

The Other Side of Partner Violence:

*A Counter-Balancing Review of International Studies and
New Zealand Reports on Intimate Partner Family Violence*

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“This is the problem with fanaticism in public life: obsessively held beliefs blind people...to the evidence before them.”

Attributed to Mark Latham
Former Australian Labour Party Leader

“Activists who really want to diminish the incidence of domestic violence have to abandon outmoded ways of thinking about the problem. To remain closed-minded at this juncture may make one a faithful ideologue but it does no service to victims of intimate partner violence.”

From Donald Dutton’s **‘Rethinking Domestic Violence’**
Page **348**

“Complexity and ambiguity can never be eliminated with the result that responding to family violence is not amenable to simplistic thinking or simple solutions. As described in this report, the purpose of the family violence death review process is to consider how we can strengthen the resilience of the multi-agency family violence system so it can respond more effectively in the face of this complexity.”

From the Chair’s introduction to the **Family Violence Death Review Committee’s Fourth Annual Report**, page **5**

“...Violence is not a valid solution to problem solving no matter who is perpetrating the act and that there is plenty of evidence that both men and women perpetrate violence, then our model of domestic violence must acknowledge this fact and find solutions for both partners.”

Donald Dutton
Author of **‘Rethinking Domestic Violence’**

Canada: UBC Press (**2006**)
Page **38**

“Men are physically stronger, cause more damage and fear, but women are abusers too and domestic violence can be mutual. We need to focus on where it happens, not politicise it by blaming all men.”

Deborah Coddington
Viewpoint
Sunday Star Times
13 July 2014

Bedrock beliefs by feminist authors about their understanding of the dynamics of family violence

- Domestic violence is used by men against women, and men are violent whenever they can get away with it.
- Women are never violent except in self-defence.
- Male violence will escalate if unchecked by criminal justice intervention.
- Males choose to be violent and have a gender-based need for power.
- The victims of intimate violence are overwhelmingly women.
- When a man is injured by a woman, she is acting in self-defence.

Taken from Donald Dutton's

Re-thinking Domestic Violence

Page **98**

Current Government moves to address the 'epidemic' of family violence

Government is pledging 9.4 million dollars to strengthen community responses to the problem of family violence and is being lobbied to put in place the following new initiatives:

- Establishing a Chief Victims Advisor to the Minister of Justice to advise on the needs and views of victims of crime, including domestic violence victims.
- Testing an intensive case management service to provide specialist support for domestic violence victims at high risk of serious harm or death.
- Establishing a nationwide home safety service to help victims who want to leave a violent relationship. The service will offer practical support such as safety planning, strengthening doors and windows and installing alarms.
- Reviewing the Domestic Violence Act 1995 to ensure it keeps victims safe and holds offenders to account.
- Exploring the possibility of a conviction disclosure scheme, which may allow a person to be told whether their partner has a history of violence.
- Trialling mobile safety alarms with GPS technology for victims, so they can notify Police of an emergency, and their location.
- Introduce legislation to change the Sentencing Act, which will allow courts to stipulate GPS monitoring of high-risk domestic violence offenders who can't currently have this condition imposed upon them.

(Section attributed to a Domestic Violence Clearing House Information Sheet)

- Provide free advocates counselling.
- Making non-fatal strangulation or choking a separate crime.
- Introducing a defence of provocation for women subjected to repeated physical violence should they kill their partner.
- Reinstating the Bristol clause placing the burden of proof of innocence on any accused (in practice, only male accused) and ensuring that children's relationships with an accused parent (in practice, only males) are damaged even when the children have never been present or involved during any alleged offending.

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1 Overview

- There is a substantial literature on family violence including well respected studies from the Christchurch and Dunedin Multidisciplinary Longitudinal Child Development Project as well as numerous international studies that provide data on one aspect, that of intimate partner violence (I.P.V.), the subject of this paper.
- Manifestations of intimate partner violence that cover a wide spectrum of behaviours ranging from inadvertent, isolated, often provoked, and uncharacteristic acts through to deliberate, sadistic, ongoing and severe violence leading to the death of the partner, are the subject of a wide range of recently issued reports, principally the Glenn Inquiry '*Peoples Report*' (herein referred to as the *Glenn report*); the *Family Violence Death Review Committee Report* (herein referred to either as the *Tolmie report* or the *Tolmie Family Deaths report*), and Ruth Herbert's *Impact Collective Report* (herein referred to as the *Herbert report*), among other various reviews and governmental reports most recently from the Ministry of Social Development and a second report from the Glenn Inquiry called '*Measuring the Economic Costs of Child Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence to New Zealand*'. There are also reports and literature reviews from the Department of Corrections which runs anger management / violence prevention programmes within the prison system as well as community based interventions.
- Recommendations to strengthen New Zealand's governmental and community responses to family violence are almost entirely based on the so-called Duluth, '*male power and control*' model for understanding family violence. The Duluth model disregards what are actually varied, complex and multi-faceted causes of family violence and instead asserts that males, due to their wish to control others, are the only true perpetrators and females the adult victims. '*Violence Is Not OK*' groups claim there is an *epidemic* of family violence and that therefore stronger more punitive measures need to be taken by Government. Those groups all push the Duluth model and either clearly or by implication intend their recommended measures to be directed against males and in protection of women and children.¹
- One basic premise of the Duluth model is that if a female partner/wife assaults the male it is only in self-defence, leading to calls that a legal defence of provocation be reinstated only on the basis of claimed family violence. As true self-defence is already a legal defence for any homicide, this proposed reinstatement would see 'slow burn' provocation treated as an excuse for attacking or murdering males even when they are helpless or pose no immediate threat. Groups believing in the Duluth model have also called for the recent repeal of the *Bristol* clause to be reversed as well, on the claimed grounds that recent Family Court reforms are 'unsafe' for women and children.

¹ For example, the term *epidemic* is repeated in the Herbert Impact Collective Report on page 53, Section 4 and page 83. An integrated response to I.P.V. '*...aims to ensure that women and children are made safe, no matter what their individual circumstances are...*'

- Actual statistics on I.P.V. show that while intimate partner violence is the most frequently studied manifestation of family violence, it is one of the least common with data collected by government and non-government agencies steered to more serious incidents. These data are vulnerable to variations in recording practices over time and variations according to which Government agency is collecting the data.²
- Manipulation of the statistical data on the number of family murders per annum in the Tolmie Family Deaths report is revealed for example by the *'fudging'* of data in various ways.
- This report will demonstrate that the recent New Zealand reports considering domestic violence have been highly selective in quoting from only those articles and reports that add weight and veracity to the viewpoints of women's lobby groups, primarily their belief in the Duluth model, and ignore those findings which do not. Technically, this is described as *'advocacy'* research or *'cherry picking'* as seen in the Tolmie, Glenn and Herbert reports, thus giving added weight and apparent veracity to each other but all in fact, relying on each others manipulation of their questionable statistical databases. Arguably, they are all *'femicentric'*³ reports that have spread disinformation and half truths about the dynamics of family violence.
- The irony should not escape legal academics that their advocacy of the Duluth model places *'power and control'* over the domestic violence industry in their hands. A further irony is that, because under the Duluth model women are only violent because they have been subjected to *'power and control'* violence from males in their lives, the rehabilitation programmes they are directed to are geared towards *'empowering'* those women, i.e. encouraging women to increase their own *'power and control'* over partners and families.
- There is probably no reliable estimate of the true extent or nature of family violence in New Zealand or elsewhere since many incidents are never notified and the police do not keep their own statistics on I.P.V. call-outs. It cannot be assumed that cases not notified to police are similar in nature to those that are notified; instead it seems likely that a greater proportion of those who don't call police see the I.P.V. as minor and/or of equal blame between the parties.
- Truly effective solutions to the problem of family violence in New Zealand should be derived from a balanced and gender proportionate review of the available literature from New Zealand based academics as well as international authorities.

² See Lievore, D., and Mayhew, P. **'The Scale and Nature of Family Violence in New Zealand'**, April 2007, page 6. This earlier M.S.D. report is a gender-balanced and proportionate coverage of the literature and is not therefore femicentrically slanted. See also, the Families Commission's Report on Family Violence Indicators (undated), which highlights the problems in collecting reliable data across all sectors.

³ An adjective not to be found in any dictionary but is in common use by the men's lobby. For the purpose of this paper *Femicentric* reports are those reports that do not draw impartially on the wider literature; fail to cross-cite and discuss New Zealand studies which are well respected internationally; rely on questionable statistical database to over-exaggerate the problem; and use *'sensationalism'* to gain the sympathies of the public at large. The distortion of data and the use of euphemisms or manipulative language are features of propaganda campaigns, all features to be found in the recent New Zealand reports and the Glenn report in particular.

- A response to 'strengthen' our domestic violence legislation has not worked in the past and will not work for the future if solely based on the findings of femicentric reports and the radical punitive solutions they propose.

2 Preamble

So large and extensive is the international literature on domestic violence that it is possible to quote selectively from studies that support the 'frame of reference' of both the women's lobby groups and the men's lobby groups.

The aim of this paper is to review recent New Zealand reports concerning family violence, and to consider the extent to which selecting reporting and manipulation of the statistics have both exaggerated and misrepresented the problem of intimate partner violence.

Internationally respected findings from articles on domestic violence originating from the Christchurch and Dunedin longitudinal studies have not been quoted in the most recently issued reports by women's lobby groups who have dominated the debate so far with extensive press publicity given to their findings. By contrast the men's lobby, less well organised and less cohesive, have experienced great difficulty in getting their side of the story heard in the media.

