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**Women's Everyday Resistance to
Intimate Partner Violence**

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Abstract

Aotearoa's rate of reported intimate partner violence (IPV) is among the highest in the OECD. Surviving IPV requires considerable strength and resilience. There is a large body of work exploring women's resistance to violence. However, this is often framed within a victim and agent dichotomy, which can obscure the variability of women's everyday experiences. In addition to understanding the more overt forms of resistance women enact against IPV, there is a need to focus on the everyday ways in which violence manifests and the subtle, imperfect ways in which women respond as they carry out their daily routines and practices. This thesis draws on both feminist research and literature on the conduct of everyday life from social psychology to explore how women navigate their daily lives and reproduce gendered relations within the constraints of IPV. Particular attention is paid to moments of adaptation, agency and resistance. Working with the support of Te Whakakuruhau (Māori Women's Refuge), I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight women, four staff members and four former clients, to explore their experiences of day-to-day IPV. My participants' experiences revealed how deeply enmeshed IPV can become within everyday practices, from making breakfast to going to the toilet. While my participants' lives were characterised by chronic anxiety and constraint, they adopted novel tactics to get through dangerous everyday situations such as going to bed or doing the dishes. They drew on simple routines such as making coffee or working in the garden in order to create a sense of routine that aided them in 'getting by'. Further, they demonstrated remarkable creativity, flexibility and agency in creating novel enclaves of care within otherwise inhospitable settings. These findings have implications for how IPV is characterised and how agencies can identify and support women within the constraints of violent relationships.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Gendered violence is a pervasive cultural phenomenon that occurs on an everyday level in both overt and subtler, less understood forms. The nature of intimate partner violence (IPV) has increasingly been reframed from an issue of physical violence to a pattern of ongoing coercive control, designed to erode victims' autonomy and freedom (Stark, 2012). A significant body of work has examined the role of structural power imbalances and ingrained misogyny in perpetuating endemic violence against women (Grabe, Grose, & Dutt, 2015; Hampton, Oliver, & Magarian, 2003; True, 2012, Rose, 2015). It is crucial that we acknowledge the structural and gendered inequalities that shape women's lives, and also that we explore the everyday, imperfect ways in which women respond to and resist violence as they conduct their lives. Surviving IPV requires considerable strength and resilience. Victims are often proactive help seekers who literally fight for their lives (Family Violence Death Review Committee [FVDRC], 2017). This study explores how women navigate the ongoing impacts of IPV through everyday instances of adaptation, agency and resistance. These experiences provide a valuable human insight into the reproduction of broader social structures.

This chapter begins by setting the scene for my thesis with a focus on the social normalisation, prevalence and health outcomes of IPV against women. In considering the prevalence of IPV, it is necessary to explore the role of broader social and cultural structures, without reducing women's experiences to these influences. I then discuss the development of the current definition of IPV and outline the complex ways in which such violence manifests in women's lives through coercive control. I examine current feminist scholarship on agency and resistance and highlight the problem of reducing women to the position of victim or survivor. To overcome this dichotomy, I draw on practice theory and the conduct of everyday life, which is useful in foregrounding the complex and often contradictory social practices

women engage in while piloting their lives through extraordinary obstacles (Højholt & Schraube, 2015). I argue that women's mundane everyday responses to the potential for, and actual violence, have the power to produce contributions to how we understand and support women's efforts to ensure their own safety and the safety of their children (FVDRC, 2017). The chapter is completed with a focus on the present study into the mundane ways in which my participants manage violence in their everyday lives in the face of gendered and structural inequalities.

Prevalence, outcomes and social norms

Violence against women has been identified as a serious violation of human rights and increasingly, as a public health issue (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). The World Health Organisation defines IPV as any behaviour which causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm within an intimate relationship (Krug et al., 2002). This includes acts such as slapping, strangulation, restricting access to financial resources, intimidation, isolation, and humiliation. In this section, I outline the prevalence of IPV in Aotearoa, some of the major health outcomes and the importance of understanding IPV and women's possible responses in relation to broader social norms. This provides the context for my conceptualisation of IPV and the multiple ways in which women resist violence within everyday life.

Aotearoa's rate of reported IPV is consistently among the highest when compared to other OECD countries (Turquet et al., 2011). It is estimated that between 33 and 39% of women in Aotearoa experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner during their lives (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). When psychological and emotional abuse is included this rises to 55% of women (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). Australian studies have similarly found IPV

is among the leading preventable contributors to death and illness in women aged 18-44 years (Webster, 2004; Webster, 2016). Between 2009 and 2015 the FVDRC (2017) reported 91 IPV deaths. Of those IPV deaths featuring a history of abuse, 98% involved men assaulting women (FVDRC, 2017).

As the statistics above suggest, IPV is a gendered crime (Jewkes et al., 2015; Reed, Raj, Miller, & Silverman, 2010). Violence against women cannot thrive without a society that facilitates its existence. As such, IPV reflects gendered power relations in society that are based in various social, cultural, economic, and political inequalities (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; True, 2012; World Health Organisation, 2010). Social and economic policies can contribute to structural inequalities which exacerbate violence against women (Signorelli, Taft, & Pereira, 2012). Neo-liberal restructuring, for example, has a disproportionate impact on women, with cuts to health and social services severely constraining the ability of victims to seek help or protection (True, 2012). The state can also reinforce violence indirectly through health practices. For example, Charles (2011) drew disturbing parallels between US obstetric practices and IPV, such as the construction of women as irrational to justify the control over patients' bodies by men subscribing to patriarchal norms.

Patriarchy manifests in complex, contradictory ways, variably endorsing male aggression and rebuking violence against women (Hunnicut, 2009; Kilmartin & Allison, 2013). Men's adherence to patriarchal norms, such as strength and control can predict their use of violence against women (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny 2002; Sugarman & Frankel 1996; Schumacher, Feldbau-Kohn, Slep, & Heyman, 2001; Basile, 2009; Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2015). The violence that occurs within intimate relationships, for example, restricting a partner's social networks or sabotaging their employment (Stark, 2012) exists on a continuum with more subtle normalised forms of violence within everyday life (True, 2012). These include more discrete forms of violence such as street harassment, which women are socialised to

minimise in terms of seriousness (Stanko, 1985; Lynch & Logan, 2015; Kelly & Radford, 1990).

Challenging the cultural and social norms that support violence has thus been identified by the World Health Organisation as a significant aspect of violence prevention (World Health Organisation, 2010). There is evidence to suggest that interventions that explicitly target the patriarchal norms and behaviours associated with masculinity can be effective in reducing the perpetration of violence (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson, & Lang, 2014; Wolfe et al., 2009; Jewkes et al., 2015). That is, while it is important to have some idea of our rates of IPV and women's experiences, we also need to acknowledge the importance of work focused on perpetrators and the development of responses that change men's behaviour. In addition to being socially normalised in some ways, IPV is related to a range of negative health and social outcomes.

IPV contributes to numerous short and long-term health consequences including memory loss, gynaecological problems, chronic pain, depression, and suicide ideation (Campbell, 2002; Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Moreno, 2008). IPV also frequently leads to financial insecurity and housing instability and is recognised as one of the primary causes of women's homelessness (Chouinard, 2006; Ponc et al., 2011; Hamby, 2014; Tually, Faulkner, Cutler, & Slatter, 2008; Spinney, 2012; Steinbock, 2008; Sikich, 2008). Violence against women occurs across all social economic groups, where greater economic opportunities do not necessarily protect women from violence (Heise & Garcia-Moreno 2002; True, 2012). For example, violence against women often increases alongside women's growing economic opportunities and the adoption of traditionally male occupations (Jewkes, 2002). In other situations, women in the mid-range of the socioeconomic scale have been the most at risk of IPV (Kiss et al., 2012). Although not exclusively an issue faced by women of more modest means, poverty has a clear function in the maintenance of violence against women, through inequalities in employment, property and income (Goodman, Smyth, Borges & Singer, 2009;

True, 2012). Hamby (2014), for example, estimates the basic costs required to leave a partner and establish a new residence in the US to be several thousands of dollars. By comparison, the current median rental price of a three-bedroom home in Sandringham (a central suburb of Auckland) is \$650 per week, and the median bond is \$520 (Tenancy Services, 2018). Considering the costs of rent in advance, moving, and furnishing a house we can see how similar barriers to leaving exist for women in Aotearoa. A consideration of the added restraints poverty imposes is important in providing context for women's responses to IPV.

Aside from these financial considerations, the assumption that leaving is a safe and realistic option for women living with violence can be overly simplistic. There continues to be a pervasive public misconception that leaving an abusive partner will prevent further violence (Paterson, 2010; Meyer, 2016; Zeoli, Rivera, Sullivan, & Kubiak, 2013; Morgan & Coombes, 2016). A survey of the Australian public, for example, found that 78% of respondents struggled to understand why women stay in violent relationships and 51% believed that women could leave a violent partner if they wanted to (Webster, 2014). This is sometimes reinforced by shelter workers, child protection workers, and those working in the family court who perceive leaving to be the safest and most responsible action a woman can take (Peled & Dekel, 2010; Douglas & Walsh, 2010; Morgan and Coombs, 2016). Focusing on leaving is an inadequate response to IPV for a range of reasons.

Firstly, leaving is not necessarily synonymous with ending a relationship or violence. A significant amount of violence against women occurs after the termination of abusive relationships (Sharp-Jeffs, Kelly, & Klein, 2018). Indeed, leaving comprises one of the riskiest periods of a violent relationship, with the likelihood of a lethal assault rising dramatically (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007; FVDRC, 2017). Further, many studies examining the process of leaving neglect the post-separation period (Anderson & Saunders, 2003). After separating from a perpetrator, women may remain subject to ongoing

psychological, legal and financial abuse, which is often reinforced by some social service agencies and government institutions (Stanley, Miller, & Foster, 2012; Jeffries, 2016; Lindauer, 2011). In an Aotearoa study exploring women's experience of family court counselling, for example, mothers reported that counsellors largely downplayed their histories of abuse (Elizabeth, Gavey, & Tolmie, 2012a). Women's efforts to manage the safety of their children were interpreted by some counsellors as uncooperative behaviour. The family court has increasingly taken an ostensibly gender-neutral stance to parenting. However, the imposition of this where a non-neutral dynamic exists is dangerous for mothers who have been subjected to gendered oppressive, controlling, and violent behaviour from fathers (Tolmie, Elizabeth, & Gavey, 2010). Where fathers have a history of violence, counselling provides an opportunity for the continued abuse of women, who are unable to leave the service for fear of appearing uncooperative. Further, the use of strategies such as victim blaming and minimisation by state or legal actors has been termed secondary victimisation, due to the risk of re-traumatising victims (Campbell & Raja, 2005). In the context of ongoing IPV, the encouragement of cooperative relationships between parents going forth, can, in many cases, be better understood as, "state-endorsed entrapment" (Elizabeth, Gavey, & Tolmie, 2012b, p.252).

The focus on leaving can also be problematic for Māori and this has led some agencies, such as Te Whakaruruhau to develop initiatives for addressing IPV that involve perpetrators and whānau. Paramount in such work remains the safety of women and their children. It also reflects a de-colonising approach that embraces Māori processes for addressing whānau (family) violence. The rise of IPV in Māori communities is strongly associated with colonisation, which continues to impose patriarchal concepts on Māori cultural practices and adversely affect the lives of women and men (Kruger et al., 2002; King & Robertson, 2017). In this context, responses based on separating whānau are seen by some as being part of the

broader application of Pākehā (person living in Aotearoa of European descent) interventions which isolate, criminalise and pathologise Māori people (Kruger et al., 2004). The second Māori Taskforce on Whānau Violence extends common conceptualizations of violence to include an absence or a disturbance in Tikanga (Māori custom) and advocates for culturally-sensitive responses aimed at restoring balance in whānau, hapū, (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) relationships. Such approaches are aimed at dispelling the illusion that whānau violence is normal and instead turn to Māori cultural constructs for the solutions. Leaving is thus not always necessary, appropriate or possible.

While it is important to consider the structural and social context for IPV, we also need to recognise that women do not accept the normalisation of violence. In a study of women from Aotearoa across a range of ethnic groups, participants almost universally agreed that male partner violence was unacceptable under any circumstances (Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle, & Perese, 2010). Accordingly, many women actively resist IPV in a myriad of ways, which I will discuss further in my section on everyday agency and resistance. For now, it is important to note that grounding women's experiences of violence and resistance within the lived contradictions of patriarchal oppression is crucial to avoid misinterpreting women's compliance with social norms through victim-blaming theories such as learned helplessness (Gavey, 1989). The normalisation of violence against women, on personal and social levels, is reflected in the current conceptualisation of IPV. Exploring the mundane ways through which this conceptualisation manifests in everyday life provides me with a basis for exploring women's resistance in this thesis.

Conceptualising violence against women

How violence against women is conceptualised shapes the boundaries of research, legal responses, government policies, broader public opinion, and women's tactics of response

(DeKeseredy, 2000). A range of terms are currently employed to describe violence against women, including *domestic violence*, *intimate partner violence*, and *family violence*. I acknowledge the limitations of all such terms in that they can obscure the gendered reality of the phenomenon (Gavey, 2005). From a research perspective, what is critical is that the conceptualisation I use reflects my participants' subjective experiences of violence (Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, & Giusti, 1992). Family violence is a broad term including elder abuse and violence against children and these were not the focus of my study. Domestic violence is used variably to refer to couple violence and violence against family members. In this thesis, I focus on IPV, which specifically refers to violence occurring between adult heterosexual and same-sex partners. My use of IPV is consistent with scholars and policymakers in Aotearoa (Lievore & Mayhew, & Mossman, 2007; Gulliver & Fanslow, 2013; Fanslow & Robinson, 2011; Ministry for Women, 2013; FVDRC, 2017). I supplement this conceptualisation of IPV with recent developments in coercive control (Stark, 2012).

Social and legal understandings of violence against women have changed significantly over the past 100 years. The criminalisation of domestic violence in the 1990s reframed Aotearoa's collective understanding from an issue of private marital conflict to one characterised by discrete acts of physical violence (Elizabeth, 2015). The term 'violence' continues to carry with it connotations of physical abuse and associated stereotypes about victims and perpetrators (Bishop, 2016). Such narratives construct violence as aberrant, defined by individual instances of severe physical abuse, and committed only by 'bad' men. This dichotomous framing can obscure the complex manifestations of oppressive behaviours between more normative aspects of relationships (Elizabeth, Gavey, & Tolmie, 2012a). Rather than being deviant or rare, violence against women is disturbingly common and categorically perpetrated by *normal* men during everyday relationships (Wood, 2001). Violence does not

occur in isolation and is only one of the many tactics of power perpetrators exert to control women (Stark, 2007).

In recent years such serious incident-based conceptualisations have been challenged for obscuring more mundane forms of violence and coercive control (Stark, 2012; Elias & Rai, 2015; FVDRC, 2017). Accordingly, IPV has been recognised as a pattern of ongoing domination within intimate relationships that include dramatic instances as well as more insidious and ongoing forms of control and abuse (Stark, 2012). The FVDRC (2017) describe IPV as a form of social entrapment within an intimate relationship defined by social isolation, fear and coercion. Coercive control comprises the micro-regulation of women's everyday activities (Stark, 2007). This systematic pattern of abuse includes methods such as intimidation, monitoring, exploitation, and isolation (Stark, 2012). This often involves more mundane forms of violence such as pushing and hair pulling, which in isolation may not seem as significant as other more overtly severe forms of violence. References to coercive control reflect the recognition of the cumulative, often mundane and everyday nature of violence. Such a conceptualisation foregrounds the importance of the experiences of many women for whom physical violence was not the worst part of the abuse to which their partners subjected them (Stark, 2012). Coercive control is reinforced by systemic inequity in areas, such as class, race, and gender, and corresponding institutional indifference. This necessitates consideration of the individual and social constraints victims have experienced throughout their relationships (FVRDC, 2017).

Understanding the importance of coercive control facilitates appropriate responses from organisations and reduces the risk of compounding situations of entrapment (FVDRC, 2017). Coercive control locates violence and women's responses to violence in the mundanity of day-to-day life. Physical abuse for women living under coercive control can become as routine as eating or sleeping (Stark, 2012). Further, when assault is an expected part of

everyday life, the normalisation and trivialisation of this contribute to the perpetrator's power (Stark, 2007). In one sense, coercive control can be read as patriarchy being played out on a personal level within women's everyday lives and infesting ordinary practices, such as cooking, sleeping and decisions on what women will wear. However, where power exists, so too does resistance (Foucault, 1982). As such, perpetrator's methods of control are frequently matched by women's agentic and often very constructive responses (Stark, 2012). This is what Stark (2007, p. 387) refers to as women's efforts to gain some "control in the context of no control." The sheer existence of survivors of IPV necessitates the navigation, resistance, and triumph of women over considerable adversity on a daily basis. As much as gendered relations may be reproduced through the repetition of social practices they can also be disrupted and resisted (Butler, 1990; Teo, 2015).

Everyday resistance and agency

Women who live through IPV hold expert knowledge on their partners' retaliation patterns and how to resist power and violence as exercised by their abusers (FVDRC, 2017). The term 'resistance' evokes physical imagery, but there are infinite modes of resistance and these do not necessarily involve direct action. How I conceptualise agency has a significant impact on how I approach women's everyday resistance to violence. In this section, I consider the limitations of binary constructions of victimisation and agency and the development of work on understanding agency within constraints and associated forms of everyday resistance. I also consider the limitations of work which frames women's agency within subject positions and argue for a conduct of life perspective. This sets me up to explore the frequently subtle, everyday acts of resistance women engage in that are agentic and critical to their survival.

Agency is a highly contested term. Historically, in Western Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) society (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010) women have often been constructed in hegemonic social science and medicine as irrational, passive, and generally as victims of circumstance (Madhok, Philips, & Wilson, 2013). Women's innate lack of agency implied a natural dependence on men in areas such as legal decisions and property ownership and justified their place in the domestic sphere. Naturally, a significant amount of feminist work has been devoted to overcoming the construction of women as passive victims and establishing women possess the capacity to act as agents (Shefer, 2016). Some of these conceptualisations, however ultimately frame women as responsible for the violence perpetrated against them.

Recently, for example, the notion of agency has been co-opted for neoliberal ideology. When agency is constructed as a choice, as in late capitalist discourse, the role of social structures is obscured and subsumed by the notion of equal opportunities (Hemmings & Kabesh, 2013). This leads to the all too common questioning of why women do not leave violent relationships without considering the blatant social and economic structural impediments to such acts (Hamby, 2014). Some feminist accounts have unwittingly fed into this notion when exploring agency as if it only exists in binary opposition to coercion and victimisation (Hutchings, 2013). Such accounts construct women as either completely lacking in strength or entirely autonomous (Jacobs, 1997). These conceptions rely on the idea of humans as rational decision makers and appeal to the WEIRD ideal of the revolutionary feminist subject (Hutchings, 2013). Stauffer (2017) decries binary caricatures of women as victimised or empowered and argues that such discourse undermines women's autonomy. For these reasons I consider both the terms *victim* and *survivor* problematic (Dunn, 2013), and predominantly refer to women 'who have lived through violence' throughout this thesis. I acknowledge the diversity in how women relate to the violence perpetrated against them and

do not wish to reduce my participants' stories to these. At times, however, the words 'survivor' and 'victim' are used to emphasise the responsibility of the perpetrator. Reading women's lived experiences through forced dichotomies nonetheless undermines the complexity of everyday life (Bilge, 2010). Neither of these categorisations adequately capture the complex realities of women living in coercive relationships (Midson, 2014).

This brings me to the problematic notion of empowerment. The concept of empowerment emerged from the civil rights movement and in the work of Freire (1970) where it was based on collective efforts to challenge institutional oppression. However, when framed as an individual endeavour empowerment theory can have dangerous consequences for women living with IPV (Wilson, Smith, Tolmie, & de Haan, 2015). Attempts to create an individual 'sense' of empowerment can create the illusion of power without effecting any real change in power relations (Riger, 1993). For women living with violence, this can mean being held accountable for their victimisation, making them responsible for their safety and disregarding the entrapment inherent to coercive control (Frazier & Falmagne, 2014; Wilson et al., 2015; FVDRC, 2017).

Women's resistance needs to be considered within the very real threats they face. Between 2009-2015 the majority of men who killed their partners either believed that their partner had committed infidelity, planned separation or had already separated (FVDRC, 2017). Women's resistance, or even suspected resistance to violence, can be the trigger perpetrators use to kill them. Thus, in focusing on the many ways in which women resist violence within their relationships I do not purport that this leads to their overall 'empowerment', but rather consider these to provide important insights into how women survive on a day-to-day basis.

Gaining insight into how people survive extreme adversity requires the study of ordinary social practices as much as women's reactions to extraordinary events of violence that have comprised the core focus of research into women's responses to IPV (Hodgetts, Rua,

King, & Te Whetu, 2015). De Certeau (1984) discusses the ways in which ordinary people resist power by considering everyday tactics and strategies. Strategies are employed by those in positions of power. They are carefully coordinated in relation to specific goals and establish long-term norms. However, an important component of strategy is that it never involves total control. This is where tactics become pertinent. Tactics refer to the unplanned, but ongoing appropriation of events into opportunities by people in subordinated positions. Tactics involve short-term goals and make use of moments of unpredictability within everyday life. Everyday tactics are used by people living under oppressive circumstances to get by (De Certeau 1984; Graham, Hodgetts, Stolte, & Chamberlain, 2018). The use of tactics can be understood in reference to Sartre's (1948) notion of radical freedom. Sartre contends that even in situations of extreme adversity individuals still have some degree of freedom. Human life is characterised by moments of spontaneity and opportunities for resistance. For women living through violence, this freedom may simply constitute a momentary break in an otherwise overwhelmingly constraining physical and psychological environment.

It has been well established that women living through IPV trial safety practices and quickly identify those that work and those that do not in the context of their lives (FVDRC, 2017; Parker, Gielen, Castillo, Webster, & Glass, 2016; Goodkind, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2004). Fighting back physically, seeking legal assistance, and leaving are some of the more overt ways in which women resist the violence that their partners perpetrate against them (Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005; Shannon, Logan, Cole, & Medley, 2006; Abraham, 2000; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). However, fighting back physically and leaving are both associated with an escalation of violence (Bowker, 1993; Campbell et al., 2007). Further, focusing on these overt behaviours, and particularly on women's decision to leave partners or seek institutional help lessens the accountability of the perpetrator and can

obscure the agency women demonstrate within violent relationships (Paterson, 2010; Murray, 2008; Ponic et al., 2011).

Considering resistance more generally, open insubordination is much more likely to result in an immediate backlash from an oppressor (Scott, 1985). Women may, therefore, use more subtle tactics such as hiding money, keeping keys close, or even having a tubal ligation to prevent pregnancy without their partner's knowledge (Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, & Cook, 2003; Williamson, 2010; Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., 2016). More subtle tactics of resistance can achieve similar goals without the same risks and reflect my participants' daily survival amidst the continued presence of violence. Campbell and Mannell (2016) highlight the need to consider women's responses to violence across a continuum. Excessive focus on open resistance obscures the smaller, hidden moments of resistance occurring every day that fundamentally shape women's lives. In *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), Scott discusses the need to focus on everyday forms of peasant resistance, the constant struggle as opposed to outright rebellions. Scott speaks of the "ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups" such as foot-dragging, slander, arson and sabotage (p. XVI). Everyday resistance can be covert, disorganised, spontaneous, premeditated, at times contradictory, and centres on immediate goals. The limitations of narrow conceptualisations of agency and resistance in situations of coercion have increasingly been addressed by feminist scholars (Madhok, 2013).

Specifically, scholars increasingly argue that agency can exist in the presence of coercion (Madhok et al., 2013; Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., 2016; Rivas, Kelly, & Feder, 2013). In Mahmood's (2005/2012) work with the Egyptian piety movement, she argues that agency does not have to be exerted in resistance to patriarchy and can be found in the ways women work within norms. Mannell, Jackson and Umuotoni (2016) investigated the agency of women experiencing intimate partner violence in Rwanda, with a core focus on the meanings women applied to their actions. They found instances of agency within women's decisions to fight

back, to remain silent, and to obtain emotional support. Similarly, in a recent study of the agency displayed by homeless women who had experienced violence, Stauffer (2017) found women used less conventional forms of resistance such as disorder, evasion and subterfuge.

Further, *choosing* to stay in a violent relationship does not imply a lack of resistance. For example, a study by Pells, Wilson, and Hang (2016) highlighted that for many Vietnamese women, approaching IPV services was not a realistic mode of resistance within their cultural and religious frameworks. While women did not meet WEIRD notions of resistance by leaving their partners, they found ways to tolerate violence and conduct their lives despite the actions of the men around them. As I mentioned earlier, the notion that leaving is the best option for women experiencing IPV ignores the reality of continued abuse and the financial and social constraints this option presents (Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2018). Meyer (2015) points out that for some women, the decision to stay in their homes (and consequently with their abusive partners) can be agentic. This was tactical for the women involved in that it minimised the risks associated with homelessness. The tactics of resistance they employed were tailored to the cultural milieus and relational practices within which they conducted their everyday lives. In other words, the development and enactment of tactics of resistance is often contextual. The presence of resistance in situations of coercion is central to my study.

By attending to these contexts and considering agency as an ongoing process, we can look at the everyday decisions women make and the tactics they adopt within violent relationships (Kabeer, 1999; Pells et al., 2016). That is, I consider agency from the perspective of what making a liveable or survivable life means to the women in this study. The manifestations of agency and tactics of resistance that my participants employ may not be consistent with dominant preconceived notions of resistance, and at times may appear to reinforce existing circumstances (Pells et al., 2016). However, this does not negate their worth, but rather gives us insight into the ways in which women work with and against the constraints

imposed upon them by their abusers. Individual women conduct their lives within these limits, and the ways in which they survive need not be interpreted through a pathological lens (Stauffer, 2017).

Following from Campbell and Mannell (2016), I conceptualise agency as the negotiation of multiple constraints. This builds on Kabeer's (1999) work which understands agency through not just people's outward acts, but the personal meanings and motivations people ascribe to their actions. This conceptualisation includes more nuanced strategies such as bargaining, deception, and subversion. I also draw on Campbell and Mannell's work on the temporality of agency. Rather than existing in discrete observable acts, agency can be considered temporal and dynamic. Logie and Daniel (2016) found the development of women's relationship agency was in constant flux, growing in some situations, and diminishing in others. Similarly, a study by Turan and colleagues (2016) demonstrated how the migration of pregnant women in Kenya experiencing violence could simultaneously or sequentially constitute aspects of agency and victimhood depending on other contextual factors. An action which is considered a moment of agency for one woman may serve as a moment of victimhood for another (Campbell & Mannell, 2016). This aligns with the work of Lilja and Baaz (2015), who argue that while IPV often involves the repetition of relatively set patterns of behaviour, repetitions are unstable and always open to the possibility of rupture.

While this conceptualisation of agency informs my study, much of the work I have described either explicitly or implicitly draws on the use of subject positions. I argue that this is insufficient to explore the complex everyday realities of women whose lives are constrained by IPV. Subject positioning is a theoretical tool allowing researchers to examine how people adopt different positions throughout story-telling (Hardin, 2001). Multiple and often contradictory positions may be available, and people move between these depending on context (Enander, 2011). For example, a study of South African women's post-abuse storytelling found

women fluctuated between positions of victim and survivor as they navigated complex and nuanced power dynamics (van Schalkwyk, Boonzaier, & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014). That is, women actively navigate and enact differing subject positions based on the availability of gendered subjectivities (Davies & Gannon, 2005). This position constructs women as active co-producers of their lives. However, human agency cannot be reduced to the flexible negotiation of subject positions. Human beings do not respond in tidy and predictable ways. I, therefore, turn to the practices people carry out in their everyday lives to supplement the conceptualisation of agency provided above. I consider both feminist contributions to the study of everyday life and the overlapping work on the *conduct of everyday life*, both of which inform the present study.

