areas that I felt were most pertinent. Indeed, one of the most important tasks for me, was to be aware of concepts and their organising capabilities. Feminism as an ideological code became more and more apparent during the course of this research, and was identified and explored in relation to its position and capacity for organising social relations within 'domestic violence'.

This research has not followed a pure or orthodox IE, rather I used IE to explore the wider area of 'domestic violence' and examine the current conditions it was working under and within. As such the research process was larger and messier than more conventional IE studies. If I had followed a more orthodox inquiry I would have designed the research in a different way. For example, if the aim of this research was to investigate only how feminist activism has been incorporated into neo-liberal working practices, then I would have designed this research in a similar way to Nichols (2006). However, uncovering the different processes and working practices that work to regulate activism was only part of the picture. To my knowledge, there is very little research on how the growth of men's intervention in men's violence is situated within existing conditions, or how it interconnects with feminist goals. Moreover, Smith (2006:2) states quite clearly that although there is theory being formulated on how IE might be thought of as a sociology, and a number of examples, techniques as well as practical advice on how to go about using it, "none of these are intended to impose an orthodoxy."

Finally, where Smith's work has not been particularly helpful, was in Chapter nine, where I explored participants' talk around homosociality and the desire to be with other men. That is not to say that Smith's work cannot facilitate analysis here, but at this current time it is difficult to envisage how I would have done this.

The next section reflects on the term 'radical feminism', and the different ways in which it was used in relation to this research, and at a more personal level.

### ***10.5.2 The Spectre of 'Radical Feminism'***

This research has highlighted the many different ways that 'radical feminism' is understood and used. It can be used institutionally, professionally, academically, individually and analytically. Importantly, it is also used as a shorthand within everyday conversations to convey meaning, this can be either positive or negative. During the interviews, my participants often used the term to invoke 'extreme' forms of feminism, and as a means of expressing detriment or criticism. One of the most significant and interesting factors of participants use of 'radical feminism' were the ways in which they assigned its tenets to current forms of feminism that are deemed more 'reasonable' in their outlook.

At a more personal level, before beginning this research, I was comfortable in naming myself as a 'radical feminist'; however, my feelings and understanding of this term have changed dramatically. Although I was aware of some of the negative connotations surrounding the term, I was unaware of the complex theoretical tensions associated with it. I can no longer name myself as a 'radical feminist' without invoking the vast scenery of problematic assumptions that have been uncovered in this research, both at an individual level and within the academy. However, to my mind, losing the term 'radical feminist' means a set of core principles and values are avoided, masked, hidden or lost altogether, which is not acceptable in today's climate of resistance and opposition towards feminism in general. To do this would mean contributing to the highly complex network of power and resistance that makes up this same opposition.

The next section discusses areas and themes that have been uncovered, and which appear to be in need of further investigation

## **10.6 Further Research**

This thesis reports on an area of considerable breadth and scope, and there is concern that I cannot do justice to it. There were a number of themes

that arose during the course of this research that there was not the space to explore in more detail. Themes such as social class and the different forms of violence that men experience under patriarchy were not explored. Neither were participants' experiences of violences, done both *to and by* them. In addition, different frameworks of analysis could have been used. For example, the similarities and differences between campaign men and professional men could have been compared. Another study might have explored multiple experiences, such as the experiences of men who deliver the men's programmes, men who used the programmes, their partners and the women's organisations who supplied support for the partners. In this way, a number of entry points would have been examined and research could uncover how experiences converge and/or differ. This might also reveal the extent to which the programmes 'worked', as well as uncovering the difficulties each group of people experienced under standardised working practices and the relations of ruling.

