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"You're in that realm of unpredictability": Mateship, loyalty and men challenging men who use

domestic violence against women

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on discourse analysis of transcripts from focus group discussions held with 28 'ordinary' men about domestic violence. Two broad 'mateship' themes emerged: 1) A strong 'mateship' discourse that produced public/private boundaries around discussions about intimate heterosexual relationships. Policed by the threat of violence, these boundaries prevented some men from challenging men about their violence. 2) 'Loyalty to mates' discourses constituted attention to men's violence against women as threatening the moral integrity of *all* men. Finally, some men positioned themselves against men's domestic violence: distinguishing their masculinity from men who abuse women. Implications for prevention campaigns are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The ways some existing masculinities work to set boundaries on the types of interactions men can have with one another, have implications for the primary prevention of men's domestic violence towards women[1] and particularly messages developed for population based interventions designed to engage men in prevention. This paper discusses the discursive practices that emerged from the texts of 'ordinary' men in Aotearoa New Zealand involved in a research project aimed at identifying the obstacles to engaging men in the prevention of domestic violence: in particular the construction of 'mateship' boundaries and 'mateship' loyalty practices associated with masculinity. We were interested in the language that men employed to explain their resistance to these prevention campaigns and the ways men overcame the constraints to support them. We argue that this language points to the gendered values and beliefs that underpin men's resistance and support of these campaigns in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<u>Gender-Based Violence</u>

Gender based violence remains a significant problem in New Zealand with one in three ever-partnered women experiencing men's sexual or physical domestic violence at some stage in their lifetime (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). Internationally men's domestic violence towards women remains a significant issue (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006) with profound effects on women's health (Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008; Fanslow & Robinson, 2004; Ludermir, Schraiber, D'Oliveira, Franca-Junior, & Jansen, 2008). Efforts to curb such violence have turned to engaging men in its prevention (Kaufman, 2004; Pease, 2008). Pease (2008) argued that an important aspect of engaging men was the interrogation of masculinity, in order to develop alternatives to hegemonic masculinity that are non-violent and egalitarian.

In earlier work on sexual policing of men by other men, Flood (2008) has maintained that one of the key features of gendered 'support' for violence against women are homosocial arrangements . Flood and Pease (2009) stated that "gender is a consistent predictor of attitudes that support violence against women" (p. 127). This was also found in earlier work by profeminist and feminist

researchers who argued for attention to patriarchy and male practices of control informed by attitudes that supported male dominance and entitlement (Stark, 2007; Yllo & Bograd, 1988). Other writers have contended that men are more likely to respond to anti-violence messages when they are delivered by other men (DeKeseredy, Schwartz, & Alvi, 2000; Flood, 2006). These arguments would suggest that a key approach for engaging men is to attend to the discursive power practices that support or 'scaffold' (Gavey, 2005) violence against women and that are acted out in men's talk. For this reason we argue that when attending to the prevention of violence against women, homosocial relational practices and the language or discursive mechanisms that support them, cannot be ignored. We argue that attending to and exposing these mechanisms allows them to be resisted where they continue to exist. Equally, finding pockets of resistance that already exist within men's talk, which challenge or disrupt the discourses that support violence against women is an extremely important and often overlooked task (Casey & Smith, 2010).

Homosocial Arrangements

The suggestion that homosocial arrangements play an important role in helping define many heterosexual men's identities and behaviours has been well described within critical men's studies. Kimmel (1996) for instance has suggested that heterosexual men validate the 'masculinity' of other men, compete for homosocial standing and can just as easily withdraw approval, and therefore status (see also, Connell, 2005). Homosocial arrangements are often portrayed as involving *commitment* to a particular group of men rather than the self-disclosing intimacy often associated with women's relationships (Nardi, 2007). For example, intimate revelations of one man to another may be sacrificed for status and in order to police masculine practices and cement homosocial bonds. These practices are often firmly established within the relationships between males from an early age. Oransky and Marecek (2009), for instance, have discussed the strategies adolescent boys engage in to perform masculinity. Despite experiencing a full range of emotions, they are often aware that discussing or displaying them in front of male friends is considered an indication of weakness.

Identification of such practices among some young New Zealand men has highlighted the ways in which they were reluctant to talk with other men about intimate heterosexual relationships and the problems they were having, because of the potential for their vulnerabilities to be exposed and ridiculed in homosocial contexts (Towns, 2009). As a consequence of this limited range of communication within homosocial interactions, when dealing with relationship conflict and stress, young men can often be provided with counterproductive 'solutions' if their social group's interactions tend toward reproduction of misogynistic, or even proabuse discursive resources (see, DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1993; Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001; Towns, 2009).

These sorts of homosocial bonding practices that silence some men have many implications for the prevention of domestic violence, as talking about such violence may offer opportunities for prevention work (see for instance, DeKeseredy, et al., 2000). Determining the discursive formulations which structure unhealthy masculine homosocial practices, and the ways these enable violence against women will assist with prevention. However, these practices will be complex, relational and built within the local histories of homosociality in a given context, thus particular attention needs to be given to constructions of masculinity and masculine relationships at a local level.

New Zealand masculinities, like other Western masculinities, tend to be constructed with a rugged independence. In the New Zealand context these have been historically informed by a "crew" culture, involving strong bonds of loyalty between men (Belich, 1996; Phillips, 1996). In pioneering times men were commonly involved in doing quite tough and dangerous work in crews or teams (e.g. on whaling ships, as soldiers, or as miners) and men's loyalty and bonding or collective action was required in these pioneering times for safety (Belich, 1996). The traditional form of hegemonic masculinity within New Zealand, as in Australia, emerged from these "crew" cultures, and while less prevalent today, continues to have some power in the production of homosocial bonds between men, idealising macho strength, male dominance and entitlement, heavy alcohol consumption, male privilege, emotional reticence and hierarchies where heterosexual men prevail over women and other men (Connell, 2005; Jackson, Gee, & Scherer, 2009; Law, Campbell, & Dolan, 1999; Terry &

Braun, 2009). Within this masculine culture, men's dominance of women is simply part of the natural social order and men are entitled to do what they like in the privacy of their homes (Adams, Towns, & Gavey, 1995; Connell, 2005; Towns, Adams, & Gavey, 2003). While dominance of this idealised form of masculine culture is waning, it still has the power to shape, as it blends with other forms of masculine expression, the identities of men within New Zealand (Allen, 2007; Terry & Braun, 2009).