In a democratic society such as New Zealand's when dissenting views on other social problems are encouraged, the lack of balanced debate on the problem of I.P.V. is far from healthy.

This report aims to redress this lack of balance and to highlight the pressing need for a more '*gender-proportionate*' understanding that all forms of I.P.V. cut both ways and that it is not exclusively a gender-specific male as perpetrator, female as victim problem as it is too often made out to be by the women's lobby groups.

There is now a general consensus from both the New Zealand and international literature that women inflict physical violence on their male partners as often as men do, although the injuries they inflict are not as severe as men's assaults on average. These studies together describe intimate partner violence including psychological violence as mutual, bi-directional and intergenerational. Only the intergenerational dynamic is discussed in the Tolmie and Herbert reports.

In spite of their apparent academic rigour and their authors' academic credentials, it is submitted that these studies are more in the nature of ideological polemics than scholarly undertakings that would impartially review the family violence literature in a balanced way.

Any group of people holding bedrock but sincere beliefs about any issue have been described as '*faith communities*' of like-minded people whose beliefs are not universally shared by the public at large. Their beliefs are unshakeable, firmly held and not amenable to rational counter-criticism or dissenting points of view no matter how compelling or objectively based.

Despite the often vituperative ideological debates slanted to the feminist perspective, there are New Zealand and international researchers who, using reliable data, have found considerable gender symmetry in physical, psychological and economic I.P.V. situations. Over 200 articles attest to this fact.

3 Domestic violence ‘panics’

The plethora of recent reports on domestic violence followed by legislative changes to strengthen domestic violence legislation is not a new phenomenon but a cyclic one which has precedence in the legislative changes following the Bristol murders in 1994. While not minimising this tragedy which followed from the father murdering his three daughters, the subsequent changes to strengthen domestic violence legislation in 1995 were arguably ‘knee jerk’ changes, an over-reaction in ‘panic’ resulting in outcomes that were repugnant to justice and that badly impacted on men and children. A more recent example was the introduction of police safety orders that usually result in the male partner being removed from the home but rarely if ever the female partner.

The commonly named ‘Bristol clause’ enshrined in the *Care of Children Act 2004* (Section 60(6) – now repealed), described by lawyers as the ‘no-evidence’ rule, put pressure on the Courts to treat any allegation of violence as if it were true. The Family Court is allowed to decide that allegations are proved ‘on the balance of probability’, and given that the Court’s beliefs about family violence were based almost exclusively on unbalanced feminist research, this meant that women’s allegations in Court were mostly accepted as ‘proved’ (because family violence was believed to be committed mainly by men seeking to impose power and control), while men’s allegations about women’s violence were treated with scepticism. Under the Bristol clause any male accused was likely to be treated as guilty unless and until he could prove himself either innocent or safe.

The Bristol clause also required the Court to disallow an accused party (who had not yet convinced the Court of his innocence or safety) from either day-to-day care or unsupervised contact with his children, even when no accusation or insinuation had arisen to suggest that parent had ever behaved abusively towards the children or that the children were even present during any alleged partner conflict. Given the drawn-out nature of many Court proceedings, this meant that relationships between the accused parent and children were often severely damaged without good reason.

The extension of domestic violence to encompass ‘psychological’ abuse (Section 3(2)(c) of the Domestic Violence Act 1995) which also resulted, was problematic and difficult to define as a single act could amount to abuse (Section 3(4)(a)) or ‘*a number of acts that form a pattern of behaviour may amount to abuse even though some or all of those acts, when viewed in isolation, might appear minor or trivial*’ (Section 3(4)(b)).

Similarly, current reports now call for another round of punitive legislative changes which may well exacerbate rather than ameliorate domestic violence since previous changes have not served to reduce the problem.

4 The Duluth perspective on intimate partner violence by legal academics

The principal authors of the Tolmie report are respected feminist academics from the University of Auckland who reveal where their femicentric sympathies lie by listing at the foot of their report summary statement, phone numbers for Women’s Refuge and the Shine Organisation without also

listing support services available to men. In fact there are few established services for men in New Zealand and those that exist receive little or no financial or moral support from government departments, in contrast to services for women.

Another example of slanted, selective reporting is from the Law School of the University of Waikato whose analysis of the Bristol Murders is not fully representative of the facts of this tragedy and again, little more than a feminist polemic, given that on the recommendation of the Judge, Counsel for the Child and a report from a child psychologist, the father was given primary care and all efforts were made to encourage his female partner to work amicably towards a shared parenting arrangement.

5 The fallacy of ‘the dynamics of intimate partner violence’.

The independently presented report by Ruth Herbert, former CEO of the Glenn Inquiry, claims that all concerned with improving and more effectively co-ordinating responses to the problems of family violence at a grass-roots community level should share a common collective understanding of the true dynamics of intimate partner violence as well as other manifestations of violence in general, not only physical but psychological and economic violence. Similarly, the Tolmie report makes statements such as (pg 74) “*Determining who the predominant aggressor is necessitates understanding the dynamics of IPV...*”, while the other reports follow a similar line. ‘The dynamics of I.P.V.’ is a fallacious concept because different sets of dynamics will apply across the range of I.P.V. situations. ‘Male power and control’ dynamics may apply in a small proportion of I.P.V. but even then the Duluth model is far from being scientifically validated as being causal or even relevant at all. Through manipulatively implying that there is a single set of dynamics of I.P.V. that involves male power and control, these femicentric reports are conducting an exercise of suggestion that distorts the way most of the population has come to view I.P.V. generally and in individual cases.

According to Denis Dutton, whose text-book ‘**Re-thinking Domestic Violence**’ is a landmark and seminal contribution to the field, the Duluth ‘male power and control’ model was devised by a small group of female activists in Canada and the United States and is one of the most common models shaping Court sanctioned interventions both internationally and within New Zealand.⁴ The basis for these beliefs came from a small sample of battered women and four men who had completed an I.P.V. programme at Duluth (Dutton, 2006, pg 301).

⁴ See the Department of Corrections literature review where the Duluth model is explicitly described as a ‘feminist’ model here used in a purely descriptive and not in any derogatory or perjurious sense of the term. Note however Dutton’s description of feminist theories on I.P.V. as a set of guiding assumptions or ‘world view’ commonly shared within a group and serving to ward off recognition of data that are dissonant with the paradigm’s central tenets. He regards it as an indoctrination process to convince men who may not in fact be as violent as their female partners of the errors of their ways.

Outside the scope of this paper are the nature of the support services provided to women by two organisations, the National Collective of Women’s Refuges and the National Network of Stopping Violence Services which could be expected to share a world view on intimate partner violence based on the Duluth model.

Dutton (2006) goes on to state:

“The primary difference seems to be in an unyielding adherence to their explanation of violence, their monolithic model of male domination and instrumental violence taken as given, and the emphasis on socialisation and control of women to the exclusion of other factors contribution to abuse...” (Ibid, pg **302**)

According to Dutton, in reality only about 4% of males fit the stereotype of male initiated violence. In most cases both males and females come from families within which violence is reciprocal, minor, or female perpetrated (ibid, pg **304**).

Dutton adds that feminist advocates seem unable to recognise that the Duluth hypotheses have been disproved and he has not been able to find confirmation in any empirical data whatever for this model (ibid, pg **314**).

The Department of Corrections literature review omits any mention whatsoever of Dutton's important text even though it is locally available from the Department of Corrections library and the library of Victoria University of Wellington. The Herbert report does mention the Duluth model, describing it as one of the founding models of a co-ordinated community response, but says nothing of the serious criticisms levelled against it, thus providing a good example of selective reporting, lack of balance and lack of an impartial objective account drawing on available sources. In section 4:4 (pg **59**) the Duluth model is uncritically described as follows:

“The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) model, developed in the 1990s in Minnesota, USA, is one of the founding models of a ‘coordinated community response’ on which many international models are based. This model comes mid-way on the continuum of joined-up approaches discussed in Chapter 3. Again common elements including shared understanding, training and protocols are foundations of the approach – although not as formalised as would be the case in a fully integrated system.

The Duluth model has victim/survivor safety as its central goal and incorporates perpetrator programmes to provide an integrated response. Resources have been developed for agencies working in the domestic violence sector including best practice policies and protocols. Emphasis is placed on providing support and safety planning for women who experience abuse, prompt and appropriate referral to other agencies, and collaborative approaches between different agencies such as child protection services, alcohol/drug and mental health treatment. Monitoring and tracking of cases has been built into the system and the response is evaluated from the standpoint of victim safety.

The development of the criminal justice response is well documented and includes an emphasis on offender accountability through the use of case tracking, arrest policies and sanctions against non-compliance to court orders. ^{148,149}

A number of studies quoted by Dutton (2001) found it was the personality type or structure of the perpetrator rather than his/her gender that was the best predictor of I.P.V., mostly mutual partner violence involving both partners presenting with abusive personality patterns. Anxious attachments to primary caregivers in childhood mediated the inter-generational transmission of family violence, this

process occurring for both genders. The authors also found this model predicted abusive personality traits in both genders.⁵

Female initiated partner abuse could not be explained away exclusively as self-defence against male partner abuse (as claimed by the Duluth model) because a women's pre-relationship history of aggressive behaviour actually predicts her abuse towards her male partner over and above his abuse towards her.⁶

6 The use of misleading, emotive language

The New Zealand femicentric reports on family violence use misleading language designed for propaganda purposes. For example, some refer to an 'epidemic' of family violence to create panic and to justify draconian law changes. Figures on death events as given by Lievore and Mayhew in their 2007 report commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development averaged eleven over the eighteen year period between 1978 and 1996 leading them to describe I.P.V. homicides as rare events (pg 8). The term 'epidemic' applies to a rapidly spreading and increasing incidence of an infectious disease to a large number of persons in a given population within a short period of time. There is no good evidence that family violence is like an infectious disease or indeed that it is increasing fast or at all. Yet the most recent Glenn Inquiry report estimating the economic cost of family violence and I.P.V. makes exaggerated estimates of future costs on the assumption that such violence is increasing fast and will continue to do so.