Feminism and everyday life

Feminist research has long been concerned with capturing the everyday lives of women, in all their messiness (Smart, 2009; Allen, 2011). This is exemplified in Carol Hanisch's classic paper, *The Personal is Political* (1969) which emphasised the role of broader political structures in shaping women's personal experiences, asserting that engagement with issues deemed personal, such as abortion and sex was a form of political action. Smith (1987) was particularly interested in understanding everyday life through local material practices which are embedded within broader social structures. Starting with women's everyday lives is common for feminist analysis. This focus allows scholars to explore the ways in which women's lives are constrained by social relations as well as the ways in which they reproduce and alter such relations through everyday actions (Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006). Leach (2005) further highlights the need to consider the mundane everyday actions women participate in as contributing to rather than simply being shaped by broader social shifts. Within these ordinary practices, we can explore how people cope with disruption while navigating daily activities

(Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006). The cumulative effect of ongoing smaller acts can lead to broader structural changes. Kelly (2000) has argued that the work women do in surviving and coping with victimisation every day needs to be explored as a form of agency.

Elias & Louth (2016) have strongly advocated for the role of feminist scholarship in contributing to the study of everyday life. Specifically, they argue that feminist political economy studies have consistently highlighted the role of complex everyday gendered practices in constituting global economic systems. Household activities are a key site for the social reproduction of the broader political economy but have often been discounted in traditional economic analyses. Elias & Rai (2015) point to classic studies such as Scheper-Hughes' (1992) work on the everyday violence experienced by mothers in Brazil as exemplary of work which links the local with the global.

Bourgeois and Scheper-Hughes (2004) argue that studying lived experiences of violence is crucial to understanding broader political structures such as neoliberalism. In more recent work Redden (2016), for example, considers the significance of mundane forms of gendered everyday resistance by call-centre workers in understanding the broader landscape of resistance within the international global economy. Bedford (2016) looks at women's local gambling practices in reproducing diverse political economies through practices such as 'having a laugh' and fundraising. Feminist work has therefore contributed significantly to our understanding of everyday life as a site to explore broader gendered, political and economic relations.

Part of this focus on everyday practices includes studying local materialities, and place-making as a means to explore wider social issues (Dyck & Dossa, 2007; Massey, 1994). People actively interact with particular places to create meanings appropriate to their needs (Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015; Wakefield & McMullan, 2005). The home, for example, is the base from which much social and economic work is supported, however, this work is often unpaid and

hidden (Dyck, 2005). Focusing on everyday life can highlight women's agency in transforming such spatial arrangements to suit their needs (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). For women experiencing violence, everyday home-making practices often involve making healthy spaces within unhealthy material and social conditions (Dyck & Dossa, 2007). That is, people can transform *landscapes of despair* (Dear & Wolch, 1987) to create *spaces of care* (Gesler, 2003, cf. Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015).

In parallel to feminist work exploring everyday life, a distinct but overlapping tradition of work on the *conduct of everyday life* has developed. I discuss the implications of this for my conceptualisation of agency and then draw on both bodies of work in outlining the present study. The collective participation in mundane social practices can serve as a rich source of insight into the reproduction of (and resistance to) gendered social issues such as IPV (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012; King & Robertson, 2017).

Conduct of everyday life

Work on the conduct of everyday life centres the mundane, ordinary actions, routines, and interactions that make up people's lived realities (Højholt & Schraube, 2015; Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015). Human agency is fundamental to this theoretical orientation. This is particularly appropriate given the tendency for women who live through violence to be constructed as passive and powerless (Cermele, 2010). This orientation gives me a focus on how women agentively construct their lives, often in response to coercion and other forms of IPV. This section explores the relevance of practice theory in research into the conduct of everyday life that moves beyond the dualist constrictions of agency and constraint. I argue for an approach which centres the everyday agency of my participants in the context of restraints imposed by circumstances and their partners (cf. Hodgetts et al., 2015). This creates space for

me to consider moments of resistance and agency without disregarding broader structural and interpersonal constraints.

The ‘conduct of everyday life’ is a term originally introduced by the sociologist Max Weber (1952) and developed in psychology through the work of Holzkamp (1995/ 2016). The approach this phrase invokes comprises an attempt to overcome some of the ongoing criticism of WEIRD psychology, such as its focus on individualism and the disconnect between empirical findings and people’s everyday lives (Schraube & Højholt, 2016). The concept provides an approach to understanding the relationship between persons and society in a way that centres the activities and efforts of human beings as they live their everyday lives. Work on the conduct of everyday life considers the ways in which people construct their lives in relation to others, foregrounding shared everyday practices (Højholt & Schraube, 2016). By exploring peoples’ everyday practices in relation to wider social structures we can explore the personal in the social (Teo, 2015).

From the perspective of this approach, human lives are made up of fluid social practices, which actively reproduce socio-cultural relationships and structures (Hodgetts et al., 2010; Halkier & Jensen, 2011). Human beings are said to participate in social practices which can be local to particular settings, such as lighting a candle in church, and those that span across multiple spheres of daily life such as eating lunch (Dreier, 2015). Butler’s (1990) theory of gender performativity, which posits that gender is constantly performed, reproduced and distorted through embodied practices, also provides an account of the importance of often mundane practices in the reproduction of gendered social conventions and structures. A practice is not limited to a pattern of individual behaviours but is inherently social, often enacted in response to, if not in concert with other people, and reflecting broader modes of understanding in society. Practices also consist of both embodied and mental activities. The human agent in this context serves as the carrier of the social practices. Where objects form a

part of a practice they are no less important than subjects in the reproduction of social order (Reckwitz, 2002). Latour's (2005) Actor-Network Theory further asserts that the material objects people engage with in their everyday life can be understood as active agents. Hodgetts and colleagues (2015) for example, note how mundane objects such as a boil-up pot create opportunities for a group of Māori men to enact cultural practices by signifying communal cooking and hospitality.

Everyday practices are also seen as manifestations of broader political activities (Hanisch, 1969; Gibson-Graham, 2003; King & Robertson, 2017). The work of George Simmel helps inform this orientation. Simmel's (1903) *principle of emergence* proposes a focus on the wider implications of local social structures on interpersonal interactions and everyday practices. Participation in everyday routines such as grocery shopping, for example, can reproduce wider social structures, such as neoliberalism (Højholt & Schraube, 2016; Hodgetts et al., 2010). From this perspective, routines are not simply fixed patterns of behaviour, but rather comprise often flexible social practices organised around other interests and commitments (Dreier, 2015). Everyday life, therefore, becomes a critical location for the investigation of social relations and the reproduction of broader social structures within lifeworlds (Hodgetts et al., 2015).

One of the problems in the conceptualisation of agency provided in the previous section is that of dualism. That is, social life is explained either by the actions of an actor or by the influence of interpersonal processes and societal structures. Giddens' practice theory (1984) works to move beyond this dualism by defining agency and structure as mutually constitutive elements. Social practices are the activities, habits and ways of doing things employed by social actors to conduct their daily lives. In this context, human agency can be approached as the actions of social actors to influence certain processes in their lives that are influenced by

structural constraints (Reckwitz, 2002). Practice theory thus provides an approach to transcend the structure-agency binary.

What can often seem like banal or mundane activities that people engage in every day, such as brushing one's teeth, preparing food or walking to work are much more significant than is often realised as dynamic manifestations of broader social formations (Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015). Exploring these diverse practices allows us to ground women's personal experiences within the constraints and opportunities afforded by broader social and cultural institutions. Considering the complexities involved in women's everyday social practices opens up multiple opportunities to explore women's agency in responding to domestic violence. Resistance to IPV does not necessarily challenge power in predictable or stable ways, but may occur in, what can appear, outwardly, to be trivial moments (Pain, 2014). As such, everyday life contains multiple moments to explore manifestations of resistance (Chaudhary, Hviid, & Marsico, & Villadsen 2017).

A focus on the conduct of everyday life can enable us to document how IPV is more than a collection of sporadic disruptive events. Hodgetts and colleagues (2016) note a tendency within scholarly research to construct everyday life as a predominantly ordinary experience that is occasionally disrupted by extraordinary events such as deaths or illness. Such disruptions often pull people out of their usual routines. However, for people living in extraordinary circumstances such as under dictatorships, ongoing violence and fear can become routine (Martín-Baró, 1994; Watkins and Shulman, 2008). Thus, this focus allows me to consider the ways in which living with IPV can become part of one's 'routine' and central to the conduct of women's daily lives (Stark, 2012; Hodgetts et al., 2016). This is in line with King and Robertson's (2017) recommendation for more research which contextualises violence against women within everyday life. In the relationships with which I am concerned, men's ongoing use of coercive control, for example, reflects how associated experiences of fear and anxiety

become regular companions in women's lives (Williamson, 2010). While incidents of physical violence may not be continuous in some cases, the ongoing coercion, constant threat of violence, and general strategising required to survive are also 'normal' parts of many women's daily lives today. Minute details of day-to-day living with violence that permeate social practices from grocery shopping to cleaning the house become central to extending our understanding of how webs of control become enmeshed in daily existence for women.

The present study

Feminist scholarship and the conduct of life share a common focus on the everyday lives of ordinary people that links local experiences and practices to broader structural inequalities (Hanisch, 1969; Leach 2005; Holzkamp, 1995/ 2016). There is a significant body of work exploring women's resistance to IPV (Critelli, 2012; Cermele, 2010; Rivas et al., 2013; Casey, Goudie & Reeve, 2011, Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., 2016) and on the importance of women's everyday resistance in relation to gendered political economic structures (Shefer, 2016; Elias & Rai, 2015). However, to my knowledge, there is little research examining the ways in which women's agency and resistance to IPV are enacted through the everyday social practices that make up the conduct of everyday life.

Situating women's experiences within the context of their daily lives creates space for examining what they actually do in response to IPV, to resist, give meaning to violent events, and to live with the complex lived contradictions that emerge with IPV. This focus is important because, despite the psychological, physical, financial, and social constraints imposed upon them, women living with IPV find ways to get by, to protect themselves, to care for their children, and to remain sane. Further, an orientation towards everyday life allows us to explore the ways in which women's own actions shape broader social structures and relations (Hanisch,

1969; Gibson-Graham, 2003; King & Robertson, 2017). That is, women's everyday resistance to the violence perpetrated against them affects broader power relations, which occur through normalised social and political inequalities (True, 2012). Adopting this approach also means that I can respond to the ways in which women's everyday lives are a tangible location for interactions between personal experiences and societal structures and institutions that perpetuate gendered violence.

The core aim of this thesis is to explore the reproduction of gendered relations through restraints and agency in the everyday lives of women who are constrained by power relations and associated gendered violence. Specifically, I will explore eight women's experiences of day-to-day violence and how this becomes entwined within their lives. I will investigate how women respond to, navigate, and resist violence in conducting their lives. The central guiding question for this research is: how do women conduct their everyday lives in response to IPV and in ways that resist and undermine men's control?

By way of thesis outline, chapter two details the research methodology. I briefly recount the significance of feminist psychology and the conduct of life to this project, before discussing the usefulness of liberation psychology to my method. I then explore the practical application of these in my ethical approach before outlining the process of recruiting participants, interviewing and analysing my participant's experiences.

Chapter three explores the ways in which four women who have lived through IPV resist and survive violence within the constraints of their everyday lives. This chapter focuses on the ways in which my participants trial a range of tactics to manage the ongoing disruption and violence woven into everyday practices, such as purchasing groceries, feeding their children and sleeping. These accounts are explored in relation to the experiences of refuge staff over many years in supporting women.

In chapter four I discuss how my participants re-imagine their everyday landscapes to create more habitable places for themselves and their children. This involves the expansion of their homes to include places which offer temporary feelings of safety and respite, including a cupboard, bathrooms and the shower. Through everyday imaginative place-making activities within hostile material conditions, my participants create structure and establish a sense of being. This further helps them to connect with family members and look towards the future.

In the final chapter, I discuss the key findings of my study in relation to the broader literature on women's resistance to violence. In particular, I focus on the recommendations of the FVDRC and other local scholars in ensuring that the conceptualisation of IPV as a pattern of violence is recognised by organisations such as the family court and Oranga Tamariki. I argue that the findings of my study help ground the notion of coercive control in the everyday lives of women and that this can be useful in helping advocates and government agencies in identifying resistance and supporting women's safety.

Chapter 2: Method

As this thesis focuses on the everyday experiences of other people, it is important that I reflect on and account for the methodological aspects of the project. In this chapter, I reflect on the feminist approach to everyday life that underlies my broad approach to the study before I present the relevance of liberation psychology as a politicised approach that, like feminism, links everyday experiences with broader social structures. This focus on the macro in the micro is also central to scholarship on the conduct of everyday life. We then turn to ethical considerations that relate directly to my broader approach to the study. This, in turn, leads to a focus on the research site and participant recruitment before considering how I engaged participants in explorations of their everyday lives and experiences of IPV, and how I made sense of participant experiences or the analysis process.

Feminist research, liberation psychology and everyday life

This thesis stands on a foundation of feminist research, liberation psychology, and scholarship on the conduct of everyday life. Central to these approaches is the explicit amplification of the experiences of marginalised groups in the context of oppressive social structures. Feminist scholarship, for example, has long critiqued the depersonalisation of science and as I discussed in the previous chapter, has a strong basis in everyday life (Hanisch, 1969; Billig, 1994; Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006; Elias & Louth, 2016). Combining these overlapping traditions of work on the psychology of everyday life seems like a natural progression of research on IPV to date. In advancing the knowledge of how violence can become mundane in women's lives, this project reflects the values of each of these approaches and can contribute to practical resources which encourage the recognition of IPV in all its forms. My choice of such theoretical underpinnings is overtly political and linked to an

understanding of science as a shared social practice and research as an inherently engaged and political endeavour (Longino, 1990; Murray, 2012).

Despite significant progress being made in how we treat women who survive violence, research and policy often still diminishes the agency of survivors or perpetuates victim-blaming ideas through false narratives of empowerment (Shefer, 2016). Feminist approaches to knowledge along with scholarship on the conduct of everyday life help me challenge the validity of these broad generalisations by attending to the ways in which my participants' everyday lives are informed by, shape and reproduce broader cultural narratives. My method is grounded in early feminist critiques of the foundations of positivist science which questioned the notion of value-free knowledge and noted the need to advocate for marginalised groups through knowledge production as a result (Gavey, 1989). The *conduct of everyday life* similarly provides a rallying point for the complexities and contradictions of social structures and intimate family practices (Hodgetts et al., 2014). Detailing the mundane events of women's everyday lives brings their humanity to the foreground (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012). This has the potential to challenge misconceptions and harmful stereotypes about victims and impede the reduction of women's lives to a mere psychological artefact.

The somewhat eclectic conceptual approach developed for this thesis is orientated towards an empathic, practical, people-first scholarship (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012). Challenging individual pathology-based conceptions of social issues such as IPV through research is one way to practice scholar activism (Murray, 2012). This thesis is also part of a broader movement of women's liberation which seeks to create practical changes in the lives of women. As such, it was also informed by the field of liberation psychology (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

Liberation psychology, a term coined by Martín-Baró (1994) and initially informed by the teachings of Paulo Freire (1970), emerged in Latin America in response to the limitations of social psychology, particularly its irrelevance to people's everyday lives. Like feminist

psychology, liberation psychology challenges positivist individual-based approaches to social wellbeing and champions the plight of oppressed people (Burton & Kagan, 2005). Liberation psychology draws on the realities of everyday people in informing collective practical actions which seek to overcome oppression (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Research in this area attempts to open spaces for understanding and contributing to the transformation of people's daily realities, and ultimately to a fairer and more peaceful world. Freire (1970) asserted that the power of ideology came from its embeddedness in everyday life, and through engagements in dialectal processes, he termed *conscientisation* people could begin to see and challenge the structural constraints enmeshed in their lives. In zeroing in on the everyday lives of women experiencing IPV, my research helps unveil the ways in which violence can become a normal part of their daily routines and as a result allows for the exploration of how women resist this.

Liberation psychologists similarly speak of the need to create liminal spaces for dialogue and change (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). *Liminality* has been used to describe periods of community life where traditional roles and hierarchies are brought into question, often abandoned, and people engage in shared cultural practices as equal human beings (Turner, 1977). Such spaces allow oppressed groups to navigate previously unknown, accidental and chance encounters, constructing new narratives and frameworks as a result (Watkins & Shulman, 2008; Allen, 2011). Creating liminal spaces where women felt supported and comfortable to talk openly with me was a priority for this project.

The values of liberation psychology are highly relevant to the present study. As mentioned in my discussion of empowerment in chapter one, decontextualisation can contribute, through the omission of relevant contextual information, to the justification of the treatment of individuals as the cause of their own suffering (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). This supports the inequitable systems which perpetuate social unrest, which may endanger women living through IPV, and reinforce the victim: agent binaries I seek to challenge (Midson, 2014;

FVDRC, 2017). Women are neither passive nor empowered by the perpetration of violence against them. They make do despite considerable obstacles and resist in ways that are often overlooked. I argue that grounding my participants' mundane responses to the potential for and actual violence in their everyday lives has the power to produce contributions to how we understand and support women's efforts to ensure their safety. These will inform the development of a report for refuge and a policy brief as I will discuss in the next section. I now consider the ways in which the values of liberation psychology, feminist research and work on the conduct of everyday life practically inform my ethical approach to this study.

Ethical issues and the importance of reciprocity in research

The ethical approach I adopt in this thesis is informed by the emphasis on informed participation in feminist and liberation psychologies as well as research into the conduct of everyday life (Allen, 2011; Watkins & Shulman, 2008; Højholt & Schraube, 2016). This thesis was evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk, meaning that the nature of the harm is minimal. It was agreed by my supervisors that by working with the support of Te Whakaruruhau (Māori women's refuge, see next section) and consequently with participants who were living in safety, that the risk of harm was minimal. Ultimately, it was agreed that women were being supported and talking about their experiences with me was similar to the conversations they also had with refuge staff and each other. Te Whakaruruhau staff also agreed to select participants who were in a healthy space and willing to talk about their lives with IPV.

Central to Massey's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants is the avoidance of harm. Naturally, my participants' physical and psychological safety was a primary concern. This influenced every stage of the research

from the selection of participants to the use of pseudonyms to protect their identities, how I went about creating a liminal space in which they felt supported and comfortable to talk openly with me, and the style of analysis employed. I also consulted with my supervisors and refuge staff throughout the project to ensure that I was acting ethically with the participants. In terms of anonymity, only my supervisors and me had access to any of the personal information collected during the study. All names and identifying details were changed or deleted, except for those of one of the managers of Te Whakaruruhau, whose role I will go on to discuss.

Reciprocity is of significant importance for research into the conduct of everyday life, particularly when conducted with marginalised groups. Gift giving reflects the shared construction of knowledge in community-oriented research and is a natural part of human social practices (Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Tankel, & Groot, 2013). In addition to refuge staff providing support and advice, participating in my study, and recruiting two participants for me, my research may have created additional work for them, as the women I spoke with may go on to seek support. With this in mind, I sought ways to reciprocate wherever I could. This included incorporating the research interests of Rolinda Karapu, a manager at Te Whakaruruhau into my study. During our initial meeting, Rolinda discussed the need for agencies and government to better understand the process women go through when they decide to leave. This turning point was of significant interest to her, so I incorporated questions about this into the project. The data I gathered did not end up reflecting the notion of a single turning point, so I reconceptualised the process of leaving in my analysis and conclusion. While I would have liked to have completed some hands-on volunteer work to reciprocate, this was logistically difficult given my location in Auckland. At the completion of my research, I will put together a report for the refuge about the mundanity of everyday violence and in consultation with Rolinda, develop a policy brief based on the importance of recognising mundane tactics of resistance in responding to IPV to be shared with political parties and government

organisations. This is about ensuring my work contributes practically and not just academically. The personal, social and health-related consequences of violence against women place an obligation on researchers to ensure that findings inform advocacy and policymaking (World Health Organization, 2001).

In the interests of reciprocity in a broader sense, I began volunteering as an advocate at Auckland Action against Poverty. The women I work with there are predominantly from working-class backgrounds and this made me feel more confident in talking with women in my thesis interviews. I was also able to use some of the knowledge I learned there to assist the women with whom I spoke. For example, one woman had previously been sanctioned under section 70A of the social securities act for not naming the father on her child's birth certificate. I told her that if she went to a community lawyer and asked them to write a letter explaining why she did not name the father she may be eligible for a back payment from WINZ. Carrying out this research has also stimulated a number of conversations with other people in my life, both those who have experienced IPV, and those who have not. I hope this will contribute to more informal conversations about the many ways in which IPV can present in future. Central to my ethical considerations was the way in which I recruited my participants. Below I provide a brief background of Te Whakaruruhau, before outlining how the organisation facilitated my study.

Research site and participant recruitment

Aotearoa's first Māori women's refuge, Te Whakaruruhau was founded in 1986. The organisation runs a 24/7 crisis service as well as safe houses. Te Whakaruruhau adopts a Whānau Ora approach, which emphasises the protective capacity of whānau (Waikato Women's Refuge, 2018). Advocates work with women, children, and men to promote safety,

growth, and resilience. Te Whakaruruhau's logo encompasses their core values (see Figure 1). The marae symbolises well-being, strength and healing. Advocates at the refuge embody the cultural role of kaitiaki (guardians) and are armed symbolically with tewhatewha and kotiate (traditional weapons). These represent the strategies and wisdom used by advocates to help whānau achieve wellbeing.



Figure 1: Te Whakaruruhau's logo encompasses their core values

Te Whakaruruhau takes a whānau-centred approach to address IPV. For men who are willing to take responsibility for their actions, the Kawatea program is also available. This program works with both partners to identify their goals and barriers then supports them to achieve these via wrap-around services in areas such as mental health and addictions. This approach holds men accountable for their actions, rather than assuming women should uproot themselves. Men have a male advocate and women have a separate caseworker, so they can work on both individual and joint goals. Because the couple each identify their own areas to work on there is a high degree of transparency and accountability if people do not follow through on their goals. One manager from the refuge estimated that by the end of these programs 50% of couples remain together and 50% separate.

After discussion with my supervisors and several experienced researchers and workers in the domestic violence field, it became clear that the safest and most ethical approach to recruitment would be to work through a domestic violence organisation. These organisations have strong safety protocols in place and this was a primary concern. My chief supervisor already had a working relationship with a manager (Rolinda) from Te Whakaruruhau and she agreed to meet with us to discuss the potential project. Rolinda acted as a gatekeeper for me to connect with these communities of women and her relationships with them were vital to their willingness to participate (Devers & Frankel, 2000).

At our initial meeting, my chief supervisor was 'running late' and entered our meeting to find Rolinda already interviewing me about the project. I say 'interviewing' because the interaction felt like I was being interviewed for a role at the refuge. Having both an academic background and significant experience in her field, Rolinda is well aware of the capacity for researchers to exploit vulnerable populations and create more work for those on the front line. Naturally, she was protective of her clients and it was important that she be comfortable with me and the nature of the study before considering her involvement. Happily, she was willing to be involved. Working with a refuge meant my participants had already established trust with the organisation and I could easily ask questions or access support if anything unexpected happened. At this initial meeting, we also discussed appropriate cultural protocols for introductions, koha, kai, the importance of taking my time with women, and whakaiti, making yourself small to express humbleness (Thomas, 1994).

I chose to interview women who had lived through violence and were currently living in a safe environment. This is known as purposive sampling and is commonly used in qualitative research, as it allows researchers to select participants based on whether or not they possess the qualities or experiences relevant to the aims of the research (Tongco, 2007). The specification of my participants currently living in a safe environment was important for two

primary reasons. First, the recruitment of women in current situations of violence was not necessary for my study and may have created additional and unnecessary strain for these women. Further, women who experience repeated violence over a long period of time do not readily forget the details and focusing on previous experiences appreciates the cumulative and continuous nature of IPV (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Second, this decision was about ensuring the safety of both my participants and me. The confidentiality of women who have experienced domestic violence is of critical importance due to the potential risk of reprisal from an abusive partner. While there was no way to eliminate this risk entirely, we limited it by working with the support of the refuge and selecting women who had long since lived free of violence. We also wished to interview staff members from the refuge. Staff members have a wealth of practical knowledge about the way IPV affects women and these interviews were intended to supplement and provide an alternative perspective on the experiences of clients.

Rolinda put me in touch with two former clients who maintained some degree of contact with the services, but who no longer lived with violence. Rolinda selected two women who she felt were in secure positions to share their stories. Kiri and Bridget had already gone through the process of leaving their partners, including wrap-around services designed to facilitate their recovery. This included the development of support systems and long-term coping strategies. Both Kiri and Bridget had told their stories multiple times and as such their speaking about their experiences again would be unlikely to cause significant distress. At Rolinda's suggestion, I asked Kiri and Bridget to recruit two other women, Diane and Wendy through their own networks, a process known as snowball sampling (Noy, 2008). Rolinda subsequently put me in touch with Sophie, a community team leader from the refuge who enlisted Greer and Jess (whānau support workers). These participants also provided me with further background information on the workings of Te Whakaruruhau and the approach to violence against women.

Participants in more detail

A total of eight participants were engaged in interviews for this thesis. They included four former clients of refuge and four staff members. I engaged the four previous clients in two interviews, one staff member (Rolinda) in a one-off orientating interview to gain more general understandings of IPV and conducted a focus group with three staff members. For some, this may seem like a small sample. However, in designing the study I was guided by Flyvbjerg (2006) who warns against the tendency for social scientists to obscure the immense variability and uncertainty present in participant's accounts of daily life through a preoccupation with large samples. I was not concerned with reaching a particular number of participants as the purpose of my research was not to draw broad generalisations, but to conduct in-depth, humane repeat interviews whereby I could engage with the complexities of my participants' stories.

Below I offer brief profiles of the eight participants, which are purposefully general to ensure the anonymity and safety of the participants. My engagements with staff focused mainly on the stories of their clients instead of their own personal histories of violence. As such the staff bios focus more on their roles in the refuge. Although Te Whakaruruhau began as Māori Women's Refuge it is important to note that the refuge caters to women from all backgrounds and therefore not all my participants were Māori. For a discussion of the implications of my being a Pākehā researcher entering and working within a Māori space see page 38.

Kiri is a 35-year-old warm Māori woman who spoke confidently and openly about her experiences of violence. On our first meeting, she welcomed me into her home and made me a coffee. Her young daughter sat in a high chair beside us as we spoke at the kitchen table. Kiri was brought up in a family without domestic violence, but where drug use was normal. When she first met her partner, they had a healthy relationship and he did not drink or take drugs. She hoped that this would help her with her own dependence issues. However, he became involved

in drugs and after their second child together the violence began. Her mother worked for victim support and this gave her some insight into what domestic violence involved. After considerable work by both her and her partner, and through the support of services offered by the Refuge such as the Kawatea program described earlier, Kiri and her partner are now in a violence-free relationship. She considers her current relationship with her partner and their previous relationship as two distinct relationships due to the significant difference between them.

Bridget is a 26-year-old young woman of Māori and Pākehā descent who grew up with a single mother. It was difficult for her to determine exactly when violence became a part of her romantic relationship. Initially, she would wake up with bruises and not remember what had happened. Her partner would tell her that she had fallen over and maintained that he never assaulted her. He became progressively more violent and at one point held a gun to her head. She pressed charges against him after he assaulted her in front of her son. However, Bridget has been battling her partner through the family court for custody ever since. She is softly spoken, relaxed, and confident. She has a very dark sense of humour and we laugh a lot. There is no fear or sadness in her eyes even as she discusses being tortured. She pets her cat throughout our conversation and when I mention I'm looking for other participants she replies dryly, "I know heaps of battered women."

Diane is a 24-year-old Pākehā woman who was understandably nervous when we began our conversation and quickly lit a cigarette. By about halfway through our initial interview, she is sitting casually on a chair with her legs over the sides. Diane first experienced family violence as a child in foster care. She witnessed her foster Dad hit an infant and she escaped out the window that night. The next time she experienced domestic violence was when she was 15-years-old. The incidence occurred three days after she moved in with her boyfriend. During an argument, he threw her down the stairs, then threw a vacuum cleaner down on top of her.