The "crew" culture or homosocial bonding of pioneering days is manifested in contemporary New Zealand through the concept of 'mateship', which is most evident in the practices of camaraderie of the New Zealand rugby or rugby league teams, and is similarly evident in Australia where sporting prowess is valorised. It has also been found to be a dominant feature of Australian military men's friendships (Flood, 2008). This concept of 'mateship', which privileges male homosocial bonding, male loyalty and heterosexuality extends beyond the sporting field into many of the homosocial arrangements men experience, and appears to be a unique manifestation of homosociality for many men in Australia and New Zealand (Phillips, 1996).

There are clearly benefits for men in these 'mateship' arrangements, which provide a source of connection to other men, but the more negative hegemonic practices of "crew" culture such as competition and hierarchies, status, loyalty and homophobia remain intact. Furthermore, "crew" cultures such as those associated with some sports teams have been associated with violence towards women, particularly sexual violence (Messner, 2002). Identification with masculinities complicit with such homosocial ideals can place limits on men, preventing them from addressing important social and health issues (see Courtenay, 2000; Lee & Owens, 2002). Masculine "crew" allegiances can also produce a silencing effect when attempts are made to address negative features of masculine practices and heterosexual relationships. In a climate that privileges men, challenging masculine cultures that might produce violence is commonly constructed as "male bashing" (see for instance, Ralston, 2007, p. 17) and diverted to focus on women's violence against men (Pease, 2008).

These discursive responses to awareness-raising concerning men's violence towards women can work to maintain the existing social order of male dominance and restore men's domestic

violence towards women to the private realm. For example, Towns et al., (2003) described some privacy discourses employed by men who had used violence against their heterosexual partners that worked to silence talk of such violence including "a man's home is his castle" and "you don't air your dirty washing in public". The public/private divide has been described as impeding effective interventions into such violence (Bush, 1992), relegating justice to the public domain: effectively condoning the subordination and oppression of women in the private domain (Jecker, 1993). Jecker (1993) has described this public/private divide as a product of the development of the nuclear family in the nineteenth century and of the doctrine of gendered public and private spheres: women's concerns (caregiving, family and free expression) were relegated to the private sphere whereas men's concerns (business, politics and justice) were associated with the public sphere.

Discursive responses that insulate men from scrutiny about their actions in heterosexual intimate relationships effectively silence attempts at creating gendered violence awareness and work against the promotion of egalitarian relationships that protect women from such violence. Silencing theory explains the way language is employed as a power practice through the strategic manipulation of discursive contexts that regulate what can be said and what cannot (Theismeyer, 2003). In the context of domestic violence, the impact of these silencing effects is to maintain the existing gendered power arrangements, which for the prevention of men's violence against women is not acceptable (Towns & Adams, 2000; Towns, et al., 2003; Towns & Scott, 2008).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis provides a means of identifying the ways language works to support men's domestic violence towards women. Discourse analysis involves the close reading of texts for the linguistic resources that are present and utilized as a means to inform the research question under investigation. In the approach used to address questions about domestic violence, discourses have been understood to be part of the existing dominant social order, or power "mechanisms" (Foucault, 1978, p. 86), historically and culturally constituted and productive (Adams et al., 1995). Language is therefore critically important to this approach, as conglomerates of forms of speech, phases,

common-sense statements, metaphors and associated contradictory expressions can point to overarching dominant discourses, which might otherwise go unnoticed. These dominant discourses can indicate the ways in which power operates through what are considered to be normative language practices. Part of the work of this form of discourse analysis is to identify the social and cultural supports that influence or produce the language associated with power practices. For example, using discourse analysis, Adams, et al., (1995) identified the gendered rhetoric of male dominance and entitlement, which was employed by men to justify and excuse their violence towards women. Towns and Adams (2000) identified discourses of perfect love, and the influence of traditional love narratives that provide the cultural supports that silenced women from talking about such violence. Using discourse analysis, LeCouteur and Oxlad (2011) identified men's use of the language of 'morality' as a pivotal means for organising and explaining their domestic violence towards women.

In this paper we describe the findings relating to 'mateship' boundaries and loyalty from a discourse analysis of transcriptions of focus group discussions from 'ordinary' New Zealand men interviewed about masculinity and the obstacles to engaging men in prevention campaigns on men's domestic violence towards women. First we describe the study. We then describe two themes that emerged from the analysis and that relate to homosocial arrangements (1) the boundaries of 'mateship' that silenced men from acting, (2) loyalty to the team. Finally we describe the ways some men negotiated homosocial bonding to position themselves away from those 'mateship' discourses that collude with men's violence towards women. We conclude with the implications of our findings for prevention campaigns.

THE STUDY

The findings described here emerged out of a larger study conducted in 2009 concerned with identifying the expressions of masculinities and the associated values and beliefs that might be obstacles to, or that might facilitate, men's involvement in campaigns designed to prevent men's domestic violence towards women in Aotearoa New Zealand (Towns, 2010). The study used

discourse analysis of interviews with 'ordinary' men. In this approach the participants' language is key and is understood to provide a means of identifying the values and beliefs that are associated with expressions of masculine practices and expressions of masculine identities.

Aims of this study were (1) to identify and analyse the language employed to describe the obstacles to men's involvement in the prevention of men's domestic violence towards women; (2) to identity the relationship between this language and expressions of masculinity within Aotearoa New Zealand and (3) to determine the ways in which this language and the associated beliefs and values might impact on the engagement of New Zealand men in the prevention of domestic violence. The approach to the analysis in this study was critical realist in orientation (Gavey, 2005; Willig, 2001) using a form of discourse analysis informed by post-structuralism (Gavey, 1989) and by Wetherell's (1998) description of critical discursive psychology, where she argued for the blending of fine grained analysis of texts with the more global analysis of the text's context. Wetherell and Edley's (1999, 2008, 2009) work on masculine identities and on masculine psycho-discursive practices also influenced the analysis.

