'Untangling the Messiness': Understanding how change happens for some men in a domestic violence intervention programme in Chile

FERNANDA MARIA CHACON-ONETTO

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the process of change in men attending a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) in northern Chile, a topic that remains significantly underexplored in Latin American contexts. Given the persistent prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Chile and beyond, understanding how change occurs in men is crucial for informing the development and improvement of intervention strategies.

Specifically, the study explores: how men understand their use of violence; how change unfolds within the programme setting; and how broader public policy frameworks shape the implementation of DVPPs. Drawing on feminist and masculinity theorists, the research develops a critical understanding of men’s violence and change that puts power dynamics in the centre and explores the links between gender norms for men and the perpetration of violence.

Methodologically, the study employs an ethnographic approach, incorporating fieldwork observations and semi-structured interviews with DVPP practitioners (n = 9), programme participants (n = 7), women’s support services staff (n = 5), and key informants (n = 2).

The findings reveal that change is nonlinear and characterised by resistance (an inherent aspect of the process) and contradictions, factors that pose distinct challenges for practitioners. Group workshops emerge as key spaces for questioning dominant gender norms for men and exploring alternative ways of being a man. However, the structural conditions practitioners face can undermine their efforts, particularly the precarious working environments shaped by outsourcing.

This dissertation contributes to a more nuanced and contextually grounded understanding of men’s use of IPV and change, while offering concrete recommendations for the design, delivery, and policy development of DVPPs in Chile and comparable settings.

‘Untangling the Messiness’:

Understanding how change happens for some men in a domestic violence intervention programme in Chile.

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Statement of copyright

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Dedication

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I love you,

Your bollito.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Research rationale

Tackling domestic violence is an urgent matter worldwide, and Chile is no exception. According to a recent national survey conducted in Chile, the ENVIF 2022, 23.3% of women between the ages of 15 and 65 have been victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the last 12 months, and 44% of women have experienced physical, sexual, or psychological violence at some point in their lives. The lifetime prevalence of IPV has increased over the years in the country (in 2012, IPV prevalence was 18.2%, whilst in 2022, it reached 23.3%). In this context, while physical violence has been gradually decreasing (from 5.6% in 2012 to 4.1% in 2022), the rise is significant for psychological violence (from 14% in 2012 to 22% in 2022) (Clarke & Trujillo, 2023). Tarapacá, where this research was conducted and where I have lived for over 36 years, had the second-highest prevalence of IPV in Chile in 2022, with a rate of 28.9% over the last 12 months.

Domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs), also referred to as Batterer Intervention Programmes (BIPs), Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes (DAPPs), Behaviour Change Programmes, emerged in the global north in the late 1970s and 1980s in response to the growing recognition of violence against women as a public matter. They were first established in the United States and later in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand (Dobash et al., 1999b). Founded in Duluth, Minnesota (US), the Duluth model is perhaps one of the most renowned approaches worldwide. DVPPs are an essential part of this model, which, in collaboration with other institutions, advocates, and organisations, aims to keep victim-survivors safe while simultaneously changing the behaviour of male perpetrators of IPV. DVPPs were implemented not as an alternative to the criminal justice system but as an experiment to see if men can change and, from a symbolic perspective, to hold them accountable for their violence (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). DVPPs are now argued to be an essential element of an integrated approach to stop violence against women (Hester & Lilley, 2014; Nicholas et al., 2020).

The field of perpetrator interventions is still emerging in Latin America, and research in this area remains limited (Esquivel & Silva, 2016). A recent study conducted by Aguayo et al. (2021)

mapped DVPPs across the region, revealing that out of 126 active programmes surveyed, 61 (47%) have been operating for five years or less, while only 20 (15%) have been in existence for ten years or more. Most of the sample was represented by Brazil (n=58), with 32 programmes identified in Chile, 28 of which were actively functioning by 2021. The mapping showed that programmes are state-funded (particularly in Chile and Brazil), followed by NGOs, academic centres, and universities (a trend observed in Brazil). A few self-funded programmes work with volunteers, particularly in Argentina and El Salvador, while others are funded by international organisations and UN agencies, mainly in Perú and Central America. Most of the programmes surveyed work with men (74%) and a small proportion with women (26%), both being Intimate partner violence perpetrators. Half of the programmes work with men from low economic backgrounds, 48 with migrants and 53 with African-descent population.

Most DVPPs serve court-mandated men, though some admit self-referred men (Flasch et al., 2022; Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021). In most programmes, an intake process is required. The most frequent reason for non-acceptance is severe mental health and/or substance abuse issues among participants. In Latin America, sexual offenders and men who have been convicted of femicide are frequently mentioned within the exclusion criteria (Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021). Interventions are usually conducted in groups with two practitioners (one male and one female), although some allow individual sessions based on individual assessments. The length of the intervention varies between eight and 52 weeks (Flasch et al., 2022).

Most programmes attempt to engage men who use IPV in self-reflection, taking accountability for their actions, and develop skills as alternatives to violence (such as communication, conflict resolution skills, empathy, identification and management of emotions, healthy expression of emotions and interpersonal skills) (Flasch et al., 2022). Programmes help men explore societal and personal values and beliefs that underpin (legitimise and sustain) violence and oppression, such as gender stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women (Flasch et al., 2022; Hester & Lilley, 2014). Regarding the curriculum, most programmes work with men on identifying different forms of IPV and power and control tactics, as well as their impact on victims-survivors (Flasch et al., 2022).

The Centros de Reeducación de Hombres (CRH, Centres for Re-education for Men) was the official name of the programme in Chile. In this thesis, these centres will often be referred to as Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes (DVPPs), which is the most commonly used acronym in the UK The programmes in Chile form part of the state's response to addressing violence against women. Influenced by the Duluth model, Chilean DVPPs are integrated into the National Response System for the Network against Violence Towards Women (Technical Orientations, 2023). The state's response, of which the DVPP is a component, is enforced by international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1989), the Inter–American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (often called Convention of Belém Do Pará) (1994), and national laws such as the Domestic Violence statutory law (N° 20.066).

In Chile, DVPPs work with both self-referred and court-mandated men (although most are court-mandated). These programmes are considered 'specialised' gender-based violence interventions, 'containing elements of socio-education and psychotherapy'(Technical orientations 2023, p. 5), for men who use violence against their (ex) partners, aiming, on one hand,

> To reduce levels of violence against women, promoting their safety and protection, and on the other hand, to positively impact their quality of life, restoring their rights and freedoms that have been violated due to the abuse suffered from their partners (Technical orientations 2023, p. 5).

Concerns about the effectiveness of criminal justice system interventions in rehabilitating offenders, initially prominent in the US, have spread to other countries, particularly in the global north. Combined with scepticism about men's ability to change and programmes' capacity to facilitate such change, these concerns have intensified scrutiny of these interventions, as evidenced by the proliferation of evaluation studies based on overly narrow measures of success and police incident-focused [measures/outcomes] (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). The concerns about effectiveness did not resonate with the same depth in Latin America as in the global north, perhaps due to the political circumstances most countries in Latin America were going through when the 'nothing works' movement emerged in the 1980s. Early interventions to tackle domestic violence in Chile followed a similar pattern to the global

north, focusing primarily on victim-survivors, and the inclusion of men in public policy interventions took place slowly, shyly, and with great scepticism over time (Araujo et al., 2000). To date, only a handful of evaluations have been conducted in the country (Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021).

Although concerns about the effectiveness of DVPPs persist, the field has been gradually moving toward understanding change, shifting away from a narrow focus on what works and instead toward a deeper inquiry into why, how, and under what circumstances change occurs. This trend is also observed in other parts of the world (Downes et al., 2019; Hughes, 2017; McNeill, 2002; Morran, 2019), to which this research aims to contribute. In other words, the field has progressively changed the research question from whether men can change in the programmes to how DVPPs can better respond to domestic violence by understanding how and why change happens. Much of the research, however, has been conducted in the global north. In Chile, several studies on change among men in the programmes have been conducted in the context of postgraduate and undergraduate dissertations. Much of this knowledge has been secluded from policymakers (Sordi, 2024) and academics.

1.2 Research aims

Considering the significant prevalence of IPV in Chile and recognising the critical gap in existing research, alongside the current trends in the field, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of change in men on DVPP. It will explore 1) how men understand their use of violence against their (ex) partners and capture the influence of the programme in this regard, 2) how change happens for men in the programme, and 3) how the broader national framework of social policy in Chile impacts DVPP practitioners' work.

1.3 Sociopolitical context in Chile

Before delving into the DVPP case study, it is essential to understand Chile's recent political and economic history, the history of DVPPs in the country, and the transition from focusing solely on IPV victim-survivors to also including men who perpetrate IPV. Although DVPPs in Chile officially began in 2011 as part of an intersectoral response to IPV, earlier initiatives, laws, and women's social movements had previously laid the groundwork.

In 1973, Chile experienced a dramatic and pivotal moment in its history: a military coup that overthrew the democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, on September 11. This event marked the beginning of a 17-year military dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet, which would fundamentally reshape Chile's political, social, and economic landscape. Enforced by the military coup supported by the United States, Chile became the first testing ground for neoliberal state policies and served as a model for shaping neoliberal policies in western countries (Muñoz Arce & Pantazis, 2019). During the dictatorship, widespread and systematic human rights abuses were carried out against perceived political opponents and critics of the regime. These violations included arbitrary arrests, torture, forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, forced migration and exile, creating an atmosphere of fear and repression that has deeply impacted Chilean society to this day.

While Chile was amid the most brutal dictatorship in its history, feminists in the global north were bringing the issue of violence against women to the forefront. During this period, the gendered understanding of intimate partner violence slowly took shape in Chile, driven by the growing influence of women's and feminist movements. These movements were central to the defence of human rights, restoring democracy and bringing public attention to violence against women. The slogan used by women's and feminist movements in Chile, 'Democracia en el país y en la casa' ('Democracy in the Country and the Home'), became a powerful rallying cry, intertwining their aspirations for political change and eradicating violence against women. However, this process was not straightforward.

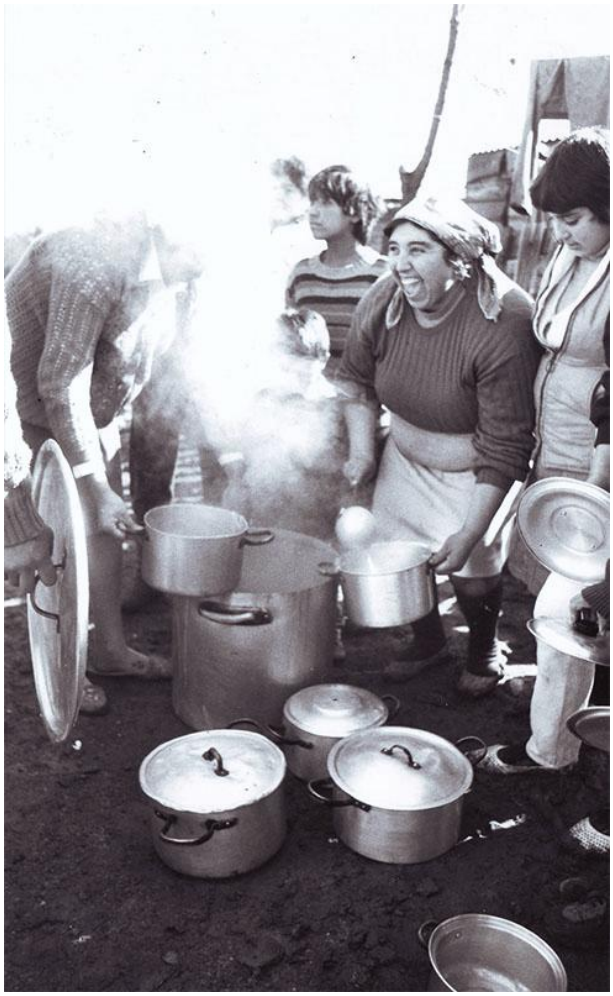
According to Araujo et al. (2000), although there were dedicated centres for the sexual torture of women, such as the infamous 'venda sexy' (in English, sexy blindfold), women were often viewed as 'neutral' in the political struggles leading up to the military coup. The military coup shut down political parties, labour unions and any political associations, along with the overall restriction of individual and collective freedoms. Women's perceived neutrality facilitated the emergence of new civil society organisations predominantly led by women. Organisations such as the Agrupación de Familiares Detenidos Desaparecidos, AFDD[1] (Association of Relatives of the Disappeared Detainees), were founded mainly by women relatives of

[1] Initially, women gathered to discuss the disappearances of their loved ones and later took the step of reporting these cases. Women visited detention centres searching for their missing family members.

individuals who were arrested and subsequently disappeared due to the state-sponsored violence during the military coup in 1973. Women, then, became a powerful voice of activism, leading non-violent protests, including hunger strikes and public marches.

By the end of the 70s, civil society and human rights organisations (such as the Vicariate of Solidarity, a Catholic organisation that aimed to aid victims and families) and NGOs proliferated, supported by international organisations. These brought together individuals from previously shut-down organisations, but primarily women, who gathered around communal kitchens, productive workshops, and human rights defences (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Photo of Women in communal kitchens (ARNAD, n.d).



In these spaces, women discussed not only issues related to political repression and violence, acknowledging the sexual nature of the political violence inflicted upon them, but also matters concerning their everyday lives. Through these dialogues, various forms of violence they

endured began to surface, including those exerted by their partners. However, there was considerable resistance, including within leftist forces, connecting the domestic and sexual violence against women with the violence perpetrated by the state, as it was generally understood as a result of power relations between social classes. Considering violence against women as a form of oppression or subordination was perceived, in some cases, as a divisive tactic to distract women from the fight against dictatorship (Araujo et al., 2000).

Between 1977 and 1981, the emergence of the first self-proclaimed feminist groups became apparent. One example is the Círculo de Estudios de la Mujer (Circle of Women's Studies). Established by feminist scholars, the organisation built connections with feminists and women's organisations in Latin America, the US, and Europe, with the support of returned exiled women, who became essential agents of dissemination and links with the international feminist movement that took place in the global north in the 1970s. The organisation aimed to gather women from different backgrounds around shared experiences of subordination. New ideas about how to understand violence against women proliferated in various spaces, causing growing conflicts within their organisations, which led women to establishing new spaces to fight for their autonomy from other political forces (Araujo et al., 2000).

The women's movement of the 1980s emerged from various groups, bringing together women from diverse social backgrounds with differing political goals (Siemon, 2011). Although differences between organisations persisted, under MEMCH'83 (a group that brought together women's organisations nationally), the movement formed a collective identity where women were self-presented as life defenders (Siemon, 2011) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Photo of the Meeting of the Democratic Women's Group (In Spanish Agrupación de Mujeres Democráticas), founded in October 1973, dedicated to the defence of human rights (ARNAD, n.d)

Social movements against the dictatorship reached their peak by 1983. Following the 1986 assassination attempt on Pinochet, the strategy shifted towards political negotiations by parties seeking a resolution to the dictatorship. This culminated in the 1988 plebiscite, which ultimately led to the restoration of democracy in 1990, marking the end of 17 years of dictatorship.

After years of advocacy by women's movements to bring attention to the issue of domestic violence, it finally entered the public agenda and became a concern among political parties and emerging political agents of the time. Recognising domestic violence, along with other forms of violence against women, as a form of discrimination against women, the new democratic government established the National Women's Service (SERNAM, now SERNAMEG, National Service for Women and Gender Equality, a state agency) in 1991 to promote gender equality by developing public policies that improved women's status in areas such as employment, education, and family life. As part of this mandate, SERNAM also focused on domestic violence, providing both support and protection for victim-survivors (Maravall, 2016). Initiatives targeting perpetrators began gradually in 1990. Among the early measures was the increased monitoring and supervision of men with criminal convictions.

In 1991, SERNAM introduced its first programme for perpetrators, titled 'Therapeutic Experiences with Male Batterers' (Experiencia Terapéutica con Hombres Golpeadores), with the support of the Organisation of American States (Maravall, 2016). This initiative focused on the most serious cases of domestic violence. In 1992, another programme was established under the supervision of the city council of Santiago. This programme aimed to intervene in abusive relationships and develop skills for non-violent conflict resolution. These two therapy-based initiatives laid the groundwork for the subsequent inclusion of men in the intersectoral response to tackling domestic violence (Maravall, 2016).

The first domestic violence statutory law (N° 19.325) was enacted in 1994. The law legally acknowledged violence within families, establishing a system of protection, support, sanctions, legal assistance, and programs for victims. Among the sanctions against perpetrators, the law included imposing precautionary measures, such as mandatory participation in therapeutic or family counselling programmes, overseen by SERNAM, the Ministry of Education's Diagnostic Centres, or community-based Family Mental Health Centres (COSAM). These agencies were required to submit reports to the sentencing court regarding the perpetrator's compliance, with consequences for noncompliance. Yet programmes for perpetrators were scarce, and thus, referrals were not always possible (Villela, 1997). Despite limited information about the available programmes, amongst the first community programmes implemented was the General Practitioner of the School of Psychology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile for court-referred men in Santiago, San Bernardo (Consultorio Externo de la Escuela de Psicología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) between 1993 and 1995 as well as the Psychological Clinic of the University of La Frontera with the support of Family Care Center of Traiguén (Villablanca s.f cited in Sordi, 2024). Other DVPPs were later established, such as the court-mandated Pronovif, launched in 2007 by the Cerro Navia city council in Santiago.

Even though the law represented a significant advance in recognising and sanctioning a phenomenon previously thought to be a family matter, and thus private, it was criticised because of its 'therapeutic approach' that aimed to repair family ties (Casas & Vargas, 2011). Mediation between partners was the most common way of solving DV cases (Casas, 2006).

Around that time, critical studies on men and masculinities began to grow in Chile and other Latin American countries, addressing the gap in gender and women's studies concerning men and the concept of masculinity (Barbieri, 1993; Madrid et al., 2023). The international feminist movement significantly influenced the early development of this field, with notable contributions from leading Latin American feminist scholars (Madrid et al., 2023). Scholars such as José Olavarría, Teresa Valdés, and Gabriel Guajardo, among others, established the first Network of Masculinity Studies in Chile in 1998. This initiative fostered the systematic study of men and masculinities in the country. It also provided recommendations to SERNAM, advocating for the inclusion of men in gender equality and violence prevention policies. This was evident in the recommendations by the Network to SERNAM through their research and publications, which advocated for the early education of egalitarian role models for men, emphasising shared caregiving, domestic responsibilities, and peaceful conflict resolution (Maravall, 2016).

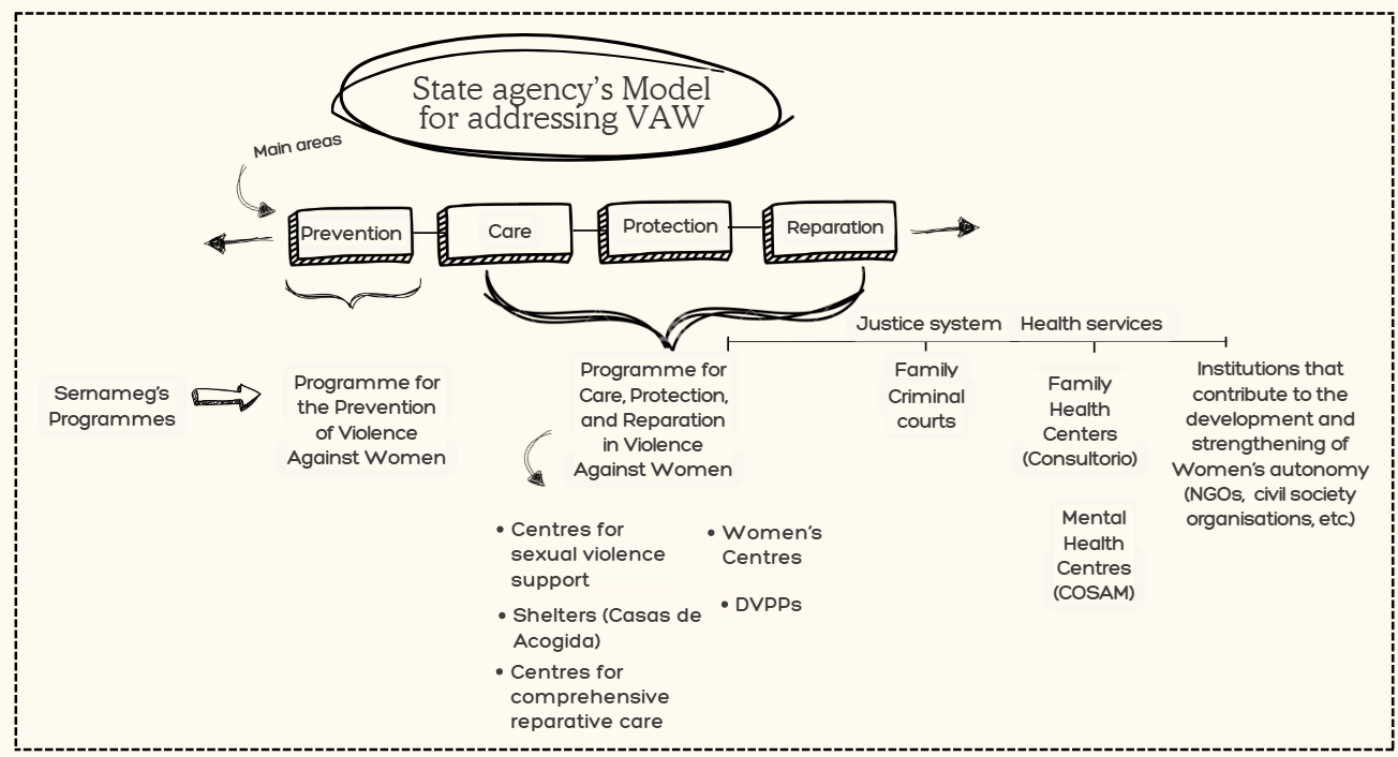
1.4 Setting the scene: Landscape of DVPPs in Chile

In 2005, Law 20.066 replaced the previous domestic violence statute (19.325), allowing both family and criminal courts to intervene in cases of domestic violence. Family courts handled cases of domestic violence that were not considered crimes, while criminal courts addressed situations involving the commission of a crime. To address some of the shortcomings of the previous law, the new statute explicitly forbade mediation between parties in criminal courts and typified the crime of habitual abuse. This term refers to a pattern of repeated abusive behaviour within the family, including physical, emotional, economic, and sexual violence. Both family and criminal courts now had the authority to refer perpetrators to specialised intervention programmes, paving the way for various forms of referrals to DVPPs. For instance, family court judges *had to* impose one or more accessory measures in their rulings, which included mandatory attendance at therapeutic or family counselling programs (Article 9, letter d). In criminal courts, perpetrators could be referred to DVPPs through alternative outlets for the trial, which refers to mechanisms or processes that allow for resolving disputes or criminal cases without going through a full court trial process. Despite these advancements, the law had been criticised for not addressing other forms of violence against women and for failing to establish clear consequences for perpetrators in case of non-compliance (Sordi, 2024).

In 2008, a significant milestone was reached when Michelle Bachelet, Chile's first female president, mandated the creation of DVPPs under newly enacted legislation. The Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with SERNAM, developed a programme for domestic violence offenders, initially launched as a pilot in 2009 in Antofagasta, Concepción, Santiago, and Valparaíso. These gender-specific therapeutic interventions, known as Intervention Programmes for Men Who Use Violence Against Their Female Partners and Young People in the Intrafamilial Context, were initially overseen by the Ministry of Justice and later, in 2010, by the Gendarmerie (Morales et al., 2012). The intervention focused on fostering motivation for change and promoting accountability among male perpetrators. These initiatives laid the foundation for the 'Programmes for Re-education of Men Who Use Violence Against Women' (CRH – Centros de Reeducación de Hombres in Spanish), one of which is examined in this research. Under the administration of President Sebastián Piñera in 2011, six additional centres were established to further these efforts. The centres were integrated into an inter-agency approach to tackle violence against women.

DVPPs were part of the ‘Programme of Care, Protection and Reparation for Violence against Women’, which, along with other centres and services (as illustrated in Figure 3), aimed to ‘strengthen women’s autonomy, promoting their right to a life free of violence’ (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 2). According to the state agency, the DVPPs are one component of a strategic approach designed to ‘enhance the state's response to preventing violence, protecting women, and supporting those who have experienced gender-based violence’ (Technical Orientations, 2023, p.5). The following figure (3) is based on the 2023 Technical Orientations and is reproduced with permission of the state agency.

Figure 3.The place of DVPPs in the state agency model for addressing Violence against women.



Although other interventions for perpetrators of IPV were part of the inter-agency approach, the centres received the most attention (Sordi, 2024). Despite this, only a handful of evaluations have been carried out under different measures of success, designs, and methodologies (Astorga & Valdivia, 2020; Espinoza et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2012; Salas-Herrera, 2015). To date, programmes in Chile run by the state agency have not been nationally evaluated, and this research is among the first to examine the processes for change in a Chilean programme in-depth.

This PhD research has become even more salient since 2023, when the 16 centres closed. The staff was partly relocated to other service providers. The shutdown of these programmes raises critical concerns about the institutional knowledge that may now be lost and, most importantly, the potential risks for survivors. Furthermore, they were key sites for studying change among perpetrators, providing a helpful resource to contribute to knowledge and practice. Cost concerns and high attrition rates were the primary drivers of the decision. Resources were reinvested in other prevention programmes, 'which have been demonstrated to have a greater impact on the community' (Ramírez, 2023, para. 1). It is essential to note

that the closure of the DVPPS occurred within the context of a broader restructuring of the state agency's programmes under the Violence Against Women (VAW) Unit. The redesign is based on the degree of harm and risk across all forms of gender-based violence, in alignment with the Comprehensive Gender-Based Violence Law No. 21.675, enacted in June 2024.

1.5 A case study of a DVPP in Chile

The DVPP examined in this research is in a city in northern Chile with a population of 143,296 as of 2024. It is one of the poorest cities in the country. In the region, over 12,000 families reside in informal settlements or camps, with the majority concentrated in this city, making it the area with the highest number of informal settlements nationwide (Diariolongino, 2023). The following list presents newspaper headlines from the area, providing a brief glimpse into the context (Álvarez, 2025; El Boyaldía, 2025a, 2025b; Moqueda, 2023; Vilas radio, 2023).

Table 1. Newspaper headlines of the city

'He pretended to be a taxi driver, killed 14 women, and was caught due to a detail in the car' (Ortiz, 2025).
'Mayor concerned about the increase of landfills: 'They're turning our area into a sacrifice zone'' (Álvarez, 2025).
'Despite the government's positive assessment: Region among the three poorest in Chile' (Vilas radio, 2023).
'Region leads in multidimensional poverty according to Casen 2022' (Moqueda, 2023).
'Power cuts: They will occur on 27th March in these areas' (El Boyaldía, 2025b).
'Power cut in the city will last 6 hours: It will be on Tuesday, 25th March' (El Boyaldía, 2025a).

The programme was first implemented in 2011 by a local university, information corroborated by the state agency. From 2013 until its closure in 2023, the implementation depended on the state agency through a city council, following the technical orientations of the first one. The technical orientations are the programme's technical guidelines, a 381-page document that includes theoretical and technical approaches alongside some practical instructions for the staff.

In Chile, the design and implementation of social policy are often distinct processes. The state, through the ministries, designs and funds public policies, but their implementation involves different institutions, usually referred to as Servicios públicos (State Agencies). These entities may include the private sector (both for-profit and non-profit organisations, such as universities), other public institutions (such as city councils), or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), all of which follow the agency's guidelines. By standardising service provision, the state aims to deliver quality, efficient, and effective interventions (Technical Orientations, 2023).

The DVPP in question provides services for male perpetrators of domestic violence across the region. Most of the men in the DVPP are court-referred. The region has some particular characteristics that are evidenced in the demographics of the programme. Firstly, it boasts the highest concentration of migrants relative to its population size compared to the rest of Chile (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2023). By 2023, 56% of the men in the programme were nationals, and 44% were foreigners. Out of the nationals, most of the men came from the region's capital, followed by the city in which the DVPP is based. Among the foreigners, 21% were Bolivians, 15% were Peruvians, 4% were Venezuelans, 1% were Paraguayans, 1% were Turks, 1% were Colombians, and 1% were Pakistanis.

The DVPP operated in one of Chile's most economically deprived cities within a region with the highest proportion of migrants relative to its native population, creating unique challenges. The programme primarily worked with court-mandated men, many of whom came from neighbouring countries and had low educational attainment. According to the centre's records, 49% of the men had completed secondary education, 18% reached higher education, 10% had completed primary education, and 1% had no formal education (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes, 2023).

1.6 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is structured into eight chapters. Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical underpinnings of the research project. It examines the links between men, masculinities, and IPV through feminist and critical studies on men and masculinities, drawing on contributions from the global north and Latin America. Although theorising men's violence against their (ex) partners is key for DVPPs, the context in which these programmes operate is equally crucial, as it can impact interventions. Chapter 3 addresses the meanings of change, how it has been measured in research, and how the DVPPs facilitate this. Chapter 4 then outlines the PhD research project, detailing its epistemological assumptions and describing how the methods and analyses were ethically conducted. The following three chapters present the study's findings. Chapter 5 explores men's and practitioners' understandings of IPV (its roots and dynamics) based on the interviews and fieldwork observations. Men's narratives of IPV will be unpacked in-depth. Chapter 6 explores how change unfolds for some of the men in the DVPP, as well as the dilemmas practitioners encounter due to the complexities of men's processes of change. It then examines the impact of Chile's public policy framework on the DVPP, focusing on agency fragmentation, the precarious working conditions resulting from outsourcing practices, and how these structural issues sideline the needs of victim-survivors while compromising practitioners' overall well-being and service delivery. The final chapter synthesises the key findings, analysing their significance in relation to existing academic literature and discussing their implications for practitioners and policymakers.

Chapter 2: Mapping the landscape of gendered theories on IPV: Linking men, masculinities, and intimate partner violence

2.1 Introduction

Not all men are violent, yet they 'are the major doers of violence' to women, children and themselves (Hearn, 1998, p. 16). Policy and practice have traditionally understood domestic violence and abuse as a gendered issue, with women being the primary victims and men the main perpetrators (Westmarland & Burrell, 2023). Furthermore, men's use of IPV often differs from that perpetrated by women in terms of context, frequency, and consequences (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). The prevalence of interpersonal violence perpetrated by men against women, such as IPV, underscores the urgent need to examine the connections between men and violence (Walby & Allen, 2004; Westmarland, 2015).

Understanding the roots and dynamics of men's use of IPV is crucial for DVPPs, as theory and practice are inextricably linked. This chapter will explore various conceptualisations of men's violence against intimate partners from a broadly gendered perspective, incorporating feminist theories and critical scholarship on men and masculinities. Feminist theories remain one of the most dominant explanations and have been widely applied in DVPPs globally. This section provides an overview of these theories, with a particular emphasis on Hearn's theoretical framework.

While understanding the conceptualisations of men's violence against women in intimate partner relationships is crucial for DVPPs, the context in which these programmes are implemented is equally significant. This chapter will conclude by examining the Chilean context of policy-making and implementation, as well as the impact of the New Public Management agenda on DVPP practitioners and other frontline workers in the domestic violence field. Particular attention will be given to their working conditions and well-being, which have recently received increased attention in research, although this remains very limited.

