Men and Domestic Violence/Partner

Violence in Santiago, Chile:
the meaning of violence in masculinity

(Photos: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Cerro Navia, Santiago, Chile. 2008)
Abstract

This thesis explores the meaning of domestic violence from men’s perspective. It is based on the idea that if we want to disarticulate men’s violence, we need to understand how this violence is articulated within masculinity.

The research is an expression of “global ethnography” where global and local discourses on masculinity, masculinities and violence can be researched through a case study. Consequently, the objective of this research is to explore the meaning of domestic violence within masculine patterns of behaviour and thoughts at a specific local level. My case study is situated in Santiago, Chile.

The empiric information comes from a focal group and four in-depth interviews centred on domestic violence, men’s relationship with their partners (wife or girlfriend), and men’s sense of self, etc. Moreover, two life stories that explore ways in which a man’s identity has been built and is expressed today. All the interviewees were participating in a re-educational programme for men who had exerted violence on their partners.

My methodological choice was based in the thought that both interviews and life stories are narratives that represent an individual interpretation on a socio-cultural reality. In addition, men’s discourse represents culturally shared metaphors on masculinity and femininity. In that sense, one-man’s life story connects individual life to living that life in a specific culture.

About the context of the problem, this study describes different views on women, men and domestic violence taking place in Chile and how new discourses and practices have their expression in international agreements, national laws, as well as different programmes that aim at preventing and putting an end to domestic violence. Additionally, it reviews some statistics in order to figure out the current situation in domestic violence in Chile according to the police and the justice system.

The theoretical framework is provided by a gender perspective on the social reality. Femininity and especially, masculinity/masculinities are largely discussed. Furthermore, different conceptions on violence, gender-based violence and partner violence are examined. Finally, concepts such as gender positions and multiply constituted individuals, subjectivity, discourses and practices on partner violence are taken into account to analyze the information.

As it is shown through men’s testimonies a man who exerts violence on his partner follows the most traditional and regressive discourse on masculinity and femininity.
There are many worlds, but they all are in this one…

and it is in their diversity where beauty dwells
Acknowledgments

I do not have enough space to mention all of the teachers and colleagues from the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University; and friends from different corners of the world that helped me with comments, recommendations, discussions or just through listening with great patience to my out loud reflections. To each one; thank you for the company and advice. Still what I have achieved from your advice is entirely my responsibility.

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There are a handful of men, which were willing to share with me their stories, feelings and thoughts. It requires courage to talk openly about something so socially negatively signed as being a perpetrator of violence against women. I really appreciate the trust that these men deposited on me. Gracias también para ustedes.

Dedication

To my beloved Ingmar, my partner through life’s adventures
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Abbreviations

INE: National Institute for Statistics (*Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas*)

PRONOVIF: Project for non violence in the family (*Proyecto por la No Violencia en la Familia*)

SERNAM: Woman’s National Service (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer*)

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women

WHO: World Health Organization
Introduction

Domestic violence was not a totally unknown issue for me before I started my research. I had a previous contact with domestic violence, more correctly partner violence, during my work in México 12 years ago. In that moment, I was helping two NGOs\(^1\) dedicated to the subject – one for women and another for men\(^2\) – to evaluate and eventually, publish their methodology. This work gave me the idea to study men’s violence more in depth. The violence that women were and are subject to has been researched extensively the last 40 years, whereas to examine men’s behaviour and thoughts related to violence has not been as significant. This research is not only interesting but also necessary because it can give us understanding of masculine behaviour and probably, some perspective about changes on the gender order.

Consequently, this thesis explores the meaning of violence exerted by men in relationship with their women partners. The focus of the research was men that have been publicly accused by their partners as batters and in most of the cases, forced to attend a re-educational programme, in Santiago, Chile. The research purpose was to go into masculine patterns of behaviour and thoughts.

The first chapter places the issue both in a global and a local context and in a gendered and cultural perspective as well. Moreover, it describes the objective, questions and methodology of the research and finishes with a short review on the state of the art.

The second chapter explores the relationship between gendered subjects, masculinity, subjectivity, practices and violence. By doing so, it examines the gender order through diverse works on gender, performativity, masculinity and femininity. Moreover, it argues different conceptions on violence, gender-based violence and partner violence. Finally, it explores subjectivity, identity, gender positions and multiple constituted individuals.

The third chapter describes how different views on women and domestic violence occur in Chile. Consequently, also how the different views of men and masculinity also take place. These new discourses and practices have their expression in international agreements, national laws, as well as different programmes that stop and prevent domestic violence. In the chapter, it reviews some numbers in order to figure out the current situation in domestic violence according to the police and the justice system. In a few words, the third chapter

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\(^1\) APIS: http://www.comminit.com/es/node/37905
\(^2\) CORIAC: http://www.e-mexico.gob.mx/wb2/eMex/eMex_Colectivo_de_hombres_por_relaciones_igualitarias
presents both the attempts to stop domestic violence in Chile and some of the results of these attempts.

The fourth chapter reviews the information from a men’s focal group, in-depth interviews with these men and their life stories. The purpose of the chapter is to analyze the interviewees’ thinking and behaviour related to violence in the present moment of their lives, as well as in the past. The idea behind the analysis of the interviews is that one man’s discourse is a social-cultural interpretation of the reality. This social reality is structured by a specific gender order, which results in a “discourse”, discourse that is possible to grasp from the individual’s testimonies.

Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the main results of the research through answering the research questions and reflecting additionally on possible implications of the findings.
Chapter I: The Issue

If there is any hope of dramatically reducing the high levels of men’s violence... we are going to have to find a way to look beyond individual perpetrators... This societal introspection is a daunting task, more daunting even than the war on terrorism. It is a lot easier to focus on external enemies, however elusive, than it is to look inwards (Katz, 2006:33).

1. Problem and Relevance

There is no human action without meaning. As we are constituted by culture, every human action communicates and has meaning. Having breakfast communicates as much as not having it; the latter sometimes is called anorexia. Using a veil is a synonym of women’s oppression in certain contexts and women’s resistance, in others (Mahmood, 2001).

Violence against women and domestic violence also communicate and can be decoded in cultural terms. One can say that domestic violence reproduces an established order, certain ways of living, and customs. It is violence that occurs in the domestic sphere, a space where daily practices of reproduction of living conditions take place. Nevertheless domestic violence does not only have this reproductive function, it also has a symbolic function which establishes who rules and who obeys. Therefore, we can ask which order is reproduced: gender order and hierarchies. As a recent report states:

Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to prevent women's full advancement (European Parliament, 2006).

Both at the global and at the local level domestic violence (usually men’s against their female partners) is considered a problem. An example of such a global concern with this issue is the World Report on Violence and Health (WHO, 2002) and at the local level Prevalence and determinants of male partner violence against Mexican women: a population-based study (Rivera et al, 2004).

Global perspectives are also incorporated in Non-Governmental Organisation’s (NGOs) perspectives and practices; NGOs that work against domestic violence –among other issues– use in their documents, for example the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and feminist theory from the USA and Europe.

Both at the governmental and non-governmental level in Latin America there are programmes in order to prevent and stop domestic violence. In general, these programmes are directed towards work with women who are subjects of the violence together with their children. Much fewer are the initiatives, which are focused on men. Although -as many people who work in
programmes against domestic violence know-, there are women who do not consider their partner’s violence as something unjustifiable. Many men who exercise violence towards their wives do not consider this to be unjustifiable either (Banda and Alemany, 2006:157). This can be better understood in the Latin-American context –and in other parts of the world as well, where the gender relations are constituted and based on a certain kind of dominant masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is characterised as dominance over women and children, maximum virility and competition among men amounting to the exercise of violence and prestige by, for example having multiple relationships with women (Connell ‘without year’ and Cazes, 1994). Femininity –on other hand- is constituted by a “vital dependence” on men and women’s subjection to powers incarnated by men and patriarchal institutions (Lagarde, 1990).

It is possible to get a general idea about the issue in Chile reading Claudia Riveras’s monograph (without year). In summary, she reports that four out of ten women suffer psychological violence and states that between 25 and 32% of them have suffered physical violence. Moreover, seven or eight out of ten women have been forced to have sexual intercourse at some time.

I consider domestic violence as an expression of gender violence, which can be defined as

…violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which arises from unequal power relationships between men and women (UNIFEM, w/d:3).

In many documents, gender violence, most correctly gender-based violence, is understood as violence against women. This has been defined as

…any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (CEDAW, 1979).

Because I consider these inequalities and oppressions to be a result of the gender order, as something to be challenged and finally eliminated, I believe it is important to explore the meaning of domestic violence from the individual and subjective perspective while considering the different subject positions.

O’Toole et al write in the preface of the book Gender Violence (2006) that

Understanding gender violence requires a merging of the analytical and experiential realms. Working toward a solution will ultimate require an understanding of both social dynamics

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3 “La investigación comparativa del ente estatal sobre violencia intrafamiliar concluye que 4 de cada 10 mujeres sufren violencia psicológica y entre 25[%] y 32[%] han sido patadas, arrostradas o han recibido una golpiza. Las manifestaciones de violencia y frecuencia de violencia intrafamiliar, arrojaron que entre 7 a 8 casos de cada 10 fue en algún momento forzada a tener relaciones sexuales en contra de su voluntad” (Claudia Rivera, w/y).
and of the pain and tragedy that gender violence wreaks in the lives of women, men and children around the world (O’Toole et al, 2006: page xiv)

In this sense, it is important and necessary to embrace the issue not only from a theoretical perspective but also from the people’s experience. Consequently, I argue that if we want to disarticulate men’s violence, we need to understand how this violence is articulated within masculinity: men’s ways of being a man.

2. Objective

The objective of this research is to explore the meaning of domestic violence within masculine patterns of behaviour and thoughts at a specific local level. My case study is situated in Santiago, Chile.

3. Research Questions

Consequently the questions that guide the research are:

- What is the meaning of partner violence within masculine patterns of behaviour and thoughts?
- How can one explain partner violence from men’s subjectivity?
  - When does partner violence become problematic for these men?
  - How do the men conceive their violence and the partner violence?
- What are the discourses on domestic violence and masculinity in media, government and NGOs in Chile?

4. Methodology

This document is based on a fieldwork and participant observation at the “Programa de Violencia Intrafamiliar de Cerro Navia” in Santiago, Chile; where I was during November and December 2008.

Using participant observation in this programme was the best method to get in contact with the issue of domestic violence because it works with “violent men”. It was also an adequate

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4 Abusive behaviour (can be physical or psychological) by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such marriage or cohabitation. See chapter II
5 Cerro Navia is one of 37 “comunas” (districts) in Santiago and is situated northwest of the metropolitan area. Its population was 184,312 (75,931 women and 72,921 men); according to the most recent census in 2002 with a negative demographic growth; and it is one of the districts with most poor people in the city (just four out of the 37 have higher percentages). [http://www.ine.cl/canales/chile_estadistico/censo_poblacion_vivienda/censo2002/mapa_interactivo/mapa_interactivo.htm](http://www.ine.cl/canales/chile_estadistico/censo_poblacion_vivienda/censo2002/mapa_interactivo/mapa_interactivo.htm)
method because it “...can allow us to discover the existence of patterns of thought and behaviour” (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002:100).

The men’s programme against domestic violence in Cerro Navia has a strong psychological imprint. The activities with the men are individual and therapeutic hence I consider important to have a collective approach with them. Consequently, during the participant observation I had two focus group discussions.

There are different kinds of focus groups depending on its purpose, although they “…share characteristic in common including; high degree of structure, specific target issues, goal orientation…” (Chambers and Chambers, 2003:226). I used this strategy in order to get a first hand “inside” explanation of domestic violence and to get information for my individual interviews. I was aware that a focal group situation could provoke men to give the “right” definition or to avoid differences in opinions, but I considered this an opportunity to approach (possible) different discourses on domestic violence and masculinity.

Based on the information collected through focal groups I created four in-depth interviews and two life stories. One might think that the number of interviews and life stories is not significant, but my choice is based in two basic ideas. The first is that both interviews and life stories are narratives by a *gendered bodily subject* (Järviluoma *et al*, 2003:46) and in that sense represent an individual interpretation on a socio-cultural reality (Herbert and Rodger, 2007:2). The second idea follows Järviluoma *et al* (2003:49) when they state “…culturally shared metaphors for the course of life generalize and link individual life to life in a specific culture”. Consequently, the interviews were centred on domestic violence, a man’s relationship with his partner (wife or girlfriend), and a man’s sense of self, etc. The life story explores ways in which man’s identity has been building and is expressed today.

In order to look at different sources of discourses on domestic violence and masculinity, I also analyzed documents from “Unidad de Prevención de Violencia Intrafamiliar” (part of The Woman’s National Service), from the “Programa de Violencia Intrafamiliar de Cerro Navia”. Finally, I analyzed some documents recently written in Chile on men and masculinity.

The collection of data during my time in Chile included reading about masculinity in general; and masculinity and domestic violence in particular, in two main newspapers in Santiago. However, this activity did not show itself to be very fruitful. Official discourses can be read better in official papers. Men’s discourse I could access through the interviews and domestic violence just appear in newspapers when its result is the death of a woman. The analysis of
the different discourses is done with the help of pertinent literature, part of which has already been mentioned.

My research is an expression of “global ethnography” (Burawoy, 2001) where global and local discourses on masculinity, masculinities and violence can be researched through a case study; in Burawoy’s words

Globalization [is] an artefact manufactured and received in the local. Globalization is produced and consumed…in real organizations, institutions and communities, etc. From this point of view the global becomes ethnographic (Burawoy, 2001:148).

Therefore, in this case one can follow the global spreading of discourses on gender, violence against women, domestic violence etc. and ethnographically go through how these discourses are re-manufactured at the local level.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the meanings of domestic violence from men’s perspective and because of that, it is based on interviews with men that have exerted violence on their partners. Consequently, it is central to make clear that the option of interviewing and listening to men does not lead to justify or validate men’s behaviour. Most certainly, this research follows Aijmer and Abbink perspective.

When we speak of ‘meaning’ it is not to advance a cultural-relativist view on the (‘positive’) meaning of violence performance for the perpetrators, but to refer to the contexts in which this performance is enacted and carries ‘communicative messages’ (Aijmer and Abbink ed, 2000:xiii).

Finally, but no less important, this research can be considered as part of cultural studies which means to study a specific culture on subjects as gender, identity, everyday life, etc (Johansson and Sernhede, 2002). Culture has been historically defined in many ways and for the purposes of this research; I use Inda and Rosaldo’s definition.

[Culture is]…the sphere of existence in which people make their lives, individually and collectively, meaningful; and it encompasses both the practices through which meaning is generated and the material forms –popular culture, film, art literature, and so forth – in which it is embodied” (Inda and Rosaldo 2008:12).

Consequently, this research is about violence in people’s daily lives, within their most intimate relationships; and about the meaning of this violence for men’s identity.