Participants were 28 men who took part in one of six focus group discussions. Most groups involved men who were known to each other. Men were recruited through men's organisations identified on the internet as providing groups for men interested in masculinity, through church groups, and through word of mouth. Details of specific men's groups are withheld to preserve confidentiality. Details of participants' backgrounds and ethnicities are in Table 1. Men were not selected for any background of domestic violence but rather were men from the general population living within the Auckland region and with a range of occupational backgrounds. Eighteen men identified as of European or New Zealand European ethnicity and ten identified as of Pasifika ethnicity. A Pasifika cultural advisor provided cultural advice and supported and assisted participants from the Pasifika community.

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Insert Table 1. about here

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Each participant took part in a single two hour focus group discussion. Focus groups were used in order to draw out the sort of discussions that men might hold with other men, unlikely to be revealed through one-on-one interviews. Each discussion followed a semi-structured interview schedule and was co-facilitated by an experienced men's group facilitator familiar with running stopping violence groups for men and AT. AT is an experienced clinical psychologist and group facilitator with expertise in domestic violence, and as the only woman present in the group, was available to identify gendered responses that the group might want to interrogate more fully. The schedule included (but was not restricted to) questions about how men in Aotearoa New Zealand were expected to be in intimate heterosexual relationships with women; notions of manhood and how expectations of how to be a man connected to domestic violence; obstacles to including men in domestic violence prevention; experiences of existing campaigns; and possibilities for involving men in future prevention campaigns. The interviewers took the position of naïve researchers, anticipating that the men would have greater knowledge and expertise about these issues than would the researchers. The interviewers sought to provide an easy climate for discussion, while maintaining the course of the discussion on the topics under investigation.

The focus group discussions were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim to include hesitations, speech repetitions and overlapping talk, but not the finer-grained features of speech and interactional style. Text presented in this paper was occasionally re-structured slightly (i.e. through deletion of text and punctuation) in order to create ease of reading without altering the meaning or suggestions of extracts. When the annotation […] appears it is an indication that part of the transcript has been removed/omitted, typically large chunks of text that were not relevant to the analytic point being made.

Texts underwent a number of readings in order to identify the masculine practices, masculine identities, power practices and values evident in the participants' talk. The language and texts associated with these practices, values and identities were then grouped thematically and were

analysed for common forms of speech such as figures of speech, phrases or messages that allowed the speech to be clustered into consistent forms of language that addressed the research questions. Of importance in this form of analysis is the work that the language does in the focus group discussions to work up the values, masculine identities or power practices that the men portrayed and that might point to effective ways to engage men, obstacles to engagement, and language that identifies processes of change. The language employed by the men and the associated values that the language evokes allows the masculine practices and masculine identities to be identified.

This project was approved by Northern Regional Ethics Committee, which followed guidelines of informed consent, consultation with appropriate ethnic groups (in particular Pasifika), and followed New Zealand Standards Guidelines on Family Violence (NAS, 2006). In order to protect the privacy of the interview participants (particularly due to the sensitivity of the topic) names and other significant identifying features were replaced.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this article we describe the findings from the larger study that related to 'mateship' boundaries and 'mateship' loyalty. Two primary themes were extracted regarding obstacles men described to challenging other men's violence against women, which appeared to be consistently employed across age, class and ethnic groups. First, many of the men described such challenges between men as difficult, drawing on implicit notions of male friendship as falling on the 'wrong' side of the public/private divide to do so effectively. These men suggested that the boundaries of 'mateship' limited the types of interaction possible and crossing the boundary to 'personal matters' were often policed by the threat of violence. Second, many of the men spoke of the gendering of violence in the public domain though prevention campaigns resulted in having to align with a 'side'. The implication of this construction is that in order to be 'authentically' masculine, a man must challenge the notion that domestic violence is 'just' about men, or risk appearing disloyal to his 'team.' Finally, some men spoke of negotiating these 'mateship' discourses in order to differentiate themselves from gendered violence supporting practices.

<u>'Mateship' Privacy Boundaries And The Limits Of Challenging Domestic Violence: "Cos you would never, never tell your mate that"</u>

It was common within the focus groups for men to speak of the difficulty, within discursive 'mateship' constraints, of challenging a friend who was violent toward their female partner. Often a clear boundary between the 'public' sphere (in which men's friendship operate) and the 'private' sphere (where men's relationships with their partners exist) was implicitly (and less often, explicitly) distinguished. In the following extract, an exchange was begun by the interviewer asking the participants about challenging other men about their violence, a question promoted by some population based campaigns:

AT: Would, would, if you challenged him would it, what, what would happen if you did?

Ioane: Probably wreck the whole system the- ah- the bonding.

[…]

AT: Like if you didn't like, if you didn't like one of your mates, the way he treated

          his girlfriend, do you, if you're uncomfortable about it, cos-

Ioane: Yeah really uncomfortable about it. Cos you would never, never tell your mate

          that. Or anyone.

AT: Would you challenge- would you challenge him?

Ioane: Nuh. [laughs] Not really.

Ioane's explanation constituted a challenge to a mate as something that "would wreck the system"

"the bonding". The phrases "bonding" and "the whole system" were employed to denote the

particular formulation of friendships between his friends and himself. Within this construction of

men's friendships, relationships between men are defined by commitment to, rather than self-

disclosing intimacy with one another (see also Flood, 2008; Nardi, 2007). 'Bonding' appears to be an

unspoken investment in the 'public' sphere, with the private sphere implicitly defined as 'off limits.'

Intimate friendships with another man would offer the potential for challenge of certain behaviours,

but within the discursive constraints of 'mateship' would be seen as a disruption to the boundary of

normative male interactions. Feeling "uncomfortable" about this disruption was deployed as

'enough' justification, a reason on its own to validate non-interference, and perhaps makes reference

to the unconscious mechanisms that operate discursively to constrain 'mateship' practices. Practices

that run counter to 'mateship', or other traditional hegemonic masculine practices, feel

"uncomfortable" because they operate outside rigid discursive boundaries often represented as

commonsense or normative. Traditional hegemonic practices such as maintaining the public/private

divide, on the other hand, because they are constituted as commonsense or normative, feel

comfortable as they do not challenge the existing social order. This reaction is likely to be particularly

salient in a novel situation where one feels out of their depth, such as finding out about a friend's

violence against their partner.