Another example of misleading language is the use only of female terms for victims (e.g. 'women', 'she', 'her') and only male terms for offenders (e.g. 'men', 'he', 'him'), as seen in all of the recent family violence reports implying that women never offend and that men never suffer violent victimization. Similarly, frequent references only to the need to keep 'women and children' safe from family violence encourage the population to believe that male victimization is trivial, whereas in fact men are more frequently the victims of both family violence and general violence in the community.

Another form of misleading language is referring to accusers as 'victims' or 'survivors' etc before there is reasonable certainty that any crime has occurred, and accused as 'offenders', 'perpetrators', 'the violent party' etc before they have been proven to have committed any violence or crime at all. Also, terms like 'disclosed' and 'disclosures' for what are actually 'allegations' and 'untested claims'.

Further, women's lobby groups use terms such as 'inappropriate' to judge many male behaviours even though they cannot claim any moral authority to do so. The word 'attacked' is used for minor actions of physical force or even gentle touching, the term 'abuse' is used for actions that are not necessarily abusive, and the term 'rape culture' is invented to describe a country that actually punishes rape more harshly than most other forms of violence.

⁵ Follingstad, Bradley, Helff and Laughlin (2002) quoted in Dutton, page 201, F.N. 75 citation 9, 75, page 377.

⁶ Ehrensaft, Cohen and Johnson (2006), quoted in Dutton, page 202. F.N. 76, citation 9, 78, page 377.

7 The Australian 'One in Three Campaign'

The New South Wales Government's Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues Report released in August 2012, from which the 'One in Three Campaign' resulted, states that of all reported victims of domestic assaults 69.2% were male on female but 30.8% were female on males and called for a more gender-proportionate response and recognition of the need for more supports to be given to males as well as the existing supports usually afforded to female victims of domestic violence.⁷

The Personal Safety Survey 2012 referred to in the One in Three Campaign fact sheets found that men were half as likely as women to disclose such abuse, to have sought advice concerning their predicaments, or to have applied for a domestic protection or restraining order against their female partner. By contrast, women usually do not usually hesitate to do so against their male partner.⁸

According to information contained in the One-in-Three Campaign's fact sheets:

- At least one in three victims of current partner violence, emotional abuse and stalking during the last 12 months were male.
- Around one in three victims of physical violence by a boyfriend/girlfriend or date since the age of 15 were male.
- Almost one in three victims of sexual assault during the last 12 months was male.
- More than one in three victims of physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 15 were male.

The well respected Australian Institute of Family Studies Report (1999) reached similar conclusions that post-separation, fairly similar proportions of men (55%) and women (62%) experienced physical violence, including threats by their former spouse. Emotional (psychological) abuse was reported by 84% of women and 75% of men (Fact Sheet No. 1).

⁷ Taken from the campaign's press releases and information sheets.

⁸ Applications for a Domestic Protection Order are overwhelmingly taken out by women, many on an ex parte basis together with an interim ex parte application for primary care (custody) of the children. Unless the man challenges the grounds on which the order has been granted within 42 days it becomes permanent and any contact with his children must be on a supervised basis, usually in church halls and under the close eye of the Service Providers, many holding 'bed-rock' beliefs about men as perpetrators and women and children as their victims.

While the Australian situation may differ somewhat from New Zealand, research has shown a similar pattern here but the femicentric reports have obfuscated this. Similarly, of children sexually abused, a New Zealand study found that one in three victims were male.⁹

8 Serious physical injury in I.P.V. assaults initiated on men by women partners

The most serious I.P.V. injuries are caused more often by men than women as are assaults leading to death. However, women seriously injure and kill men too as women can compensate for weaker upper body strength by the use of weapons, assaults on male partners while they are asleep, using women's greater lower body strength to kick partners or by slow poisoning as in the *Helen Milner* case.

Magdol *et. al's* study originating from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary project found that the risk factors for female violence were high scores on a scale of psychoticism, neuroticism and alcohol abuse.

Pathological mood swings, technically described as bipolar disorder, are experienced by both men and women, while women suffer more often from borderline personality disorder which also causes severe mood and behavioural problems. Both of these disorders carry an elevated risk of violence in various forms.

9 Acting in Self-Defence

Studies cited in *Fact Sheet No. 3* from the Australian One-in-Three Campaign found, contrary to the Duluth model, that few women pleaded self-defence and provocation in female on male assaults and only a low percentage of women used this justification as primary excuse since women often used violence against non-violent male partners. Another important finding was that women's allegations of male violence were either proven to be false by their own children or such charges were often withdrawn subsequently once the case got to Court.

Aggressive teenage girls with delinquent/anti-social behaviours mostly grew up to be aggressive partners as did their male counterparts.

⁹ See Fergusson, D., and Mullen, P. (1999) '**Childhood Sexual Abuse: An evidence-based perspective**'. Thousand Oaks. Sage Publications. There is now a state-funded support service for adult men and childhood victims of sexual molestation. They can suffer almost the same post-traumatic stress reactions as women.

10 The need for ‘power and control’ in I.P.V.

Empirical research on American couples and New Zealand studies by Fergusson *et. al.* plus data from the One-in-Three Campaign Fact Sheet No. 4 have found that power and control struggles are in the minority in intimate relationships and just as likely to be female-dominant as male-dominant. If both partners are equally controlling such relationships are more likely to produce injury in repeated violent incidents initiated by one or the other. Thus the results from research findings in this area called into question yet another erroneous Duluth basic assumption held by most prevention and treatment programmes, most particularly New Zealand based programmes. Both sexes tend to over-report and exaggerate minor acts of violence, under-report serious acts they commit and over-report serious acts that they suffer.¹⁰

11 Without Notice (Ex Parte) Domestic Protection Orders: an abuse of principles of natural justice

Under the 1982 Domestic Protection Act, the threshold for without notice orders was whether the delay that would be caused by proceeding on notice would or might entail risk to the personal safety of the applicant or child of the family or serious injury or undue hardship. In practice, women’s allegations against men have been treated as entailing such risk much more readily than men’s allegations against women. Ex parte orders are almost routinely granted for women in the absence of any evidence except the woman’s allegations.

Clause 60 (now repealed) of the Care of Children Act 2004, subsection (1) and (2), used to place no requirement on the Court to make any inquiry on its own volition about the veracity of allegations levelled against a (usually male) partner, repeated in clause 6(a) and (b), that a Domestic Protection Order could be made if the Court is ‘...unable to determine on the basis of the evidence presented to it...whether the allegation of violence is proved; but is satisfied that there is a real risk to the child’s safety’ (page 48).

Another partisan, explicitly feminist analysis of family violence is to be found in the New Zealand text, **‘Psychology and Family Law: A New Zealand Perspective’**. This text was probably influential in shaping the over-reaction to subsequent legislative amendments to New Zealand’s Domestic Violence legislation and in the Care of Children Act in 2004 and the earlier amendments of 1995 following the Bristol murders.

Fathers’ Rights Groups have repeatedly claimed that ex parte Domestic Protection Orders have been one of the biggest causes of anger among separated fathers and one of the main drivers behind protests about the New Zealand Family Court. As stated in the Ministry of Justice’s Review of the Family Court document (2013, para 181, pg 47):

¹⁰ Dutton, D., and Nicholls, T. (2005), **‘The gender paradigm in domestic violence research and theory’**, Part 1, **the conflict of theory and data’** *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 10.6, 680–714.

“Without notice applications take parties straight into a court process without the opportunity to try less adversarial ways of resolving disputes. This can be damaging to the ongoing parenting relationship and escalate conflict, especially when later information provided by a respondent suggests that a without notice application was not necessary. Between 2005/06 to 2009/10, 61 percent or 14,294 without notice applications for temporary protection orders were granted with 39 percent or 9,247 of these later recorded as either discontinued, dismissed, lapsed, struck out, or withdrawn. During the same period 80 percent or 10,485 of 13,150 without notice applications for interim parenting orders were granted with 32 percent of these later recorded as either discontinued, dismissed, lapsed, struck out, or withdrawn.”

Henaghan and Atkin (2009, page 162) are of the opinion that section 60 and 61 of the Care of Children Act 2004 (COCA) has an adult rather than child centred focus and is therefore in breach of section 6 of COCA and section 27 of the 1990 New Zealand Bill of Rights Act since no provision is made to obtain the child’s perspective in determining whether violence between the parents has occurred, nor ‘...the child’s views of the violence and the importance to them of their relationship with the alleged abuser’. That perspective particularly as expressed by older children, may well reveal a different set of circumstances and behaviours as claimed by the parent who usually initiates the application for a Domestic Protection Order.¹¹

12 Lack of community supports for men following the issue of ex parte domestic protection orders and interim parenting orders

Figures from the One-in-Three Campaign bear out a lack of support for men subject to domestic protection orders and that men are less likely than women are to seek advice and support. Men are two to three times more likely never to have told anybody about violence from their partner, nor to have contacted the Police. Many are reluctant to apply for a domestic violence order or to object if their partner has fabricated the grounds upon which she has been granted an order. They are ashamed and humiliated when they realise that they are not going to be believed while their partner is. There are no refuges for men, or counselling and support services to help them to relocate homes.