5. State of the Art

There are among others, three pieces of research linking violence and masculinity, which are important to start with. The first was published in 1991 by Myriam Miedzian who states that there is a “masculine mystique” (2002: xxiv). For her this masculine mystique has different
expressions in different contexts and the result is ultimately the same. Therefore, her major thesis is

…that many of the values of the masculine mystique, such as toughness, dominance, repression of empathy, extreme competitiveness, play a major role in criminal and domestic violence…(Miedzian, 2002: xxiv).

Her main purpose is to understand how men become physically violent in the context of the USA. Based on this understanding, she makes suggestions for social change.

The second piece of research is a PhD thesis in Gender Studies by Michelle Jones, Australia (2004). She is referring to violence in a broader sense and her purpose is to research

…the ways in which men negotiate contradictory discourses to accommodate their domestic violence into their sense of self (Jones, 2004:299).

To achieve this, she focuses her research on the men -and women related to them- who participate in men’s groups organized by local Governments in Australia. In a few words, Jones is reflecting on the meaning of domestic violence for the men who perpetrate it. She also takes into a count the meaning of this violence for the women that have been subject to these men’s violence.

The third piece of research is a descriptive study of the social construction of gender and men. The study made in Viña del Mar, Chile by Menares and Saavedra; is a thesis on social work and “…describes the Social Construction of Genre [sic] that men do with respect to the phenomenon of Couple Violence” (2008:4). This study is interesting because it focus on both men who have perpetrated violence against women and men who have not. Moreover it limits the research to “couple violence”, in other words violence which occurs between men and women who are or have been in a relationship and live (or have lived) together. As one of the main conclusions, the researchers do not find substantial differences between violent men’s and non-violent men’s discourses on masculinity and their ways of conceptualizing themselves.

Finally, there is a book written by various Chilean authors: “Diálogos sobre el Género Masculino en Chile” (Montecinos and Acuña ed. 1998) where one can find different discourses on masculinity in Chile. Especially interesting is the article El Estado Desnudo. Acerca de la Formación de lo Masculino en Chile written by José Bengoa (in Montecinos and Acuña ed, 1998: 47-) which intends to explore the relationship between gender and the way
that the Chilean state has been formed. In his article, Bengoa is exploring violence, authoritarianism, dominance and subordination within the state and masculinity\(^6\).

### 6. The Limits of the Thesis

The research:

- has men as *informants*. Women’s voices will be explored through secondary sources.
- is on heterosexual men.
- is on men that have exerted domestic violence not on those who have not exercised violence.
- is on men in a specific programme. This means men living under certain conditions of life as related to Cerro Navia, which is one of the districts with the poorest people in the city. Nevertheless, all interviewed men had work.
- is specifically not exploring other kinds of gender violence such as child abuse, rape, etc. However, these problems might be present in the lives of the men and women that I researched.

### 6. Ethical Considerations

The empirical data I have used in this thesis is recorded, both the focal group and the interviews. I asked the interviewees their permission to do it explicitly promising that their identities would remain anonymous. Surprisingly all the interviewees were unconcerned about their identities being public, probably because they have been already denounced as “violent men” by their families and by the justice system. Despite of this fact, their names and identities are not mentioned in this thesis, because I believe domestic violence, partner violence is an issue much bigger than individuals are.

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\(^6\) In his words the objective “…no puede ser otro que el análisis de la violencia, el autoritarismo, la dominación y subordinación en nuestra sociedad” (Bengoa in Montecinos and Acuña ed, 1998: 48)
Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

Interdisciplinary study consists in creating a new object, which belongs to no one. Roland Barthes (1972)7

In this chapter, I explore and try to explain the relationship between gendered subjects, masculinity, subjectivity, practices and violence. I analyze different conceptions about violence, gender-based violence and partner violence.

To start with, I examine Gender Order through Lagarde’s and Cazés’ work on gender, and masculinity and the situation of women in Latin American contexts. I also discuss Butler’s concept of performativity; gender definition by The Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre and by Stern and Nystrand.

I explore as well different conceptions on violence, gender-based violence and partner violence. With this purpose, I examine World Health Organisation and UNIFEM documents and authors like Antonio Ramirez and Henrietta Moore.

On masculinities, I study Michael Kaufman’s work and Raewyn Connell’s as well. Suzette Heald’s research helps me to explore one of the possible embodiments of masculinity in a local setting.

Finally, in order to study subjectivity and identity I bring into play Henrietta Moore with her ideas on gender positions and multiply constituted individuals.

1. Gender Order/Hierarchy

Every man and woman embodies, the socio-cultural and historical processes in their own lives that made them be precisely that, men and women. Each and every woman and man is a social subject who embodies a specific culture, certain family traditions, religious beliefs, etc. These social subjects are situated in a specific country and in a specific class, which means, that they are involved in the historical processes of the moments and places where they live (Cazes, 1994; Lagarde, 1990).

The sexual difference is in our bodies and it is part of human existence no matter the social class, culture, or historical moment. According to some authors —especially within psychoanalysis (Freud, 1905; Olivier, 1992 etc) - this sexual difference makes an imprint in our psyche at the moment a child “discovers” this difference. Gender would be the symbolisation of sexual differences that also result in cultural interpretations of reality, nature

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7 http://www.raimes.com/assignment2.htm
and people. Consequently, sex and gender have been understood as a continuum, where sex is the result of sexual difference; and gender, the result of culture and socialisation. Along these lines, it has been almost logical to end up using a binary frame to analyse the gender order in different societies.

In her book Gender Trouble (2007), Judith Butler understands gender as a process whereby subjects integrate cultural meanings and she asks about the possibility of a person building up a different identity than the prescriptive one. The book criticizes the gender category. She states that gender “…originally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation…is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed sex” (Butler, 2007:8). In other words, for Butler gender appears on the academic scene in order to displace the explanation about women’s identity from biology to culture. In the process of emphasizing –she continues- that women have common characteristics and interests among them on the social arena, scholars have strengthened the idea of humanity being divided into two groups: men and women. Masculinity and femininity seem to be equally obligatory as the biological destiny of male and female. In this sense, the patriarchal order would inevitably be reproduced and built up, femininity upon a female body, and masculinity upon a male body. This patriarchal order also becomes a way of constructing the desire for the other gender. Butler however believes that gender is a performance, what the person does in every day’s life, more than a pre-established identity, which indicates who the person is.

Butler’s perspective is interesting because it presents the possibility of avoiding a binary view of gender, as well as the opportunity to re-think nature/sex as a culture construction. Her work also permits us to think of identity as a process. Nevertheless, it does not give real clarity as to where the psychological and socio-cultural dominions start and finish and how they are related to each other.

She is aware of these kind of problems and in her preface of 1999 says:

> Although I would deny that all of the internal world of the psyche is but an effect of a stylized set of acts, I continue to think that it is a significant theoretical mistake to take the “internality” of the psychic world for granted (Butler, 2007: xvi).

In different words, for her no whole individual’s psyche is a result of performance. Nevertheless what role the early socialisation of the child has or how individuals performance of a different gender impacts the gender structure or gender hierarchy does not seem to be explained.
However, each culture has its own definition of sex and gender, as well as what the relationship between sex and gender is. In this sense, I believe the following definition by The Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre is useful in its simplicity:

Gender represents the socially-constructed differences-in terms of accepted attributes, roles and relationships-between women and men, and girls and boys, in a given society (The Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000: 24).

I would add gender also prescribes how relations between gendered subjects should be.

Stern and Nystrand state that femininity and masculinity cannot be seen separated from each other, and they are defined as oppositional. Moreover—and like most of the scholars—they consider gender as a relationship of power. There are however many different ways of expressing gender, expressions that are related with its social and cultural contexts (Stern and Nystrand, 2006:6-7). These authors continue by describing the different faces of gender:

...gender can be seen as informing:
- identities (who we are, who we are supposed to be)
- activities (what we/institutions do)
- symbolism (how we think)

All of these are interconnected and are produced within relations of power (Stern and Nystrand, 2006:7).

In this sense, one can say that gender has its expression in discourses and practices, which are occurring in our daily life. Moreover, gender is not only modelling our individual identities, but also our institutions.

2. Definitions of Violence

The Cambridge dictionary of 2006 defines violence as “actions or words which are intended to hurt people” and violent as “using force to hurt or attack”. Consequently, in daily language, no discussion is needed about the actions and intentions of those who use violence. A perpetrator has the intention of harming someone else.

According to the World Health Organization, violence is:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment [sic] or deprivation (WHO, 2002:5).

In this definition, social relations are included in the word “power”.

According to Ramirez (among many others), there are four different kinds of violence—or in his words “ways to invade the spaces of a person” (Ramirez, 2000:6-7): physical, sexual, verbal and emotional violence.
In contrast to these definitions, Henrietta Moore stated in 1994, “...the concept of violence in social sciences still seems remarkably undertheorized” (Moore, 1994: 139). This situation has to do with the impossibility of explaining violence as having just one-cause, but as multi-determinate. She continues that violence is a multifaceted concept:

...from an anthropological perspective, there is an obvious need to integrate the sociological and psychological theories of the interpersonal violence with theories about meaning, representation and symbolism (Moore, 1994: 139).

I argue –following Moore- that as human beings we are multi-determinate so that any explanation of a social problem such as domestic violence must understood from different perspectives.

3. Violence against Women /Gender-based violence

Different theories on violence were put forward before the establishment of the concept “gender-based violence”. During the 60’s and 70’s, at the beginning of the research and work with battered women, the explanations of violence against women were based on the man’s mental state. A man who battered his wife was seriously mentally ill, so the solution to the problem was medication and psychiatric treatment. This explanation proved to be insufficient because a man who battered his wife usually had a violent behaviour towards her, but not towards work colleagues or friends (Larrain, 1990; Ramírez, 2000).

Another theory stated that battered women also were considered mentally ill. Consequently, their “symptoms” were thought to be caused by a mental disease and not as a result of men’s violent behaviour. This misconception was produced because of the lack of knowledge of the psychological effects of violence. Once again, the solution had to do with medication and psychiatric treatments (UNIFEM, 2006).

A different type of explanation was based on “learned behaviour”. The concept was based on the idea that both men and women had seen the same kind of behaviour at home when they were children. Still another one was “loss of control” because of men’s abuse of alcohol or drugs. Moreover the “learned helplessness” was found, which would prevent women from leaving an abusive relationship. Finally, this kind of explanation mentioned the “cycle of violence” which was provoked by the men’s incapacity to express frustration and anger, etc (UNIFEM, 2006). All of these explanations gained certain status among the scholars and the people who worked on the issue, probably because one could find examples of those phenomena between men and women involved in domestic violence.
There is further a very common view coming from psychology and the systems theory. The starting point is to see the family as a system, where men and women have the same responsibility for the family/couple equilibrium. When one of them breaks the couple’s establishment, violence appears. This explanation lacks a vision of the hierarchical order within the family and thus lacks a serious clarification about men’s violence (Ramirez, 2000: 21).

Nevertheless, an explanation considering what was occurring at the level of power and control in the relationship was missing. Subsequently a new understanding of abuse took place. The explanation was represented by the “Power and Control Wheel”\(^8\), which is an outcome of the “Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP)”\(^9\) in Duluth, USA. This vision is based on the idea that domestic violence is men’s pattern of behaviour for exerting power and control over their partners. As a strategy, the model includes the concern over victims’ safety, the “rehabilitation programming for offenders” and the coordinating work between different governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The amount of women affected by violence, and the spreading of this violence in different cultures, classes or circumstances, makes it necessary to look for an explanation, which can really deal with the phenomenon from multiple sides. More importantly, an explanation that considers violence against women as a socio-cultural problem is needed.

The World Health Organization uses the concepts of “violence against women” and “gender-based violence” as synonyms\(^{10}\), and states that it is one of the biggest issues in health and human rights all over the world. Even though it can sound tautological, the use of these two terms as synonyms means that: there is a violence, which has the female part of humanity as its principal object; and this is due to patriarchal order.

4. Domestic Violence/Partner Violence

Domestic violence (Jones, 2004; Sokoloff, 2006 etc.), intrafamily violence (Larrain, 2001), partner violence (Menares and Zaavedra, 2008) etc. have apparently been used to denote the same phenomenon. Nevertheless using these concepts as interchangeable is problematic for several reasons. Even though the violence that I am referring to take place at domestic environments (homes), it also can occur in public spaces. Is it not a battered girlfriend or ex-wife considered part of the family? To consider the issue as domestic or intrafamily violence

\(^{8}\) See Appendix 1  
\(^{9}\) [http://www.theduluthmodel.org/index.php](http://www.theduluthmodel.org/index.php)  
does not say much about who is perpetrating violence and gives the impression that “home” and “family” are spaces without conflict. It gives the idea that in just a few cases families have conflicts and that this situation is exceptional, abnormal. Finally, violence that is perpetrated in domestic contexts and within families would include child abuse or femicide\textsuperscript{11}, sides of the issue of violence that require a specific approach.

For Ramírez “when a man is violent towards his partner, his objective is to have her under control in order to take advantage of her resources” [my translation]\textsuperscript{12} (2000:23). In this sense and according to Ramírez partner violence also has a concrete purpose: to get woman services on daily bases.

Consequently, I consider the concept of partner violence –also called intimate partner violence\textsuperscript{13} - gives a more precise view of this thesis’ objective; and refers to the gender-based violence that occurs within an intimate relationship - in this case heterosexual\textsuperscript{14}. These relationships can be with a girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, wife or ex-wife. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that men exert psychological, physical and/or sexual violence in the relationship (WHO, 2002; Ramírez-Rodríguez, 2006; and Rivera-Rivera et al. 2004 among others).

5. Masculinity/Masculinities

According to Michael Kaufman, one of the worlds known experts on gender and masculinity,

...gender is our notion of the appropriate behaviour, thought and activities of men and women, our ideas of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity, says a friend of mine, is what you do (Kaufman, 1993: 19).

Consequently, in this very clear definition, masculinity is what men do; it is their behaviour. Nevertheless, when Kaufman describes gender he is referring to both meanings and practices about masculinity and femininity, which are shared by men and women.

For Raewyn Connell\textsuperscript{15} –Australian scholar of gender issues- masculinity

...is on one level a pattern of personal life and conduct, but it is important that masculinities also exist at another level – impersonally, in communities, institutions and cultures (w/d, 2).

In that sense, the meanings of manhood are produced at the cultural level and it is at that level where these meanings can possibly be changed and contested. Organisations such as the army have their definition of masculinity, as does the mass media. I would add that both, as a

\textsuperscript{11} Defined as the misogynous killing of women by men by Russell and Radford in 1992
\textsuperscript{12} “Cuando el hombre es violento con su pareja, su objetivo es tenerla bajo control para obtener beneficios al disponer de los recursos de ella”
\textsuperscript{13} \url{http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/IPV-FactSheet.pdf}
\textsuperscript{14} “Although women can be violent in relationships with men, and violence is also sometimes found in same-sex partnerships, the overwhelming burden of partner violence is borne by women at the hands of men” (WHO, 2002:89).
\textsuperscript{15} Formerly Robert William Connell
personal pattern of life or at the impersonal level of masculinity, include a definition of violence. This definition contains discourses about both: what violence is and what is prohibited, as well as, what violence is not and what is permitted.