At the time of our conversations, Diane was in a safe relationship with a new partner and the walls of their home were covered with artworks by her child. Diane gestures to a laundry basket and we joke about the never-ending laundry that children bring. She has a large fluffy cat who she loves despite him being “so fucking annoying”. Diane compares the feeling of him lying on her chest to the security of an anxiety blanket, “it’s just like 7kgs of fluff on you. And it does make you fuzzy inside”.

Wendy is a warm, open-minded, and articulate 46-year-old Pākehā woman. She wears a lot of jewellery, including the first ring she bought for herself as a teenager. She talks about the significance of holding onto it for so long. Wendy was abused as a child and this distorted her perception of what love meant in future relationships. Her partner's violence was initially mental and emotional, such as making rules about what she could wear and when she could go out. It was not until three years into the relationship, when she started to resist those rules that the violence became physical. It included kicks to the stomach or him breaking her nose. Wendy describes her current life as beautiful and boring. She loves going for family walks with her children, attends university, and enjoys weekly meditation nights.

Rolinda Karapu, age 50, and of Māori background is held in high esteem by both clients and other members of the DV community for her ongoing work and expertise in the field. In addition to her role at Te Whakaruruhau, Rolinda currently works as a specialist practice leader for Waikato’s Integrated Safety Integrated Safety Response. Initially, this program was very police heavy and this caused significant frustration. With Rolinda’s help, it is transitioning to a more community-driven model, which acknowledges that communities have their own solutions to social problems. Rolinda is welcoming, unfailingly humble despite her enormous contributions to the field and, like many in the field, has a wonderfully dark sense of humour. Sophie is a 45-year-old Māori woman who works as the crisis community team leader at the refuge. She has worked at the refuge for 11 years and leads much of the discussion. Greer is a

25-year-old Māori woman who works with women in the community as part of the whānau support team. This role involves helping women with their long-term goals after the initial crisis. Jess is also a whānau support worker. She is a 43-year-old Māori woman who has previously worked in the crisis community team and as a house leader. These staff members very clearly embody the role of aunties for refuge clients and their care is transparent in the way they reminisce about former clients. As with my other participants Sophie, Greer, and Jess frequently draw on humour throughout our conversation.

Having grown up with a single mother on the Domestic Purposes Benefit, I felt quite at home speaking to women from working-class backgrounds. However, my understanding of Māori life worlds has been limited. As a Pākehā researcher, I was very conscious of my place as an outsider and was initially hesitant to go down this route. I was aware that my position as a tertiary educated Pākehā woman would create a cultural rift between myself and the women with whom I conversed. Or, as my second supervisor (who is Māori) concisely put it, “they’ll be trying to figure out what this rich white lady is up to”. I was particularly wary of misinterpreting cultural concepts through deficit-based victim-blaming narratives. A considerable amount of damage has been inflicted on indigenous communities via the colonial framework imposed by WEIRD research practices (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 1999). Colonisation has seen the disruption of traditional gender roles and the dominance of a distorted cultural narrative where Māori men are presented as inherently violent (Mikaere, 1994; King & Robertson, 2017). By working with my supervisors, who are to varying degrees both ‘cultural insiders’, I felt more confident in being able to respectfully interact with women and interpret their stories through appropriate frameworks (Thomas, 1994).

Working within the refuge space meant considering violence from a whānau perspective. Rolinda’s endorsement of me to staff and former refuge clients was critical to their acceptance of me. I was always welcomed warmly, and my participants were quick to relax

and share their stories. This would not have been possible without Rolinda's facilitation. My supervisors also encouraged me to read *Becoming Bicultural* (Ritchie, 1992) to familiarise myself with some of the key cultural issues to consider as a Pākehā researcher working with Māori participants. One of the things this research encouraged me to do was pursue a basic Te Reo course at Unitec, which gave me some degree of confidence in improving my pronunciation of Māori words and also gave me a basic introduction to Tikanga Māori. When I had questions about the possible cultural interpretation of women's stories, I consulted my supervisors who were quick to steer me in the right direction.

Accessing participant accounts

I conducted my first interview with Rolinda, who provided valuable feedback about my questions and style afterwards. This was an excellent introduction to the interview process and helped me feel more comfortable in speaking with refuge clients and other staff members. This also gave Rolinda a chance to gauge me for herself and facilitated her recruitment of other participants as she could give them a first-hand account of what their participation would involve. Before our interview, Rolinda gave me a tour of the Integrated Safety Response (ISR) site, which brings police, Oranga Tamariki, and a number of other agencies together to combat family violence collaboratively. This helped ground my work within the conduct of a key initiative in Aotearoa's current responses to violence against women. My interview with Rolinda took place at the ISR office and my interviews with the other staff members took place within a meeting room at the refuge.

Next, I contacted Kiri and Bridget and gave them some background information about the study. I outlined the five general areas I wished to talk to these women about and emphasised that the focus was on their behaviours in response to everyday violence, rather than

the details of violent episodes. This subtlety was important as it would be unethical to simply repeat research documenting the experience of violent episodes (Clark & Walker, 2011). Further, because more mundane forms of violence against women are to an extent normalised within society, I stressed that there was no 'right' type or level of violence (True, 2012). I let women know that they did not have to answer any questions if they did not want to and I answered any questions they had. I then checked to see if they were still interested in participating. As they both were, we arranged a suitable time to meet for our first interview.

These interviews with former clients predominantly took place at their houses as this was both a space where they felt comfortable to speak about their experiences and the most practical location. Further, my participants had childcare obligations and limited budgets affecting their access to transportation. Therefore, their homes were the most appropriate place to meet. Rolinda, my supervisors, and I discussed the safety of going to women's homes, for both myself and my participants. Our main consideration was the risk of retaliation if a former partner found out about a woman's participation in the study. This risk was considered minimal given my participants had been living violence-free for some time and most no longer lived in the same cities as their former partners. One of my participants had maintained a relationship with her partner, having gone through a series of Refuge programs together and formed a healthy relationship. He was supportive of the research. For one participant our interviews took place in a private room at a public library as this was convenient and more private for her.

We began each interview with general conversation, introductions and the sharing of kai (food; coffee and a scone), before getting into the formalities of the information sheet and consent forms. Offering time and space to introduce ourselves and build genuine rapport before the more formal interview process began reflects manaakitanga. Manaakitanga entails responsibility of the host and acts as an invitation to the visitor by opening up a common space (Blundell, Lillis, & Gibbons, 2010). The provision of food can also change the discussion from

being tapu (sacred or restricted) to noa (unrestricted), enabling people to speak freely (Tipene-Matua, Phillips, Cram, Parsons, & Taupo, 2009). Sharing kai is recommended as an essential component of research with Māori participants (Smith, 1999). Even though two of my participants were Pākehā this process contributed to a sense of comfort and lessened the sense of formality with all the women I spoke to. Two participants insisted on making coffee for me instead, which I accepted, in respect of the reciprocal nature of manaakitanga (Hazou, 2018).

I then verbally went through the information sheet, which outlined the nature of the study, the length of time, the overall aims of the project, and their right to withdraw at any time. Taking the time to go through this carefully was a way to demonstrate my support to my participants and helped set our interview up as something we were involved in together. This reflects the goal of liberation psychologists in creating liminal spaces for dialogue (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). It also offered a means of ensuring that I was genuinely obtaining informed consent. Relatedly, the impact of neoliberal reform on Adult literacy programs in Aotearoa has been well documented (Taupo, 2016). More than 1.3 million adults in Aotearoa struggle to meet the literacy requirements of their jobs. I did not wish to assume the literacy of any participant (Earle, 2009). As such, I went through the consent form verbally with each participant, specifying whether they agreed to have the interview recorded and if they wished to receive a copy of the transcripts to go over.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary vehicle for my engagements with participants, along with a small focus group for my staff participants. These were audio-recorded on two devices to protect against data loss through technical failings. For my interviews with former clients, one-on-one interviews were appropriate as their confidentiality and anonymity was a key concern (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). Such techniques provide an important medium for exploring women's everyday realities through their own words (Collins,

1989). Semi-structured interviews facilitate the in-depth exploration of personal experiences, often providing rich data while allowing flexibility in the direction of conversation (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). My schedule of questions was based around five general areas (see Appendix C). These comprised their history of violence, how violence affected everyday routines, the normalisation of and resistance to violence, leaving, and safe places. The fluid nature of semi-structured interviewing, however, creates space for unexpected tangents, clarifications, and corrections (Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009).

WEIRD psychology, in the name of objectivity, often seeks to create distance between researchers and participants (Hodgetts & Stole, 2012). This creates an uneven power dynamic, placing the researcher in an authoritative position. I worked to reduce this dynamic as much as possible throughout our interactions. As such, our conversations were less like interviews and more ‘chats’. I adopted my usual (non-academic) colloquial style of conversation and this quickly eased tension and helped me build rapport with my participants. I used my schedule of questions as a loose guide. However, there was a significant amount of laughter and casual side conversation throughout and this facilitated my participants in asking questions, changing topics and correcting me. I also let my participants steer the conversation as much as possible. This was particularly important given the often-traumatic nature of my participants’ experiences.

At Rolinda’s suggestion, I conducted a single focus group with Sophie, Greer, and Jess to access more general accounts of women’s everyday experiences of IPV. Focus groups draw on the collaborative energy of the group setting in generating responses (Green Draper, & Dowler, 2003). The use of pre-existing groups such as co-workers can help facilitate idea-expression as participants can draw on each other’s experiences and challenge each other’s views (Kitzinger, 1994). The trust my participants had from working together was evident as

they frequently built on each other's responses, variably clarifying points, agreeing and disagreeing. Initially, I planned to ask my staff participant about their personal histories with violence before referring to the experiences of clients as this is how many women become involved in this work. However, I made the decision to focus on client experiences on the spot. This was based partially on a concern for their privacy, as while there was a significant degree of trust between them, I did not want to assume this applied to sharing their own stories, and partially on my desire to limit the time I was taking from their work. The constant demand for their time was highlighted when Sophie took a phone call with a distressed woman during our interview. As with my other interviews, this focus group took on more of a 'chat' like feel and there was a lot of laughter and reminiscing. By way of example, at one point another senior staff member came into the room to see if anyone had a light, which quickly led to the room collapsing into laughter.

At the end of the interviews, I provided my participants with koha of \$25 cash. This was a token of respect and acknowledgement of my participants' maanaki in welcoming me into their homes and sharing their valuable time and knowledge with me. (Jahnke & Gillies, 2012). It was given in cash, so participants could choose how to use it. I paid for petrol, kai and the koha with a research stipend from my chief supervisor.

Speaking about experiences of IPV naturally bears the risk of causing women to become distressed. In response, I told my participants that the amount of detail they provided of violent episodes was entirely up to them. These women went into a variable amount of detail about violent episodes and where they did share graphic details about incidents, I did not interrupt them out of respect for their right to tell their story. I was also acutely aware of the impact of the way that I framed questions and responded to my participants' accounts. I used my best judgement to normalise and in particular to justify the responses my participants gave me, as there was sometimes an implicit element of self-blame in their storytelling.

Repeat interviews with former clients were chosen to foster a humane relationship with the women I spoke to and give them the time and space to reflect on what are sensitive stories (Hodgetts, Drew, et al., 2010). My chief supervisor stressed throughout this project that these relationships were my primary concern and my research was of secondary importance (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012). Or as he more informally put it, “no drive-by research”. The use of repeat interviews approximately a week apart allowed me to ask women how they were going and if anything had come up for them since the first one. I developed my second interview questions based on the transcription and initial analysis of the first interviews. I stressed that my participants contact myself or either of my supervisors in the future if they had any concerns or questions. I also provided information on support services where appropriate. This is in line with World Health Organisation (2001) guidelines on research on violence against women, which set a minimum ethical obligation to provide participants with information on available support services.

It is important to consider the risks relative to the right women have to share their stories, particularly where these have the potential to reduce IPV (Bender, 2017). There is some evidence that women find talking about their experiences of violence, in general, to be beneficial (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). That is, talking to someone who is not going to pass judgement or imply fault on the part of the victim can be a valuable experience. A study on the potential harm associated with research involving victims of physical and sexual violence found little evidence of harm following their involvement in studies (Griffin, Resick, Waldrop, & Mechanic, 2003). By contrast, participants found the experience interesting and positive. This was true even for survivors with severe symptoms of PTSD. This supports the findings of a study which asked women survivors of trauma about their experiences of distress and regret regarding a mail survey they had completed on physical and sexual abuse (Walker, Newman, Koss, & Bernstein, 1997). These authors found that even where women experienced more

distress than they had anticipated, they reported that had they known this prior to the study, they still would have wanted to participate. All participants in the present study expressed an interest in participating in a second interview, which provides some indication that it was not an overall unpleasant experience. Wendy explicitly said, “*Thank you for being so nice about doing this, making me feel comfortable that I could just be honest*” which was reassuring.

Sharing transcripts with participants is sometimes recommended for qualitative researchers as it affords participants an opportunity to fact-check and engage further in the research process (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). In practice, asking participants to read transcripts can be time-consuming and embarrassing for them (Hagens, Dobro, & Chafe, 2009). In light of these considerations, I gave my participants the option of having their transcripts returned to them (see Appendix B). None of my participants expressed any interest in reading over their transcripts. For my refuge client participants, the nature of the repeat interview process allowed us to discuss what happened in the previous interview and for them to raise any questions or comments about the research in person. I reflected my interpretations of previous points from the initial interview back to participants and they corrected me when they felt it necessary. Following our initial interview, one participant requested that I exclude some information from my final analysis, which I did.

After each interview, I drove to a nearby location such as a park and recorded my initial reflections. This included notes on the tone of our conversation, the ideas that stood out to me, and environmental observations (Elizabeth, Halcomb, Davidson, 2006). I was strict about not recording any notes during our interactions as I felt this would create an air of judgement and detract from the relaxed, friendly environment I was trying to create. I tried to take notes on the objects that seemed relevant to everyday life, such as the noise of a television, the putting down of a coaster, the presence of a family cat. I also took notes on materials such as laundry baskets, toys, pictures, as well as the feelings generated by the house, the atmosphere of our

discussion, and the body language of the women. I wove relevant aspects of these into my descriptions of participants and my analyses to help ground them in my participants' material lives. I transcribed all interviews orthographically, that is, including laughter, corrections and pauses (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and supplemented these with brief references to gestures or facial expressions that were recorded in my field notes, subsequent to each interview.

Analysis process

Social constructionism informed my epistemological stance and I adopted a critical realist ontology. This stance is consistent with feminist research and allowed me to ground my participants' lived accounts within the context of broader patriarchal constraints. Social constructionism posits that the ways people understand their realities are constructed through interactions shaped by language and other forms of social interaction (Gergen, 1985; Lyons & Chamberlain, 2006). This approach allowed me to critically explore the power dynamics underlying, for example, dominant gendered norms, expectations of victims and the responses of agencies such as the family court. Critical realism holds that the meanings we make of events such as violence can differ depending on social context but does not deny the existence of an external reality, meaning these constructions have lived 'real' implications for people (Edley, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2013). The combination of these approaches allowed me to consider both the material manifestation of violence within my participants' lives while considering how their everyday practices reproduce wider social structures.

I utilised Denzin and Lincoln's (2013) notion of writing as analysis, which reflects the realisation that a lot of information is collected during the thinking and writing processes of research. As such, in beginning to write my thesis I began to engage in developing my ideas about what the participants were saying. Early ideas appeared in my field notes and were further

developed at a research retreat. As I transcribed each interview, I highlighted quotes that appeared significant and made small notes about the key ideas that were coming through. Respecting my participant's accounts was central to my analysis. I frequently considered whether my ideas could be interpreted as victim-blaming in some way and if these were feeding into the victim-survivor binary critiqued throughout. After transcribing the first interview I read through it again, highlighting more quotes and taking further notes. These notes were compared with other interviews and, where repeat interviews were conducted, informed my questions for the second interview. I then began to organise extracts under a series of headings related to my aims in exploring everyday life. These were interpreted in relation to existing research on domestic violence, everyday life and the current political climate in New Zealand.

Initially, I considered organising my material into case studies but decided against this for safety reasons. Case studies provide in-depth data about people's experiences, framing stories in a way that makes people recognisable, and 'real' to the reader. Case studies are well suited to the investigation of the nuances of everyday life (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, after discussing this with an experienced researcher in the field I decided that this posed a safety concern. Even with the use of pseudonyms and location changes case study makes it harder to protect confidentiality and therefore increases the risk of recognition and retribution. I, therefore, opted to base my analysis around shared themes across women and reported minimal background information. In this sense, my research employs thematic analysis, an approach which aims to organise participant accounts based on shared patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, I did not wish to reduce my participants' experiences to generalisations or fit them neatly into pre-defined analytic categories. Real life is messy. It defies tidy summation (Thomas, 2010).

My analysis draws on the concept of *bricolage*, which encourages a multidisciplinary approach to analysis, reflecting the complexity of everyday life and the active construction of

research methods according to the demands of the situation (Kincheloe, 2005). I drew on the notion of phronesis, the practical tacit knowledge acquired through first-hand experiences which can provide insight into surviving hardship (Thomas, 2010; Flyvbjerg, Landman, & Schram, 2012). This was particularly useful in appreciating my participants' everyday survival tactics, which often relied on instinctive feelings. I also used abduction, the process of constructing descriptions and explanations based on the way in which social actors understand their everyday lives (Blaikie, 2018; Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015; King, 2014). Bricolage allowed me to connect my participants' embodied forms of practical knowledge, such as their feelings of fear and humiliation with conceptual and theoretical work based in the conduct of life, feminist theory, and liberation psychology (cf. Hodgetts et al., 2011).

Chapter 3: Day to Day Survival

*I don't know whether it was a survival strategy, it was just,
do what you fucking have to do.*

- Diane

Diane's matter of fact sentiment regarding the everyday reality of IPV in the quote above epitomises the focus of this chapter. Survival is just what my participants did. Practices of survival were enacted and refined every day as and where needed. In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which my participants worked to ensure their safety on a day-to-day basis.

In setting the context for this chapter, it is important to note that considerable evidence of women's resourcefulness in resisting domestic violence has been documented in previous research (Robertson, 1999). Women engage in multiple acts of resistance, including fighting back physically, seeking legal assistance, and hiding money (Goodkind et al., 2004; Liang et al., 2005; Shannon et al., 2006; Abraham, 2000; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). These acts comprise elements of dynamic responses to abusive relationships (Pain, 2014). My participants often conduct their lives in ways that feature agentic acts despite their living in a constant state of anxiety and disruption. Complex and disordered daily environments are the norm and women must find ways to get through each day as they conduct their lives in the face of adversity.

I begin the analysis by exploring the state of routine anxiety and disruption my participants navigate day-by-day. I then analyse the materiality of violence and how my participants embody knowledge to inform their trial and error of different safety tactics. I go on to explore how these tactics come into play within everyday practices of childcare, food, sleep, and humour. Such mundane activities, including making breakfast, served as significant sites of resistance and survival for the women I spoke with in ways not previously documented

in scholarly research. In doing so, I provide a more nuanced understanding of women's agentic resistance within violent relationships.

Living with uncertainty: Routine anxiety and disruption

Abusive relationships create an everyday reality that is chaotic, incoherent and full of contradictions (Williamson, 2010). As such, IPV has been described as a form of everyday terrorism (Pain, 2014). Correspondingly, my participants' lives were characterised by a lack of routine and a constant sense of anxiety and foreboding. The constant disruption amplified a general sense of uncertainty among my participants. Rolinda describes her clients as living "day-by-day", or in more severe cases, "moment-to-moment." This section details the ways in which chronic anxiety and disruption become entangled in my participants' everyday lives and how they manage complexities.

Perpetrators exhibited volatile mood shifts and the promise of safety for my participants was always fickle. This reflects a deliberate strategy used by men to foster a sense of confusion, insecurity, and ultimately dependence on the targets of their abuse (Stark, 2012). Perpetrators used intermittent rewards such as affection between severe episodes of violence, which included strangulation, hanging and the attempted drowning of my participants. Random reinforcement through rewards and punishment is a mechanism of control (Herman, 1992). These behaviours were coupled with smaller acts of abuse such as throwing toast or criticising my participants' choice of clothing, acts which can appear insignificant in isolation.

The meaning behind these ostensibly trivial acts, however, is clear to my participants due to their prior experience (Stark, 2007). This volatile and contradictory state of existence leads to a harrowing and anxiety-ridden everyday life for my participants. Diane explains:

It's like. One minute they love you, like really love you. And the next minute they're fucking - trying to kick your teeth out. It's like that alone like plays - your mind. You're so fucking confused the whole time. Yeah yeah, it's kind of draining on your idea of reality or something 'cos you can't figure out what's gonna happen... And you never know like. It is like constantly walking on eggshells, you don't know what's gonna set them off, you don't know if this time they're gonna get mad at you for eating breakfast, or for eating breakfast before they got to eat breakfast or if it'll be fine.

Diane emphasises the extreme mood swings her perpetrator exhibited by contrasting his expressions of love with the act of kicking her face in. The constant sense of confusion this contradictory behaviour creates drains Diane's sense of reality. The undermining of a person's notion of reality is a key element of coercive control. Hayes and Jeffries (2016) refer to this as a 'dreamlike' state of entrapment. The unpredictability and incoherence of the 'rules' her partner set put Diane constantly on edge. She repeats, "you never know" highlighting how out of control this situation felt for her. The volatility of Diane's everyday life is grounded in her example of not knowing what outcome to expect from an essential activity such as eating breakfast. Her everyday experience of anxiety becomes normalised through her partner's exertion of control through these mundane strategies.

As I will go on to discuss, my participants, like other women who experience violence learn to play according to their partner's rules and adapt their behaviour accordingly (Williamson, 2010). However, regardless of which safety tactics my participants employ they can never be completely certain of their partner's responses. There is always a degree of uncertainty that adds to the stress and anxiety that populates everyday violence (Pain, 2014). Kiri explains:

Some days it worked, some days it didn't. Some days he'd come home, and I would have done everything that I thought in my head was okay for him, or went ok, make it ok and

I'd still end up getting a hiding. 'Cos where did I get the drugs from? Who came over? Where did you get the money from? Y'know? It was just a really unpredictable life, and so I guess I lived life really walking on eggshells.

Like Diane, Kiri invokes a life with violence characterised by the need to walk on eggshells. Despite learning known triggers and adapting her behaviour accordingly, Kiri expresses a fundamental resignation to the reality of uncertainty where events can change at any time. The effectiveness of any tactic was often time-limited and depended on other unpredictable factors. In this example, acquiring drugs could function as either a safety tactic or a trigger for her partner's violence depending on the specific circumstances. Further, the techniques that work for one woman will not necessarily work for another (Parker et al., 2016).

Fear and anxiety are necessary precursors to emotional and psychological control (Pain, 2014). Perpetrators may elicit significant fear and anxiety through their overtly erratic behaviour and more subtle threats that are understood by my participants, but which remain invisible to onlookers (Stark, 2012). To further assert their control, perpetrators may engage in monitoring behaviour and restrict aspects of women's participation in everyday practices, such as eating, sleeping and even using the toilet (Stark, 2007). Constant anxiety about the perpetrator's next move is an intentional consequence of his abuse and contributes to my participants' everyday experience of trauma. For Kiri, chronic high anxiety became her routine experience:

I guess, and I didn't know what the feeling meant back then, but today I know my feelings and I guess it was anxiety. Like really, really high anxiety.... all the time... Yeah constantly. But I didn't know that that's what it was back then... Yes, really draining and y'know like... like even to the point where if I knew he was coming home, and he'd be home soon I'd be getting like dizzy, like trying to think like-hopefully this is enough, have I done enough, yeah just really intense feelings of anxiety.

Kiri describes her day-to-day state as one of constant anxiety, to the point of physically feeling light-headed and faint. Fears regarding the extent to which she has met her partner's unstable expectations permeate her mind, reinforcing the unpredictability of her partner's violence. She goes through the actions she has taken, trying to figure out if she has done everything possible to prevent or minimise the threat of further violence. Like Diane earlier, Kiri refers to this as emotionally draining. This account also demonstrates the knowledge Kiri has gained having lived through violence and the perspective she now has on her emotional responses.

Amongst a host of other emotional and psychological consequences, living with perpetual anxiety is a common experience for women who are subjected to IPV (Anderson, Renner, & Dani, 2012; Pain, 2014). Women who have survived violence may meet the criteria for a range of mental disorders. However, chronic anxiety about future abuse is often warranted and, in many respects, a functional and realistic appraisal of danger (Browne, 1993; Dutton et al., 2006; Humphreys & Thiara, 2003). My participants' anxiety serves a tactical function. Whether a particular behaviour is adaptive or not depends on the person and situation (Thwaites & Freeston, 2005). In Kiri's case, the threat is very real. Her hyper-vigilant state, while exhausting, serves a protective purpose. Stauffer's (2017) work on the agency of homeless women who survive violence explores how prolonged anxiety leads to various adaptations in participants, such as identifying exit routes and keeping their phones down their bras. As such this chronic anxiety can be framed as a form of self-regulation, helping women preserve their safety.

Both Kiri and Diane's accounts demonstrate how the disruption of their partner's violence contributes to their sense of day-to-day anxiety. As in other situations of ongoing precarity and violence, disruption becomes a part of my participants' routines (Hodgetts et al., 2016; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Many people crave relief from the tiresome repetitive nature of managing the predictability of mundane daily routines (Cohen & Taylor, 1993). By contrast,

my participants long for this sense of predictability and seek to create structure wherever they can. Although violence and disorder became normalised, my participants still held underlying beliefs regarding how their lives were not as they should be. That is, my participants understood violent and controlling behaviour enacted by their partners to be 'normal' in their own lives but did not accept the normality of violence in terms of how things should be. Diane discusses this conflicting position:

Eventually, it seemed normal. I knew from my upbringing before foster care that it didn't happen everywhere. I knew that. But with being in the foster system and I lived on the streets and I worked on the streets. Not, "this is life for everyone", but this is life for me.

This quote reflects the contradictory nature of violence in my participants' everyday lives. Disruptive behaviour on the part of Diane's partner was in one sense familiar and normal to her and in another remained strange and unacceptable. Diane reflects on how her early upbringing without violence gave her an underlying knowledge that relationships and everyday life more generally could be different. The discrepancy between how she knew life could be and how she saw her own life going reflects the extent of her despair, but also implies a hint of optimism. This incongruence speaks to her underlying resistance to this life. The sense of how things could be serves as a distant, but stable constant which provides relief from the perpetual disruption in Diane's conduct of everyday life.

Familiarity with violence and the 'normalising' of disruption as an element shaping everyday life comes from experiences of violence that for some can be traced back to their childhoods. For example, Kiri grew up with a mother who worked for domestic violence services and this gave her an early appreciation of the nature of abuse. When she first met her partner's family, she witnessed his father assault his mother and was shocked. She explains:

He comes from a family where like domestic violence is like normalised so when I first met his mum, the first time I met his mum and dad, his dad was giving his mum a hiding. That's how I got acquainted with the family. 'Cos I was drinking with his sisters and then the mum turned up and we were drinking and then the dad turned up and gave her a hiding and I was like, "Holy shit" ... It was like "Holy fuck, um that's not okay." I wasn't really liked in the family from then, because I told him what I thought about his actions and stuff.

Kiri's quote demonstrates the complex way violence has played out in her life. She learned from her upbringing that violence was unacceptable and applied this understanding to her partner's family when she witnessed an assault. This initial episode of violence disrupts her time with her partner's sisters. Kiri resists the imposition of violence in her family life despite this making her unpopular. While Kiri clearly discerns that violence is not okay in this situation, violence becomes embedded within her own life in subtle ways. Kiri reports being initially shocked when her partner hit her, but his abuse became normalised over time through its frequency and later through having friends in similar situations. A kind of perverse common ground of IPV was established between these women's experiences. Kiri's own family are nonviolent, and she feels comfortable calling out her partner's family on their behaviour. This is much harder to confront and escape when it happens to her personally. Kiri's partner's violence became so deeply enmeshed in her day-to-day life that it became difficult for her to disentangle. The normalisation of violence is thus nuanced and relative to particular contexts. Violence is accepted as normal in her partner's family and within their social circles, but this conflicts with Kiri's own upbringing and sense of justice.

