

Family Violence

Victim, Perpetrator And Service Provider Perceptions Of The Nature Of,
Factors Associated With, And Responses To Wife-Battering – An
Australian Sample.

Makhotsang Phokojoe-Niboye
B. A. (N.U.L.), MDS (Deakin)

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of New
England, June 1996.

*I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree
and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.
I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been
acknowledged in this thesis.*

Signature

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification. I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Signature

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the varying perceptions of victims, perpetrators, and service providers of factors associated with wife battering, and responses to it. First, attention is given to pregnancy as a potentially vulnerable period for battered women. Second, the impact of wife battering for the battered women in this study has been that of “learned hopefulness”, as opposed to the “learned helplessness” commonly assumed. “Hope” is a significant factor influencing the women’s decision to leave a battering relationship. Third, the three-way focus (victims, perpetrators and service providers), which has been rare in previous research on wife-battering, is very important in its revelation of substantial differences in perceptions and attitudes. For example, the findings point to the identification of the power of service providers in dominating the nature of public discussion of wife-battering in ways which are to a significant extent at odds with the views and needs of service users. The recommendations flowing from this finding should make a significant contribution to public debate about the nature of, and factors associated with, wife battering and the desirable responses to it.

The conclusions of this study speak with and for those directly affected by wife battering. It is recommended that problems should drive and direct treatment for those in need of such; organisational philosophy, particularly service provision, should not direct treatment, intervention and/or response. Wife battering should remain entirely under the ownership of those who lived it instead of being managed and manipulated. This is required if we wish to narrow the gap between empirical evidence and organisational philosophy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List Of Tables	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter 1	Introduction
	1
1.1	A Review Of Research On Family Violence
	3
1.1.1	Research In The 1960s
	4
1.1.2	Research In The 1970s
	6
1.1.3	Research In The 1980s
	10
1.1.4	Research In The 1990s
	12
1.2	Objectives Of Research And Its Importance
	15
1.3	Definition Of Concepts
	16
1.4	Why Wife Battering?
	18
1.5	Theories Of The Family
	22
1.5.1	Family As A Haven Thesis
	22
1.5.2	The Family As An Instrument Of Oppression
	26
Chapter 2	Literature Review
	31
2.1	The Extent Of The Problem
	31
2.2	Theories Of Family Violence
	40
2.2.1	Resource Theory
	40
2.2.2	Exchange Theory
	42
2.2.3	Subculture Of Violence Theory
	44
2.2.4	Social Learning Theory
	45
2.2.5	General Systems Theory
	47
2.2.6	Patriarchal Theory
	48
2.3	The Profile Of Battered Women
	51
2.4	The Profile Of Perpetrators
	60
2.5	Factors Associated With Wife Battering
	62
2.6	Family Violence And Pregnancy
	70
2.7	Various Responses To Family Violence
	75
2.7.1	The Police And Legal Responses To Wife Battering
	76
2.7.2	The Response Of The Women's Movements
	79
2.7.3	The Medical Response To Battering
	83
Chapter 3	Methodology
	90
3.1	Research Design
	92
3.2	Research Techniques
	93
3.3	Sources Of Data
	94
3.4	Sampling
	95
3.4.1	Case Studies: Victims
	98