The situation in New Zealand is little different.

13 Fear of the male perpetrator

One in Three Fact Sheet No. 5 addresses the phenomenon of fear of males by citing studies which

¹¹ The exposure of children to I.P.V. is considered as psychological abuse as legally defined under section 3(b) of the Domestic Violence Act 1995. Note also that there has always been provision for mutual protection orders which are rarely issued but which would serve to recognise the ‘mutual’ nature of I.P.V.

conclude that women are twice as likely to fear death from a partner than men are. Women may over-react to threatening situations while men under-react.¹²

However, following domestic violence both men and women may suffer much the same symptoms of chronic or delayed post-traumatic stress reaction such as psychosomatic symptoms, traumatic flash-backs and loss of confidence and self-esteem plus irritability and loss of motivation. Men may become both pre-occupied with and obsessed by their many losses, particularly loss of a meaningful role with their children, and are often unable to continue in their pre-separation occupations.¹³

This directly contradicts femicentric claims that only male violence is designed to generate fear thus to enable coercive behaviour. A study by Fergusson, Horwood and Ridder (2005), found that the consequences of mild to moderate domestic violence in terms of both physical injury and psychological trauma was similar for both men and women, with 97.5% of women reporting that they were not fearful of their partner as compared to 99.7% of men. Thus the majority of cases studied did not invoke fear in either partner.

14 Intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay and trans-gender persons and heterosexual civil unions

The fact that I.P.V. in gay male and lesbian relationships is seldom mentioned in femicentric reports demonstrates the selective inattention to any studies that would challenge the exclusive emphasis on heterosexual domestic abusive situations and an underlying belief in the Duluth model.

There are studies for example that show that I.P.V. is more of a problem in lesbian unions than in male homosexual unions with a study by McLeod (2001) finding that almost half of lesbian and bisexual women were reporting abuse.¹⁴

Lesbian relationships are less stable than gay male relationships in the longer term as applications for the dissolution of lesbian civil unions outnumber applications by gay male couples and heterosexual

¹² Dutton, D. (2010) 'The gender paradigm and the architecture of anti-science' *Partner Abuse*, 1:1, 5.25. Note that all the case histories detailed in the Herbert Report are female people, consistent with the approach used throughout the report (pg 35).

¹³ The Impact Collective Report on page 29 actually lists a number of symptoms suffered by women traumatised after Intimate Partner Violence. While there are post-traumatic stress reactions unique to women such as a higher tendency to suffer depression, experience mood swings, suffer from eating disorders and self-harming behaviour, the majority of symptoms are shared in common with men, particularly physical and social wellbeing variables, alcohol and drug abuse, and inability to hold down employment responsibilities ending up on unemployment benefits. Women mainly claim psychological abuse since of the women who seek help from Women's Refuge, 90% report psychological rather than physical abuse which is more difficult to prove.

¹⁴ McLeod, S. (2001) 'Exploring the Second Closet: A discursive exploration into the silencing and acknowledgement of family violence within the bonds of lesbian relationships'. Thesis submitted for the degree of Minister of Public Health, Dunedin: University of Otago.

couples.¹⁵ This could indicate that lesbian relationships are more conflictual and this is reflected in the reported higher violence rates.

Another study by Bolonga *et. al.* is cross-cited by Dutton (2001 pgs **124** and **125**) on the topic of Lesbian Violence. These female to female relationships were found to be significantly more violent than gay male relationships (56% vs 25%). Further, the reported rates of verbal, physical and sexual abuse were all significantly higher in lesbian relationships than in heterosexual relationships (*ibid.*, pg **125**).

A further study discussed in Dutton (pg **125**) found that reported rates of verbal, physical and sexual abuse were all significantly higher in lesbian relationships than in heterosexual relationships. In one study 78.2% of subjects had been in a prior relationship with a man. Reports of violence by men were all lower than reports of violence from their female partner when previously in a same sex relationship.¹⁶

Contrast these findings with the claim recorded in the Herbert Report on page **12**, that I.P.V. does not occur in gay and lesbian relationships. This is one notable example of selective inattention to studies which would challenge and invalidate the feminist world view of family violence and points to lack of rigour and scholastic integrity by the authors in arriving at these deliberately misleading and erroneous findings. To acknowledge that I.P.V. is more frequent in lesbian than heterosexual relationships would be to contradict that the Duluth male-power-and-control provides any fundamental or general explanation for I.P.V.

15 Female manifestations of psychological violence

Psychological abuse was found to be the most common form of I.P.V. with verbal aggression a feature for which women seem to be more often responsible (National Survey of Crime Victims, pg **7**).

Femicentric reports invariably target the male partner as being psychologically abusive and make little or no mention of the immense emotional damage women can cause not only to men as fathers but to their children as well. According to the Australian One in Three Campaign fact sheets, of every 10 incidents of partner emotional/psychological abuse, the perpetrator was male to female in six with four being female to male. Just under half (46.1%) of affected men experienced anxiety or fear. Adverse emotional responses were basically common to both genders.

Forms of psychological/emotional violence frequently reported by males from females include malicious gossip, deliberately damaging a man's reputation and/or career through false, exaggerated or unbalanced allegations, deliberately humiliating a man, for example by flirting publicly with another, complaining frequently about financial provision, comparing a man unfavourably with others, frequent

¹⁵ Supported by data from Statistics New Zealand. Over the period 2009 to 2012 dissolutions by female couples totalled 71; by male couples, 35 and by heterosexual couples, 18.

¹⁶ See Lie, G., Schilit, J., Bush, M. *et. al.* (1991) '**Lesbians in currently aggressive relationships: How frequently do they report aggressive past relationships**' *Violence and Victims*, 6:2, 121–135.

criticisms in general, derogatory comment on a man's hobbies, failing to treat the home as a shared environment that also needs to reflect the man's interests. As men read this very incomplete list, many will nod in recognition of their own experiences that however are totally ignored or denied in the recent New Zealand reports.

Stalking behaviour is common to both genders and constitutes psychological intimidation.

Women make more suicide attempts and gestures than men do while men commit completed suicide about 4 times more often than women do (New Zealand Ministry of Health, 2011). Men are also 8 to 9 times more likely to commit suicide following a marriage or relationship breakdown than at any other time of their lives. While women's lobby groups tend to view a man's suicides as just another 'power and control' behaviour designed to harm women, they are just as quick to view female suicide gestures as calls for help and evidence they are being abused. However, it is unreasonable to assume that completed suicides are 'power and control' behaviour, both because no outcome such as control or revenge can be experienced by someone who has actually committed suicide and because an act of full suicide will more often involve an extreme erosion of mental health devoid of sufficient awareness or self-value to ensure survival or rescue. On the other hand suicidal threats, gestures and attempts will more often amount to I.P.V. The much higher rate of completed suicide by men following relationship breakdown is likely to reflect the losses and mental harm men suffer through that process in the context of female-favouring, male-blaming and male-exploiting family law and welfare systems.

A further example is the enormous pressures placed on fathers by relationship breakdowns since separations are more often initiated by the female partner and often come without prior warning. Men will almost always be the party expected to leave the home, often forced to do so quickly through police 'safety orders' (routinely given to men regardless of who may have committed any violence or whether any violence was committed at all) or conveniently arranged Family Court protection orders. Men will more often be the party whose prior assets are plundered by his separating female partner due to female-favouring legal definitions of 'relationship property'. Further psychological trauma is caused to the father if the woman abducts the children internationally or more frequently by moving with the children to another city. Not uncommonly a younger mother and children partnered to an older man will shift back with the children's grandmother, herself a solo parent, who then assumes the parenting responsibilities that should belong to the children's parents.

The New Zealand justice system even before the establishment of Family Courts in 1981 described the alienation by the mother of the children's affections for the father as '*schooling*' subsequently to be described in the literature on this topic as the '*parental alienation syndrome*', mostly perpetrated by mothers. The deliberate process of alienating the affections of the children from the father has not been covered in femicentric reports as abusive of the parental guardianship rights of a loving father or as one manifestation of female initiated psychological violence.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Baker, A. (2007) '**Adult children of parental alienation syndromes: Breaking the ties that bind**, New York: W.W. Norton; page 24–29. See also '**Separated with children**' by Adam Cowie, available from the author on phone 03 217 1269.

False allegations of sexual abuse of the daughter by the biological father are quite commonly encountered in contested custody and access disputes whereas father–daughter incest is rarely encountered clinically.¹⁸

Another psychologically abusive tactic to gain advantage in contested custody disputes (not confined to one gender), is to ‘bend the truth’ and hide the facts or even to bear false witness without penalty for perjury¹⁹ which leaves the target of such behaviour with a heightened and lasting sense of injustice, embitterment and demoralisation. This can occur with the collusion of Family Court and its lawyers who have been long indoctrinated into believing feminist ideology such as the Duluth model, for example from the misleading picture painted by endless femicentric reports. This could be regarded as systemic psychological abuse of men and of the important part good fathering plays in the healthy psychological development of children and adolescents.²⁰

While there are various penalties for perjury in Family Court legislation they are seldom invoked. This is another source of bitterness and resentment from people of both genders who believe that in their case justice has not been served.