Ioane's earlier construction: "Cos you would never, never tell your mate that. Or anyone"

suggests that speaking to one's mate (or anyone else) about such behaviour runs counter to the

commitment practices associated with the masculine ideals with which he aligned himself. His

emphasis "never, never" lends weight to the strict, generally unspoken, discursive rules that govern

'mateship' practices, and which limit the possibilities for talking to another man about his gender-

based violence. One interpretation of this rule is that to challenge another man constitutes

judgement of another man's 'private' practices, which runs counter to 'mateship' values that

promote cohesion or "bonding" between men. At a later point, when pressed as to whether the

discomfort of disrupting boundaries was enough to limit a challenge, Ioane elaborated on why this

challenge might be problematic, by referring to the implicit concern about a violent confrontation:

AT: What would stop you from doing that?

Ioane: Nothing pretty much. If your mind set on it you would go and do it […] that's

         where all the- the beef starts. Beef's another word for fighting, anger or stuff.

When asked to describe the obstacles to talking to a mate about his behaviour towards a girlfriend

Ioane's statement "nothing pretty much." This suggests that the obstacles to challenging a friend

about such behaviour, when stripped of 'mateship' discourses and reconstructed from an outsider's

perspective, may be rendered meaningless, but the cost of challenging or confronting another was

potentially violence. The obstacles appeared difficult to describe, an implicit, rather than explicit

ideal for male relationships. Challenging a man's intimate relationship practices with women, in

which violence against women might operate, are constructed as entering the 'personal domain' and

thereby operating within an entirely distinct context from 'mateship,' which is aligned with

traditional hegemonic masculine rules enforced through the potential for violence.

In Ioane's accounting of how male friendships operate, if a man decides to confront a mate

about such actions he would. The inference, however, is that a challenge to a mate will potentially

result in violent confrontation. Another man in the study, John, described knowingly entering

dangerous discursive territory and suffering being beaten up in a confrontation with two young

newly acquired 'mates' when he challenged their potential sexual violence towards a young woman. In his account the act of ensuring the safety of the young woman required him to actively internally negotiate 'mateship' values (of bonding and shared heterosexual access) and the alternative ethical male practices taught by his mother. The argument is that, at least within certain constructions of masculine friendships, men need to prepare for violence if they want to confront certain mates about their violent practices towards women or if they want to practice actions that counter such violence. 'Boundary crossing' while apparently possible within this formulation, is something that some men would hesitate to do because of this unspoken, implicit threat of violence. There are implications for the safety of women, and also for the well-being of those men who do not want to act unethically and according to what might be implicitly constituted as normative 'mateship' practices, policed and enforced by violence. When the alternative to violent enforcement for these men is to collude with gender-based violence, which runs counter to basic humane practices, questions arise about how these men discursively and emotionally manage the ethical consequences, the emotional effects and the discursive dilemmas that arise through 'mateship' requirements.

There are other considerations associated with 'mateship' that, at least within constructions of hegemonic masculinity, require careful expression by the men involved: that is the potential for 'mateship' bonding to be constituted as of a homosexual nature. Rules relating to the private/public divide in these kinds of homosocial arrangements, influence the form of relationships mates have, precluding intimacy while promoting commitment to the mates. Traditional hegemonic masculinity (or 'orthodox masculinity', Anderson, 2009) has been described as promoting homophobia: the potential to be constructed as gay is deplored and homosexuality is constituted as violating the rules of masculinity (Anderson, 2009; Connell, 2005). Violent responses to questions about intimate heterosexual relationships, while reinforcing rules about the public/private divide, also distance the man from intimacy with his mates and constructions of him or the relationship with his mate as homosexual thereby validating his heterosexual masculinity, consistent with discourses of traditional hegemonic masculinity.

Given the notion that some men constructed of the boundaries of 'mateship' and the risk of violence against themselves precluding them from challenging others, how might these men go about speaking about a man's violence towards his partner? While the threat of violence appears to work to bring a man who might step outside accepted practices into line, some men spoke of 'safe spaces' where the boundaries *might* be crossed:

Dave: I wonder how easy it is as men to talk to other men […] about family violence

in their relationships? [Trevor: Bloody hard] bloody hard? [laugh] [Trevor:

mmn] yeah.

Trevor: I mean I had, I'd find it hard to approach someone [Sean: mmn] about it [Dave:

Yeah] um, I mean if they approached me. [Dave: Yeah] And said, look, I've got

a problem. [Dave: Yeah] Fine. You know, I can't stop myself talking, but to go

and talk to someone with that- I mean it brings up all sorts of fear issues or-

[Dave: Yeah] all that sort of stuff [Dave: Yeah] how are they going to react.

[Dave: Yeah] [Sean: Mm]

Trevor distinguished between a man who approaches him about problems in his relationship and a man whom he might approach to talk about his use of family violence. He then argued that depending on who initiated the discussion, he would respond in distinctively different ways. In the former situation he constituted his reaction as unproblematic ("Fine" "I can't stop myself talking"). In the latter he constituted the effect on him as risky ("it brings up all sorts of fear issues" "how are they going to react" "everything like that"). These 'risk' phrases were employed to raise the possibility of an unpleasant even fear-provoking reaction on the part of the man approached, and like Ioane's account, they portray the potential obstacles involved in a man talking to another man about his family violence. They serve to illustrate why Trevor constituted such an approach as "bloody hard".

Trevor noted that being *invited* to cross the boundary was a different matter. The underlying threat of violence was diminished, and speaking about the private sphere (on the inviter's terms) was

welcomed because of the initial self-disclosure. This hypothetical scenario was reinforced by a material example from a member of the group, and supplies some insight into the possible fissures in the boundaries of 'mateship' to which Trevor and others subscribed. While discussion about the private sphere is normally avoided, and constructed as extremely difficult to cross, a man wanting to talk about his 'problems' gave other men licence to help 'fix' the issue. There was a strong sense that the rules of masculine relationships were still being followed in this hypothetical situation, and that the man being violent toward his partner still maintained some control or agency over what was spoken about and how much 'fixing' was allowed. 'Fixing' things would be permitted as a suitably masculine activity within traditional hegemonic discourses of masculinity.