One way for my participants to distance themselves from the normalisation of violent disruption was to participate in activities which promoted routine and structure. Bridget's job as a receptionist was her 'get-away' from home and provided her with a sense of stability. At

work, she was able to distract herself by speaking to people all day. However, this routine was difficult to maintain because her partner's often erratic behaviour spilt over from the domestic domain into her working, causing further complications in her ability to retain employment. As Bridget explains:

Yeah, it was the work, otherwise it was quite sporadic, um, there wasn't really routine y'know? I remember once he just decided, "oh let's go to Napier" so we jumped in the car. I rang up work and said, "bye, yeah I'm going away for three days, sorry won't be there."

Bridget's attempt to create a predictable schedule in which she could find respite was consistently thwarted by her partner's spontaneous actions. This led to her employer perceiving her to be an unreliable staff member when in reality she prioritised her time at work and her absences were beyond her control. Diane similarly attempted to create a more stable routine and home life, particularly early on in her relationship by attending an alternative education course. However, she was unable to continue this due to her partner restricting her time outside of the house.

Everyday routines help people stabilise their days and provide a sense of belonging (Hodgetts et al., 2008). In attempting to create routines, women craft ways of being that make coping within an abusive partner a little more bearable. A key feature of their everyday lives is the disruptions to their routines that are perpetuated as part of the controlling behaviour of their partners, which in turn disrupts their sense of being.

Briefly, my participants struggled to establish and maintain routines amidst their partner's ongoing disruptive and unpredictable behaviour. As such, high levels of baseline anxiety were normative for them. So common was this experience that anxiety became like a companion, an ever-present shadow or weight that women carried with them. Women in this

study appealed to external structures such as work and education to find moments of respite that they could incorporate into their everyday lives. However, their partners actively undermined such tactics. As I explained earlier in this chapter, my participants' lives are characterised by chaos and contradiction. As such, the ongoing unpredictability and disruption explored throughout this section coexists with my participants' attempts to predict and manage their partner's behaviour. Because they have limited control over their broader environments much of their resistance comes down to day-to-day tactics. In accounting for how they respond to these situations, my participants talk about the importance of adaptation through trial and error.

Phronetic knowledge: Adapting to the materiality of violence and disruption

Day-to-day life for women who experience violence involves making constant risk assessments. Women participating in this research utilised their lived experiences to gauge the reactions of their partners and adapted their behaviours accordingly. These adaptations occur imperfectly within the context of unpredictable disruption described above. Violent triggers are not always immediately identifiable but come down to women's instinctive responses. In the following section, I explore how my participants come to acquire tacit knowledge about violence. They achieve this through observation and experiences of the materiality of violence involving everyday objects.

Survival involves constant work to manage safety. Like other women living through violence, my participants are often unable to establish whether a self-preserving tactic is safe until they try it out for themselves (Hamby, 2014). Much of their ability to remain safe my participants put down to what are referred to as base instincts. De Becker (1997) argues that women's intuition regarding their safety is the best predictor of violence. All of my participants

spoke about learning to read their partner's moods and identify certain triggers. Kiri describes this instinctual process:

I dunno, it was just like, I could see it in his eyes, like. That. I could just tell. Like I would be able to look into his eyes and know that if I said anything or did anything y'know, like I would probably get a hiding...

Kiri's experience of knowing when violence was eminent was difficult for her to communicate to me. She expresses doubt while trying to explain herself, because of the intuitive nature of the phronetic knowledge that she had developed which enabled her to anticipate and respond to the actions of her partner. Phronesis refers to practical tacit knowledge made on the basis of experience (Thomas, 2010). Kiri is speaking about something which emerges for her in an embodied form of knowing that is linked to her sense of anxiety as discussed in the previous section. It was at times difficult for my participants to convey aspects of violence, partly because it was experienced as a constant feature of their everyday lives.

To explore these difficult to express ways of knowing related to survival we can draw on the notion of mimesis (Benjamin, 1940/2002). Memesis refers to the imperfect processes of communication that often feature mimicry and approximation as women work to make themselves heard when conveying, however, imperfectly their experiences of violence and relationships. Relatedly, the knowledge Kiri has of her partner's violence is in many ways untranslatable to an outsider but is crucial to her reading dangerous situations and for her continued survival. My participants all emphasized the importance of their becoming accurate predictors of their partner's moods and actions. Central to surviving and responding tactically to such violence was the development of tacit knowledge that emerged in our interviews in relation to notions of 'reading him'. This encompasses knowledge of how to respond in ways that might defuse the situation or removing oneself from the immediate threats where possible (Weisz, Tolman, & Saunders, 2000). Such knowledge is often contingent, context-sensitive, is

experienced as a gut feeling, and is memetic in the sense of often being difficult to articulate verbally.

Over time my participants learn to estimate the risks associated with various environmental and social cues and alter their behaviours accordingly. Particular objects feature in my participants' accounts of how they read their partner's moods and anticipate their next course of action. According to Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005), the material objects people engage with in their everyday life can be understood as active agents. My participants learn to associate everyday household items with terror and violence and adjust their behaviour as a result. References to particular objects or spaces can provide a means of rendering experiences substantive or material for other social actors who may not have direct experience of hardship or doubt the validity of the accounts of people who do (Hodgetts, Groot, Garden, & Chamberlain, 2017). For example, Diane fears the kitchen and avoids spending time there because it contains numerous objects which her partner can use as weapons. The sheer noise of doing the dishes could anger her partner. This example demonstrates how violence and fear become entrenched in the mundane objects and practices that occupy my participants' lives:

Whether we were having spots [a method of smoking cannabis using small pieces of cannabis and heated knives] or doing the dishes or boiling water, I hated being in the kitchen because I knew that in the kitchen there was boiling hot water and knives and fucking hot spotting knives. And nah, the kitchen made me like... Yeah, no the kitchen was not a fun place... If I was making noise doing the dishes, or if I was vacuum cleaning and he was trying to watch TV or trying to sleep, it just made shit worse so a lot of the time I just wouldn't do it.

Diane's fear of the knives and boiling water in the kitchen reflect the "materiality of abuse" (Stark, 2012, p. 13). Such dangerous, but mundane objects are incorporated into the regular practice of doing the dishes. Through experiencing her partner's use of these objects as

instruments of violence, Diane learns to associate them with abuse, and avoids the kitchen wherever possible, reflecting her unique phronetic understanding of her partner's patterns of violence. Diane's account highlights the intrusion of violence in even the simplest of chores and the fear that accompanies my participants as they attempt to complete their everyday activities.

Diane has further reason to avoid the dishes because her partner has previously used the noise this makes to justify his violence against her. The micro-regulation of everyday practices, particularly those stereotypically associated with female roles such as domestic labour and childcare is the primary means through which perpetrators establish control (Stark, 2007). In this instance, the mundane decision often made within households of *not* doing the dishes takes on much greater significance. In the context of men's family violence and oppressive control, any such decisions taken by a woman that might disturb their partner's routine are subject to further control and violence. At one level, an untidy house can function as a marker for a chaotic home environment. Indeed, messy homes are often read as a (mother's) parenting failure by organisations such as Child Youth and Family (now Oranga Tamariki; Robertson & Masters-Awatere, 2017). However, in this situation, the lack of attendance to gendered domestic labour such as dishwashing and vacuum cleaning constitutes a tactic of survival. The material chaos of Diane's unwashed dishes comes to embody her safety and is one of many ways she protected herself from immediate danger.

The significance of material objects and particular spaces in my participants' experiences of and prediction of violence is further highlighted by Kiri. Kiri describes the way her partner used household items such as firewood and a chair as weapons against her. He also throws her personal belongings onto the street, and her decision to leave them there again takes on a greater significance. She explains:

By the end of that relationship, he was using objects like-pieces of wood, a chair, you know things like that. Or chasing me around the house y'know - throw, throwing all of my things out of the house out onto the road in front of everybody. Y'know like - like really like back then uh the violence was like nothing compared like the shame and the y'know like the feeling worthless... Nah he did it all the time - like the whole street came out to have a watch... I didn't even wanna go and pick all my stuff up like, I'll just leave it out on the road I don't wanna go out there.

This quote demonstrates how ordinary household items can embody different meanings through violence, grounding abstract elements of coercive control, such as intimidation and degradation in Kiri's material reality. The feelings normally associated with firewood and a chair for instance, such as comfort, warmth and rest are transformed by Kiri's partner's appropriation of them for violence. They become reminders of previous attacks and threats for the future. Relatedly, Hodgetts, Groot, Garden and Chamberlain (2017) explored how mundane objects, such as empty lunchboxes and soiled blankets came to represent personal feelings of anxiety and shame in the lives of impoverished families. Both the empty lunch box and a piece of firewood can come to be imbued with intense feelings of despair and are ever-present within the family home.

Beyond leaving physical marks of violence and evoking fear, her partner's practice of throwing her personal belongings into the street arouses shame in Kiri. Having her possessions strewn about the street in front of neighbours is humiliating and degrading. In throwing out her belongings physically he also throws Kiri onto the street psychologically. This behaviour is designed to target her self-worth (Stark, 2012). Like many women, Kiri experiences the humiliation and psychological violence her perpetrator exhibits as worse than the physical violence (Stark, 2007). Her partner's repeated use of this strategy reflects an attempt to wear down Kiri's resistance over time (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). Kiri does not want to be

associated with the shame these possessions embody, so to minimise the social embarrassment she leaves them on the street. As in Diane's example, leaving this mess of belongings becomes a small act of agency within a situation which seems devoid of control. Kiri's subtle tactics to resist this psychological domination reappear throughout this chapter.

In sum, my participants report acquiring a body of phronetic knowledge which helps them to read their partner's moods and adapt their practices accordingly. Women drew on the material embodiment of violence and humiliation in objects such as kitchen knives and piles of their belongings in navigating their responses. Some of the tactics my participants employed contradict patriarchal narratives about victims of violence. For example, in Diane's case, not doing the dishes was less a result of hopelessness or mental illness, and more a safety tactic. We also see how resistance to psychological abuse can manifest in novel material ways for my participants, for example, Kiri leaving the piles of her clothes on the street. The significance of mundane domestic objects such as kitchen knives and items of clothing renders specific aspects of IPV such as fear and humiliation tangible. The next section explores how my participants extend this everyday knowledge as they trial a range of behaviours in their attempts to achieve safety and preserve their dignity.

Trial and Error: Experimenting with tactics for safety and survival

Building on the phronetic safety knowledge my participants develop, they learn to identify, respond to and de-escalate violence in many ways. As is evidenced in previous research, my participants engaged in ongoing processes of trial and error over the course of their relationships in frequent attempts to remain safe, preserve their dignity and survive (Goodman et al., 2003; Meyer, Wagner, & Dutton, 2010). In this section I consider my participants' use of tactics such as listening, using euphemisms, giving perpetrator's space,

standing up for themselves, and leaving. These examples demonstrate the ongoing adaptability of my participants as they respond to changing demands through novel means.

One of the ways women can adapt to the cues around them to inform their safety behaviour is by listening. Jess, one of my staff participants, describes the way a Refugee client learned to identify her partner's likely course of action simply by the sound of his car in the driveway. Her account reveals aspects of how the everyday psychology of men's family violence is materially real as a series of intrusions within and disruptions to these women's lives:

One lady I worked with, she knew the way he drove up the driveway whether it was gonna be a good night or a bad night. So, if he zoomed up the driveway - do everything you can to keep it down, but if he drove up the driveway - normal. So, they'll watch, monitor and predict his behaviour, as soon as he looks or comes back in and then they'll settle their kids, make sure the kids don't make any noise, anything they shouldn't be doing and then cater to his needs.

Jess's client was able to identify the likely mood of her partner simply by the sound and speed of the car coming up the driveway and adjust her behaviour accordingly. The sound of the approaching car and the vehicle itself became social actors in this context; ones that can elicit extreme fear or relative safety depending on the occasion. Jess's client then adapts her responses to match the specific requirements of the situation. One reading of her client's actions is compliance. However, such events can also be understood as exemplifying agentic tactics of survival that are not perfect and that also carry some risk. This woman did not have control over the situation, she could not guarantee the children will settle, she cannot be sure of her partner's exact mood, but she can use all the available information to prepare herself for the most likely scenario. Re-examining the meaning behind acts of apparent compliance allows

multiple forms of agency to emerge (Mahmood, 2005/2012; Hutchings, 2013; Mannell et al., 2016).

It is significant that Jess refers to the presence or absence of violence using the euphemisms good night or bad night. The implications of good and bad are readily apparent to my other staff participants. The use of coded language means women experiencing violence are able to avoid going into painful and potentially dangerous detail while alerting others to the situation. Rolinda similarly describes how her clients will use euphemisms when seeking help from their partner's family members, for example:

Ringing up his mother, ringing up his father, or his brother, or someone really close, and saying "Look he's not having a good day". So, she's not saying what he's doing, "he's not having a good day, are you able to come and have a talk with him?"

This quote demonstrates how clients can navigate delicate conversations with their perpetrator's family members by appealing to euphemisms. Women in such situations are able to ask for help while reducing the likelihood of conflict with both their partner and their partner's family. Euphemisms are one of many tools employed by members of subordinate groups in order to convey sensitive information without backlash (Scott, 1985).

Surviving violence on a day-to-day basis also involves navigating and making changes within typically mundane situations under extreme circumstances. My participants often invoke everyday situations that would be recognisable to most people and then populate these with extraordinary events that disrupt the normality of the situation and foreground the terror to which they are subjected. They then demonstrate their agency in creating novel adaptations that defuse or at least render these situations less extreme and more habitable for them and their

children. Bridget recalls an incident where her partner beats her while she tries to flee in the car to his parents' house:

I said, "ok obviously you're pissed off I'm gonna go for a walk, give you some space". He chased me down the road, got me in the car, gave me a hiding all the way to his Mum's house, in the car - so this is in public as well, y'know I'm trying to pull up the hand brake and get out, he's just, "I'm gonna fucking kill you." We get to his Mum's place, he's pulling me out of the car by my hair, um, then his Nan, 'cos his nan lives there as well, started going off at me, and that I'm immature and that I need to stop causing this shit and I needa pull my head outta my ass. And that morning I had gone and gotten a flu jab, dropped our kid at kindy, came back and started cleaning and he'd just got up in a foul mood.

Bridget attempts to diffuse the situation by adopting the tactic of giving her partner time and space to cool down. When this fails, she still manages to get inside the car, operate a vehicle while being assaulted, and successfully make it to her in-law's home, all the while avoiding an almost inevitable traffic accident. Bridget situates violence as part of the fabric of daily life and as entangled within what are for many people mundane tasks like driving to the in-laws or cleaning the house. This embedding within the conduct of everyday life brings violence into focus in terms of its pervasiveness. Extracts such as the one above speak to issues of how threats and control texture these lives, rendering them virtually uninhabitable. More than speaking to, such exemplars scream to the adversity faced by my participants and the ways in which men's violence enters, engulfs and can destroy women's lives. We can see in such accounts why women living under these conditions are constantly anxious and need to find inventive ways to just get by. They are living under tyranny.

As was touched on in relation to employment in a previous section, violence spills over from the domestic realm of everyday life. IPV pervades multiple spheres of my participants'

lives. It is not simply that Bridget is assaulted in the car. It is the exacerbation of such events by a family member who blames Bridget for the ‘drama’ caused by her partner’s violence. This type of situation was a common experience for my participants who were variously blamed by their family members and flatmates for causing these situations. In addition to dealing with everyday violence, women must often overcome victim-blaming stereotypes to access support (Meyer, 2016; Morgan & Coombes, 2016). Exasperated, Bridget lists all the tasks she has successfully completed that day despite this criticism, highlighting her ability to mother and complete everyday activities despite the violence. This example brings to life the necessity for my participants’ continuous use of multiple tactics of trial and error to survive their everyday lives.

As should be evident by this point in the chapter, surviving violence involves consistent, active efforts by women after trialling multiple tactics throughout their relationships (Anderson & Saunders, 2003). Agency can be ambiguous, and tactics are not necessarily associated with obvious beneficial outcomes for women (Bordonaro & Payne, 2012; Pells et al., 2016). In some instances, women’s increasing agency had negative consequences such as an escalation in physical violence. For Wendy, she found her strength increased as she got older and she felt confident asserting herself more, even if this had repercussions for her later:

...I grew one [a voice]. As I got older in the relationship, I got a bit stronger and realised that I actually have a voice...I wouldn't ask him if I could go to a party, I'd just go to a party and then go down to the pad after the party... So, in that sense, I started to get some sort of sense of self.... And actually that would have been the first time he broke my nose, when I turned up and I was meant to be there – ‘cos it was before cell phones and so yeah I got down to the pad and I had meant to be there at nine and I didn't get there until around one am and um it was a very sneaky backhand where no one could see, even though I don't think there would have been

anyone that would have stood up for me ...It wasn't until I started resisting those things as I got older that the physical violence started so it'd be like kicks to the stomach...I think it was just 'cos I was getting older. I wasn't that 19 or 21-year- old. I was ya know getting 24, 25, sort of had some sense of sort of "fuck you" [laughing].

To gain a sense of power over her situation Wendy trials increasingly assertive acts. Even though she experiences backlash for this, she continues to engage in these acts throughout the relationship. Wendy's increasing resistance to her partner's controlling behaviour seems counterintuitive on one level as he responds with increasingly physical acts of violence. However, she clearly gains a sense of power and self through her assertiveness. This exemplifies the contradictions present in my participants' daily lives. Resistance and agency do not manifest in predictable ways, nor necessarily in ways that are beneficial to women from an outside perspective.

Stauffer (2017) also proposes this observation with her work on the resistance of homeless women. Survivors demonstrate their agency in actively sabotaging interactions with untrusted agencies, including the police. In doing so, they can exercise some power against institutional violence, while at times also limiting their ability to receive support. For Wendy, holding onto her sense of self became increasingly more important than the fallout of physical violence. It is almost as if she is testing her partner, to see how much she can 'get away with'. The potential for harm cannot be overstated. It is common for abusive partners to escalate violence as they feel their control diminishing, and this is often cited in cases of lethal violence (FVDRC, 2017). Wendy's continued rejection of her partner's demands suggests that the sense of power, control, and voice she gained from these instances preserved her life in other ways. In trialling these acts of resistance, she is trialling her life as a woman living without violence.

Beyond surviving their immediate circumstances my participants appeared to apply the process of trial and error to leaving their partners in both overt and more subtle ways. Surviving

violence involves consistent, active efforts by women after trialling multiple tactics throughout their relationships (Anderson & Saunders, 2003). Women often begin leaving their relationships on a psychological level well before they leave physically. Leaving is a complex practice involving multiple decisions and actions over time (Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1998). Sophie describes observing the way one of her client's actions embodied this process:

I had one woman when I was at the house, every couple of months you'd go oh here she comes. She'd come in for a couple of weeks, her and the kids and then she'd go back and then one day - but the breaks in between were getting closer and closer. And I remember saying to Betty and Whaea, "this girl's ready to leave soon". But I think when they do, when they do decide to leave, it's probably one of the biggest decisions they've ever had to, 'cos sometimes they'll walk away with nothing.

Sophie's client initially began to take breaks at Refuge, staying for a couple of weeks at a time then returning home. She used this time and space to replenish her strength so that she could face her home life once more. This continued practice of leaving and returning to her partner became increasingly frequent until eventually, she left permanently. It was as if the previous times had been practice and gave her the strength and confidence to go through with the separation. This account is consistent with the literature, which finds that women often leave for shorter periods before achieving long-term separation (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005). Moments of control and resistance may bolster women's sense of self and contribute to further acts later (Madhok et al., 2013).

However, as I have noted in the introduction to this thesis, leaving is also an extremely dangerous time for women. This can have immediate and far-reaching consequences. For example, Sophie discussed one client who was still being subjected to the financial and psychological abuse of court cases six years after leaving her partner. This phenomenon is widely reported and sometimes referred to as 'paper abuse' (Miller & Smolter, 201). Because

perpetrators often have greater financial resources, and because of widespread acceptance of gender stereotypes which discredit women's accounts of violence, legal pathways present a socially acceptable means for men to continue to abuse their victims (Elizabeth et al., 2012a; Laing, 2017). Despite these risks, Kiri left her partner on numerous occasions. Her experience highlights the reality of housing instability and the heightened risk of violence (Hamby, 2014; Sharp-Jeffs et al., 2018). She explains:

Like in one year, I had seven different houses y'know 'cos moving and leaving and moving back to my parents' house and then getting a house and then him coming back and then getting a hiding, y'know and just the same shit happening.

Kiri demonstrates her agency in leaving multiple times, however, this does not prevent her partner from finding her and continuing to abuse her. We see the incongruity between leaving a house and leaving an abusive relationship (Ponic et al., 2001). As with Wendy, Kiri's agency in leaving has a contradictory impact on her safety, giving her a temporary sense of control, but ultimately this is not enough to prevent future violence. This highlights the problem with an empowerment-based model. While Kiri has agency within her everyday life, she cannot control her partner's decision to continue to abuse her. Because overt manifestations of leaving carry such risks I argue that the subtler everyday ways my participants resist violence throughout these chapters constitute part of the leaving process, functioning similarly as moments of practice. Through these tactics my participants leave in a small way all the time.

My participants trialled a range of tactics to delay or avoid violence throughout everyday situations. These comprised subtle acts which utilised their observational skills, for example, listening out for the car when their partner was coming home from work, as well as more direct tactics, such as getting into the car to flee the violence or directly confronting their partner. Through such tactics, women maintained some sense of normality, responding in self-preserving ways that at times were associated with backlash, and in other cases protected their

children (e.g., silence and not answering back). In doing so my participants ‘got on with life’ to the best of their abilities given the constant threats they were experiencing. In such circumstances, no tactic is perfect, and compromise and adaptation become necessities of survival. Tactics that traditionally constitute resistance such as leaving had varying consequences for women in this study, both appearing to function as a form of practice for leaving permanently while also being associated with an escalation of violence.

Because such overt actions are associated with violence, I argue that my participants enact and practice leaving through the subtler everyday tactics described above and in the following analyses. Throughout these chapters, I will discuss numerous examples of my participant’s everyday resistance from laughing it off, to drugging partners and fantasizing about a different life. These tactics often occur within mundane everyday practices and help preserve my participants’ sense of humanity, which is crucial to their long-term survival.

Completing mundane activities such as grocery shopping or taking the children to school becomes enormously challenging under the constraints of coercive control raised by the examples in this section. However, the completion of these everyday tasks was considered a given, and as unexceptional to the women I spoke with. These everyday activities often occur within my participant’s homes, a place generally overlooked as a site of work and resistance (True, 2012). The following sections explore how my participants respond to violence in the context of their day-to-day routines, through practices such as childcare, eating, sleeping and black humour. These mundane practices prove to be sites of everyday resistance and relief.

Mothering

My participants are all primary caregivers and must support their children within the constraints of both violence and broader gendered expectations of mothering and homemaking.

Women continue to bear the disproportionate responsibility for household labour, work which is unremunerated and undervalued, and essentially invisible as a result (True, 2012). Child care may be a conventionally female job, but this does not negate the agency of my participant's work in this area. My participants exercise agency every day by pursuing the values that are important to them, and mothering is central to their practices (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). This section details the tactics my participants adapt to carry out childcare within the constraints of violent relationships. I consider the expectations of mothers living through violence, the imperfect reality of mothering within violent relationships, and the tactics my participants adopt to achieve moments of family time. To contextualise these experiences, I first outline some of the current research and practice on mothering in the context of domestic violence.

A deficit-based model of mothering frames much of the discourse examining women's experiences of violence. Agencies such as Oranga Tarimiki and the Family Violence Court frequently hold mothers accountable for the violence perpetrated against them (Morgan & Coombes, 2016). This is exemplified in the application of 'failure to protect legislation'. Common Law in Aotearoa stipulates that a parent has a duty to protect their child from the violence of another (Midson, 2014). That is, they are culpable of a crime if they fail to take reasonable steps to protect a child from the risk of death, grievous bodily harm, or sexual assault. Attempting to prevent violence against a child can be lethal for both the person intervening and the child. However, it is socially expected that a mother will do more than a father in protecting their child, even if she risks death in doing so (Jacobs, 1997). Aotearoa's 'failure to protect' legislation and other comparable international laws are ostensibly gender neutral. However, they are almost exclusively applied to women (Fugate, 2001). This is unsurprising given parenting continues to be a gendered practice and IPV is predominantly committed against women (FVDRC, 2017). Mothers are often constructed as hostile and acting against their children's interests by the organisations described above if they do not promote

contact with the father, even where there is evidence of violence (Harrison, 2008; Morgan & Coombes, 2016). This situation places my participants in a contradictory position where they fear the consequences of reporting violence but may be punished by government agencies if they do not. Rolinda explains how victim-blaming attitudes and her client's heightened childcare accountability discourages them from reporting violence to social services:

Oranga Tamariki, they put a lot of onus on her to keep the children safe from his violence which absolutely makes no sense. But that's about her being culpable, for his actions. Where he's the Father and actually he should be held solely responsible... So, is she gonna report to the police? 'Cos the police will report to Child Youth and Family after an incident and then she gets blamed, because we get told, like in our ISR (Integrated Safety Response) we know, then she'll be told, "well you never rung the police...So Oranga Tamariki is gonna come and do an assessment because it's obvious you have a lack of insight." This is the phrase that they use, "a lack of insight into the impacts of violence on you and yourself or your children." That is actually not true.

Rolinda outlines the contradictory position her clients must navigate. They fear to lose their children if they report violence to the police, but equally, they may be called unfit parents if they do not report. This leads my participants to be particularly tactical when navigating social services and naturally fosters a degree of cynicism about their ability to provide genuine help. It also encourages them to rely on their own safety tactics to survive violence as I will continue to demonstrate throughout these chapters.

The approach Rolinda outlines places responsibility on her clients, instead of the perpetrators and assumes that they can somehow prevent the violence committed against them. Such an approach draws on the empowerment approach to violence against women. In this context, empowerment theory is informed by neoliberal values of individual responsibility. It

frames mothers as being in control and able to prevent their children from being exposed to the violence of their partners (Frazier & Falmagne, 2014; FVDRC, 2017). Women who choose to stay with their partners are then interpreted as complicit in the abuse and as putting their children at risk. While my participants exercise agency within violent relationships, agency is not equivalent to control and women living through violence cannot control the abuse committed against them or their children (Midson, 2014). My participants live complex, demanding daily lives and the attempt to minimise or prevent violence cannot be their only priority. More generally, their compliance with abusive regimes can be understood as part of a long-term strategy for survival. That is, my participants engage in ongoing tactics which influence how they conduct everyday domestic practices such as childcare in ways that preserve their lives. The constraints of violence and the competing demands that are placed upon these women mean they do so in imperfect ways.

My participants contend with both the violence of perpetrators and misplaced accountability for violence from organisations such as Oranga Tamariki while raising their children. None report their partners reliably contribute to the day-to-day housework or childcare, rendering them as single mothers by default. As such, Wendy laughs in response to my question around parenting duties, reflecting how self-evident her role as primary caregiver is:

Yeah, Fuck yeah. Excuse me yeah [laughing]. Yeah. It's like. I'd always been a single parent even though I'd been with my sons' Dads for a little while after they were born I was always, there was no one there helping me.

It is this self-evidence that minimises the visibility of the significant amount of work my participants are expected to do even in the context of ongoing violence. Ongoing work such as feeding, washing, playing, and putting children to bed rests on their shoulders, and these

women complete such tasks, however imperfectly, within disruptive, violent and anxiety fuelled day-to-day lives that are uncondusive to childcare.