The findings from this research, then, provide only a partial picture of the conditions within which the participants worked, but it also gives a starting point, or context, for more focused study that is able to dovetail, and one such area could explore the intricate workings and institutional connections within the sphere of event organisation. Attending the various public and semi-public events constituted a considerable part of the field work, and at the time of attending these different events I was unaware of how significant a part they would play in the final analysis and writing up of the thesis. Although it may appear that they have contributed very little to the analysis, these events have influenced my thinking, and have furnished me with a wealth of invaluable knowledge that contributes to, and complements my theoretical and empirical analysis regarding how the domestic violence sector is organised. Attending these events meant actively engaging with a multitude of ideas, institutions, organisations, policies, and not least observing the men and women who attend: who, why, the proportional split between men and women, and their interactions with each other. Indeed, one insight gained concerned the differences in rationale that underpinned events. Events organised by feminist academics and activists tended to be concerned with the consequences of men's violence. However, events that were organised primarily by men around

masculinity and behaviour, tended to focus on men's health issues, particularly their mental and emotional health, and this phenomenon constitutes an area in need of further research.

This research also suggests a move towards the commodification of 'domestic violence', and this constitutes another key area for further research. The component parts identified within the 'domestic violence' sector, such as organisations that provide women's support services, organisations that work with men who have been violent, training awareness organisations, academia, research, government initiatives and policies, suggest the 'domestic violence' sector is more than a 'sector', rather it has become an institution in itself. This, along with the involvement and interconnections across various other institutions, such as the criminal justice system, the financial sector, and the government, create a network of institutional complexes that not only work to incorporate the social problem of 'domestic violence' into the relations of ruling, but potentially commodifies it. This commodification can be seen in two profitable ways: personal profit, and monetary profit. Personal profit enables the establishment of careers, reputations, status and kudos for those men (and women) who make the decision to work in this area. The social power that men already carry in the wider gendered structure means they carry benefits and privileges that assume an authority and, thus, they are able to occupy social positions that can facilitate their authoritative voices. Monetary profit would examine the 'economy' that has developed within the sector, and would take into account funding in its various forms; conferences, especially the development of private conference organising; and training and awareness workshops, including those that are privately operated.

Other areas that have been highlighted for further research, centre around feminism and its opposition. Further study could begin with men *and* women who work in violence intervention, but could concentrate on attitudes and thinking around feminism in an effort to locate its opposition in more detail within the areas of 'domestic violence', and also compare this situation with other areas of violence against women. One last area of research concerns activism. This study uncovered a number of processes that work to constrain and regulate feminist and profeminist activism, and further research could explore the strategies and devices people use to retain their motivation and



commitment, and how paths are negotiated between an activist ethos and the standardised working practices that tend to incorporate activist work into the relations of ruling. Research could also explore how women use the Gender Equality Duty Act to their advantage, rather than their disadvantage. Or how counter-counter discourses of resistance have evolved to overcome barriers that promote gender equality. The insights gained from this type of research would provide much needed knowledge that would assist and facilitate women's struggle to alleviate their oppression.

## **10.7 Conclusions**

This research is one of few empirical studies that focuses on the growing area of men's intervention in men's violence towards women, and has attempted to synthesise theory, practice, and activism. My first aim was to explore the 'space' that women have created, that can loosely be termed 'men's intervention with men who have been violent to women they know'. Secondly, I wanted to situate this area of men's intervention within the wider area of violence against women, and examine the practical application of feminist values. Thirdly, I wanted to explore the men themselves; how they came to be working in this area, their understanding of feminism and feminist values, and whether they were furthering and/or disseminating these values.

What this research suggests, is that the goals of the women's movement, in this case, 'freedom from violence', have been reconceptualised and incorporated into the relations of ruling. There is also regional evidence to suggest the re-reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence' into 'domestic abuse'. These reconceptualisations have important and wide reaching political implications in terms of gender-neutrality and resistance towards feminism. As part of the same process, feminist and profeminist activism has also been regulated and absorbed into neo-liberal working practices and a marketised, corporate working ethos. This incorporation effectively subsumes, constrains and regulates activism, whilst simultaneously delivering much needed public welfare services.