Connell states that, despite the fact that masculinity studies are relatively new, the current globalisation processes make them necessary to understand masculinities in a global perspective, and characterize the global gender order. For that reason, it is also necessary to distinguish contexts of masculinity formation, the local as well as the transnational, and the impact of globalisation on men’s bodies (Connell, 2005).

It is clear that masculinity is different in different cultures and contexts, but it is also important to remember that masculinity has changed over time. Connell argues that the historical process of conquest and colonialism -where the world seems to become global- has been gendered from the start. This has implied interaction between different gender orders, between local gender orders and those that were brought by conquerors. Accordingly, one can understand that contacts and interactions between different gender orders have occurred at the local level, within countries or regions. In the current situation of globalisation, new arenas or spaces have appeared and all of them are strongly masculinised: transnational and multinational corporations, international state, international media and global markets. As he says “…the global capitalist economy becomes the key arena for the making masculinities” (Connell, 2005:76). In this perspective, it is “logical” that the author -examining the masculinity associated with those who have control over the mentioned arenas- finds a “transnational business masculinity”.

According to Connell, both the pressure of global markets and the local desire to participate in the global economy reshapes gender order at the local level. This reshaping is made not only by men but also by women. The reconstruction of masculinities at the local level is logically uneven; on account of the cultural forces working against it. Finally he argues the global reshaping of masculinities does not have the same point of departure because –and this is very important- there has not been such thing as “cross-cultural masculinity” (Connell, 2005:77). Consequently, one can say that for Connell it is globalisation, which sets the base for a “universal masculinity”. In a few words, for Connell the masculinity has been constructed differently in each culture and in different historical moments. Consequently, it is possible to talk about “masculinities”. There is, nevertheless, one of these masculinities that become hegemonic inside every culture because this multiplicity occurs within hierarchical social
relations. It is now with the globalisation process where -according to this author- we can found a masculinity that becomes “universal”.

There have been critics to Connell’s concept of “transnational business masculinity” and his understanding of this as “hegemonic masculinity”. Beasly and Elias for example underline the importance of Masculinity Studies in making

...visible the gendered character...of the rhetorically gender neutral neo-liberal market agenda in global politics, diplomacy and economics (Beasly and Elias, 2006:2).

At the same time, they state that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used with an unclear mix of meanings. In that sense, they argue that:

...these may be summarised as a slippage between its meaning as a political mechanism tied to the word ‘hegemony’, as a descriptive word referring to dominant (most powerful and/or most widespread), and as an empirical reference specifically to actual groups of men (Beasly and Elias, 2006:4).

The last becomes clearer when Connell makes the description of his concept of “transnational business masculinities” and he reminds us of the executives that we can see at airports.

On another side, Henrietta Moore states that Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity is obviously occidental, though similarities can be found in a certain number of localities (Moore, 1994:148). In her analysis on Connell, she continues:

...it is not possible to analyse discourses on gender, wherever they occur, without recognizing the ways in which they are implicated in large processes of economic and political change well beyond the control of local communities (Moore, 1994:148).

Although one might agree with the critiques of Connell’s work, it is still important to recognize his efforts to connect ideologies and men’s practices through the concept of hegemonic masculinity. It is also interesting that he can understand the presence of different masculinities and how they work together in order to maintain women’s subordination. Even though not all men have access to all privileges, subordinated masculinities still get certain advantages from the system. In Jackson Katz words, “…sexism provides men a way to ally across race and class lines” (Katz: 2002).

Connell has an interesting way of referring to different levels of social reality, for instance when he writes:

...because globalization refers to very large-scale processes, it is important to recognize that the effect of these processes appear at the most intimate level. Men’s bodies, not just broad masculine ideologies and institutions, are involved (Connell, 2005:81).

For him, hegemonic masculinities imply processes of creation and re-creation at the local level, where men’s bodies have a role as do the relationships where men’s bodies are involved. Moreover, the process or creation and re-creation happen at the regional level
within the state, and between different states, as well as at the global level, especially in geopolitics and transnational business.

5.1. Violence and Masculinity

The processes of globalisation have implied a renegotiation of masculinities not only because of migration, but also because of women’s entrance into the public arena, the spreading of feminist ideas among heterosexual men and the existence of gay and queer movements and politics. An example of the renegotiation of masculinity that Connell refers to is the White Ribbon Campaign “…a growing international effort to address and involve boys and men in ending violence against women” (Kaufman, 2001:38). In this sense, the campaign is an expression of not only the renegotiation of masculinities in general but also violence as a component of men’s identity.

I agree with Connell when he states

…violence is a relationship between bodies that has been of great importance in the history of masculinities... (Connell, 2005:82).

Consequently, I believe that actions like the White Ribbon Campaign are especially important in order to understand and to address the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and subordinated masculinities both at the local and global levels. Moreover, the White Ribbon Campaign helps to analyze the relationship between ideology and practices.

Kaufman (2001, 39-43) provides a framework to analyze men’s violence that he calls the seven Ps. According to him, violence can be related to the following items:

- **Patriarchal power**, a hierarchical order of male-dominance over women and other men. This order implies that violence is exercised not only against women but also against other men and towards themselves.

- **Privilege**. This is the conscious or unconscious sense–even for those men who are not part of hegemonic groups in the society- to be entitled to certain privileges in their relationships with women.

- **Permission**. This is the explicit (or not) “permission” for violence in “…social customs, legal codes, law enforcements and certain religious teachings” (Kaufman, 2001: 40).

- **Paradox of men’s power**. In order to build up their individual and social power men must construct a capacity to dominate others. This process is not always free of fears and insecurities, and consequently violence appears as a “compensatory mechanism” which is performed against those who are weaker or vulnerable.
- **Psychic armour of manhood.** Men’s psyche is based on a permanent emotional distance from others, because “…masculinity is codified as a rejection of the mother and femininity…” (Kaufman, 2001: 42). Consequently, this rejection also extends to the characteristics associated with “mother” and “femininity”. The result is logically a lack of empathy that makes violence against others possible.

- **Psychic pressure cooker.** The learned repression of feelings and its conversion into anger make some men easily react violently to feelings of pain, insecurity, hurt, etc.

- **Past experiences.** Many violent men have grown up in families where their fathers beat their mothers and the man himself as a child. As a result, they have experienced and learned the meaning of violence in earlier years.

In Kaufman’s framework, it is interesting that he moves through the different aspects or levels in social life. In this sense, he starts with the patriarchal order -the general- goes to the individual –the particular- and describes how patriarchy expresses itself in each man’s life. Moreover, he adds in the analysis man’s personal history. I would say that in his perspective he embraces (or at least tries to embrace) socio-cultural aspects and the personal-psychological as well.

Finally, Kauffman places the violence against women as one corner of the –as he calls it- triad of men’s violence. “The other two corners are violence against other men and violence against oneself” (Kauffman, 2007:34). This triad gives a general perspective and permits to understand how strongly violence shapes men’s lives and their masculinities.

### 5.2. Masculinity and its Embodiment

From Connell and Kaufman’s arguments it is possible to comprehend the importance of researching different embodiments of masculinity at the local level. One example of this embodiment is Suzette Heald’s research (Heald, 1999), which intends to establish the relationship between manhood and morality in the Gisu society in Africa. Her concern is that for the majority of the scholars, masculinity

…is now seen as inseparable from power: from male dominance and the structures of society and its serving ideologies… (of)...legitimisation and reproduction of that power (Heald, 1999:2).

According to her, in a scientific context where everyone works towards showing the patriarchal order and male dominance, it is almost impossible to conceive of a “moral” man. However, the development of men’s studies and the idea of many and different masculinities
gives her the possibility of researching this particular form of embodying manhood in Gisu society.

Heald tries to report how men experience their masculinity and in order to get men’s perspective she appeals to

...the anthropological call for multi-vocality, for other voices to be heard,...the ability of people to establish their own meanings (Heald, 1999:2).

It is very interesting that her ethnography about Gisu people exemplifies, in her own words:

...the extreme way in which violent power is located in men, a source of their rights but also... a source of self-knowledge and responsibility (Heald, 1999:4).

As a result, her research brings us to a local masculinity and once again, we find manhood and violence strongly connected. However, despite the fact that this violence tries to be settled on a “moral level”, as an instrument to get “self-knowledge and responsibility”, it does not seem to me less harmful for Gisu women than it would be for women in another culture.

This leads to the importance of putting any research on masculinity at the local level in the context of the development of human rights and gender equality.

6. Subjectivity and Identity

Given the previous ideas about gender and masculinity it seems still necessary to find some tools to explore men’s life at individual level and to find out in what way this individual level is related with the cultural level. Consequently and in order to explore subjectivity and identity, Henrietta Moore’s perspective can be useful. According to her

...a single subject can no longer be equated with a single individual. Individuals are multiply constituted subject...Some of these subject positions will be contradictory (Moore, 1994:141).

Her idea can certainly facilitate an understanding of men’s contradictions of being a “good worker” and “a decent citizen” in the public sphere while he is a “perpetrator of violence” in the private sphere. Consequently, if each individual embodies multiple subjects, if we can take up different subject positions and finally, if we can have multiple self-representations; one can ask what holds this multiplicity together? How can a person live constituted by this multiplicity? Moore states it is “…the subjective experience of identity, the physical fact of being an embodied subject, and the historical continuity of the subject...”(Moore, 1994:141) which holds the sense of self integration. Following this line of thought, it is possible to imagine changes in each person’s subjectivity and identity throughout their life. Nevertheless, Moore argue that “…past subject positions tend to overdetermine present subject positions”
(Moore, 1994:141). For me, it could mean certain limits about an individual’s possibilities of change.

In real life, there are gendered individuals that in their practices will show certain gaps between their explicit definition of “women” or “men” and their actual behaviour. In addition, the link between a cultural definition of “woman” or “man” and the individual comprehension of femininity or masculinity is not necessarily immediate, automatic or very clear. I agree however with Moore when she states:

…since the characteristics or attributes associated with the category ‘man’ are frequently predominantly positive, it is possible for male individuals … to identify with the dominant cultural ideals which cluster around that category (Moore, 1994:145).

In that sense, can one say that for female individuals it is more difficult to identify with the dominant cultural ideals of femininity?

To sum up -following Moore’s point of view (Moore, 1994:146), I argue that people embody diverse practices and discourses which in some way follow the dominant cultural discourse on gender but still leave place for new practices.

Each male and female individual is a multiply constituted subject. Every man and woman engages her- or himself in different subject positions, reproducing dominant gender discourses. Nevertheless at the same time, every individual can take distance from certain imperatives of the dominant discourse.

It is this diverse approach on the subject which finally allows for a discussion about masculinities and femininities. Even in local settings, there are always multiples ways to embody femininity and masculinity.

In the next chapter I will explore, with the help of the concepts of masculinities and multiply constituted subjects, how men describe and explain the violence they exert against their female partners. These explanations refer both to present life and to their experiences in the families where they grew up.

The gender order will be explored through men’s feelings, relationships with women – partners or not, other men, as well as through early experiences with violence. The meanings of partner violence come from men’s explanations about themselves and their experiences, but are related to the social context where these experiences unfold.
Chapter III: Domestic Violence in the Chilean Context

“*The story we tell ourselves about ourselves in order to account for what we are doing, is fundamentally a lie – the truth lies outside, in what we do*” (Zizek, 2009:40)

This chapter describes how different views on women and domestic violence take place in Chile, and consequently, though less explicitly, how the different views of men and masculinity take place. These new discourses and practices have their expression in international agreements, national laws, as well as different programmes that stop and prevent domestic violence.

Finally, it reviews some numbers in order to figure out the current situation in domestic violence according to the police and the justice system.

In a sense, this chapter presents both the attempts to stop domestic violence in Chile and some of the results of these attempts.

1. From the Global to the Local

This subchapter describes how a new discourse and new practices on gender-based violence is incoming in Chile.

1.1. International Agreements and the Chilean Government

Since 1990, when a democratic government came to power in Chile after Pinochet’s dictatorship, *women* and *domestic violence* began to be an issue in the political agenda. Because the whole society needed to be democratised, gender relations were introduced into the political scene. In 1991 the government created “Servicio Nacional de la Mujer”, SERNAM (Woman’s National Service) in order to live up to the international agreements that Chile had signed, especially CEDAW (UN, 1979) -ratified in 1989. Moreover, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women "Convention of Belem do Para" (The Inter-American Commission of Women, 1994), ratified in 1996.

SERNAM had two main objectives: to promote equality between men and women and to diminish discriminatory practices in the social, political, economical and cultural development processes in Chile. On domestic violence SERNAM had a specific programme named “Unidad de Prevención de Violencia Intrafamiliar” (Unity for Intrafamily Violence)

Prevention) which has the purpose of reducing domestic violence and increasing efficiency with regards to the issue within governmental offices.

After four years of parliamentary discussions in 1994, law No. 19325\(^{18}\) was approved as the first ruling in “Violencia Intrafamiliar” (Intrafamily violence) which protects the victim, women, and her children. Interestingly, one of the articles of this new law states the aggressor’s obligation to attend “therapeutic or family orientation programmes”. Such programmes however did not exist in the country until 2007. The discussions and the new juridical framework promoted further awareness on the subject but most importantly allowed the opening of different governmental offices and programmes, which addressed the issue.

In 2005, there was a modification (law No. 20066\(^{19}\)) in the juridical framework with the creation of Family Tribunals; and there were attempts to articulate different governmental services on Intrafamily Violence. This law has been modified again as late as September 2008. Consequently, it is important to underline that the law and its additions, imply a new view on Intrafamily Violence. This new perspective improves the understanding of the complexity of the issue, and the effort to achieve better articulation between health services, “carabineros” (police) and the justice system.

Three aspects are significantly related to the situation of men and “future” programmes for them: a) the aggressor can be obligated to leave the house where he lives with the victim; b) he can be prohibited from getting close to the victim and her children and c) he has an obligation to attend therapeutic or family orientation programmes.

The process started in 1990 in the Chilean legislation; it is a change from the traditional notion about family and men’s and women’s roles in the household and consequently, a change in notions of gender relations. It also implies that public programmes have not only taken care of women, children, and old people - in other words victims-, but also men or the aggressors as well. As a result, in March 2008, Michelle Bachelet –the president of Chile- gave the order to start, organize and run programmes for men who exert violence towards their partners and men who exert violence in the household contexts\(^{20}\).

In this sense, new practices and discourses on masculinity and femininity co-exist with the traditional ones.