In Ben's construction, an approach by him to a man who uses violence towards his wife or girlfriend would depend on the relationship Ben had with the man. While acknowledging the risks, he argued certain men might be more approachable than others:

Ben: The level of influence partly has to do with the kind of level of kind of equity I suppose you have in your relationship with that person, that's if you're sitting down and kind of talking about it, saying 'hey I […] hear that you might be having some problems' [AT: Mm] on the other side if it's someone that's kind of less known my experience with um- from my upbringing that of- a lot of you know- violence is often at a point where someone snaps and so you tend to think they're in that realm of unpredictability and so I think quite a lot of guys would just, you know would stand back.

AT: So because of- because of being unpredictable? The guy might be unpredictable? [Callum: Yeah] and what does that mean?

Ben: Well effectively [AT: To a guy], in a sense that actually um- they're going to lash out at you. But then I suppose everyone's going to have a point where they stop and realise that I just can't stand by and watch that happen. [Alex: mm mm]

Like Trevor, Ben differentiated between men he might successfully engage in conversation and those he might avoid talking to about this topic. He represented knowledge of the person and "equity" as providing possibilities for breaking the silence produced by the public/private divide. He differentiated between being able to approach someone whom he is able to sit down and talk to ("Hey... I hear that you might be having some problems") and a 'risky' situation where he did not know the man so well. He depicted violence as occurring "at a point where someone snaps" and in this rendition draws on justifications for violence as an out of control action (see also, Towns, Adams, & Gavey, 1996), something he had experienced in his "upbringing," where violent responses were normative.

By constituting men who use violence as "in that realm of unpredictability" he draws on the man's potential for violence. Later he more explicitly conflates unpredictable actions with physical violence ("they're going to lash out at you"). This potential for violence is employed to explain why "a lot of guys would just... stand back." With this phrase he represented the ways most men govern their behaviour in response to the potential risk of violence from another man. Many men who act in this way would not want to appear to collude with the man's violence against his woman partner, but inaction will potentially have ramifications for the woman who will potentially continue to experience the effects of this man's violence without some active signal that what he is doing is wrong. Concerned men who want to act ethically in this context will presumably seek other means of intervention that will not entail harm to themselves or others.

Loyalty To The 'Team' Of 'Men': "I'm inherently wary in any situation that purely spotlights it on males in domestic violence"

Another reason men suggested they would be wary of challenging other men was the suggestion they needed to be loyal to men in general. Such formulations were also tied to the notions of 'mateship,' but in this case referenced a broader loyal relationship with all other men, setting men in opposition to all women. As such, men in this study seemed to be doing the discursive work that DeKeseredy's male support model might predict (see Dekeseredy & Schwartz, 1993; Dekeseredy,

1990), producing and reproducing social contexts where justifications for violence against women might be drawn upon and normalised.

Public discourse about men's violence against women in the focus groups was sometimes constructed as oppressive toward *all* men and therefore needing some resistance (see Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007 for further discussion concerning this issue). Of importance for this study was how 'ordinary' men responded to the attempts made in current campaigns to engage men in the prevention of men's domestic violence towards women. Some current campaigns in New Zealand focus specifically on men's domestic violence towards women, and this context framed the discussion that the following extracts were drawn from. In the following we describe the ways men worked up the notion of women and men operating as gendered 'teams' and the requirement that men be loyal to the 'team' of *all* men.

In a number of the focus group discussions, the participants worked to question the construction of men as those responsible for men's domestic violence towards women by positioning women as equally violent to men. For instance, Viv drew on the 'two to tango' discourse (see Adams, et al., 1995) to highlight the 'impossibility' of knowing how the violence occurred and whose 'fault' it was:

Viv: And it's not just guys, it takes two to tango. [Sean: absolutely] Sometimes

women feel they can get away with [laugh] mm [Sean: absolutely] more at

home and they say things to their husbands that they wouldn't say in public

[Sean: to anybody else] [Trevor: oh absolutely] [laughs] and they- the things

they say may, you know get up the nose of their husband [Sean: mm] [Dave:

yeah] or partner, sorry.

Depictions of men's violence towards women that involve positioning women as equally violent, using the adage "it takes two to tango" have been identified in the texts of male offenders who attend stopping violence programmes (Towns, et al., 2003). The phrase works to justify men's violence as a consequence of a woman's provocation. Similarly phrases like "get up the nose of their

husband" or "it's like a red rag to a bull" were also found to be employed by men, who had used violence, to describe women's provocation and to justify and excuse men's violent reactions (Towns, et al., 1996).

Positioning women as equally violent to men, ironically, draws on gender equity discourses to nullify gender as a discursive interpretation of men's domestic violence towards women. In the extract above, the other men recognised the adage and offered agreement ("oh absolutely"), also aligning themselves with the "two to tango" discourse. Most of these men did not identify as violent toward women, but they appeared to be drawing from and reproducing the discursive resources used by men who are, which suggests that these justifications are broadly held within the community. In another focus group, Finn also represented women as equally culpable, suggesting he chose to align with men *in general* when thinking about the issue of violence against women:

> Finn: And I have a lot of problems I think looking upon this purely as a male issue, to me it is, it is violence in a relationship and there are male- well there are male, male and female, female too [Dave: yep] Any place where you have two creatures who have both similar and differing needs, there's the potential for conflict on an escalating scale. And whilst we're focusing on issue, because blokes who damage physically [Dave: yep] damage happens emotionally as well. [Unidentified participant: yeah] [Unidentified participant: yeah] [Unidentified participant: absolutely] and I think, I think, I'm inherently wary in any situation that purely spotlights it on males in domestic violence because there is a symbiosis going on here. **Always** whether it's passive aggressive, whether it's co-dependence, whatever it is- I'm wondering, I'm not a researcher, whether we simply get a 'bad bastard'! and a 'good woman'? Whether the situation it creates where it is interwoven stories, you know, [Dave: yeah] which are dysfunctional in their own right.