A father whose guardianship entitlements should allow him to continue a full parental role with his children will often have that role controlled, limited or prevented by his ex-partner, yet he is still required to pay so-called ‘child support’ that channels his contribution through the mother and therefore hides it from his children (assuming any of it goes to benefit the children at all). This is another form of psychological violence that traumatizes many separated fathers both emotionally and financially.

16 Homicide of children by their parent

There are well known and publicised cases of homicide of children by either or both parents, particularly where issues as to primary care and contact time have been contested. The *Bristol* case in Whanganui (father) and the less well publicised *Livingstone* case (mother) in Nelson are representative. The younger the child the more likely the child has been murdered at the hands of the mother whereas older children are more likely to have been murdered by the father following acrimonious disputes in the post-separation phase.²¹

¹⁸ See United Nations Human Rights Committee (2005) Communication No. 1368/2005 submitted by E.B. with the assistance of the Civil Liberties Organisation.

¹⁹ While there are various penalties for perjury in Family Court legislation they are seldom invoked. This is another source of bitterness and resentment from people of both genders who believe that in their case justice has not been served.

²⁰ This is exactly why the Bristol clause was repealed in October 2013 as part of the reforms to the Family Court, reforms described by the National Collective of Women’s Refuges as ‘unsafe’ for women and children. There are psychopathologies of women in their maternal functioning as well as their equivalents in fathering. Mothers can provide ‘unsafe’ environments for young persons just as fathers can.

When a male commits such an atrocious crime women's lobby groups respond vocally and attribute it to the male's need to assert power and control, but when a woman offends similarly this is rarely commented on by the women's lobby or in femicentric reports, and any such comment will blame the crime on the woman's own victimization, mental health problems, etc. The truth is that all such crimes whether committed by a male or female will involve complex factors leading to psychological breakdown. 'Male power and control' as an explanation adds little to one's understanding of these tragedies or to preventative solutions.

17 Ethnicity as a factor in Intimate Partner Violence

As stated in the Tolmie Family Deaths report, Maori were 2.8 times more often deceased and 2.5 times more often offenders of intimate partner violence deaths than New Zealand citizens of other ethnic groups. The authors state that over-representation of Maori in intimate partner violence deaths is of significant concern (pg 81). Although the recent reports present the data showing high rates of Maori I.P.V., they highlight and discuss only Maori female victimization. They also fail to point out the extent to which specifically Maori I.P.V. inflates the overall New Zealand statistics and therefore exaggerates the true extent of the problem for most of our population.

What is termed 'over-kill' in domestic murders is often Maori gang-related where grossly violent assaults by the male perpetrator against the female victim are encountered. Extreme violence towards women is a specific characteristic of gang culture. See also Fergusson's 2003 article on '**Ethnicity and Interpersonal Violence in a New Zealand birth cohort**' (pp 138+).

18 Mutual Intimate Partner Violence

Ehrensaft, Moffitt and Caspi's study published in 2004 found that in less seriously abusive situations described as '*common couples abuse*' the female was most usually the perpetrator but in more serious assaults described as '*clinical abuse*', both men and women were equally culpable. Men in non-clinically abusive relationships were similar to men who were not abusive or personality disordered.

²¹ See Moore, E. (2005) '*No Sun Has Shone: Child Homicide in New Zealand*' Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington: Masters of Arts Degree in Criminology, unpublished mimeo, and the *Listener* article by Catherine Woulfe, '**Unthinkable: What drives a parent to kill their own child?**' Sept 13 (2014), 27-31. See also article by Simon Collins entitled '**Gone Too Soon: Kids who die at the hands of parents**' *New Zealand Herald*, January 18, 2014. Statistics maintained by Murray Bacon on family murders between 1997 and 2011 are incomplete but broadly indicative, with ten perpetrated by mothers and eight perpetrated by fathers who were more likely to commit suicide after the event. Most families were already known to the authorities.

An Australian study with more reliable statistics found that between 1997 and 2005 that of 291 child murders 140 were killed by their fathers, 127 by their mothers, and 24 by both parents.

In 'clinical abuse' situations the dynamics were entirely different due to the assertive mating or coupling of both partners who had the same history of violent and anti-social behaviour. Thus prevention programmes commonly described as anger management or violence prevention programmes should address female aggression in the relationship not just male aggression.²²

A variation of common couple abuse is described as 'mutual fighting'. Mutual fighting is where physical violence is used by both partners within an egalitarian relationship as a means of problem-solving. Neither partner will have developed much fear of the other. Mutual fighting usually involves very low-level violence, such as slapping and pushing scuffles rather than serious assaults unless both parties are highly disinhibited through alcohol or drug abuse.

Most police call-outs are to domestic violence incidents of this nature which should result in the issuing of mutual police safety orders or domestic protection orders to 'protect' the couple from each other and the children from both parents.

19 Adverse effects on children who witness parental violence

Women's lobby groups maintain that children's emotional wellbeing is harmed when they are witness to male on female violence, whereas studies on this topic show that it is also harmful for children to witness female on male violent encounters but with different detrimental longer term outcomes, findings supported by Dutton (pages 176–179) and by the Fergusson *et. al* articles.

Fergusson and Horwood (1987), from the Christchurch Health and Development Study wrote on the effects of children of their exposure to inter-parental violence and how this affected their adjustment and development into young adulthood.²³ They found that such exposure predicted later increased risk for anxiety disorders, behavioural disorders, alcoholism and criminal offending, the latter modelled off the anti-social behaviour of the father while increased risk of alcohol abuse and dependence was predicted by the mother's substance misuse dependency. These harmful consequences are more likely in family backgrounds where males and female partners assault each other at similar rates (1998, pg 341).

However, a clear and compelling finding from this study was that there were no marked gender differences in either the patterning or the rate of father initiated violence and mother initiated violence (ibid, pg 345). Inter-parental violence was frequently embedded in disadvantaged family contexts characterised by social and economic problems, parental divorce and separation and child physical

²² Ehrensalt, M., Moffitt, T., and Caspi, A. (2004) 'Clinically abusive relationships in an unselected birth cohort: Men's and women's participation and developmental antecedents' *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 113, 258–271.

Note that while Male Assaults Female is a criminal offence, there is no corresponding charge for Female Assaults Male. For exactly the same actions a female can be charged only with Common Assault which carries a maximum tariff of half the prison term applying to the Male Assaults Female offence.

²³ Fergusson, D., and Horwood, J. (1998) 'Exposure to inter-parental violence in childhood and psychological adjustment in young adulthood' *Child Abuse and Neglect* 22:5, 339–357.

Note that only the Tolmie Family Deaths report cites from this study. See Tolmie (2013) pg 139.

and/or sexual abuse (although not usually by the biological father) (ibid, pg 347). The impact of inter-parental violence was similar for males and females (ibid, pg 351), although boys were more likely to externalise their conflicts, with girls likely to internalise their conflicts (ibid., pg 353).²⁴

A finding from an Australian National Crime Prevention Report found that witnessing parental domestic violence had a significant effect on young people's attitudes and experiences. The best predictor of perpetration was witnessing certain types of female to male violence, whilst the best predictor of victimisation in personal relationships was having witnessed male to female violence.²⁵

20 The Christchurch Health and Development, and Dunedin Multidisciplinary studies

The Christchurch Health and Development Study (CHDS) and Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study (DMHDS) as described in the Lievore and Mayhew review (2004) are important sources of information on the life experiences of New Zealanders nearing thirty or just turned thirty respectively. They cover both victimisation and offending histories with regard to various forms of family violence, including witnessing parental violence, parental use of physical punishment, child maltreatment and physical, sexual or psychological violence (or verbal aggression) in intimate relationships. The CHDS has followed a birth cohort of 1,265 children born in the Christchurch urban region in mid-1977. The DMHDS has tracked and studied 1,037 children born at Queen Mary Hospital in Dunedin during 1972–1973.

One of the internationally recognised studies republished by United States Department of Justice is the July 1999 article by Terri Moffitt and Avshalom Caspi entitled '*Findings about partner violence from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study*' which found that I.P.V. is strongly linked to partner co-habiting at a young age; a variety of mental illnesses in **both** the male partner and the female partner; a background in their families of origin of instability and violence; a history on both sides of antisocial (delinquent) behaviour in adolescence; other types of crime; long term unemployment and parenting at a young age. 27 percent of women and 34 percent of men reported that they had been physically abused by their partner, while 37 percent of women and 22 percent of men said that they had perpetrated the violence. Lack of parenting skills in young men was a troubling finding since men who had fathered children by age 21 were more than three times as likely to be perpetrators of child and partner abuse as men who were not fathers. Further, more men (88%) than women (66%) met criteria for one or more mental disorders when the physical abuse was severe. A strong link was found to exist between violence against a partner and a history of violence against victims outside the family and in the wider community.

These findings underscored the importance of prevention programmes that involved both parents.

²⁴ For a dissenting viewpoint that men were more likely to perpetrate I.P.V. when witnessed by children and that poor fathering can accompany male perpetration of I.P.V. see Murphy, C., Paton, N., Gulliver, P. and Fanslow, J. (2013) '**Understanding connections and relationships: Child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and parenting**' Auckland: University of Auckland, New Zealand, Family Violence Clearing House.