\(^{18}\) [Link](http://www.parlamentarios.org/spip/IMG/pdf/Ley_19325_de_27.8.1994_Violencia_Intrafamiliar__Chile.pdf)

\(^{19}\) [Link](http://www.bcn.cl/leyes/242648)

\(^{20}\) [Link](http://www.minjusticia.cl/Comunicados/2008/febrero/06_02_08.pdf)
1.2. Municipal Context

The Cerro Navia Municipality established in 2007 two different lines of operation in order to work with Intrafamily Violence:

- Within a Community Mental Health Centre, the “Programa de Violencia Intrafamiliar” (Programme on Intrafamily Violence), for women and men.
- Within “Oficina de la Mujer” (Office for Women) -which is a municipal office- the “Programa de Atención, Acogida y Seguimiento a las Víctimas de Violencia Intrafamiliar” (Attention, Refuge and Monitoring for Intrafamily Violence Victims), for women.

In addition, the last months in 2007 a programme called PRONOVIF related to Citizen’s Security and Public Security Division was started. After two years of municipal work on domestic violence, this programme focused on men who exert violence on their partners or ex-partners. This latest focus tried to eliminate previous lack of public attention on violent men, and intended to follow national policies on the issue.

In order to have a better perspective over the importance of this attempt, it is necessary to know that both a Community Mental Health Centre and an Office for Women exist in many Municipalities across Chile. Still there were no similar programme as PRONOVIF in other parts of the country.

The three programmes in Cerro Navia on Intrafamily Violence had a strong psychological imprint. In the case of women, the programmes also included support in the areas of law, work, and health as well as individual and group therapy. In the case of men, the programme meant fundamentally psychotherapeutic intervention although in the written project group work was also included.

In almost 90% of cases, men attended the programmes because they had been forced to do so through a judicial order. This presents a sort of contradiction, given that therapy can hardly succeed if the person is not willing to go through the process. As a social anthropologist, I would argue that it is difficult to resolve a social problem such as intrafamily violence or

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21 Chile has 357 municipalities. Cerro Navia is in the Metropolitan area.
22 http://centroamigable.blogspot.com/
24 http://www.seguridadpublica.gov.cl/
gender violence through an individual and a psychological focus. I cannot say that the people who run one of the programmes are not aware of this. One of them states

…the violence is naturalized in our daily life, in our relationships, in the Chilean society…What happens inside the families reflects what happens in the whole society.

In the programme, yet they tried to influence the man and his social environment through a systemic model, where a team focuses on the family of the aggressor and on the “victims” needs.

1.3. PRONOVIF, “Proyecto por la No Violencia en la Familia” (Project for non violence in the family)

PRONOVIF was a project under Cerro Navia Municipality but was run by a small external team, composed of men specializing in gender, masculinity and therapy for men. Nevertheless the programme started as a work against intrafamily violence in general and from September 2007 it focused on men who exert violence on their wives/partners or ex-wives/partners. According to one of the men who worked in the programme, there was a “hegemonic masculinity” which he defined as

…the traditional masculinity, stereotyped, rigid which diminishes men’s wellbeing and health and makes a person follow patriarchal values as power, rivalry, competition, superiority, individuality.

For him this hegemonic masculinity crosses social classes and it has its expression not only through open violence but also through “micro-machismo”; a subtle and almost imperceptible male behaviour used by men to perpetuate their dominance over women. “Micromachismo” is a concept presented by Luis Bonino (1999), Spanish psychiatrist founder of “Centro de Estudios de la Condición Masculina” (Center for the Study of the State of Masculinity) in Madrid.

PRONOVIF had as its purpose to contribute towards the diminishment or elimination of male violence and towards men taking responsibility for their violent behaviour. In order to achieve this, every man must go through an “integral diagnosis”, which meant five interviews with him but also five interviews with his past or present wife/partner. The interviews with the “victim” had the purpose of identifying to what kind of violence she had been subjected. Moreover, it explored the different possible manifestations of the violence.

After this diagnosis, men started a therapeutic process that can last between 24 and 48 sessions.

25 Verbal communication
26 Verbal communication
2. The Current Situation

The previous paragraphs show different discourses and practices concerning stopping and preventing domestic violence in the Chilean context. In order to get an even wider perspective, here are some figures on domestic violence, reported to the police and to the justice system.

Amnesty International\(^{27}\) in Chile informed in a press communication, that 59 women were killed by their partners in 2008, while in the first 60 days of 2009, 10 women had been victims of femicide.

Woman’s National Service (SERNAM, 2009) states -based on a national research on Youth\(^{28}\)- that the violence starts early in relationships. So for example –in the Metropolitan Area- among women that have a relationship but do not live with their partner, 11.6% have been victims of psychological violence and 12.2% of physical and/or sexual violence.

Apparently, these figures are much higher in the case of women that are married or cohabitate with their partners. Larrain (2001:18) reports that among these women – between the ages of 15 and 49 years- in the Metropolitan Area, 43.2% have experienced psychological violence. In addition, 14.9% declare to have lived with sexual violence and 32.1%, with physical violence.

2.1. Denunciations\(^{29}\) on Intrafamily Violence

In 2004, The National Institute for Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, INE) stated that between 1999 and 2003, the number of police reports filed for “intrafamily violence” had grown 57%. Moreover the Minister for Internal Affairs (Ministerio del Interior de Chile, 2008) reports -in its annual statistics- that the number of police reports reached 108,538 in 2007. Consequently, it is possible to say that reports filed due to intrafamily violence have increased more than 100% over eight years (Graph 1).

According to INE this growth is attributed to greater social awareness of the problem and also that today legal instruments exist to protect the victims.

The Institute also states that even though these denunciations have men, children, old people and women as victims; during 2003 for example, in 90 % of the cases the victim was a woman (INE 2004).

\(^{27}\)http://www.cl.amnesty.org/index_noticias.shtml\?AA_SI_Session=acca4b01b6ba5a\?2eb628da7ce2e456a&scr=1&scrscr_Mv=1
\(^{28}\)Young adults until 29 years
\(^{29}\)Public accusations, police reports
The same report stated that in 2003 there were 71,724 reports filed related to violence exerted against women, in which 98.4% correspond to psychological violence and “light injuries” (*lesiones leves*), but unfortunately it does not explain what a “light injury” is. The remaining 2.6% are “low/grave/higher injuries” (*lesiones menores/graves/superiores*), and again there is no definition of what the severity of each type of injury is (INE 2004).

### 2.2. Denunciations versus Detentions

According to this report, the number of police reports is related to the level of awareness of the problem both among women and the public in general. Still in order to complete the picture on Intrafamily Violence, it is necessary to explore what actually happens after a woman’s files her police report.

According to INE (2004), total denunciations and detentions on violence against women, in the 13 Chilean regions look as follows (Graph 2).
The highest figures appear in the Metropolitan region, which could be explained by the fact that it is the most populated region in the country—with almost 17 million people, seven million live in the Metropolitan region. The number of perpetrators who are detained is still quite low, 3.2%, which show that the metropolitan police are as ineffective as elsewhere in the country.

70,573 police reports on psychological violence and “light injuries” were filed in the year 2003 and just 2,644 cases resulted in the perpetrator’s detention, which amounts to 3.7% of the total (Graph 3). Consequently, it is possible to say that given the low detention rate, legal instruments put in place in order to protect the victims of domestic violence are not enough.

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30 Chile is divided in 13 regions. For more information: [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demograf%C3%ADa_de_Chile](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demograf%C3%ADa_de_Chile)
The number of reports filed for “low/grave/higher injuries” is relatively small (1.151 cases), but it is of concern that only 35% of them resulted in detention. This percentage is higher than the detentions because of psychological and light injuries (graph 4), so one should be concerned by the effects on women’s lives in cases where the perpetrator is not detained.

2.3. Domestic Violence Exerted on Children

Even though this thesis does not explore violence exerted on children, it is interesting to see if the relation between cases reported and apprehensions is different or if it shows better effectiveness. INE (2004) stated that 3,486 police reports were filed in 2003 in which 144 of them resulted in apprehensions. The following graph (graph 5) shows the figures divided by regions.
It should be noticed that there are regions in which there have been no detentions. The latter is even more worrying when the number of cases reported of low/grave/higher injuries is *twice as many as the psychological violence and “light injuries” in the case of children.* (INE, 2004).

Moreover, it seems important to light these figures with the fact –discussed in a previous chapter*31* and reported by scholars that many perpetrators of violence have been subject to violence under their childhood.

**2.4. Cases of Intrafamily Violence in Court**

A final aspect to complete the picture on the situation of intrafamily violence is to explore what happens with legal procedures in court. INE (2004) reports that 95,844 cases of intrafamily violence went to court during 2003 and this figure represents almost all cases: violence exerted on women, on children, on old people etc. The cases in court also have grown since 2002 by 25%.

According to INE (2004), just 14% of the cases finished with a sentencing while 19% ended because the demand did not continue. In 45% of the cases, the lawsuit was settled out of court between the parties. In 5% of the cases, the tribunal declared they were not competent to decide the case (Graph 6).

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*31* See chapter II, pages 13 and 19
Strangely, there are two categories that appear separated in INE report and sound very much like “not persisting with the demand” and “taking back the demand”. Unfortunately, there are not explanations of the difference; the task of researching what situations and circumstances exist behind these “settled out of court” cases remains.

It may be possible to read the substantial growth in reported cases of domestic violence during the past years, as a transformation in women’s understanding of themselves. The traditional representation of women, who are obliged to accept mistreatment from their partners, is being changed. Consequently, local femininity and masculinity is also being transformed.

Nevertheless, the response from the authorities towards those denunciations has been very weak, which could mean less transformation (at least in part) of the understanding on gender relations.

2.5. The Results of PRONOVIF’s Work

When a woman has filed a police report against her partner for intrafamily violence, a judge can dictate a “precaution decree” \textit{(medida precautoria)}, which means that the man must leave the household and he is forbidden to come near the house and to the woman. This \textit{precaution decree} also means that he has the obligation to participate in some therapeutic or “family orientation” program. It is in this way that men start their participation in PRONOVIF.

Consequently, it is in addition important to investigate the results of PRONOVIF’s work. From September 2007 to November 2008, 53 men had started the programme and among them six did so spontaneously. Nevertheless just 23 continued with the treatment in November. The rest of the men left or were expelled for bad behaviour. By February 2009 PRONOVIF finished its work because its contract with the municipality had ended. According to its website\textsuperscript{32}, 33 individuals participated in –and finished- a clinic and psycho-educational programme. They presented their results disaggregated in physical violence and psychological violence; and the indicators of them are taken from the Duluth model\textsuperscript{33}. Their results can be shown as follows.

\textsuperscript{32} http://www.pronovif.blogspot.com/
\textsuperscript{33} See chapter II page 14 and Appendix 1
About physical violence:

- 76% of the men "eliminate" physical violence, meaning that the man have not exerted violence during a period longer than 6 months
- 9% of them have not exerted violence during a period longer than 3 months
- 9% of the men have diminished both the intensity and the frequency of violence
- 3% of those treated still exert physical violence, and have not changed in this patterns of behaviour
- 3% of them have increased the intensity of physical violence exerted

About psychological violence:

- 45% of the individuals have eliminated it, meaning that the man have not exerted it under a period longer than six months
- 9% have not exerted it during a period longer than three months
- 27% of them have diminished its exercise in both intensity and frequency
- 12% of these men continue exerting it
- 3% of those treated have increased the intensity of the psychological violence exerted

These are the results in figures of 17 months of work.

It would be interesting to illuminate these figures with men’s own explanations of their behaviours and the changes that they experienced. Later in this thesis, a few of these explanations will be mentioned. Nevertheless, it is important to understand this work as an instrumental expression of a new discourse and practice on masculinity. The simple fact that it exists, is a proof of an effort to find new patterns of masculinity.

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34 "76% de los sujetos la elimina (no la ejerce por un periodo superior a 6 meses)"
Chapter IV: Masculine Men? Violent Men?

For every woman who is a victim of domestic violence, there is a man who commits it and denies it, who presents himself as a victim of the woman’s “provocation” or “psychological abuse” and—there are many others who look away in silence as accomplices. Bonino et al (2002)

The information I review in this chapter is based on a focal group, in-depth interviews and life stories. In all cases, they are men participating in PRONOVIF—the municipal programme for violent men. Their ages range between 28 to 43 years old.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the interviewees’ thinking and behaviour related to violence in the present moment of their lives, as well as in the past.

It is important to make clear that when I comment the different testimonies I use the word “men” as a category. By doing this I want to underline that, one man’s thoughts are a social-cultural interpretation of the reality and in that sense, it is a men’s discourse. In other words, reality is structured by a specific gender order (Järviluoma et al, 2003:46). Consequently, this gender order is here seen as a “discourse”, discourse that I am able to grasp from the individual’s testimonies.

I may also use information from other interviews that I conducted with people working in different programmes on domestic violence.

1. The Violence in the Men’s Current Situation

In order to have an extensive vision on men’s patterns of thoughts and behaviour related to partner violence, in the beginning of my research I concentrated in the present of the men’s lives and their relationships with their partners. The following is the result of this initial approach.

1.1. Culture of Violence: “it is a culture...almost…”

In the beginning, in order to go into the subject, I invited the interviewees to reflect about violence and why they have exerted violence. Their answers were as follows:

The fact that you are living in a poor area makes you have to defend yourself. When you are a kid you defend yourself by fists, with insults and it seems normal. In a way, one must defend oneself...and perhaps from there it becomes violent…

35 See chapter I page number 6
36 “El hecho de vivir en una población hace que te tengas que defender, de chico te defiendes a combos, a garabatos y uno lo ve normal”
37 “De alguna manera uno se tiene que defender para que no lo pasen a llevar y quizás de ahí viene el ser violento”
It depends on how one was raised...When I was 8 or 10 I had to learn to defend myself because ...they hit me, they took my football...One day my father told me: 'sissy, you have to learn defending yourself'...From then on it was fist fight every weekend...In the poor areas is like that,

Everyone is accelerated, everyone is violent, everyone is defensive...it is a culture...almost...it doesn’t distinguish gender [sic]

We –men- are more [physically] violent, women are more [violent] by words...psychologically

Primarily, the explanations given by them are intended to justify their behaviour. Nevertheless, the previous quotes show the kind of environment where these men have been brought up and the kind of relationships they are experiencing in the present moment of their lives. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that in Latin-American contexts, as many others around the world, one compulsory cultural meaning of masculinity is to be strong and show virility. At the same time the reference of this kind of environment shows one face of the permission for violence that Kauffman refers to in his model, where violent behaviour is justified by customs. Additionally, it illustrates the veracity of the triad of men’s violence (Kauffman, 2007:34) where violent behaviour against other men comes together with violence against women and against men themselves.

The men’s explanation of their behaviour is a sort of “culture of violence” in the current situation in Chile. These explanations could show that men are integrating discourses given by the media in campaigns against gender violence, like the “Campaña Cuidado el Machismo Mata” (Attention Machismo Kills! Campaign). This campaign initiated in July 2007 as a permanent denounce of “domestic and sexual violence”. The use of such discourse still does not explain why each individual is exerting violence on his partner.