Finn constructed the problem of men's violence towards women as involving a conflict between equals. With these linguistic moves he shifted the focus away from the power relationship that

exists when men are violent towards intimate women (Stark, 2007) and worked to nullify gender as a discursive interpretative framework for the issue. Men's violence towards women becomes "violence in a relationship" and the violence is removed altogether with the phrase "a conflict" albeit "on an escalating scale." The use of the word conflict and the euphemism "on an escalating scale" suggests a level of discomfort with the explicit reference to violence. Finn reconstructed such violence as "a symbiosis" and "interwoven stories" and both phrases again drawing on the notion of an interaction between equals and repositioning the interaction away from a relationship of power. His utilization of the word "dysfunctional" suggests problems with these interwoven stories but again avoids referencing any relationship of power typical in the context of men's domestic violence towards women.

Further work on positioning women as equivalent to men in the context of domestic violence occurs through Finn's work on harm. While Finn does not completely gloss over the difference in strength between men and women, he positions them as 'equal' through the use of the phrase "two creatures", which allows him to address the question of harm. His acknowledgement of the context of this research being men's violence towards women is made through his reference to "blokes who damage physically" but he does not make any reference to the woman as the recipient of this violence and so avoids acknowledging any explicit harm that the woman may have experienced. The situation of the comment "damage happens emotionally as well" after the reference to physical harm that "blokes" do, sets up a contrast between these forms of harm and in so doing allows the listener/reader to infer that it is women who are doing emotional harm. Other participants similarly made gendered references to men being physically violent and women 'equally' emotionally violent. In these accounts any gendered account of harm is discounted because women engage in acts that are harmful too, although there is material evidence of greater harm experienced by women (Stark, 2007).

Finn also used the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) "**always**", when referring to the "symbiosis" of this interchange of violence, placing emphasis on the word. Extreme case

formulations (ECF) work in conversation to make an argument more persuasive by using extreme judgments of a given scenario (Edwards, 2000; Pomerantz, 1986). In this case the implication of its usage is that men's *physical* violence *always* exists in relation to women's *emotional* violence. One cannot exist without the other and therefore solely blaming men for violence is overly simplistic. The references Finn makes to "passive aggressive," and "co-dependence" are not explicitly assigned to men and women but are also gendered in that they are commonly employed to describe women's acts rather than men's.

This gender nullifying effect further reinforces loyalty to 'mateship' and the team of men (the victimized "bad bastard") who are now represented as in opposition to the team of women (the glorified "good woman"). The constructions of equal violence and harm run into some difficulty at a realist level, as they conflict with evidence that most physical violence that women experience from male partners is accompanied by emotional violence designed to control (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 2007) and therefore men are implicated in the use of emotional violence as well as physical violence. It also relies on the acceptance of the other group members and interviewers that somehow "co-dependence" and "passive-aggressive" actions can be equated with physically hurting somebody. Despite these difficulties, Finn was able to continue this occasioned explanation without censure from other members of the group. This lack of challenge from the group might represent the effective silencing he has produced through his linguistic manoeuvres, and manipulation of the discursive context, and the resultant production of ambiguity about who is responsible for men's violence towards women. This finding of these men's silence has ramifications for the issue of violence towards women associated with (elite) men's sports teams and their performances, where some men are complicit with, and party to, sexual violence towards young women (Robinson, 1998). Their silence could also be indicative of another obstacle to men's talk of this issue. Connell (2005) has argued that men's guilt about being a man occurred for some men when confronted by concerns about such gendered practices. One participant openly spoke of

his own feelings of guilt about all men's violence when explaining why some men attempt to shift responsibility away from men's violence towards women's harmful actions.

Rhys more explicitly made reference to all men and all women operating in opposition to each other:

> Dave: Yeah. I'm um- I'm wondering um why it's a women's issue. How- how come family violence is a women's issue.
>
> Rhys: It's a- oh. In- in regards to this it's almost- I almost see it just as- ah- a man/woman issue and if you're advocating on behalf of women then you're almost on their side.
>
> Dave: And what is their side. I'm just- I'm just trying- trying to get an understanding so when we talk cos we are we're talking about sides eh what is the women's side of that issue.
>
> Jordan: Getting beaten up. Pretty much.
>
> AT: Is it a- does it become a kind of- a- win-lose issue.
>
> Rhys: Power struggle?
>
> Dave: Yeah.
>
> Rhys: You always- I- I think the male they always have to be- they always want to know they are, higher than a woman. Like it's like- I know that's when a woman tries to rise up they have to rise higher.

With the statement "if you're advocating on behalf of women then you're almost on their side" Rhys, explicitly positioned men and women as in competition, and drew on notions of men's loyalty to the team of all men. The interviewer then invited Rhys to reflect on this idea of competition with her question about winning and losing and Rhys responded with a question that depicted the encounter as the consequence of "a power struggle". He then suggested that the problem of violence occurs due to women trying to resist the power and dominance men have over women, and presumably also in society more generally. While he did not explicitly blame women with this statement, and in

fact simultaneously offered some blame of men ("the male… they always want to know they are, higher than a woman"), again the implication is one of violence being a consequence of men and women operating in a dysfunctional manner *together*, and there being a team divide of 'sides'.

In the following, Viv discussed this same issue of the positioning of men and women, when men's domestic violence towards women is explicitly focussed upon, referencing the interaction as a 'game':

> Viv: Yeah I think perhaps, perhaps, you know it has been, been overdone, the
>
>   protection orders and the family court ah- and that men are the perpetrators
>
>   and women are the victims and that, its ah blame game [Dave: right, right] and
>
>   men are to blame um- so there is a bit of reaction um to that which, which is
>
>   kind of based on feminist ideology.

Family Court statistics in Aotearoa New Zealand indicate that, at least in relation to the seeking of protection orders, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators and women the victims (Families Commission, 2009). Viv's construction of this issue as one that is "overdone" raises questions about how the material reality and gendered nature of domestic violence might be raised when men such as Viv and Finn constitute this gendering as implicating *all* men as perpetrators and *all* women as victims. In a very tangible way they are demonstrating loyalty to a particular 'side' of the issue, and often do so while other men around them remain silent or even agree with their assessment of the situation.