My key point in this analysis is not that women living with IPV are able to parent to the standards of the ideal nuclear family. Rather, as feminist scholars before me have argued, these standards are unrealistic. Given the duress my participants are under they demonstrate considerable agency and strength in completing parenting activities period (Middleton, 2006). Ruddick (2002) argues that idealised motherhood myths can result in mothers losing confidence in their best efforts. Not openly exploring the everyday reality of mothering under violence, with the fears, struggles and human inadequacies which this brings, would perpetuate the idea that there is an easy and natural way to mother (Maushart, 2000). Throughout their accounts, my participants provided grounded depictions of the dilemmas that come with mothering in the extraordinary context of violence and abuse. For example, Wendy's partner is part of a gang and he is obligated to spend several nights a week staying at the gang headquarters, or 'pad'. Wendy has her own home where she and her son spend most of their time, but she also spends time staying with her partner. Wendy balances nights at the pad with looking after their son. In doing so, she provides an example of this imperfect situation:

He was a baby you know. It's not a place to have a baby really, in the middle of a biker gang. He would stay down there. In the middle of a party and I'd be going down and checking him every half an hour or hour he was still asleep. He'd be in his room yeah in his bassinet.

For context, gang members spend a great deal of their time at the pad drinking, consuming drugs and watching porn. At times Wendy witnessed other members being openly violent towards their girlfriends in this setting. This is clearly not an ideal situation for a child. Wendy criticises her decision to leave her baby sleeping at the pad while the gang are having a party. Within the context of ongoing violence and disruption, the extract above can be read as an

example which demonstrates Wendy caring for her child to the best of her abilities under difficult circumstances. Notable is the absence of her partner from this account, parenting is solely her responsibility. It is a realistic account of mothering even if the broader environment falls outside our expectations of an ideal family home.

Ultimately, Wendy demonstrates her dedication and care in several ways. She secures a bedroom in which her baby can sleep. She provides him with a bassinet. And she repeatedly checks on the welfare of her child. None of these actions are easy within the context of a violent relationship, where her partner attempts to control her every move. By keeping her child in a bedroom downstairs Wendy can keep him close by and yet away from the immediate danger of the party. Her efforts to, however imperfectly, care for her child are extraordinary given the violence and chaos that she endures daily. Rather than demonising mothers for failing to protect their children from the violence of others, these efforts should be acknowledged and supported.

Hegemonic ideals of mothering and the trope of the ‘bad mother’ are so strong, that it is unsurprising that Wendy, like many other mothers is critical of her own childcare practices (Dunkerley, 2017). Kiri similarly expresses regret regarding her childcare practices:

Even when you're in quite like a low spot and stuff it was still like-well the children need to be taken care of...Back then it was like y'know I did them, I treated them like they were chores and that they just need to be done. Do them over, do them real quick, get them over and done with...yeah I did them, but I didn't do them properly.

This exemplar highlights both Kiri's criticism of her mothering abilities as well as her resolution that childcare work must be completed despite any personal problems. Kiri recognises that despite the significant daily barriers she faces she is still the best caregiver her children have, and it is essential that she meet their needs. Kiri makes reference to the necessity of childcare in a ‘that's just the way it is’ manner. In this context, her responsibility for their

care is simply presented as a given. Such self-positioning is typical of my participants. Kiri criticises herself for treating childcare like a chore. However, the repetitive tasks involved in caring for children naturally take on a chore like quality even for mothers who are not living with violence.

The notion that mothers should be self-sacrificing and find joy in menial tasks, such as changing nappies stems from a patriarchal myth based on the naturalness of motherhood (Ruddick, 2002). Attempting to live up to this idea of motherhood leads many mothers to experience guilt, shame, isolation, and anxiety (Sutherland, 2010; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Henderson, Harmon, & Newman, 2016). These feelings were repeatedly invoked by my participants as they contended with violence in addition to the chaotic practice of mothering (Lapierre, 2010). Kiri's disappointment with her mothering throughout this time, therefore, needs to be considered in relation to the hegemonic ideals of motherhood and the punitive institutional responses to mothers discussed earlier. That Kiri and so many other women can carry out any parenting duties within such volatile circumstances is evidence of her ongoing endurance, resilience and determination (Mullender et al., 2002).

There is no question that my participants struggle with parenting amidst ongoing violence and within less than ideal circumstances. However, their ability to care for their children at all is remarkable. Radford and Hester (2006) found that despite immense challenges and stressors, most of the mothers in their study coped remarkably well with their parenting duties amidst ongoing violence. Further to completing routine caring duties, my participants also work to create moments of joy with their children amidst the chaos of everyday life. They actively manage their environments, making use of whatever resources they have to create a stable family life despite the disruption of violence. These small moments of fun help women approximate a 'normal' family life and carry on through periods of extreme hardship. Bridget discusses one of the ways she would create quality family time:

Setting up the lounge like a movie theatre, all lying down on the beds, got our popcorns, our snacks. Ya know just doing that really quality time together. And we-me and him ya know did make sure we done it regularly too. Ya know, I was about ya know making, making memories, positive memories for my kids so yeah...Ya know we had those moments at home as well-just spending good quality raw time together.

Creating quality family time amidst disjointed routines and her partner's unpredictable actions is a struggle for Bridget, but one she endeavours to maintain. She reproduces the family ritual of going to the movies within the intimacy of her house. With a few minor changes to the furniture and some snacks, Bridget creates an affordable family activity that creates a sense of security and fun for her family. These moments contribute to her sense of accomplishment as a parent and help sustain her. She works to create positive memories for herself and her family, perhaps hoping to balance out some of the more negative experiences her children have witnessed. Bridget's pursuit of leisure activities with her children can be read as a tactic of resistance against the broader chaos and violence of her daily life. She actively restructures her environment to create a safe enclave for a fixed length of time, even if it is only the length of the movie.

Family bonding activities are commonly reported in studies of mothering in the context of domestic violence. Lapierre (2010) for example, describes one participant taking brief opportunities without her partner to play in the garden with her children. Radford and Hester (2006) report a mother taking her daughter regularly to the park and playgroup to help create a sense of normality. Leisure activities and family play, especially where these involve nature or social interaction, help buffer people from the adverse effects of stress (Mannell, 2011; Coyl-Shepherd & Hanlon, 2013; Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011). Rather than simply serving as a type of avoidance, leisure activities give people the space to cultivate hope and optimism (Kleiber,

Hutchinson, & William, 2002). Wendy similarly takes time out with her son when her partner is not around:

Oh, we used to love making playdough, especially in winter because the house was so cold that would be a great way to warm our hands up. We'd go into the garden and chase butterflies. It was one of his favourite things to do was to watch me chase butterflies. He used to crack up laughing. We used to play with his Hot Wheels cars. He had a cool little garage and I used to love just, it was a way of me having another childhood 'cos I'd missed out on so much. But just hang out. Just be together. We'd go dig in the garden, plant stuff, plant plants...We'd go for walks a lot 'cos we lived out in the Coromandel, so there was a little forest walk near the coast. So, we'd often go there, and just hang out...Making playdough was one of our favourite things to do.

Wendy enjoys making playdough with her child, particularly in Winter as a way for them to keep warm while spending time together simply playing. This extract highlights both Wendy's precarious financial situation and her creative agency within such constraints. Playdough involves actively moulding and creating something new from old, ambiguous materials. This practice of reworking existing material into novel creations echoes Wendy's efforts to rework her life with her son. Activities such as chasing butterflies similarly allow Wendy to create imaginative memories with her son where they are the main actors. The only sense of unpredictability is in the butterfly's next movement. Such spontaneity is safe and fun in stark contrast to time spent with her partner which is dominated by his volatility. Wendy also finds free ways to spend time with her son by making use of the local natural surroundings, such as the forest walk.

I expand in more detail upon the significance of nature and gardening as a particular form of respite in the next chapter. For now, it is useful to note that playing with her son is a way for Wendy to relive and recreate her own childhood. It is also an opportunity for them to

make up for the time they have lost due to her partner's violence. For people living in hardship, continuing to engage in leisure practices, however insignificant they may seem can be a fundamental way to preserve a sense of humanity (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2016).

Wendy and Bridget's pursuit of leisure activities with their children undermines their partner's ongoing efforts to control and isolate them. The findings of previous research are particularly relevant here. Part of socially isolating women involves cutting off access to leisure activities (Stark, 2012). One study found over a third of women living in a shelter had not experienced any recreational activities within the past month (Forte, Franks, Forte, & Grigsby, 1996). While leisure activities may not directly remove violence from women's lives, they can improve their quality of life and thus their motivation to survive. In a study of homeless people's use of leisure spaces, Hodgetts and Stolte (2016) found participants used simple leisure activities such as taking the bus or going to the library to temporarily enjoy a respite from their otherwise deprived and strenuous daily lives. My participants also work to create affordable moments of leisure with their children, and this helps them maintain a connection to life outside of violence. Working to create small moments of fun, laughter and normality demonstrates resistance and gives my participants something to survive for.

Mothering in the context of a violent relationship poses unique challenges for my participants. They must contend with both the violent controlling practices of their partners and the institutional victim-blaming narratives of agencies such as Oranga Tamariki. Despite these constraints, my participants consistently manage their children's daily care without the support of partners and even manage to create moments of fun and leisure with their children. In the context of IPV, my participants' ability to provide this care is remarkable. However, it is considered the bare minimum to my participants, reflecting how deeply ingrained the hegemonic ideals of mothering can be. The prioritisation of children's care comes through further in my participants' accounts of eating practices.

Shopping and eating

For the women in my study, eating was often associated with fear, poverty and violence. The ordinary practice of having breakfast, for example, could involve having a hot cup of coffee or a toasted sandwich thrown at you. However, like other everyday practices eating was also a site of resistance for my participants. Despite the violence being perpetrated against them, these women continued to buy groceries, prepare meals, feed their children, and procure takeaways. While their experiences may not reproduce the stereotypical ideal of a nuclear family sitting down at the dinner table, the fundamental point is that my participants continue to find ways to make ends meet. Food-related activities encompass a broad range of practices from acquiring ingredients to cleaning up. Embedded within these visible activities is an expansive range of related tacit knowledge and skills (Delormier, Frohlich, & Potvin, 2009). This section details the tactics my participants adopt as they navigate grocery shopping, create opportunities to eat, compensate for limited food, and undermine their partner's dominance. Their experiences touch on issues of food insecurity, isolation, mobility, and resistance.

One of the primary everyday practices affected by violence for my participants is supermarket shopping. The supermarket is a particularly stressful environment because of the amount of public interaction, particularly where participants have visible injuries. Rolinda stresses that a trip to the supermarket has the capacity to re-traumatise her clients. However, if they do not go, she queries, "who's gonna do the shopping?" The implication is that it is her clients or no one. To manage this, my participants find ways to minimise threats such as social confrontation in their everyday lives. Bridget, for example, limits her supermarket shopping to an 'as needed' basis. Kiri tactically avoids trips to the supermarket altogether, preferring the privacy of a local dairy (small convenience store selling groceries, newspapers and other everyday items in Aotearoa):

Nah, I wouldn't go to like Pak'nSave, I would go to like the dairy, I would rather spend like hundreds of dollars at the dairy and 'cos at the time we were dealing drugs too so we had money. But, ya know, I would have rather gone to a dairy than Pak'nSave where like there were shitloads of people ...Maybe I bump into someone, but like the dairy owner knew me, he knew pretty much knew our whole family all that sort of stuff. So, it was like ok let's go down there...I just couldn't do public places, like, ya know, some days I couldn't even, barely even, ya know go out the front door.

Kiri's account demonstrates both the widespread impact of violence on day-to-day life and the agency my participants demonstrate within these constraints in their daily decision making. Kiri prefers to buy her groceries from the comparably expensive dairy because there is less chance she will run into people there. She is not restricted financially and considers the added monetary expense worth it for the peace of mind that shopping at the dairy provides. The mere notion of going out into the public is daunting for Kiri, who wishes to avoid crowds of people, because of the potential judgement and questions she will face. Therefore, she minimises the amount of contact she will have with the outside world by choosing a space which is small and familiar. The dairy owner knows her situation, and she does not need to justify herself there.

The supermarket is an intimidating space for Kiri and several other clients with whom refuge staff work. Sophie notes that her clients generally prefer avoiding crowds, particularly if they have visible injuries. The dairy provides a safe alternative for these and further reasons. Sophie, for example, recounts how one of her clients would buy groceries at the dairy because if she went to the supermarket her partner would accuse her of sleeping with the employees there. Accusations of infidelity are a common feature of abusive relationships, with perpetrators using them to justify 'rules,' and physical violence (Stark, 2007; FVDRC, 2017). This account further demonstrates how control transcends spatial boundaries. Perpetrators do not need to be present for women to feel their presence throughout their day-to-day interactions.

Going to the dairy to avoid confrontation at home illustrates both the micro-regulation of client's everyday activities as well as the use of conscious survival tactics. Control is deeply embedded in my participant's daily lives and this requires significant decision making around apparently mundane chores such as grocery shopping. Williamson (2010) similarly describes an incident where a participant's washing machine breaks down and she is consumed with anxiety. On calling a repairman previously her partner accused her of having an affair with him and assaulted her. However, her partner had also accused her of 'laziness' in the past and assaulted her, so she did not wish to leave the washing machine broken. Survival in these types of situations does not necessarily mean escaping violence. Often this is not possible. Instead, survival comes down to identifying the response that will likely invoke the least harm. Eating similarly requires my participants to adapt to difficult circumstances to achieve the outcome they perceive as best.

Food was problematized for my participants. Eating too much or too often was associated with violence. Withholding, controlling or limiting access to food are all forms of violence against women. Worldwide, women often eat last, least and of the lowest quality (Bellows, Lemke, Jenderedjian, & Scherbaum, 2015). While this severely constrained my participant's ability to meet their nutritional needs, they managed their meagre resources to survive food insecurity. Lentz (2018) refers to these types of decisions as a form of burdened agency. That is, women sometimes make conscious decisions to limit the amount of food they consume to avoid violence or to privilege their children's needs. While constrained they still exercise agency (cf. Sartre, 1948).

Such was the case in my study. In the interests of feeding their families, Jess and Sophie described how Refuge clients will often sacrifice their own nutritional health. A Mothers' base kai (Māori word meaning food) could simply be bread and butter, offering little to no nutritional value. This is an act of maternal care within the context of violence and insecurity.

Weetbix is utilised by three of my participants as a quick and cheap dinner for themselves and their children when financial resources are limited. This is a common tactic for families dealing with food insecurity in Aotearoa (Graham et al., 2018). Weetbix serves as a ‘filler food’, similar to the way bread may be incorporated into meals to stave off hunger (De Certeau, Giard, & Mayol, 1998). The Weetbix box comes to reflect both everyday resistance to poverty and the ordinariness of food insecurity in Aotearoa. Wendy also teaches her son how to get his own Weetbix once he can reach the cupboard and pour milk. This allows her to sleep in until around 8 am. As her sleep is severely affected by violence this extra rest helps Wendy cope with the rest of the day’s events. Feeding herself requires Wendy to be more tactful. She describes one tactic she uses to ensure she gets a meal while staying at the gang pad with her partner:

I'd cook breakfast because that gave me a chance to get something to eat. So, I would offer to poach - “do you want a poached egg?” So then I could eat as well. Otherwise, I'd go without. Just wouldn't eat.

While down at the pad, Wendy does not have the same freedom she has in her own home to eat when she pleases. This is not her space and she is not able to consume food as she likes. Rules around eating are used to reinforce the power dynamic between my participants and their partners. To get around this Wendy offers to cook other members of the gang food, which permits her to eat breakfast with them. This is not an act of genuine kindness or generosity on her part, but a tactic to ensure her own needs are met. Wendy adopts a hegemonic gendered role and makes use of the social practice of sharing food to provide for herself.

Eating is a fundamental aspect of daily social life and is closely tied to building and maintaining familial relationships (Delormier et al., 2009). Wendy uses the social bonding aspect of eating to her advantage. Diane similarly has restrictions imposed on her diet. She learns not to eat until dinner time as her partner gets angry if he sees her eating before then. He uses her unemployment to justify this practice. While Diane’s partner prevents her from leaving

the house and therefore earning an income, he also uses his resultant financial power against her to control her eating habits. When Diane leaves the relationship, she weighs 37kgs. Diane compensates for the restricted food by consuming coffee and smoking cigarettes:

Yeah, we had coffee. I drunk a lot of coffee - I still drink a lot of coffee... And coffee and cigarettes it's the best way to make you not hungry-besides meth, it's the best way to cut your appetite. So, I could get through for days with just coffee and cigarettes. Like I said I did eat, it's not like I spent a year with no food, but it wasn't you know - like one meal a day if I was lucky.

I then asked when she would drink coffee and what she thought she liked about it, and Diane replied:

Just the second I got up - all day. It was like oh the coffee's finished, pour another coffee. I dunno I've always drunk coffee. Like even now, caffeine doesn't do anything to me. Like as far as energy or-caffeine doesn't do shit. But I just like the taste. Like I've always liked coffee. And I've always liked having something...hot to drink? I don't know. I don't know what it was. I think it was more habit than anything. What am I gonna do? Have a coffee. Oh, look I've still got half a coffee. Oh well, make another coffee. I think it fills up some gaps. It's like - there's a gap in my day-coffee. And like, 'cos there were so many fucking gaps it's just. Coffee, coffee, coffee. And I'm still like that. Like if I'm at home. Even if it's a busy day and I'm out at work or whatever, I'll drink five or six cups of coffee a day. If I'm at home, especially if there's a full pot or something - every time I walk past, I'm just like-yip-top it up. More coffee.

Dianne discusses how a combination of coffee and cigarettes allows her to survive longer without food. While meals are unpredictable and sparse, Diane makes use of this one aspect of

food that remains unregulated. Diane frequently consumes coffee, despite noting a lack of stimulant effects. Drinking coffee is a regular part of her day-to-day life and helps structure her otherwise chaotic days. Coffee helps fill the uncertain gaps that violence and disruption create and gives her days a glimpse of normality. This practice also offers her time to reflect and step back from the reality of her life.

Although Diane drinks her coffee alone at home it is worth considering the social role of coffee in her life. Coffee plays a significant role as a ritual and shared social experience. As with anxiety, perhaps for Diane, her coffee acts as a companion or a friend she can consistently rely on. She is severely isolated; therefore, coffee and its associated social significance may be a way for her to reproduce this social practice without the traditional actors. Coffee, tea and cigarettes all share social meaning and these relationships remain even if other humans are not present.

Having a cup of coffee with someone has also become a euphemism for talking with them (Stroeback, 2013). Coffee signals that people can engage in relaxed conversation. For this reason, I always shared coffee and kai with my participants before beginning my interviews. Coffee breaks can serve as an informal coping strategy for workers to deal with the draining and emotionally taxing nature of work settings and help foster resilience (Stroeback, 2013). Lee (2001), for example, found nurses used their morning tea breaks to express their emotions and cultivate social support. Similarly, Diane can be seen to use coffee breaks to create a sense of comfort and stability in daily life.

When Diane does manage to access a meal it is often consumed in an ‘on-the-go’ fashion. She describes often eating in the car *on the way* to somewhere:

*It was sort of like grab some food-it wasn't dinner, it was like-grab a bowl of cereal.
Or grab something and sit wherever. A lot of the time it was in the car on the way to*

somewhere we'd just stop and get BK (Burger King) or, whatever, but it wasn't like family dinner. Nothing like that. A lot of the time it was dinner over the fucking stove waiting for the knives to heat up, so we could have spots.

The on-the-go nature of eating reflects the unpredictability of Diane's life with violence. She talks about dinner as an incidental event that generally co-occurs with other more important needs. Eating is a practical necessity, but the meal ritual takes on a casual nature and becomes enmeshed in other activities. Diane and her partner still have a family dinner ritual, it just differs from the stereotypical format. The static nature of the dinner table is replaced by the fluid environment of the car journey. Rather than sitting at the table, Diane and her partner stand over the stove while preparing knives for spots. Again, we see issues of temporality and mobility embedded within these accounts, highlighting the ongoing disruption but also revealing how my participants move with this disruption to secure their basic needs.

So far, these accounts have demonstrated some of the subtler ways in which my participants resist and work around the restrictions their partners impose on their eating. These allow them to buy groceries, eat on small budgets under constraints, and withstand periods of relative starvation. These tactics provide my participants with tangible outcomes and ultimately ensure their survival. Further to these examples, meal preparation can be a site of a different type of resistance, one for the sole purpose of my participant's enjoyment. Wendy uses her partner's meal preparation to get revenge on him:

I would sometimes spit in his food, spit in his coffees. I'd forgotten about that til just then. Oh, it was great. I dunno why, but it gave me a sense that I was taking my own back. Ya know like, "Fuck you" to his mashed spud. Yeah, I'm not gonna have the retaliation of getting a smack around the back of the head or a fucking slap around the face or a kick to the stomach.

Wendy understands that she cannot openly defy her partner without serious repercussions, so she finds subtle ways to do so which provides her with a form of amusement. This is an example of covert resistance (Scott, 1985). Again, Wendy uses an event that otherwise might be considered compliant or submissive, preparing food for her partner, and undercuts it by contemptuously spitting into his food.

My participants engage in a range of tactics to stretch their resources, avoid re-traumatisation and make it through the day. These include sacrificing their own nutritional health, finding filler foods, adapting meal rituals and even combining retribution with ostensibly hospitable actions. Eating practices are carried out within broader patterns of social relations and interact dynamically with them (Delormier et al., 2009). This is evident in the way Wendy, for example, adopts the gendered domestic role of preparing food for her partner and spits in it to express her contempt. In reconstructing this domestic role, she also disrupts gendered stereotypes more broadly, flexing the victim-survivor binary in ways that are not always predictable or vital to her immediate survival. As with eating, sleep is fundamental to human survival, and my participants must find creative ways to ensure they can get as much sleep as possible.

Sleep, alcohol, and drugs

Managing sleep is a fundamental part of daily life and the way that we ‘do’ sleep can tell us a lot about a person’s everyday life (Williams, 2008). Because sleep is an acutely vulnerable state to be in, people often require a sense of safety to be able to do so soundly (Lowe, Humphreys, & Williams, 2007). For my participants, bedrooms were generally places of violence and going to sleep posed an acute risk. They adopted a variety of tactics, such as day sleeping, delaying going to bed, and drugging their partners to avoid the violence associated with this time. These accounts highlight the state of terror my participants endure

and the amount of energy they consume remaining vigilant. The tactics of my participants do not fully ensure their safety, but rather delay or minimise oncoming violence.

Being asleep while an abusive partner is awake is particularly dangerous for women living with violence (Humphreys, Lowe, and Williams, 2009). My participants, therefore, remained extremely observant and took opportunities for rest as they arose. Hypervigilance and constant anxiety come to the fore in their accounts. Wendy's partner was often violent at night and intermittently organised for his friends to break into their bedroom so that he could watch them rape her. She would, therefore, wait for him to fall asleep before sleeping herself:

It's funny I always used to just, I'd wait for our Tom, wait for him to pass out and I'd be able to tell when he was asleep. And then I'd be able to relax and go to sleep. But until he was asleep I, no. I couldn't sleep 'cos I still didn't know what was gonna come.

Wendy remained vigilant until she was sure her partner was asleep. She remarks that it is funny, as if noting for the first time how unusual such a precaution sounds. This reflects how the practice had become enmeshed in the fabric of her daily life. Wendy demonstrates her tacit skill of identifying when her partner is asleep, knowledge learned over many observant nights. This is a draining process, but one necessary to ensure her safety and for the relative sense of security required to fall asleep. All my participants reported exhaustion because of similar states of vigilance. Rolinda points out that for this reason one of the first things women do upon entering the Refuge is to sleep for days. Wendy's experience is echoed in the literature. Lowe and colleagues (2007) found participants who had experienced violence were often afraid to sleep too deeply, preferring to rest their bodies while alert or waiting until partners are asleep. The authors argue that fear becomes their organisational framework. This is evident in the way their participants develop highly specific sleep routines, for example setting alarms and taking

sleeping tablets to work around their partner's schedules. Fear and anxiety similarly motivate the sleep tactics of my participants.

Wendy's account demonstrates one of many tactics my participants used to ensure their safety while sleeping. Not all tactics were successful. For example, my participants reported that feigning sleep did not help reduce violence and had the potential to backfire. This was similarly reported by participants in a study by Lowe and colleagues (2007). Hiding was similarly regarded as unlikely to be successful and had the potential to aggravate perpetrators. Accounts of unsuccessful tactics reflect the ongoing trial and error involved in my participant's daily lives and their ability to adapt and alter their tactics as they go. A more successful tactic was to adopt a nocturnal sleep pattern. Greer and Sophie discuss the way in which some clients sleep during the day so that they can remain vigilant at night:

Greer: I remember one case where the lady totally switched her whole routine around, she would sleep during the day and stay awake during the night. And just, sleep it off during the day.

Sophie: They become hypervigilant eh? And over the years I've seen that with a few women, you know 'cos you have child youth and family and other agencies ask, "why is she always asleep?" And I thought one day, "why is she sleeping during the day," y'know? She's got kids. And then I sat down and spoke with her and it was exactly that scenario. She wanted to be up at night to keep an eye on the kids, to make sure the kids were safe, and keep an eye on what he was doing and so if she did go to sleep, she'd sleep with that one eye open, one eye closed sort of thing. And she did that for frigging years. And I remembered she'd get up, get the kids to school and the babies go to day-care then she would sleep. And 'cos he would go to work... But I've seen a lot of that and a lot of women... I had one lady who'd done that most of her life 'cos her father used to come into her room, so she would be up all night cleaning and doing stuff.

Sophie and Greer recall how several of their clients adopted nocturnal sleeping patterns to minimise the risk of violence to themselves and their children. Once again, we see an example of mothering under constraints. One client remains awake all night to guard her children. Only once she has personally taken them to childcare and can be assured of their safety does she allow herself to rest. If she did sleep at night she would do so only very lightly, as in the previous examples. For one of Sophie's clients, this habit goes back to childhood abuse. She uses domestic chores such as cleaning to keep herself occupied so she can ultimately survive.

Day sleeping is a tactic similarly adopted by homeless people so that they can remain vigilant at night (North, Smith, & Spitznagel, 1994). This overlap highlights the safety concerns common to housed women living in violent relationships and women living on the streets (Radley, Hodgetts & Cullen, 2006). As I mentioned in the introduction intimate partner violence is a significant contributor to women's homelessness (Tually et al., 2008). The lack of safety my participants experience while sleeping demonstrates the disjuncture between a home and a house, a point I will elaborate on in the next chapter. Briefly, that some women would rather risk life on the streets than live with an abusive partner, suggests that they are homeless long before they leave their physical houses (Casey et al., 2008). Intermittent daytime naps were also common among my participants. With little to alleviate the ongoing disruption in their lives, brief naps could provide temporary relief, escape, and help make up for lost sleep the night before.

While day sleeping worked for Sophie and Greer's clients and naps provided some respite for my participants they often still had to sleep in the presence of their partners. Therefore, they developed their pre-sleep routines based on minimising upcoming risks to the best of their abilities. For Wendy, this involved delaying going to bed. She did this in several ways, for example by appealing to her partner's interests and playing his favourite music. This sometimes worked to distract him and appease his mood. However, this strategy only worked

for a while before he became suspicious, demonstrating the temporal nature of women's tactics and the need to develop ongoing tactics. Another tactic Wendy employed to delay sleep was drinking:

I'd be like "owh, I'm gonna get it later, I just know it." You know, when there's no one around, or when we go to the room. Sometimes I'd try to avoid going to bed just because I didn't wanna... Well, I used to drink like a bottle, like a 40-ounce bottle of Bacardi so I'd be like, "No, I'm not going to bed til I finish this bottle." And so, then I'd slow down the drinking.