As I explain in the previous chapter, “women” and “gender” issues have entered in the political arena in Chile, since 1990. Consequently, to use the word “gender,” instead for “sex,” seems to be quite common, even though it does not mean necessarily a deeper understanding of power relations between males and females. Certainly, it can be understood that there co-exists at least two discourses on gender. One is traditional and tells us about compulsory violent masculinity and other more “modern”, which tries to integrate women as

38 “Depende de cómo lo hayan criado a uno” “Y cuando yo tenía 8 o 10 años tuve que aprender a defenderme, porque puta me pegaban, me quitaban la pelota, tuve que aprender a defenderme” “Un día mi papá me dijo “maricón tenís que aprender a defenderte” “Y de ahí para adelante era un agarrarse a combos cada fin de semana...en las poblaciones es así el cuento”

39 “Todo el mundo anda acelerado, todo el mundo es violento, todos andan siempre a la defensiva” “Es una cultura casi, que no distingue géneros (sic)”

40 “Nosotros (los hombres) somos más violentos...la mujer es más (violenta) de palabra...psicológica”

41 See chapter II page 18

42 http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/?q=node/382

43 See chapter III, page numer 22
equal. This “modernity” appears at least at the discursive level, because as it can be shown, men’s practices are still very much traditional.

1.2. Gender Order: “…almost like a princess”

The men’s descriptions and explanations about their relationships with their partners clearly portray the traditional discourse(s) on gender. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a man explaining the problem he had in his marriage.

Perhaps with my ex-wife the problem was …[I was] not very nice to her. I dedicated myself to work Monday through Sunday…The idea was that she should never lack anything, the idea was to have her be financially secure. I thought…almost like a princess without having to do anything…I thought it was the best way, but no, I was wrong. It was necessary to pay attention to her, to go out with her…I don’t know [pause] to give her a chocolate…something that I never did…and if I did it, I did it because I was forced. [Those things] I missed because of my dedication to earn money, of my dedication to her wellbeing…so that she could get luxury things, good vacations…

In his mind, the marriage is constituted by a man who works and provides, while the woman rests at home, does the housekeeping and is supported by her husband. Consequently, his whole energy is dedicated to undertake the expected position as a “good husband.” The relationship did not work as he would have wished, and in his interpretation the conflict was produced by his flaws in taking care of her emotionally, romantically. The conflicts and the subsequent violence are in his view the consequence of the absence of certain practices related with the “romantic love”.

Nevertheless, other discourses on “a good husband” can be found.

I am very independent, I know how to wash and iron clothes, I know everything on domestic work …I never minded the situation if there wasn’t food or because there was spaghetti again.

Here the man feels he is able to step outside of the traditional men’s positioning into one where he behaves according to a masculinity that follows the new times. He is a “good husband” because he is willing to do domestic work and is able to accept a wife who does not position herself traditionally.

Nevertheless, the violence enters the relationship. Consequently, in men’s testimonies violence and gender embrace clearly, showing frustrated expectations on the way that men and women should relate to each other, conduct to violence.

44 Quizás con mi ex-mujer mi problema fué: [que fui] muy poco atento con ella, me dedicaba a mi trabajo de lunes a domingo…la idea era que no le faltara nunca nada a ella, era tenerla bien económicamente. Yo pensaba que la iba a tener bien, casi como una princesa sin hacer nada. Yo pensé que esa era la mejor forma y no, me equivoqué. Había que darle atenciones, salir con ella, no se darle un chocolate…algo…cosa que nunca hice y si las hice, las hice forzado [Esas cosas]…las perdí por dedicarme a ganar plata (dinero), a que [ella] viviera bien, que se diera sus lujo, sus buenas vacaciones…

45 “Yo soy un tipo re-autosuficiente, se lavar, planchar, se hacer de todo…nunca me compliqué, por si no había comida, por si había de nuevo tallarines».
Depending on the situation, we [men] are not always violent...I can’t hit my boss because everyone knows this is something you should not do.  

Here he is positioning himself as a respectful citizen that has understood the rules of social interaction in public spaces. Consequently, can we understand his statement as an authorisation about battering his partner? In addition, his statement shows an understanding that there are different rules about violence and gender relations in public and private spheres; and his capacity to “navigate” between them.

Moreover, as the next quote shows, he is “aware” about the different consequences of violence between males and females.

The beating is obviously stronger for her...For her it is painful, because she is a woman...Between men we understand each other...so the beating between men is another story...[the violence] is a necessary evil...We men are raised like that...it is not possible to avoid it.

As I mentioned before, there are still public spaces where there is a tacit acceptance of violence between men. In addition, men clearly can describe a masculinity that compels them to act and think in the acceptance of violence. They consider women less strong than men, but this consideration does not seem to stop them to exert violence against their female partners in the private sphere.

When men state “it is not possible to avoid it ”, they are referring to a pre-established situation which structure men in certain way; and a compulsory response that is expected and impossible to evade. I would say dialoguing with Butler (2007) that even though, I would agree with her that masculinity is not a pre-established destiny; these men’s performances are very much like the old and traditional masculinity expected from them.

1.2.1. Men’s Feelings: “...I don’t like crying”

In the traditional masculinity that men are referring to during the interviews, there is not much room to express, or show, feelings that are supposed to be related to women or femininity.

I don’t like crying, I don’t like sadness, it doesn’t fit me, I am a happy guy...[even though] when I cry I am worse than a woman...in general the women tend to cry more and are more sensitive.

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46 “Depende de la situación, no siempre somos violentos. No le voy a pegar al jefe porque se sabe que eso no se puede hacer”

47 “El golpe es obvio que para ella es mas fuerte...para ella es doloroso, porque es mujer...Entre hombres nos entendemos, así es que [el golpe] entre hombres es otro cuento. [la violencia] es un mal necesario, los hombres nos criamos así, no se puede evitar”

48 See chapter II, page number 11

49 “...no me gusta llorar, no me gusta la pena, no va conmigo, yo soy un tipo alegre...[aunque] cuando lloro soy peor que una mujer...por lo general las mujeres son mas lloronas y mas sensibles”
As I mentioned in the theoretical framework\textsuperscript{50}, this rejection of feelings is a behaviour learned by men since the childhood and it goes together with its conversion into anger (Kaufman 2001, 39-43). This psychological mechanism is part of the construction of masculinity in every man. It “prepares” them to react with violence when men feel pain, vulnerability or sadness. Those are feelings that are only “permitted” for women. Obviously not all men actually use this mechanism, but still they have subsequently the problem of how to deal with vulnerability. As one Chilean, male and middle age friend told me, “…violence is to be attacked in everything that is vulnerable…” and he was referring to his feelings. Remembering the compulsory attitude\textsuperscript{51} within certain type of masculinity, where a man must answer violence with violence, we can easy imagine the implications of this last quote on his life and his relationships.

1.2.2. Woman Researcher: “It is good that women listen to us and understand”

In relation with men’s difficulty in showing their feelings, the participants in the focal group made interesting comments about me being a female researcher interviewing them.

A man is always more relaxed with a woman on the emotional side, we [a man and a woman] can be equal on the emotional side.\textsuperscript{52}

Once again, the relationship between male and female is framed by the idea that women are sensitive and that women have special capacities for taking care of “the emotional” aspects of people and relations. The fact that I was there as researcher, does not change this previous idea. In these men’s testimony, it is most likely because I was a woman I could probably have a better comprehension of their lives and motives.

It is good that women listen to us and understand...It is not that we want to be like that [violent]...It was something that unfortunately ‘escaped’[comes out]… and it reached the partner.\textsuperscript{53}

To approach in these subjects with women is like to approach it with my wife...my ex-wife...to listen to [other] opinions, to see things from your point of view...It makes me understand the kind of things that I fell in, which was my mistake.\textsuperscript{54}

Both of these testimonies tell us about men’s expectations to be listened to and be understood by a woman. One can say expectations on femininity and masculinity are working together. Nevertheless, they also show a lack of understanding of their partners’ experience of being

\textsuperscript{50} See chapter II, page number 18

\textsuperscript{51} See chapter II, page 18

\textsuperscript{52} “Un hombre siempre es mas suelto con una mujer en la parte emocional, uno puede estar de igual a igual en la parte emocional”

\textsuperscript{53} “Es bueno que mujeres nos escuchen y entiendan que no es que queramos ser así... fue un tema que desgraciadamente se escapó y le tocó a la pareja”

\textsuperscript{54} “Tocar estos temas con mujeres es como tocarlo con mi mujer...mi ex-mujer...escuchar [otras] opiniones, ver las cosas desde el lado de Uds... me da a entender en las cosas que caí, cuál fue mi error”
battered. This absence remind us of the “psychic armour of manhood” stated by Kauffman (Kauffman, 2001:42), “armour” that permits emotional distance and difficulties to empathize with others.

1.2.3. Other Women’s Opinions: “…you aren’t a bad guy”

In their attempt to justify themselves, men mentioned other women friends and family members that tried to alleviate their responsibility of their actions.

They know …and they say to me that it is good she denounces me, because this could end in a higher level [of violence]. Nevertheless, they also told me ‘she is as guilty as you are, because you aren’t a bad guy, you are calm’...

Here we must remember as Järviluoma et al (2003:49) clarified, discourses on masculinity and femininity are discourses shared by men and women. In this sense, the last quote shows the coexistence of two discourses. One discourse presents a critical positioning about partner violence and at the same time, a second discourse presents a sort of un-critical acceptance of him as a good man despite the fact that he battered his partner.

1.2.4. Other Violent Men: “…80% of men commit the same mistakes”

The interviewees were attending a programme that put them together because of their violence, but even though they did not have many common activities, it was still surprising their attempts to separate from each other. They did not want to be confused with “that other man which is more violent than I am”.

I came here [to the focal group] with the idea of listening to something that the others did…We men are here not because we are good or saints. There were around three [which had already left] who should not have been here…One person didn’t want to talk because of fear. He didn’t realize this was different from the therapy [he meant the activities in the Programme which differs from the focal group].

They were on the defensive…but it wasn’t my case [problem].

Moreover, men’s discourse use other ways to prevent the possibility of being mistaken on their violence. They attempt to appeal to awareness.

I think that we see it more because we are in the problem, I see many men that don’t even see the campaign posters [Attention Machismo Kills! Campaign].

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55 See chapter II, page 19
56 “…ellas saben…y me dicen que está bien que ella me haya denunciado, porque esto podría haber llegado mas arriba (en la violencia)...pero me dicen (también) ‘así como tú tienes culpa ella también tiene la culpa, porque tú no eres un tipo malo, tú eres tranquilo…”
57 See chapter I, page number 6
58 See chapter III, page number 24
59 “Yo vine con la idea de escuchar algo de lo que [ellos] hicieron…los hombres estamos aquí no por buenos ni por ser santos…y habían como tres que no tendrían que haber estado…Una persona no quería hablar por miedo…No se daba cuenta que esto era distinto de las terapias…”
60 “Ellos ya estaban un poco a la defensiva…en el caso mío no…”
61 “Yo creo que mas lo vemos los que estamos en el problema…yo veo que muchos hombres ni los ven los afiches de la campaña”
[Though] I think 80% of men commit the same mistakes that we have committed. I think many see the advertising [campaign] and they say to themselves ‘it was her fault, she deserves it’…

Their discourse shows certain consciousness about their own violence and the violence they have exerted. At the same time, I would argue that there is a feeling of “bad luck”. Notwithstanding, the majority of men have made the “same mistake” (exerted violence) just a few of them have being caught by the law and forced to attend a re-educational programme.

1.3. Meanings of Partner Violence:

The main reason of my research was to understand men’s explanations about their violence. Therefore, I asked why they had ended in a violent relation and how they felt about being forced to participate in the programme for violent men.

1.3.1. Shame: “We are ‘fucked’ for life”

The first reaction was very clear:

Now I feel ashamed…We are ‘fucked’ for life though there is not in a document that we are batterers of women…You wonder all the time what people think about you…if the people know that you have committed mistakes.

They felt shame being pointed out as batterers, as violent men. Still it is necessary to remember that; even though the man mentioned an absence of official papers on his behaviour, there is a relative new legal frame in Chile that permits women to defend themselves against partner violence and most importantly, that forces men to take consequences of their behaviour.

One can think that this feeling of shame could be a positive sign of the process of men’s violence re-codification. In other words, that at least these men are changing their patterns of thoughts; but it is remarkable that he finished his testimony using the word “mistake”, an expression that makes the violence exerted less important. Additionally, the shame is almost a victimization and there is a “poor me” idea behind it instead of thinking of the woman who was on the receiving end.

1.3.2. Non-Helpful Woman: “The woman doesn’t help…”

Even though the interviewees mentioned the “mistake” of having exerted violence, when they tried to explain the situation, the responsibility moved to someone else.

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62 “[Aunque] yo creo que el 80% de los hombres comete los mismos errores que hemos cometido nosotros… yo creo que muchos ven los comerciales y se dicen, ‘ella tuvo la culpa, se lo merece’…”

63 “Ahora me da verguenza…nosotros estamos cagados para toda la vida, aunque no nos aparezca en el papel que somos castigadores de mujeres…uno anda pensando todo el tiempo que la gente va a pensar, que la gente sabe que uno cometió errores”

64 See chapter III, page number 22
Unfortunately, the woman doesn’t help [us, men]. It is so simple as to say ‘let’s stop it’…she continues and she doesn’t shut up…and it is then when it happens [the violent behaviour].

“In my case it isn’t because of little things but because of my wife’s character, which is strong…that is the point, to try to restrain her a little…[I say] ‘this is the solution! Period!’…and I made the mistake…

In the men’s discourse, it is clear that rules, which control their violence in public spaces, are not working anymore. As we can notice by the previous quote, in the private sphere, the interviewee’s partner, “the woman” as he calls her, needs to be controlled and consequently, violence is his way to get the control back. This last excerpt reminds us of Ramirez’ perspective (2000:23) about partner violence as a control mechanism used by men. Moreover, it is interesting that this testimony is an example of men’s need or expectation of the women’s help in men’s power game.

...this problem is two people’s problem, [so] it should have a ‘regulator’ for the woman, with the same structure [of PRONOVIF]…if she is not obligated to go to therapy, I will recover and she has not been treated, we will come back to the same story.

In this statement, the violence is a shared problem caused by the man and the woman. Consequently, the interviewee thinks there should be an external mechanism to control women as well. Connecting this to the idea of control that I had earlier discussed, one could say that if he is “out of control”, she must be “out of control” too, so he will not be completely “guilty” or “responsible”.

My wife comes here too [to the programme office] and every time she’s here, I feel that her anger towards me wakes up again.

This last passage can be better understood remembering that PRONOVIF has private interviews with women whose partners are attending the programme. In this sense, the last passage shows the interviewee’s difficulties to understand and empathize with his partner and the consequences of his actions.

1.3.3. A Strong Woman

In the previous testimonies, men refer that their partners are “strong women”, an expression which was present many times in the focal group and in the interviews. A strong woman
seems to be the partner of a violent man. Consequently, I ask them to describe how a strong woman was.