2.2 Feminist contributions to IPV from the global north

The phenomenon of men's violence against women was brought to the public agenda by feminist movements. Feminist schools of thought played a crucial role in establishing the foundations for theorising men's violence against women by revealing the socially constructed nature of behaviours and characteristics previously considered inherently masculine or feminine. They also highlighted the hierarchical, and thus unequal and oppressive relations, between genders and their mutually constituting nature (Millett, 1971). The concept of patriarchy, introduced by pioneering feminist work, emerged here and was later theorised to highlight the systematic nature of male oppression and female subordination (Hunnicutt, 2009). This system is sustained through various structures, including violence (Walby, 1989). A central focus of feminist theories on men's violence is its impact on women (Berggren et al., 2020). Through feminist activism, violence against women has been mainstreamed within transnational human rights discourse, leading to its framing as both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality (Kelly, 2005). Complementing this perspective, critical studies on men and masculinities have investigated how men sustain gender inequalities, often through the concept of masculinities, providing valuable insights into this complex issue.

In explaining the relationship between men and IPV, many feminists have focused on two key concepts: power and control (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999; Hearn, 1998; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 2007). It is important to clarify that these concepts are also central to various other theoretical perspectives and disciplines (Wagers et al., 2022), which, however, fall outside the scope of this dissertation. Men's violence against women in the context of intimate partner relationships may be used to reassert their authority (Dobash & Dobash, 1978, 2011), as IPV is an 'extension of the domination and control' of men over their partners (Dobash & Dobash, 1978, p. 15). It may also be used to maintain and gain power (Hearn, 1998; Stark, 2007), or it can be an expression of power where physical violence is no longer needed to enforce compliance (Stark, 2007).

IPV may be exerted through physical force, but it can also be sustained without it (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). Women who have experienced IPV often recognise a broad spectrum of violent behaviours, which may be distinct or interconnected, extending well beyond physical

violence to include actions that may seem minor or insignificant. IPV frequently consists of seemingly low-level acts of physical behaviours, carried out routinely and repeatedly, with cumulative effects that erode the victim's autonomy and capacity to 'resist or escape abuse' (Stark & Hester, 2019, p. 90). IPV also occurs within same-sex relationships, with research indicating that its lifetime prevalence in the United States is as high as, or even higher than, that of the general population (Brown & Herman, 2015). It can take specific forms in same sex couples, such as identity abuse, which will not be addressed in this discussion (Jennings-Fitz-Gerald et al., 2024).

Stark (2007) elaborated on the concept of coercive control to identify seemingly small behaviours, offering an analytical tool for understanding the dynamics and complex patterns of abuse in IPV from a victim-centred perspective. This concept elucidates the connections between IPV, gender inequality, and masculinity. It challenges the focus on the consequences of violence solely on safety, urging consideration of how it impacts the freedom of women and children (Downes et al., 2019).

The concept of coercive control was subsequently adapted into criminal law as a new criminal offence in the UK and elsewhere around the world (Stark & Hester, 2019). It is important to note, however, that the dynamics of IPV and its consequences for victim-survivors had been studied long before Stark's work, dating back to the late 1970s. One influential theory that predates Stark's is Lenore Walker's Learned Helplessness theory (Walker, 2009). It is acknowledged as one of the 'precursors to the coercive control model' (Stark, 2007, p. 359). Other precursors of coercive control that influenced Stark's ideas came from authors such as Camella Serum (1979, as cited in Stark, 2007) and Margaret Singer (1979, as cited in Stark, 2007), among others, who drew on previous research with individuals subjected to extreme control in non-familial contexts in the 1950s and 1960s. These authors applied those theoretical frameworks to the phenomenon of IPV. While their insights fall outside the scope of this discussion, their contribution lies in rendering visible tactics that were previously unnoticed.

Early efforts to develop counselling programmes for men who use violence were grounded in theories that conceptualised abuse as a form of control. These initiatives also laid the groundwork for Stark's theory of coercive control. A notable example is the Duluth Men's

Programme. A more detailed exploration of the theoretical framework of the Duluth Men's Programme will be presented in Chapter 3, given its influence on the Chilean programme.

Walker's theory has been highly influential in the past, but it is no longer widely used as a dominant framework. As Stark (2007) acknowledges, Walker's work has 'had a greater impact than any other work on how abuse victims are understood, represented by the media, and treated by the service system' (p. 221). The Cycle of Violence theory has also influenced domestic violence perpetrator interventions, as the Chilean case study demonstrated. Due to its pivotal role in the DVPP studied, Walker's theory and its critiques will be analysed in detail in Chapter 3.

In Walker's (1979) famous book, the author contends that IPV follows a cyclical pattern, offering an explanation for the phenomenon of learned helplessness, whereby victim-survivors, believing they cannot influence or escape their circumstances, remain in the relationship. This belief is shaped and reinforced by the repeated cycles of violence, making her feel trapped. In this context, Walker identified a three-phase cycle: (1) the tension-building phase, marked by escalating stress and fear; (2) the acute battering incident, where violence erupts; and (3) the loving contrition phase, in which the perpetrator expresses remorse or affection, temporarily restoring hope in the woman. The third phase acts as a form of positive reinforcement, often mirroring early courtship behaviours in the relationship, which can make it even harder for victims to leave.

Walker's cycle of violence theory has been widely critiqued for presenting IPV as a series of isolated incidents, rather than as a continuous and cumulative pattern of abuse. Stark (2007, 2023) argues that this episodic framing obscures the everyday, ongoing nature of coercive control and reinforces a male-centric understanding of violence. The model also neglects the non-physical dimensions of abuse, such as surveillance, emotional degradation, and financial control, which are often more devastating than physical violence itself (Stark, 2007). Moreover, it reduces violence to psychological trauma, ignoring the structural inequalities that enable IPV and its broader societal consequences. Stark further challenges the assumption that violence escalates in predictable phases, noting that many women experience a constant state of fear and tension. Finally, critics argue that framing IPV as a response to anger risks

excusing abusers, diffusing accountability, and encouraging self-justification rather than responsibility for harm (Gondolf & Russell, 1986; Garda, 2021).

The critiques of Walker's model have underscored the need for more nuanced theoretical approaches that capture the structural, gendered, and enduring nature of IPV. In response to these limitations, Stark's concept of coercive control offers a conceptualisation of abuse that moves beyond incidental violence to highlight the cumulative effects of patterned abusive behaviours. This framework shifts the analytical focus from isolated acts of violence to the broader dynamics of domination and entrapment, providing a more comprehensive account of the lived experiences of victim-survivors and the mechanisms through which gender inequalities are sustained over time. What makes coercive control distinctive, according to Stark (2007), is its aim to dominate and control a partner's sense of self. It achieves this through its broad application, deeply personal nature, and reinforcement of rigid gender roles in everyday life, ultimately creating a state of constrained autonomy that victim-survivors experience as entrapment. Crucially, this phenomenon is fundamentally gendered in how it is constructed, in how it is enacted, and in its consequences for victim-survivors.

Stark (2007) defines coercion as 'the use of force or threats to compel or dispel a particular response' (p. 228) that can have immediate effects on the victim-survivors. Control, on the other hand, has a much larger scope and consequences for women, even after the relationship ends. Control entails micro-regulating a partner's behaviour, vital resources, and choices. When coercion and control happen together, the result is an experience of entrapment or the invisible 'cage' (Stark, 2007, p. 356).

Most of the violence used in coercive control can be distinguished by its frequency and duration rather than its severity. Furthermore, a significant proportion of coercive control cases do not imply physical violence but can still subjugate the victims by targeting women's agency, which is a key predictor of severe or even fatal violence, as control recedes, violence increases (Stark, 2012). Physical violence, then, is a byproduct 'of an already established pattern of domination that has disabled their capacity to mobilise personal, material and social resources to resist or escape' (Stark, 2012, pp. 13-14). These patterns of behaviour are designed by men against their partners, exhibiting a personalised and individualised nature. Simultaneously, they are connected to broader discriminatory structures that devalue

women. Coercive control, then, is bound to gender inequality. The asymmetry in IPV between men and women stems not so much from differing capacities for violence but from sexual discrimination that provides men with privileged access to material and social resources. This structural advantage gives them an upper hand in power struggles and enables the implementation of personalised strategies and tactics. It is gender inequality and not the motives nor the frequency of coercive controlling behaviours that allows men (but rarely women) 'to shape discrete acts into patterns of dominance that entrap partners and make them subordinate' (Stark, 2023, p. 249). As Stark indicates, 'coercive control is 'gendered' because it is used to secure male privilege and its regime of domination/subordination is constructed around the enforcement of gender stereotypes' (Stark, 2012, p. 8). As such, it solidifies male authority.

Building on this, Stark (2023) conceptualises coercive control as a mechanism through which men impose what it means to be a woman, a process he refers to as 'gender ideology' (p.288), which is enacted through demands that position masculinity as inherently moral and authoritative, thereby entrapping women within narrowly defined expectations of femininity. This understanding of coercive control as both structurally rooted and ideologically driven resonates with earlier work by Dobash and Dobash (1998), who contend that IPV is fundamentally gendered, functioning to reinforce traditional norms of femininity. They argue that men's violence against women is a response to perceived deviations from gender norms, such as caregiving, emotional labour, and domestic responsibility, that have historically been devalued and feminised (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Within this framework, IPV becomes a punitive tool used by men to reassert dominance and uphold gender hierarchies, 'denying women a voice' (Dobash & Dobash, 1998, p. 154). Furthermore, Dobash and Dobash (2011) suggest that such violence is often rationalised by perpetrators as a legitimate reaction to women's failure to conform to idealised roles of wife, mother, or homemaker. In this later work, they expand on their earlier argument, proposing that men use violence to enforce rigid standards grounded in their own beliefs about intimate relationships. While Dobash and Dobash highlight how violence is used to enforce traditional gender roles, Stark deepens this analysis by examining how coercive control is not only a tool for maintaining gendered expectations but also a means through which men perform and affirm their masculinity. This

shift in focus, from the enforcement of what it means to be a woman to an examination of what it means to be a man, and thus the role of masculinity in IPV perpetration, offers a more comprehensive understanding of how coercive control operates within intimate relationships.

According to Stark (2007, 2009), men employ coercive control as a deliberate and strategic expression of masculinity, with control being more integral to masculinity than the use of force. Controlling women is not just about the direct act of dominance over women but about fulfilling men's ideals of how to do masculinity. In other words, men achieve control over women because the very 'performance of masculinity involves controlling others' (Anderson, 2009, p. 1448). Men often mistake the need to maintain or preserve control for a need to dominate women. However, the submission of women is less critical for them than the belief that it is a consequence of their authority being subordinate to that of men. Being in control thus allows men to differentiate themselves from women, with their identities intrinsically linked to the ritualistic performances they enforce against their partners (Stark, 2007, 2023). However, the restrictions that come with coercive control are foreign to most men, as many of the dynamics involve target behaviours associated with female gender norms. For Stark (2023), men's use of coercive control is instrumental and rational due to the specific advantages they gain through it and, at the same time, is driven by irrational and impossible demands imposed on women that do not provide any other immediate benefits than the feeling of being in control.

Stark's work focuses on women's narratives of IPV perpetrated by men, not exploring what motivates men to use coercive controlling behaviours against their (ex) partners, a gap investigated by Downes et al. (2019). The researchers explore perpetrators' narratives to 'examine how and why men use coercive tactics' (p. 267) and to understand how they reduce their use of coercive control (Downes et al., 2019, p. 267). They conclude that men's use of IPV is connected to the reinforcement of traditional masculine values, which portray men as authoritative, protectors, providers, and rational thinkers. In this context, men often use women's resistance to their standards as a justification for violence, viewing the regulation of their lives as a form of protection. Disparaging portrayals of women as inadequate enable some men to bolster their sense of power and rationalise their perceived need to intervene or guide them.

2.3 Theorising men's violence against their partners – masculinity theorists

According to Hearn and Howson (2020), men have historically dominated various fields, including academia, research, science, history, literature, and religion. Their writings have often been by and for other men, even when addressing women. For much of history, gender was regarded primarily as a woman's issue. At the same time, men were seen as ungendered, as masculinity functioned as the implicit standard, the norm, rendering it invisible and rarely examined. This has been changing with the growth in studies on men and masculinities, which range from less critical to more critical perspectives, the latter incorporating insights from feminist theory. In contrast, some perspectives are integrated within feminist theory, such as the Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (Hearn & Howson, 2020), which will be discussed later in this section. In this dissertation, I refer to these diverse perspectives collectively as masculinity theories.

Overall, the study of IPV has not gained significant attention within the field of men's and masculinity studies in the global north (Gottzén et al., 2020). An important part of this scholarship involves the study of violence, with a primary focus on the relationships between men (Gottzén et al., 2020; Messerschmidt, 1993). Regarding the latter, Walter DeKeseredy and his colleagues' theory of male peer support in criminology offers valuable insights into the links between relations among men and IPV (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). Men who have peers (including family members) who endorse violence against women are more likely to engage in IPV, particularly if, for example, friends' advice upholds the notion of male dominance and control in relationships, and sexism and objectification of women are normalised. Male peer support theory thus highlights how men often receive affirming support for their violent behaviours from their social circles. While this theory highlights how men receive support that fosters violence and abuse, research suggests that responses to IPV can be more nuanced, and despite receiving clear support, men who use violence may also encounter disapproval and condemnation (Hearn, 1998).

Perhaps the most influential concept in the field is hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The core principle of this theory is that there are multiple patterns of masculinities organised hierarchically around a hegemonic form that varies over time and in different contexts. This hegemonic form legitimises patriarchy by idealising a particular

version of manhood, sometimes through exemplar masculinities or authoritative male figures, in such ways that make men's dominance over women seem natural, desirable or even inevitable (Connell, 2005). The legitimisation of patriarchy can be reinforced by violence, but it is not simply based on force. According to Connell (2005), it is achieved through other mechanisms such as cultural consent, discursive centrality, institutionalisation, and the marginalisation and subordination of alternative masculinities and men. These men are required to conform to the ideal type, despite the fact that 'most men do not inhabit hegemonic masculinity' (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019, p. 1988).

Connell's argument explores the processes and relationships that shape the gendered lives of men and women. She posits that masculinity should be understood in multiple ways: as a position within gender relations, as a set of practices that men and women engage in to define this position; and as the impacts these practices have on personal experience, identity, and culture. Connell views femininity and masculinity as gender projects, ongoing processes where practices evolve, shaped by historical and social contexts, leading to changes in the foundational aspects of gender. Since masculinity is embedded in various relational structures with different historical and social contexts, it is subject to internal contradictions and changes. The theory of hegemonic masculinity has faced criticism, particularly for not prioritising men's violence against women in its development, an issue that will be thoroughly addressed later in this section (Green, 2009; Hearn, 2012a).

Another strand in the field, with a focus on IPV, has highlighted the ambivalence and contradictory nature of men's violence. Kaufman (1987, 1999), for example, argues that because masculinity is a social construct rather than a biological reality, it is inherently fragile for men. The dominant ideals and expectations of what it means to be a 'real man' in a given society place significant pressure on men, often driving them toward unhealthy coping mechanisms. However, the harm caused by these norms extends far beyond men themselves, impacting women, children, and others in their lives.

The dominant standards of masculinity, which men internalise, are impossible to meet fully, and the resulting insecurities from this failure can be deeply unsettling. In this context, violence can become a compensatory mechanism, a way for men to (re)assert their masculine identity both to themselves and others. In other words, 'the vulnerability and instability of

masculine identities may lead some men to use violence to temporarily shore up or restore their sense of selves as real men' (Anderson, 2009, p. 1445).

According to Kauffman (1987, 1999), men's violence is rooted in gender norms that socialise them to see violence as an acceptable way to handle their problems. Most emotions are perceived as emasculating, while anger is one of the few emotions deemed appropriate for men, reinforcing the normalisation of aggression and violence. Because masculinity discourages emotional expression and seeking support, many men struggle to process their difficulties in healthy ways. As a result, they may resort to destructive behaviours that harm themselves and those around them. This dynamic is further reinforced by norms of femininity, which often position women as responsible for managing men's emotional needs and maintaining relationships.

The ambivalence of men's violence is also highlighted by Messerschmidt, who argues that 'crime is a resource that may be summoned when men lack other resources to accomplish gender' (Messerschmidt, 1993, p. 85). Men's use of violence in intimate partner relationships is understood as a way to assert (achieve) masculinity and reinforce power and status over women and other men, highlighting how those in positions of power sustain and reproduce it. This means that some men may use violence as a resource to perform masculinity, especially in contexts where their masculinity feels threatened or devalued. Crime, and potentially IPV, becomes a way to reaffirm manliness that separates them from anything considered feminine.

Gadd and Corr (2017) argue that men's violence is linked to their perceived powerlessness, stemming from the impossibility of meeting social expectations of manhood. This feeling is intertwined with insecurities about intimacy and emotional and sexual dependence on women (Gadd, 2003, 2004). Men often project their vulnerabilities onto their partners, which explains the pattern of idealisation and denigration within intimate relationships, and the use of violence as an avoidance and defensive mechanism to evade painful self-realisations. These dynamics play an underlying role in the enactment of men's violence. Within this framework, violence and abuse are understood as both psychic and social phenomena. Consequently, men's violence is not always rational, nor does it always follow an instrumental logic, as some feminists argue (Gadd, 2003). Gadd proposes integrating feminist perspectives with

interpretive psychoanalytic approaches to understanding men's violence and masculinities. This combination addresses the limitations of the feminist view, which often sees men's violence solely as a deliberate exertion of power and control, while still recognising the importance of this perspective.

While the significant contributions of the authors reviewed here are acknowledged, this research will follow Hearn's approach. Hearn, a prominent British sociologist, has critically studied the phenomenon of IPV. He advocates for an approach known as Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) (Hearn & Howson, 2020). This approach emphasises that men and masculinities are embedded within systems and relations of gender power and domination. It draws on the full spectrum of feminist and critical gender and sexuality scholarship, Women's and Gender Studies. Although studying men and masculinities does not inherently ensure a critical perspective, CSMM prioritises this critical approach, unlike the other masculinity theorists explored here.

Hearn has been particularly critical of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, arguing that men's violence against women has not been a central focus in the development of this theory (Green, 2009; Hearn, 2012a). He contends that the theory of hegemonic masculinity has unintentionally shifted the focus away from men and the embodied materiality of power to masculinities. According to Hearn (2012a, 2012b), focusing on the hegemony of men helps illuminate the different ways men's social category operates through multifaceted forms of power: material, discursive, as a group, and individually. This multifaceted nature means that seemingly positive developments can have contradictory effects. For example, while men's expressions of emotions are typically viewed positively within the scholarship of men and masculinities, these expressions can also play a crucial role in justifying or perpetuating violence against women (Hearn, 2012b).

The hegemony of men does not imply that men are naturally or inherently violent. Instead, it is used to demonstrate how the social category of men invested in power is (re)created in everyday life and institutional practices, as well as at an intersection with multiple inequalities. In that way, the problem of men's violence against known women is not simply rooted in disembodied and abstract structures but is possible and achievable through agency. This has practical implications for the terminology I choose to employ in this PhD research. In this

context, it is essential to name the violence explicitly, as well as identify who is responsible for perpetrating it in most cases of IPV (men).

McCarry (2007) has made similar critiques regarding some aspects of scholarship on men's studies. She argues that masculinity is frequently treated as an abstract concept, detached and disembodied from men and their actions, often portraying men as victims of patriarchy. For example, the idea that men struggle to understand, express, or communicate emotions is frequently linked to dominant ideals of masculinity, which encourage emotional restraint and discourage vulnerability. A recurring theme in this literature is that men are socialised to suppress emotions or maintain emotional distance, which can negatively affect their mental health and relationships. As a result, improving men's emotional communication is often framed as a strategy for promoting gender equality. While McCarry (2007) does not address men's emotions, the example addressed here illustrates how masculinity theorists portray men as victims of gender norms for men, while overlooking how they also benefit from and reproduce patriarchal structures. However, this perspective can oversimplify the role of emotions in male perpetrators of IPV. Men's violent behaviours can be driven by a mix of emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, frustration, satisfaction, pride, and happiness, depending on the situation. The notion that emotions are either present or absent is too simplistic to explain the motivations behind their actions (de Boise & Hearn, 2017). Instead, scholarship should examine how men understand and interpret emotions and how these interpretations are connected to social structures.

McCarry (2007) contends that discussing masculinities without a focus on men's practices represents an obstacle to effective intervention strategies, as it fails to hold men accountable for their actions. She advocates for research that critically examines men's behaviours, material practices, and the construction of masculinities. Although other political and strategic issues may be at stake (Kaufman, 2012; McCarry, 2007), the critiques above may partially explain why VAW researchers have not always engaged with advancements in the scholarship of men and masculinities (McCarry, 2007; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019).

Hearn builds on feminist contributions by highlighting the central role of power and control in IPV; however, he does so in ways that differ from feminist perspectives. While many feminists argue that men's violence is a tool used to maintain power, Hearn contends that violence is

not merely instrumental but a fundamental expression of power itself, thus, a 'central dialectic of patriarchy' (Hearn, 1998, p. 188). In his theorisation, violence is not simply a byproduct of factors such as class, age, or religion, nor is it solely an outcome of hegemonic masculinity (Hearn, 2012b). Instead, it is constitutive of gender relations and 'itself a form of social inequality' (Hearn, 2012b, p. 164). He further challenges the idea that men's motivations stem only from an ideological intent to make women conform to the gender category of 'woman' (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006, p. 44), suggesting instead that this conformity is better understood as a consequence of the violence itself.

Men's violence is intricate and contradictory, often serving multiple and even opposing purposes. IPV is an attempt to sustain the illusion of an unattainable, idealised manhood (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). It can also serve to uphold certain ideologies (such as the belief in lifelong love) or function as a demonstration of raw power, eliminating the need for further violence to ensure obedience (Hearn, 1998). Due to these complexities, Hearn (1998) argues for a 'multifaceted conceptualisation of men's power in relation to violence' (p. 193) to explain why men who use violence may not necessarily feel either powerful nor manly. Crucially, this perspective should not diminish women's experiences of violence, power, and control.

The relationship between men and violence is marked by ambivalence toward both violence and masculinity (Olavarría, 2020). Violence is not always a means to achieve a higher status as a man, as different forms of violence are perceived differently in society. Some violent acts, particularly those against women, are condemned, with perpetrators often labelled as unmanly, deviant, or even monstrous (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). In such cases, men's use of violence against their partners may threaten their ideals of manhood rather than reinforce them.

Men's violence is also deeply intertwined with the construction of masculinity and the concepts of honour, respect, and responsibility. Violent actions can stem from conflicting motivations and emotions, including pride, shame, routine power reinforcement, or reactions to perceived threats and losses of power (especially when women challenge men's authority or fail to meet their expectations in areas such as childcare or housework). Notably, this can occur despite men's structural and individual dominance. In these contexts, violence may paradoxically signal vulnerability rather than strength. Furthermore, when men experience a

perceived or potential loss of power in one aspect of their lives, they may assert control through violence in other areas or relationships (Hearn, 1998).

2.4 Insights from Latin America

For Castro and Riquer (2003), early research on IPV in Latin America was paradoxical. In this context, although there was broad agreement that gender-based violence is a cause and consequence of patriarchy (and the gender inequalities that constitute it), empirical studies on IPV tended to reduce the concept of patriarchy to individual variables. In practice, this means it has been narrowed down to men's sociodemographic traits (such as age, marital status, education, occupation, and income) and behavioural factors (mainly alcohol and drug use). Such studies attempted to establish a profile of men who use violence, aiming to identify the characteristics among men that led to violence and those that are susceptible to change (In Chile: Barría, 2013; Barría & Macchiavello, 2012; Munita et al., 2012).

Back in the early 2000s, Castro and Riquer (2003) also noted there was still a significant gap in women's studies and pro-feminist research: the lack of focus on the perpetrators of violence against women. This gap became the starting point for the development of scholarship on men and masculinities, and it also presented a valuable opportunity for feminist research to expand.

Research on IPV in Chile and other parts of Latin America has been deeply influenced by feminist and women's movements, a conceptual framework shaped by gender mainstreaming and international organisations, and studies on masculinities. As a result, research on IPV and the understanding of men's violence against their intimate partners has drawn from various theoretical contributions from both the global north and the global south, enriching the debate.

As mentioned earlier, scholarship on men and masculinities in Latin America became formalised in the 1990s and expanded considerably during the 2000s, influenced by the work of Connell, Kimmel, Kauffman, Gutmann, and Bourdieu. The combination of topics and perspectives from the global north with incipient knowledge production in the global south during the 1990s shaped the region's scholarly development towards contextualised studies of male identities (Madrid et al., 2020).

Research in the region has focused on several key areas: the social construction of masculinity and male identities (Olavarría, 2017); at the intersection of ethnicity, age, and class (Mara, 2002); fatherhood (Olavarría, 2001c, 2003); and male homosocial spaces and reproductive health (Díaz et al., 2020). This body of work has made extensive use of hegemonic masculinity theory (Olavarría, 2020). However, less attention has been paid to other areas, such as violence, particularly IPV (Misael, 2008; Viveros, 2003).

There is a relatively recent line of research that explores how the demands and pressures of patriarchy, reinforced through idealised notions of manhood (hegemonic masculinity), have caused significant discomfort among men, impacting their well-being (González-Barrientos et al., 2024). For instance, Golubizky (2015) identifies patriarchy as a risk factor that can harm men's health, particularly when they perceive themselves as failing to meet the idealised standards of masculinity (González-Barrientos et al., 2024). As Olvera and Luna (2020) argue: 'The constant need for validation of this masculinity [hegemonic masculinity] requires its reaffirmation throughout men's lives. In this process, men become worn out, paradoxically diminishing their health in the pursuit of the well-being that supposedly comes from fulfilling the requirements of the hegemonic model. This can be potentially fatal for themselves and those around them' (pp. 270-271).

It has also been suggested that men often have difficulties in expressing their emotions, which are closely linked to dominant notions of masculinity. These norms usually involve the suppression, concealment, or masking of emotions, which can have a detrimental effect on men's mental health. In this context, anger is mainly associated with hegemonic masculinity, which encourages men to express themselves through actions that demonstrate or reaffirm their manhood and power. As a result, anger, rage, interpersonal conflicts, and even violent behaviours may function as masks for underlying emotional struggles, such as depression (Aguayo, 2022). These findings have informed the theoretical foundations of the Chilean programme, which draws on studies that highlight how traditional gender norms create distress and suffering for some men, potentially leading to mental health challenges (Olvera & Luna, 2020).

As previously noted, certain areas, including violence, specifically IPV, have garnered relatively less attention within the field. Nonetheless, this does not imply that IPV has been entirely

neglected. For Olavarría (2001a), for example, men's identities are based on ideals of how men should be, which are established as the norm and become a hegemonic standard that regulates gender relations. This model of reference for men defines what is expected of them and women, and stepping outside of it can expose men to rejection from other men and women. Men often desire to conform to the ideal ways of being a man; however, not all can live up to these standards, which are shaped by their economic status, resources, and the context in which they live. This hegemonic model of masculinity carries a duality: it grants privileges and dominance, while at the same time, men are 'condemned' to continuously prove that they are entitled to those privileges. Influenced by Kaufman's body of work, Olavarría (2001a) understands men's violence as a tool to assert or maintain control and dominance over themselves, other men, and women, which conforms to the triad of men's violence. Men's use of violence produces and reproduces the hierarchical order that allows them to enjoy privilege and power. However, this power is contradictory for men. The very processes through which men establish their dominance become, paradoxically, 'sources of fear, isolation and pain' (p. 123), since the idealised masculine standards 'imposed on men' are impossible to fully achieve (p. 123). This impossibility creates emotional imbalance and insecurity among men, making violence a compensatory mechanism for feelings of masculine inadequacy.

Fuller (2001) analysed men's accounts of their use of intimate partner violence in Peru. Although her original research focus was not IPV, half of the participants interviewed acknowledged having used violence against their partners, prompting her to redirect her research focus. Fuller examined how homosocial relations and gender norms contribute to the use of violence. According to her findings, IPV occurs when women fail to meet men's expectations of how married women should behave, and when men themselves fail to fulfil their expected roles. This dynamic, according to Fuller, also explains women's violence against their partners. Men's violence typically erupts when their wives criticise them for having sexual affairs or for spending excessive amounts of money during gatherings with friends, which often involve alcohol consumption. Paradoxically, the men acknowledge that their wives have the right to expect responsibility and fidelity from them, recognising these as core principles of marriage in Peru. Nevertheless, they find it challenging to meet these

expectations, as doing so would, in their view, mean neglecting their relationships with other men or, even worse, submitting to female authority. Both scenarios pose threats to their masculinity: either they would be excluded from male social circles, or, by yielding to their wives' authority, they would assume a subordinate, 'female' role. Consequently, men find themselves caught in a paradox of fulfilling two conflicting yet equally important obligations.

Fuller's analysis demonstrates how men's violence emerges from the tension between competing masculine expectations. This mirrors Segato's broader theoretical understanding of how structural patriarchal demands create impossible binds for men, though Segato locates these contradictions within a context of neoliberalism.

For Segato (2018), a renowned Argentinian feminist scholar, intimate partner violence, and more broadly, gender-based violence, is not an isolated or sporadic phenomenon but rather systematic and constitutive of patriarchal social relationships. A distinctive component of patriarchy is what she terms the ‘mandate of masculinity’, which requires men to constantly prove their attributes (military, sexual, and economic power) first to other men and secondly to women.

Although Segato (2018) considers gender norms and mandates to be similar and interchangeable concepts, she prefers the latter term as it reflects an inherent ambiguity: it simultaneously represents an obligation that men experience as a burden and demand, whilst also referring to a grant of authority. The mandate of masculinity is fundamentally a mandate of domination and violence, whose primary victims are men themselves, who must victimise each other and conform to societal expectations. The victimisation of women follows chronologically.

Men's use of IPV specifically represents a display of control over what they already possess. As Segato explains: ‘If, within the domestic space, the man abuses the women under his dependence it is because he can, that is, because they are already part of the territory he controls’ (Segato, 2013, p. 29). According to Segato, this mandate of masculinity becomes intensified when men's hierarchical position is eroded. This erosion is a consequence of the precarious living conditions brought about by neoliberalism, which undermines men's identities as providers and protectors.

2.5 Not only theory. The context matters

DVPPs have sometimes been regarded as 'abstract entities,' with insufficient attention paid to the 'wider social, structural, and cultural circumstances in which programmes function' (Morran, 2019, p. 8). Research has highlighted that the outcomes of DVPPs are influenced not only by programme-level factors (e.g. delivery and praxis, that is, how the programme is implemented on the ground, including the conceptualisation of men's violence -extensively reviewed in this chapter-, the curriculum, format, etc.), but also by systemic factors. In other words, what happens within the programme is just as important as the context in which it operates, and the two are related. As Morran (2019) argues, 'the potential for any intervention to be more or less effective (…) is substantially dependent on the environmental, organisational, cultural, policy and practice contexts in which it is delivered' (p. 38). Specifically, the concept of 'context' in this PhD research is defined as the broader conditions in which DVPPs function.

Scholars have argued for a reconsideration of the focus of inquiry, emphasising the need to examine how the context of a programme shapes its outcomes (Mair, 2004b). Researchers investigating context have sometimes conceptualised it in relation to the broader system within which the DVPP is embedded. Within this strand of research, it has been suggested that the effectiveness of such interventions depends on their integration with other agencies and institutions (Gondolf, 2002). A more detailed description of Gondolf's study will be addressed in Chapter 3. The significance of collaborative efforts stems from the idea that crucial information may be overlooked, potentially endangering the safety of victim-survivors if there is no communication and coordination between agencies. Moreover, working with victim-survivor agencies is key to gaining a better understanding of men's violence against their partners while in the perpetrator programme (Day et al., 2009).