This research also highlighted the complexity of power and resistance. Resistance is power, but it is exercised within an intricate network of social relations *and* power relations, and this has been explored through 'feminism'

as an ideological code. Indeed throughout this investigation the theme of feminism has been constant, which led to exploring feminism as a major organising factor within the area of 'domestic violence'. This was done primarily through Smith's analytical tool of ideological codes. The extent to which feminism as an ideological code possesses crucial organising capabilities cannot be overstated. Its complex interplay within and across institutional spheres, along with its abilities to organise social relations have only just begun to be mapped. This research identifies it in discourses surrounding gender-neutrality, in opposition towards feminism, in the reconceptualisation of 'domestic violence', and in individualistic understandings of feminism. In short the spectre of feminism is *always there*. It saturates the whole area of 'domestic violence' and imbues it with meaning. It can be avoided, masked, hidden, incorporated, subsumed, and or 'mainstreamed'. Nevertheless, when the surface is scratched, its powerful force is evident.

This study also suggests that the hegemony of men is prevalent throughout the area. Male dominance and patriarchal systems remain the overarching structure for a gender ordered society, and the benefits and privileges associated with this means the social power men carry can disproportionately facilitate career and status opportunities. In addition, some participants appear to be caught up in the complexities of homosocial groups. The desire to change masculine practices and behaviour can conflict with strong desires to be with other men in the form of men-only groups. Without a gendered analysis of wider social relations, these groups risk reproducing and reinforcing men's social practices, as well as reifying masculinity itself. Despite this, however, some men have taken a stance against men's violent behaviour towards women, and this appears to have come about as a direct result of the women's movement. The renegotiation of their everyday sexual politics with intimate partners has been instrumental in the lives of most men in this study. That this deeper understanding of gendered relations has, in part, come about through the unacknowledged everyday activism of feminist women, was unexpected, but remains encouraging.

Finally, whilst I have critiqued some of the practices and attitudes in the area of men's intervention in violence against women, I must also point out that the men interviewed in this study were, and remain, pro-active, innovative and

committed in their attempts at intervention and prevention. It should not be forgotten that their interventions exist within prevailing gendered social conditions, and that contemporary social practices that exist in their own institutions and the many institutions they work across, also (re)produce these same conditions. Political, social, media and institutional attitudes towards gender and sexist practices have not evolved far enough to facilitate the feminist goal of freedom from male violence. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that great inroads have been made. Working with men constitutes an essential component for improving the lives of women, and the contributions of men like those in this study remain an invaluable resource. Moreover, in the spirit of IE, this research has revealed areas that have undergone change, but at the same time it has also identified areas that might be amenable to change at an activist level.

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## Appendix A Participant Information Form

September 2006

Carole Wright  
University of Huddersfield  
Queensgate  
Huddersfield HD1 3DH

Supervisors<sup>1</sup>:  
Prof Jeff Hearn email [j.r.hearn@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.hearn@hud.ac.uk)  
Prof Nigel Parton email [n.parton@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.parton@hud.ac.uk)

Dear

My name is Carole Wright, and I am a PhD student funded by the Economic and Social Research Council at the University of Huddersfield. I am carrying out doctoral research in the area of men's violence (including sexual violence), and the construction of masculinity, sexuality and gender relations. The title of my project is:

### **From boys to men: the gendered and social depths of male violence.<sup>2</sup>**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some background information about my study, and to ask whether you would be willing to participate in an interview. The interview would take approximately ninety minutes at a mutually convenient venue, and may also include sensitive issues.

My research is mainly focused on men who are opposed to violence and who are actively involved in violence prevention. Participants in this study may work in various areas where stopping violence forms part of their everyday work. The definition of 'work', here, is not limited to paid employment, but incorporates any activity that requires time, resources and/or action. Such areas might be delivering anti-violence programmes at both court mandated and voluntary levels; working with boys, young men and adult men and where violence is talked about in some way; working as political activists for anti-violence campaigns, or voluntary work that includes talking about violence and its prevention.