It is someone who shouts, fights, gives orders, stubborn, a dictator. When you leave something on the floor... she exaggerates...It is someone who says ‘I am not your mother, I am not your servant’.  

According to Ramirez (2000:23) partner violence appears in the relationship because of men’s attempts to get women to provide domestic services. The men’s discourses implies an idea of femininity, which includes women’s obligation towards domestic work and an idea of masculinity where women services are something that men should get without discussion. Once again, the last coincides with Kaufman (2001, 39), when he relates violence to the privileges that men believe they have in their relations with women.

Despite the fact that the interviewees were describing the women as having strong character, I continued asking if they, as males, had a strong character. Surprisingly enough the answer was no! When I repeated each characteristic that they said to be proper of “a strong woman”, (“who shouts, fights, gives orders, stubborn, a dictator”), and asked them if the same characteristics’ applied to men’s case, the answer was sometimes!

Another man continued his explanation on how it was to be in a relationship with a “strong woman”.

Do you thing a guy with a strong character would iron a lot of clothes on Sunday? …I’m not an oppressed man…I even drove her when she wanted to go out and prepared the food and went to the movies with my son…I wasn’t an ogre.

Here he positions himself as a modern man, performing a masculine behaviour, which includes domestic work and even the acceptance of a partner that goes out on her own. This discourse still appears mixed with another more traditional discourse when he explained that he was not an oppressed man, showing his fear to be a man controlled by a woman. It is necessary to remember that this fear is one common argument in Latin American contexts in order to avoid the sharing of the household work (Gutmann, 2000:226).

When speaking of women that perform their femininity in a traditional way the interviewees described those women ambivalently. Once again, two discourses are combined, a sort of admiration towards traditional femininity and at the same time, a distance towards it.

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71 “Es una mujer gritona, peleadora, mandaña, llevada a sus ideas, dictadora. Cuando uno deja algo tirado...exagera” “[Que dice] yo no soy tu mamá, yo no soy tu empleada”

72 See chapter II, page 15

73 See chapter II, page 18

74 “Y tienes de carácter fuerte?”

75 “¿Ud. cree que un tipo de carácter fuerte se va a poner a planchar un montón de ropa el día domingo? …Yo no soy sometido…Yo llegaba al extremo de [cuando ella quería salir el día viernes] yo la iba a dejar y preparaba comida y las películas para ver con mi hijo…Yo no fui un ogro”
I don’t say that my wife is a bad person, but for example my cousin’s wife is a good housewife…my cousin behaves badly, he spends all his money drinking and he knows when he arrive [home] his wife will be with him…he is one of the fortunate men…[although] I don’t want a wife like that...

1.3.4. Silly Motives for Fighting: “We fight because of a pair of shoes out of place…”

It is remarkable when the men describe their conflicts with their partners how they minimize the motives, more correctly her motivations.

My problems with my wife were because of silly things…’I want to see this’…[she] ‘I want to see that’… ‘No, the TV is mine, I bought it’…and it finished in a mess because of silliness.

I don’t understand why we fight because of a pair of shoes out of place…or a plate…when there are women who have done it whole their lives and never complained.

Men’s minimization is also reported by other scholars for example Michelle Jones (2004:1), when she describes huge differences between men’s and women’s interpretations on their arguments. According to this scholar, a woman talking about the same quarrel a woman could express big frustration and sadness, while her partner could hardly remember it.

The last two fragments shows interviewees’ thinking about the dynamic within the household. For them the quarrels are based on motives hardly important but at the same time, they do not seem to have good explanations about their own strong reactions towards the “silliness”.

1.4. The Expressions of Partner Violence

During the focal group and the interviews, it was obvious the interviewees avoided speaking clear and loudly, about the violence they had exerted on their partners. For that reason, I asked them in what way they had been violent with their wives or cohabiting couples.

Honestly, I never battered her...mine were pushes...One time I took her by the neck and I told her ‘leave me alone!’ I didn’t measure my force, of course! Never did I punch or kick...It was not every day either.

Very few times blows, generally it was insults...I think every six or eight months. When that happens, I tried to avoid it...I went upstairs and she went up...I went down and she went there. At the end, it doesn’t mean that there was not another outcome, but it slipped...
These testimonies -coming from three different men and being very similar to others I got in the interviews, show four mechanisms used by men in their attempts to position them selves as a decent and good man despite the violence on their partners. Firstly, they minimised the physical expression of violence and its psychological effects on the women. Secondly, they minimised also the frequency of violent events. Thirdly, they consider their behaviour as something that just happened without intention, without their awareness. Fourthly, they felt their partners were also being violent, so the quarrel was between “equals”. It is necessary to say that these mechanisms are very similar to those that other researchers reports as men’s explanation to their violent behaviour (Anderson and Umberson 2001: 5).

I would argue those mechanisms permit men to take cover from seeing and understanding the effects of their violence on their partners in the end. I have already mentioned the “psychic armour of manhood”83, which I believe it is in the base of this behaviour, but it is even more important to remember that the relationship is framed by power. Consequently, as I discussed in previous chapters84, they are mechanisms possible to use because of the power position that men hold in the society.

1.5. Partner Violence as a Problem

In global contexts as well as local contexts, domestic violence, gender based violence and partner violence have been considered a social, cultural and health problem. I have already discussed this in previous chapters85. Nevertheless, it was important to explore if partner violence was a problem for the men that I interviewed and when did it became a problem for them.

In my case, in a moment when the law interfered...the family...then it’s more complicated86

Sometimes the problems happen, but they don’t become known...in my case we are talking because my wife denounced me and it became public.87

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81 "Muy pocas veces llegamos a las manos, generalmente eran insultos...yo creo, que cada seis o ocho meses. Cuando pasaba esto...yo trataba de evitar, yo me quería ir, pero no podía...me iba para arriba y allá [ella] subía...me bajaba y allá iba ella. Al final, no es que no quedaba otra salida, sino que se arrancaba de las manos, porque yo nunca pensé 'le voy a dar un correctivo para que la corte’. No era como un chispazo...yo recibía y ella también recibía...”

82 "Es que en el momento de conflicto...en mi caso con mi ex-mujer, ninguno de los dos callábamos...entonces una vez que ya ‘quedaba la escoba’ [caos, pelea], era ahí cuando recien ya nos dábamos cuenta del error...”

83 See chapter II page 19
84 See chapter I page 3 and chapter II page 12
85 See chapters II and III
86 “En mi caso llegó un punto en que se mete la justicia...la familia...entonces ahí es más complicado...”
87 “A veces estos problemas suceden, pero no se dan a conocer...en mi caso estamos hablando porque mi señora fue la que me denunció y se hizo público...”
Sometimes I feel that she...I don’t say exaggerated, but it wasn’t necessary to involve justice, because I never gave her a bruised eye, I never did anything to her face, I never threatened her with a gun, and I never threatened to kill her...

If I find another partner, to tell her this would be impossible, because what woman wants to be with a violent man?... Someone who punishes? Nobody.

These testimonies show clear enough that partner violence was not a problem in itself until the situation became “public”. It is after the woman denounces, after the extended family gets involved, when men start to realise there is a problem in the relationship and their behaviour. I would argue that once again, we are in front of men whose masculinity compels them to take distance from their partners’ feelings and from their own feelings. Still this kind of masculinity is criticised and confronted by new discourses and practices represented by new laws in Chile about domestic violence and family. As I have described in a previous chapter, these new laws protect both women and children against men’s violence.

2. Violence Imprint in a Man’s Life

The previous section has showed men’s discourses and experiences in their present lives. What we are today is obviously related with our experiences in the past, and following Moore (1994:141), one can say that past subject positions possibly predetermined present subject positions. In this section, I reproduce an in-depth interview where a man, participating in PRONOVIF, tells about his life story. The whole subchapter describes the violence imprint in one man’s life and the limits of individual’s possibilities of change.

2.1. The Interviewee

He is 28 years old. He is one of the very few men who have participated in the programme voluntarily. He studied to be a technician in the area of publicity, and works as a security guard in a private company.

His parents separated when he was 13 years old and he lived with his maternal grandfather from then on. He worked to earn a living and studied. Even though he has a house that he inherited from his grandfather, he never lived there with his ex-partner, despite the fact that they have twins, a boy and a girl, together. According to him, they did not live together in the beginning because she did not want to and afterwards because of economic reasons. The twins

88 “De repente siento que ella...no [dijo] exageró, pero no era necesario llegar a tanto, al tema de la justicia, porque yo nunca le dejé un ojo morado, nunca le dejé la cara con nada, nunca la amenazé con un arma, nunca amenazé con matarla...”

89 “…si llegamos a tener una pareja, de contarle esto va a ser imposible, porque qué mujer va a querer estar con un hombre violento, que castiga, nadie!”

90 See chapter III, page number 22
91 See chapter II, pages number 20 and 21
were born with a very serious medical condition that could make them die, so they had to be at a hospital. Two years later, when I interviewed the father, the twin’s health had recovered.

2.2. The Relationship with His Partner

I started the interview exploring the relationship with his ex-partner and which were the problems he had to face in this relationship.

I never thought my partner could be so immature yet she is 2 years older than me. She’s really close to her mother. We used to argue a lot, there were moments of violence. After participating in PRONOVIF I have come to the conclusion that it [the violence] was more psychological than physical. But the ghost of her father being violent towards her was always with me. Suffice it to say that my father was an officer in the army, which adds more to the situation. Even though I always had the idea that I would not end up like them, that’s what happened. I would always say that she was my “Mrs”, even though we weren’t married… I never felt that she would give me a hand. She seemed selfish to me, closed off. Instead of saying something, of communicating, of asking for something .... it was always her mother, her mother. That was the issue. She wouldn’t do anything if her mother hadn’t told her to.

Second Point: non-existent sex life

Third Point: work. I worked and still work as a security guard. The stress of work, the stress of the relationship with my partner plus the stress of the relationship with the mother.... well my relationship with her was not good.

Fourth and fifth points are the arrival of our children and their illness. 92

According to him, the problems in the relationship were five. Nevertheless, I could argue that the main issues in the relationship were a) the violence -both psychological and physical-; b) the reality that his partner still lived with her mother; and c) the fact that both came from a family with a violent father. Even though he tried to minimise the intensity and the character of the violence, the partner violence makes the relationship to come to an end. The second issue implied that in front of other people eyes and even for their own eyes, they did not constitute a “real” couple. Based on this, one can explain the partner’s closeness with the mother, the absence of sexual contact on daily bases and his need to call her “my wife”. The third issue, that both have their origins in families with violent fathers, reminds us of

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92 Nunca pensé que mi pareja tuviera una actitud tan inmadura, aunque ella es dos años mayor que yo. Muy apegada a la mamá. Discutíamos mucho, capítulos de violencia en si...después de participar en el PRONOVIF yo he llegado a la conclusión que fué mas psicológica que física. Aunque siempre estuve con el fantasma de la violencia del padre de ella...Demás está decir que mi papá era suboficial del ejército, lo que le da un elemento mas al hecho. Así yo siempre tenía la idea de no terminar como ellos, pero igual se dió.

Yo siempre le decía que era mi ‘señora’, aunque no estábamos casados. Yo nunca sentí que ella me tendiera la mano, la sentí egoísta, cerrada. En vez de decir algo, de comunicar, de pedir...siempre era la mamá, la mamá. Eso es un punto. Ella no hacia nada si no se lo decía la mamá.

Punto dos: inexistente vida sexual.

Punto tres: el trabajo. Yo trabajaba y trabajo de guardia de seguridad. El estres del trabajo, mas el estres de la relación con mi pareja mas, el estres de la relación con la mamá...[pues] mi relación con ella no era buena.

Punto cuatro y cinco son la llegada de los niños y la enfermedad de ellos.
Kaufman (2001, 43) when he states violent men frequently have experienced violence from their fathers in the earlier years. I reflect again over this aspect later in this chapter[^3].

The interviewee continues:

> Everything got more and more stressful and so when things exploded, the only thing I’m thankful for is that I never disrespected her ... like slap her ... I would only react with a word or a look, I got mad really fast. She would respond submissively. Until she told me it was too much and that was it. So I decided to ‘recruit’ myself to PRONOVIF. I found the help I needed there, to stop being so jealous. I used to always say ‘you are cheating on me’, she would always say no, and I never believed her. So we can add that to the sixth point.

> Physical violence, only happened once in the hospital, I took her by the arm, pushed her, forced her, because I needed to talk to her and she wouldn’t pay attention to me. She was afraid of me....I don’t know where that came from...She thought I could hurt her.... and I arrived at the same conclusion. So before everything blew up, I decided to do what I’m doing.[^4]

These excerpts are from two different occasions and they are a very good example of how contradictory the explanations of someone’s own violent behaviour can be. They show on one side a man, who presents himself as someone aware of his own violence and for that reason, joins the programme. On the other side, even though he is conscious of being violent, he minimises this violence through statements like he never was disrespectful with his partner, he was physically violent just one time or he does not know why she was scared of him. Moreover, sometimes he is who decided to finish the relationship, and sometimes it was she.

The interviewee’s recall about the only moment that he was physically violent –the event at the hospital- seems to be an expression of what Kaufman calls the *Psychic pressure cooker* (Kaufman, 2001: 43), which makes men simply react with violence when they are feeling insecurity, sadness or feel hurt.

### 2.2.1. Expectations about his Partner

He had many ideas about how she should have behaved in the relationship but apparently, she could never measure up to his expectations.

> I expected her to stand by me no matter what, that she would always be committed to me. I wanted her to be more open and lean on me. I didn’t want it to be only about economic

[^3]: See page 48
[^4]: Todo fue comprimiéndose, comprimiéndose y ya cuando reventó, lo único que agradezco es que yo nunca le falté al respeto...así como pegarle una bofetada...yo siempre reaccionaba de palabra ó con una mirada, me enojaba muy rápido. Ella respondía sumisamente. Hasta que ella me dijo que era demasiado y que lo dejaríamos hasta ahí. Entonces yo decidí ‘echutarme’ para el PRONOVIF. Allí encontré la ayuda que necesitaba, para dejar de ser tan “celópata”. Yo siempre le decía ‘me estás cagando’ y ella me decía que no y yo nunca le creí. Entonces eso lo podemos agregar al punto seis.

Violento físicamente, sólo una vez en el hospital, que yo la tomé del brazo, la empujé, la obligué, porque yo necesitaba hablar con ella y ella no me tomaba atención. Ella me tenía miedo...no se de adonde, pensaba que yo la podía agredir...y yo llegué a pensar lo mismo. Entonces antes que se reventara todo, decidí hacer lo que estoy haciendo[participar en PRONOVIF]
support. The first three months, wow! She liked to take care of me, wait on me ... I’d say ‘You’re not my servant; you’re my partner’.