The concept of context in research has also been interpreted through the lens of the neoliberalisation of social policy and its impact on DVPPs. This perspective underscores practitioners' critical role and expertise in delivering effective and safe interventions (Hughes, 2017; Morran, 2008) and how these efforts have been undermined by inconsistencies in training and insufficient attention to practitioners' well-being (Morran, 2019), issues linked to managerialism's influence (Renehan, 2020), which will be addressed in more detail in the next

section. Following the pathway of similar studies on the topic, this PhD research will examine the national policy framework in Chile under the New Public Management agenda and its implications for the delivery, practice, and well-being of practitioners, paying particular attention to the responses, tensions, and challenges that arise in practice and how staff navigate them.

2.5.1 New public management

During the 1980s and 1990s, a new managerial approach emerged in the public sector as a response to the shortcomings of the traditional administrative model established between 1900 and 1920 in most western countries (Hughes, 2003). This approach is known by various names, including 'managerialism' (Pollitt, 1990), 'new public management' (Hood, 1991), 'market-based public administration' (Lan & Rosenbloom, 1992), the 'post-bureaucratic paradigm' (Kernaghan, 1993), marketisation, liberalisation, commercialisation (Anttonen & Meagher, 2013), and 'entrepreneurial government' (Osborne, 1993). The various concepts of new public management represent differing perspectives on the changes. For example, numerous scholars have distinguished managerialism and New Public Management (NPM). The first is thought to be a paradigm translated into practice through NPM (Hood, 1991). This latter is often defined as the 'operationalisation of neoliberalism within organisations' (Mullin, 2016, p. 10). Nevertheless, despite the differences, all the concepts mentioned here share some common elements (Anttonen & Meagher, 2013; Hughes, 2003). Managerialism and NPM will be used interchangeably.

First, NPM is not merely a reform or change in management style. Instead, it is part of a new paradigm, ideologically driven, that took place within broader transformations linked to the rise of neoliberalism's economic and political project by the end of the 70s (Araya & Cerpa, 2009; Jessop, 2002). Neoliberalism is not merely an economic model. In this sense, the NPM agenda was catapulted due to the delegitimisation of the state, along with the enforcement of neoliberalism, which led most OECD nations since the 1970s to reassess the role of their public sectors, reduce and privatise the functions of the state (Hughes, 2003).

In the political arena, the right-wing argued that the State had failed to promote the conditions for markets and businesses to function effectively, while the left-wing deemed it unable to

address and overcome poverty and social inequalities (Araya & Cerpa, 2009). Reagan (US) and Thatcher (UK) led the way for western countries, contributing to the shift from a state-centred perspective to a market-centred one (Araya & Cerpa, 2009).

Chile was the first testing ground for neoliberal state policies and was a model for shaping neoliberal policies in western countries. In this context, the outcomes of neoliberal reforms implemented in the country were used as evidence to support the adoption of similar policies in the United Kingdom and the United States. This is why some scholars have considered Chile the 'laboratory' of neoliberalism worldwide, enforced under the shadow of Pinochet's coup for over 17 years (Muñoz Arce & Pantazis, 2019).

As a political project, the neoliberal ethos extends 'entrepreneurial values', such as competitiveness and profitability, into the legislative and policy arenas, reshaping the objectives of social service provision and fundamentally restructuring the public sphere. This approach prioritises market-driven principles, altering the traditional goals of public services and transforming the role of government in society. Neoliberalism involves reorganising a) the relationship between the private and public sectors, government and citizenry (Hughes, 2003), and b) the structure of traditional public administration. Second, and concerning the latter, NPM shifts away from traditional public management by incorporating private sector management practices, which are believed to be more effective in resolving organisational challenges within social service agencies (Finley et al., 2012). The approach hinges on the idea that competition, efficiency, and flexibility, hallmarks of market-based business practices, can significantly improve bureaucratic functions and service delivery. Third, organisational and personal objectives are clearly defined, allowing for the measurement of their achievement. In this context, the focus of the public sector shifts from process to results, and one strategy for achieving this is the use of performance indicators (Brodkin, 2011). Fourth, government functions are outsourced, and contract-based financing is used based on the premise that 'the government should steer rather than row' (Osborne, 1993, p. 4). Under the NPM framework, the state prioritises setting targets, monitoring progress, and ensuring accountability, while external providers manage the execution and day-to-day operations. This model emphasises performance-based funding, where financial support and agreements are contingent on achieving specific goals or deliverables rather than relying on traditional funding structures.

As argued in Chapter 7, the outsourcing model will have several implications for the practitioners and the DVPP analysed.

Following these principles, Chile reformed its state structure by breaking down large multi-purpose ministries into smaller, specialised, and politically autonomous public organisations (called servicios públicos, or in this research, state agencies) for more pragmatic and focused interventions, a design based on organisational theory that links greater task specialisation to improved efficiency (Franco, 2017). For example, Chile's 2024 budget allocation for the Ministry responsible for designing DVPPs revealed a predominantly decentralised operational model. In this system, 63.4% of the total ministry budget was transferred to third parties rather than being spent directly by the ministry itself. The ministry operates through a two-tier funding structure: its own agencies act as intermediaries, channelling government funds to the actual programme implementers, NGOs, community organisations, and local city councils.

2.5.2 Consequences of NPM on service provision and workers

Given the limited literature on DVPPs and NPM, this section will broaden the scope of the search and delve into research on NPM and service provision in general, with a particular emphasis on studies conducted in Chile. This focus is relevant because the working conditions for practitioners at men's centres are similar to those of front-line workers implementing social policy in the country.

According to Timor-Shlevin and Benjamin (2020), the literature on NPM in the public sphere has primarily examined its impact on public services, the practitioners and workers involved, particularly how professionals adapt to this model and how it has altered their daily practices across various fields, and the relationship between states, governments, and citizens. In the field of DVPPS, however, research has long overlooked practitioners' experiences (Renehan, 2020), and Chile is no exception. To address this gap, this research will focus on practitioners' experiences, examining the implications of New Public Management (NPM) for their practice, service delivery, and well-being, as these dimensions are interconnected. In this PhD research, I conceptualise practice as encompassing both contextually and theoretically shaped behaviours and actions that are not always deliberate, but may be (Falconi Loqui et al., 2024;

Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, such behaviours may not always stem from critical reflection on their ethical significance or broader social and historical impact. In intervention work, the implementation of social policy reflects a particular understanding of the social world, which is then interpreted and translated into specific actions and practical strategies (Falconi Loqui et al., 2024).

There is growing concern about the impact of NPM on practitioners' practice and well-being. NPM has tended to increase bureaucracy and workload while weakening support. For example, it has shifted clinical supervision to administrative supervision, which occurs irregularly and with minimal training. This change has also increased the volume of documentation and the time required to complete it (Jones, 2001). Managerialism has frequently been linked to the de-professionalisation of social work, resulting in a flattening of its impact, de-skilling, and de-specialisation (Trappenburg & van Beek, 2019). It has diminished the depth of their practice by prioritising risk assessment and management over meaningful engagement with offenders (Smith, 2006). Instead of unleashing creativity and energy by reducing bureaucratic constraints, NPM has led to an environment where employees are more focused on meeting audit requirements rather than doing meaningful work (Siltala, 2013).

Support is particularly crucial for practitioners working with IPV perpetrators. However, the study of practitioners' experiences has been largely neglected (Morran, 2019). Recent research underscores the importance of organisations establishing effective support systems for DVPP facilitators, including enhanced supervisory support to help practitioners manage and navigate the demands of their roles (Morran, 2008; Renehan, 2021). However, organisational reforms linked to managerialism have significantly increased staff workload and altered supervision practices (Renehan, 2021). This has ultimately had detrimental implications for delivery: 'Abusive men are expected to take responsibility for their behaviour when interventions and practitioners are not response-*abled* – that is sufficiently enabled to be responsive to them' (Renehan, 2020, p. 10). This idea is also supported by Morran (2019), who contends that the professional impact of vicarious trauma among practitioners working with men who use violence and abuse may interfere with how they engage with clients, particularly under isolated, unsupported working conditions marked by a context of managerial priorities. The author also highlighted constraints within the system practitioners

operate in, which may contribute to the discrepancies between theory and practice. These constraints affect what practitioners are expected to do according to the manual versus what they do (Morran, 2016). Research has also demonstrated that managerialism has triggered both organisational and ideological shifts within probation-led domestic violence perpetrator interventions in the UK These shifts include the de-gendering of intervention frameworks and an escalation in the pressures experienced by practitioners (Hughes, 2019).

Research across various fields underscores the emotional toll experienced by practitioners engaged in direct work with clients who have undergone trauma. Working with perpetrators of sexual abuse, for example, increases the risk of developing secondary traumatic stress (Steed & Bicknell, 2001). Practitioners and clinicians engaged in interventions with sexual offenders may also face negative emotional responses such as vicarious traumatisation (Lee, 2017) as well as a negative impact on one's sense of self, worldview, and interpersonal relationships (Barros et al., 2020; Way et al., 2004), stress, and burnout (Leicht, 2008). The emotional consequences of working with perpetrators vary between female and male practitioners. In other words, gender mediates the impact of working with perpetrators (Way et al., 2004).

Practitioners' well-being has garnered significant interest among scholars in Chile, given the precarity of the working conditions of front-line workers due to transformations in the public policy realm in the country (Bilbao et al., 2018; Muñoz Arce & Pantazis, 2019; Muñoz et al., 2022; Villalobos et al., 2020). This literature has examined the detrimental impact of NPM and its associated working conditions on practitioners, including extended overtime hours, instability and uncertainty regarding the continuity of social programmes, increased workload and its link to higher reported stress levels and burnout among workers (Jones, 2001; Mullin, 2016). A recent 2022 survey in Chile highlights the precarious working conditions faced by practitioners in mental health, poverty, and education programmes. Based on responses from 1,784 individuals working in these sectors, the survey revealed that 90.21% of professionals rarely or occasionally receive severance payments. Additionally, 76.87% reported limited access to medical leave for a child under one year old, 68.95% struggled to use their maternity or paternity leave, and 67.7% found it difficult to take sick leave (Muñoz et al., 2022). The precarious conditions of practitioners in Chile are further evidenced by their low salaries.

While wages vary among different programs in Chile, they typically range between £560 and £800 (Muñoz et al., 2022). Research has also shed light on the challenging material conditions intervention implementers face due to inadequate infrastructure, resource scarcity (Villalobos et al., 2021), and weak supervision systems (Muñoz, 2020).

Working conditions and the demands of the role have been linked to stress and burnout among frontline workers in Chile, leading to increased job dissatisfaction and turnover (Bilbao et al., 2018). Job rotations are one of the most prominent characteristics of the sector, which have implications for the intervention, the staff, and service users, as they hinder the teams' experiential knowledge (practitioners often have little to no experience in the area), increase job dissatisfaction (Muñoz et al., 2022), diminish workers' performance, and jeopardise the goals of psychosocial programmes in Chile (Bilbao et al., 2018).

The neoliberal agenda raises significant challenges in the public sphere because it undermines the collective by envisioning a 'public of atomistic individuals who compete with one another for comparative advantage' (Asen, 2017, p. 8). The outsourcing model fosters agency fragmentation, undermining coordinated efforts, as it tends to amplify competitiveness among organisations, hindering the ability to share and consolidate insights regarding programme implementation (Morales, 2015). There has been concern that NPM, and more specifically, the organisational changes it involves, such as outsourcing, could jeopardise women's and children's safety and increase their risk of harm (Gilbert, 2013).

In Chile, outsourcing social policy has also presented numerous challenges for workers, as frontline professionals must respond to the demands of various institutions engaged in providing social services and other institutions as part of the welfare system. As Bilbao et al. (2018) illustrate for the case of child workers, professionals are expected to handle the demands of the intervention they carry out, which requires being attentive to the specific needs of the service users, deliver interventions according to the technical guidelines developed by the state services, meet the demands of the justice system, and address the requirements of the implementing institution, which has its own rules, policies, procedures, accountability mechanisms, and working culture. Furthermore, in some cases, the boundaries and responsibilities between the implementing and designing institutions are blurred, creating additional challenges (Muñoz et al., 2022).

2.6 Summary

Theory and practice are linked. Theories provide explanations, principles, and guidelines that help practitioners make sense of complex issues, such as IPV. This chapter examined the link between men and IPV from critical studies of men and masculinities and feminist perspectives.

What is broadly termed 'feminist theories' has evolved significantly, contributing to a deeper understanding of IPV. Stark's (2007, 2022) work has highlighted the often-overlooked patterns of behaviour, akin to an invisible cage, that entrap women, restricting their autonomy and voice. His research reveals how men's use of IPV both arises from and sustains broader gender inequalities, mainly through coercive control. The latter is more than a tactic—it is an expression of masculinity, as men use it to impose and enforce their expectations of how women should conform to gender norms. Downes et al. (2019) expanded on Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control by highlighting an overlooked aspect: the connection between men's use of coercive control and the reinforcement of traditional masculine gender norms.

IPV has not been a central focus within the scholarship of men and masculinities. Certain studies have lacked a critical approach to how men sustain gender inequalities, occasionally portraying them as victims of patriarchy (McCarry, 2007) and abstracting men's everyday practices and the ways power is enacted under the concept of masculinities (Hearn, 2004). For instance, research has examined how idealised notions of manhood affect men's mental health and physical well-being, as many struggle to meet these standards (González-Barrientos et al., 2024). It has been argued that men's difficulty in expressing emotions is closely linked to masculine norms that equate emotional restraint with rationality. This suppression not only compromises their well-being but also reinforces gender inequalities, whereas fostering emotional expression in men has been identified as a means of promoting greater gender equality (Aguayo, 2022).

Others, such as Hearn, who adopts a more critical perspective (Hearn, 2004, 2012a; Hearn & Howson, 2020), have analysed how men perpetuate gender inequalities, offering valuable insights into the complexities and contradictions of men's use of violence and its connection to the performance of masculinity. Hearn's multifaceted and embodied conceptualisation of men's power in relation to violence is preferred in this research, particularly in the analysis of

how men talk about their use of violence (Chapter 5), as well as his critical perspectives on how men communicate emotions, which is a pivotal dimension in the findings about change (Chapter 6). His approach examines the power dynamics of men's violence towards known women through material practices, discourse, and both group and individual actions, to understand men's motivations and how these practices (re)produce gender inequalities.

According to de Boise and Hearn (2017) research on men's communication of emotions has often neglected to explore how men talk about their emotions and the intentions behind these expressions, including the deeper meanings underlying their words. His framework draws heavily on feminist theories, placing power and control at the centre of the analysis of men's violence, while also incorporating insights from critical studies of men and masculinity (Hearn, 1998, 2004). Hearn's approach recognises that, although men are not victims of patriarchy, their use of violence against their (ex)partners presents contradictions. For instance, men may not feel genuinely powerful despite their efforts to assert and maintain dominance through IPV.

Practitioners' practice is shaped by more than just theory at the programme level. DVPPs do not exist in isolation—their outcomes are profoundly influenced by the system in which they are embedded (Gondolf, 2002). Grounded in the same premise, Renehan (2020) and Morran (Morran, 2008, 2019) take a slightly different approach to defining context, highlighting the impact of managerialism on practitioners' well-being and service delivery. The next chapter will examine how change is understood and measured in research on domestic violence perpetrator interventions.

Chapter 3: Domestic violence perpetrator programmes and change

3.1 Introduction

DVPPs emerged from a broader shift: the expansion of grassroots women's and feminist activism into more institutionalised, multi-sectoral responses to domestic violence. These developments not only sought to address the immediate harms of violence but also to promote critical reflections on its gendered, socially produced nature. DVPPs were thus developed within a framework that challenges biological determinism, instead drawing on gender theories that understand men's violence as rooted in structural inequalities.

This chapter begins by contextualising the emergence of DVPPs and their role in enhancing victim-survivor safety. Particular attention is given to the Duluth model, which represented a significant advancement in domestic violence responses. Developed in the 1980s in Duluth, Minnesota, the model integrates individual accountability within a coordinated community response and remains one of the most influential models globally. However, in practice, the Duluth men's programme is rarely implemented in full accordance with its original vision (Renehan, 2020), and few places have established the kind of coordinated community response it envisaged (Phillips et al., 2013). The Chilean DVPP is a case in point. While it incorporates elements of the Duluth model's theoretical foundations, it is primarily informed by Lenore Walker's theory of the cycle of violence, a distinction that has important implications for how change and violence is understood among men and facilitated within the programme.

The final part of this chapter addresses three core questions drawn from a review of the literature from both the global north and Chile: What does change mean in the context of DVPPs? How is change measured? And how is change facilitated within these interventions? In addressing the third question, the chapter concludes by exploring the different perspectives on the mechanisms and processes through which change unfolds in these programmes.

3.2 The next step in victim-survivors' safety: The role of perpetrator programmes

The first legal and community responses to tackle IPV in the global north focused on victim-survivors and how best to meet their needs and keep them safe, providing immediate protection and support. Institutions, individuals and states mobilised to provide shelters and housing assistance (Lewis, 2004). To a lesser extent, later responses focused on men who use IPV primarily through legal sanctions. In the US, for example, these efforts contributed to the introduction of civil protective orders, vacating shared residences, avoiding contact with the victim and her workplace, among others. Additionally, advocates promoted a strong criminal justice response involving police, prosecutors, judges, and probation officers to enhance victim safety. They supported the implementation of mandatory arrest policies and proactive prosecution of offenders (Mederos & Perilla, 2004). While these measures are crucial in safeguarding many women and may deter some men, they are insufficient on their own (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999). Similarly, in Chile, most support services have primarily focused on women, which, according to Aguayo et al. (2016), is necessary but not enough to keep victim-survivors safe and improve their space for action (Westmarland & Kelly, 2013). In other words, this phenomenon 'cannot be significantly reduced and ultimately eradicated unless interventions that target both the victim […] and the perpetrator become available' (Esquivel & Silva, 2016, pp. 316-317). This is where DVPPs arise.

As mentioned earlier in the introduction of this dissertation, feminist movements played a pivotal role in the emergence of DVPPs by challenging the perception of IPV as a private matter (Hester & Newman, 2021; Mederos & Perilla, 2004), yet they were simultaneously viewed with scepticism by women's advocates, as focusing on treating a relatively small number of men was seen as unlikely to lead to the broader social change desired (Dobash & Dobash, 1992).

The origins of DVPPs can be traced back to the late 1970s in the United States, with early programmes such as Emerge, Amend, and Raven emerging after the implementation of mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence (Day et al., 2018; Mederos & Perilla, 2004). Similar programmes were subsequently implemented in various parts of the global north, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and some European countries (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999).

There is a wide array of programmes nowadays globally. In Europe, for instance, there are programmes delivered within prisons, probation-led programmes for convicted perpetrators, community-based programmes delivered by NGOs and other agencies for court-mandated perpetrators, and programmes without links to the criminal justice system (Hester & Lilley, 2014). In the US, DVPPs are usually privately operated by profit and non-profit organisations (Dalton, 2007), and some provide opportunities to suspend sentences (under certain conditions, such as completing the programme and not reoffending) and even reduce convictions or sentences (Stop Violence Against Women, 2019). Despite this diversity, they share some aspects. Most DVPPs primarily work with court-referred men, and to a lesser extent, with self-referred men. The modality is often based on group workshops, with some programmes additionally having one-to-one sessions (Bates et al., 2017). Programmes are characterised by a diverse range of approaches, primarily rooted in cognitive-behavioural or psychoeducational models, or a combination of these, and often influenced by the Duluth model (Lilley-Walker et al., 2018).

3.3 The Duluth model

In order to prevent men's violence, the societal (and structural) conditions that (re) produce and sustain it should be challenged (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006), yet men can choose alternative means to violence, and they should be accountable for the choices they make (Pence & Paymar, 1993). This is the premise on which feminist activists and victim-survivors founded one of the most widely known DVPPs in Duluth, Minnesota, in the 1980s.

The Duluth model is often referred to as a DVPP, but it was never originally designed as a standalone programme. Instead, it emerged as part of a broader Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence. The programme component was developed experimentally in response to the unintended consequences of the CCR, specifically, the low rates of incarceration for men accused of domestic violence, despite the adoption of pro-arrest policies intended to increase accountability (Gadd, 2004; Phillips et al., 2013). Furthermore, the DVPP was initially designed to be closely integrated with the criminal justice system and the broader systemic response, and men were court-mandated to the programme and consistently reminded of the consequences for non-compliance with the conditions imposed or further violence (Paymar & Barnes, 2007).

The Duluth model represents a coordinated, inter-agency approach to addressing domestic violence, within which perpetrator programmes constitute just one component. It brings together institutions such as the criminal justice system, community organisations, and victim-survivors, placing collective responsibility on the community rather than isolating victims. This model is widely recognised as one of the most influential frameworks for responding to IPV (Gondolf, 2002).

3.3.1 Power and control in the Duluth men's programme: Understanding the roots and dynamics of men's violence against their (ex) partners

The primary purpose of DVPPs, as it was envisioned in the Duluth model, 'is to keep women and children safe by holding perpetrators accountable for their use of violence, working with them to take responsibility for their use of violence, and monitoring and responding to women's and children's risk of violence' (Nicholas et al., 2020, p. 11). An auxiliary goal is behaviour change in men (Day et al., 2019). The latter is considered strategic but not fundamental, given that the victim's safety can be promoted by the coordinated system in which the programme is situated and not necessarily due to men's change (Gondolf, 2002).

The Duluth men's programme (DAIP) 'is one of the most replicated models' for DVPPS worldwide (Stark, 2007, p.136). Grounded in the understanding that men's violence is a learned behaviour used to exert power and control over women, the theory informs a re-educational approach central to many DVPPs. The Duluth men's programme inserted within a CCR aims not only to challenge individual behaviours but also to transform the structural conditions that sustain IPV. The conditions that enable men's violence are transformed by actively engaging the community (Pence & Paymar, 1993). This aligns with the feminist principle that the personal is political, which asserts that IPV is not an individual issue but a collective social concern (Hanisch, 1970), and reflects the centrality of power and control, a theme that aligns with many of the feminist theories based on power and control discussed in Chapter 2.

A defining feature of the curriculum is its gender-based cognitive-behavioural approach. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is based on the principle that individuals' thoughts and beliefs significantly shape their emotional and behavioural responses to life experiences.

Within CBT models, cognitive processes—such as meanings, judgements, appraisals, and assumptions regarding specific events—are central in shaping behaviour (Hupp et al., 2008). In the context of DVPPs, men are encouraged to reflect on the beliefs that sustain their violent behaviours critically and to examine the rational intent and origins of their violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993). As Miller (2010) explains, this involves identifying the 'justifications and rationales behind the actions' that are often used to excuse, minimise, or shift blame onto the victim (p. 1010). Through a re-education process based on the experiences of victim- survivors (Gondolf, 2007; Miller, 2010), the curriculum challenges men to adopt nonviolent behaviours and relinquish their sense of entitlement over their partners, thereby addressing the structurally reinforced power imbalance (Paymar & Barnes, 2007).

By rejecting individualised explanations of violence, the programme does not attribute men's violence to stress, anger, or an inability to express emotions (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Instead, it conceptualises men's violence as intentional and instrumental in maintaining control and dominance over women, asserting that alternative behaviours are possible. Crucially, the programme does not view violence as a series of isolated incidents or as cyclical but rather as a persistent pattern of coercive and controlling actions shaped by broader social structures. This perspective is reflected in its key learning tools, such as the Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993), which illustrates the various tactics of power and control used in abusive relationships and reinforces the understanding that IPV extends beyond physical violence.

By shifting the focus from discrete acts of violence to an ongoing pattern of control, the Duluth model laid the groundwork for the theory of coercive control later developed by Stark (2007, 2023). Although Stark (2007) critiqued the underpinning theory of the Duluth's programme for minimising 'the system sources of domination' (a debate around this will be addressed in section 3.7), he acknowledges that it effectively characterise IPV 'as rational, instrumental, and intentional behaviour rather than impulse driven or the byproduct of a dysfunctional personality or upbringing', and thus exposes the patterns of behaviours that IPV entails (p. 362-363).

3.3.2 A Monolithic misrepresentation of the Duluth men's programme

The Duluth model is now internationally recognised, although it has not been fully replicated as initially envisioned (Renehan, 2020), with the Chilean programme serving as an example of this partial implementation.

Duluth-style programmes have often been criticised for being driven by feminist ideological motives that fail to grasp the diverse reasons and factors behind IPV and the differences or needs of men, rather than being grounded in empirical evidence (Dutton & Corvo, 2006). The phrase 'one size fits all' is frequently used to critique the Duluth men's programme for its single approach to intervention, thus allegedly neglecting the needs and backgrounds of the participants. It is thought to overlook the diversity among perpetrators and the complexity of their circumstances. Among the critics, authors have dismissed the gendered aetiology of IPV used in the Duluth model and call for a revival of psychology within DVPPs (Dutton & Corvo, 2006). Others have argued that evaluations of DVPPs have not been able to definitively answer whether these programmes work or what content or approach is more effective than others (this will be explored in more detail in section 3.6). Consequently, multiple approaches in DVPPs have been increasingly recommended (Maiuro & Eberle, 2008).

With regards to the critiques described above, it is crucial to note that there is an ongoing debate in the literature about whether the distinction between intervention approaches is more apparent in theory than in practice. Many programmes, including the widely recognised Duluth men's programme, overlap and converge around common principles while using different approaches (Hamilton et al., 2013; Hester & Newman, 2021). Phillips et al. (2013), for instance, observed in their historical overview of UK programmes that numerous adaptations have been introduced to better address the needs of men. These adaptations incorporate diverse approaches and experiences, marking a significant departure from the monolithic representation of Duluth-based programmes, which have had a considerable influence on British efforts in working with men who have used violence against their (ex) partners. Similarly, according to Hughes (2017), critiques of the Duluth model as a standardised approach frequently fail to fully grasp the dynamics and therapeutic components of the programmes, and tend to misrepresent their feminist theoretical foundations.

The adoption of multiple theoretical approaches has contributed to a broader conceptualisation of IPV, increasingly incorporating psychosocial perspectives. Hester and Newman (2021) analyse this development, highlighting a notable shift toward what they term 'psychologising' approaches in countries such as the UK, Denmark, and Norway (p.144). They argue that since the 1980s, DVPPs have undergone significant transformation in their understanding of IPV, reflecting evolving discourses and practices within penal welfare societies. This shift has brought greater attention to the perpetrator's psychological profile, focusing on individual traits and underlying 'drivers' of abuse, such as attachment difficulties and past trauma, rather than exclusively addressing the socio-political foundations of the re-education approach that characterised earlier models like Duluth (p.144). A similar trend is evident in the United States. Maiuro and Eberle (2008) found that many programmes continued to employ a gendered framework of violence and control, often in conjunction with social psychological theories. Likewise, Flasch et al. (2022), in their content analysis of state standards of DVPPs in the US, observed that most contemporary programmes adopt a blended approach, with fewer relying primarily on the Duluth model. While this shift has attracted criticism as it has gendered interventions (Hester & Newman, 2021), it nonetheless represents a move away from a monolithic interpretation of the Duluth framework.

In Latin America, nearly all intervention providers surveyed in research conducted by Esquivel and Silva (2016) reported that their programmes were hybrid, combining multiple intervention approaches, but were 'all nested within a gender perspective,' with the primary intervention approach being feminist (p. 239). A more recent study by Iniciativa Spotlight et al. (2021) indicated that most programmes surveyed had developed their own models (41%), followed by those inspired by the Duluth model (21%) and Hombres por la Equidad (10%).

The Chilean case examined can be described as a hybrid model, as it integrates key principles of the Duluth model in two significant ways (a more detailed description of the programme can be found in section 4.3.2). Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction (Chapter 1), the DVPP is conceived as part of an interagency response to IPV. Second, the programme utilises both the Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel. While this might initially suggest a feminist lens grounded in power and control, in practice, the primary explanatory framework for IPV is not coercive control but rather the cycle of violence. Although this theory is not

formally included in the programme's technical guidelines, it is consistently used by practitioners. A more in-depth discussion in Chapter 7 explores why this theory is employed by practitioners despite its absence in the programme's official design.

3.4 The Walker Cycle Theory of Violence

In 1979, the psychologist Lenore Walker conducted an exploratory study with victim-survivors of IPV. Based on that study, she coined the term Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS). The concept describes the psychological effects that can emerge in women who have endured prolonged abuse. Initially, BWS encompassed a wide range of behaviours observed in both victims-survivors, such as learned helplessness, and perpetrators, including the recurring cycle of violence. Over time, however, it has come to be more narrowly recognised as a trauma-related mental health condition, with symptoms that often mirror those found in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Dutton, 2009). As established in Chapter 2, the consequences of IPV extend far beyond physical injuries and psychological harm to women. These impacts are not merely domestic or personal. Yet, the theory appears to reduce violence to individual trauma, overlooking the structural inequalities that contribute to IPV and the broader implications for women's position in society (Stark, 2007).

A pivotal concept within BWS is learned helplessness, which offers insight into why victim-survivors often find it exceedingly difficult to leave abusive relationships (Walker, 2009). This difficulty has frequently been mischaracterised as a 'lack of effort' on the part of the victim (Dutton, 2009, p. 2), despite the fact that many develop intricate and life-saving coping strategies (St. Vil et al., 2016; Stark, 2007). Women may feel they 'cannot leave' their abusers because they internalise a belief that they are powerless to resist or escape (Walker, 2009, p. 71). The learned helplessness theory posits that victim-survivors perceive their actions as ineffective in producing predictable, desired outcomes, rendering them powerless to change their circumstances (Walker, 1979, 2009).

Another key component of Battered Woman Syndrome is the Cycle of Violence. This modeldescribes a three-phase cycle that helps explain both the phenomenon of learned helplessness in survivors of IPV and, within the context of DVPP, the behavioural patterns of perpetrators. Although the cycle of violence theory is no longer widely used in DVPPs, it is still

applied in certain contexts, such as the Chilean programme, which underscores the importance of critically engaging with it. In the DVPP examined in this PhD research, the theory continues to inform understandings of the dynamics of IPV, a term which, in this dissertation, refers to the complex and interrelated behavioural patterns that sustain abusive relationships.

The cycle of violence consists of three recurring phases: (1) tension-building, accompanied by a growing sense of danger; (2) the acute battering incident; and (3) loving contrition (Walker, 1979). The cycle typically restarts after the third phase, which is characterised by a 'courtship period', during which the man shows interest in his partner and displays 'loving behaviours', many of which he exhibited in the initial stage of the relationship when the woman first fell in love with him (Walker, 2009, p. 91). This third phase 'provides the positive reinforcement for the woman to remain in the relationship' (p. 94). Following this phase, 'there is a gradual escalation of tension, marked by discrete acts that increase friction' (p. 91). At this stage, the violence is not 'extreme' nor 'explosive', and the woman may employ strategies to prevent further escalation, giving her a sense of control over the situation and her partner (p. 91). Phase 2 is where injuries typically occur, and police may become involved as the tension peaks and the woman's strategies fail to manage the man's 'angry response pattern' (p. 91). As Walker notes, 'Phase two is characterised by the uncontrollable discharge of the tensions built up during phase one' (Walker, 1979, p. 59).

Although the cycle of violence theory has declined in prominence for several reasons that will be discussed here, it is important to acknowledge the historical significance of Lenore Walker's contribution. Her seminal work, published 46 years ago, marked a turning point in public discourse on domestic violence by challenging dominant victim-blaming narratives. At the time, Walker introduced the concept of learned helplessness, proposing that repeated exposure to abuse could lead victims to feel psychologically trapped, even when opportunities to escape were available. This sense of entrapment was further reinforced by the social isolation many victims experienced, a key factor in the development of learned helplessness (Walker, 1979).