3.4.2	Case Studies: Perpetrators	99
3.4.3	Case Studies: Service Providers	100
3.5	Methodological Problems Encountered During The Course Of This Study	100
3.5.1	Definitions	103
3.5.2	Women's Refuges	104
3.5.3	Government Departments	106
3.5.4	Criticisms Levelled Against This Study	108
3.5.5	Responses To Criticisms/Concerns	109
3.6	Strengths Of This Methodology	111
3.7	Data Analysis And Interpretation	113
3.8	Summary	114
Chapter 4	Nature Of Violence	115
	Age	116
	Marital Status	116
	Number Of Children	117
	Occupation	117
4.1	Women's Perceptions Of Violence	117
4.2	Perpetrators' Accounts Of Violence	131
4.3	Service Providers' Perception Of Family Violence	135
Chapter 5	Factors Associated With Wife-Battering	144
5.1	Women's Accounts Of Factors Associated With Violence.	145
5.2	Perpetrators Accounts Of Factors Associated With Violence	158
5.3	Service Provider Accounts Of Factors Associated With Violence	166
	Summary	175
Chapter 6	The Role Of Pregnancy In Violence	178
6.1	Women's Experiences Of Violence During Pregnancy	179
6.2	Perpetrators, Violence And Pregnancy	188
6.3	Service Providers' Views On Violence During Pregnancy	193
Chapter 7	Responses To Family Violence	198
7.1	Women's Contacts During Violence	199
7.1.1	Family	200
7.1.2	Friends	202
7.1.3	Police	204
7.1.4	Medical Doctors	207
7.1.5	Other Services	209
7.2	Perpetrator Contact Concerning Violence	216
7.3	Service Providers Response To Family Violence	218

		iv
Chapter 8	Conclusion	226
8.1	Comments And Recommendations	242
8.2	Summary And Implications	249
Appendix A	Plain Language Statement/Consent Form	253
Appendix B	Interview Schedule For Women	255
Appendix C	Interview Schedule For Perpetrators	259
Appendix D	Interview Schedule For Service Providers	263
References		266

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Women's Demographic Characteristics	115
Table 4.2: Types Of Violence	118
Table 4.3: Women's Experiences Of Worst Incidents Of Violence	124
Table 4.4: Partner's Response During Violence	127
Table 4.5: Women's Aftermaths Of Violence	129
Table 4.6: Perpetrators' Demographic Characteristics	132
Table 4.7: Perpetrators' Perception Of Their Violence	133
Table 4.8: Violence And Demographic Features Of Clients	135
Table 4.9: Service Providers' View Of Types Of Violence	139
Table 5.1: Women's Accounts Of Factors Associated With Of Violence	146
Table 5.2: Women's Decision To Either Leave Or Stay	149
Table 5.3: Women's Family Of Origin And Violence	155
Table 5.4: Perpetrators' Accounts Of Causes Of Violence	158
Table 5.5: Women's Decision To Either Leave Or Stay	162
Table 5.6: Perpetrators' Family Of Origin And Violence	164
Table 5.7: Why Do Women Remain In Abusive Relationships	169
Table 6.1: Women's Accounts Of Violence During Pregnancy	179
Table 6.2: Perpetrators Accounts Of Their Violence During Pregnancy	188
Table 6.3: Service Providers, Violence And Pregnancy	193
Table 7.1 Women: Various Responses To Family Violence	199
Table 7.2 Women And Violence: Impact And Benefits	213
Table 7.3. Perpetrators: Various Responses To Family Violence	216
Table 7.4: Reasons Why Clients Finally Seek Assistance	218
Table 8.1 Women's Perception Of Batterers And Ideas For A Solution	242

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without those men and women who lived the violence and offered their experiences. My sincere gratitude goes to them. I would also like to thank the organisations and individuals who offered their assistance in terms of encouraging their clients to participate in this study, and those organisations which enabled me to make an extensive use of their resource material. My thanks also go to individual service providers who became part and parcel of the sample group.

My deep appreciation goes to my supervisors, Drs. Roberto Hugh Potter and Peter Corrigan, whose continued support, encouragement and comments helped in the completion of this thesis. Dr. Corrigan worked tirelessly during the revision period of the thesis and his contribution has been tremendous, and as such is sincerely appreciated. My colleagues in the Department of Sociology also deserve a mention.

I would also like to thank my husband Elliott Niboye for his tolerance and perseverance during my absence. Other friends from other disciplines as well offered invaluable support.

Finally, I wish to thank both the Department of Employment, Education and Training within the Australian Government and the Lesotho National Manpower Development Secretariat for their respective partial funding towards the undertaking of this degree.

It should be noted, however, that any errors or omissions are entirely the responsibility of the author.