²⁵ *National Crime Prevention (2001). Young people and domestic violence: National research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence. Barlon: Attorney-General's Dept.*

21 The 'Peoples Report' from the Glenn Inquiry

Findings from this report, the first to be issued this year, were derived from meetings held around New Zealand which gave an opportunity for respondents, mainly female, to give an account to interviewers, nearly all female, of their own experiences of the support services for victims subject to family violence. Few men attended the meetings so it is unsurprising that the report contains only a few accounts of men who had experience of the domestic violence system particularly their experiences with the Family Court and how it handles applications for the primary care of children (custody), and contact time (access), usually in favour of the mother.

Because of the lack of involvement by men in the Inquiry it would be unfair to criticize it for not giving a gender proportionate coverage of family violence. However, it deserves criticism for the extent to which it uses its unbalanced data to make and imply general statements about family violence. There are just two male scenarios in the report, one detailing concerns that police were quick to side with women once application had been made for a Domestic Protection Order and that many men felt frustrated that the onus was on them to prove that they were not the perpetrator. This was an accurate observation at the time since, thanks in part to the Bristol clause, allegations against men were almost always treated by both police and Family Court as if they were true.

The report is highly critical of various agencies including the Family Court although mainly from a femicentric perspective. The welfare of the mother is usually equated with the welfare of the children, precisely the assumptions in Herbert's Impact Collective's Report.

It is most often the male and not the female however who is traumatised, particularly if the mother shifts to another town or wilfully denies reasonable contact time with the children. This can occur without the male partner being informed in advance.

Some 'people' objected to shared parenting arrangements which did not take into account 'one parent's' abuse and inability to care for children (pg 86).²⁶ The shrill use of language here is almost Orwellian as it is *female* people that object to shared parenting arrangements on the grounds that *male* people will abuse the children or be incapable of caring for them properly.²⁷

The Glenn Report did however point to the lack of support for men. It noted that effective advocacy may be compromised if volunteer workers advocate solely for the women (pg 66). A number of voluntary community organisations such as Women's Refuges were staffed by female victims of family violence enabling them to relate sympathetically to their clients but, as the report notes, this may also affect the objectivity of the volunteer in accurately assessing the dynamics of the abuse '*she*' (sic) has endured within her own unique family situation. Use of the term '*perpetrator*' and

²⁶ See the heading '*The Courts—Dysfunctional and Broken*' on pg 84. Criticism of the Family Court ranges through to page 91, criticisms which could be easily matched by men's experiences in the Family Court. Further criticisms may be found on page 118 and 119.

²⁷ This is an example of '*camouflage*' language, a feature of ideological driven campaigns and, dare it be said, true propaganda campaigns. Orwell described this misleading use of language as '*double speak*'.

'victim' is gender neutral but overwhelmingly so in this report, the perpetrator is male and the victim female. The use of the term 'people' as in the very title of this report is misleading as the 'people' discussed in the report are mostly female.

A number of 'people' told the Inquiry about the lack of refuges and support for men when they are removed from the home on instant Police Safety Orders or Domestic Protection Orders and have nowhere to go, while still having to pay the mortgage, their rent, their living expenses and entertainment for the children on access visits. Far from feeling some measure of sympathy and compassion for men finding themselves in this unenviable situation, these female respondents see them as causing chaos and domestic abuse (pg 106). And even though the Glenn Report recognises that the Ministry of Justice has recently reviewed the Family Court and made significant reforms to solve more disputes in mediation, it still maintains that it is anything but a safe environment for 'victims' (pg 116). There is, they state, the need for the removal of *anti-female* gender bias which fosters institutional abuse and re-victimisation (pg 118). Mediation and joint counselling only puts those female people who have been psychologically abused at further risk (pg 119).

These erroneous, misandrous statements should not remain unchallenged. Similar comments would also apply to many providers of community based 'violence prevention' programmes with a similar mindset.

This report claims that front line professionals including judges, lawyers, police, CYFS social workers, teachers and health professionals, all lacked understanding about the dynamics of child abuse and domestic violence particularly 'power and control' behaviour. What they are really saying is that everyone should conform to their unscientific belief that domestic violence is due to male power and control.

Comments that many 'people' perceive the Family Court to be biased either against men or against women but overall that it was the women (victims) who struggle the most, staggers rational belief given that men have to carry their own Court costs whereas women find it easier to secure legal aid or have their fees waived altogether if they have applied for, a most usually granted, Domestic Protection Order.

These statements highlight the fact that the beliefs about family violence held by the Glenn Inquiry are just that and betray the self-serving closed minds of its authors to any other dissenting viewpoints on the true, varied dynamics of family violence. 'Male Power and control' dynamics are also a feature of the Tolmie Family Deaths report. That one femicentric report seemingly makes the same points as another does not mean that their findings are valid.

The Glenn Inquiry has had a chequered history with the resignation of its former CEO Ruth Herbert, its Operations Director and a number of its thirty strong advisory panel, which compromised the integrity and credibility of its processes. The key to its earlier disintegration was to be found in Sir Owen Glenn's assertion that he would have liked the Inquiry to be founded on more evidence-based and objective research, and not on the publicity given to the often emotive and misandrous statements from its many female interviewees.

This was not a 'peoples' report. This semantic use of the term is misleading as it is mainly a female people's report and not a male people's report or even a 'little people's' report. While the Tolmie Family Deaths report should have had greater academic respectability and rigour given the standing of its authors, it too uses the generic term 'people' to hide the fact that it is a femicentric polemic, manipulating the language in a way that should serve to call into question the integrity, credibility and

motivations of its authors irrespective of their academic status. Similar comments apply to the Herbert report.

22 The Tolmie Family Violence Death Review Committee Report

The Tolmie Family Deaths Report made the same fundamental errors the other recent studies, made. The authors embarked upon their project with an assumption that the Duluth ‘male power and control’ model explains all or most family violence, especially I.P.V. This assumption then caused the authors to look only for information consistent with the Duluth model and to consider and process data in ways that supported that model.

The report claimed, regarding the abuse causing death (pg 71) that *‘coercive control—rather than physical force—is a defining feature of the abuse’*, and (pg 72) that *‘strategies are designed to control the victim even when she is not in the presence of the abusive (ex-) partner’*. The Death Review Committee pushed the Duluth model in this way throughout its report. This agenda clouded its judgement so much that it sought to define family homicides as occurring due to something other than physical force.

The Tolmie Family Deaths Report quoted the claims by Ptacek (1999) that I.P.V. is a form of ‘social entrapment’ that has three dimensions including *‘the ways that men’s coercive control can be aggravated by structural inequalities of gender, class and racism’*. Use of the word ‘men’ implied that ‘structural inequalities’ don’t or can’t increase women’s coercive control. What about heavily biased Family Court decisions in favour of females, including orders for primary care of children and granting protection orders? The Tolmie Report frequently used gender terms to stereotype males as offenders and females as victims, but never the reverse.

The Tolmie Report counted 89 adult family violence deaths of which 57% were males. However, it failed to mention this ratio at all but instead went on to focus almost exclusively on the I.P.V.s, reporting them in a processed form according to which gender the authors decided had been *‘predominant aggressor’* and *‘primary victim’* in the pre-homicide history of each case. The report then progressed to consider how more should be done to keep women and children safe, making recommendations such as providing a legal defence for women who murder men, and failing totally to consider specifically how the most frequent victims of family homicide, men, might be kept safe.

Nearly all the men involved in family homicides, even those killed, were labelled *‘predominant aggressor’* and nearly all the women, including the female killers, were labelled *‘primary victim’*. The purpose of this exercise appeared to be to excuse the women’s violence, to redefine violent females as victims, and ultimately to sweep aside the fact that about one quarter of I.P.V.s are males killed by female partners, a fact that otherwise would be inconvenient for the Duluth model.

The basis for labelling *‘predominant aggressor’* and *‘primary victim’* was almost certainly invalid. The authors claimed to be able to determine whether there had been *‘...a history of abuse in which one partner is using coercive and controlling behaviours towards the other...’* (pg 130) and then decided those cases must have involved a predominant aggressor and primary victim. Where the authors disagreed about this on any case they discussed it together until a consensus was reached, but it

appeared that the consensus always ended up labelling males predominant aggressors and females the primary victims.

Criteria for deciding that included allegations (called 'disclosures') by victims' family members, with no apparent consideration that such allegations will be unlikely to arise from an objective view. Further, even if those allegations had a sound objective basis they may not provide a balanced or accurate picture given the extent to which men maintain silence concerning their I.P.V. victimization.

Other criteria for deciding that predominant aggressor and primary victim had existed included any protection order temporary or final, any claimed fearfulness by either partner, and 'lethality risk factors' including 'separation after living together during the past year', the 'abuser avoided being arrested for domestic violence', either party ever threatened or attempted suicide and 'the abuser...calls when you don't want them to' (pg 132–133). None of these factors singly or in combination could justify a conclusion that there had been a predominant aggressor and primary victim. For example, protection orders are often based on absolutely no evidence apart from the applicant's allegations (which need be no more than the applicant's claim to feel afraid), and applications for protection orders are often made (and encouraged by lawyers to be made) as a way of gaining leverage in Family Court disputes over children or assets. The existence of a protection order is in no way reliable evidence of violence or 'coercive and controlling behaviours' and certainly not evidence that the couple could be described as consisting of predominant aggressor and primary victim.

A major source of the case histories used for this categorisation was police records, but these cannot be relied upon for accuracy because police typically focus only on I.P.V. offending by male offenders and often ignore any violence women committed. Even if the police recorded the woman's violence, the Death Review Committee subjected such information to their own further distortions, claiming for example to be able to determine (pg 131) *'the respective motivations of each party for their use of violence...'* and which party *'had the potential to seriously injure the other'*.