Over the past four decades, extensive empirical research has revealed significant limitations in Walker's theory. Developments in the field have led to a more nuanced understanding of

IPV, with authors such as Stark (2007, 2023) offering influential frameworks that shape current thinking and practice. As Dutton (2009, p. 1) argues, Walker's theory is 'both misleading and potentially harmful'. While some victim-survivors may experience patterns resembling the cycle of violence, the theory fails to capture the diversity of experiences shaped by individual and contextual factors, and there is a general lack of empirical evidence to support its claims (Petrangelo-Scaia, 2025).

Dutton (2009) further notes that beyond physical harm, survivors frequently face a wide range of psychological issues that vary in intensity and severity. The impact of domestic violence is shaped by each person's social and cultural background, which affects how abuse manifests, when, its duration and severity. Institutional and societal responses to both the abuser and the survivor also play a critical role. These include factors such as the survivor's level of social support, potential risks from system interventions (e.g., the criminal justice system, civil courts, child welfare), and access to financial and practical resources. Importantly, even when contextual factors are not considered, research shows that survivors 'actively engage in help-seeking behaviour' (St. Vil et al., 2016, p. 64), contradicting the portrayal of passivity in Walker's theory. Moreover, the theory overlooks forms of resistive violence and other survival mechanisms employed by women (St. Vil et al., 2016). What may appear as 'passivity' can, in fact, be a deliberate and instrumental strategy to reduce the risk of further harm (Dutton, 2009 ,p 2).

The cycle of violence may promote an incidental view of violence (Stark, 2007), portraying it as consisting of 'discrete' and delimited episodes (Walker, 1979, p. 91). In contrast, Stark (2007, 2023) argues that violence in abusive relationships is continuous and cumulative, with its impact building over time rather than being confined to isolated incidents. The author emphasised that the resulting harms are best understood through these ongoing patterns rather than the severity of individual episodes. Viewing violence as a series of isolated events tends to reflect a male-centric perspective and overlooks the persistent, pervasive nature of abuse that survivors often endure (Stark, 2007).

By framing IPV in this way, the theory neglects the non-physical dimensions of the phenomenon, contributing to the invisibility of coercive control and minimising the emotional and psychological toll, which can be as damaging as the physical violence. While physical

violence remains significant, it is not necessarily 'the worst part' for women (Stark, 2007, p. 37). The mere threat of physical harm can have more devastating effects on the victim than actual physical assaults. Stark's research (2007, 2023) indicates that many women who experienced only physical violence retained autonomy in significant aspects of their lives, whereas the most devastating and harmful effects often stemmed from routine, controlling behaviours rather than life-threatening attacks. Moreover, low-level violence is more common than severe or injurious assaults (Stark, 2023). Coercive control accounts for 50% to 80% of all help-seeking by abused women, most of whom are subjected to multiple tactics (Stark, 2007). These include financial deprivation, time monitoring and surveillance, degradation, and restrictions on mobility and communication, which are the most significant (Stark, 2023).

This framework also fails to account for the constant tension that victim survivors experience. The notion that tension gradually escalates before erupting into violence is only partially accurate (Stark, 2007). According to Walker, women are considered helpless because they have 'lost the ability to predict that what you do will make a particular outcome occur or, in scientific terms, loss of contingency between response and outcome' (Walker, 2009, p 71). But were they ever truly able to predict the violence in the first place? For many, the experience is one of persistent unease and hypervigilance, described as 'walking on eggshells' (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015, p. 12). Even seemingly positive moments can provoke anxiety, as any shift in the abuser's mood can lead to outbursts. Some men bypass the gradual build-up of tension, moving directly from feeling hurt to becoming enraged (Stark, 2007). Even if violence follows a predictable pattern, as proposed by the cycle of violence, the justifications for it often shift in response to the perpetrator's fluctuating moods and contradictory demands. Furthermore, the theory presumes that the so-called honeymoon phase offers a safe window to leave or speak up, overlooking the dangers of this, as attempting to leave an abusive partner can significantly increase the risk of harm for survivors.

Lastly, equating IPV with patterns of angry outbursts overlooks the intentional and strategic nature of many abusive behaviours (Gondolf & Russell, 1986). IPV is not merely a series of spontaneous emotional reactions; it can function as a calculated system of coercive control. As a result, the cycle of violence may obscure the perpetrator's responsibility and reinforce

denial. Moreover, focusing primarily on men's anger can lead them to centre their own emotional discomfort rather than acknowledging the deeper harm inflicted on women (Garda, 2021).

3.5 Change for whom?

There is an ongoing debate about the potential changes that DVPPs can achieve, as well as the challenges and limitations of their work. Garda (2004), a renowned practitioner and currently the founder of Hombres por la Equidad in Mexico (Centre for Intervention with Men and Research on Gender and Masculinities), warns against assuming that individual change, such as that promoted by DVPPs, will organically lead to broader cultural transformations. He argues that personal transformation alone is insufficient for achieving societal change, as men's violence is only one aspect of a more extensive system of oppression against women. This system is perpetuated not only through men's violence but also through a broader array of social structures and norms that reinforce male privilege.

The limitations of DVPPs are closely linked to the broader social transformation that experts argue is necessary to achieve gender equality. Hearn and Whitehead (2006), for instance, contend that rigid binary distinctions between masculinity and femininity sustain men's dominance (men's hegemony) and perpetuate the existing gender order. From their perspective, reducing men's violence requires dismantling these distinctions, as this is a fundamental step in preventing gender-based violence. As they explain: 'The less gender differentiation between women and men, the less likely will be men's violence. The more men are nurturing and caring or can express fear – and the more women are seen as capable, rational, and competent in the public sphere – the more likely that aggression will take other routes besides gender-based violence' (p. 51).

Espinoza et al. (2021) provide a similar perspective. In their study, practitioners expressed concerns about the challenges of DVPPs, describing them as 'a small programme fighting against an entire society that keeps teaching men that they are not allowed to cry, must be strong and not express their emotions' (p. 82).

Both studies underscore that men's violence is not merely an individual issue but one sustained by dominant gender norms. They suggest that meaningful change requires broader societal shifts beyond the scope of DVPPs alone.

Jewkes et al. (2015) argue that the ultimate challenge for feminist and gender activists is to change the 'idealised form of masculinity,' which will provide 'the most enduring impact on a society' on the pathway towards gender equality (p. S117). However, most interventions, including DVPPs, are often driven by short-term goals of change measured through the attitudes and behaviours of individual men. According to the scholars, interventions targeting men must recognise the inherent contradictions and limitations that they encounter. Thus, DVPPs tend to produce gradual changes; they are incremental rather than 'widely socially transformative' (p. S117).

Gadd (2004) shares a somewhat similar critique. He argues that within the National Probation Service of England and Wales, DVPPs in the UK have moved towards standardising cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In his view, the problem with this shift is that it operates under the assumption that broader societal gender inequalities can be addressed by narrowly focusing on correcting men's 'faulty thoughts' (p. 175). Consequently, these programmes are essentially limited in their capacity to deliver societal transformations.

Although this research acknowledges the limitations of DVPPs, it is essential to note that, under the Duluth model, DVPPs are only one component of a Coordinated Community Response (CCR). Feminists and women's movements worldwide have recognised the need to coordinate actions against patriarchy, driven by a vision of a different society (Menjívar, 2001). Addressing violence against women is essential to achieving this vision, a responsibility that society as a whole must undertake. This idea underpins the Duluth model. In this model, various institutions, the justice system, groups, advocates, and individuals mobilise to tackle intimate partner violence, keep victim-survivors safe and hold perpetrators accountable.

R. E. Dobash et al. (1999) argue that the transformative agenda should address personal, institutional, and cultural levels. The first level involves the transformation of both perpetrators and victims at the individual level. The second level is the institutional transformation of organisations working with perpetrators (such as DVPPs) and victim-

survivors. The third level is a cultural transformation where violence is no longer tolerated. Personal, institutional, and cultural areas must be distinctly recognised as fundamental aspects of the problem and, therefore, essential to any comprehensive response. Addressing only one of these arenas without integrating the others limits the potential for genuine transformation. While not every intervention can fully address all three dimensions, they should all contribute to a collective framework that considers each element to achieve a sustainable solution to tackle IPV.

Hearn (2012b) highlights the dilemmas of DVPPs. On the one hand, he cautions against using concepts of choice and responsibility in the context of intimate partner violence perpetration, as they can reinforce liberal individualism. Feminist poststructuralist theories criticise this perspective for assuming that individuals are autonomous, unified, and rational without considering the influence of gender. This approach can lead to overlooking structural factors. Without a structural perspective, IPV can be easily reduced to individual behaviours, ignoring how IPV (re)produces gender inequalities. On the other hand, Hearn (2012b) argues that if IPV is viewed solely as a result of societal structures rather than as actions taken by individuals, it raises a problem regarding accountability.

A pathway to untangle this dilemma is offered by Anderson (2009), who argues that coercive control generates and perpetuates structural gender inequalities. Consequently, DVPPs have the potential to challenge gender norms at individual, interactional, and structural levels (Downes et al., 2019). Anderson's examination of coercive control is informed by Giddens (1984) concept of the duality of structure, which asserts that social structures—such as rules, norms, and institutions—are the product of human actions and the framework that shapes and constrains those actions. As Anderson (2009) states: 'Structural gender inequality facilitates coercive control; coercive control, when enacted, recreates the structure of gender inequality by constraining women's power' (p. 1450).

3.6 Can DVPPs facilitate change in men?

The short answer to whether DVPPs can facilitate change in men is yes, but this comes with important caveats. The concept of 'change' is often conflated with terms like 'effectiveness' or whether a program 'works,' though these are not always synonymous (Gondolf, 2002). What

constitutes change, effectiveness, or success varies widely across studies, depending on who defines these terms and how they are measured. This lack of consistency in definitions and research designs has often led to inconclusive and contradictory findings regarding the programmes' impact (Lilley-Walker et al., 2018). This section examines how change has been conceptualised and assessed in research, both in the global north and in Chile, highlighting the multiple dimensions of change.

To understand why these evaluations came to be seen as important, it is necessary to consider the historical context that drove the shift toward evidence-based interventions, particularly the growing scepticism about the effectiveness of offender rehabilitation in the 1970s. The pursuit of effective methods for assessing and rehabilitating justice-involved individuals dates back to the 1960s. However, Martinson's article (1974) marked a turning point by challenging the belief that offender rehabilitation was possible. The 'Nothing Works' movement in the United States resonated across the global north, influencing criminal justice policies in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom. This shift led to increasing demands for evidence-based practices in criminal justice interventions (Bowen & Gilchrist, 2006), calls for more rigorous research (Martinson, 1974), and significant institutional reforms, such as the restructuring of the UK's Probation Service (Mair, 2004a).

In Latin America, research on DVPPs has increasingly emphasised the importance of evaluating these interventions (Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021). However, the impact of the 'Nothing Works' debate did not resonate in the same way, as many Latin American countries were under military dictatorships throughout the 1980s, including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In Chile, DVPPs under the supervision of the state agency were only introduced in 2011, making evaluations of these programmes a relatively recent development. In contrast, the global north has a more extensive history in evaluation research on DVPPs, providing a broader base of evidence to examine.

3.6.1 Evaluation studies of DVPPs in the global north

The study of Babcock et al. (2004) in the US indicates that the impact of these programmes on change (measured here through a reduction in recidivism) is consistently small. According to the author, 'regardless of reporting method, study design, and type of treatment, the effect

on recidivism rates remains in the small range' (p. 1044). This indicates that, although some degree of change is evident, it is relatively minimal, with studies with a control group reporting even smaller differences. However, the results from North American studies cannot be generalised to the European context (Akoensi et al., 2013, p. 1207).

In an attempt to synthesise the body of European evidence on what works in DVPPs, Hester et al. (2014) found that just over half of the studies (57%, n = 37) indicated 'moderately positive or promising results' (p. 33), although these findings were not statistically significant. Akoensi et al. (2013), in their systematic review of the state of evidence of DVPPs in Europe, concluded that, while the evaluations included in their research indicated several positive outcomes following treatment, they argue there is a lack of definitive evidence regarding the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes, underscoring ongoing uncertainties about what works best, for whom, and under what conditions (Akoensi et al., 2013).

The findings of the studies previously presented are closely tied to methodological limitations (Akoensi et al., 2013), a point further developed by Gondolf (2004) and Westmarland and Kelly (2013), who argue that much of the evaluation in this field has been hindered by varying interpretations of results, narrow definitions of success, and differing views on what constitutes relevant data for assessing effectiveness. In short, these inconsistencies in how success is defined and measured have made it difficult to draw definite conclusions about the impact of DVPPs.

Providing empirical support for these claims, Kelly and Westmarland (2015) identify three generations in DVPP evaluation research based on a review of published UK, US, and Australian studies. First-generation studies relied on staff estimates, police reports, and men's self-reports to measure violence reduction at follow-up (Edleson et al., 1985; Gondolf, 1987; Hawkings & Beauvais, 1985). However, the measures of success and data sources used in these studies present several issues.

Focusing solely on violence as an indicator of change has limitations. Scholars increasingly recommend incorporating a broader range of success indicators, a trend reflected in many UK and Ireland evaluations, which tend to adopt wider measures than those used in other parts of Europe (Lilley-Walker et al., 2018). Although stopping violence remains a key outcome (Day

et al., 2019), DVPPs often target multiple dimensions of change, including parenting and co-parenting, as well as communication skills based on respect, thoughts, and beliefs that underpin violence, among other areas. Evaluations that fail to consider these broader dimensions risk overlooking the full scope of change that such interventions promote. Most importantly, studies that adopt a narrow definition of success focused only on physical violence, such as Edleson et al. (1985), tend to overlook the pattern of coercive control, a central component of IPV that is often more persistent and difficult to address than physical violence itself (Downes et al., 2019). This omission is significant, as many DVPPs explicitly target coercive control due to its profound and lasting impact on victim-survivors (Stark, 2007; Westmarland et al., 2010). For women in shelters, it is the controlling tactics, such as the denial of money, the monitoring and management of their time, and restricted mobility, that make them feel like they are walking on eggshells (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). These tactics are linked to disproportionate help-seeking (Stark, 2023) and are a key predictor of intimate partner femicide (Johnson et al., 2019; Stark, 2007). Moreover, such controlling behaviours may persist, or even intensify, even as physical violence declines (R. P. Dobash et al., 1999).

Regarding the second data collection sources, studies that included women's reports as an outcome measure revealed significant differences in how male perpetrators and female victim-survivors assessed change, thus challenging the reliance on men's self-reports alone (Edleson & Brygger, 1986; Edleson & Gruszynski, 1988). For instance, Margolin (1987) found that women are more likely than men to acknowledge their own violence. Expanding on this, Dobash and Dobash (2004) argued that while men and women tend to share similar views regarding women's acts of violence, they differ considerably in their perceptions of men's violence. A notable conclusion from their study is that men '*never* report more of their own violence than is reported by their female partners' (p. 336), suggesting that men using IPV always underreport or downplay incidents of violence (emphasis in italics is mine to illustrate the categorical nature of the statement) (Heckert & Gondolf, 2000). Certain studies have indicated that the tendency to underreport may decrease over time, as seen in follow-up reports of DVPPs (Edleson & Brygger, 1986). However, for others, disagreements between men and women regarding reports of men's violence persist even after completing the programme (Heckert & Gondolf, 2000). Overall, research has been sceptical about the

reliability and validity of men's reports of violence, arguing that women's reports are more accurate and reliable indicators of violence and abuse. Men's self-reports 'grossly deny and minimise' women's reports (p. 183). In this context, men's explanations for their use of violence are often considered mere justifications characterised by blame, denial, and minimisation (Cavanagh et al., 2001).

Building on Kelly and Westmarland's (2015) classification, second-generation research sought to address the shortcomings of earlier studies through two main routes: experimental and quasi-experimental designs (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999; Gondolf, 2002). While experimental designs are often regarded as the gold standard, praised for their scientific 'rigour' (Befani, 2020, p. 6), they have also faced criticism for implementation issues, compromising their findings (Gondolf, 2004). Additionally, and more importantly, ethical concerns have been raised about randomisation, as it can jeopardise women's safety by leaving some men without treatment, and it poses challenges in obtaining participants' informed consent (R. P. Dobash et al., 1999; Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). To address these limitations, researchers have increasingly employed quasi-experimental designs.

A key study in second-generation research is 'Changing Violent Men' by R. E. Dobash et al. (1999) conducted in Scotland. This study evaluated the effectiveness of court-mandated Duluth-inspired DVPPs compared to other criminal justice sanctions, focusing on their impact on violence, controlling behaviours, and the beliefs that sustain them, with particular attention to assessing injuries. A primary aim of the study was to understand whether men can change (defined as adopting new ways of acting, thinking, and speaking) and, if so, how they can do so.

The study established two comparison groups: men who had completed the programme and those who had received other criminal justice sanctions. Considering women's reports as a more valid indicator of men's violence, the research assessed changes in violence and coercive controlling behaviours based on women's accounts. The cessation of both coercive control and physical violence was the most critical indicator of change, as it was expected to have the most significant impact on the relationship and quality of life for both women and men. By eliminating violence, the safety and well-being of victim-survivors would be enhanced.

Men's accounts were used to report changes in behaviours and attitudes, while criminal justice system (CJS) reports were used to assess prosecutions. The researchers concluded that the DVPPs under study were more effective than other CJS sanctions in reducing violence and modifying associated beliefs, with these changes more likely to be sustained over time. Furthermore, men showed 'a sense of achievement' (p. 151) and 'a new appreciation for their partners, children, and family life, as well as a transformed view of the costs and rewards of using violence' (p. 150). Men also reported feeling happier and better able to control their temper and drinking, indicators of improved emotional well-being.

Both experimental and quasi-experimental designs have been criticised for neglecting the context of programme implementation (Gondolf, 2004). Gondolf addressed this issue in his multisite evaluation research in the United States, one of the most systematic and renowned studies evaluating the effectiveness of DVPPs. He aimed to overcome the shortcomings of previous research by revisiting notions of success, asking, 'Effective compared with what, with whom, and under what circumstances?' (p. 609). The author employed a longitudinal naturalistic comparative design across four sites, incorporating quasi-experimental research within these sites. This involved a four-year follow-up evaluation starting at programme intake, with both quantitative and qualitative outcomes assessed at three-month intervals. The outcome of the re-assault was based on reports from men and their new female partners, corroborated by police reports. Other outcomes assessed included no abuse, nonphysical abuse, and threats.

Gondolf's multisite evaluation research presented promising outcomes for DVPPs in reducing violence, de-escalating its severity (both for physical violence and controlling behaviours, although the latter did not decrease to the same extent), and improving victims' safety and overall quality of life. Women's accounts proved to be the best predictors of re-assault, alongside the man's drunkenness.

Although Gondolf's study did not primarily focus on coordinated responses, each site studied had elements of such a response. The CCRs differed across the four sites, and no significant differences in re-assault rates or victim quality of life were observed. However, one of the sites (Denver, Colorado) with the most comprehensive programme had significantly lower rates of severe re-assault when controlling for background variables. The site included

mandatory counselling as part of the conviction (a 9-month group-counselling programme), and additional services such as mental health, chemical dependency, and support services for victim-survivors.

Gondolf noted that contextual, organisational, and practical factors had a disruptive effect on the effectiveness of the programmes. The author concluded that the system matters, a view supported by other scholars who argue that the effectiveness of DVPPs is influenced by the coordinated community response, including police response, prosecution, and probation (Babcock et al., 2004), as well as statutory and voluntary sectors (Shepard et al., 2002). Uniform and consistent policies and procedures across institutions and individuals handling IPV cases are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of legal and support institutions and systems.

3.6.1.1 Mirabal project

Kelly and Westmarland (2015) laid the foundation for what they identified as the third generation of research evaluation on DVPPs, offering a reflexive approach to measuring success. Westmarland et al. (2010) revisited key questions, asking, ‘What does it mean for a programme to work or be successful?’ and ‘Whose perspectives should inform these definitions of success?’ (p. 2). While second-generation research expanded the definition of success by including women's reports of violence, Westmarland et al. (2010) adopted a more inclusive approach, considering a broader range of perspectives including those of men, women, practitioners, and funders and redefining the very concept of change. Their work served as the pilot study for the Mirabal project. This six-year, multi-site longitudinal initiative moved beyond the traditional focus on violence reduction or programme completion, exploring the broader contributions of DVPPs to coordinated community responses to domestic violence (Alderson, 2015). The researchers argued that the success of DVPPs should be assessed within the context of a complex service system involving multiple stakeholders, including social services, legal systems, and support agencies. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, they conducted longitudinal surveys with women whose partners were referred to a DVPP and a comparison group of women receiving support in areas without community-based programmes. The study also included in-depth interviews

with men on the programmes and their (ex) partners at both the beginning and the end of the study (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015).

The Mirabal project began with scepticism about the effectiveness of DVPPs (and the criminal justice system) in holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring the safety of victim-survivors. This scepticism was partly fueled by earlier experimental studies reporting 'no effect' (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). Through their research, the Mirabal Team addressed several controversies regarding the data used to evaluate DVPPs, offering a nuanced perspective on the reliability of men's and women's reports in assessing men's change. While the prevailing view held that women's accounts were more trustworthy when it came to reporting men's use of violence, the research found that women who were no longer in a relationship sometimes struggled to assess certain aspects of change in men. Moreover, in some cases, men admitted to more violence and abuse than their partners had reported, challenging the assumption that they are always unreliable or untrustworthy informants (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015, p. 9). Ultimately, the study revealed fewer discrepancies between men's and women's reports than earlier research had suggested, indicating that men can sometimes accurately assess their own changes (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015).

This finding aligns to some extent with Morran's (2013) arguments. While men may be inclined to present a more positive image of themselves or portray themselves as changed (Hughes, 2023), dismissing their narratives could miss valuable insights into how they perceive their past behaviour and the personal changes they are working to achieve. Morran (2013) suggests that researchers can better understand their flaws and strengths by attentively listening to these men and gaining crucial insights into what might motivate them to change. Cavanagh et al. (2001) similarly emphasise the importance of considering men's interpretations of their violence to improve programme responses.

3.6.1.2 How is change conceptualised in the Mirabal project?

The Mirabal project's focus on re-defining success prompts a rethinking of how to conceptualise change in men who have used IPV. As R. P. Dobash et al. (1999) 'the heart of any evaluation is the process of change' (p.6). In the Mirabal project, six collective measures

of success were established, derived from the pilot study conducted by Westmarland et al. (2010):

1. An improved relationship underpinned by respect and effective communication.

2. Expanded space for action for women, restoring their voice and ability to make choices while improving their well-being.

3. Safety and freedom from violence and abuse for women and children.

4. Safe, positive and shared parenting.

5. Enhanced awareness of self and others for men, including an understanding of the impact that domestic violence has had on their partner and children.

6. For children, safer and healthier childhoods where they feel heard and cared for.

The study revealed that for participants, particularly victim-survivors, success was seen as a complex and multidimensional concept that went beyond merely stopping violence. For these women, the first two measures were particularly significant, reinforcing the idea that 'ending violence and abuse is a necessary, but insufficient, requirement for safety and freedom' (p. 7). This challenges the conventional reliance on the cessation of abuse as the primary indicator of change (success), while also placing the well-being and safety of victim-survivors at the forefront (McGinn et al., 2021).

Victim-survivors expressed a desire for their partners to show respect and value their perspectives. While not all aspects of change included in their research are explored in this section, this example illustrates how the understanding of change within DVPPs has expanded. Some men demonstrated notable shifts, becoming more approachable, creating space for their partners to speak, actively listening, and seeking their opinions. At its core, this transformation was grounded in a recognition of the power they had once taken for granted and a conscious decision not to misuse it.

Significant progress was observed when men acknowledged and addressed conflicts constructively when engaging with disagreements. This included incorporating open discussions into their daily interactions, addressing issues promptly to prevent resentment, and learning to communicate honestly about emotions and difficult topics. De-escalation also

played a crucial role in these transformations, with men learning to control their tone, lower their voices, and consider how their words and actions were perceived by their (ex-)partners. They became more aware of how their body language and tone had previously been used to intimidate.

Positive change was evident when both partners developed mutually agreed-upon guidelines for communication, effectively negotiating shared interaction rules. Men who participated in this process experienced fewer, less intense, and less frequent conflicts. Successful negotiation involved creating shared agreements, setting boundaries, admitting mistakes, and managing emotions.

One of the most significant changes involved men's understanding of violence. Initially, their narratives focused on specific incidents, often justified by vague explanations of their actions. Over time, however, many men developed a more nuanced understanding of their behaviour and its impact, alongside a greater willingness to acknowledge and discuss their actions. Another key development was the practice of self-reflection, where men began engaging in internal dialogue before reacting, challenging their sense of entitlement and shifting from blaming their partners to taking responsibility for managing their emotions. Participants also often mentioned tools introduced in the programme, such as self-regulation techniques and the 'Time Out' strategy, which helped them become more aware of the early warning signs of abusive behaviour and take responsibility for their actions (Wistow et al., 2017). These tools fostered greater self-awareness and reinforced the crucial lesson that violence is always a choice. While not all men applied these lessons beyond their intimate relationships, some reported using them professionally and socially. For those who had long used violence as a form of control in various areas of their lives, the programme's ability to disrupt this pattern marked a significant breakthrough.

3.6.2 Landscape of DVPPs evaluation studies in Chile

The study of DVPPs in Latin America is still in its early stages (Esquivel & Silva, 2016). In Chile, for instance, only a few evaluations have been conducted (Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021). A distinctive feature of the research landscape in Chile is that numerous evaluation studies have been undertaken as part of undergraduate and postgraduate theses. As a result, much of this

knowledge remains within academic institutions, limiting its accessibility to policymakers, practitioners, and even other researchers (Sordi, 2024).

The evaluations conducted in Chile have generally reported positive outcomes, albeit with variations in design, methodologies, and interpretations. In terms of data collection, DVPP evaluations have drawn on various sources, including reports from practitioners, accounts from both men and women, police records, and clinical files. However, there is little consensus on how to measure or define change. Over time, the field has evolved, moving away from narrowly assessing success based on simplistic measures, such as reducing violence or developing conflict resolution skills (Salas-Herrera, 2015; Villela, 1997). More recently, a broader and more nuanced understanding of change has emerged, incorporating concepts such as men's evolving understanding of violence, improvements in self-esteem and confidence, and shifts in beliefs that underpin violence (Morales et al., 2012). While questions about the effectiveness of these interventions remain, there is a growing interest in exploring how these changes unfold and the challenges men face, an issue which will be explored in more detail in the final section of this chapter. However, this shift is still in its early stages in Chile, and a significant gap in research persists (Madrid et al., 2020).

One of the earliest studies on DVPPs in Chile is Villela's (1997), which examined the reduction of both physical and psychological violence among perpetrators participating in a community-based DVPP run by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Using data from clinical records and interviews with therapists, Villela concluded that the programme contributed to a reduction in abuse. In several cases, physical violence appeared to shift toward psychological forms, echoing findings that suggest DVPPs are generally more effective at reducing physical violence than at tackling psychological abuse or, more broadly, coercive control (R. P. Dobash et al., 1999). Villela's study also sought to develop a typology of perpetrators, which proved difficult due to the significant variability in participants' profiles. As a result, the researcher recommended a deeper exploration of masculinity with participants, noting that cultural gender binaries might influence men's sense of entitlement to power and control.

Munita et al. (2012) expanded the scope of research by evaluating men's use of violence and their conflict resolution strategies in a DVPP operated by a state agency. This study relied on men's self-reports of violence, using the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2), alongside practitioner

accounts of change. The findings suggested a reduction in violence; however, the researchers were unable to determine whether this change was directly attributable to the intervention or the individual characteristics of the participants themselves.

In a more comprehensive study, Morales et al. (2012) evaluated DVPPs implemented by the Gendarmería in five regions of Chile. Combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this research drew on data from practitioners, staff, men, and police records to assess recidivism and the broader impact of the programme on men's violent behaviours. The study found a statistically significant reduction in recidivism, with participants demonstrating changes in their understanding of violence, shifting from denial, justification, and minimisation of violent behaviours to recognising non-physical forms of violence. In the emotional domain, changes included an increased ability to express feelings, improved empathy, and better communication skills. Participants also exhibited greater self-reflection, which enhanced their self-esteem and self-worth. In the behavioural domain, changes were observed in impulse control and communication, with a reduction in violent behaviours, a greater sense of responsibility for their actions, and an increased motivation for change.

Salas-Herrera's (2015) research represents a significant milestone in the Chilean context, as his study was one of the first to include women's reports and to follow up on changes over an extended period after programme completion. This quantitative study evaluated recidivism among men who had completed a DVPP at the Centro de Hombres in Bío-Bío, Concepción, which was overseen at the time by the Chilean Gendarmería. Using multiple questionnaires and a range of data sources, including accounts from men, women, and practitioners, the study assessed the recurrence of violent acts against female partners, 36 months after programme completion.

In a more recent study, Espinoza et al. (2021) evaluated a DVPP run by a state agency, based on interviews with programme practitioners. Although the definition of success used in this study was somewhat ambiguous, the practitioners emphasised that success involves men recognising the different forms of violence they employ, improving conflict resolution skills, taking responsibility for their actions, and cultivating internal motivation for change. The research also highlighted the challenges practitioners face, including coordination issues with women's centres and the justice system. In particular, the study noted that the courts were

not always considering the recommendations provided by the DVPPs, which could undermine the overall impact of the interventions. Overall, this study underscored the importance of a coordinated community response, suggesting that it should be a key consideration in the evaluation of DVPPs, marking a gradual shift in how these programmes are evaluated.

3.7 How does change happen for men in DVPPs? The role of the programme

This section explores how DVPPs facilitate change among male perpetrators of IPV, as well as the challenges of this endeavour. A number of studies have drawn on behavioural change frameworks, most notably the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM), to understand how such change occurs. Originally developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) to treat addictive behaviours, the TTM has been extensively used in DVPPs, including those in Chile. A core assumption of this model is that change is not abrupt; instead, it unfolds gradually (a process) (Casey et al., 2005) through a series of identifiable stages: precontemplation (the individual has no intention of changing their behaviour); contemplation (the person becomes aware of a problem and is interested in changing but has not yet committed to action), preparation (the individual intends to act soon and plans the steps needed for change); action (the person actively works on changing the behaviour); and maintenance (the individual has successfully changed the behaviour and is now focused on sustaining it and preventing relapse). These include becoming increasingly aware of the problem, deciding to make a change, developing strategies, and ultimately implementing those strategies (Casey et al., 2005; Clavijo, 2016). While these stages are typically consistent, the pace of progression varies between individuals, and setbacks to earlier stages are common (Babcock et al., 2005).

In the context of DVPPs, much of the research has focused on mapping the extent and type of change across the stages of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) to predict intervention outcomes (Carbajosa et al., 2017). The model, some argue, helps to identify where men are in their change process, something well-documented (Scott, 2003). The stages may also be valuable for encouraging change, motivating individuals to address their violent behaviours, especially since many are initially resistant to engaging in these interventions. However, applying this model to DVPPs requires careful consideration of specific factors unique to IPV (Casey et al., 2005). These considerations arise from the complex and multifaceted nature of IPV, which often involves patterns of coercive control that are deeply embedded in gender

norms, a factor that cannot be easily captured by standard models of behavioural change (Casey et al., 2005). Moreover, the mechanisms that drive or sustain change in IPV perpetrators remain largely underexplored (Morrison et al., 2018), thus, the TTM does not sufficiently explain how or why change occurs, nor does it fully account for the factors that facilitate or hinder this process. Crucially, it tends to overlook the gendered dimensions of change and the internal negotiations men undergo as they confront their use of violence, which are key for practitioners' work.

The following two sections address key aspects often neglected by the TTM but essential for understanding change in DVPPs: 1) the importance of programmes being grounded in a nuanced conceptualisation of IPV (3.7.1), and 2) the need to recognise the deeply gendered nature of change and how men navigate traditional masculine norms in the process, norms that are inextricably linked to coercive and controlling behaviours (3.7.2).