The phrase "blame game" again situated men and women in opposition to each other. With this construction of a 'game' involving men and women Viv evoked the notion of winners and losers: of a competition between men and women who attend the family court. In this way, violence against the women in question was depicted as a side issue, not as key to the situation as the gender politics that are on display. Viv argued that these politics are "based on feminist ideology," constructing the portrayal of men as perpetrators of violence within the family court as not being based on fact, but rather produced by feminists promoting a particular ideological point of view . By

this reference he implicated feminists in the blaming of men for violence towards women, and "feminist ideology" as inherently negative, and anti-men. Viv aligns himself with the opposite side, that of men, even men who likely *are* perpetrators of violence against women.

In the following construction Finn's loyal adherence to the 'team' of 'men' appears to prevent him from being able to isolate *some* men as offenders and any attempt to address domestic violence becomes constructed as a threat to the moral integrity of all men. This positioning of *all* men being perceived as perpetrators was explicitly articulated:

Finn: I think that a lot of blokes are **terrified** of the whole domestic violence topic

because right away they/**we are cast in the role of the offender**. Before

anything happens.

In this construction, the inevitable positioning of *all* men as the offender in any discussion on domestic violence (which is perpetrated by a minority of men) evokes questions of men's moral standing, which is problematic for some men. This construction drew on the idea of domestic violence as gendered and all men as potential offenders to locate aligning with *either* men *or* women in such campaigns as a moral decision. Due to the risks of being "cast in the role of an offender" simply by being a man, Finn suggested men will avoid the issue (in discussion, but potentially in challenging another man's violence) as they are "terrified". Indeed, as we have seen here, some men within Aotearoa New Zealand have openly stated their discomfort with or opposition to violence against women campaigns such as White Ribbon Day because of their depiction that they caste all men as perpetrators.

Within the accounts of Finn and many other men, the underlying notion of loyalty to the 'team' is constructed as a 'truly masculine' moral response but it remains grounded in a discursive dilemma. By supporting men in general they are not at risk of losing validation from other men, and thus the basis of their masculinity, which has very old historical foundations in Western cultures and patriarchy that ascribed moral superiority to men and evil to women (Holland, 2006). The flipside of this is that by aligning with *all* men, they risk being supportive of men's violence against women:

even as they criticise the gendered approach to violence many of the men were also quick to point out that they themselves were not that way inclined. Some men were able to articulate their nonalignment with men's violence towards women with examples of discursive and material practices that valued women, suggesting a way forward for prevention.

<u>Negotiating 'Mateship' Boundaries And Loyalty: "It's not what *I* want and I don't associate with people like that"</u>

As noted, loyalty to the team came with a price: it often created an ideological dilemma (Billig, 1991) as men in the focus groups had to attend to a careful balance between identification with their 'mates' (which may include 'all men'), but not identification as an offender. Within many forms of masculine sense-making, *men* give validation of other men's masculinity (Kimmel, 1996). Women are often constructed as unable to do this (except perhaps indirectly through sex), so when a rhetoric of 'sides' exists, alignment with women in the area of domestic violence has the potential to make a man's masculinity suspect. However, most of the men were careful not to align with offenders in general, often speaking of these men as 'other' to themselves and the masculinity with which they identified.

AT: so one of the things that you're saying that sort of stops guys from actually

        raising it you know with someone they wouldn't know would be the possibility

        of actually being hit or hurt- hurt themselves? [Alex: The violence? Yeah. For

        sure] and that [Alex: I'm thinking-] sits with you-

Alex: my friends know if they wouldn't bring that up [Dave: Right] in conversation

        because it's not a … I wouldn't have friends who could comfortably bring that

        up in conversation [AT: Yeah. I mean could we-] it's not what *I* want and I

        don't associate with people like that and I *know* the sort of men who would

        say, 'This is how I treat my wife, this is how you should treat *your* wife' and you

just leave them to it. I don't. I don't. Perhaps I would say 'No. You don't, no *I*

don't but I wouldn't get into any kind of, I wouldn't try to change that person.'

Alex depicted men who use violence towards their woman partners as a certain 'type' with whom he does not want to associate. This statement suggests that he associates such men with a certain form of masculinity that Alex is readily able to identify, but with which he does not align. With the statement "This is how I treat my wife, this is how you should treat your wife" he employed directly reported speech to more graphically illustrate the invitation such men make to others to engage in the sort of reprehensible behaviour they use towards their wives or girlfriends. This reported speech allows him to depict such men as working within certain strict rules of gendered conduct, which they attempt to enforce on other men. Reported speech is normally used in a similar fashion to scientific discourse, to lend veracity to an account, doing so by evoking the context of the original discussion (Holt, 1996). In direct reported speech the person speaks using the method of active voicing to quote a person directly. This gives a factual reading (or hearing) to the account and also worked to give a sense of objectivity to the current story, accentuating its status as verbatim recall (Abell & Stokoe, 1999).

By articulating his response to such an invitation ("'No. You don't, no I don't'") he was able to demonstrate a way to resist being drawn into a masculinity that supports gender-based violence and his determination not to collude with such an invitation. The statement also worked to distance him from the values of such men, situating him in opposition to the practices of men who identify with masculinities that support violence against women. His final statement "I wouldn't try to change that person" leaves open a number of interpretations – that such a person would not change if confronted, or given the nature of the man that he alluded to earlier: that avoiding any further confrontation would avoid the potential for violence.

In this account Alex appeared to show some awareness of different expressions of masculinity. He referred to himself in terms that align with Wetherell and Edley's (1999) *ordinary* masculinity, contrasting himself (and the men he would chose as friends) with a more negative

expression embodied by 'others.' This formulation had something in common with John's account who commented that "better mates can steer you one way, or bad mates can steer you another way". These men signalled a distinction between the 'mateship' discourses described earlier that depict all men as members of the same team. In Alex's and John's constructions there are other ways of being a man and of 'mateship' than those which would have all men using or excusing gender-based violence. Such accounts provide examples of resistance within the talk of men who may not necessarily identify as profeminist (in contrast to the men in Casey and Smith's (2010) study), but may still position themselves as anti-violent. These data suggest that there are stable discursive structures for resisting talk that supports violence against women within 'ordinary' men's talk.