I didn’t feel like I had her support, even though she would say ‘worry about yourself’. She worried about me, but sitting in my bubble, I didn’t see it that way. The only thing I would do was go back to work so my kids had everything they needed. I thought that being the family provider (100%), and being a man, that I would have her in the palm of my hand, not to oppress her, but so that she would value me. But it never felt that way. On the contrary, I would always tell her [encourage her]... So she would feel motivated. I was a good provider, and she told me that that was my responsibility; she didn’t value it. Even up to today, I give her money every month.99

Even though his discourse talks about how little his partner’s behaviour corresponds with how a good wife should be, it tells also that her performance at the beginning was like expected. By that first moment, we can see both performing according to a traditional gender order. She took care of him, she liked “serving” him and he provided for her, he is a man to hundred percent. This situation is what Ramirez (2000) and Kauffman (2001)96 describe as one of the bases of masculine violence against women. Though he did not consider himself a traditional man and for that reason, he expressed his desire for her to be a “companion” not a “servant”, he was aware of how much power he had over her. Power nevertheless he wanted to use in order to be valued not for oppressing her.

For him an important cause for the problems to begin was his partner’s relation with the mother. As states below his ex-partner was constantly consulting her mother for advices.

Then she started to ask her mother...and since her mother is also separated and her husband cheated on her for five years with another woman...She (my partner) was raised thinking that all men were the same. It took me months to convince her, to demonstrate to her that I wasn’t like her father. 97

Consequently, one can say he was struggling to persuade his partner that he was not like her father and at the same time –as he described earlier in his testimonial-, he was making a big effort to convince himself that he was not like his father. Following Moore (1994)98 I would argue that he was struggling with the fact that a previous subject position as traditional man tends to have a negative effect on his present positioning as a more modern and equalitarian man.

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95 Yo esperaba que ella se la jugara por mi, que hubiera mas compromiso. Que hubiera sido mas abierta y que se apoyara en mi. Que no fuera tanto en lo economico que se apoyara en mi. Los tres primeros meses, uf! Le gustaba atenderme, le gustaba servirme...yo le decía ‘no te quiero como empleada, sino como mi compañera’.

Yo no me sentí apoyado por ella, aunque a veces me decía ‘preocupate por ti’. Ella se preocupaba por mi, pero yo en mi burbuja no lo sentía así. Yo lo único que hacía era volver a mi trabajo para que a mis ‘cabros’ no les faltara nada. Yo pensé que siendo proveedor al 100%, que siendo hombre la iba a tener en la palma de mi mano, no para oprimir sino para que me valorara. Pero yo nunca lo sentí así. Yo en cambio siempre le decía a ella... para que se sintiera motivada. Yo era un buen proveedor y ella me decía que ese era mi deber, no lo valoraba. Yo hasta el día de hoy le paso la mensualidad. 97

96 See chapter II

97 Luego empezó a preguntarle a la mamá...y como la mamá también está separada y la engañaron durante cinco años con otra mujer. Ella [mi pareja] se crió pensando que todos los hombres son iguales. Me costó meses convencerla, demostrármelo que yo no era como su papá.

98 See chapter II pages number 20 and 21

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One important aspect of traditional masculinity is a sort of compulsory “polygamy”. This means that a man is allowed to have other relations parallel to marriage or it is accepted as long as he fulfils his duties as husband or father (Ramirez, 2008:252 and Gutmann, 2000: 334). In that sense, the interviewee was performing masculinity more according to the new times, because he was not like her father and showed that not all men are unfaithful. Moreover, he would like to be with his partner again.

I’m still struggling, and I wouldn’t be able to die in peace without having met my goal of going back to live with her.  

Despite interviewee’s participation in the re-education programme, it seems that for him there is no contradiction between the violence he had exerted on his partner and the desire that he expressed to be with her again.

2.3. His Original Family: “…when I have kids, I’m not going to do this…”

When the interviewee talks about his childhood and his original family, he describes a process where violence has been present since he was a boy. His discourse is about a process of building up masculinity, in which violent husbands and violent fathers are a painful but unquestionable reality.

[I am] not like my brother, he is somebody to be scared of... The wife says something [he makes a hitting sound], somebody looks at him wrong and ‘bam’. Six months ago, his partner would say something and end up with being hit three times. With me, he is not violent, because I’ve softened him, but even if I don’t say it, I’m scared of him. So that’s when I think ‘I could have become like that’.  

His brother is even more violent, or as the interviewee underlines, he is really someone to be afraid of. However, the interviewee is frightened by his brother but he would never acknowledge it to him. This reminds us of other aspects of masculine violence, the paradox of men’s power (Kaufman 2001: 39-43). The interviewee and his brother have positioned themselves as powerful men in the domestic sphere, based in both cases in violent behaviour, but this dominion has components of insecurities and fears. One violent man is afraid of another violent man; consequently, one could say this kind of masculinity is constituted by fear, dominion and violence.

99 Y sigo luchando, yo no podría morir tranquilo sin haber cumplido el objetivo de volver a vivir con ella.
100 No [soy] como mi hermano, él si que es alguien de temer...La mujer le dice algo y... [hace un ruido de golpe], lo miran feo y ‘pa!’. Hace seis meses su pareja le decía algo y terminaba con tres bofetadas. Conmigo no es violento, porque yo lo he ablandado, pero aunque yo no se lo digo, yo le tengo miedo...Entonces es ahí cuando pienso ‘pudiste haber llegado a ser así’.
101 See chapter II, page number 18
Now I think that if we hadn’t broken up [he and his partner], I would be exactly the same as my father. Every time my dad put his hands on me, I’d say to myself, ‘when I have kids, I’m not going to do this.’

Here he is establishing a clear relationship between the ways that he was brought up and his behaviour with his partner. In this sense, his life is another example of the fact –reported by social workers and scholars (Kaufman, 2001; Katz, 2006; Miedzian, 2002 among others) that a man, who batters his wife or partner, probably has suffered or seen father’s violence under his childhood.

My father is a dog ... (though) a dog has more dignity than he does. He’s a very hard person, a rock, intractable. He’s a person who caused a lot of harm. He never really knew what it was like to have a family. He’d put his pants on ‘backwards’, in the sense that he felt like more of a man when he harmed my mother and would say ‘I’m the man of the house’…”I’m the one who wears the pants in this house”.

It is interesting that though he was criticising his father and he paraphrased a proverb about “men wearing the pants at home”, his discourse is not critical or questioning men’s power in the household, but the manner in which his father had gotten control over his mother and children. The interviewee opposes father’s violence but not father’s power.

There was a case of extreme violence in the house, which ended up with my brother, and me in the hospital, and my mom really hurt at home...that was when she was pregnant with my sister. In a fit of insanity, he wanted to hit my mother and the only thing my brother and I did was to make like a wall... And he sent us to the hospital and he went to the psychiatric ward at the military hospital. Despite everything, I’d shirk school and go see him at the hospital. .... ‘here’s a carton of cigarettes, old man.’ The only time that my dad went to the hospital to see my children... I told him, ‘I forgive you dad’... because I don’t want to spend the rest of my life feeling resentful like my brother. We’re four siblings in my family (one woman and three men) and one of my brothers is autistic. We’ve always thought that he was like that because of my dad...that my father brought it on.

During the two occasions I met the interviewee he showed a remarkable capacity to control his feelings. No sign of sadness, anger or desperation accompanied his narration. The last testimony, for example, -a compressed description of his father’s behaviour- begins with a terrible event when the interviewee was around eight years old. He recalled but it seemed that he did not feel much on the subject. One could say he was using the “armour” (Kaufman, 2001:16) that protect men to empathise with others and I would argue, protect men to get in

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102 Yo pienso ahora que si no hubiéramos terminado, yo sería exactamente igual a mi padre...Cada vez que mi papá me ponía la mano encima, yo me decía ‘cuando yo tenga hijos, no lo voy a hacer’.

103 Mi papá es un perro...[aunque] un perro tiene mas dignidad que él. Es una persona dura, una piedra, intratable. Es una persona que hizo mucho daño. No supo lo que era realmente tener una familia. Se ponía los pantalones al revés, en el sentido que él se sentía mas hombre cuando agredía a mi madre y decía ‘yo soy el hombre de la casa’…‘yo soy el que lleva los pantalones en esta casa’.

104 Cuando vivió un hecho de violencia extrema en la casa y terminó conmigo en el hospital y con mi hermano en el hospital, que terminó con mi mamá mal en la casa... que fue cuando estaba embarazada de mi hermana. En un ataque de locura, quería pegarle a mi mamá y lo único que hícimos mi hermano y yo fue hacer como una pared... Y nos mandó al hospital y él se fue al psiquiatrico del hospital militar. Y a pesar de todo yo hacía la ‘cimarra’[no ir a la escuela] y lo iba a ver al hospital... ‘viejito aquí tiene una cajetilla de cigarros’... La única vez que mi papá fue al hospital a ver a mis hijos... yo le dije ‘papá yo te perdono’... porque yo no quiero ir por la vida resentido como mi hermano. Nosotros somos cuatro hermanos [una mujer y tres varones] y uno de mis hermanos es autista. Nosotros siempre hemos pensado que él es así por culpa de mi papá, que mi padre le provocó eso.
contact with the feelings that they consider *proper* for women. In this sense, men lack in understanding and comprehension on their own feelings.

**2.4. The meanings of Partner Violence: “It is the most terrible thing...”**

Because in the interviewee’s life violence had been a constant presence, I asked him what was violence for him.

It’s the worst thing that can happen... The very thought that I could inflict the same damage as was done to me... that the model would repeat itself, that hurts a lot. I think that violence is like a long stairway... part of it in the street, at school,... in the house, with your family, with your children, with your wife and it keeps going up... the last step is the murderer. The first step is to insult her and the last is to kill her. The path that leads you there is very dense and I followed it in the crisis that I lived with my parents. At least I didn’t go that far.  

Though he suffered his father violence, although he was aware about his own violence, he could not do very much in order to avoid the “model”, as he called it. This fact remind us Moore’s ideas (Moore, 1994) about how much past subject positions predetermine or influence new subjects positions. In my interviewee’s case, his childhood crossed by his father violence, being battered by him and being witness when the father battered his mother, did not help him to move away from a violent masculinity to another less dangerous and more according with his definitions about himself, as an “equalitarian” man.

Moreover, he had an explanation that can apply to everyone.

All men are violent. The gene that we human beings have is activated under certain circumstances. All men are violent, some more than others. Even she [his ex-partner] has some remnants ... when she loses control of the situation and yells. Like I said, violence can begin with yelling and end with killing someone...[Though] I think about my brother’s case and I think that there’s more of a solution for my case. My case has more potential for a solution than any of the guys at PRONOVIF. I’m not one of those who goes around looking for a fight in the streets. But ‘if anyone provokes me, it’s their turn’. Violence can happen when both parties are equal...A person has to realize who they can do it with and who they can’t. With a man, I’ll go for the fight, but with a woman, noooo! We [men] have twice their strength, twice their physical capacity.  

Once again, the idea of a general violence appears in the discourse. Now there are biological reasons, “a gene”, even women have that gene. Still, he is capable to describe differences

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105 Es lo mas terrible que puede haber... el solo hecho de pensar de que pude haber infringido el mismo daño que me hicieron a mi... que se repitiera el modelo, me duele mucho. Yo pienso que la violencia es un largo escalón... parte por la calle, [sigue] por el colegio... la casa, con tu familia, con tus hijos, con tu mujer y ahí sigue subiendo... el último escalón es el asesinato. El primero es echarle un ‘chu chá’ [grosería, palabra altisonante] y el último es matarla. El camino para llegar ahí es denso y lo seguí en las crisis que viví con mis padres. Menos mal que no llegué a eso...

106 See chapter II pages 20 and 21

107 Todos los hombres son violentos. Es que el gen que tenemos los seres humanos que se activa en ciertas circunstancias. Todos son violentos, unos mas unos menos. Incluso ella [su ex-pareja] tiene sus rasgos... cuando pierde el control de la situación, grita. Como decía la violencia puede empezar con un grito y terminar matando a alguien... [Aunque] yo pienso en el caso de mi hermano y creo que mi caso tiene más solución. Tiene una situación de igual que la de los ‘gallitos’ [hombres, tipos] que están en el PRONOVIF. Yo no soy de las personas que anda buscando pelea en la calle, pero si ‘Ud. provoca le toca’. La violencia se puede dar en igualdad de condiciones. Es que uno se tiene que dar cuenta con quién puede hacerlo y con quién no. Con un hombre yo voy a la pelea, pero con una mujer...noooo. Nosotros [los hombres] les doblamos en fuerza, en capacidad física.
between men and between men and women. He is positioning himself as a more modern man and, because of that; he has a less violent approach to his environment. Moreover, he can consider his female ex-partner as someone who equally can lose control. Despite this positioning, or together with it, he continues with the not so modern perspective of masculinity and femininity: first, men must react with violence to violence. Second, women are constituted by biological weaknesses.

He continued:

With men I’m pretty passive ... even though I think that I look bad to other men… ‘oh, you didn’t slap her when she said that’… ‘she doesn’t do what you want, who’s wearing the pants?’… You look bad. We’re raised with that thing of ‘the man is the boss in the house’.... and why do I want to rule the house for? I used to justify my actions telling myself that I was right, I had more experience, I knew what was best for us and if she didn’t obey she was going to lose.108

When he called himself passive, he was comparing his behaviour with the masculinity expressed by the phrases that he put in other men’s words. He was passive because he did not want to be the “boss”. Notwithstanding his good intentions, the masculinity in which he was formed “trapped” him. He became violent. This led to a need to justify his behaviour, and the traditional conception on gender relations gave him a good argument: men have more experience, because of that men know better.

2.5. Other Violent Men

Kauffman’s definition (Kaufman, 1993: 19) masculinity: is what you do –meaning what men do- gives a good tool to explore the different possible meanings of masculinity. Consequently, I asked the interviewees many times about other men’s behaviour, either family members or other men in the programme.

My grandfather used to hit my grandmother and my father saw that. My dad used to hit my mom and he would hit us too, so we should have ended up the same as them. From that tree, the only branch that came out like that is my brother and I was heading in that direction. Violence is like a culture … one has to specify what a person has in the head, how the person act, how the person engages, even how he speaks. I’ve met very intelligent people that talk to you with words taken from the dictionary and in the end they are the biggest dogs in their house. The root comes from the parents… imagine what it would be like to be the child of an ex-military man, imagine those years [under Pinochet]. I was embarrassed that my father was in the military and even today, I’m embarrassed by it. I used to ask myself, ‘if that’s the way he is with his children, what would he be like on the streets. And drunk besides that!109
The last is a clear description about how the violence is transmitted/learned by one generation to another and how differently some men can behave in public and private spheres.

What we have in common is the use of physical, psychological violence. There’s a relationship, what changes is the result, the harm is done. I’ve never felt identified with them. Coincidences yes, but I don’t go around with the face of a scared dog, which is the same face my dad used to put on once they locked him up for family violence and then went around begging my mother to be allowed to come home... the same face that I had. That’s why I spoke before about a mirror [that shows] what we are, what we were and what we could become. 110

Even though the interviewee wanted to make a difference between him and other men in the programme, he finished this testimony using the metaphor of a mirror. Other men, those who are part of his family and those who are not, served him to have a picture of men and masculinity in Kauffman’s sense.