3.7.1 A nuanced conceptualisation of men's use of IPV

The literature suggests that developing a robust framework to examine men's use of violence may play a crucial role in facilitating change within DV perpetrator programmes. A lack of conceptual clarity on this issue may hinder their work (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). As discussed in Chapter 2, theoretical perspectives on this topic vary, not only among masculinity theorists but also between them and feminist theories on power and control.

Astorga and Valdivia (2020) found that men attending a DVPP in Chile reported several changes in their understanding of their use of IPV: they broadened the definition of violence, linked it to power and control, developed a sense of accountability, and were able to acknowledge the consequences and impact of their violence on others. According to the authors, the programme's theoretical framework, grounded in feminist perspectives on violence, was crucial in supporting these changes. Rather than seeing violence as an explosive or reactive loss of control, men came to understand it as a deliberate and purposeful behaviour. They also recognised the importance of communication, reflecting on how they had previously relied on violence as a means to resolve conflict.

While Astorga and Valdivia (2020) highlight the importance of feminist frameworks in facilitating change, Hearn offers a more comprehensive conceptualisation that foregrounds

men's subjective experiences of patriarchy. Drawing on masculinity theorists, his approach expands feminist perspectives by retaining a focus on power and control while illuminating men's complex and often contradictory relationship with violence (Hearn, 2012a; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). As Hearn and Whitehead (2006) argue: 'A clear framework of understanding motivation is necessary for the effectiveness of any intervention into such problematic behaviour. It seems that existing interventions may be impeded by a conceptual shortfall in respect of men's motivation in violence to women' (p. 44).

Hearn (1998) cautions against interpreting men's violence solely as a rational attempt to exert control, as many feminist theories previously reviewed suggest. As noted in Chapter 2, it may be unrealistic to assume that men who abuse their partners are always consciously motivated by an ideological desire to uphold patriarchal gender roles. Instead, their violence might be better seen as a consequence of patriarchal structures rather than a deliberate effort to enforce them (Hearn, 1998). Building on this, Hearn and Whitehead (2006) call for interventions to go beyond surface-level explanations and to attend to how men internalise and embody patriarchal values in deeply personal ways. They argue that feminist perspectives, while highly valuable and an intrinsic part of their insights, do not fully address how individual men subjectively experience patriarchal relations. In this context, gender norms are not merely adopted by men; they are embodied and woven into their self-concept, influencing how they perceive themselves and their place in the world (a topic that will be examined in depth in the next section). In other words, DVPPs facilitate changes in men when they address men's subjectivities of their experience of patriarchy. As they write: 'If it is not possible to understand his subjective reality within those relations, how may it then be possible to expose and make amenable to change the cognitions that underpin his violent behaviour?' (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006, p. 44).

As mentioned earlier, Hearn's expanded conceptualisation of men's violence is based on the contributions from masculinity theorists (Hearn, 1998, 2004, 2012a; Hearn & Howson, 2020; Kaufman, 1987; Olavarría, 2001a), a field that, as discussed in Chapter 2, reveals both the complexity of men's power and their experiences of powerlessness. In Latin America, however, scholars are divided on the role of masculinity studies within DVPPs. While some advocate for incorporating this field's insights (Iniciativa Spotlight, 2021; Iniciativa Spotlight et

al., 2021), others caution against it (Garda, 2021). Iniciativa Spotlight et al. (2021), for example, argue that DVPPs should incorporate 'a transformative gender and masculinities approach […] that challenge machismo, traditional gender norms, and the use of violence, both towards women, girls, and boys, as well as towards other men and people of diverse sexual and gender identities' (p. 12).

By contrast, Garda (2021) warns that incorporating insights from masculinity studies into DVPPs risks shifting the focus away from feminist principles of power and control, placing undue emphasis on men's emotional struggles rather than their use of violence. He stresses the importance of keeping power relations central: 'We need to talk about men's experiences and their discomforts [in the group workshops], but the focus should be on power relations, not the pain or suffering of men—much less the costs of masculinity, as masculinity studies point out' (Garda, 2021, p. 31).

Garda's critique likely stems from concerns about less critical strands within masculinity research, which sometimes position men as victims of patriarchy (McCarry, 2007). One such example is the focus on the emotional costs of masculinity, particularly how restrictive gender norms hinder men's emotional expression and negatively impact their well-being (González-Barrientos et al., 2024). While these insights may be valuable for mental health interventions, Garda (2021) argues that programmes for men who use IPV must maintain a feminist lens: 'One thing is to work with men's masculinities, and another is to work with men who use violence from a feminist gendered perspective' (p. 36). Hearn's work offers a way to reconcile these seemingly opposing positions (Garda, 2021; Aguayo et al., 2021), advancing a more nuanced framework for understanding men's violence. Some of these ideas will inform the findings in Chapters 5 and 6.

Complementing Hearn's theoretical lens, Morran (2016) offers a criminological perspective that also calls for deeper engagement with men's lived experiences. He argues that for change to be meaningful and sustained, programmes must explore the significance men attribute to their violence, including their need for control, rather than dismissing such narratives as mere excuses. Gadd and Jefferson (2007) similarly contend that resistance may arise when men's tendencies to deny, minimise, or shift blame are interpreted solely as refusals to take responsibility. They claim that such responses may also express feelings of shame,

dependency, and masculine vulnerability. Ignoring these dimensions may only reinforce men's desire for absolute control over women and children. Despite this, some research continues to frame men's explanations as mere deflections. For example, based on interviews with perpetrators, Miranda and Muñoz (2013) concluded that men often justified their actions, even when aware that their behaviour was unjustifiable and conflicted with their ideals of being a good man. However, many cited a perceived lack of respect as a rationale for their violence.

Building on Gad's work (2004), Renehan (2020, 2023) introduces a psychosocial perspective that further explores the emotional and unconscious roots of coercive control. Although her work is not directly used in the findings chapters, it highlights the complex terrain that DVPPs must navigate, and the importance of not dismissing men's narratives nor simplistically analysing them. The author examines a UK Criminal Justice DVPP, Building Better Relationships (BBR), designed for men convicted of IPV offences. Drawing on a (psychoanalytic) psychosocial theory of men's violence, Renehan found that while some men could articulate links between their violence and power and control, their narratives were often fragmented and inconsistent. As a result, she argues that BBR failed to support men in fully understanding the deeper roots of their controlling behaviours. Central to Renehan's analysis is the idea that coercive control is rooted in unresolved anxieties and deep emotional dependencies that play out in intimate relationships. Many men, she argues, expect their partners to meet their emotional needs, an entitlement shaped by gendered norms that position women as caregivers and emotional supports. Coercive control, then, is not merely a rational assertion of dominance; it also represents a complex emotional response shaped by rigid gender norms. Renehan argues that BBR does not sufficiently address key challenges in DVPPs, such as denial and minimisation, viewing them instead as defence mechanisms used to 'relieve feelings of angst and shame' (p. 37). Yet, these reactions function not only as unconscious strategies for managing distress and complex emotions but also operate as discursive (and conscious) strategies. This dual perspective highlights the complexity of IPV interventions, where facilitators must engage with both the psychological and social dimensions of men's behaviour, which often pull in opposing directions.

3.7.2 Letting go vs keeping traditional gender norms for men

As examined earlier in Section 3.7, one of the main critiques of the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM) is that it does not fully address how change occurs for male perpetrators of IPV, overlooking the importance of gender and the role it plays. To answer the question of how DVPPs facilitate change in men, research has pointed to the theoretical understanding of IPV on which the programme is based, emphasising the importance of exploring men's own understandings of their use of violence and how they internalise patriarchy, without reducing their narratives to mere justifications. This section examines how men navigate the complexities of change in DVPPs, highlighting the crucial role of gender, particularly in relation to traditional masculine norms.

Early research argued that change among male perpetrators is 'a product of learning that which is new and replacing that which was previously commonplace' (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999, p. 154). As research progressed, it became evident that simply replacing old behaviours was not sufficient for meaningful and sustained change. Instead, this process involves deeper work: a disruption of men's gendered identities (Anderson, 2009; Downes et al., 2019). Kelly and Westmarland (2015) argue that change for men who have used violence is inherently gendered and entails modifying coercively controlling behaviours by 'developing different ways of being men in relationships with women and children' (p. 11).

Challenging previous assumptions that change is a uniform progression, Downes et al. (2019) contend that modifying coercive controlling behaviours in men is a complex, 'uneven and contradictory [process]' (p. 279), that is often painful. DVPPs have the potential to facilitate this (Anderson, 2009; Downes et al., 2019), although the extent varies among participants. As mentioned earlier, the process is far from being an organised progression; on the contrary, change is more chaotic, less straightforward than previously acknowledged, and better understood as a series of 'steps' (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015, p. 9).

The type of change described by authors such as Kelly and Westmarland (2015) and Anderson (2009), which enables some men to move beyond mere behavioural disruption and toward a more significant and sustained change, requires the time and guided reflection offered by DVPPs. Elements supporting change in men within DVPPs include group workshops, skilled

practitioners, and the length and depth of the interventions (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). In the Mirabal research, group workshops allowed men to identify with their peers, be challenged by them, and reflect on their behaviours. Because change requires profound reflection on the harm caused and understanding the 'benefits of letting go of traditional masculine norms' (p. 279), the authors argue that relinquishing the need to be always right, in control, and rational, while embracing one's own and others' mistakes, vulnerabilities, and imperfections, enables some men to find a pathway to a non-abusive way of living. This transformation fosters greater openness, comfort, and consideration towards themselves and those around them.

Practitioners Astorga and Valdivia (2020) in Chile share a similar view on the role of group work. The programme supported and facilitated men's change by encouraging them to reflect on and critically question their 'hegemonic masculine beliefs' (p. 10). Through group work, men felt 'free' (p. 10) to express their emotions, breaking away from the conventional masculine ideal that demands men restrict and contain their feelings. By providing a respectful space for social interaction, group workshops reinforced and taught men new forms of communication and conflict-resolution strategies that they later incorporated into their daily lives. Practitioners also actively participated in this process, sharing their own experiences, 'tears and laughs' (p. 10), which helped build trust and foster a sense of closeness with the men.

Miranda and Muñoz (2013) interviewed men attending a DVPP in Chile to gain insight into their process of change. They concluded that this process involves developing new ways of being a man, or what the authors term 'new forms of masculinity' (p. 148), with the programme playing a central role in this transformation. Among the changes, men reported an expanded understanding of what constitutes violence, enabling them to recognise forms they had previously overlooked, such as economic violence, intimidation, isolation, and sexual violence. However, not all men reached this level of recognition, particularly regarding sexual violence. Despite this expanded understanding, many men still perceived their violence as a consequence of losing control, often blaming women for provoking their behaviour and justifying it through feelings of frustration. These findings led the researchers to conclude that change is a gradual process, involving a slow deconstruction. The programme supported this

'deconstruction' (p. 148) by teaching non-violent conflict resolution skills, strategies to identify early signs of anger, exercises to maintain calm, and techniques such as time-outs, which were widely used by the men interviewed. Among the most significant reported changes was the ability to resolve conflicts differently, by seeking compromise, validating and considering their partner's perspective, and reflecting on the consequences of their actions.

Similarly, Macaya and Arriagada (2017) interviewed men who completed a DVPP in Chile to explore their motivations for using IPV and how they 'break the cycle of violence' (p. 7). The researchers linked men's sense of entitlement (the belief that they have certain privileges over women and their bodies, and that their views are always correct) to the concept of hegemonic masculinity, noting that this entitlement significantly increases the risk of violence. Men's violent behaviours are also driven by gender norms for women, or more specifically, 'cultural expectations regarding what a woman is and should be and the type of relationship she should maintain with her partner' (p. 101). For example, men often questioned their partners' interactions with other men, feeling a loss of control over what they believed to be theirs. Violence occurred when women did not conform to their wishes or challenged their authority, such as neglecting traditional roles or questioning how they spent their time. The researchers concluded that 'when women challenge their authority, men resort to violence' (p. 102).

What is particularly interesting, and adds another layer of complexity, is that according to the researchers, violence also arose when men's work-related ambitions were unmet, especially if criticised by their partners, although this was not further explored. The study showed that men 'drop some mandates of hegemonic masculinity by establishing more equal relationships with peers and women', supported by the programme (Macaya & Arriagada, 2017, p. 102). Men 'interrupted' their violent behaviours by letting go of certain 'gender prejudices' (p. 102), becoming more involved in household chores and showing greater respect for women's autonomy and independence (p. 99)

The research reviewed thus far argues that change for men in DVPPs happens when they drop 'mandates of hegemonic masculinity' (Macaya & Arriagada, 2017, p. 102), or let go of traditional gender norms for men, such as dominance, control, emotional suppression, and entitlement, allowing them to find new, non-violent ways of being a man (Downes et al., 2019) or what Miranda and Muñoz (2013) term 'new forms of masculinity' (p. 148). The common

thread through this research is that, by moving away from rigid gender roles for men (and women), men can develop more respectful and equal ways of relating to women and others. However, only a few studies have explored the role of group workshops in facilitating this change; most focus on outcomes rather than the process of change itself. Even fewer have examined how men not only let go of some gendered ways of being but also preserve others (Morran, 2022), which is an intrinsic part of the change process that DVPPs must be tuned into. My PhD research explores both the process of letting go and simultaneously retaining gender norms.

Regarding the latter, Morran (2022) highlights an important yet underexplored dimension of the gendered nature of change: for men, change is a masculine endeavour. Drawing on desistance theory, he examines how male IPV perpetrators sustain change (secondary desistance). Although desistance is more narrowly defined than change, the terms are used interchangeably here.

Building on Maruna's (2001) foundational work on desistance among ex-convicts, Morran (2022) adapts and applies these insights to men who completed a DVPP. Maruna (2001) argues that change is best understood not as a complete rejection of one's former self, but as a process of preserving and reshaping identity. In line with this, the participants in Morran's study (2022) described abandoning the 'masculine stereotype' but only modifying 'the bits that need changing' (p. 11). This process, while seemingly paradoxical, does not involve abandoning their ways of being a man altogether, but rather selectively letting go of certain traits while holding on to others, retaining and reshaping aspects of their gendered identity. In this context, men viewed change as a kind of heroic endeavour, achieved by embodying qualities and values such as responsibility, hard work, independence, and strength, which they described 'positive manly qualities' (p. 11). As Morran (2022) concludes, 'to become non-violent involves finding and valuing new ways of enacting masculine roles while allowing other pre-existing aspects of one's identity to be valued' (p. 11), reflecting a process of reshaping that integrates the new with the pre-existing (gendered) self. For the author, change is therefore 'not simply about behavioural modification but about a reconfiguration of identity and relationships' (Morran, 2013, p. 317).

This emphasis on reshaping rather than rejecting what men consider masculine qualities highlights the importance of being attentive to their gendered identities and the aspects they value. This approach seems to be key for DVPPs seeking to support sustained change. Morran's (2022) argument aligns to some extent with the views of Álvarez Álvarez et al. (2015) in Chile, who argue that DVPPs should preserve men's identities by identifying their core constructs, particularly in the early stages of the programme when the therapeutic alliance is being established. A similar stance is shared by Viveros et al. (2001) in their work on masculinities in Peru, Colombia, and Chile. Although their research does not specifically focus on DVPPs, it offers valuable insights into how change may occur for Latin American men. According to these scholars, the potential for social change lies in transforming the negative aspects of traditional definitions of a real man, while preserving the positive qualities of masculine norms and leveraging them to drive social progress. Key masculine traits such as responsibility, strength, and protectiveness are highlighted. Numerous examples illustrate men striving to be responsible, strong, protective, and courageous. The authors assert that these traits are beneficial as long as they are not associated with the need for control or a sense of entitlement and authority. The core positive values can be reframed to serve not as tools for domination, but as support for families and communities (Shepard, 2001).

3.8 Summary

This chapter outlined the emergence of DVPPs, examining how change has been conceptualised and assessed in research from both the global north and Chile, and highlighting two critical dimensions that facilitate change within these interventions.

DVPPs were developed to tackle IPV, aimed at both keeping victim-survivors safe and holding male perpetrators accountable for their use of violence. However, addressing IPV requires not only institutional responses and the involvement of multiple actors, but also coordinated, systemic efforts. This is the premise under which the pioneering Duluth model and the Duluth men's programme emerged. Yet this advancement in the field has not been without criticism, particularly concerning the limitations of perpetrator programmes. Violence is just one of the structures that (re)produce gender inequality; therefore, while DVPPs and individual change among men are necessary and play an important role in the system, they are not sufficient to transform women's position in society.

The chapter then examined how change has been defined and measured in DVPP research, drawing on studies from both the global north and Chile. Initially, change was understood primarily as a reduction in physical violence. Over time, however, this concept has expanded to encompass reductions in coercive control and improvements in victim-survivors' safety, autonomy, and well-being. This shift aligns with a broader move toward victim-centred and more comprehensive approaches (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). Key indicators of men's 'steps towards change' in DVPPs now include a broader recognition of what constitutes violence, a greater ability to express emotions, the use of non-violent conflict resolution skills, and increased self-awareness and empathy (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015).

Two interconnected elements emerge in the literature as particularly influential in supporting change among men who use IPV in DVPPs, although these are often overlooked in standard models of behavioural change, such as the Transtheoretical Model. First, following Hearn and Whitehead (2006), programmes can only meaningfully facilitate change when they are grounded in a clear and nuanced theoretical understanding of IPV. This involves drawing on feminist theories of power and control, such as those underpinning the Duluth model, as well as critical scholarship on men and masculinities. While the DVPP examined in this study is influenced by the Duluth programme (more details of this will be elaborated in Section 4.3.2), it is primarily informed by the Cycle of Violence theory. This marks a significant departure, with implications that will be explored in the findings. The analytical framework proposed by Hearn and Whitehead (2006) guides findings on men's narratives, uncovering the internal conflicts and tensions surrounding their use of IPV and how they understand its causes and underlying dynamics. While men's accounts must be interpreted critically, they offer valuable insight, not to be taken at face value, but to reveal the contradictions and tensions they contain (Morran, 2016).

Second, the chapter highlighted the critical role of group workshops and skilled practitioners in facilitating change. In this context, group settings can support men in letting go of rigid gender norms and exploring new ways of being a man (Downes et al., 2019). Change is not only about adopting new behaviours but also about a deeply gendered reconfiguration of identity (Morran, 2022; Downes et al., 2019, Anderson, 2009), and as such, given the nature of coercive control, change in this area is more complex, uneven, less straightforward than

physical violence, and thus requires a more profound and guided personal reflection (Downes et al., 2019). The next chapter outlines the methodology underpinning this research, setting the stage for the findings that follow.

Chapter 4: Research design, methods and ethical considerations

4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of the research methodology employed in this study. It begins by outlining the epistemological foundations and guiding principles, which are rooted in critical realism and feminist research. The research design is a qualitative mixed-methods case study that incorporates ethnographic elements.

The chapter subsequently discusses the research methods and the rationale behind their selection. It includes fieldwork observations and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, such as DVPP practitioners, male participants, key informants, and staff from the Women's Centre. It also details the sampling strategies and ethical considerations integrated throughout the research process to ensure the well-being and safety of both participants and the researcher. The ethical challenges encountered during fieldwork and the strategies deployed are critically examined. Finally, the chapter outlines the data analysis method and reflexivity, focusing on the researcher's emotions and the power dynamics with the participants.

4.2 Critical realism and feminist research

This section will outline the epistemological foundations that inform my research methodology. The former lies in the intersection of critical realism and feminist research, which informs the various stages of my research process. Scholars concur that there is no single unified feminist theory or methodology (Skinner et al., 2005; Westmarland & Bows, 2019), and that feminist research should be understood in broad terms as a variety of perspectives (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) that 'provides the researcher with a broad methodological and ethical framework for conducting research with women, for women' (Westmarland & Bows, 2019, p. 11). Core feminist principles serve as a unifying foundation across diverse feminist theories and methodologies, shaping the research methods used to study gender, violence, and abuse. My PhD research is grounded in feminist principles informed by the work of Westmarland and Bows (2019), Skinner et al. (2005), Parr (2015) and Beckman (2014). This list of principles is not intended to be exhaustive, nor does it encompass

all the principles outlined by each author. Rather, it highlights those that were most relevant to my research process.

The first principle is a focus on gender and its interconnection with other forms of inequalities (such as age, ethnicity, and disability), grounded in women's experiences. As Skinner et al. (2005) elaborate, feminist research is 'concerned with issues that are gendered', such as domestic violence and other forms of violence that are 'carried out primarily by men' (p. 11). Even when research does 'not exclusively focus on gender or gender inequality' and even when female participants are not directly involved, 'it can still be grounded in women's experiences' (p. 11).

The second principle centres on amplifying and valuing the voices and experiences of marginalised groups, particularly women. As Parr (2015) notes, this entails recognising women's lived experiences as valid and meaningful sources of knowledge, which can be used to expose and challenge oppressive structures and to foster transformative social change. Feminist researchers are politically committed to producing knowledge that is both academically rigorous and aimed at improving women's lives(Westmarland & Bows, 2019).

The third principle involves recognising the inherent power imbalances between the researcher and the researched, and explicitly reflecting on how the researcher's emotions, positionality, and wider context shape the production of knowledge, a process commonly referred to as reflexivity. As Beckman (2014) states:'Feminist researchers recognize that the self mediates all knowledge' (p. 169). Attending to these dynamics enhances the transparency of the research process (Parr, 2015). Reflexivity, in this context, also requires researchers to be aware of the emotional and personal impact that the research may have on them, to reflect on how these experiences might shape their interpretations, and to develop strategies for sustaining resilience throughout the research journey (Westmarland & Bows, 2019).

Reflexivity is a valuable tool that forms the foundation of the following principle: engaging participants in the research process to minimise the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched, while avoiding the limitations imposed by the expectation of neutral and impersonal detachment. This principle calls for the use of methods that promote reflexive and reciprocal dialogue, in which participants' voices and lived experiences are prioritised. The

aim is to move beyond treating participants merely as sources of data by engaging with them in ways that acknowledge their agency and contributions (Westmarland & Bows, 2019).

The fifth principle emphasises the prioritisation of both the researcher's and participants' emotional and physical well-being, recognising that attention to care, emotional safety, and the cultivation of 'empathy and mutual respect' (Parr, 2015, p. 11) are themselves ethical commitments (Beckman, 2014). This principle reflects a broader view of ethics as embedded in the research process, not limited to formal procedures but grounded in relationships and care.

The sixth principle highlights the importance of using research findings to bridge the gap between research and practice. At the heart of feminist research lies a commitment to activism and advocacy, with a strong emphasis on the practical application and transformative impact of knowledge (Beckman, 2014). Rather than focusing solely on dissemination, feminist approaches prioritise the active use of research to influence policy, inform professional practice, and support activism aimed at promoting social justice and meaningful change (Westmarland & Bows, 2019).

Finally, the seventh principle refers to the multiple (Beckam, 2014) and flexible (Parr, 2015) use of methods. Feminist research encourages a flexible and responsive approach to methodology, challenging rigid or formulaic conceptions of method (Parr, 2015). Rather than adhering to fixed formats, methods are shaped by the research questions (Westmarland & Bows, 2019), the context, and guided by the research participants. This methodological openness enables feminist researchers to draw from a range of disciplines and to adopt mixed or multi-method approaches.

These principles are embedded throughout various stages of my research process. For instance, the first principle, which addresses gender and its intersection with other inequalities, is reflected in the analysis of the chapters that present the findings. In Chapter 7, I examine gender disparities among practitioners, which are shaped and perpetuated by their working contexts. Regarding the second principle, while my research does not directly include the voices of victims, their experiences are reflected through the perspectives of Women's Centre practitioners in Chapter 7.I will revisit the dilemma of combining critical realism and

feminist research principles, particularly concerning the representation of marginalised voices, later in this section. This research aims to contribute to academic knowledge and practice of DVPPs, a service dedicated to improving the safety and well-being of victim-survivors.

I kept a fieldwork journal throughout the research to support the third principle, reflexivity. The journal was a reflective tool, documenting my observations, thoughts, and experiences during fieldwork. This practice allowed me to critically examine power dynamics at different stages of the research process and, in some cases, to reinterpret past actions and decisions that I had not previously recognised as significant. The journal enabled me to uncover and analyse hidden or overlooked aspects of power that influenced the research.

The fourth and sixth principles, reflexivity and bridging research with practice, were actively applied throughout my study by involving practitioners at various stages of the research process. During fieldwork, I openly shared my emotions, thoughts, and motivations with the staff, fostering mutual understanding and helping to dismantle (though not entirely eliminate), the traditional power dynamics and authority often associated with the researcher's role (Hesse-Biber, 2014). This approach embodies the reflexivity principle, which encourages transparency and reciprocal dialogue to prioritise participants' voices and lived experiences. After completing fieldwork, I shared my initial findings with practitioners, allowing them time to reflect and provide feedback. Towards the end of my PhD, I invited DVPP practitioners to a workshop to discuss the results and offer additional insights. This collaborative process ensured their perspectives were meaningfully incorporated before presenting the final report to the central team in Santiago, thus strengthening the link between research and practice.

Ethical considerations, the fifth principle, permeated every stage of the research process, from selecting the research topic to defining the theoretical foundations and methodology. However, I paid special attention to the participants' well-being, which extended beyond merely adhering to norms and guidelines or securing the ethics committee's approval. These were often insufficient to address the complex challenges that emerged during fieldwork (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022). Many ethical dilemmas I encountered required situational responses to prioritise the well-being and needs of participants, especially practitioners. For example, I carefully considered what information to include in my fieldwork

journal, what details to share with participants, and how to present the findings, even if this meant omitting key information. This was not a matter of selectively presenting data but rather a deliberate effort to avoid potential conflicts, uphold confidentiality, and respect the trust that participants placed in me (Shokooh, 2021).

The final principle, flexibility, was essential throughout the process. I allowed the research to evolve as new insights emerged. I revisited the research questions and adapted data collection methods, including observation templates and interview questions, based on the context and circumstances encountered in the field.

Critical realism posits that the world can only be understood through descriptions shaped by available discourses. Thus, it recognises how historical and cultural contexts shape social scientific knowledge —a perspective it shares with feminist research. However, critical realism rejects the notion that all descriptions or explanations are equally valid. While embracing 'epistemic relativism'—acknowledging that beliefs are context-dependent, temporary, and fallible—critical realists reject 'judgmental relativism,' which denies the existence of rational criteria for evaluating competing beliefs and supports the evaluation and comparison of theories based on their explanatory merits (Sayer, 2000). If all versions of events were considered equally valid, progress in knowledge would be impossible—a critical issue for research focused on policy development, as in my study. Social norms, structural positions, and unintended consequences often shape outcomes, yet participants may not always fully recognize or articulate these influences. For example, men may interpret their violent actions as purely personal choices, failing to acknowledge the role of gender norms in shaping their behaviour.

The tension between epistemic and judgmental relativism is particularly evident between feminist research principles and critical realism. For example, feminist research prioritises participants' knowledge, emphasising marginalised voices, mainly those of women, who are recognised as experts on their own experiences (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022), while critical realism emphasises that some accounts are more reliable or explanatory than others (Parr, 2015). Overemphasising marginalised voices risks diminishing the researcher's role, perspectives, and interpretive authority (Parr, 2015). For example, during fieldwork, I created bonds with the practitioners; some expected me to advocate for their rights (Parker-Jenkins,

2018). Though deeply engaged with the staff experiences and perspectives, a cornerstone of qualitative research, I ensured my voice was not lost. Practitioners provided interpretations and verified my findings, but I determined which perspectives to include in the analysis. Practitioners were not involved in drafting the findings, reaffirming my critical role as a researcher in interpreting and synthesising data.

4.3 Research design and questions

This research is grounded in a qualitative case study design enriched by ethnographic elements (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative methodology enables an interpretive approach to making sense of and assigning meaning to data. It is particularly suited to exploring social phenomena through the meanings participants assign to their behaviours, interactions, and actions. Rather than simply reporting what was said, the role of the qualitative researcher involves interpreting, distilling, and reorganising data into coherent insights, illuminating both the theoretical and practical implications of the findings (Thompson, 2022).

Case study research facilitates an in-depth examination of a particular phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2018). Such a phenomenon might be a social system, organisation, programme, or group of individuals (Yin, 2018), and is investigated with the aim of understanding it from the participant's viewpoint (Harrison et al., 2017). Because case study research seeks a holistic and detailed understanding of a case's specific dynamics (Creswell, 2013; Flick & Flick, 2022), it typically employs multiple methods of data collection. In this PhD research, semi-structured interviews and participant observation were conducted over an extended period, alongside the analysis of relevant documents (for example, the programme's Technical Orientations) and engagement with a variety of stakeholders (Creswell, 2013).

As the research unfolded, the research questions were progressively refined (Swanborn, 2010). This iterative process culminated in a collaborative review of preliminary findings with the DVPP practitioners. While this step helped ensure accuracy and clarity, it also had limitations, as discussed in Section 4.2. Throughout the study, different qualitative methods informed one another, generating a layered understanding of the phenomenon and revealing diverse perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

Although not ethnographic in the conventional sense of extended fieldwork undertaken by scholars such as Mead or Malinowski, ethnographic principles were crucial in shaping the research process. Ethnographic research is distinctive in that it seeks knowledge through long-term engagement, relationship-building, and immersion in the everyday lives of participants (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The time researchers spend in the field matters, as it allows a different level of depth and relational understanding (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). While my fieldwork lasted six months, during which I was on-site approximately twice a week for over six hours each time, this still represented a relatively short duration. I inevitably missed elements of practitioners' day-to-day working lives, including meetings with the regional manager and their monthly meeting coordination with Women's Centres.

Nonetheless, the relationships developed during fieldwork were foundational. They shaped not only the interview process and its emergent style but also how I interpreted what was said and what was left unsaid in interviews and observations. As Hesse-Biber (2014) points out, this interpretive depth is a defining feature of ethnographic inquiry. The relationships established during fieldwork allowed me to contextualise other forms of data, such as interviews or documents, within the everyday realities and constraints practitioners faced. These relationships enabled me to make sense of aspects that were not immediately visible, such as the significance of working conditions, which were not always explicitly discussed in interviews but emerged through field notes, casual conversations, and observations.

Ethnographic research relies heavily on the researcher's embodied presence, using the self as a research tool (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Through participation and observation, researchers can gain insights into lived realities that are not accessible through detached methods. In my case, I did not initially anticipate the extent to which structural and institutional working conditions influenced practitioners' well-being and their capacity to support programme participants. The significance of these conditions became clearer over time, particularly during analysis and writing, as they revealed their entanglement with broader processes of national policy design and implementation.

Traditional ethnography has typically relied on prolonged, face-to-face engagement to gain and sustain access to communities, often requiring researchers to demonstrate credibility, respectability, and trustworthiness (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). These qualities remain central to

ethnographic practice, which has historically been shaped by the legacy of researchers from the global north studying the global South. As Lagunas (2024) notes, ethnography evolved within colonial frameworks and continues to carry traces of these power dynamics. My position in the field was shaped by a complex negotiation of insider and outsider roles. Being born and raised in Iquique allowed me to draw on longstanding personal and professional networks, which facilitated access and supported trust-building. My local embeddedness meant I could remain in the field for an extended period without the costs that typically limit researchers' time on-site. Practitioners frequently noted that this was the first time a researcher had been physically present for what they considered a prolonged period. This, in turn, contributed to deeper rapport and more candid insights than might have otherwise been accessible. At the same time, this position unsettled rigid insider/outsider binaries, as shared cultural background did not automatically translate into a fully shared experience. As Song and Parker (1995) argue, these binaries can obscure the heterogeneity that exists within social groups; my position required navigating both familiarity and difference throughout the research process.