CONCLUSIONS

Alignment with certain 'mateship' values was identified as a key component that silenced men from talking of domestic violence, and was deployed as an explanation for why many men are unwilling to challenge such violence. First, the way many men in this study spoke of relationships with other men suggested that for some men certain 'mateship' values produced a divide between their public and private lives, with a discomfort in crossing boundaries. Such values were often described as being policed by the threat of violence. Second, some men spoke of attention to men's domestic violence towards women in prevention campaigns producing team 'mateship' loyalties or sides, and that by aligning with women, one becomes disloyal to *all* men. These discursive resources worked to maintain men within the bounds of traditional hegemonic masculine practices. These findings with 'ordinary' men have implications for the collusion of men who are aware of others domestic violence towards women and who do not speak out about it or act to negate it and/or who implicate women in their own victimization. The findings would also suggest that such collusion would allow domestic violence to prevail in those communities of men that privilege loyalty to the mates as an important part of masculinity (such as in the military and in men's sports teams). This study suggests that In Aotearoa New Zealand such values remain influential amongst 'ordinary' men.

Some men were able to negotiate these 'mateship' values, in the accounts here, by distancing themselves from those masculinities that invited them to be violent towards women and by acting ethically in their material practices towards women. These men spoke of consciously moving away from 'mateship' practices and values that would have them behave otherwise, and actively resisting other men's invitations to assume singular practices for *all* men, which would have aligned their actions with male dominance and entitlement towards women. These accounts indicate that, even within a male culture that privileges loyalty to mates, resistance towards 'mateship' values that are harmful towards women is possible when men value women, privilege humane actions, and are prepared to act ethically. For these men 'mateship' values were only permitted as long as they actively resisted men's violence towards women, were gender equitable and operated humanely and fairly.

This research suggests that a way forward for domestic violence prevention campaigns in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in order to address the problematic features of these 'mateship' values that would have men negate these campaigns, is to strengthen the alternative male accounts that define ethical 'mateship' values discursively and in practice. Encouraging men to talk about these values and how they influence them to act towards women would be a first step. In addition, this approach might involve a more visible presence in media campaigns of various different groups of men (and groups of men and women) speaking out as 'mates' about their abhorrence of violence towards women, their valuing of women and women's entitlement to ethical and fair practices. Casey and Smith (2010) have noted that men's association with profeminist/anti-violence groups and campaigns is often a product of informal invitations through their existing social networks. Enhancing knowledge of both negative and positive mateship 'effects' may help nuance the ways in which postfeminist/anti-violence men might make these invitations.

Further promoting mixed gender sports teams, and mixed gender groups as mates would also work to interrogate some of the negative features of currently hegemonic forms of masculinity within Aotearoa/New Zealand. This may enable a challenge to traditional 'mateship' practices that

divide men and women across 'team' lines. Such actions might work to counter the discursive

construction within those 'mateship' discourses of loyalty that undermine domestic violence

prevention campaigns by associating all men as a single team under attack from all women.

NOTES

1. In this paper we are concerned with men's domestic violence towards women, where violence is

understood as involving practices of control that cause harm or injury (see Stark, 2007; Krug et al.

2002). We use "domestic violence" as an abbreviation.

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Table 1. Participants' Background Information

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Relationship status	Children
Alex	46	NZ European Pakeha/Palangi	Artist	Engaged long-term	None
Ben	34	English	Quantity Surveyor	Married	None
Callum	44	NZ European/ Anglo kiwi	Builder	Married	3
Haden	49	European	Wine merchant	Single	None
Grant	50	NZ European	Company director	De facto	3
Dylan	40	NZ European Pakeha	Mental health worker	De facto	None
Euan	40	European	Company director	Married	2
Frank	48	NZ European	Software developer	Single	1
Ian	54	NZ European	IT Technician	Married	2
Maru	39	Samoan	Artist/Youth worker	-	-
Ioane	18	Tongan	Part-timer	Single	None
John	58	Niuean	Manager	Separated	6
Kevin	19	Samoan	Bartender	Single	None
Darryl	34	NZ European Pakeha	Retail Assistant	De facto	None
Finn	52	Irish	Creative director	-	3
Harry	40	NZ European	Broker consultant	Married	1
Evan	32	NZ European	Massage therapist	De facto	None
Garth	29	NZ European Pakeha	Artist	De facto	None
Zak	58	NZ European Pakeha	Alcohol and drug clinician	Married	3 adult
Trevor	45	NZ European	Network engineer	Married	2
Warwick	48	NZ European	IT technician	Married	1
Viv	45	NZ European	Barrister	Married	1
Sean	50	NZ European	Sales rep	Married	5
Jordan	30	Samoan Niuean	Machine operator	Married	2
Rhys	21	Samoan NZ	Outreach co-ordinator	Single	None
Arana	41	Samoan	Process coordinator	Single	None
Keoni	35	Samoan	Machine operator	Married	4
Joseph	18	Samoan/Maori Tongoan/European	-	Single	None

Bios

Alison J. Towns is an honorary research associate of the Department of Community and Social Health, Population Health, University of Auckland. She completed her PhD from the University of Auckland in 1994 and has research interests in the prevention of men's domestic violence against women, gender and power. She was a member of the inaugural New Zealand Family Violence Death Review Committee. In addition to publications in *Violence Again Women*, she has published in *Discourse and Society*, the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *Addiction Research and Theory*, the *New Zealand Family Law Journal* and the *New Zealand Social Policy Journal*.

Gareth Terry is a research associate of the Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University. His research is broadly within critical psychology, in particular at the intersection of men's health and their masculine identities. His PhD, investigating the relationship between New Zealand masculinities and men's decision to take up vasectomy, was completed in 2010. He is currently on the editorial board of *Feminism & Psychology*, and has published in *Health Psychology (APA Journal), Men and Masculinities, Feminism & Psychology, The Journal of Gender Studies, Sexualities, Sexuality Research and Social Policy, and the Journal of Infant and Reproductive Psychology.*