Although there may be no direct benefit for yourself by agreeing to participate in this study, you will be contributing to research that may benefit society in general, and may help to influence future policy. Your participation in this research is wholly voluntary, although your contribution will form an integral and valuable stage of the research. Anonymity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. Confidentiality will be assured as far as is possible, however, I should state that if a participant makes a declaration of future intent to harm, it will be my responsibility to advise the appropriate authorities. PhD studies are public documents and freely available, in addition and after completion, I will also make the findings available to you in the form of a summarised report, and you will be welcome to discuss them with me at any time.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact me by email ([c.i.wright@hud.ac.uk](mailto:c.i.wright@hud.ac.uk)) at which point we can arrange an interview. If you require further information or confirmation, you may also contact any of my supervisors at the University as detailed above.

Yours sincerely

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<sup>1</sup> At this early stage I had only two supervisors.

<sup>2</sup> Author's footnote additional to original document; this was the official title for the ESRC 1+3 Studentship. The thesis changed considerably during the early stages of research, thus the official title was replaced with the more apt thesis title of 'Men and their interventions in violence against women: Developing an institutional ethnography.'

## Appendix B Informed Consent

University of Huddersfield  
School of Human and Health Sciences  
Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH

September 2006

### INFORMED CONSENT

Name of Researcher: Carole Wright.

#### **Title of Project: From Boys to Men: Exploring the Gendered and Social Depths of Male Violence.**

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

I understand that there are no right answers, that some of the questions may consist of a sensitive nature and that I am free to refuse to answer any questions that I do not want to.

I understand that the interviews may be time consuming and that at my convenience I can take comfort breaks or terminate the interview and/or reconvene at a later date.

I understand that there will be no direct benefit or reward for taking part in this research.

I understand and give my consent for the interviews to be audio-taped, and for its contents to be used for research purposes.

I understand that the researcher will safeguard confidentiality of all my individual details. (Unless information is given that indicates future harm to myself or another third person, in which case the researcher will be obliged to inform the relevant authorities)

I understand that complete anonymity will be ensured, and that transcription from the audio tapes will bear no identification to myself or the agency I work in. However, I further understand that due to the nature of the interviewee sample there is a possibility that some participants may recognise each other, and that this is beyond the control of the researcher.

I give permission for the information I am about to give to be used for research purposes only (including research publications and reports) **with strict** preservation of anonymity.

I agree to my audiotapes (in line with conditions outlined above)

being archived and used by other bona fide researchers.

Yes / No

Signature of Participant .....

Signature of Researcher .....

## Appendix C Interview Schedule

### INTERVIEW THEMES

Interviews will be loosely structured, with questions on initial themes as follows (not necessarily in this same order, and also some themes may be covered or overlapped during the participants' discussion of other themes:

*Before we start, can I remind you that if you want to take a break at any time, please just say. Also, you will be completely anonymised and everything you say will remain confidential. I will need to identify you in some way in the research and I'm going to do this through a pseudonym – is there any particular name you would like to choose yourself, or would you prefer me to choose one? One other thing, if you find that you have more to say about things than you originally expected please don't feel that you need to rush through it all, as we can always make arrangements for another interview at a later date.*

- Do you have your CV with you?
- Can I ask you what class you would identify yourself as? Can you give me reasons for this?
- As a child, were you brought up with any religion? If so what denomination? Can I ask if you are (still) religious (now)?
- Were you brought up by your parents? If so, both?
- Do you have any siblings? Age in relation to yourself and their sex? Can I ask you about your sexuality? (Prompts: schooling, peer influences, family influences, cultural messages)
- Are you in a long term relationship?
- Do you have any children
- What made you take this job or become involved in this particular area?

OR

- What made you become involved in campaigning against violence?
- Personal definitions of violence  
(Prompts: sexual violence, rape, sexual coercion, marriage, ownership, sexualisation of children, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, associations (if any) made with (hetero)sexuality and violence, who commits most violence)
- Relationships toward feminism and feminist issues.  
(Prompts: close or intimate relations with feminists or strong women, different strands of feminism stereotypical or media representation, male domination.)