Ethnographic studies can serve as valuable tools for comparison, illuminating both the distinctive features of particular groups and the common threads that link them (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In this case study, I paid close attention to the specific context of the DVPP, also noting the similarities it shared with other frontline services. For instance, the working conditions of the DVPP staff echoed those of practitioners at the Women's Centre, revealing broader structural patterns that affect professionals across different sites of intervention.

The table below summarises the three core research questions and the corresponding qualitative methods and data sources used to address them.

Table 2. Research questions and methods

Research questions	Methods
How do men understand their use of IPV?	24 Session Observations 7 Semi-structured interviews with men

How does the DVPP facilitate change in men who have used IPV?	24 Session Observations 7 Semi-structured interviews with men 2 Semi-structured interviews with key informants
How does the national public policy in Chile shape the local implementation of a Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs (DVPP)?	5 Semi-structured interviews with the Women's Centre practitioners 9 Semi-structured interviews with the DVPP staff 2 Semi-structured interviews with key informants

4.3.1 The process of partnership with a state agency and choosing the case study

I chose a DVPP for several reasons. First and foremost, it is an ideal setting for examining change in men who have used violence, as it is part of the only national-scale initiative working with this population. Additionally, the programme offered a unique opportunity to engage with this group, which is notoriously difficult to access (Di Marco & Santi, 2024).

Several factors influenced my decision to select the DVPP. As previously noted, I was born and raised in the nearest city where the DVPP operates. However, the decision was not solely based on proximity. My networks played a crucial role in overcoming initial challenges and facilitating access to the state-run program. To carry out the research, it was necessary to partner with the state agency responsible for the DVPP and the women's support services. In my experience, state agencies in Chile present significant challenges in terms of access, and I am aware of other researchers who have struggled to establish contact in various regions. These challenges are not unique to my study, as similar difficulties have been documented in research conducted in other Latin American countries (Marco & Santi, 2024). While there is a consensus that convenience sampling is often considered the least acceptable approach, this strategy has proven particularly useful in research focused on engaging hard-to-reach

communities (Etikan et al., 2016). All of the reasons outlined above present the DVPP located in the northern city as more accessible than other centres in Chile.

Given the highly hierarchical nature of state institutions in Chile, I sought permission from authorities in Santiago to access the site (Appendix I). My local contacts facilitated this process, who helped arrange online meetings, some of which included my supervisors. Despite the language differences, it was important to showcase their expertise and support. In these initial meetings, it was crucial to present my research objectives and ensure they aligned with and were valuable to the institution's work. Equally important was the commitment to provide meaningful feedback to the institution, offering useful insights that could inform their practice, including presentations, an executive summary, and a shared link to the full research for all relevant stakeholders. Ethical considerations were thoroughly discussed, including the types of activities and stakeholders I intended to invite to participate, all of which were outlined in a formal agreement that I later sent to all of the parties involved (Appendix II), including the City Council. This implementing institution was not involved in the initial meetings but was informed adequately through the DVPP staff.

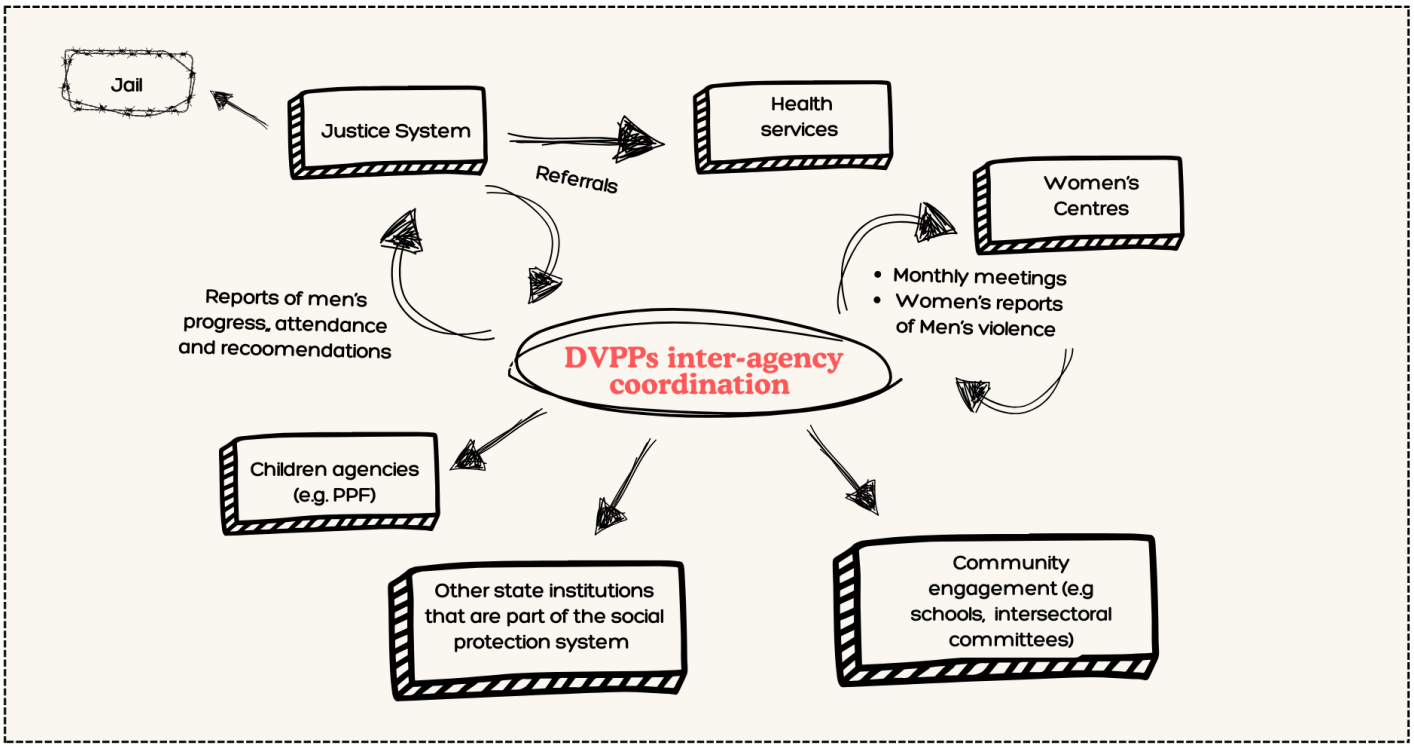
4.3.2 Case study overview: A domestic violence perpetrator programme in a northern region

This section examines the Chilean DVPP under study, detailing its theoretical foundations, structure, institutional coordination, and key components. The analysis draws on two institutional documents: the Technical Orientations (2023) and the Group Intervention Tools (2020). It also explores the demographics of programme participants and the specific characteristics of the programme's regional context.

The Duluth model informs the framework for addressing violence against women in Chile, with the DVPP being a part of this framework: 'In general, collaboration between the various local state agencies is essential for a coordinated and comprehensive response to violence, but in the DVPP model, it is a requirement' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 12). Although this influence is not explicitly stated in the Technical Orientations, several elements of the Duluth men's programme are evident. For example, the DVPP under examination integrates the Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel into the intervention, highlighting the

intentional nature of IPV and the importance of perpetrator accountability. Its strongest resemblance to the Duluth model is its emphasis on institutional coordination. The programme is designed to 'coordinate with other institutions, aiming to foster a comprehensive community response through inter-institutional and inter-sectoral collaboration' (p. 54). According to the programme's Technical Orientations (2023), coordination primarily occurs with the justice sector and the private and public health Sectors. It includes adopting written agreements, guidelines, and procedures that outline the necessary actions for handling referrals, providing care, and following up on measures in relevant cases where coordination is required. Coordination also takes place between the programmes run by the state agency I partnered with, particularly the Women's Centres, a programme that gathers women's reports of violence, which are then shared with the DVPP in their monthly meetings. Whilst not exhaustive, the next figure (4) highlights the key actors identified through the Technical Orientations (2023) and fieldwork.

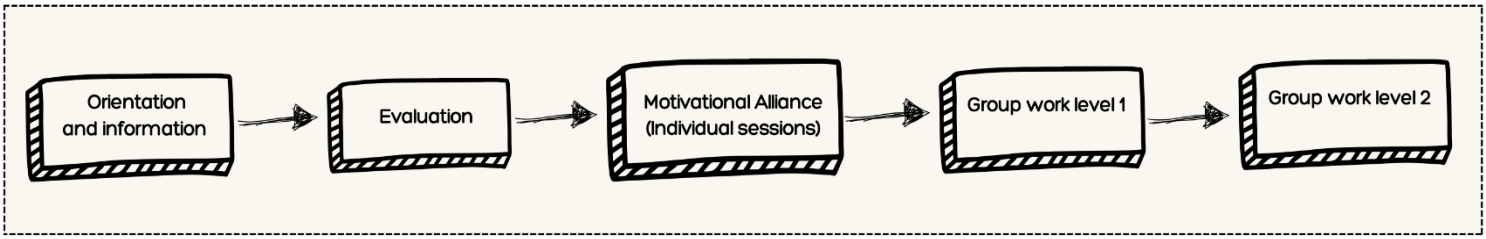
Figure 4. DVPP Inter-agency coordination



The target audience consists of men aged 18 and older who have committed violence against their partner or ex-partner. Although according to the technical orientations, a minimum level of accountability is required for entry, this criterion is applied more flexibly in practice (Fieldwork notes). Most of the men on the DVPP are court-referred. Out of the total men on the DVPP in 2023 (N: 125), 71% were referred through the family courts, 15% through the Criminal Courts, 8% self-referred, and 6% were referred through other institutions. In family courts (the most commonly referred route for perpetrators of IPV), psychological violence is the most frequently reported form of violence, and legal complaints and police reports describe it as involving insults and humiliations that cause psychological distress to the victims (Casas & Vargas, 2011). In the study by Casas and Vargas (2011), women's accounts in police reports and legal complaints reveal the enforcement of gendered expectations and norms. These manifest as demands and profound devaluation of women's worth, often based on perceived failures to meet these imposed standards.

The programme is based on the Transtheoretical Model of Change of Prochaska and Diclemente (1984) as described in Chapter 3, which views change as a gradual process rather than a single event. It emphasises that individuals progress through the stages of change at their own pace, sometimes experiencing setbacks and revisiting earlier stages. The technical orientations provide the main guidelines for the intervention, with some components, particularly the structure and activities, expected to be applied flexibly, which aligns with the TMC: 'Individuals' processes are more important than the session structure, and the goals of the phases and sessions are more important than the activities and tools' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 16). Although staff have made adjustments to the programme over time, the team often suggest that it remains relatively standardised and is not as individualised as the technical orientations suggest (Practitioners' interviews and Fieldwork notes).

Figure 5. Structure of the Programme



In terms of the structure, the programme includes both individual and group sessions (see figure 5). The orientation and information phase is aimed at all individuals who wish to learn about violence against women and related issues. If a victim survivor seeks consultation at the DVPP, she will be referred to the Women's Centre (Technical Orientations, 2023).

In the evaluation phase, the goal is to determine the suitability of men for the programme by assessing their personality traits, individual context, and, most importantly, their violence and potential risks to victim-survivors' safety. The women's report, gathered by the Women's Centre and shared with the DVPP, is crucial for this assessment. This report should provide detailed information about the men's violence, including its characteristics, frequency, and severity (Technical Orientations, 2023).

According to the TO, the Motivational Alliance consists of 4 individual sessions conducted weekly. In practice, though, practitioners typically conduct seven individual sessions over approximately seven weeks. This phase aims to establish a bond between the men and practitioners, setting the rules, informing them about the goals and model of the intervention, and preparing them for the group workshops (Practitioner, Interview). To achieve these goals, the Technical Orientation recommends incorporating elements of motivational interviewing, a client-centred approach designed to enhance individuals' engagement with the programme and strengthen their motivation for change by emphasising their responsibility in the process. This approach begins with the establishment of rapport—the relational connection between practitioner and participant—which forms the foundation for effective communication and trust-building (Pinto e Silva et al., 2023).

Background information provided by both the men and their partners or ex-partners is considered, requiring a contrasting report from the woman obtained through state partner institutions, notably the Women's Centre (which in this research will be referred to as women’s support services) and court documents.

Group sessions last 27 weeks and are divided into two levels: Level 1 and Level 2. After completing the individual sessions, participants move on to Level 1 group sessions. Upon finishing Level 1, they progress to Level 2.

The programme is defined as a specialised gendered psychosocial intervention based on a combination of psychotherapy and socio-educational approaches: 'it is a psychosocial-educational intervention that includes elements of socio-education and psychotherapy, specialised in gender-based violence for men who perpetrate intimate partner violence or violence against ex-partners' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 5).

It is a gender intervention because it recognises that IPV is rooted in gender-asymmetrical dynamics between men and women and is fundamentally about power and control. However, these ideas have not been explored in depth in the technical orientations. They are briefly mentioned in the following sentence: '(The model) understands male violence as a pattern of behaviours with the aim (conscious or unconscious) of maintaining a relational asymmetry based on control and power' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 59). The TO asserts that the unequal power dynamics between men and women are socially constructed and manifest in various forms of violence perpetrated by men against their (ex) partners. This understanding forms the basis of the programme's gendered approach: 'It should be noted that the gender approach analyses power relations that determine, for example, the privilege of one gender's use of power, socially accepted as hegemonic, over another placed in a position of obedience and submission. This is not based on physical characteristics centred on biological sex, but on the characteristics of how this power is exercised, which translates into violence towards a partner or ex-partner' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 62).

Given that men's use of violence is socially 'learnt' and 'normalised', it can also be 'unlearnt' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 5). These ideas form the foundation of the socio-educational component of the intervention, which is implemented in practice through group workshops. The process of unlearning occurs when men question their own beliefs and gender norms through a reflexive process. During this process, men are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, reflect on their behaviour, recognise the harm caused to their partners, and make a deliberate decision not to use violence: 'This specialised support (...) encourages questioning their beliefs and ways of constructing hegemonic masculinity' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 57). The DVPP's annex states: 'The group methodology provides an ideal setting for men to share their life stories, beliefs, fears, and concerns while also engaging in the deconstruction of violence. Through group interventions, the likelihood increases that

perpetrators will recognise their problematic thoughts and behaviours, with the support and insight of other group members' (Annex: Group Intervention Tools, 2020, p. 4).

Emotional management (EM) is a crucial element of this reflective work. EM aims to help men 'connect with their own emotions and experiences, as well as those of others' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 73). It involves teaching men skills to regulate their emotional expressions more effectively, starting with the gradual identification of their emotions. Recognising and managing negative emotions is crucial to inhibiting the 'impulse' to use violence (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 20).

EM is integral to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and forms a significant part of the psychotherapeutic component of the intervention. The use of CBT is not explicitly acknowledged in the Technical Orientations. However, it is evident in the vocabulary used in the TO and in the data collected from practitioner interviews and session observations. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) focuses on identifying and changing 'distorted' thought patterns (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 68), which in turn helps manage emotional responses. In this context, gender norms are considered the distorted beliefs that underpin IPV: 'The numerous cognitive biases related to gender roles and the legitimisation of violence can predict IPV' (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 68). The goal, especially during group workshops, is for men to criticise the dominant way of being a man (underpinned by traditional gender norms for men), so they can eventually reject and distance themselves from it: '[Practitioners should] give importance to analysing beliefs, and understanding what the beliefs are about what a man should be according to the Traditional Hegemonic Masculine Model. This includes linking intimidation with authority, requesting services, and maintaining privilege through power, strength, violence, and other means, as well as identifying the spaces where intimidation was learned, such as games and sports. The aim is (for men) to critique, dissociate from, and distance themselves from the hegemonic masculine model, ultimately generating a rejection of it' (Annexe: Group Intervention Tools, 2020, p. 4). Chapter 6 will reveal the complexities of change for men and how, surprisingly, it is intricately linked to gender norms in various ways.

In practice, likely due to the limited support available to practitioners (which will be explored in Chapter 7), they often rely on their own ideas and understandings of IPV, combining

elements of the Technical Orientations. Instead of the power and control theory, the primary framework they use to explain IPV dynamics is the cycle of violence. Considering the importance of this theory, Chapter 5 will analyse its implications for men's understanding of their use of violence against their (ex) partners.

4.4 Research methods

This section outlines the two primary research methods employed in the study: fieldwork observations and semi-structured interviews. The table below (Table 3) provides a comprehensive overview of this, detailing the number of participants, time spent on-site, interview duration, and transcription volume for each method.

Table 3. Summary of data collection by research method

Methods	**Number of participants**	**Number of days spent on site/N° of interviews conducted**	**Number of hours**	**Number of pages transcribed**
Observations	36 men for the session observations	64 days	265 hours on site, (including 24 observations of the sessions)	403 (88 pages of fieldwork journal,315 pages of the sessions observed)
Interviews with DVPP staff	5	9	12.25	244
Interviews with	5	5	6	138

Women's Centre staff				
Interviews with Key informants	2	2	3	36
Interviews with Men	7	7	8	143
Total	55	23	28.5	964
		64 days of fieldwork on site	265 hours on site	

The data collection methods selected were deemed most appropriate for addressing the research questions. The observation method was considered particularly suitable for addressing the research question of how change occurs for some men and how the programme facilitates that process, as it is generally recommended for studying behaviours, subject's characteristics and interactions as they unfold (in this case, during the group workshops sessions) (Mwita, 2022). Furthermore, observations are appropriate when the researcher intends to unpack the links and associations between context and behaviours (Tunison et al., 2023): in this case, how the broader national framework of social policy in Chile impacts DVPP practitioners' practice and delivery. One of the limitations of observations is that what is observed is inherently influenced by the researcher's perspective. To ensure an accurate interpretation, engaging in critical reflection is recommended. I achieved this through the fieldwork journal, the ongoing presentations of the research findings to the DVPP staff, and the discussions and reflections shared with practitioners during my time on-site.

Interviews are typically conducted to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences than methods with closed questions allow (Mwita, 2022). In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility and the greater agency they provide to participants

in the interview process. This method enabled me to ask targeted questions based on the literature and prior knowledge while allowing participants to shape the direction and scope of the conversation (Westmarland & Bows, 2019). The method was selected not only to reduce the researcher's control over the flow of the study but also because its flexibility fosters the discovery of new insights and perspectives that were not initially anticipated. This uncertainty helped maintain openness to new ideas and unexpected findings.

4.5 Fieldwork observations

According to Preissle et al. (2003), fieldwork involves studying a specific aspect of human behaviour within its natural, everyday environment. The researcher immerses in the social environment under study, the field, to observe human interactions within that specific context.

The fieldwork lasted approximately six months, from late March 2023 to September 2023. I spent two to three days per week on-site at the DVPP facilities, typically for three to six hours. My fieldwork activities on site included reading the DVPP Technical Orientations (2023) to understand programme delivery and inter-agency coordination, interviewing men attending the DVPP and practitioners, attending weekly group sessions (Levels 1 and 2), and participating in staff meetings to discuss cases and practice-related issues. Additionally, I engaged in more informal interactions with the DVPP staff, such as sharing lunch, celebrating birthdays, and discussing with practitioners the nuances of their work with men, personal well-being, family concerns, and working conditions. These moments provided valuable insight into the daily realities of those involved in the programme.

I also interviewed women's support service practitioners at their facilities during this time. Although I did not spend time with them during their everyday activities, conducting the interviews at their working offices provided valuable insight into their working conditions and the available infrastructure. Notably, one of the houses where one of the centres operated was built over a sinkhole with visibly cracked walls. Although they were awaiting relocation, practitioners expressed concerns about the potential risks this posed to service users and themselves, fearing for their safety.

Initially, I planned to spend only two days a week at the DVPP facility. However, I quickly realised that spending more time on-site allowed me to ask questions naturally and unobtrusively. I also needed additional time to understand their work and become familiar with their daily activities, as I had no prior experience in the field.

The intensity of my initial fieldwork was partly shaped by the constraints imposed by the funding institution, which limited the study's duration. Additionally, sharing the same office with the practitioners during the first few months made it feasible to be on-site more frequently.

During the first four weeks of intense fieldwork, I visited the facility 3 to 5 days a week for shorter but exhausting visits. After this period, I adjusted my schedule to 2 to 3 days per week, extending the duration of each visit to better align with practitioners' regular working hours.

Being on-site was crucial to getting to know each other and grasping in depth the complexities of their work (two things that I believe are linked): documenting their concerns, daily struggles, expectations and hopes. Being on-site shaped my understanding of the challenges facilitators faced in their roles and how these challenges, at times unintentionally, influenced their practice. To document these, I kept a fieldwork journal in Word, organising it by date and noting the hours spent on-site each day. I frequently took notes during fieldwork, striving to document my observations immediately after interactions with practitioners. I reported 88 pages of fieldwork notes, comprising approximately 52,600 words, and spent approximately 265 hours on site. The conversations I had with practitioners during their working hours and in interviews not only deepened my understanding but also provided them with valuable opportunities for reflection on their practice—something they frequently acknowledged and appreciated.

Although some of the practitioners' challenges and working conditions were touched upon during the semi-structured interviews, I realised that they did not fully capture the complexity and nuance of the facilitators' experiences—a depth that the fieldwork ultimately revealed. However, the observations played a crucial role in enhancing the interviews in two significant ways. First, they prompted me to restructure and refine the questions for the semi-structured

interviews with the practitioners. Second, they allowed me to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the topics, experiences, and issues raised during the interviews.

A central element of my fieldwork involved observing the group workshop sessions, which were structured across two distinct levels: first and second. In total, I observed 24 sessions, with 36 service users participating in the observations. Each session typically lasted around 1.5 hours. In total, I documented 315 pages of observed sessions. Initially, I planned to observe only the first level, and once the group completed it, I would move on to the second level to gauge the service users' progress. However, due to time constraints and based on the practitioner's recommendation, considering high attrition rates and the fact that, in practice, few service users complete the programme on time, I observed both levels simultaneously, each with different service users.

During arrangement meetings with the state agency, I was informed that the programme was transitioning to in-person sessions. At the start of my fieldwork, both first- and second-level group workshops were conducted online. I observed five online sessions and nine in-person sessions of the first-level group. Simultaneously, I observed nine online sessions of the second-level group. While the second-level group later shifted to in-person sessions, I chose not to observe them, as only two service users regularly attended.

For most of the sessions, I did not actively participate. I shared my opinion in two sessions and participated in role-play activities in two others. I documented my observations through written notes using a specifically designed observation template. I adjusted the template during the first few sessions. Initially, the template included timestamps for every activity, but this disrupted the flow of observing and engaging with the dynamics, interactions and physical gestures. I realised that what was being said and how it was expressed, like a screenplay, was more important than the time spent on each activity, and that I needed to make a choice.

During the online sessions, I kept my microphone and camera off. As a fast typist, I could capture the discussions almost word-for-word. I also kept my microphone and camera off due to occasional internet connectivity issues and the limited bandwidth on my phone at times. For the in-person sessions, I chose to sit at the back of the room to minimise disruption. I took notes in a notebook to avoid disturbing the group with the sound of my laptop keyboard. Since

I cannot write as quickly as I type, I quickly developed the skill of capturing key ideas and concepts during sessions. To retain essential information without interruption, I concentrated on noting the main points during the session and elaborated on them in my notes afterwards. This approach allowed me to document what was happening without losing the flow of the session.

4.5.1 Fieldwork recruitment and ethical considerations

On my first day at the DVPP facility, I formally introduced myself to the practitioners, the secretary, and the cleaning staff. We organised a meeting that same day, during which I explained the details of my research, outlined my planned activities, and invited them to participate. I provided them with printed copies of the participant information sheet for the observations (Appendix III) and interviews (Appendix IV), translated into Spanish, and read it aloud while carefully explaining both documents. They agreed to participate in both. To ensure they had sufficient time to review the consent form carefully, I provided printed copies of the consent form for the observation component in advance, which they signed a few days later (Appendix V). To further support this, I read the consent form aloud and clarified any points as needed. My primary concern was making sure they were aware that I intended to document our interactions and conversations within their work environment. I emphasised that they could request specific details not be recorded, and I would honour those requests by excluding them from the study. In the initial stages of fieldwork, some practitioners exercised this option, asking me not to document specific conversations. However, as time passed, such requests became less frequent. Eventually, they stopped altogether, likely due to growing familiarity with my presence and a sense of trust that had developed over time. Still, I purposefully did not take notes about decisions, comments or circumstances that could betray their trust (Shokooh, 2021). I also wanted to ensure they were fully informed that, in the event of any potential harm, I would consult with my supervisors to determine appropriate actions. However, I emphasised that they will be fully aware of any steps I plan to take. No situations involving potential harm arose during my fieldwork, so no further action was necessary.

The recruitment of men was coordinated with the practitioners. Since all sessions were initially held online, men were only required to attend in person for the enrolment and by the

end of the programme, for a closure session with the practitioner, so I did not have face-to-face interactions with the men attending the online sessions. Due to these circumstances, practitioners suggested converting the consent form into an online version. For ethical reasons, I did not contact them directly to safeguard the service users and my safety. Instead, the staff attached the participant information sheet (Appendix VI) and the link to the online consent form (Appendix VII), created through my Durham University Microsoft Forms account, to the weekly email sent to service users with the session link. This process was consistently applied to both levels of the group workshops.

As new men joined the programme on an ongoing basis, I regularly introduced my research and requested their consent to participate at the beginning of both online and in-person sessions. In the case of the online group workshops, I proceeded to share the participant information sheet from my screen, provided a detailed explanation, demonstrated how to open the link and sign the consent form, read it aloud point by point, and took extra time to clarify sections that needed further elaboration. The practitioner and I alternated in creating space for questions about the study, ensuring service users could address any concerns. I clarified that all records were fully anonymised and kept confidential, with no personal names documented. I also assured them that my observations would not affect their progress and would not be used to evaluate their performance in the programme. If they wanted to participate in the study, they were reminded to complete the consent form sent via email. If they did not want to participate in the study, they were reminded that they would not be excluded from the intervention or their views recorded. I also explained that if they wished to withdraw after giving their consent, they could, but should inform me within two weeks, given that I would not be able to identify and remove their data from the observations after that period due to anonymisation. I reassured them that their data would be securely stored on a password-protected laptop and the University servers.

While all service users attending online verbally agreed to participate in my research, some did not sign the consent form. The practitioner had anticipated this issue, explaining that many service users accessed the sessions using their cell phones, some while at work, which often made opening, reading documents and filling out forms challenging during the sessions. Additionally, technological skills were limited among participants; I witnessed some struggling

to navigate Google Meet (the platform used for the sessions), and others reported issues with Microsoft Forms. Furthermore, and more importantly, practitioners noted that many service users did not complete the homework tasks assigned during sessions. As a result, they anticipated that some service users might not be interested in filling out forms. In other cases, consent was given verbally, but participants later expressed concerns about writing their names on the online form. Interestingly, for the in-person sessions, where consent is paper-based, users did not express the same concerns, highlighting the importance of face-to-face interactions in building trust. During the in-person observations, however, two service users declined to participate in the study; therefore, their interventions were not included during the observations. Additionally, knowing that men often feel ashamed during sessions on sexual violence, the practitioner asked whether they preferred me not to be present for that discussion, and the men agreed. I respected their decision.I consulted with my supervisors and the practitioner to address this issue. I decided to digitally record verbal consent using a portable voice recording device during the sessions (Appendix VIII), including the service users who had already given written consent, to ensure their inclusion in the group. The ethics committee approved this adjustment and amendments to the ethics form.

4.6 Semi-structured interviews with the DVPP Staff

All interviews were conducted in person between April and September 2023, lasting approximately one and a half hours. They took place in a private office, separate from the rest of the staff, and were carried out with a balance of professionalism and approachability.

The staff interviews were the first ones I conducted during fieldwork, but I chose not to start them immediately. I decided to wait until I had gathered enough information about the centre to assess whether my questions could be effectively addressed during my time there. This approach allowed me to become more familiar with their work, which was deemed necessary given my lack of prior experience in the field. The interview format involved asking participants primary questions, with additional prompts and follow-up questions introduced as needed. These questions were guided by a topic outline, which was adjusted throughout the interviews—some questions were added, reworded, or removed—to ensure they remained relevant to each participant and allowed for deeper exploration of specific issues.

Additionally, minor revisions to the wording and structure of the topic guide were made over the course of the study, based on insights gained from previous interviews.

The interview guide was divided into 3 sections (Appendix XV). The first part revolved around finding out more about the interviewee's personal and professional experience, both in terms of their current and previous involvement in the field of domestic violence and what led them to work in the DVPP in the first place. The second section of the interviews delved into the practitioner's understanding of IPV, its aetiology and dynamics and the last section was about staff's views on change: what does change mean for them, the strategies they use to achieve change, challenges they face both with the work with men and other organisations, and what, in their views, it takes to achieve change in men and the limitations of the programme in that regard. As these topics were extensive, they were divided into two interviews, prioritising the section of change in the second interview. For the second interview, I took time to transcribe and listen to the first interview to clarify a few aspects and delve deeper into others before starting with the last section about change.

Each interview was digitally recorded using a portable voice recording device, and they were fully transcribed into Microsoft Word in the following months. Interviews were held in Spanish, as was the transcription. As much as possible, all explicit verbal expressions from each interview were transcribed, including filler words such as 'you know', 'like', and 'um', as well as Chilean slang to help ensure that each transcription fully and accurately captured how the interviewees articulated themselves. However, descriptions of non-verbal expressions, such as physical gestures, were generally not included, as this level of detail was not deemed necessary for a thematic analysis of the interviews.

4.6.1 Sampling and recruitment

Once in Chile in March 2023, the state agency referred me to the DVPP staff. From then on, I had exclusive contact with the team. I did sporadic check-ins to inform the regional manager about the fieldwork arrangements that the staff and I agreed upon.

I conducted two interviews with each of the DVPP practitioners, except for one coordinator who went on leave shortly after my arrival. Due to the extensive work involved in preparing for the incoming coordinator, we mutually agreed to reduce the planned interviews with this

coordinator from two to one. In total, I interviewed two coordinators and three practitioners, conducting nine semi-structured interviews with DVPP staff members, including both psychologists and social workers.

A purposive sampling approach was adopted. For Abrams (2001), purposive sampling involves the researcher deliberately selecting participants based on their informed judgment about who can offer the most relevant insights into the phenomenon being studied. All centre practitioners were invited to participate in the research to include the broadest range of perspectives possible (Staller, 2021).

4.6.2 Ethical considerations

While the state agency officially approved the activities planned in my research, including the interviews with the DVPP staff, I always reminded them that their participation was voluntary, as recruitment through agencies may bring confidentiality issues and pressure to participate (Abrams, 2001). As mentioned in section 4.6.2, I provided each participant with a printed copy of the participant information sheet translated into Spanish (Appendix IV), which I read aloud and explained in detail in the first meeting. I also encouraged the staff to ask any questions they might have throughout my fieldwork. Before each interview, I read the consent form script (Appendix IX) out loud and explained it point by point. Their consent was audio recorded in a separate file.

Because this strand of the research involved speaking to staff already working in a DVPP, I must acknowledge that I was initially not expecting a great degree of harm and stress as a result of their work with men. To some extent, the staff was accustomed to dealing with this population, something they also reinforced during fieldwork. Despite this, and as part of the consent agreement, the staff was notified that they could stop the recording, end the interview, skip any questions they did not want to answer and withdraw from the study up to two weeks after the interview, as they were fully anonymised during transcription, and thus identifying their recording may not have been possible after its transcription. However, this did not occur with any of the interviewees.