Because Wendy's partner wanted to keep his abuse private, he would often assault her at the end of the day when they went to bed. She could sense earlier in the day if her partner would be violent later. Wendy adapted to this by establishing a nightly routine aimed at delaying the onset of violence. Heavy drinking was an activity that she and her partner both participated in, and this was encouraged down at the pad, where the gang bought alcohol wholesale and sold it on to members. Alcohol consumption, therefore, provided Wendy with an appropriate excuse for staying up as it was both socially acceptable and economically beneficial. This tactic also helped numb her from the violence that did occur when she did eventually retire.

Rather than framing alcohol use as a personal vice, in this context, it is a tactic that helps Wendy both delay and survive violence. Similarly, Diane would initiate drug use, pointing out that they still had a bag left to distract her partner from going to bed. In addition to consuming alcohol herself Wendy describes pouring strong drinks for her partner in order to inhibit him:

I'd pour him a drink and I'd make it probably stronger than what it should have been hoping like fuck that it would knock him out. That he'd get to sleep... Thought about

getting sleeping tablets to pop in his drink, but then thought oh imagine if you gave him too many and you killed him.

Wendy discusses using alcohol to sedate her partner and fantasises about the possibility of employing the use of sleeping pills. Engaging in the fantasy alone serves as a form of resistance, giving Wendy the ability to rewrite the script on her terms. In entertaining the notion and then deciding not to use sleeping pills she establishes a degree of control over the situation. I will explore the significance of fantasy further in the next chapter.

Wendy and Diane's experiences demonstrate the complex role of alcohol and drugs in my participants' lives. They use them as tools to achieve moments of relative safety, taking advantage of their partner's dependence to incapacitate them and at times themselves. This is not to deny the harm that these drugs can cause. It is to paint a more nuanced picture in which alcohol and drugs are also used by my participants as vehicles for safety. This is tactical alcohol abuse.

While my participants found ways to manage sleep to their best ability, their safety during this time remained precarious. Because of this prolonged anxiety, women living in safe environments may continue to have difficulties sleeping for a long time. A study of the sleep patterns of women exposed to domestic violence found participants who had left partners for an average of 16 months continued to have graphic nightmares, often involving torture and murder (Rasmussen, 2007). This prolonged hypervigilance is not without cause, as Wendy describes:

He almost, afterwards he came around and explained to me that he had actually come round one night to shoot me, and he stood at my bedroom window with a shotgun right where my bed would be, and I'm like "Oh, thanks. Fuck, thanks for not." And he reckons the only thing that stopped him was our child was in the house. Scary.

Wendy describes how after she left her partner he came to her house, armed with a shotgun with the intention of killing her. She was unaware of this until he told her about it sometime later. This story highlights the horrifying reality underscoring my participant's constant anxiety and hypervigilance. Rather than understanding women's post-separation sleeping behaviour as pathological in some way, this demonstrates that my participants have serious cause for disrupted sleep. With this context, their hypervigilance appears justified and adaptive.

Doubting their personal safety, even when people around them reinforce it may be another example of tacit safety knowledge. Women continue to be murdered by their partners in Aotearoa after the threat to their personal safety has been downplayed by the police and other agencies (FVDRC, 2017). This is further exacerbated by a broader culture of minimisation which undermines women's confidence in their personal judgements regarding safety (Kelly & Radford, 1990; Wood, 2001). Wendy's experience further epitomises the problem with focusing on women leaving as a solution to domestic violence. Other than removing accountability from the perpetrator, leaving does not guarantee women's safety, far from it. As highlighted previously, leaving can be a trigger for lethal violence.

Briefly, sleep for my participants was dangerous, of low quality and took place outside of regular patterns. But sleep is also essential for survival. Therefore, these women found ways to practice it within the constraints set by perpetrators. Safety-enhancing tactics included delaying sleep, day sleeping, waiting until partners were asleep, and spiking drinks. These tactics helped women survive each day but left them perpetually exhausted. Leaving did not ensure women were safe at night, as Wendy's story shows. One of the ways my participants manage the perpetual exhaustion and fear associated with everyday practices such as sleep is through humour.

Humour

The interviews were unanimously laced with moments of laughter between myself and my participants. 'Black humour' is commonly used by both professionals working in trauma-heavy fields and those who have lived through trauma (Craun & Bourke, 2014; Rowe & Regehr, 2010). I found this to be true with both my staff participants and with those who had survived violence. The casual tone of our discussions reflects our shared knowledge of how rampant violence is in Aotearoa. This eased the tension for us all and made talking about horrific events a little less horrifying. My participants laughed and made dramatic understatement about everything from the failure of the justice system to instances of torture. Bridget, for example, laughed as she casually told me about a time when her partner tried to run her over but missed. This section considers my participants use of dark humour as a coping mechanism and a form of resistance in the face of chronic violence and disruption. They use humour to re-claim their experiences and represent issues in a less confronting way.

Laughter has been characterised as a form of covert resistance (Bussie, 2015; Scott, 1985). Scott refers to the 'offstage' culture; the jokes and conversations that occur privately in the lives of oppressed groups. Compliance here is understood as a form of self-protection and humour a form of resistance which covers its tracks. Multiple examples of laughter in the face of historical atrocities have been recorded. A study of Jewish Holocaust survivors, for example, found participants used humour to preserve their humanity and freedom (Ostrower, 2015). Similarly, Goldstein (2013) found impoverished women in Rio de Janeiro openly laughed at rape and murder, both of which presented a daily threat. Goldstein considers this a tactic to manage their ongoing anger and fear while also reflecting the absurdity of the situation. Spontaneous moments of humour, almost unbelievable given the risks they were associated with, came up with all my participants. Wendy provides one such example:

The best thing I ever did, my one way of getting back to him, and this is when he was passed out drunk one time. I stuck my finger up my bum and then put it all up in his nose and in his mo. And when he woke up in the morning all day all he could smell was shit. And I was just like "yessssssssss" [laughing]... It was just my one way of getting back at him. I thought about telling him when he's on his deathbed, maybe I'll tell... "Remember that day..." Then I thought oh no actually that might just be the one thing that I don't need to tell him. I know.

Wendy apologises for telling me the story while we are eating. She laughs and shakes her head. Simultaneously, the joy this memory brings her is obvious. She had disclosed a private joke, a moment intended only for her enjoyment. An audience was not necessary for her to savour a feeling of satisfaction and retribution. Even when Wendy considers a future scenario in which her former partner is vulnerable to her, she does not feel it necessary to tell him. She gets enough satisfaction knowing she did it.

Examples of humour resistance like this are important in breaking down the dichotomy of women as either victims or survivors of IPV. Wendy's days were chaotic and unpredictable, but within this fluid chaos, Wendy had opportunities to exercise her agency in both mundane and absurd ways. This private mocking provides a way for Wendy to resist the erosion of her sense of identity through being subject to ongoing violence. Preserving a coherent sense of being outside of one's adverse circumstances can be fundamental to living through hardship (Casey et al., 2008). Most of my participant's humour was similarly private. Diane jokes about rape and domestic violence with her friends and current partner to ease the tension surrounding the reality of her experiences:

In my home with my partner or my best friend, we'll make the most horrific jokes about rape and domestic violence abuse and none of us find it funny. None of us find domestic abuse funny, but we'll still make those jokes. And we'll still laugh about it. And it's that

weird like. It does almost make me feel like a bit better laughing about it. Like my partner will always do this thing where he'll come home and dinner won't be cooked or the floor won't be vacuumed or whatever and he'll like start rubbing his hand. And the first time he did it I was like, "what are you doing?" And he goes, "oh I'm just warming up my backhand." And he does shit like that, or he'll like (holds hand up). Like he's never gonna fucking hit me. But we make the jokes without thinking about it. And he knows where I've been as well and it's like it makes it slightly less tense.

Laughing about something so horrendous helps Diane put some mental space between her past experiences and current life. Her friends have gone through similar experiences and while none of them finds domestic abuse funny, sharing dark jokes provides them with a sense of relief, and bonds them together. Humour represents a way for Diane to navigate her experiences in a lighter and more positive way without having to confront the trauma directly. The mutual trust between Diane and her current partner is evident in his comfort around making the joke and her acceptance of his participation. As Ostrower (2015) notes in his analysis of Holocaust humour, humour does not diminish the objective horror of a situation, but it does give survivors a different layer to weave into their narratives. For Diane, humour affords a means for her and her partner to acknowledge her past from a place of safety. This social practice allows them to reconstruct the narrative in a sense, by claiming and appropriating it for their entertainment. Diane's ability to trust and laugh at all after her experiences reflects her resilience and an underlying faith in humanity and the oddities of everyday life with violence.

Occasionally my participants would directly mock their partners, though this clearly carried a greater risk. Wendy, for example, once mocked a new car her partner bought in front of his friends, knowing he would assault her later, but enjoying the moment all the same. Similarly, Kiri would sometimes laugh outwardly in defiance of her partner when he was violent. She explains how she would try to be stoic in front of her partner:

I tried not to cry. Yeah. Yeah like I tried not to cry. Or I'd laugh like yeah like "is that all you got?" That sort of thing. Yeah, but really deep down on the inside, I was like dying... I guess I did that to try and like, I guess make myself strong like-don't care about it. Don't let him bring you down like, even though he's doing all this shit to you. Like still keep yourself fit - I was fucking dying on the inside, y'know?

Most of the tactics I have discussed throughout this analysis are aimed at preventing, delaying or minimising oncoming violence. Here, Kiri has a different intention. She laughs and mocks her perpetrator to minimise his sense of power and evoke her sense of radical freedom (cf. Sartre, 1948). She has already endured the physical abuse and challenges her partner by putting up a façade of indifference. She talks about making herself strong and works to build herself up through this outward projection. Kiri's determination not to cry mirrors Ostrower's (2015) account of Holocaust survivors urging themselves not to cry. There is a sense that if she must endure the violence she can at least exert some control over her response to undermine the notion of her partner's dominance. Kiri notes the incongruence of her laughter with her true state. Kiri's internal feeling is that she is dying. The use of laughter amidst such objective horror is what Ostrower refers to as a "rebellion against reality" (p.184). Kiri resists both her own and her partner's perception of reality through her defiant laughter and asserts her agency through reinterpreting the power dynamic.

To recap, joking about the everyday horror of the violence perpetrated against them gave my participants a way to cope with some of the most traumatic elements of abuse. It provided temporary relief and was a way to gently acknowledge their past and present realities without retraumatising themselves. Laughing at perpetrators was also a way to express contempt and an expression of power when women were in extremely vulnerable positions. It was a way for women to tell the men abusing them that they had not won. They had not yet broken them.

Chapter discussion

This chapter has explored my participants' navigation of chaotic, unpredictable routines on a day to day basis. Their efforts in doing so left them with a constant sense of anxiety and disruption, which necessitated their imposition of structures and routines wherever possible. However, woven within this chaos and contradiction my participants developed an acute ability to predict their own danger. They did this through relations with material objects such as knives which came to embody feeling such as shame and fear. This was partially facilitated through their chronic state of hypervigilance. By constantly trialling different survival tactics my participants adapted to ever-changing circumstances. Leaving their partners was among the tactics my participants trialled. However, this was often associated with an escalation in physical violence. For this reason, my participants resisted in more subtle ways through everyday practices, that were just as instrumental in their agency. These moments created glimpses into alternative realities where my participants lived violence-free, and as such, they contributed to the process of leaving.

Working within the constraints of antiquated gendered expectations around domestic labour and childcare my participants managed to purchase groceries, feed children and sustain themselves day after day. Such efforts are often invisible to social service agencies and broader social discourses which take these domestic activities as a given (True, 2012; Dyck, 2005). Sleep was a particular challenge, as my participants had to remain vigilant to ensure their own and their children's safety. They, therefore, altered their sleeping patterns, managed their depth of sleep, and modified the sleeping behaviours of partners through distraction and sedation. These efforts left women exhausted, but functional. My participants also helped alleviate the psychological consequences of ongoing violence through consistent use of dark humour both during and after their relationships. Rather than normalising violence, this gave my participants

the psychological distance necessary to cope with their gruelling experiences. Humour offered a way to connect with other people, and this further bolstered their morale.

Survival for my participants required ongoing flexible engagement with the actions of perpetrators and necessitated fluid, improvised solutions. These were often hidden within the ostensibly mundane practices of everyday life. This chapter has demonstrated the ways my participants restructure everyday practices to survive. The following chapter explores the ways my participants resist violence and establish moments of respite through creating landscapes of survival that are more habitable.

Chapter 4: Landscapes of Survival

Walking was always quite therapeutic for me 'cos that too meant I was out in public, so if he did come with us nothing was gonna happen...

-Wendy

Wendy's quote above highlights the constant burden of dread my participants carried as they sought moments of sanctuary to relieve their experiences of everyday violence. For Wendy, the therapeutic component of walking stemmed both from her enjoyment of exercising in nature and the promise of a period of nonviolence. This example demonstrates that while chaos permeated my participants' everyday realities, they were able to punctuate this with moments of calm through movement and place-making.

This chapter explores the way my participants resist violence and establish moments of respite through their interactions with survival landscapes. I document how my participants actively work to construct moments of safety amidst uninhabitable places, appropriating *landscapes of despair* (Dear & Wolch, 1987) to create landscapes of care (Gesler, 2003; cf. Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015). I start by considering the relational nature of home and how my participants draw on social and cultural resources in creating a sense of stability. I then examine how they expand and appropriate specific places within their houses such as cupboards, bathrooms and the garden to enjoy moments of safety and stability. This includes imaginative mental work during mundane practices such as sitting in the living room or taking showers (Cohen & Taylor, 1993). Through diverse place-making tactics involving social relations and imaginary work, my participants gain brief moments of control over their environments and relationships, helping them get through the drudgery of everyday life with violence.

My participants find respite by creating landscapes of survival in which such moments of normality become possible. 'Landscape' here refers to more than the physical area, but the

shared social practices, political processes, and cultural meanings that people construct (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt, & Watts, 2000; Gesler, 1992). 'Place' can be conceptualised as the product of socio-economic processes operating across multiple scales (Massey, 1994). This involves ongoing interactions between people's daily material conditions and their social status (Eyles, 1995). People actively interact with particular places to create meanings appropriate to their needs (Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015; Wakefield & McMullan, 2005). My participants' survival landscapes are a product of the social practices they employ in conducting their everyday lives and are made up of all the places they mention, frequent, dwell in, move through, and resist through.

Safety is a fluid concept and like other women, my participants' accounts of safe places touch on issues of temporality and mobility (Frohmann, 2005). That is, places that at one time offer safety could quickly become associated with violence. My participants' spatial mobility is constrained by the controlling behaviours of perpetrators and this reproduces broader issues of power and control, such as the relegation of women to the domestic sphere and its associated poverty (Jaffe, Klaufus, & Colombijn, 2012; Massey, 1994; True, 2012). Despite these constraints, my participants negotiate and rework their everyday landscapes in novel ways. I start by exploring how these women engage in home-making practices in the presence of ongoing violence and control.

Home

The home is central to people's daily practices (Tuan, 1974). It has frequently been conceived of as a place of respite, a sanctuary from the outer world (Porteous, 1976; Seamon, 1979). Beyond mere shelter, a home should offer safety and security (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). Hegemonically, 'home', is often still constructed as a woman's natural place. For those

who experience IPV, this place can become a site of oppression, violence, and also resistance (Gregson & Lowe, 1993; Pain, 2014). My participants' houses were not safe, they did not offer sanctuary, and moments of respite had to be achieved tactically. My participants found ways to expand their home spaces beyond the domestic dwelling. Rather than treating the home as a noun, a reference to the physical entity, home-making can be considered a relational process, variably evolving and being reproduced through various everyday practices (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Heidegger (1978) similarly argues that humans make homes beyond the mere living arrangements that become spaces in which to dwell. This material, emotional, and gendered work of home-making is frequently overlooked and is an important site of resistance for my participants (Dyck, 2005).

There is a pervasive mismatch between the perception and reality of women's safety in private and public spaces (Valentine, 1992). That is, while social discourse tends to focus on the dangers women face outside the house, this is the place women are most likely to be assaulted (Warrington, 2001). Spatial entrapment and the presence of consistent violence compromised my participants' ability to create the feelings of stability and safety central to the idea of home (cf. Hodgetts et al., 2017). To varying degrees, my participants could at times be understood as homeless throughout their relationships. As Wendy put it simply, "*Home wasn't always safe. Yeah, home was where it all happened really.*" Kiri's house was similarly bleak. I asked her how she felt about her family 'home' while she experienced violence:

Oh, like where we were living? [shaking head]. Nah like it was just yuck. It felt dark like that's how it felt. It felt yuck. And like, y'know, I guess I had really nice stuff inside the house, but the house itself just felt like yuck. Well, I can do my house today [laughing] and do my children, I used to have piles of fucking washing everywhere and that was purely because I couldn't get out of my head.

Kiri's immediate physical reaction when I asked about her family home speaks to the intensity of her feelings. That she checks where I am referring to before answering highlights the obvious disjuncture between the notion of a family home and the place where she lived. Warrington (2001) underlines the contrast between the ideal of home and the reality of spatial entrapment for women living through violence. Kiri's house becomes a spatial, material and psychological manifestation of violence and control. She repeats the word "yuck" to express the feeling of sickness it gave her.

Despite having what she describes as "really nice" material possessions, these did not relieve the consuming darkness. Her account highlights the materiality of violence. We can see that the piles of dirty laundry in Kiri's house became manifestations of her distress and guilt at not meeting her expectations of motherhood. Kiri was confronted by her apparent failings every time she looked at them, and as such, they come to embody the deficit-based conception of mothering (Ruddick, 2002). By contrast, her ability to keep a tidy house today gives Kiri a sense of pride and security. This highlights the significance of home-making to Kiri's notion of successful mothering and provides a metaphor for her family's health.

While this account may paint a bleak picture of Kiri's house, this does not prevent her and my other participants from forging homes in other places. Like other women who have experienced violence, my participants attempt to create healthy homes within constraints (Dyck & Dossa, 2007). They utilise novel, social and imaginative tactics to do so. Wendy describes spending time at her partner's Nana's place to enjoy a period of safety, demonstrating the expansion of her home landscape beyond the walls of a domestic dwelling shared with her abusive partner through broader familial social relations:

With my second partner, my second boy's dad, his Nana's was always safe. He was always well behaved at his Nana's. I never used to mind going there and hanging out there for the day. We'd just hang out. So, we would have lunch. We would eat lunch and

Tom would attempt to eat lunch, 'cos he'd be on the nod [semi-conscious state experienced with opiate use]. So he wouldn't be able to eat much. I dunno, it was just a place where I knew. We wouldn't really do much. Maybe, I'd just talk to the old dear (slang for an elderly woman). It was just a break. Sometimes we wouldn't be there long. We'd only be there for an hour or two hours max sort of thing, but it was just for that little bit of time I knew he wasn't gonna be volatile... He wasn't gonna... God, crazy. It was crazy that relationship. Yeah, I could have some peace. Yeah.

Wendy's house was the primary site of violence. Beyond these walls, she was able to find temporary respite when she visited her partner's Nana. Wendy exploited the fact that her partner modified his behaviour in the presence of his Nana. It was not merely the physical place of her house that made it a sanctuary, but the presence of a family member, and the expectations tied to her matriarchal social role. Despite her partner being high at the time and not really being able to participate in the meal, the shared social ritual of eating together in a violence-free house created a sense of stability for the three of them, anchoring them to the present violence-free moment. Going to Tom's Nana's house for lunch and a chat became an enclave of care for Wendy. Even if they only spent an hour or so at Nana's house, Wendy could be assured it would be a period of relative peace.

'Auntie's house' as a culturally patterned enclave of care was a common theme when it came to sources of shelter for my participants (cf. King, et al., 2017). In keeping with Māori cultural practices and in support of prior research, my refuge staff participants frequently assume the role of aunties for the women and children they work with. As such they are frequently referred to as Nan, Auntie or Whaea (aunt) and the refuge building itself fulfils the cultural role of 'Auntie's House'. Sophie pointed out that for many of the clients, they may be the only nans they have. Greer added that women will walk in off the street, explain to the staff that they are "just having a rest", lie down on the couch in the reception area for a time, and

then leave. That is, women make use of the security offered by the refuge, appropriating the sofa as a temporary bed and the reception area as a bedroom (Hodgetts, Stolte, Groot, & Drew, 2018).

Some of my participants also had familial aunts to turn to. Kiri, for example, stayed with her auntie for a period before going into the refuge. She describes the way in which this environment influenced her recovery:

I felt like I could grow there. Y'know and not only grow but like get back to who I was as a person. I didn't even know who I was as a person before I moved into her house, but like, her house gave me the foundation to be able to find that. And were there lots of people around. Yeahhhhhhh, lots of people lived there so it was like ya know, my aunties, one of their friends was like the nanny, and then there was my uncle and he was like real, ya know, hard out Tikanga Māori (values and practices) and so I learned a lot from him about I guess being Māori. 'Cos I grew up in a house where drugs were our culture like Māori wasn't our culture or anything. So yeah, it was really cool to have my aunties who were there really supporting me and y'know the old nanny with who, y'know, I'd sit down and have conversations and cup of teas and then learning my whakapapa through my uncle mmmm yeah.

I then asked if there was a lot of socialising around food and Kiri continued:

Yeah definitely! Yeah, so it was like, our routine every night. We'd, me, my uncle, Sarah, Sarah was her name - the nanny. We'd all, us three would cook dinner while my aunties were at work and then they'd come home and sometimes they'd bring people with them. And y'know they had a big dining table with like 12 chairs around it, so it was like ya know, yeah real American style where the food's all put out on the table

and we'd just help ourselves yeah it was real, it was a really like loving atmosphere with lots of people, lots of supportive people around.

For Kiri, her auntie's house was a significant cultural space where she could (re)connect with her whakapapa, her culture, and herself. Her uncle, in particular, took on a significant mentorship role due to his understanding of Tikanga Māori; Māori custom, values and knowledge (Mead, 2016). Kiri's aunties routinely brought home guests and there was always extra room at the dining room table. Hosting and reciprocal caring reflects the Māori value of manaakitanga (King, 2018). Kiri was swathed in feelings of love and support and this helped her establish a solid foundation from which to grow from. Through engaging in communal food preparation, the sharing of home-cooked meals, and even having cups of tea Kiri was able to establish a sense of security, routine and whānaungatanga (Graham et al., 2018). Whānaungatanga refers to the development of relationships through kinship, reciprocity and shared experience (Ritchie, 1992). Underlying all of this was a continuous feeling of love.

For Māori, Auntie's house has cultural resonances of the marae (King, 2018). The term marae refers to more than just a specific type of structure and space but extends to the people who inhabit it and their practices. A marae can be formed wherever Māori people gather if they are informed by Māori principles and adopt suitable Māori protocol (Te Awekōtuku, 1996). It is a place where community activities can be practiced comfortably, a place to rest and a place to act. An ethnographic account of a Māori homeless woman explores how one woman appropriated a social service agency, the Auckland City Mission, as a marae through her everyday social practices (Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora, & Leggat-Cook, 2011). Auntie's house, and therefore the refuge itself, can be understood as another modern-day urbanised variant of the traditional marae (cf. King, 2018).

Wendy and Kiri's accounts both reinforce the social aspects of eating in establishing routines. Wendy also discussed baking to help maintain a sense of normality. This was

something she learned from her own grandmother, practised with her sister and continues to practise with her children today. She explains, “*It was mine and my sister's way of coping I think, with the mayhem that was our life... My daughter still loves me to bake now-I make a mean carrot cake - just saying [laughing].*” As discussed in the previous chapter, food provides a critical anchoring point for Wendy to connect with family amidst disruption. We can draw on the concept of re-membling here to understand how Wendy reconstructs memories of her grandmother and brings them into her present life by carrying out the familiar practice of baking with her sister and then her children (Myerhoff, 1982; Graham, Hodgetts, & Stolte, 2016). Baking helps Wendy connect to both the sense of stability this activity provided her with as a child and to her relationship with her grandmother who has passed away. Baking with her children also allows her to reproduce the transmission of family knowledge across generations and to situate herself as being at home within her family history and traditions (Pickering & Keightley, 2013).

Wendy generated momentary feelings of home and security by keeping up mundane routines, such as visiting Nana’s house and baking (cf. Latimer & Munro, 2009). Drawing on Giddens’ (1991) notion of ontological security, which refers to a sense of continuity surrounding the events of one’s life, Woodhall-Melnik and colleagues (2016) found that as women living with IPV established homes both materially and emotionally, they were also able to re-establish routines and control. Though my participants did not dwell in material houses free from violence, they established temporary or fleeting moments of home through their routines, which provided them with a sense of security and resilience (cf. Dunn, 2013).

Similarly, Graham and colleagues (2018) discuss how amidst a landscape of food insecurity, one family created enclaves of care through their mealtime practices. This family draws on a range of tactics such as busking, vigilant grocery shopping, and food grants to resist and survive the damning conditions of food insecurity. The use of these ostensibly mundane

tactics allows them to create a habitable daily landscape amidst a neoliberal social context informed by values of austerity and personal responsibility. Hanging out at Nana's house and baking with her children can similarly be constructed as creating a fleeting home-like enclave of respite and care for Wendy. These practices served a restorative function, allowing her to create the safe, familial social interactions she missed out on in her own house.

My participants' own houses were rarely experienced as homes. Constant disruption compromised their ability to create the feeling of security underlying the notion of home (Hodgetts et al., 2017). However, my participants found ways to expand their home landscape. Time spent at her partner's Nana's home provided Wendy with rest, safety, and a sense of family. Kiri immersed herself in the cultural practices of her auntie's house, while the refuge space itself fulfilled this role to clients and visitors more broadly. Thus, despite the violence women associated with their houses, there were also opportunities to create small enclaves of care. While this section has explored the notion of home-making more broadly, different rooms were associated with different levels of danger for my participants. As discussed in the previous chapter, kitchens and bedrooms could be unsafe. In creating landscapes of survival my participants appropriate novel places within their houses, even where these are also associated with danger. The following examples demonstrate my participant's creative agency through deriving meanings from places such as the living room window, a cupboard, bathrooms, and gardens.

Confinement: The window and the cupboard

One way in which my participants could broaden their home landscape was to engage in imaginative place-making. Daydreaming presents an instantaneous and readily accessible means to flee unpleasant situations and inhabit more bearable enclaves (Cohen & Taylor,

1993). People partake in daydreams and fantasy-type experiences every day, by reading books, listening to music or simply contemplating upcoming events. These have further been argued to serve a survival function in protecting people from extremely traumatic experiences such as IPV (Butler, 2006). Daydreaming is more than just a distraction from everyday life, but a way to make meaning of it and experience self-transformation (Molesworth, 2009). Even the smallest relief from violence can make women's immediate circumstances more bearable and help them carry on in their daily activities (Radford & Hester, 2006).

Diane's everyday life was almost completely confined to her house and she was only allowed to leave in the presence of her partner. Looking out the living room window is one way in which she engaged in imaginative place-making to resist the confines of her house. As she explains:

There was a massive window. There was the kitchen bench and sink and there was this massive window. The house was right in front of the golf course. So, you would look out at the golf course and that was cool. I used to stand and look out there a lot 'cos it was just like green. Like everywhere. And there was never really a problem with me looking out windows unless he was outside. If he was outside and I was looking out the window it was because I was spying on him or doing something, but like he never had a problem with me standing in the kitchen looking out the window or anything. As long as he wasn't outside, and I wasn't looking at him out the window.

I then asked why she stared at it and she replied:

I dunno. I don't like golf. There was usually no people on it - or that you could see 'cos you could see not the whole golf course. You could see part of it. I don't know. I think it was just. I think the main reason was just because I hardly ever got to fucking go outside. So, it was just like - oh that'd be nice. But I don't think there was any sentimental

like, stuff. It was just like, "oh, outside looks really sunny". And that's the thing that I think I lost touch with a bit. I didn't see any of it. It just felt like the whole world had stopped a little bit. I knew the world hadn't stopped. I knew people were still doing what they're doing. But it's like. Almost that feeling of like zombie apocalypse. Like you see no one. You talk to no one. You don't go out. You don't leave the house. It was like this weird alternate reality where nobody else existed. But I wasn't that crazy. I knew the world existed. It's that weird sense of knowing that reality and human life is out there, but not really being in touch with any of it....