To make matters worse, the statistics reported in the Tolmie Report may not be accurate. It claimed that over the four years from 2009 to 2012 there were 13 males killed by a female intimate partner. However, Laven (2011) counted and provided sources for six such cases for just one year within those four years. Several of those cases appeared to involve drunk, jealous, possessive and/or historically violent females who killed their partners in a rage and when the victims were vulnerable and unable to defend themselves, yet the Tolmie Report claimed that only one female I.P.V. killer during their entire four years was a predominant aggressor whereas the remaining were all primary victims! That is almost certainly inaccurate. A request was made to the Death Review Committee to provide any possible information on its cases so it could be ascertained whether the six cases identified by Laven (2011) were included in their tally, but the Death Review Committee refused to provide any information at all. When a study refuses to allow access to check its data this must seriously compromise its credibility.

Australian statistics on family death events from the One-in-Three Campaign indicated that in the three year period between 2008 and 2010 75 men were killed in domestic female-initiated homicide incidents, 25 men per year. Given a population base of 20 million citizens, the proportionate yearly total for New Zealand's population of just over 4 million citizens would be five male I.P.V. deaths each year, 50% more than the New Zealand figures reported in the Tolmie Report. While it's possible that Australian women are 50% more likely than New Zealand women to kill their partners, this seems unlikely.

The Tolmie Family Deaths Report, by assuming the validity and applicability of the Duluth model and by manipulating its data and reporting to ensure all appeared consistent with the model, showed a seriously compromised scholastic integrity from authors with standing in the academic community. Its recommendations (especially that of providing a new legal defence for women who murder male partners) seemed more likely to increase family violence than to decrease it.

23 The Impact Collective's Report on Family Violence—The way forward

Ruth Herbert, the lead author of this report which followed on from the Glenn and Tolmie reports, was a former CEO of the Glenn Inquiry. As she herself states, **The Way Forward** is the report she would have written had she been permitted to stay on in that capacity.

Herbert's 'Way Forward' is a well organised, well presented, clearly stated and comprehensively cross-referenced report but is it a gender-neutral and gender-balanced account in a way that The Glenn Report and Tolmie Family Deaths Report are not? Herbert's report proposes an integrated approach at the community level of involvement with 32 Regional Hubs rather than a top-down bureaucratic model which, as she argues, is broken, fragmented and with no cohesive infrastructure.

The report maintains that as only approximately 20% of I.P.V. cases are reported to the Police, the problem of family violence is badly underestimated making it unrealistic to make significant changes if interventions to combat the problem are not reaching 80% of cases (pg 2). An integrated system would ensure that not only would various agencies deliver consistent and safe services, they would all share the same understanding of the complex dynamics, particularly on the inter-generational nature of I.P.V. If this does not happen and different individuals hold different understandings then there will be different conflicting ideas about the most effective interventions (pg 4). This is a critical point which requires an evaluation of what exactly constitutes a common 'world-view' of I.P.V. and exactly what factors ameliorate and on the other hand serve to exacerbate, the ongoing problems of family violence.

However, the report by following the convention of referring to I.P.V. 'victims' in the female gender and 'abusers/perpetrators' in the male gender (and to continue this distinction in discussing the effects of abuse against children) is questionable. Herbert's report claims to provide evidence-based information to show that I.P.V. is serious, pervasive and prevalent and that 'certain groups' are more vulnerable than others. The person (most usually a man), repeatedly uses a range of abusive strategies to gain 'power and control' over another (usually a woman and child) by the use of domination, fear and coercive control, precisely the '*bed-rock*' beliefs by feminist authors about the dynamics of family violence. Post-separation, the male abuser may use Family Court processes as another tool of abuse, a criticism shared in common with Glenn Report. To imply that women never use Family Court processes as a strategy to gain power and control is clearly ridiculous given the frequency with which protection orders are used as weapons in cases.

The statement that women do not choose to be with abusive men is highly questionable given research which suggests to the contrary, that women often end up in a number of serial relationships with abusive men which is part of the inter-generational transmission of I.P.V. (pg 11).

Were the Impact Collective Report to have given a gender-balanced account of the dynamics of I.P.V. and not a slanted and highly selective review, then its emphasis on the virtues of an integrated approach with all participants having a shared vision for change '*...including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions*', would be an admirable aim. However, the Impact Collective Report's declared common goal is the safety of women and children (pg 94) and not men. If this also were the common goal for a proposed multi-disciplinary national training course framework (pg 132), would this result in a gender-proportionate mechanism that continually collected, reviewed, assessed and integrated new information on I.P.V. and identified emerging evidence? (pg 134/135). And should this not include the collection of empirical data to assess the effectiveness of 'stopping *men's* (sic) violence' programmes as well as programmes expressly tailored to violent women as provided already by Department of Corrections and other providers? (Women's 'stopping violence' programmes usually emphasize 'empowerment' for the female offenders whose bad behaviour tends to be blamed on their victimization under male power and control.)

24 Ministry of Women's Affairs Report, 'Current Thinking on Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women', October 2013

This report builds on the principles invented by feminist and human-rights based approaches which define violence against women as an abuse of male power that is facilitated by gender inequality. The report makes various claims that are plain wrong, such as "*Violence is one of the leading preventable causes of premature death, disability, and morbidity among women*". This claim has been parroted by numerous feminist groups but it was based on only a few discredited studies. In fact, violence does not appear on any credible list of the leading causes of female morbidity in Western countries.

Prevention strategies, particularly primary prevention models need to be part of a holistic and integrated system that '*...upholds women's rights to live in violence-free societies, communities and families*' (pg 6). The position is taken that men are the primary perpetrators of violence against women and that male socialisation is a key determinant of violence and that intervention strategies and programmes must be delivered through settings particularly relevant to men (pg 9). Sexual violence and I.P.V. are claimed to be inter-related. The report acknowledges that more research needs to be done within New Zealand context about the implications of differing world views, concepts and frameworks of knowledge for effective violence prevention programmes.

With its exclusive emphasis on male violence against women and on treatment programmes and interventions that mainly target men, and its neglect of the New Zealand literature on I.P.V., this can only be described as yet another femicentric report.

25 Ministry of Justice's Report on a Stronger Response to Domestic Violence Incidents

This report was to include a proposed review of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 but will not be progressed to a draft bill at this stage (para 20, pg 3).

Work will be undertaken to develop shared definitions and understandings of family violence and an agreed set of family violence indicators as also discussed in the Herbert Report.²⁸

26 Ministry of Social Development's 'Violence is not OK' campaign material

Government has also pledged a commitment to national education and social marketing for its 'Violence is not OK' campaigns although whether its content gives a gender-balanced perspective on the true dynamics of family violence is seriously open to question as its 'model' of domestic violence is derived from the flawed 'Duluth male power and control model'.²⁹

Throughout the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Development Reports the language used is gender neutral and gender-proportionate but the education booklets, materials and TV clips are not. This discrepancy needs to be addressed in the interests of a balanced perspective on I.P.V. otherwise these campaigns will seem as a social conditioning exercise for male people who contribute their taxes to derogatory portrayals of all men as violent and abusive.

27 National Domestic Violence Clearing House Fact Sheets

Do the content of the Clearing House fact sheets bear some points in common with the Australian One-in-Three fact sheets and, if not, would this demonstrate selective reporting on the part of New Zealand academics?

²⁸ The progressive further '*strengthening*' of the Domestic Violence Act is akin to a process described as '*cumulative radicalisation*' where each unwise decision leads to a crisis which then leads on in turn to still more radical decision making which then results in a worse crisis as was the case with the Bristol clause and now the current proposals to further strengthen family violence legislation.

²⁹ The booklets available contain numerous illustrative 'case histories' of male initiated violence towards women and women as invariably the victim. The same may be said of the TV clips which are an exercise in social conditioning as the perpetrators are usually Pakeha men terrorising their wives and, worse still, their children. These clips are ideologically driven and distort the facts. They are highly objectionable and portray men in the worst possible light. If women were similarly portrayed there would be an immediate public outcry over discriminatory and highly prejudicial advertising at the tax payers expense.

The Clearing House is now based at the University of Auckland with twenty-two staff or advisory personnel of whom all but two are female. It is under contract from the Families Commission which also organised the 'White Ribbon' campaign but will not, for the future, continue to do so, so it may then adopt a more gender-neutral and gender-proportionate response to family violence.

One Clearing House fact sheet states that *'...research has repeatedly demonstrated that once attention to the issues of context, meaning, motivation and consequences of violence are included – it is men's violence against women and children that is the most significant problem'*, a statement which is not valid since the studies discussed in this paper clearly show to the contrary, thus indicating femicentric bias on the part of this otherwise assumedly reputable, research organisation. Its activities are also tax payer funded. The content of their fact sheets should be compared with the Australian One-in-Three fact sheets which do not reach this conclusion.

28 Department of Corrections Prison-based and community-based domestic violence interventions: The Slabber Review

Their review is somewhat selective in scope and while it correctly reports that internationally the field is dominated mainly by the Duluth programme, it does not access available information from its own library on the criticisms of the Duluth 'male power and control' model which otherwise mainly informs its community-based I.P.V. interventions.³⁰

While the authors of the Corrections review claim that the search parameters for the literature review were deliberately kept as broad as possible, the authors do not draw on the findings about domestic violence in the published literature from both the Dunedin and Christchurch longitudinal, multi-disciplinary child development studies cited in overseas literature reviews, or of the many community-based intervention models discussed in Donald Dutton's seminal text **'Re-thinking Domestic Violence'**, references that did not apparently meet the authors' selection criteria for inclusion in the report (pg 4).³¹

In practical situations, anger management and violence prevention programmes and interventions blend together aspects of psycho-educational and cognitive-behavioural approaches but still within a feminist context (page 5). Dutton observed that Canada, USA, UK and Australia all offer 'pro-feminist' programmes for domestic violence offenders. Outcome studies as to their efficacy are rare and not usually evidence-based (pg 7). In New Zealand very little information is available on the content or success of its domestic violence programmes.