Although physical gestures were not written down for analysis purposes, attention to participants' physical gestures of discomfort was necessary during the interviews, especially

when discussing sensitive topics such as their working conditions, as participants may have felt uncomfortable, mainly due to concerns about confidentiality. One of the most significant ethical issues was anonymity and privacy, given the unique roles occupied by many of the interviewees in the field, which could make it easy to identify them even from anonymised comments. This was a particular concern for the staff. This could be problematic for the participants when expressing critical remarks about the organisations they worked with or details about their personal lives. For the sake of confidentiality, all the staff's roles were identified under the umbrella term 'DVPP practitioner', making distinctions when needed between males and females. Efforts were made to ensure that information that could identify participants was removed or concealed. The audio recordings of the interviews were securely stored on a password-protected computer and folder and on the Durham University server. They were deleted after transcription. All interviewees were given pseudonyms, and any quotations from the interviews included in this thesis have been fully anonymised. I have also had to minimise the amount of information provided about the participants and their experiences for the same reasons. Despite the efforts, I noticed that the interviews did not fully capture the extent of the practitioners' experiences, especially regarding their working conditions. This might be attributed to their concerns about confidentiality and the limitations of this method.

The interviewees were informed that their confidentiality could not be entirely guaranteed and that, as such, a practice of 'limited confidentiality' was applied in the case the staff discloses information that puts them or anyone else at serious or imminent risk or if the researcher sees or becomes aware of something that could cause serious harm to themselves or others. If this occurs, the researcher must report the matter to their supervisors to discuss possible actions, but I reassured them that any actions taken would be informed in advance. The interviews did not reveal any information that could cause harm. Therefore, no actions were taken in this regard.

At the end of each interview, the participants were debriefed and encouraged to contact the researcher if they wished to discuss any aspect of the project further, and informed that they would be kept updated about its progress. I have maintained – and continue to – contact with the staff throughout the research process, presenting preliminary results at different stages.

This is important because my goal is to avoid exploiting participants for their knowledge. Instead, I aim to contribute to the ongoing development of their work while ensuring that the experiences and challenges discussed in Chapter 7 are validated by the individuals themselves, although with limitations as described in section 4.2.

4.7 Semi-structured interviews with men on the programme

All interviews with the men took place in person at the centre's facility and lasted between one hour and one and a half hours. The interview format consisted of central questions, with additional prompts and follow-up questions to encourage further discussion.

The interview guide was divided into three sections (Appendix XVI). The first focused on introductory questions designed to get to know the participants and help them feel more comfortable. This created a more relaxed atmosphere for the conversation, given that the interviews were conducted in a formal manner. After the introduction, men were asked about the circumstances that led them into the programme, and their initial thoughts and perceptions about it were discussed. The second section examined the programme's impact on men's lives and relationships with their ex or current partners, conflict-solving strategies, perceived changes, and the reasons behind their use of violence. The third section discussed their change process, motivations, facilitators, and personal expectations.

Each interview was digitally recorded using a portable voice recording device and fully transcribed into Microsoft Word in the following months. The interviews and their transcriptions were conducted and written in Spanish. After each interview, I took notes in the fieldwork journal to reflect on men's body language and my overall impressions and emotions, which I then used in the analysis.

4.7.1 Sample and recruitment

Seven men who had completed the programme were interviewed, with ages ranging from their late 20s to late 40s. Six of them were in a stable relationship, and one was single. As previously mentioned in section 4.6.2 (fieldwork recruitment), I also recruited men for the interviews during the group workshops. During these sessions, I introduced my research and invited them to participate in the interviews after they completed the programme. However, this method was not successful.

The practitioners played a vital role in the interview recruitment process, which took place in two ways. Towards the end of the program, practitioners called participants to schedule their final in-person session, during which they received their certificate of attendance. During these calls, the practitioners informed men about the opportunity to participate in an interview immediately after their session. Four men were recruited this way. Additionally, practitioners recruited participants through a WhatsApp group that included men from previous cohorts. Three men were recruited this way. In this case, men contacted me directly through the university email.

Table 4. Demographics of the men interviewed

Anonymised name	Age	Relationship status	Employment status	Country of origin	Highest level of education
CRH08	Late 30s	With partner	Employed	Chile	Secondary education complete
CRH09	Early 40s	Without partner	Employed	Chile	Primary education complete
CRH10	Early 30s	With partner	Employed	Chile	University Education complete
CRH19	Late 20s	With partner	Self-Employed	Chile	University education incomplete
CRH23	Mid 40s	With partner	Employed	Chile	Technical/professional education
CRH24	Early 30s	With partner	Employed	Chile	University Education complete
CRH05	Late 40s	With partner	Self-Employed	Chile	Secondary education complete

Although practitioners facilitated the recruitment process, two men explicitly declined to participate in the interview, and another who initially agreed to an online interview failed to show up and did not respond to subsequent contact attempts.

4.7.2 Ethical considerations

For the safety of the participants and me, practitioners handled the initial contact for interviews. Interviews were conducted on the programme site, and all the staff knew my whereabouts.

For the WhatsApp participants recruited who contacted me through the university e-mail, I sent the participant information sheet before the interview (Appendix X). However, for the ones recruited by phone call, given that I did not have direct contact to them, they were given a printed copy immediately before conducting the interview. The participant information sheet and the consent form (Appendix XI) were carefully explained before the interview, and their consent was audio-recorded separately. The men were informed about the limitations of confidentiality. They were notified that any disclosures indicating potential harm to themselves, or others would be reported to the programme staff.

I expected that participants might become distressed or emotional during the interviews, as they would be asked to discuss topics such as the violence they had committed, their journey of change, and their personal and professional relationships. A distress protocol for men was devised for men (Appendix XII). Participants were informed that they had the right to decline to answer any questions and could terminate the interview at any point. Furthermore, they were informed that they could withdraw their data up to two weeks following the interviews before the transcriptions were anonymised. Although a few participants became emotional and some visibly distressed, none interrupted, terminated the interview or withdrew from the study. As some men had limited time to participate in the interview, I ensured that the agreed duration was respected.

The audio recordings of the interviews were stored securely on a password-protected computer and folder, as well as on the Durham University server, and were deleted following transcription. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and all quotations included in this thesis have been fully anonymised.

4.8 Semi-structured interviews with the women's support services

The context in which the DVPP is implemented plays a crucial role in its outcomes, particularly in how well it integrates with other institutions within the inter-agency response to IPV (Gondolf, 2002). Building on this premise and recognising the central role of the women's support services in the DVPP's work, particularly given that women's reports are used to assess changes in men's use of violence against their (ex) partners, I also interviewed practitioners from these programmes.

The interviews took place in person at the centres' facilities between April and May 2023, in private offices separate from other staff. They lasted between one and one and a half hours and were recorded using a recording device.

The interviews with the practitioners were structured into three sections (Appendix XVII). The first focused on gathering insights into their professional and personal backgrounds, as well as their roles within the women's service, providing context for the pathways women follow in the programme. The second section explored their collaborative work with the implementing institution and the DVPP, examining the challenges they face, the practical aspects of coordination, the impact of the DVPP on their work, and the perceived benefits of working with the DVPP.

In the following months, interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word. The transcriptions included Chilean slang and filler words but did not include non-verbal expressions.

4.8.1 Sample and recruiting

There are three women's support centres in the region, each located in a different city. The recruitment was initially conducted by email, authorised by the local regional manager, who provided the contact information of each programme and the designated person in charge. In the email, I formally invited the centre to participate in the study and asked for a contact number to facilitate quicker and more personalised communication. The designated individual then contacted the staff. Given that the women's support centres typically have a higher demand for services than the DVPP, we arranged a meeting based on their schedules and availability.

A purposive sampling approach was adopted (Abrams, 2001; Staller, 2021). Thus, all women's services were invited to participate in the study, as it was essential to understand their territorial differences in the inter-agency coordination process. However, only two of the centres replied to the invitation. In total, five practitioners, including psychologists and social workers, were interviewed.

4.8.2 Ethical considerations

The same safeguarding protocols and data management procedures used for DVPP practitioners were also applied to the women's support services staff (see section 4.7.2). For the initial contact, I attached a digital copy of the participant information sheet (Appendix XIII) to the designated contact, inviting them to participate in the research, and requested their assistance with the staff recruitment. I then provided a printed copy of the participant information sheet on the day of the interview. I read it aloud to each participant, including the consent form script (Appendix XIV), and explained both in detail to ensure participants fully understood their involvement in the study. This was particularly important as I did not have direct access to the participants before the interviews, since the designated person handled the interview arrangements. I was also uncertain whether the participants had received the participant information sheet. As in the case of the DVPP practitioners, I carefully explained the limited confidentiality practice. Their consent audio was recorded using a portable voice recording device. The interviews did not uncover any information that posed a risk of harm to themselves or others, so no further action was required.

4.9 Semi-structured Interviews with key informants

I conducted key informant interviews between November 2023 and February 2024, following the research fieldwork in Chile. This timing was intentional for two reasons. First, I needed a deeper understanding of the data to formulate more targeted and insightful questions. Second, as most key informants are based in Santiago (approximately 1,400 km from Iquique), these interviews were always planned to be conducted online for practical reasons. I prioritised my limited time in Chile for in-person interviews.

The key informants' interviews followed a three-part structure, with additional questions tailored to each participant's area of expertise and follow-up questions incorporated as

needed based on their responses. Consequently, the interview guide was adapted throughout the process, with questions added or removed as needed. The first section broadly focused on participants' professional backgrounds and experience with DVPPs and IPV. The second section explored their perspectives on the concept of change, while the final section examined the facilitators and barriers to change in men who have used IPV. Additional questions addressed topics such as the relationship between masculinity and violence, as well as the implementation of DVPPs in Chile.

4.9.1 Sample and recruitment

I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants. As with the other participant groups in this study, purposive sampling was employed to identify individuals with relevant experience, in this case, key informants in the field of interventions with men who use IPV. Some initial participants (referred to as 'seeds') also facilitated snowball sampling by recommending other potential interviewees. Key informants were contacted either via LinkedIn or through their professional emails. In total, two key informants were interviewed, both of whom had extensive practical experience working with men who have used IPV in Chile. Overall, engaging this group proved challenging. Although some initially expressed willingness to participate, they stopped responding after a few exchanges, suggesting a loss of interest or competing commitments.

4.9.2 Ethical considerations

All interviews were conducted online through the University account on Teams; they were video recorded, stored on a laptop with a password, and on the university server, and deleted after transcription.

No formal distress protocol was established; however, participants were reminded that they could pause or terminate the interview at any time and were free to skip any questions they preferred not to answer. Given that the field of DVPP in Chile is relatively small, strict confidentiality measures were implemented in the case of key informants' interviews, ensuring that any personal information that could potentially identify them was removed and concealed.

4.10 Data analysis

The transcriptions of the interviews and fieldwork observations were then analysed through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021), using Maxqda, a computer software for qualitative analysis. Although this software was not available at Durham University, I had a full license of the software on my laptop. All the data collected was transcribed in Spanish, and only the quotes used in the findings were translated into English. In my case, one of the main challenges of translating the data into English was the time it required, as the process was long and demanding. Chilean Spanish contains many 'muletillas', filler words or phrases, that, while not easily translatable, help make speech more understandable in context. Additionally, Chileans often speak using sayings and idiomatic expressions, which rarely have direct equivalents in English. I frequently attempted to find UK expressions with similar meanings, but this proved to be a time-consuming and challenging task, particularly because I am not a native English speaker. It was often unclear whether the phrases I selected carried the same nuance or cultural resonance. In translating, I tried to preserve original words and slang wherever possible, then either provided the closest English equivalent or explained their meaning to the reader to maintain the integrity and context of the original speech.

These translation decisions were not just linguistic but interpretive, shaping how meaning was conveyed across languages and cultural contexts. In other words, I was attuned not just to what was said, but also to how and why, considering context, subtext (the underlying meaning), and cultural particularities. This attention to meaning and nuance also informed my approach to data analysis.

Reflexive thematic analysis is a 'particular way of doing TA', a method for finding qualitative patterns of meaning in relation to a research question across a piece of data (Joy et al., 2023, p. 155). It is likely the most commonly used form of qualitative data analysis. It can be flexibly utilised across various ontological, epistemological, and theoretical approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The RTA describes, organises, and aids in the interpretation of the research topic.

The analytical process used was a 'continuum' between inductive and deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 331). In other words, the coding process incorporated both a theory-driven

(deductive) approach and a data-driven (inductive) approach (Braun & Clarke, 2023). For example, initially, I was guided by the research questions outlined in the study. However, I then decided to build codes unrelated to the research questions, which proved particularly useful as it allowed me to revisit the initial research questions in light of the data collected. During the initial analysis of the practitioner interviews, it became evident that their experiences 'in-between' (as described in Chapter 7) were unique. Although this aspect was not anticipated in the initial research questions, the fieldwork notes and interviews were rich with descriptions, notes, and reflections on this topic. This prompted me to explore research on frontline workers in Chile, which shaped the themes and codes I later identified as significant within the data. However, I did not approach the data to develop themes that applied to a specific framework or theory. It is equally crucial to recognise that my perspective and prior experience working within various state agencies in the Chilean context inevitably shaped and informed the analysis.

The reflexive thematic analysis was implemented through a six-step procedure based upon the approach devised by Braun and Clarke (2006). While Braun and Clarke (2006) provided detailed guidelines for thematic analysis, their recent work (Braun & Clarke, 2021) highlights the importance of flexibility. The outlined steps are not meant to be rigidly followed; instead, they can overlap, and the analytical process evolves iteratively over time. In this section, I will illustrate how and why these steps overlapped based on my specific needs and the strategies employed throughout the process.

The initial stage of reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) involves becoming thoroughly acquainted with the data. I read the fieldwork observations several times and transcribed the interviews in Word, a process that served as an initial step toward data familiarisation. The transcription process was time-consuming, but it enabled a level of familiarity with the data to be established, which in turn assisted with the analysis. I also took notes and formulated questions about possible meanings during this process. Following transcription, I carefully read each interview transcript to deepen my understanding of the content as a whole and the context of each participant. I then re-read them while actively engaging with the material, identifying potential meanings and patterns, and making reflective notes.

After becoming familiar with the data and forming initial ideas about notable features within them, I proceeded to the second stage of analysis: generating preliminary codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This coding process involved systematically identifying sections of the data that seemed particularly significant or relevant into codes. I used both semantic and latent coding. At this stage, I used mostly the first ones, which are based on what is directly stated by participants. The second one goes beyond what is explicitly stated to examine underlying assumptions and meanings. During this stage, I began to write some of the findings. However, they had not yet come together as a cohesive story, as I was still exploring different ideas. While this was an important personal step, my supervisors noted that I needed to refine the analysis and focus/selecting the ideas to explore them in depth.

The third stage involved 'searching for themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). I examined the codes across multiple interviews and within individual interviews, seeking patterns and connections that could be grouped under common themes, aiming to identify overarching patterns in the data. For example: temporary contracts, variable income and entitlements were included under the theme practitioner's contractual conditions. It is important to note that themes were created in terms of its occurrence in the data, but this was not always the case. Some themes were created from a small portion of the data, and in those cases, my judgment as researcher was pivotal, which was based on previous literature review, but also on the interactions and notes I took (for example, physical gestures, the environment of the sessions and during the interviews). In other words, a theme can (and indeed was) created from a small but important portion of the data, rather than needing to be widespread or heavily emphasised by the participants.

Personally, the third stage also involved an initial process of story creation, as themes inherently tell a story. At this point, the story was still in its rudimentary phase, which was refined through multiple iterations. To support this, I organised the ideas into PowerPoint which I latter presented to my supervisors. This helped me to explore the potential connections between the ideas. My supervisors played a key role in helping me reflect on my personal process of developing ideas.Creating a PowerPoint presentation proved to be a valuable tool in organising, refining and connecting the emerging themes to create an initial framework for the story. I presented my findings on multiple occasions alongside the PhD, and

with each presentation, the structure and flow of ideas were refined, enhancing the clarity and coherence of the chapter's findings.

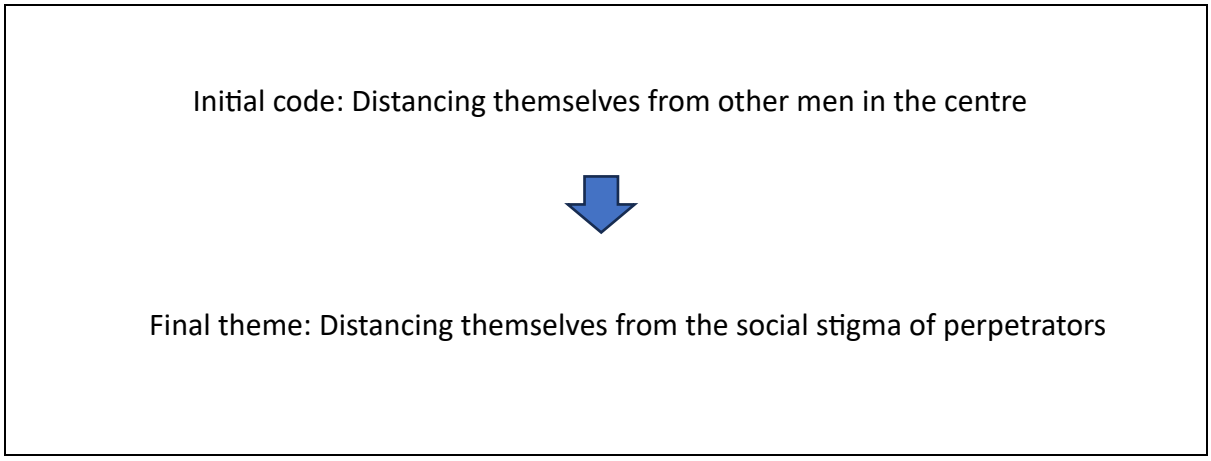
The fourth stage of the analysis focused on reviewing and refining the identified themes. I checked whether the themes aligned with both the coded extracts and the entire data set, creating a thematic 'map' of the analysis. In other words, in this stage I basically refined the story creation process. This happened hand by hand with the various presentations of the findings and with the writing of the literature review chapters. I supported this process with several conceptual maps.

The fifth stage of the analysis involved what Braun and Clarke (2006) call the defining and naming of each theme. This meant interpreting the meanings at the heart of the themes, individually and as a collective, in relation to both the data and the research questions. During this process, some codes were transformed into themes to provide a more comprehensive analysis and to uncover the underlying meanings of what was said. This was particularly helpful in the case of the men's session observations and interviews, where the participants did not often acknowledge the links between their use of violence and gender norms. In these cases, RTA was used to 'unpick or unravel the surface of reality' based on the researcher's interpretations, one of the foundations of critical realism (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Figure 6. Example of quote analysis

'And I arrived here at HEVPA, as it was called before, the Centre for men who use intimate partner violence. The term was very, very strong; it scared me. I even remember arriving; I was a few blocks away. And I would arrive walking and feel bad because I saw people looking at me like: Ah, there goes the wife-beater. It was my own feeling of self-shielding that I put on' (CRH10- Interview).

'When I arrived, I said to myself, no, I shouldn't be here. I didn't say it to the professionals, but internally, I said I shouldn't be here; I'm not like them. And as I got to know the people, of course, I was on the way to becoming a person who could commit something worse' (CRH10- Interview).



To organise the analysis, some themes were subsumed under larger themes. For example, the themes of infrastructure, practitioner contractual conditions, training and development, and high staff turnover were included under the umbrella theme 'The Chilean way of practitioners' working conditions'.

The sixth step is producing the final report. In my case, the writing process began early (in the second step), and the final stage focused mainly on connecting the findings to the research questions and relevant academic literature, while carefully selecting and incorporating additional data excerpts to enhance the reader's understanding of the narrative presented in the findings.

4.11 Reflexivity: the never-ending struggle

In some doctoral theses, reflexivity is compartmentalised, addressed separately within each methods section. Although this chapter is also structured by method, reflexivity in this research did not unfold in such tidy, discrete phases. Instead, it overlapped constantly in practice, and it is best understood as a more dynamic process, which this section intends to reflect.

Reflexivity in qualitative research entails a continuous critical engagement with the researcher's positionality, that is, their standpoint and perspective shaped by their social, cultural, and political context. In other words, it involves recognising and questioning one's assumptions and how these are shaped by the personal background and contextual factors that influence research (Yip, 2024). These dimensions significantly shape how researchers

approach the field, interpret data, and interact with participants. In this context, and grounded in the feminist principles outlined earlier, reflexivity also demands attention to the power dynamics between researchers and participants (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

To this discussion of positionality and power, I add another critical dimension: emotions. While preparing my ethics application, I included a protocol designed to protect myself from potential harm, guided by an ethics of care. In retrospect, however, I realise I underestimated the emotional toll this research would take on me or the role emotions play in research. This section seeks to address this.

Reflexivity, however, is not a soliloquy**.** Emotions have epistemic value. They are also valuable in what is broadly termed feminist research, as they are 'fundamental cognitive tools to identify power relations in the research process' (Dauder & Trejo, 2019, p. 40). Emotions were present from the very beginning of my research process, for instance, in the selection of the topic itself. They were also deeply embedded in fieldwork and, therefore, in the knowledge production process.

During fieldwork, I experienced intense emotions. I recall debriefing with a close friend, who noticed I was pacing like a lion in a cage while describing my feelings, illustrating my unease. I was not only an 'instrument' of data collection, but I had 'emotional responses' that affected, for example, how I conducted some of the interviews, particularly with men, therefore impacting the data I was collecting, and the participant's responses (Dauder & Trejo, 2019, p. 40). For example, I understood in theory that change might not occur for everyone and that contradictions could emerge. However, as a Chilean saying goes, 'otra cosa es con guitarra', roughly translated as 'it's easier said than done'. The phrase highlights the gap between theory and lived experience. During interviews with the men, I was unprepared for statements such as 'I was a victim of domestic violence' or 'I did not use violence against my partner,' coming from men who had already completed the programme. These contradictions left me disoriented. My facial expressions tend to mirror my emotions and thoughts, and it was a constant effort to maintain a neutral or unreadable demeanour. At times, unexpected disclosures caught me off guard and left me momentarily speechless. Some participants seemed to notice these reactions, occasionally leading them to revise or reframe the

statement that had prompted my visible response. In those moments, my reactions appeared to influence the very narratives being shared.

Most men expressed change as an ongoing process. They had used violence but were not ‘really’ violent, some ‘actually’ did not use violence, and simultaneously, they had stopped using violence. Navigating these contradictions and producing a story about change was challenging. As a researcher, I initially believed I needed to untangle these contradictions and present a coherent (logical) story. However, as recommended by my conversations with my supervisors, in some cases, it was more about unfolding the dilemmas and acknowledging that men's stories are not coherent narratives with clear beginnings and endings but are characterised by discontinuities and disruptions.

What probably played a key role in the emotions I felt during fieldwork was an encounter I had at an outreach fair just a few days after starting my fieldwork. A woman approached the DVPP stand, holding a baby, and spoke of the violence she had endured from her ex-partner. Her pain was palpable, marked by self-blame and a simultaneous search for recognition. Although the moment was brief, it lingered with me for weeks. It likely made me more critical of the men in the programme, and even practitioners, but also reaffirmed my commitment to the research. It grounded me emotionally, reminding me why I was doing this research and for whom.

During my initial interviews with victim-survivor support services, I felt a mix of disappointment and hope. I had expected clear, encouraging accounts of men’s change, something more straightforward and palatable. Instead, the stories were complex, uneven, and at times disheartening, making me realise that my expectations had been unrealistic. This realisation was frustrating. I also realised that my questions were based on an assumed level of inter-agency coordination, suggested by the Technical Orientations, that did not exist in practice. This mismatch limited my ability to grasp the nuances of change within the programme and may have contributed to my initial sense of disappointment. For example, I asked about the specific techniques used by the men, but they were unaware of the curriculum. It was only through re-reading the transcripts and paying closer attention to what women’s services practitioners observed in their work with victim-survivors that my understanding of change began to deepen and my unease and frustration gradually subsided.

I now recognise that I was also grappling with one of the most difficult challenges of case study research: making sense of multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives across diverse data sources (Jones-Hooker & Tyndall, 2023).

Perhaps shaped by the experiences described above, I initially took a more critical stance toward the DVPP practitioners. This changed as I spent more time at the research site, sharing their daily struggles and observing group sessions with the men. Aware of the potential power dynamics between us and my privileged position as a researcher, I tried to remain cautious. Although my aim was not to evaluate the programme's effectiveness, some practitioners mentioned feeling scrutinised, particularly in the early stages of fieldwork, which I think may have been simultaneously intensified (inadvertently) by the tone of my questions while I was trying to make sense of the different and even contradictory information I was collecting and producing. Looking back, my early emotional responses to the practitioners prompted me to examine their experiences more closely. In hindsight, my frustration stemmed not only from my unrealistic expectations about the process of change in men, but also from a limited awareness of the difficult conditions under which the DVPP and women's support services operated (discussed in Chapter 7).

Power dynamics and asymmetry are inherent in research, but they were more pronounced in the case of the interviews with men who have used violence against their partners. Power relations are manifested in various ways. For example, I noticed that guiding interviews with men on the programme was more challenging than those with others. I tried to get them to talk about themselves, their process of change, but they often reframed the conversation, exposing the lingering negative emotions towards their ex-partners. Some of these conversations helped to reveal their understanding and motivations underpinning their use of violence. However, I redirected the conversation when it drifted toward victim-blaming, aware of the ethical tension between documenting these narratives and inadvertently reinforcing them.

Their victim-blaming remarks frequently elicited anger in me, likely intensified by the challenge of navigating power asymmetries in the interview setting. In these cases, my anger revealed the presence of unequal power relations. At these times of anger, I realised I may have missed opportunities to ask about issues relevant to my research question due to my

overwhelming emotions, which were affecting my ability to focus and formulate inquiries to address my research questions. During the group workshops, I heard men's experiences of childhood abuse, saw one in tears when disclosing violence against his son, and observed their voices tremble while reading letters to their (ex) partners. Despite this, I found myself judging them internally. Their stories elicited feelings of understanding, sadness, and sometimes hope, but not empathy, an absence I still find difficult to acknowledge, as it challenges how I understand my role as a feminist researcher. Of course, this reflection was not immediate, and the conversations I had during the supervision meetings were crucial at this step and helped me to realise that I was judging men. I was trying to make men accountable. Not my place, not my job. My approach changed in the subsequent interviews as I attempted to listen and understand their perspective. I also discussed these emotions with practitioners. Some female practitioners shared similar feelings, while others offered insights on managing anger and disappointment.

Emotions such as discomfort also signal power relations that are embedded in the researcher's positionality. I sometimes felt as though I was in a play, portraying someone I am not, which reflected my position as an outsider among men. My gender, class background, and ethnicity contributed to this feeling and may have caused discomfort among the men and, therefore, created more barriers to access for participants. First, I was a woman among perpetrators of IPV, who themselves recognised having negative ideas about women, something that was also especially noted by female practitioners. Second, I am middle-class, with fairer skin due to my mixed ethnic roots. I believe it is crucial to address this, as it may help explain why recruitment was a challenging endeavour.

The colonisation of the Americas established a socio-political and economic hierarchy based on ethnicity, in which Indigenous peoples were assigned a subordinate status. In my country, I am usually considered 'blanca' (white in English). I have received many nicknames throughout my life that reflect this, such as 'Rusia' and 'Rubia' (blondie), which signal that the category of white is beyond phenotypic traits, is contextual, and operates as a mechanism of social stratification (Ortiz Piedrahíta, 2013). This probably deterred men in the centre from participating in my research, most of whom are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, with almost half coming from other Latin American countries. However, no immigrants or men

from other indigenous backgrounds participated in my research, despite the different strategies devised with the practitioners.

During the first draft of my findings chapters, my supervisors advised me to step back from my emotions, as they were almost readable through my writing. I was too critical and judgmental to produce a nuanced analysis. I still sometimes feel I was too 'soft' in the final version, perhaps complicit in my attempt to convey the complexities of change. As I became more familiar with the data, the intensity subsided, allowing me to recognise the nuances. Judgment, while not inherently unethical, was part of a necessary learning process. But unless critically examined, it risked flattening the data and reducing the complexity of men's narratives. Revisiting the literature and discussing my findings with others—both academic and non-academic, helped me recalibrate. This remains a continual negotiation, and traces of over-generalisation may still be visible to the reader.

4.12 Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed in this study, grounded in critical realism and feminist research principles. The qualitative mixed-methods case study design, incorporating ethnographic approaches, has enabled an in-depth exploration of the DVPP examined.

The research methods included fieldwork observations and semi-structured interviews. These methods were chosen to capture the DVPP's complex dynamics and multifaceted nature, ensuring a rich and nuanced understanding of the programme and its implementation context.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process, with careful attention to the well-being and safety of participants. The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and managing potential distress among participants.

Data analysis was conducted using reflexive thematic analysis, which enabled the identification of key themes and patterns within the data. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, while also acknowledging

the researchers' positionality and the influence of their own experiences and emotions on the research process.

The chapter has also highlighted the importance of reflexivity in feminist research, emphasising the need for continuous reflection on the researcher's positionality, power dynamics, and emotions involved in researching sensitive topics such as IPV.

Overall, this methodology has provided a robust framework for exploring the processes of change within the DVPP, offering valuable insights to the field of domestic violence interventions. Subsequent chapters will elaborate on the findings from this study, offering a detailed analysis of the themes identified and their implications for practice and policy.

Chapter 5: Men's understanding of intimate partner violence

5.1 Introduction

Whilst different theories of IPV inform DVPPs (Flasch et al., 2022), these theoretical frameworks are not always applied in practice as originally intended (Morran, 2019). This gap between theory and practice has received limited attention in research, with only tentative explanations offered through examination of broader implementation contexts (Morran, 2008; Renehan, 2021). This gap underscores the importance of examining how practitioners understand IPV, specifically, how they conceptualise its causes and dynamics, as these understandings fundamentally shape their work with men and determine how interventions are delivered in practice.

Equally important is exploring how men themselves understand and make sense of their use of violence against current or former partners and considering how the programme influences these narratives. By examining both practitioners' and participants' interpretations of violence, researchers can potentially identify opportunities for strengthening DVPPs.

Overall, the chapter argues that the programme may, albeit unintentionally (something that will be explained in more detail in Chapter 7), reinforce men's ideas and views on IPV that often obscure gendered and structural explanations. The final section of the chapter will explore these ideas and their broader implications in depth. This chapter is organised into three sections. The first explores the perceived causes of IPV from the perspectives of both the men and the practitioners. The second section examines how they describe the dynamics of IPV in their relationships. The third provides a critical analysis of the men's accounts, considering both what they express explicitly and the underlying meanings that emerge beyond their stated narratives.

5.2 Why did he do it?

This section explores the perceived roots (causes) of IPV, starting with the men's perspectives and then moving to the views of DVPP practitioners. These practitioner accounts serve as a representation of the programme's theoretical framework, as it is through their daily work that the programme's ideas take shape in practice. It is important to emphasise that

presenting these insights is not about assigning individual responsibility, but rather about understanding how practitioners' interpretations shape the way IPV is addressed in the programme. The focus on practitioners' discourse, rather than the official Technical Orientations, highlights the gap between policy and practice, a gap that will be examined in Chapter 7.

5.2.1 Men's perspectives

A prominent discourse among practitioners frames violence primarily as the result of poor emotional management, relegating explanations rooted in power and control to a less central position. This framing is also evident in many of the men's narratives, which frequently echoed the language and core concepts promoted by the programme. The extent to which these understandings align with the programme's discourse will be explored in the following section.