Leaving the house physically was associated with violent repercussions for Diane. However, she could leave through her imagination without consequence. The underlying control present in her partner's violence comes through as Diane explains that she could not look through the window if he was outside or he would interpret this as her spying on her partner. Such confinement isolated her from the comings and goings of other people's lives and fed into a deeper sense of disconnection from reality. This spatial restriction constrained Diane's ability to form social connections and distorted her sense of time. She became so absorbed in the monotonous cycle of her everyday life with violence that the world beyond almost ceased to exist.

Control over physical movement is related to broader socio-political factors (Jaffe et al., 2012). Diane's entrapment more broadly reflects the way in which the public versus private spatial dichotomy can work to constrain women's mobility under patriarchal oppression (Massey, 1994). The living room window thus functions as a portal into another life, a reminder that life carried on beyond the boundaries of domesticity and looking through it becomes an act of resistance. Diane could, on one level, remove herself from her present world and enter her private thoughts, while still remaining physically grounded in her living room. In doing so she could manufacture some sense of connection and protection (Vogler & Jørgensen, 2005).

This is another example of the small, relatively safe ways in which my participants can leave their partners throughout their relationships. Informatively, Leach (2005) argues that imagination is a critical part of the human capacity for agency and helps people survive everyday adversity.

Imagining another reality actively confronts the possibility for change and introduces new directions for my participants. Sophie similarly raised the importance of talking with clients about their dreams for future lives while they were staying at the refuge. Imagined future violence-free homes through such conversations can provide a sense of order and control in lives characterised by chaos, while also affecting people in real material ways (Segal, DeMeis, Wood, & Smith, 2001). Through imagining better lives, my participants make their immediate everyday landscapes more habitable. Though Diane had no interest in golf, the expansive sheet of green she looked out on gave her an open plane to play out her thoughts and feelings. Such an open view contrasts sharply with the spatial constraint embedded within Diane's everyday practices. Looking at the golf course, which remained constant each day, may have also helped Diane retain a sense of stability within her everyday life, which was constantly disrupted by her partner's actions. Windows facilitate reflection and provide opportunities for mental restoration, particularly where they offer a view of nature (Kaplan, 2001; Schweitzer, Gilpin, & Frampton, 2004). For this reason, windows are referred to repeatedly as key objects in everyday life by both patients and staff working in clinical environments where stimulation is low (Leather, Pyrgas, & Lawrence, 1998). Looking through the window gave Diane a flickering recollection of the diverse realities beyond her door, as well as giving her much-needed mental rest.

While Diane knew that life was carrying on around her, she expresses feeling like she was in an alternative reality. This feeds back into my earlier argument about normalisation. As 'normal' as her social isolation has become within the fabric of her daily life with violence,

there is a sense of unreality and artificialness about her circumstances, which distances her from her experiences. Relatedly, at times Diane talked about her everyday life as so anxiety provoking that she entered into a state of dream-like dissociation:

Panic. It was. Panic and not euphoria 'cos euphoria is like happy, but like. You know when you haven't eaten for a day or two. Well I dunno if you know that, but you know, if you haven't eaten for a while your blood sugar goes down and you get kind of like daydreamy and... I was like that, almost all the time. Like just like, dissociated, I guess. Like it was like I was living this life, and I was definitely in this house. But it felt like I was dreaming it. I didn't feel like I was actually physically there and living it. It just felt like I was dreaming about myself... I think it's a thing my brain did.

Diane was operating at such a high level of anxiety that she felt disconnected from her lived reality inside her house. While she knew on some level that this was her life, she felt removed from her experiences, as if in a different place. In contrast to looking through the window, Diane did not consciously choose to distance herself from what was happening, it simply seemed to occur when things became too overwhelming. That is, this mental distance served a self-protective function. There are few things that better embody resistance than the departure from conscious reality (Cohen & Taylor, 1993). We further see the extent of her partner's control over access to food and the materiality of her deprivation as she compares this situation to the experience of not eating for a day or two.

As I outlined in the previous chapter, the anxiety and panic my participants carry with them is not wholly pathological, but in many ways helps them survive by keeping them alert to threats. Similarly, given the extent of violence, she is confronted with regularly, Diane's self-described dissociation can be understood as a self-protective form of mental distance. Muting her immediate environment in this way allowed Diane to carry out her daily house-

bound activities on a superficial level while avoiding some of the worst aspects of violence. Looking through the window can also be understood through this self-protective framework.

In addition to often being confined to their houses, some of my participants would be locked in specific rooms by their partners, often for several hours. Diane's partner would do this at the end of a particularly violent attack. He also frequently shut her in the cupboard. Hodgetts and colleagues (2010) discuss the ways in which homeless people *rewrite* unhealthy landscapes for their own needs. What we see in the following example is Diane rewriting an experience of being locked in a cupboard to make it more bearable:

I was always in the room or in the cupboard or somewhere where I wasn't gonna fuck him off... I used to be very relieved. Because he locked me in the cupboard a lot. And I used to be relieved when he would do that. Sometimes it would go on. It was almost like isolation like he would leave me there for hours and hours and that was too much. But initially, when he put me in the cupboard I would just go [exhales], woah, like thank fuck. I don't necessarily know if that was a safe space though. That was just like a, "okay I don't have to deal with it right now". But I was really confined. Like there wasn't anywhere I could go out and feel safe. 'Cos if I was out, I was petrified he was gonna see me or one of his friends was gonna see me. So, there wasn't really an outside space that was safe.

Diane's account of being shut in the cupboard exemplifies both the extent of her partner's controlling behaviour and her adaptability to constraining situations. Being trapped in the cupboard is a metonym for the spatial and psychological constraints imposed on Diane throughout her day-to-day life with violence. While Diane did not enjoy being locked in the cupboard, she was also able to reframe the situation, and more generally her everyday life. She describes feeling almost reassured. Being in the cupboard at least gave her a feeling of

temporary safety. It gave her some breathing room. Diane creates a temporary enclave of care in the cupboard, despite its obvious detriment.

Wakefield and McMullan (2005) discuss the notion of re-imagined landscapes in their analysis of perceptions of a city plagued by labels of pollution and deprivation. Despite contending with stigmatising labels residents of Hamilton (Ontario) emphasised the health-enhancing qualities of their city, such as strong neighbourhood bonds and local natural attractions. People in positions of hardship can maintain their well-being and sense of security by renegotiating unhealthy places and creating enclaves of care (Graham et al., 2018). Homeless people, for example, can create habitable urban landscapes via improvised bedrooms in places not typically considered habitable, such as within trees or under houses (Hodgetts et al., 2018). Similarly, Mokos (2017) highlights how places that seem dangerous and dirty to outsiders, such as river-bottom homeless encampments, can be therapeutic for the people living there.

Being locked in the cupboard was an act of violence, but one which Diane reworked to her advantage. For a period of time, she was able to enjoy the peace and protection this space offered. While she was in there she was out of acute danger. When her partner left her in there for long periods of time this sense of security was lost and the fear of confinement and isolation took over. Time was central to whether the cupboard was a space of safety or danger. This demonstrates the significance of temporality to my participant's place-making. In addition to finding respite in the cupboard, Wendy and Diane also created novel enclaves of care in the bathroom.

The Bathroom

In many domestic dwellings, bathrooms and toilets comprise predominantly shared spaces, while still generally being conceived of as places of privacy. Note: For the purposes of this section, a ‘bathroom’ refers to a room containing a shower or bath and basin, and a ‘toilet’ refers to a separate room containing a toilet. For women experiencing IPV, the privacy offered by bathrooms and toilets can offer a temporary haven of safety. For example, in a study of urban mothers and children exposed to IPV one participant described how she would attempt to hide the impact of abuse from her children by crying in the bathroom in the middle of the night (Devoe & Smith, 2002). The bathroom was a place to compose herself as she attempted to protect her children from witnessing the psychological impact of violence on her. Demonstrating women’s flexible use of this place, a study of male perpetrators of domestic violence reported that one participant’s partner went into the bathroom for 45 minutes and began to load a gun after being attacked by her partner (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Bathrooms and toilets similarly feature in my participants’ accounts and facilitate a range of actions as they utilise this place according to their needs. In Diane’s case, she found the bathroom itself unpleasant. However, the shower was her sanctuary:

I don’t know how or why but... I think the shower... which I didn’t get the opportunity to use very much but, the shower was... in fact still now I think the shower is really a massive. I got this thing about when I was in the shower there, I used to sit down, like I wouldn’t stand up and shower, and I’d just sit. Like I’d wash myself, but I’d sit. And I still do that every time I get in the shower, but I never did it before that. And I think the shower still is like my safe spot. It’s warm and it’s like a box. And I know people can get into it but it’s almost like my mind is like “no you’re in a box, it’s fine”. Like, the shower was really safe... I would stay in there as long as I could. I couldn’t stay in there for hours because that would become suspicious and a problem with the water

and the power bill, but I would stay in there as long as I could. The bathroom was fucking horrible. It was tiny and like dimly lit and there was shit in there all the time - not literal shit, but there was stuff everywhere. And the washing machine was in there as well. Like it was not a nice bathroom, it wasn't like - walk into the bathroom and everything falls off - no it was a shithole. But... the shower was disgusting. No one cleaned the shower, it was disgusting. But the water pressure in the shower was really good. And yeah, I would just go in. I'd take my clothes off, which usually were a couple days old and real gross. Get in the shower. There was never any soap or shampoo or anything like that, but I'd just sit there in like a little ball. With my head between my knees like that. And I'd make sure my hair was like coming over so like the water dripped all down my face as well. And just sit there.

Showering provided Diane with a temporary haven from the brutal daily reality of IPV. While her bathroom was far from a luxurious environment, the ritual of sitting in the enclosed shower gave her a sense of safety and peace. That is, Diane found sanctuary in a self-described shithole. She did not have access to soap or shampoo, but the feeling of warm water running over her brought relief. Curling up in a ball, as Diane did, can be interpreted as an evolutionary protective act, an attempt to transform herself into a smaller target and protect vital organs (Tally, 2011). This behaviour is often observed in people who have experienced traumatic events, particularly when they are feeling vulnerable (Lord, 2013). Diane may have adopted this bodily posture to express the overwhelming feelings of vulnerability that she was unable to show in front of her partner.

As with Kiri in the previous chapter, this practice is likely a key element of Diane's broader efforts to resist psychological domination. She hugs herself privately while appearing strong in front of her partner. Creating moments of safety in an unsafe relationship demonstrates resistance in and of itself. In addition to this, Diane used the relative safety and

privacy of the shower to engage in role-playing and fantasy to re-enact arguments with her partner and embody a position of power and control:

And I used to. I still do this today, I have fake arguments with him in the shower. But I played both parts and they used to go my way in the shower. And I would say the shit that I would never actually say to his face and I still do that if I'm mad at my partner. And like we treat each other with respect, in the shower mmmm. I'm like "fuck you". And he hears me. But I always used to - unless he was sitting on the toilet - in which case I was talking to him, but I had little fake [conversations]. Does that sound so crazy? But it was always in past tense like I would have said that, not like rehearsing what I'm gonna say next time, like wouldn't that have been funny. But it wouldn't have been funny... Imagining that I had the upper hand rather than him.

Re-enacting arguments in a safe environment gave Diane some sense of control and justice over her situation. Far from being under the illusion that her partner was treating her appropriately, Diane was well aware of how things should have been in her relationship. She resisted her partner from within the safe enclave she created via a mundane routine. Diane utilised this brief privacy afforded her by the shower to play out an alternative story where she held the power. While not intending to ever use these arguments against her partner, the process of playing them out in private seems to have helped Diane maintain her composure at other times, ensuring her survival.

Leach (2005) asserts that women lay the groundwork for action when they imagine futures unconstrained by gendered inequality. One of Sophie's clients engaged in a similar tactic of everyday resistance against her partner's psychological abuse by going to the gym and directing all her energy into Thai boxing. Several of my participants also fantasised about killing their partners. They often had opportunities to do so, especially when these men were heavily sedated with drugs. However, these women never acted on these fantasies. Some came

closer than others though. In one incident, Wendy actually called her partner's mum and told her to come and pick him up before she killed him. As in Diane's case of rehearsing the argument, it is enough to simply imagine or play out a scenario where they have the upper hand. A study on Iranian women's experiences of domestic violence similarly found women used self-talk, distraction, and fantasising about killing partners as coping tactics (Taherkhani, Negarandeh, Simbar, & Ahmadi, 2016). Engaging with these arguments and fantasies provides my participants with a safe sense of control, retribution and justice. These moments may have helped my participants prepare for futures without their partners, again allowing them to practice the process of leaving in a small way.

Rather than being a simple process of cleaning, showering became instrumental to Diane's self-preservation, allowing her to express her anger and step into the persona of a different version of herself. Bathing is such a mundane practice that it can be overlooked as a site of resistance. Physical cleansing has long been associated with notions of morality and purity (Twigg, 2003). Feelings of dirtiness are particularly relevant in cases of sexual assault. This can lead people to engage in repeated washing in order to gain a sense of relief (Fairbrother & Rachman, 2004). Rather than being pathologised as a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder as in the aforementioned study, showering can also become a therapeutic tactic for coping with violence. In an environment where chaos and disorder are the norm, small acts of taking time to oneself can give women such as Diane the physical and psychological rest they need to carry on. Such enplaced therapeutic landscape 'experiences' often involve brief abstractions from everyday domestic worlds. Such ordinary places as the shower can become transformed into therapeutic spaces where people interact with them in health-enhancing ways (Conradson, 2005).

Relatively safe places often, but not always, feature privacy and varied over time and between my participants. For Wendy, the safety offered by her shower was broken when her

partner organised for one of his friends to break into the bathroom and rape her. To minimise the future possibility of this she would spend as little time in the bathroom as possible, hurrying in and out of the shower. This example highlights the way in which instances of severe violence can be brutally inscribed into my participant's everyday practices and lead to drastic disruptions and variations in the meanings my participants attached to particular places. In this case, the act of rape has transformed the shower for Wendy from a therapeutic space to one invaded by rape and abuse.

The temporal nature of safety was similarly highlighted in a photo elicitation study of survivors of domestic violence (Frohmann, 2005). Also resembling Wendy's experience, one participant in Frohmann's study took a photo of her bathroom door. She then explained that she felt safe there because it had two locks on it. However, the illusion of safety was shattered on an occasion where her husband pried the door open with a knife. Such examples foreground the dynamics of space making and how women's efforts to create spaces of safety and care within landscapes of violence are often subject to intrusions by perpetrators. Although the acts of such men can be disruptive, these women do not simply give up. For Wendy, the shower and bathroom also became unsafe through the actions of abusive men. However, the toilet was still used as a more fleeting breathing space:

I used to run to the toilet to find safety 'cos that was a place I could lock the door. I'd go to the toilet and be in there for a long time even if I didn't need to be in there for a long time. Like I was hiding just to get away...Yeah, I hadn't thought about it and it wasn't until after I was like, "oh hang on" I used to go jump into the toilet or just hang out in the toilet even if you didn't need to be in there. Just 'cos I don't have to deal with anything. Whether he was in a bad mood or a good mood.

Wendy used the privacy of the toilet as a small temporary sanctuary from the ongoing disruption occurring beyond the door. She can justify spending a long time in there without

having to worry about being bothered, because of the privacy associated with toilets. Having a lock on the door reinforced her feeling of security, highlighting the materiality of safety in this case. Wendy locked her partner out of the room, and out of her headspace for a time. Her need to get away from him reflects the way in which abusive behaviour bleeds into what are commonly considered mundane everyday practices such as going to the toilet. Her reference to her partner's mood is also important in the extract above. Moments of relative peace and intermittent affection occur within a pattern of control, intimidation and violence; therefore a 'good' mood still holds dangerous connotations for Wendy. Further, alternating violent behaviours with occasional moments of affection is a well-known strategy of maintaining control (Herman, 1992).

The significance of running to the toilet was not immediately memorable to Wendy, such was its embeddedness in her everyday routine. This highlights the often obscured or hidden nature of my participants' tactics of resistance and the importance of analysis at the level of the everyday to reveal and unpack such tactics. Not only is the abuse of perpetrators made vivid through exploring everyday practices and places of resistance, but my participants' resistance becomes tangible through attention to mundane activities such as going to the toilet. Toilets have similarly been used by people as places to break down and recompose themselves after therapy. McGrath and Reavey (2015) analysed the space-time characteristics of people attending short intensive mental health consultations. They found service users appropriated certain spaces to deal with the transitional phase before and after therapy. One service user described using the toilet as a type of decompression zone. Before and after his CBT sessions he would use this time to adjust his emotional state to the requirements of the private or public world. Because people were not provided with an official place for this purpose, this service user adapted and appropriated the only private place available, the toilet.

Diane similarly appropriated her use of a toilet when the need arose, using it as an escape route. During an argument with her partner, Diane indicated that she needed to use the toilet. She then climbed out the window and ran down the street to the house of an acquaintance. In this instance, she was able to delay the violence for around 20 minutes until her partner located her. Again, here we can see the temporally dynamic nature of place-making in terms of issues of safety and resistance Diane could not avoid the violence entirely, but she could delay it by adapting her use of the toilet.

My participants appropriated bathrooms, showers and toilets to find solitude and respite within their daily lives. The degree of safety afforded by these places was temporary and variable, but it gave women a chance to collect themselves, recover, and psychologically prepare for the future. For Diane the shower offered sanctuary and she could re-imagine it as a battleground to air out her grievances with her partner and gain a sense of agency. Her ability to adapt the purpose of the toilet further demonstrates her ingenuity and flexibility in resisting violence. For Wendy, the shower was a site of violence and fear. The toilet, bathroom and shower gave my participants moments of rest, but Wendy's experience of violence in the shower highlights how volatile this was.

Gardening

Gardening is an everyday leisure activity which offers a unique opportunity to connect with nature and enjoy something outside our immediate human experience (Unruh, 1997). Activities such as gardening offer a way to bring order and routine into everyday life, offering predictability and sanctuary in my participants' otherwise volatile lives (King, Hodgetts, Rua, & Te Whetu, 2015). There is something intrinsically therapeutic and powerful about the process of gardening for people who have experienced trauma, and indeed for those who have

not (Bhatti, Church, Claremont, & Stenner, 2009). In addition to being popular with my participants, gardening was something I frequently engaged in throughout this process as a way of reflecting on my ideas and occasionally as a way to put space between myself and some of the darker experiences my participants shared. The act of gardening is about creating a space to be and to become as well as providing an immediate escape from the present (King et al., 2015). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, my participants craved stability and routine in coping with the disruptions of violence. Gardening provides an affordable and accessible way to way to do so for Bridget and Wendy.

Gardens provide gentle, but powerful metaphors for challenging life events such as death and personal growth (Clatworthy, Hinds, & Camic, 2013). For example, an intervention for refugees utilised metaphors of being uprooted and growing new shoots to parallel the trauma and growth participants had experienced (Linden and Grut, 2002). Similarly, there are parallels between the experiences of women going through domestic violence and the cycle of life in the garden. My participants actively embraced these metaphors. When the weather was fine, and she had time off work, Bridget would garden regularly. Despite the financial difficulty a visit to the garden shop afforded, Bridget placed significant value on spending time in the garden:

That was a sanctuary for me. I used to get pissed off when he wouldn't help though. I had this prickly bush out the back that was entwined in this really beautiful flower bush and honestly, I think I spent like three days out there trying to get the prickly bush out of it. I just wanted help and he just sat in there on his game, fritted off his face (erratic behaviour associated with meth use) [deep sigh] ... I wouldn't do any vegetables and stuff, I hated that kind of maintenance. I was more of the, grow the flowers, yeah unique flowers, liked my flowers, so it was seasonal... peacefulness. Yeah, I think it's really important to touch the dirt [laughing] just yeah very peaceful and hard work, you know

that sense of, what is it? Accomplishment I suppose when you've finished. Looking at your house with your perfect little garden. Yup. And I think it is. It's such a healing kind of thing, and that you've aided it too. It's not just growing wildly... And it's also something that we'd try to do as a family too. Our daughter was quite young then, so she loved playing in the dirt. And, ya know, he'd come out and help and stuff. Good past time.

Beyond offering temporary respite, gardening was a place for Bridget to practice home-making on her own terms (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010). Bridget's commitment to removing the prickly bush from the flowers clearly parallels her struggle to separate herself from her partner's violence. She worked assiduously to separate the plants, despite her partner's refusal to help. Working on them day after day may have helped Bridget to emotionally prepare for the eventual separation of her and her partner. Working in the earth can also help people feel grounded and valuable (Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011; King et al., 2015). It provided a safe practice space in through which Bridgette could work through the idea of leaving while distracting herself somewhat from directly confronting the pain and fear such a scenario can evoke.

Bridget notes the healing effect of gardening and the joy she finds in assisting the plants in their growth. Through nurturing the plants, she nurtures and heals herself (cf. King et al., 2015). For people who have experienced biographical disruption, gardening has been shown to help create a sense of control and continuity in situations of transition (Li et al., 2010). For Bridget, gardening was one of the few activities she could immerse herself in that was not associated with violence. A few times a week she could put aside the burden of violence and fear and weave together the more fragmented aspects of her life. The garden becomes a *space of being* for Bridget (King et al., 2015).

Bridget's interest in unique flowers further showcases her creative side. She was not interested in the work of growing vegetables, preferring to invest her energy in creating something which brought her aesthetic joy. Amidst the chaos of her daily life, the simple routine of caring for her flowers gave her a sense of pride. Taking time to nurture her flowers may not seem relevant to Bridget's immediate safety. However, it is a way of not allowing her life to be diminished entirely by violence. Expressing herself creatively through the garden contributes to her self-preservation and dignity, and thus facilitates her long-term survival and sense of self (Coats & Wade, 2007). Bridget's creativity can be understood as a form of resilience, and her garden an expression of her sense of self (Li et al., 2010).

Gardening was also a way for Bridget to bond with her daughter. In the extract above she reflects on the image of her house and garden, noting the association with a happy family life. Gardening together with her daughter provided Bridget with a glimpse of this life, even if it was regularly threatened by the actions of her partner. Gardening was similarly a family activity for Wendy and her son. In discussing it, she also reflected on her childhood memories of gardening, drawing on these experiences as she recreated them with her son:

As a kid yeah, had my own little garden that was mine once I was old enough to look after it. I always grew flowers, but out the back of our section - we grew up with a quarter acre, the average Kiwi home in the 70s I suppose. So out the back, we had every sort of vegetable you could imagine growing. And I just loved getting out there with Mum, I remember when I was really little - maybe Dad had left so I might have been seven or eight, and our peas hadn't come up that year for Christmas and Mum said, "I dunno why our peas didn't come up, Wendy." And I went, "I know I went walking down there one day to see Grandma, 'cos Grandma lived behind us, and they'd all shot. All the peas had popped up to the surface. So I popped them all back down again"- not knowing that that's how they grew [laughing]. And Mum just laughed, which was really

neat 'cos it could have if it was the wrong day she could have gone off her tree about that you know. 'Cos we had no peas for Christmas that year. 'Cos we grew all our veges. 'Cos mum was, we were really poor growing up so that was quite funny. And we had a bean vine, my Grandma had an orchard on her property, so we got all our fruit from there. I suppose it stemmed from Grandma even. I loved gardening with Grandma. She'd always go around and tell me the name of the flowers you know? Dear old soul, yeah. She was an amazing woman. I draw on her now for strength, eh. She'd be so proud of me.

Gardening helps Wendy draw together fragments of the past, recreating something familiar and comforting in the present. The concept of re-membering (Myerhoff, 1982; Olsen, 2003) can be drawn on here to consider how Wendy brings past interactions with her grandmother into the present by engaging in the material practice of gardening (cf. Graham et al., 2016). Through working in the garden in the same way she did with her Grandma, Wendy re-engages in, re-joins, and re-enacts aspects of their relationship. Many gardeners associate certain plants or scents with loved ones or re-membering (Bhatti et al., 2009). As such, gardens can become a type of sensory portal, transcending spatial and temporal boundaries and becoming sites of memory embodiment.

Ginn (2014) similarly examined the ways in which people remembered the death of loved ones through the ongoing performance of mundane gardening practices. The topic of death was never at the forefront of their minds, but rather strayed into conversation through the ongoing demands of the task. Working at repetitive mundane tasks such as weeding allows people to connect with loved ones through the indirect, momentary re-ignition of memories and the material enactment of shared social places and practices.

The significance of material objects in my participants' accounts is also highlighted in Wendy's story about the peas, which emphasises the financial struggle her family was under

and the sometimes-volatile mood shifts of her mother. Wendy's fear of upsetting her mother and not having anything to eat for Christmas dinner becomes tangible in her mother querying what happened to them. Their absence becomes present. Wendy's recollection of pushing them under the soil invokes her childhood naivety, which in this situation helps neutralise her mother's reaction.

Wendy reflects on childhood textured by poverty with humour and love. Like violence, poverty can become a type of normalised disruption (Hodgetts et al., 2010). Through her account, we can see the traces of a sense of continuity between Wendy's childhood difficulties and those in her more recent violent relationship. However, at the same time, her memory of collecting fruit from her grandmother's orchard evokes feelings of love and a sense of stability. In her childhood, as in her abusive relationship, gardening offers respite and helps to buffer Wendy from the material and psychological effects of hardship.

Participation in leisure activities such as gardening, though constrained by material and social circumstances, is an inherently agentic act (Stebbins, 2005). Wendy and Bridget draw on the everyday therapeutic values of gardening and use these to counteract the damaging impact of ongoing violence. Gardening was one of the few acts that was not associated with violence for these women and they made use of this. Working in the garden allowed my participants to nurture their present and future selves, forging relationships with the earth and enacting the love and care that was missing from their intimate relationships. It was also a time to reflect on past and present relationships and prepare for the challenges ahead.

Chapter discussion

The present chapter discusses the ways in which my participants re-imagined their everyday landscapes to create a broader landscape of survival (cf. Dear & Wolch, 1987).

Contrary to the notion of home as a space of respite and care, my participants' houses were primarily sites of violence, anxiety and fear. They were largely confined to their houses because of their partner's controlling behaviour. A significant part of their day-to-day lives, therefore, revolved around avoiding the most dangerous places - that is, kitchens and bedrooms - and appropriating mundane places and routines to enjoy brief moments of respite.

The construction of healthy spaces involves more than a place, but social relationships, everyday practices and material conditions (cf. Massey, 1994). My participants drew on social networks, whānau, cultural practices and their imaginations to construct feelings of stability, routine and home. Mundane practices such as showering acquired therapeutic properties through my participants' use of these to imagine, rest, and resist (cf. Conradson, 2005). Acts of violence such as being shut in the cupboard for an indefinite period of time were re-imagined as temporary breaks. My participants reclaimed their homes in imperfect ways that nonetheless resisted the psychological and physical ways in which perpetrators eroded their sense of belonging.

By focusing on my participant's everyday place-making we can see how even under significant constraints they actively worked to appropriate mundane places in novel, flexible ways that facilitated their survival. Gazing out the window and working in the garden provided my participants with the opportunity to transcend their immediate circumstances and establish a sense of normality. These landscapes allowed my participants to make it through their days.

The material and emotional work involved in home-making has been devalued by the development of the private labour market and this substantially undermines women's economic opportunities and their abilities to resist violence (Dyck, 2005; True, 2012). In being confined to their homes, my participants were also largely unable to participate in paid employment. The work they engaged in to create homes for themselves and their children, and ultimately to survive, is perhaps made even more invisible because of the ways in which perpetrators isolate

women from their social networks (Stark, 2012). Recognising the significance of this everyday work is vital in supporting women's safety, challenging the victim-agent binary, and more broadly, the role of the private realm in reproducing and resisting broader gendered political economic structures (Massaro & Williams, 2013).