³⁰ Slabber, M. (2012) *Community-based domestic violence interventions: A literature review*. The review explicitly describes the Duluth programme as a feminist psycho-educational model which focuses on teaching (male) clients about power and control elements that cause domestic violence. Both high risk and moderate risk offenders are mandated to attend along with non-mandated offenders (pg 12). The Duluth model interventions and cognitive-behaviour approaches had only a *'weak positive impact'* on recidivism rates (pg 2).

³¹ Note however the observation on page 5 that, quote:

'Increasing dissatisfaction with the feminist approach and the inability of the social-political stance...to adequately explain female or same-sex violence, led to growing agreement that the current approaches (to I.P.V.) are limited in their success'.

Domestic violence strategy in New Zealand is guided by the Violence Ministerial Team which is advised by the Task Force on Action with Violence Within Families. A review which was completed in 2010, concluded that there was no conclusive evidence available to prove that the programmes were successful nor likely to work as a stand-alone response to family violence, particularly if they adopt a one size fits all approach without due regard for the needs of the individual perpetrator and the unique characteristics of 'his' partner and family background, particularly where alcohol, drug and mental health issues were co-presenting (pg 15). Domestic violence interventions do not usually deal with or target the 'perpetrator's' experience of trauma, personality disorders or relationship conflict issues, nor, as they should, an exploration of their volatile family of origin backgrounds (pg 18).

A recently publicized New Zealand programme run by police that did not appear to be based on the Duluth model conducted outcome research that showed it achieved impressive reductions of 70% in I.P.V. in couples with a history of repeated police callouts and/or violence convictions. The programme is called the Whakakotahitanga Domestic Violence Rehab Camp and works with the couples together to improve their relationship, including identifying the ways both partners contributed to their I.P.V. and how they might overcome this.

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) (e.g. Johnson, 2008), based on attachment theory, identifies and helps to overcome the vicious cycles of emotional responses by both partners in conflictual relationships. Although the authors of this method advise against using it to work with couples where I.P.V. is occurring, it provides a valid explanatory model and effective intervention for most couples' conflict including I.P.V. The New Zealand Whakakotahitanga Domestic Violence Rehab Camp programme appears to use the principles of EFT to good effect.

The National Collective of Stopping Violence Services is one of New Zealand's main providers. However, this organisation initially boycotted running a pilot programme to work with offenders using a cognitive-behavioural approach because programmes based on the Duluth 'male power and control' model had not been shown to be effective (NZ Herald, 04/07/2014). The boycott was on the grounds that the change '*...undermined years of research and development by the network, lacked expert analysis and significantly increased the potential for harm to already vulnerable women and children*', a statement as reported in the print media.³² The gender-specific language used highlights their attempt to present the problem in a distorted way.

29 Selective reporting and gender bias in the media coverage of I.P.V.

While generous media coverage has been given to the women's lobby whether by TV, radio, or newspaper, media releases from the men's groups have only rarely been featured at any length and then mainly from Letters to the Editor. This has stymied wider debate on I.P.V. and further publicised the 'world view' on I.P.V. according to women's lobby groups (including the legal academic lobby

³² Dominion-Post article by Caleb Harris entitled '*Plan is doomed to fail, Tolley is warned*' on 4 June 2014.

groups),³³ For example, the well known commentator on family law issues, Catriona McLennan was given frequent exposure on women's experiences of injustice and bias against women in Radio New Zealand's programmes but equal air-time was not given to spokespersons from the men's lobby to provide any counter-balancing response to her claims.

The New Zealand Herald has provided extensive, highly slanted coverage to the more vocal women's lobby while allowing allegations of biased reporting to be aired in the form of Letters to the Editor only.³⁴

Wellington-based *Dominion-Post* has featured well balanced opinion pieces from the fathers' lobby although a one page article by political reporter, Andrea Vance, featured from a women's perspective their criticisms of recent Family Court reforms without input from the fathers' lobby.³⁵

Articles from the *Sunday Star-Times* have been gender-neutral in tone, well balanced and informative, comments also applying to Dunedin's *Otago-Times* and the *Christchurch Press*.³⁶

Various fathers' groups, men's groups and non-partisan commentators prepared media releases on the first release of the Glenn Report findings, but no media release except femicentric ones ever featured in the print, radio or TV media.

30 Summary and general findings

- Over 200 studies in the international literature on I.P.V. report approximately equal rates of assault by women on men as by men on women, with the proviso that men may significantly

³³ This problem is one also experienced by well known American authorities in the field. See, Straus, M. (2010). Another example is the refusal by the Select Committee hearing submissions on the Family Law Reform Bill to table Adam Cowie's published book on his personal experiences with the Family Court processes and the lack of support when contacting his community's services for separated parents.

Another submission detailing eight cases of gender bias and injustices to men and men as fathers was not heard or even acknowledged by the Select Committee, although submissions by women were heard in closed session.

³⁴ Publicity given to initial findings from the Glenn Inquiry were sensationalist in tone and remain so when the new chair, a retired High Court Judge Bill Wilson called for a highly punitive response to the '*epidemic of family violence*'.

See article by Simon Collins '*When Love Breaks Down*' NZ Herald of Saturday, April 20, 2013 and the letter of the week published on April 27 entitled '*Shared-parenting piece unbalanced*' which highlighted its anti-father, pro-mother gender bias and pointed out that the most unsafe environment for children living without a father's presence was in the household of a chronically depressed, unsupported solo mother.

³⁵ Article by Andrea Vance '*Faster way to untie the knot*', *Dominion-Post*, 8 March 2014, pg **Clinicians**. An example of a published Letter to the Editor is provided by Craig Jackson's '*Don't Forget Male Victims of Violence*', published on 5 July 2014 from the Father Lobby Group's perspective.

³⁶ An article published in the *Christchurch Press*, July 10, 2014. (A9) entitled '*Men Hide Humiliation*', featured findings from the Fergusson study which found that victimisation rates were slightly higher with 6.7% of men and 5.7% of women admitting violence against their partners.

under-report the nature, frequency and impact of family violence perpetrated on them by their female partner.

- Men's assaults on average cause greater injury but women's violence nevertheless causes death or serious injury at about 25% the rate for men's violence, still a significant level that should not be treated as non-existent or irrelevant in reports on I.P.V.
- The response of men and women to domestic violence victimisation has similar detrimental effects on their mental health with adverse stress reactions largely common to both including depressive and anxiety disorders, and high rates of attempted suicide (female) and fatal suicides (men), following relationship breakdown.
- Unlike women, men are less likely to talk about the trauma of family breakdown with others. There is an almost complete absence of support services for men as compared to the many services for women leaving abusive partners and unlike women, men are most reluctant to apply for domestic protection orders and if they do so, they are rarely believed.
- Given the numerous community supports including legislative and legal supports offered to women, the lack of nationally co-ordinated community supports for men in I.P.V. and family breakdown situations should be corrected to better recognise the degree of gender symmetry existing in I.P.V.
- Statistics on I.P.V. death events vary from study to study, one describing these as 'rare'.
- The polarisation of opinion as to the true dynamics of I.P.V. is aided and abetted by the partisan Glenn, Tolmie and Herbert reports, all of which (according to the criteria adopted in this counter-balanced report), are *femicentric* and politicised with all bearing the hallmarks of well co-ordinated, well-publicised campaigns solely dedicated to protect the interests of women and children (as so candidly stated in the Herbert Report) and to blame and reduce the rights of men. They amount to propaganda campaigns, not what their authors were commissioned to do. These reports do not meet high standards of scholarship since they deny any gender-symmetry in I.P.V. by scientifically unacceptable tactics such as concealing relevant studies in the field, selective citations, seeking biased data through deliberate study design, distorting and reinterpreting data to make them conform to prior assumptions, and stating conclusions that are beyond what can be justified from their own unreliable databases.
- Is it the case therefore, that various legislative changes to New Zealand's domestic violence legislation which have been punitive and based on the Duluth '*male power and control*' model have all failed precisely because of the failings of the Duluth model? The search for more effective and less punitive solutions to domestic violence is to use a different model and world-view of I.P.V. that is more gender-proportionate and is equally supportive of men as well as women finding themselves in I.P.V. situations.
- The radicalised feminist perspective on family violence is arguably a form of social conditioning that should be more widely recognised as such so that government and societal responses and solutions to family violence become more gender-proportionate and realistic.

- Standards of good scientific analysis and reporting should not change because a topic is politically charged, an observation that is highly pertinent to the evidence of bias and 'advocacy' reporting in the Glenn, Tolmie and Herbert reports. Academic researchers have particular ethical responsibilities for objective reporting because of the risk that various vested interests may distort and misrepresent issues of vital importance to the welfare of both mothers and fathers and particularly, what best serves the interests and welfare of their children.
- Academic researchers who draw their income from the public purse deserve particular criticism of their viewpoints if they do not fairly and in a balanced way, represent the viewpoints of both male and female people, and even our 'little people' caught up in our gender wars.

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