Before moving onto the next section, repeat the following statement about confidentiality:

*These next set of questions are of a more sensitive nature. I want to ask you now about any past violences that you may have experienced in some way. You can discuss with me as much or as little as you want in this section, and you do not have to answer anything that you do not want to, or that you feel uncomfortable with. I must also remind you, here, about confidentiality. Everything you say will remain confidential, but please do not divulge any specific or identifying details as I am obliged to work within the limits of the law, and any information that you give me that might indicate future intent to harm to yourself or another person, will oblige me to inform the relevant authorities.*

- Have you ever personally experienced anything that could be construed as violent, sexually violent or sexually coercive in the past.
- Have you ever done anything that could be construed as violent, sexually violent or sexually coercive in the past.

This next section is about your everyday work:

(prompts: Feminist protocol/Funding/Employment/Programmes – are they funded or matter of course/employment criteria)

- What does your work entail? Can you tell me something about the things you do and/or what you do in an ordinary working day?
- Which other organisations do you liaise with? Are they good/positive relationships?
- Is there anything other than you may have already mentioned that makes your job/work frustrating or difficult?
- Do you ever get involved in political activity that challenges men's violence – this can include challenging, demonstrating, petitioning etc., (prompts: anti-war, anti-pornography, men's groups...)

*Is there anything else you would like to say, or ask me?*

*Thank you very much for taking part. (Give participant thank you letter and help/support sheet)*

*Do you know of anybody else that may be willing to take part in this study?*

## **Appendix D Participant Helpline and Support Information**

### **SUPPORT AND INFORMATION**

Please note: The following list of help lines and websites does not constitute an endorsement of that service. It is the responsibility of each person accessing these services to check the suitability of information and advice.

#### **Andrea Adams Trust**

Is a charity dedicated to tackling workplace bullying. Their helpline **01273 704 900** offers confidential advice Monday to Friday 10am-4pm.

Website: [www.andreadamstrust.org](http://www.andreadamstrust.org).

#### **British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy**

E-mail: [bacp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bacp@bacp.co.uk)

Website: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

#### **British Association for Sexual and Relationship Therapy**

E-mail: [info@basrt.org.uk](mailto:info@basrt.org.uk)

Website: [www.basrt.org.uk](http://www.basrt.org.uk)

#### **Everyman Project**

Aims to help men to change violent or abusive behaviour. Their helpline for anyone concerned about a man's violence is open on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 6.30 to 9pm on **0207 263 8884**. Website: [www.everymanproject.co.uk](http://www.everymanproject.co.uk)

#### **London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard**

Providing information, support and referrals to lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, transsexuals and straight people wanting information on gay issues. Their helpline **0207 837 7324** is open 24 hours.

Website: [www.llgs.org.uk](http://www.llgs.org.uk).

#### **Men's Advice Line**

Provides support, advice and information for men experiencing domestic violence. Their helpline is open Monday to Thursday 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on 0845 064 6800.

Website: [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

#### **National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)**

Offers support for people abused, ill treated or neglected in childhood - regardless of how long ago this took place. Their helpline **0800 085 3330** is free and confidential, and opening times are from Monday to Friday 10.30am to 3pm, Wednesday evenings 7 to 9pm and Thursday evenings 8.30 to 10.30pm. They

are also open every 3rd Saturday in the month from 12 noon to 4pm and Sunday evenings from 8.30 to 10.30pm.

website: [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

### **NSPCC Child Protection**

If you're concerned about the safety of a child their Helpline **0808 800 5000** is free, confidential and open 24 hours every day of the year.

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Queery**

Data base providing support, advice, information and regional links on sexual identity issues.

Website: [www.queery.org.uk](http://www.queery.org.uk)

### **Rape Crisis**

Provides details on regional support for men or women and also contains information on what to expect when you go to the police and/or court procedures.

Website: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk).