In the final chapter, I discuss the collective findings of this study in relation to some of the current concerns of scholars and advocates surrounding the treatment of women living through IPV in Aotearoa. In particular, I discuss the need to ground the conceptualisation of IPV and coercive control in mundane forms of violence and resistance within women's everyday lives. This can help agencies and advocates recognise and respond to the needs of women living through violence.

Chapter 5: Thesis discussion

Violence against women is a significant health concern in Aotearoa. Our rate of reported IPV is frequently among the highest in OECD countries (Turquet et al., 2011). Our responses to IPV and efforts to ensure women's safety are largely dependent on how we conceptualise it (FVDRC, 2017). Conceptualisations of IPV have changed significantly over the years, from an early understanding of abuse as a private marital matter to discrete incidents of physical violence and more recently as a pattern of abuse which involves perpetrators using multiple tactics to exert control over women (Stark, 2007). This pattern includes any behaviours which cause psychological, sexual, or physical harm (Krug et al., 2002). The language of policymakers, practitioners and researchers has a significant impact on how violence is defined and thus how practitioners respond to it (Wilson et al., 2015). I argue that this conceptualisation can be enhanced by an appreciation of the mundane ways in which violence can become embedded within women's everyday lives.

Accordingly, the core aim of this thesis was to explore the reproduction of gendered relations in the lives of women who are constrained by inequalities in power and associated gendered violence. Specifically, I sought to answer the question: how do women conduct their everyday lives with IPV in ways that resist and undermine men's control? To answer this question, I explored eight women's experiences of day-to-day violence and how this became entwined within everyday life. I utilised repeat semi-structured interviews to explore how agency manifested in the lives of four women who have survived violence. I supplemented this with a focus group about the work experiences of three women who worked at the refuge. A single interview was also conducted with the refuge manager, Rolinda. The support of Te Whakaruruhau, and Rolinda specifically was crucial to my conducting this study in a safe and ethical manner.

Working with an agency like this was important in conducting my research in a safe and ethical manner. This ensured women had already been through the process of seeking help from the refuge and had established lives free from violence as well as coping techniques before being considered by Rolinda as potential participants. It further ensured there were support systems in place, both for participants and me as we went forward. In utilising the ties my chief supervisor already had with the refuge, the recruitment of participants was built on multiple layers of trust between staff, clients, and myself. Building relationships with people takes time and engaging in repeat interactions with former clients of refuge allowed for a shared exploration of their experiences. Sharing kai and coffee and adopting a casual conversational style helped create a liminal space in which my participants felt comfortable sharing their stories. This led to all sorts of tangents and side-conversations that textured their everyday experiences with macabre moments of humour and insight. The findings I discuss throughout this chapter reflect these moments.

This chapter discusses key findings from this research in relation to broader literature on intimate partner violence and the conduct of everyday life (FVDRC, 2017; Wilson & Webber, 2014). Drawing on my participants' accounts, I contradict harmful victim-blaming narratives and the mischaracterisation of women as either victims or agents (Paterson, 2010). In doing so, I re-contextualise women's everyday practices as moments of resistance within constraint. This research orientation contributes to the IPV field more broadly by helping to reconstruct some of the entrenched and harmful stereotypes about women who live through violence with a more nuanced understanding of women's agentic resistance within violent relationships.

In line with the focus of liberation psychology on providing practical actions informed by the realities of everyday people (Martín-Baró, 1994), I provide suggestions for the inclusion of mundane aspects of violence and resistance in how government and agencies respond to the

needs of women who live through violence. Before moving into my key findings, I also reflect more broadly on the importance of everyday life as a site for social reproduction in IPV and consider the importance of understanding agency within constraints in relation to my findings. Key findings from this research are then considered under four headings. First, I discuss the need to recognise how violence and resistance can become entangled with particular material objects and social practices. Second, I discuss women's active mothering within the constraints of violence and argue for increased recognition of the imperfect but crucial day-to-day care provided by women while living through violence. Third, I reflect on processes of leaving an abusive partner and consider the ways in which my participants left psychologically throughout their relationships before leaving physically. Fourth, I conclude by discussing the significance of recognising mundane forms of violence in how agencies respond to women's needs. I argue that women's mundane everyday responses to the potential for and actual violence can contribute to how we support women's efforts to ensure their own safety and the safety of their children.

Everyday life as a site for the social reproduction of dominance and resistance

My analysis draws on both feminist research and the conduct of everyday life to explore my participants' agency and resistance to IPV in the context of the mundane comings and goings of everyday life. Both frameworks centre the practices of everyday life in understanding broader social and political structures (Smith, 1987; Leach, 2005; Holzkamp, 1995/ 2016; Højholt & Schraube, 2015). In this section I reflect on these theoretical underpinnings and consider how attention to the subtle everyday aspects of IPV reflect broader gendered inequalities and dynamics.

Centring women's everyday lives is a core tenet of feminist research as it can reveal how women's local experiences are constrained by broader structures as well as how women reproduce and alter social relations (Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006; Leach, 2005). In conjunction with the conduct of everyday life framework, this allowed me to explore the social reproduction of dominance and resistance through women's everyday practices, routines and placemaking (cf. Hodgetts, et al., 2015). Drawing on Simmel's (1903) *principle of emergence* and feminist scholarship (Hanisch, 1969), my analysis reveals how women's local practices and routines provide insight into wider political structures (Gibson-Graham, 2003; King & Robertson, 2017).

Local spatial constraints such as being shut in the cupboard or locked in a room, for example, reflect both the dynamics of coercive control in individual relationships as well as the spatial constraints imposed upon women via legal and social systems. Within the family court system, for example, women are often forced to endure face to face mediation with perpetrators to satisfy the court that they are co-operating as parents (Elizabeth et al., 2012b). Similarly, in a widely covered case at present, a woman in Aotearoa is being ordered to return to Australia after fleeing IPV with her child for safety under the Hague convention. Such cases occur all too frequently (Salter, 2014). Such instances highlight that individual experiences of violence against women do not occur in isolation, but rather in relation to wider socially sanctioned practices of control over women.

At the same time as revealing structural constraints, everyday instances of control and violence also reveal women's practices of resistance. Because routines are often flexible and organised in relation to other needs (cf. Dreier, 2015), my participants often adapted these to facilitate their survival. That is, rather than reflecting the reproduction of social structures in predictable ways, attention to routines allows us to explore the unstable nature of repetition amidst the broader patterns of power and control seen in IPV (Lilja & Baaz, 2015). In preparing

food for her partner, for example, Wendy does not do this in the same way every day, but variably spits in his food or spikes his drink according to her needs. Subtle tactics of survival were embedded in ostensibly trivial routines such as showering or walking the dog and reveal both the deep enmeshment of violence in everyday life along with concurrent resistance (cf. Stolte & Hodgetts, 2015). These were important in appreciating moments of agency.

Drawing on Campbell and Mannell's (2016) conceptualisation of agency as the negotiation of multiple constraints, I was able to explore the everyday, imperfect tactics my participants used to survive. In many cases, these did not align with dominant, often overt modes of resistance, but were subtle and sometimes appeared contradictory (cf. Scott 1985; Pells et al., 2016). They were nuanced, context-dependent, and predicated on individual understandings of safety and immediate survival (cf. Kabeer, 1999). People challenge power in diverse and fluid ways and resistance to IPV is no different as my study demonstrates (Pain, 2014).

While women resist violence in a range of ways, there is a need to understand more overt behaviours, such as leaving or calling the police, in relation to the tactics women carry out within everyday life. The many tactics my participants utilise throughout their relationships reflect the importance of understanding resistance to IPV across a continuum (Campbell & Mannell, 2016). We see that even within situations of extreme control and coercion, women find ways to express radical agency and shape their lives in small ways that preserve their dignity or just let them make it through the day (Sartre, 1948; Madhok, et al., 2013). The focus on everyday tactics orientates us towards such dialectics.

Embodied violence, emotionality and resistance

In considering how violence and associated emotions such as anxiety become embedded within the objects and practices of daily life, I have contributed further insights to a body of knowledge regarding women's efforts to resist IPV (Shefer, 2016; Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., 2016; Campbell and Mannell, 2016; Mannell et al., 2016). My participants' everyday landscapes were characterised by chronic anxiety and disruption. They were perpetually exhausted as they tried to anticipate their partner's next move and keep up with volatile mood shifts and changing expectations. Such constantly changing boundaries are part of the strategic sense of unreality perpetrators create, which helps them maintain control (Williamson, 2010). My findings demonstrate how anxiety can become embedded in every aspect of women's day-to-day life, from going grocery shopping to taking a shower. Anxiety became like a constant companion, present during all of their interactions. Having hot coffee or a sandwich thrown at them over breakfast is just one of the many unpredictable ways in which violence may manifest in women's daily routines.

This ever-present anxiety, although exhausting, was also in many ways appropriate to the situation my participants were in. It served a tactical function. Rather than pathologising women for this state of hypervigilance, my work points to the protective role such an embodied understanding of IPV can have in their lives. For Diane, this chronic anxiety led to a self-protective state of dissociation, which at times allowed her to separate herself from the intensity of her life at home and take a step back from it. My participants also had a heightened awareness for cues associated with violence such as the sound of the car coming up the driveway and responded by adapting their behaviour accordingly. This by no means suggests that women have control over these situations or can prevent the violence of perpetrators. However, it does indicate that women develop phronetic knowledge (Thompson, 2010) based

on their partner's previous patterns of behaviour and on their ability to pick up on subtle cues and respond accordingly.

Feelings of anxiety and shame came to be embodied in objects such as knives and piles of clothes, reflecting the material presence of strategies of coercive control, intimidation and humiliation. My participants developed phronetic (Thomas, 2010) forms of knowledge that alerted them to danger and useful responses. Often such forms of knowledge were difficult to communicate, such as the way Kiri could anticipate violence from her partner in the form of a feeling or facial expression. Drawing on the concept of memesis (Benjamin, 1940/2002), we can understand the imperfect ways in which Kiri approximated knowledge that was vital to her survival but difficult to express. As violence, anxiety and fear can become embodied, so too can women's resistance. When Kiri's partner repeatedly threw her belongings onto the street, for example, this was a deliberate strategy of control to intimidate, punish, and humiliate her. The shame Kiri experienced as a result of her partner's violence was worse than the physical abuse. Her decision to leave her belongings in the street was not passive, but a tactic to preserve her dignity, a rejection of his material violence and an act of resistance against his efforts to publicly degrade her.

The significance of these tactics and embodied forms of knowledge could easily be missed by agencies and legal actors if the everyday context of IPV was not considered. As Wilson and colleagues (2015) point out practitioners, advocates and government agencies need to be able to accurately record the context of violence, including the perpetrator's use of violence and the ways in which women resist in order to secure their safety. This means recognising the safety tactics women have already used when developing safety plans (FVDRC, 2017), many of which may not be obvious outside an everyday life framework. In recording safety tactics, frontline workers should be trained to recognise subtle and embodied forms of violence and resistance such as the anxiety embedded within kitchen utensils, the

manifestation of humiliation in piles of clothes, or the ability to detect subtle shifts in mood. Such mundane details may have significant ramifications for women's daily lives, as my study demonstrates.

The recognition of IPV as a pattern of violence and control within women's complex everyday lives is critical to avoid the provision of mismatched safety responses and punishment for actions which constitute self-defence (FVDRC, 2017). It is particularly important to establish a pattern of abuse and resistance to support women in any legal efforts, criminal prosecutions or child-custody disputes (Wilson & Webber, 2014). Women have died as a result of agencies mistaking situations of violent entrapment for relationship dysfunction or discrete acts of physical violence (FVDRC, 2017). Women have also been charged with manslaughter and murder in situations where a long history of violence has been discounted and the context of entrapment has been ignored in determining whether women had other non-violent means to resist their oppressor (Tolmie et al., 2018). That is, when the numerous ways in which women have attempted to protect themselves are discounted, their use of defensive violence can be mistakenly considered unreasonable. Between 2009 and 2015 the FVDRC (2017) found that the majority of women who killed their abusive partners did so in the context of significant past violence and escalating threats. It is therefore crucial not to miss the signs of such escalation in order to protect women's safety and defend their use of defensive violence. By paying attention to these everyday embodied forms of knowledge and resistance, we can help ground violence and women's resistance within the material world. The recognition of such efforts is particularly vital for institutions such as the family court and Oranga Tamariki.

Recognising active mothering within constraints

There are significant expectations on mothers to protect their children from the abuse of perpetrators, despite the Domestic Violence Act (1995) explicitly specifying that

perpetrators, not victims are responsible for exposing children to their violence (Robertson et al, 2007). As such, many mothers fear reporting abuse because of the response of the family court system, which often fails to recognise and support their proactive safety tactics (Morgan & Coombes, 2016). Judges have similarly been identified as pathologising and otherwise problematising the actions of mothers who are actively caring for themselves and their children within the restraints of IPV (Naughton, O'Donnell, Greenwood, & Muldoon, 2015; Salter, 2014; Chadwick, Gavey, Elizabeth, & Tolmie, 2014). What a mother can reasonably be expected to do given the context of entrapment, which includes efforts to undermine parenting is quite different to what might otherwise be expected (Tolmie, Smith, Short, Wilson, & Sach, 2018). My research builds on other work of mothering through violence (Midson, 2014; Middleton, 2006; Dunkerley, 2017) to suggest women actively engage in mothering through establishing routines, creating more habitable landscapes and finding ways to play within the constraints of their relationships. This work is made invisible by its ordinariness and the gendered expectations associated with raising children. We need to see a shift in the way the Family Court and Oranga Tamariki respond to the needs of mothers who live through violence and part of this should involve increased recognition of their day-to-day care despite violence.

My participants consistently completed taken-for-granted tasks, such as getting children ready for preschool, feeding, bathing, and putting them to bed, while also dealing with IPV. First and foremost, this primary care in adversity needs to be acknowledged. The taken-for-granted nature of providing basic care for children invisibilizes and devalues the work women consistently put in and makes it easier to construct them as deficit. More broadly the failure to recognise this work reflects the gendered division of labour and justifies women's inequitable access to economic resources (True, 2012). The fact that my participants provided day-to-day care for their children within the context of IPV which included instances of torture, attempted drowning, hanging, humiliation, and threats to family members, amongst an ongoing

pattern of violence, should be commended. As these women are often the primary caregiver, all of the work they do to ensure their own survival should also be considered as evidence of their attempts to protect the safety of their children.

Women living through violence adjust their day-to-day lives in numerous ways that aim to protect themselves and their children (Lapierre, 2010; Radford & Hester, 2006). However, within our current deficit-based approach to mothers, many of women's protective actions may be misrepresented as signs of pathology, neglect or mental illness (Naughton et al., 2015; Henderson et al., 2016; Roberts et al., 2015; Salter, 2014). By re-contextualising my participant's mothering practices as tactics of survival, we can undermine such harmful narratives. In teaching her son to get breakfast for himself, for example, Wendy might be constructed as somehow absent. However, what my research demonstrates is that Wendy uses this time to catch up on much-needed sleep while still keeping an ear out for her child. Wendy's exhaustion is actually evidence of her vigilance in protecting herself and her child at night time. Sleeping in and taking naps during the day for women experiencing violence may be less a sign of mental illness or 'giving up' than a deliberate tactic to minimise the risk of harm to themselves and children at night.

Other everyday tactics may similarly be misinterpreted. As I mentioned in my analysis, organisations such as Child Youth and Family (now Oranga Tamariki) have used a 'messy' home as evidence of a parent's inability to meet their gendered parenting obligations (Robertson & Masters-Awatere, 2017). Yet, within the context of her everyday life we see that when, Diane for example, chooses not to do the dishes it is not the result of her lack of stability. It is a rational self-protective decision to ensure her immediate safety based on her partner's past behaviours and the safety tactics my participants develop through ongoing trial and error processes. It is an antiquated view to expect any woman to be solely responsible for the running of their household and in the context of violence this expectation is even more out of place.

What should be focused on instead is the ways in which the violence of perpetrators constrains women's ability to build healthy lives, despite their resistance.

Above and beyond meeting these basic expectations of care and establishing, my participants put a great deal of work into creating more habitable landscapes for themselves and their children. Like the migrant women in Vaiou and Lykogianni's (2006) study of women's everyday lives in Athens, my participants renegotiated their everyday landscapes to create imperfect, but important routines within unhomely environments characterised by disruption. Creating structure and a sense of security came down to my participants' flexible use of whatever was available within their everyday routines. This includes practices such as going to an aunt's house for lunch, pottering around in the garden, or the ostensibly simple routine of making coffee. Such seemingly insignificant practices came to take on significant importance in my participant's lives in providing them with a sense of security and familiarity. Women's engagements in these activities should be understood as attempts to improve home life for themselves and their children. Home-making practices may also involve spontaneous moments of play and imaginative place-making, such as Diane setting up the family lounge like a movie theatre or Wendy chasing butterflies in the garden with her son. My participants show how women can assert their own realities through the flexible, often temporary structures they put in place in their everyday lives. Their accounts also question the utility in focusing on leaving as the only way in which women can achieve agency or protect their children.

Leaving Everyday

While there is often an emphasis placed on women to leave perpetrators by child protection workers and other frontline agencies, this often disregards the nature of entrapment, the dangers associated with leaving and the possibility of ongoing violence both directly and through indirect means, such as family court counselling (Stanley et al., 2012; Jeffries, 2016;

Lindauer, 2011; Elizabeth et al., 2012a). In attempting to conceptualise how women reach their decision to leave, scholars and practitioners often refer to 'turning points'. These are perspective shifts that women experience about themselves and their relationship (Anderson & Saunders, 2003). Gaining more insight into such shifts is of particular interest to agencies working with women as they can tailor their support to the stage women are at. As such this was something I incorporated into my study after discussion with Rolinda.

What I found, however, was that my participants 'left' their relationships all the time. Like other women subjected to IPV, my participants actively resisted and worked to secure their safety throughout their relationships and not in a linear way (Reisenhofer & Taft, 2013). My participants exercised small moments of agency every day through actions such as daydreaming, laughing, and turning to their social networks. Through these smaller actions, women appeared to practice the process of leaving throughout their relationships. Agencies need to appreciate that women's self-preserving practices and expressions of agency do not necessarily align with traditional responses to IPV.

Women respond to violent situations in countless ways that ultimately do not end the violence perpetrated against them, but which are critical to their humanity and self-respect (Coates & Wade, 2007). I argue that the ways in which my participants protect their self-respect are vital to their long-term survival and such acts need to be better understood in order to support women. When Diane looked through her living room window, for example, she was not passive, she was actively re-structuring her landscape to make it more habitable, creating a sense of continuity and stability in a life populated by moments of chaos. As Coates and Wade (2007) point out, in some cases of violence the respite offered by the mind can be the only opportunity for resistance. Similarly, when she used the sanctuary of the shower to recreate arguments with her partner in which she had control, she was using her imaginative capacity to reframe the situation. In doing so, she resisted her partner's attempts to psychologically

dominate her, while remaining hidden in the seemingly inert place of the shower. Engaging in such self-preserving acts was critical to my participants' long-term survival. Thus, there needs to be increased attention to the agency present in the self-preservation work women do, including imaginative work, for example, Diane re-imagining the cupboard.

Through subtle tactics such as imagining a better reality or playing out an argument, my participants left psychologically in small ways all the time. In other words, leaving did not begin or end with the physical departure from their homes. This is consistent with other studies which found women report multiple shifts throughout their relationships and that earlier acts of agency can contribute to later decisions (Rosen & Stith, 1997; Patzel, 2001; Chang et al., 2006; Madhok et al., 2013). For some women, leaving is never going to be the right answer, hence the reason why Te Whakaruruhau take a whānau-oriented approach. This involves working with families and holding men accountable for their behaviours, rather than assuming women should uproot themselves. Recognising and reframing women's everyday efforts as a part of the leaving process could help undermine the victim blaming logic inherent to questioning why women do not leave.

Final thoughts: Recognising mundane forms of resistance

Recently a woman asked me what my thesis was about. I replied that it was about women's resistance to everyday violence. She looked at me knowingly and said, "resistance or lack of resistance?" I replied, "Exactly. It's about the instances of resistance within everyday life that people don't recognise as resistance." What my study has demonstrated, and what this woman's comments reinforce is the need to recognise mundane forms of resistance to IPV. Resistance to violence is universal, as are strategies by perpetrators to conceal and reframe such resistance (Scott, 1985; Ridley & Coates, 2004). Getting out of bed, for my participants

was an act of resistance. Survival is resistance. Functioning is resistance. When women are constructed as passive, the perceived responsibility of and harm caused by perpetrators' violence is reduced (Henley, Miller, & Beazley, 1995; Penelope, 1990). Coates and Wade (2007) document how institutions become complicit in this violence through language that obscures the perpetrator's violence, obfuscates responsibility, and conceals the resistance of victims, shifting blame onto them for being passive. Concealing victims' resistance has been highlighted by the FVDRC (2017) as a way to blame women for the violence of perpetrators. To overcome victim blaming there is a need to focus on women's resistance and resilience even amidst the most horrendous circumstances (Paterson, 2010).

In line with the recommendations of Coates & Wade (2007), my research helps reveal the situational logic by which my participant's actions can become understood as forms of resistance. I ground Stark (2013)'s conceptualisation of coercive control, and in particular, the materiality of violence in the context of women's daily lives. My analysis reveals both the mundane ways in which coercive control manifests in women's everyday lives and the tactics with which they resist. In addition to relating to their immediate survival, many of the tactics my participants used functioned to preserve their humanity. I suggest building on the current conceptualisation of IPV to acknowledge the role of embodied forms of knowledge, using these mundane everyday tactics to inform safety plans. I further argue that the family court needs to recognise women's day-to-day survival efforts as a form of active mothering and prioritise their needs accordingly. Finally, I assert that women's self-preservation tactics throughout their relationships are critical to their long-term survival and these should be understood as part of the process of leaving rather than compliance with abuse. Recognising the significance of mundane violence is important in contextualising the pattern of abuse of perpetrators' and supporting women's responses.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



Everyday Gendered Violence

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher

My name is Alice Black. I am conducting this research as part of a Master of Science in health psychology at Massey University. My supervisors are Darrin Hodgetts and Pita King (school of Psychology).

Project Summary

I would like to talk to women who have experienced domestic violence. Initially I'd like to go through your history with violence-when it started and how it entered your relationship. Then I have some questions on the way violence affected your everyday life. I would like to speak to you about surviving violence and the types of strategies you used to get through. Then I have a few questions about making the decision to get outside help and what that process was like. Finally, I'm interested in the ways people use different places and whether there were certain spaces that felt safe to you. I am recruiting two groups of women. Group one are clients of Women's Refuge. Group two are staff from Women's Refuge. If you agree to participate you will be asked to discuss either your own or client experiences of violence.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

To be included in the study you must be over 18 years of age, have experienced domestic violence in the past, and now be living in a safe environment. I am recruiting 4 women who have experienced domestic violence in the past as well as 2 women who have worked in the area. As appreciation for your participation I will provide you with koha of \$25 for each interview.

Project Procedures

Your participation will involve 2 interviews of approximately 1 hour in length each. The interviews will be conducted either in a private room at Women's Refuge, or a local space where you feel comfortable.

Discussing your experiences of domestic violence may be upsetting. If you do become distressed at any stage we can always stop the interview, turn off the recorder, or have a break. I can also refer you to support services if you would like.

What happens to the information you provide

With your consent, the interview will be digitally recorded. I will then personally transcribe (type a written version of the interview) the interview recording to maintain and protect your anonymity. Once the recording has been transcribed it will be stored securely on a password protected computer and the audio recording will be destroyed. Your details will not be disclosed to anyone outside of myself and my supervisors, and any identifying information (such as person or place names) disclosed during the interview will be replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The only exception to this is if you disclose something that puts either your own or someone else's safety into question, in which case I may seek the advice of a member of Waikato Women's Refuge- I will let you know this at the time.

Every attempt will be made to protect your privacy. However, it is not possible to give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality where information is being recorded.

If you would like to hear about the results from this research please let me know, and I will provide you with a summary of the research findings when it is completed.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study at any time up until you have released your transcript for me to use in reporting the analysis*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

Project Contacts

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Darrin, or Pita, if you have any questions.

Alice Black: [REDACTED]

Professor Darrin Hodgetts: +64 (09) 414 0800 ext. 43758 or

D.J.Hodgetts@massey.ac.nz

Pita King: +64 (09) 414 0800 or P.R.W.King@massey.ac.nz

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix B: Consent Form



Everyday Gendered Violence

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that every attempt will be made to protect my privacy, however it is not possible to give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality where information is being recorded.

I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

My data will not be placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: **Date:**

Full Name - printed

Appendix C: Initial Interview Guide

Initial Interview Guide

- introductions, coffee and kai, general chat
- go through information sheet and consent forms, answer questions
- Outline topics e.g.

"I've got 5 different topics I'd like to talk with you about. There might be some that you want to talk about more and some that you don't want to talk about at all and that's no problem, you don't have to answer any of the questions, - just let me know if you'd like to move on at any point.

First of all, I'd like to go through your history with violence, when it started, and how it entered your relationship. Then I'd like to talk about whether violence impacted your everyday routines-things like going to the supermarket or daily transport. After that I have some questions about surviving on a daily basis-whether there were any strategies you used-that type of thing. Then I'd like to ask you about the process you went through when you left-coming to that decision and what it was like for you. Finally, I have a few questions about the way you used different places-and whether there was anywhere that felt safe to you, that type of thing.

Does that sound okay? Do you have any questions?"

1. History with violence

- Let's start with your history with family violence. When was the first time you experienced family violence?
 - Tell me a bit more about that?
 - Can you give me an example?
 - How did that feel?
 - How did you react?
- How did violence enter your life/ in your relationship?
- Can you recall a particular incident that stands out for you?
- How has violence affected you and those around you?
- Has your understanding of what violence is changed over time?

2. Everyday life

- Did the violence impact your everyday life and routines? *e.g. going to the supermarket, gardening, childcare, transport, eating, sleeping, health care?*
 - If so, how?
 - Can you give me an example?
- Was it predictable? Were there signs he was about to be violent?
- What did you do in those situations? *e.g. some women might delay it by inviting a neighbour over for a cup of coffee or going to do the grocery shopping*
- Did it affect your broader relationships with others?
- What types of activities did you engage in to help you deal with the violence?
- Did you have any regular events that helped you through? *e.g. when my mum left my father we used to go round to my great Aunt's house for Sunday dinners*

3. Sense of normality/ resilience

- What did surviving mean on a day to day basis?
- How did you maintain your safety? *e.g. some women might avoid talking to their partners at certain times during the day or keep a certain amount of money hidden*
- Did the ongoing nature of the violence ever make it seem 'normal' to you?
- Was there a period of time where you adjusted what you did?
- How did you respond emotionally? Did this change over time or in different places?
- Did you use any strategies to help preserve a sense of normality?
- How did you maintain your sense of self?

4. Leaving

People often talk about the need for women to "leave" violent relationships, and sometimes this puts all the focus on the individual and doesn't take into account the context of the situation.

- When did you start thinking about leaving?
 - Tell me about that
 - What affected your ability to leave?
- Walk me through you leaving
 - What did leaving involve?

- Was there a single point where you decided to leave or was it more gradual?
- How has leaving affected your life?
- Has leaving had any negative consequences?

Places/ Spaces

- Above, you mentioned that you went.... Was this a place you felt safe?
- Were there any particular places that you went to get away from the violence, or just to take a break? *e.g. some women might spend time in their bedroom or go outside for a cigarette*
- Earlier, you mentioned....
 - How did it feel to...
 - Can you tell me a little about...

e.g. going for a drive:

- *How did it feel to get into the car?*
- *Where would you go?*
- *What did it look like?*
- *How long would you spend there?*
- *What would you do afterwards?*

Closing

- Thank for what you've shared with me today, I realise it's not an easy topic to discuss and I really appreciate your time
- Summarise what we've talked about-check if correct
- Explain what's happening now-that I will transcribe etc
- Any questions-contacts
- Arrange follow up interview if interested