2.6. Changes: “A Perfect World...doesn’t exist...”

Finally, after the interviewee described his reality, I asked him about changes and if he could imagine another situation.

A perfect world does not exist. A less violent world, only through dialogue. Therapy is only a support, it helps you to centre yourself, but true change has to come from the person. You have to realize what a pathetic situation you are in. I think that neither my father or grandfather realized it and if they did, it was too late. Although I don’t know exactly what needs to be done. 111

Not much can be added to this last testimony. Although, he did not know what could be done in order to change the situation, in order to diminish violence; he mentioned dialogue as a tool. An important aspect for him is also to gain more consciousness about the situation; men must see and understand what they are doing.

In this chapter, I have analysed men’s discourse and practices related to violence in general and partner violence in particular. In my perspective, both discourse and practices embodied certain kinds of masculinity. Consequently, in the next chapter I make some final reflections over the data enlightened by the theoretical framework.
Chapter V: Conclusions and Further Considerations

We talk about men not only as perpetrators but as victims... we...show them that violence by men against each other – from simple assaults to gay-bashing - is linked to the same structures of gender and power that produce so much men’s violence against women (Katz, 2006:9).

Habits are the very stuff our identities are made of. In them we enact and thus define what we effectively are as social beings, often in contrast with our perception of what we are (Zizek, 2009)

The objective of this research was to explore the meaning of domestic violence within masculine patterns of behaviour and thought at a local level: Santiago, Chile. In order to achieve the objective, I interviewed men that had exerted violence on their partners. In this chapter, I discuss the most important results of my research answering my research questions. I reflect additionally on possible implications of the findings.

1. Reviewing the Research Questions

As I have argued in the first chapter, every human action has a meaning and has something to communicate. This applies also to something so individually painful and socially problematic as domestic violence. Researching men I assumed that violence exerted by them was related to the socio-cultural order. Consequently, my first research question was what is the meaning of domestic violence within masculine patterns of behaviour and thoughts?

This meaning emerges from a man’s explanation of his actions and life and it is moulded by the socio-cultural contexts where this man lives.

I embarked in the investigation process and regarding the concept of domestic violence; I started to re-think if this concept was pertinent enough. This led to the better choice of partner violence, because this last concept explicitly frames the phenomenon that this thesis is concerned about: violence between a man and a woman who have or have had an intimate relationship. This violence, in the majority of the cases, exerted by a man on a woman is the individual expression of the social organisation of power. In Kauffman’s words:

The act of violence is many things at once. At the same instant, it is the individual man acting out relations of sexual power; it is the violence of a society –a hierarchical, authoritarian, sexist, class-divided, militarist, racist, impersonal, crazy society – being focused through an individual man onto an individual woman (Kauffman, 2007:33).

112 See chapter I page number 3

113 “Although women can be violent in relationships with men, and violence is also sometimes found in same-sex partnerships, the overwhelming burden of partner violence is borne by women at the hands of men (6, 7)” World Health Organization (2002:3).
Even though intimate relationships develop in a specific socio-cultural context, I could say that the most meaningful frame where partner violence develops is the gender hierarchy. It is within this context that gives a better explanation.

In total these acts of violence are like a ritualized acting out of our social relations of power: the dominant and the weaker, the powerful and the powerless, the active and the passive…the masculine and the feminine. (Kaufman, 2007:33)

Consequently, as Kauffman points out in the previous quote, we can have a better understanding of partner violence in the contexts of gender hierarchies and masculinities/femininities.

It is here where the philosopher and Slavoj Žižek’s ideas on violence seem to be adequate.

Subjective and objective violence cannot be perceived from the same standpoint...Objective violence is precisely violence inherent to ‘normal’ state of things. Objective violence is invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent (Žižek, 2009:2)

Žižek’s perspective could apply for analysing partner violence. The normal state of things would be the kind of relationship derived from a gender order, which places men and women in a compulsory masculinity and femininity. I argue this gender order is violent in itself and is constituted by the objective violence that Žižek refers to. Following this pattern of thoughts, it is understandable the remarkable “blindness” of the men interviewed in this research about the relation between their attempts to follow a very traditional masculinity – and the expectation of an equally traditional femininity – and their violent behavior. This blindness shows clearly - for example - when one of the interviewees bitterly criticized his father, not because the control that the father exerted on the mother, but the violent way that he used.

On the other side and because new discourses and practices on partner violence are taking place at both national level and local level, the subjective violence is without any difficult seen by the society in the current situation in Chile.

In order to understand better this subjective violence within male perpetrators I followed Moore’s point of view (Moore, 1994:141) when she states that the individuals are multiply constituted subjects. As I reviewed in the previous chapter, all the men that I interviewed positioned themselves as a decent and good man despite the violence on their partners. They follow the most traditional discourse and practice on masculinity, where the man works hard to be a good provider and has the obligation to protect his woman and the children that they

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114 See chapter IV page number 49
115 Whole chapter III
116 Violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent (Žižek, 2009:1)
117 See chapter II pages 20 and 21
have together. This is one of the possible subject positions, which found its contra part in an also traditional feminine behaviour of their women partners. Consequently, it is vital to remember that men’s discourse represents culturally shared metaphors on masculinity and femininity;118 and in that sense, one-man’s life story connects individual life to living that life in a specific culture.

There are nevertheless other subject positions that emerge simultaneously. Some men positioned themselves within a discourse that embraces a more modern perspective on gender relations. They are modern men that perform a masculine behaviour, which includes domestic work and even the acceptance of a partner that goes out to parties or bars on her own. This new subject position is not performed without problems or contradictions, which can be seen – for example – when the man cannot understand his partner irritation towards “a pair of shoes out of place...”119.

Notwithstanding men’s efforts to be good men, the violence exerted by them on their partners is present. They have been accused and are so then forced to attend a re-educational program because of that. Consequently, the men found rational arguments to cover this contradiction. I could find four mechanisms used by men in their attempts to protect their self-representation:

a) They minimised the physical expression of violence and its psychological effects on the women, describing the violence exerted as of low intensity120.

b) They also minimised the frequency of violent events.

c) They considered their behaviour as something that just happened without intention, without their awareness.

d) Men argued their partners were also being violent, so the quarrels were between people equally positioned.

In a few words, I could say that men’s self-representation is protected by avoiding taking full responsibility of their own behaviour.

Because the study was directed to go into partner violence from the men’s perspective, I had one more question to research: how can one explain domestic violence [partner violence] from men’s subjectivity?

118 See chapter I page 6
119 See chapter IV page 42
120 See chapter IV page 43
In the first place, the men talking about violence in general refer to a social environment\textsuperscript{121} that contains plenty of violent behaviours. They consider it very problematic, but at the same time they do not intend to change it. It is a violent social environment where the men were brought up both in school and in the street during the games with other boys, and in some cases even at home. Moreover, men and boys embrace the thought that a boy cannot be a \textit{sissy} and needs to defend himself and to answer violence with violence. Additionally, men report the same state of things in the streets even as adults. It would seem that the environment is a fixed entity that cannot be modified by personal decisions and efforts.

I believe there are still public spaces where there is a tacit acceptance of violence between men. They even refer to a sort of “culture of violence” in current Chile, an argument that “help” them give an explanation to men’s violent behaviour but also shows one face of the \textit{permission} for violence that Kauffman refers to in his model\textsuperscript{122}, where violent behaviour is justified by customs. A \textit{man needs to defend himself in this violent environment}, and in this way, a masculinity imprinted by violence is shaped.

Secondly, when I asked to my interviewees about their feelings of being forced to participate in a re-education programme, the immediate answer was \textit{shame}. The men expressed their shame of carrying a “label” for life\textsuperscript{123}. I would argue that the fact of being accused as batters and as violent men becomes a \textit{stigma} for them (Goffman, 1989). The partner’s denunciation discredits the man socially and the forced participation into the re-education programme turned him into a discreditable person. In this way, these men’s identity has become a \textit{spoiled identity} in Goffman words, but I would say following Moore (Moore, 1994:141) that individuals are \textit{multiply constituted}\textsuperscript{124} so one man can have multiple self-representations. Consequently, for these men this stigma became part of their changing masculinity, in the sense that they have to embrace the idea that violence is not a compulsory part of their male identity.

A very interesting research area is related to men’s identity and the effectiveness of re-education programmes. However, I would argue that the stigmatisation these men experienced does not necessary help them to face and take responsibility over their violent behaviour.

The third explanation men give on partner violence focuses on a woman’s behaviour or her personality. During the interviews, even though the interviewees referred to having exerted

\textsuperscript{121}See chapter IV pages 33 and 34
\textsuperscript{122} See chapter II pages 18 and 19
\textsuperscript{123} See chapter IV page 39
\textsuperscript{124} See chapter II page 20
violence on their partners as a “mistake”, when they tried to explain the state of the relationship, the responsibility fell on women’s shortcomings in helping her partner to control the situation or on what they called the women’s strong character125. I would argue that this shows men’s own failures to take responsibility over their actions, but most importantly, that men are positioning themselves into a masculinity that demands a traditional subjected femininity.

Finally, the interviewees said that they could not understand the causes of the fights with their partners. For these men, the motives of the quarrels were hardly important but at the same time, they did not seem to have good explanations about their own strong reactions towards those unimportant issues. I would say that the open conflict started when the women did not behave according to an expected traditional feminine behaviour or men did not behave according to a new masculine behaviour.

I review in chapter III that domestic violence is considered a social problem both globally and locally. Consequently, actions against this social problem have been taken at both the international and the national arena. Because my research focused on men’s experience I had a further question: *when does domestic violence [partner violence] become problematic for these men?*

Before going into men’s answer to this question, I believe it is pertinent to consider what the statistics tell us about the situation in Chile. Among other figures already reviewed in chapter IV, in 2007 the reports filed due to intrafamily violence had increased more than 100% over eight years (Ministerio del Interior de Chile, 2008)126. According to the Chilean government, this growth can be explained because of a greater social awareness of the problem and also because today legal instruments exist to protect the victims. In that sense, it may be possible to read this substantial growth as a transformation in women’s understanding of themselves. The traditional representation of women, who are forced to accept mistreatment from their partners, is being changed. Consequently, one can say that local femininity is changing but probably masculinity is also being transformed.

Notwithstanding this new perspective and situation on the issue in Chilean contexts, men’s testimonies show clearly enough that partner violence was not a problem in itself until the situation became “public”127, and until the woman subject to their violence denounced the

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125 See chapter IV page 40
126 See chapter III page 26
127 See chapter IV pages 43 and 44
situation to the judicial authorities. In just one case, the interviewee was voluntary participating in the re-education programme; there was an understanding on the situation as a problem for him. He did not say it directly but I believe -listening to his interview- that he decided to adhere to the re-education programme because he was afraid of his own anger. Talking about violence, he said, “…The first step is to insult her and the last is to kill her…” and it was not the only time that he mentioned the possibility of killing.\textsuperscript{128}

One can wonder about the other interviewees, how it is possible that partner violence is an issue for them only after it happened. I would argue that they do ignore women’s suffering using the “armour” (Kaufman, 2001:42) that prevents men from empathise with others. They are men – as already explained – raised in a very violent environment and shaped by a masculinity constituted by violence. Consequently, they have not learned empathy and they have an “armour” that stops them from getting in contact with the feelings that they consider proper for women. I would add that this armour also provokes men’s lack in comprehending/accepting their own feelings.

Adding another question to the previous discussion of my research, I asked which are the discourses on domestic violence and masculinity in media, government and NGOs in Chile?

As I reviewed deeper in the chapter \textit{Domestic Violence in a Chilean Contexts}\textsuperscript{129} there is a widespread discourse in the Chilean government and its different institutions on “intra-family violence” –as they call the issue. In a few words and according to this discourse, intrafamily violence is an expression of gender violence and a social problem that must be faced by the government. Consequently, new laws, governmental organisations, and practices against intra-family violence started to take place initially in the Metropolitan Region, then in the rest of the country.

An important shift in public policies regarding domestic violence took place recently, in late 2007, when the law incorporated the prescription of treating violent men with equal priority as the their victims.

Similar discourse can be found among Non Governmental Organisations. The discourse and practices at those levels include both help and treatment to the victims, the treatment to the perpetrators and finally, the attempt to prevent intra-family violence. The re-education

\textsuperscript{128} See whole interview in chapter IV page 44 to 52
\textsuperscript{129} Page number 22
programme, where I met the men whom are subject to this research, is an example of such treatment of the perpetrators.

As I have already mentioned, men explain their behaviour in terms of the “culture of violence” in the current situation in Chile. I would argue that these explanations reflect the discourses of the media in campaigns against gender violence, like the “Campaña Cuidado el Machismo Mata”\(^{130}\) (Attention Machismo Kills! Campaign). This campaign is part of the actions undertaken by the Chilean Government to prevent violence in general and intra-family violence in particular.

2. Further Considerations

The men’s descriptions and explanations about their relationships with their partners clearly portray the traditional discourse(s) on gender. In this sense, the conflicts and the subsequent violence seem to be, for many of them, the result of a lack of practices related to their image of “romantic love”. Butler (2007)\(^{131}\) argues that masculinity -or femininity- is not a pre-established destiny. Being in agreement with her, I cannot avoid thinking that these men’s performances strongly remind the old and traditional masculinity expected from them.

Moreover, individual expectations of men and women may have changed but not necessarily the gender order or the way that society is constructed. In this sense, it cannot be easy to be a man and satisfy the imperatives of a masculinity constituted by tradition and in a large part by violence; and at the same time, live together with a woman that position herself in a new femininity. This last aspect was even more obvious for me when men expressed very little trust or awareness, about their agency for changes.

Finally, I must add that the testimonies, the interviewees’ words and their discourse many times sounded like a *caricature* of “a violent man”. They described situations and they had explanations that one could believe belong to “pre-modern” times, in the sense that they were referring to a very traditional masculinity. Nevertheless, they were talking honestly and without the intention of repeating a “prefabricated” discourse. I would argue that this showed the strength of a gender order, which shapes individual’s identity in an almost inevitable way.

This research focuses on men that have been violent with their partners; this focus was taken because I considered it important to explore men’s experience and their own explanations on

130 http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/?q=node/382
131 See chapter II, page number 11
the issue. Listening again to the interviews and during the analysis it became clear for me that a future research is relevant, a research of the meaning of violence for men that have not exerted violence on their partners. As I mentioned in the first pages of this thesis\textsuperscript{132} and it can be deduced from my research, it seems there are no substantial differences in the discourse on masculinity between men who are violent with their partners and those who are not.

\textsuperscript{132} See chapter I, page number 8
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**Fiction**


Appendix 1

In http://www.theduluthmodel.org/documents/PhyVio.pdf