### **Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre**

Offers support and information for women and girls over 14 years of age who have been raped or sexually abused, however long ago. Their helpline **0845 1221 331** is open Monday to Friday 12 noon to 2.30pm and 7 to 9.30pm, and weekends & bank holidays 2.30 to 5pm.

Website: [www.rasasc.org.uk](http://www.rasasc.org.uk)

### **Relate**

Provide advice and support for relationship problems. Their helpline **0845 130 4010** is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4pm. E-mail:

[enquiries@relate.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@relate.org.uk)

Website: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

### **Respect**

Is a national organisation providing help and support for both men and women who are experiencing abuse, and for men and women who are perpetrating abuse.

Respect also advise and support frontline workers and professionals in this field.

Their helpline number is **0845 122 8609** and is open Monday and Friday between 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm, and Tuesday and Wednesday between 10am-1pm and 2pm-8pm. Email: [info@respect.uk.net](mailto:info@respect.uk.net)

Website: [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

### **Samaritans**

Open 24 hours on **08457 90 90 90**.

### **Stop It Now!**

Advice and support for anyone who has abused, or thought about abusing a child. They also support the family and friends of abusers. Their free helpline **0808 1000**

**900**, and e-mail [help@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:help@stopitnow.org.uk) offer a confidential service to adults seeking advice or information who do not choose to identify themselves or other parties. Their helpline is open Monday to Thursday 9am to 9pm, and Friday 9am to 7pm.

Website: [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk).

### **SupportLine**

Is a national organisation providing an A to Z list of support and advice lines for emotional, abusive, sexual and relationship problems. Their confidential helpline number **020 8554 9004** is open to individuals of any age. Email:

[info@supportline.org.uk](mailto:info@supportline.org.uk)

Website: [www.supportline.org.uk](http://www.supportline.org.uk)

### **Survivors UK**

Provides information, advice and support for men who have been raped or sexually abused, or who are trying to cope with the abuse of someone close to them. Their helpline **0845 1221 201** is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 7pm-10pm. You can also e mail to [info@survivorsuk.org](mailto:info@survivorsuk.org)

Website: [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

### **Survivors West Yorkshire**

This site is for any adult abused in anyway as a child, their site provides a comprehensive list of website support and information links.

Website: [www.survivorswestyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.survivorswestyorkshire.org.uk)

### **The 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**

Provides free confidential advice, information and support for women experiencing physical, emotional or sexual violence in the home on **0808 2000 247**.

Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) or [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

### **Victim Support line**

Provides help and practical information for anyone who has been affected by a violent or sexual assault. Their helpline **0845 30 30 900** is open Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm, and Saturday & Sunday 9am to 7pm. There is also a minicom number for people who have hearing difficulties on **020 7896 3776**.

Website: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Every effort has been made to check the operation of these services and websites, which were last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

## Appendix E Thank You Letter

Thank You!

May I please take this opportunity to say thank you very much for taking part in this research project:

*From Boys to Men: Exploring the Gendered and Social Depths of Male Violence.*

Your contribution is important in helping to understand why and how some men take a stand against violence, and what is involved in carrying out their everyday work.

For information purposes, I have attached a participant sheet with a list of help and support agencies, although please note that this does not constitute an endorsement of those services.

This is a PhD study that will continue for the next two years and the results may not be available for some time. After completion, however, the PhD becomes a public document and is freely available. In addition, I will also make the results available to you in the form of a summary report. In the meantime, If you would like to be informed about any future academic journal publications that concern areas of this study, please contact me by email and I will ensure that you are sent a copy.

If you have any further questions, or if you require any further information about this research, please feel free to contact either myself on email: [c.i.wright@hud.ac.uk](mailto:c.i.wright@hud.ac.uk) or either of my supervisors at the University of Huddersfield: Prof. Jeff Hearn, email: [j.r.hearn@hud.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.hearn@hud.ac.uk)  
Prof. Nigel Parton, email [n.parton@hud.ac.uk](mailto:n.parton@hud.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

Carole Wright  
PhD Researcher