Several men attributed their use of violence to emotional build-up, feelings they had not recognised, named, or expressed. They linked this emotional suppression to dominant gender norms that discourage men from showing vulnerability, often compelling them to maintain a façade of strength in order to fulfil societal expectations of leadership and provision within the family. These accounts probably reflect broader constructions of masculinity in Chilean society. While such narratives are not unique to this national context, they likely emerged and were reinforced through the programme's reflective practices. For example, some men explicitly referenced hegemonic masculinity, noting how this model frames emotional expression as a sign of weakness that threatens the man's role as the symbolic pillar of the household.

> I think it's the hegemonic patriarchal model, the famous cliché phrase 'men don't cry', 'men are the strong ones','men, in a crisis, have to push forward, carry the whole family, carry the woman'. That's what I was taught. I grew up without a father; my grandfather was there, and I never saw him cry. I never heard him say anything like 'I'm not feeling well,' but instead, it was always about moving forward. So, I was raised with that stereotype, the idea that a man can't show emotions or weakness because if weakness is shown, everything falls apart(CRH09- Interview).

Following this idea, the next man argued that dominant gender norms for men are an arbitrary societal imposition.

> What happens is that throughout this whole process, we've analysed all these behaviours we have, and that society imposes on us. I mean, it's still deeply ingrained that men don't cry, or that they shouldn't cry, or shouldn't express themselves, that they should stay quiet (CRH08 - Interview).

Since men are often socially expected not to express their emotions, they may internalise resentment and frustration during conflict resolution, particularly with their partners. The 'emotional accumulation' ultimately manifests in episodes of violence, which they thought they could overcome with 'tools', a term that is used in different ways. Sometimes, for example, they used it as a reference for specific self-control techniques taught in the programme, such as time-out or relaxation techniques, where some indicate having learned how to identify when a situation is escalating.

> Researcher: At one point, you mentioned that the programme provided tools, right? What benefits has the programme had for you?
>
> Man: Well, the benefits are the tools I now have to face situations I know I avoid when, let's say, I'm a little bit upset. For example, time, that snowball effect when the situation is already a bit extreme, step back, breathe, end the conversation (CRH10- Interview).

This was also observed in the sessions themselves. For example, the next man points out the efforts he is making to de-escalate the situation by doing sports such as yoga to help regulate his buildups.

> Relaxation is something I practice. I'm a big fan of yoga. I hope to reach a conversation or discussion without getting worked up (Man, Session Observation n° 7, 2nd level group workshop).

Other men used the concept of tools in a broad reference to the 'emotional skills' needed to handle conflict in intimate partner relationships, which included the techniques but were not only limited to them. The next man, for example, explains he did not have the 'tools' to solve

conflicts with his ex-partner, which led to the breakup. The lack of a strong emotional connection with his mother, in his view, may have hindered his ability to navigate emotional challenges, particularly in intimate relationships. The user's admission of focusing on material stability and neglecting other aspects reflects a societal emphasis on men fulfilling provider roles, often at the expense of his 'emotional side'. This one-dimensional focus likely left him ill-equipped to handle relational conflicts. What is more interesting is that his idea about the use of tools to prevent IPV are personally embedded in the men's personal story based on gendered division of the family. As such, the programme's ideas help men to understand their use of violence, based on their personal life experiences. As women are the emotional support, and he does not have a good relationship with his mother, therefore his emotional 'side' was neglected. This implies that the programme's discourse is filtered through, reinterpreted, and integrated into his lived experience**.** The language of the programme is not merely echoed; it is refracted through men's own affective biographies, and men offer a personalised reinterpretation of that discourse.

> I've always been economically very stable. I was very, very visionary, but I left aside other things. When I delved into the spiritual side, I realised how my dad always provided the economic and work part, and I had a very good relationship with him. In contrast, my mom provided the emotional side, and I didn't have a good relationship with her. Everything fell into place and made sense when I started seeking answers, so as I said, with the mother of my first child, I believe I use violence given these same patterns. But with her, it was all about romantic love, the love of everything for her. I was the one who arrived with bouquets of roses; it was all ideal, and when problems arose, neither she nor I had the tools to solve them. That led to the breakup (CRH19- Interview).

In this case, the concept of 'tools' do not to refer to specific techniques, but rather as a broader metaphor for emotional capacities, resources that allow them to engage in an emotionally attuned relationship. This same man quoted before, explains this further in the interview, where he refers to ability to express, validate and recognise emotions, in this case, with his children.

> Emotional tools, so that my children can say 'I feel sad,' and I don't respond with, 'What's that? Why are you crying?' No, and instead I can say, 'Come here, cry.' That's something I was never able to do with my dad. When I cried, it was criticism after criticism, and my brothers would join in too, even making me doubt about my sexual orientation (CRH19-Interview).

The following excerpt builds on a similar idea, revealing a personal realisation about the importance of emotional awareness, which refers to the ability to identify and acknowledge one's own emotions, that is, recognise them and embrace them without denial. The speaker reflects on how the absence of this capacity may have impaired his emotional regulation and contributed to the use of violence in a past relationship, which he refers to as 'mistakes.' His mention of now living life 'a bit calmer' suggests a shift toward greater emotional self-regulation, likely emerging from increased emotional awareness:

> I've realised, after this process and others I've gone through personally, that you make a lot of mistakes when you don't identify your own emotions. I live life a bit calmer now, though I'm still learning. That's fundamental. In fact, with my partner, my partner has a child, we get along well. It's okay to feel bad and sad, but it's important to acknowledge it because that provides tools and helps prevent mistakes like the ones I made (Man, Session observation n° 4, 2nd level group workshop).

These narratives reveal a consistency in how men explain their violence, not as an issue of power or control, but as a matter of emotional management and missing 'tools'. As the next section shows, these accounts closely mirror the programme's own conceptual framework.

5.2.2 What do the practitioners say?

Men's understanding of their use of violence often aligned with the programme's conceptualisation of the roots of IPV. The repeated use of the term 'tools' by several participants reflected the programme's emphasis on providing men with strategies to prevent violent behaviour. A central focus within the programme was on encouraging men to connect with their emotions. This broad idea encompasses three interrelated dimensions: emotional awareness, the ability to identify and recognise emotions and to understand their origins or triggers; emotional regulation; and emotional expression. Practitioners saw progress in these

areas as a sign that participants were advancing in the process of 'conectarse con las emociones' (connecting with their emotions) or 'manejar las emociones' (handling or managing their emotions), terms that were often used interchangeably in practice.

> Researcher: What does it mean for you to connect with emotions?
>
> Practitioner: Three things: identify them (I feel something), recognise them (in myself), express them in a healthy way (towards another person, or write it down, draw it, express it to a third party). Do not keep this emotion bottled up. Identify the event that triggers the emotion. What is making me angry (this is part of the origin) (Fieldwork notes, conversation with a practitioner in the workspace).

To illustrate how emotional management was a recurring and shared theme within the programme, this section draws on excerpts from various DVPP practitioners, collected during multiple stages of fieldwork, including informal conversations, session observations, and interviews. These excerpts served to show that such ideas were neither individual interpretations nor isolated instances. Instead, they demonstrated the consistency of this discourse throughout the programme's delivery. As shown below, the belief that violence stemmed from poor emotional management and that the programme's role was to foster emotional awareness, expression, and regulation emerged as a central tenet in the practitioners' narratives.

> Violence often occurs in moments of tension, when I am sad, which is why it is important to be able to identify and express emotions. It has to do with emotional management' (Practitioner, session observation n° 4, 2nd level group workshop).

> One of the main reasons behind intimidation is emotional overwhelm; therefore, managing and expressing emotions is crucial. Managing emotions doesn't mean I can control whether I feel anger or any other emotion. Expression is not always verbal, there are various ways we can express our emotions' (Practitioner, session observation n° 12, 1st level group workshop).

> In the end, one of the main reasons why many people resort to violence is due to the poor handling of their emotions, not control, but management, being able to express what I carry inside in a healthy way (Practitioner- Interview).

Practitioners placed particular importance on emotional management, viewing it as a key explanatory factor in intimate partner violence. Men often demonstrated difficulties in managing emotions such as anger, frustration, and even joy or love. These challenges were frequently linked to gender norms that discouraged emotional expression, shaping and constraining how men learned to engage with their emotional lives. Practitioners noted that many participants struggled to articulate what they were feeling, and in the absence of the skills and tools, such difficulties often manifested in violent behaviours (How this process unfolds will be explored in the following section).

> I believe that the main cause (of IPV) is due to poor handling of emotions, straight up. And there we have everything because of the anger, frustration, and annoyance. I could even say that men struggle to express joy or love. So, this lack of emotional management often elicits these outbursts and explosions, like 'I don't know how to react when I'm angry, so instead of talking, I go and break something'And all of this stems from early childhood (Practitioner- Interview).

Emotional management also underpinned harmful behaviours not only towards their (ex) partners but also themselves. The following quote highlights how traditional gender norms for men, such as the need to be strong, unemotional, and the sole provider, are often experienced by men as mandatory. As the practitioner explains, these social expectations can shape men's identities in restrictive ways.

> Internationally, suicide rates are higher among men than women. This is due to work-related factors. A man often validates himself through his job, providing for his family, which isn't necessarily negative, but it's important to understand that being the provider is not an obligation. There's also the expectation to be strong, virile, unemotional, and distant from anything feminine (Practitioner, session observation n° 7, 2nd level group workshop).

For practitioners, these gender norms can be problematic in multiple ways. First, while embodying the role of the strong, self-reliant man, the family provider, protector, and emotional anchor, is not inherently violent, it creates conditions in which emotional expression is suppressed or seen as weakness. Second, these norms generate internalised pressures that often lead to frustration, emotional repression, and ultimately harm, both to the men themselves and to those around them. The programme encourages participants to question these gender norms, emphasising that they are not natural or inevitable, but socially learned ideals. Practitioners invite men to critically reflect on the consequences of these norms for men and others.

> Many say, 'but what's wrong with me being this strong man, wanting to be the pillar of the family, to provide, to take care of them, to protect them? What's so bad about that?'. It's not good for their mental health, right? We start from the fact that feeling like I have to meet certain expectations, living in a constant state of frustration, and repressing my emotions are things that harm me and later also harm those close to me (Practitioner – Interview).

> Romantic love reinforces gender roles. It dictates how men and women are expected to behave, creating expectations about how relationships should be. Women are expected to be loving, nurturing, submissive, and self-sacrificing. Romantic love benefits men, as they are often assumed to hold more power in the relationship. However, it also comes with demands: men are expected to be cold, protective, and disconnected from their emotions, as vulnerability is perceived as a weakness (Practitioner, session observation n° 8, 2nd level group work).

In this chapter, it is argued that framing violence primarily in terms of emotional management carries significant implications and does not fully capture the underlying roots or dynamics of IPV if men's narratives are carefully analysed and unpacked (section 5.4).

5.3 How did he do it?

This PhD research understands the concept of the dynamics of IPV as the ways in which the phenomenon is reproduced and perpetuated through everyday interactions within intimate

relationships. The term dynamics is used here in line with its dictionary definition, referring to the patterns or forces at play within a process or system. In other words, it denotes the patterns, processes, or mechanisms through which IPV occurs and develops over time. This section examines explicitly how both practitioners and men understand the dynamics of IPV, the ideas they use to explain them, and how these relate to the causes discussed earlier.

5.3.1 Practitioner's perspectives

The cycle of violence, developed by Lenore Walker (2009), served as the primary theoretical framework used in the programme to understand the dynamics of IPV. Practitioners drew on this model to identify three stages: tension-building, violence, and reconciliation, the latter commonly referred to as the honeymoon phase. Practitioners linked this cycle with explanations of IPV based on a lack of emotional management that causes emotional buildup, which triggers the episodes of violence, frequently followed by feelings of guilt and attempts at reparation. Practitioners construct a causal link between emotions and violent outbursts, suggesting that unprocessed emotions, particularly anger, accumulate until they erupt.

> Violence occurs during moments of tension, not all the time. It happens when I release everything I have bottled up. Then I feel colder. I look back and see the damage I caused. Guilt and regret come. Then comes the honeymoon phase. I try to repair the damage. I make promises: it will never happen again. However, I will fall back into this cycle until I change and acquire the tools to express my emotions and communicate effectively with my partner. To leave violence behind, I must leave the accumulation stage (Practitioner, Session observation n° 6, 1st level group workshop).

While the reconciliation phase may involve sincere efforts to make amends, practitioners view it as temporary and insufficient to interrupt the cycle on its own. They consistently emphasise that genuine change requires cultivating emotional awareness, regulation, and expression—capacities that prevent the accumulation of unprocessed emotions in the first place. Within this framework, IPV is not understood as a constant condition, but as an episodic phenomenon, violence emerges at specific, identifiable 'moments of tension' rather than being ever-present.

> When we avoid showing sensitivity and expressing emotions, I accumulate them. Each time I hold back an emotion and/or a thought, it builds up and eventually explodes in various forms of violence. Then I cool down, feel guilty, and the honeymoon phase begins. If I don't manage to express my emotions, the cycle of violence starts again (Practitioner, session observation n° 12, 1st level group workshop).

Practitioners repeatedly underscore the idea that violence emerges from a buildup of unexpressed or poorly managed emotions, particularly anger, which is seen as the most difficult emotion for men to navigate. In these accounts, anger functions as a central force within the cycle of violence, reinforcing its recurrence.

> The expression of anger is one of the biggest challenges. Let's remember that holding onto anger is not healthy. We must express this emotion and remember what happens with the accumulation of tension. If I swallow the emotion, it will continue to gnaw away inside. It's good to take a break and cool down, but we must discuss it later (Practitioner, session observation n° 5, 2nd level group workshop).

Consequently, breaking the cycle of violence is framed as a matter of emotional education. Men are encouraged to recognise, name, and express their emotions before they escalate into violence. This view aligns with the broader programme logic discussed earlier, in which emotional mismanagement is constructed as both the cause of violence and the site of intervention.

While practitioners consistently frame IPV through the lens of emotional accumulation and regulation, the extent to which these principles are internalised or contested by participants remains a critical question. The following section turns to the narratives of men engaged in the programme, examining how they make sense of their own emotional experiences and whether their accounts reflect, resist, or rework the emotional logic promoted by practitioners.

5.3.2 Men's narratives

Just as practitioners frame IPV through the lens of emotional accumulation and cyclical dynamics, many men in the programme appear to internalise these ideas. Sometimes they reproduce them directly, other times they reinterpret them, though not always in ways intended by the intervention. This framing may inadvertently support strategies aimed at avoiding conflict altogether, treating violence as isolated incidents, and prioritising their own well-being.

Many participants refer, either implicitly or explicitly, to the cycle of violence model taught in the programme. One man, for example, articulates how he came to understand his actions through this framework and used specific techniques to prevent further escalation.

> Well, when I joined, I mentioned that I came in with a bit of resistance, which happens to a lot of people. But before entering the programme, I had already ended my conflicts with my ex. I knew that any conversation we might have wasn't going to lead anywhere good. Because even though it's true that I wasn't looking for conflict, the other person was. So, I think it was more about waking up and, obviously, learning and internalising the techniques that, at some point, I had but didn't use correctly. Or, when I tried to use them, they didn't work, like the timeout technique. So, when you enter the centre and start realising things, you begin to analyse everything that has happened, everything you've lived through, and the range of tools we have to break this cycle of violence. We're on the right path, which, in the end, is what happened to me (CRH08- Interview).

Other men adopt related language. A recurring theme is the idea of emotional buildup leading to violent outbursts. The lack of emotional management, defined by the programme as the inability to recognise, process, and express emotions, is framed as a root cause of this accumulation. Several men describe these experiences through metaphors such as 'frustrations' (CRH09) or a 'bomb' (CRH08).

> That's why I say there are many things one has internalised, but at some point, well, I was carrying a lot of other things that aren't justifiable because, in reality, one has to know how to separate things. But I lost my job, they didn't pay me my severance, we were in the middle of the pandemic, my first child, my ex-partner,

> of course, also left the house because she didn't want to be with me anymore, and an endless number of things that created this bomb that eventually exploded (CRH08-Interview).

Other participants also draw on the metaphor of 'the glass overflowed' to describe how prolonged emotional buildup led to a tipping point that culminated in violence. This account closely mirrors the stages outlined in the cycle of violence model. One man, for instance, contrasts his past behaviour with his current relationship, highlighting how improved emotional communication and mutual trust now serve as key indicators of personal change, which he recognises as having a positive impact on his relationship. Notably, he describes emotional suppression as 'harmful' to himself, possibly reflecting the programme's framing of restrictive gender norms as detrimental not only to others but also to men's own emotional well-being.

> The conflict we had was about the kids. Of course, sometimes you act out of anger and frustration. The things I said to her hurt her, and there came a point where it was too much; the glass overflowed, but that's not the way. One positive thing is that I now know how to recognise emotions, and that's a good thing. I still tend to keep things to myself, but now, with my current partner, it's different, completely different. There's a lot of communication, a lot of trust. Before, I kept so much to myself, which was harmful to me (Man, session observation n° 2, 2nd level econd group workshop).

The cycle of violence model supported by emotional management appears to support the perception that violence results from a buildup of unexpressed emotions that eventually 'explode' (CRH08). Men often describe these episodes as moments of losing control, using terms such as 'burst,' energúmeno (raging madman), or ser irracional (irrational being) to characterise these states. This language conveys a sense of involuntary transformation, in which the individual becomes temporarily unrecognisable to themselves. In doing so, it frames the violent episode as an outburst, an extraordinary event that stands apart from their usual behaviour.

> I would turn into a raging madman. I lost all rationality, everything I preached and everything I read. In arguments like that, I became irrational (CRH10- Interview).

> I arrived at the centre at the beginning of the year due to a particular situation with my ex-partner, with whom I hadn't been together for over two years (CRH23-Interview).

However, the programme's framework appears to sit in tension with the strategy of encouraging men to connect with their emotions. As noted earlier, several participants describe their violent behaviours as episodes of losing control. As a result, their preferred strategies often involve limiting or controlling themselves or avoiding conflict altogether.

> Practitioner: Why do we intimidate? As a strategy to control what is going on. If my partner says something I don't like, I hit the table, and most likely, she will remain silent. I can communicate differently, explaining that what she says makes me feel bad. What else can we do to avoid intimidation?
>
> Man: Respect and self-control are also important. Knowing your limits, and respect, learning how to say things, good words, and good communication.
>
> Practitioner: Controlling what?
>
> Man: Avoid shouting and saying bad words; there must always be a limit to that (Session observation n° 3, 1st level group workshop).

> At that time, I was about to complete almost two years of a process with a private psychologist. I can now recognise emotions, I didn't know when I was upset or when I was happy; I was very flat in that sense. Nowadays, I try to avoid arguments with her and with everyone. I experienced that when I was younger and more impulsive (Man, session observation n° 2, 2nd level group workshop).

> I'm no longer with my previous partner. If something happens, I move on to something else. I no longer explode, and that's thanks to the process. I'm now in a relationship with someone else, but there it's at zero, meaning we've never argued or fought (Man, session observation n° 9, 2ndlevel group workshop).

These narratives reveal both the reach and the limits of the programme's emotional framework, supported by the cycle of violence model. While many men adopt its language

and tools, this can inadvertently encourage conflict avoidance, self-focus, and a fragmented (isolated), incidental (not deliberate), and circumstantial (as a byproduct of emotional management) understanding of IPV. Such a reinterpretation of practitioners' ideas risks obscuring the deeper patterns of power and control that underpin violence and its connection to how men enact their different ways of being a man. This tension will be examined further in the following section.

5.4 Unpacking men's narratives: Exploring the connections between gender norms and men's violence against intimate partners

This section highlights how IPV is linked to gender norms that underpin masculinities. Men's reflections reveal the complexities between their emotions and their ideas on how men should behave, illustrating how feelings of inadequacy and entitlement often underlie their use of IPV. The following discussion unpacks these ideas, offering insight into the gendered mechanisms that sustain IPV, and the challenges faced in addressing them within DVPP settings.

While men's accounts of violence should be critically examined, particularly given their potential to justify abusive behaviours or position themselves as equal victims, dismissing these perspectives outright offers limited analytical and practical value. Instead, engaging with these narratives allows for a deeper understanding of how men make sense of their actions.

In one of the group workshops, participants were asked to identify the emotions they often experience before using violence against their (ex) partners. Their responses included feelings of betrayal, sadness, frustration, defensiveness, distrust, and fear of being hurt or ridiculed.

> I feel betrayed, sad… sometimes I cry out of helplessness
>
> I feel criticised or hurt.
>
> Hurt, sad, frustrated—just like my peers.
>
> I'm on the defensive, thinking they do it intentionally.
>
> Distrustful. Or, for example, I feel like they think I'm stupid.
>
> Mostly, I think they will hurt me. The person will do the same thing to me again later (Session observation n° 9, 1st level group workshop).

The question about emotions, however, seemed to be disconnected from the context behind their use of violence: intentions and underlying reasons, dimensions that could have helped men link their emotions with the broader gendered norms that shape them. Men may experience complex emotions without fully recognising what informs them.

When asked about the reasons behind their use of violence during the interviews, most of the men described in detail the context that preceded it and, in their view, explained their actions. While the violence itself was often minimised or left unexamined, the surrounding circumstances were foregrounded in depth. This is when the emotions mentioned in the previous extract become more understandable: when considered within their context. Men's accounts frequently referenced a sense of powerlessness in their relationship, with some men acknowledging ongoing power dynamics.

> I didn't understand that raising your voice was a type of violence mhm, or minimising her emotions was also another type of violence, so there was no physical violence, there were no blows, there was nothing, nothing physical, everything was always verbal and since she has a strong character, so did I, and she's a woman, and I'm a man, I couldn't stay, eh, well, she was my boss. So, she's older than me, so there was like a power struggle there that still goes on to this day, but today, after almost 1 year here at the centre, today, like: okay, you won. I'm not going to confront you anymore (CRH19- Interview).

This quote illustrates the gendered nature of power dynamics, and how they are underpinned by a discomfort with a perceived loss of authority can underpin men's use of violence. The participant explicitly refers to gender norms for men and social expectations when he states, 'She's a woman, and I'm a man'. In this case, the ex-partner was 'older' and 'his boss,' and his position as a man was incompatible with his perceived subordination; thus, he could not stay silent and felt 'compelled' to act to the perceived power imbalance. Although he now claims to avoid confrontation by 'letting her win,' this appears to reflect a strategy of conflict avoidance and/or preventing violence escalation. Despite acknowledging the role of power in the relationship, he attributes his violent behaviour primarily to a lack of 'emotional tools,' which he links to a strained maternal relationship that, in his view, hindered his emotional development. In this case, the perceived threat to his authority is linked to his ideas around

being a man and its links to power, authority and dominance, revealing how these norms continue to influence men's responses.

The next participant also highlights the power imbalance in his past relationship, a dynamic he reinforced through a sense of entitlement, particularly his belief that he was always right. He describes how acknowledging wrongdoings was previously perceived as a sign of 'weakness'. While he explicitly attributes his use of violence to a lack of emotional management (as many men in the programme do, as shown in section 5.2.1), his narrative also reveals how power and entitlement are central to his understanding of what it means to be a man and how this latter is linked to his use of IPV. He draws parallels between his personal experiences and broader societal structures, referencing politics, the workplace, and war to illustrate how admitting fault is culturally perceived as a sign of weakness.

> I remember that neither of us apologised in our argument and fight afterwards. Neither of us said sorry, I was wrong, sorry, I did this. Instead, it was something natural, like the issue... the argument passed, a couple of days went by, and we were back to our normal couple dynamics. So, of course, it was like a power struggle to say, hey, you know what, I was wrong. I started this, and I initiated this because I acted this way. Ah, so that is weakness in front of the other and recognising mistakes, recognising, hey, I was wrong, I triggered this situation. I don't know, I consider it like that instead of a sign of weakness, as society has taught us. At all levels, in politics, in war, and in all that, no one says, Hey, I was wrong; I misinterpreted this. So when one can say that, then agreements come, but that is like the first important step, let's say, in human relationships, recognising that one makes mistakes, of course, because one thinks that they always have the truth, the correct vision of life (CRH09- Interview).

Men's narratives also reveal how deeply internalised gender norms for men, particularly those linking masculinity to fatherhood and economic provision, contribute to feelings of inadequacy or a sense of failure and shame. Many men explicitly, although some inadvertently, connect these feelings to their use of violence. The next man begins his account by identifying his inability to communicate emotions with his ex-partner as a key factor. He describes his use of violence, what he calls his 'biggest mistake', as stemming from being 'not

a communicative person', linking the accumulation of unexpressed emotions to his eventual outburst. However, as his narrative unfolds, a dynamic of control becomes evident: he positions himself as the one who could 'give' or 'withhold' the opportunity for dialogue, casting himself as the gatekeeper of communication and decision-making within the relationship. His words also convey a sense of pride rooted in traditional masculine ideals, particularly the role of primary provider, which, in his case, appeared closely tied to his perception of being a good father, roles he ultimately felt he had failed to fulfil.

> Researcher: Now, I would like to talk about your personal process of change. Have you been able to explore the reasons behind why you used violence against your ex-partner?
>
> Man: Yes, undoubtedly (….) For the rest of the school, at work, with friends, I was a very calm person, and I kept everything to myself because I was a person who did not express emotions, and society did not demand that from me either (…) later, having a partner and children became a big responsibility. I was, of course, an immature person who was not prepared for that. I had not had life experiences of emotionally and financially supporting three children and a partner who had needs to develop as a woman and as a mother. So, unfortunately, I think that was my biggest mistake, and obviously, I was not a communicative person, and I was mostly proud. So, I started to feel that my child and wife needed things, and I wondered how much I could provide. And I would say: no, no, no. And I thought there was only one solution. If my wife wanted a house, there was nothing if there wasn't a house. It's like an example. So, in that sense, that was the biggest problem; there was no communication because when there is communication, you look for alternatives. Maybe we won't reach the solution that we both want, but we will reach a consensual solution, as they said in the centre, a negotiation as a couple, so we never had that, I never gave that opportunity, my wife, on the contrary, was very communicative, very expressive, and it was hard for me to handle her emotions, they unsettled me, so we were like yin and yang (…). So I think that was the biggest mistake I made, which obviously triggered all the episodes of violence, because all the frustrations were there. I continued to

> perform well at work, and perhaps all the anger from work was taken out on my family (CRH09- Interview).

His sense of pride led him to shoulder financial responsibilities alone, often dismissing his partner's potential contributions to resolving shared challenges. However, during the interview, it became clear that his 'frustrations' stemmed from a perceived failure due to his inability to meet traditional gender norms for men, especially the role of primary economic provider. He admitted that 'all the anger from work was taken out on his family' (CRH09-Interview), linking his emotional outbursts to work-related stress and financial strain. This self-perceived inadequacy emerged as a key trigger for his frustration. Notably, during periods of unemployment, economic hardship, or the arrival of children, the onset of conflict and violence in the relationship often coincided.

> Our son was born with a health condition, and she kept insisting because, well, they couldn't find a solution here in Chile; she wanted to take her abroad. At the time, I was facing significant financial problems, and I kept saying, 'I can't, I can't, I can't,' but she kept insisting, insisting... We had already seen several doctors and all that, and we always clashed over this (CRH09- Interview).

Similarly, another man recounts that he was unemployed at the time of his first child's birth, while his partner, whom he notably acknowledges, held two undergraduate degrees and was employed full-time. Although she was on maternity leave during the events that led to his participation in the programme, the contrast in their roles was stark. Despite placing blame on his partner for the violence, claiming that 'everything I wanted to help her with was wrong', a closer examination of his narrative reveals deeper layers of self-perceived inadequacy and failure. His violent behaviour appears to be rooted in feelings of being questioned and undervalued in his roles as both a provider and a father, feelings that likely fuelled his frustration. The mention of his partner's academic qualifications seems far from incidental; instead, it highlights a power dynamic within the relationship.

> Researcher: Could you understand why you had resorted to violence at that moment? Could you grasp the reason why?
>
> Man: There was a breakdown within me. I felt like I was giving my best, and I never received recognition for it. Everything I did was wrong, or everything I wanted to

> help her with was wrong. So I would wash his clothes. I did those things. 'I don't want you to do it like that.' I would cook, but she didn't want to eat. So, during all that time I was unemployed, so I was fully at home (…), and then I started working; they asked me to do extra shifts, (she said) do all the shifts you want. I was struggling to get hired. They offered me a permanent position, but it also bothered her. So there were a bunch of things that made me explode then. I tried to do everything possible the best way I could, but it was never enough, even today (CRH08- Interview).

> Because for me, fatherhood is super important. And throughout this whole process, I've always been questioned—I feel super, super, super questioned. Now I'm seeing the results, but it's because I've done all my therapies. I've completed all my processes, but my fatherhood has always been questioned (CRH08-Interview).

The significance of gender norms remains evident in this man's current relationship. Although he reported improvements in emotional expression and communication, he described feeling 'attacked' when his partner called him 'stingy', a comment that sparked a recent argument. This reaction highlights the enduring influence of traditional provider expectations on his sense of self. His inability to fulfil this role, particularly after losing his job during the pandemic and the birth of his first son, contributed to a buildup of unexpressed emotions, which he described as the 'bomb that eventually exploded' (CRH08-Interview). Despite progress in managing his emotions, these deeply ingrained ideals around masculinity and provision continue to generate tension. His partner's remark triggered a strong emotional response, underscoring how closely his identity remains tied to the provider role. Notably, he viewed the conflict as resolved only when his partner acknowledged that 'he was right', suggesting that, for him, maybe resolution is not solely about mutual understanding or emotional openness.

> The other day, we had a situation where she made a joke that obviously affected me, and I let her know—I communicated it to her—about the financial issue. So, I made her aware of it. She understood it one way, while I meant it in another way,

> and that's where assertive communication came into play. We talked it through, and we obviously reached a good resolution. She understood that, while I've worked on certain issues, there are still things that remain—specifically the financial issue I mentioned to her recently. She made a comment like I was stingy or something, and it hurt me because, in reality, I've never been that way. In fact, I told her that I'd have many more things if I weren't the way I am. So, I shared that with her, explained it, and she agreed, saying I was right (CRH08- Interview).

The men's narratives reveal a complex emotional landscape, where shame emerges as a particularly significant yet often unspoken emotion. While feelings of frustration, defensiveness, or being 'attacked' are commonly expressed, these often (not always) mask more profound feelings of shame, especially in relation to unmet gender norms and what it takes to be a man. For instance, when a man took pride in being the provider but could no longer fulfil that role, a deep sense of failure emerged. This shame is not only present in their narratives about violence but also in how they engage with the intervention programme itself. The following section builds on this by examining how shame operates beneath the surface of men's resistance in DVPPs.

5.5 Behind men's resistance: The unspoken shame

To understand how some of the men in the programme make sense of IPV (the purpose of this chapter), it is essential to examine how resistance appears in their accounts, as it is a key feature in their discourse through which men avoid taking full responsibility for their abusive behaviour. Resistance often takes the form of minimisation, denial, and victim blaming. In some cases, it manifests as mutual combat, portraying both partners as equally responsible.

In men's narratives, resistance is often entangled with shame. Although they tend to attribute this emotion to their female partners, this section argues that shame frequently underlies resistance in the context of the DVPP. The findings reveal that resistance is expressed through strategies such as distancing and euphemistic language, discursive mechanisms that 'shield' (CRH10-Interview) men from the discomfort of shame. While resistance appears at the surface level, shame operates as a deeper emotional driver.

Practitioners' responses offer valuable insights into how resistance is managed within the DVPPs studied. A central strategy that emerges is the concept of 'Encuadre' (framing), used to

address the common challenge of working with male perpetrators. Framing involves clearly outlining the programme's purpose, expectations, and boundaries to reduce denial, minimise victim blaming, and reinforce accountability. It typically includes a direct conversation with the participant to clarify that they are in the programme because of their violent behaviour. This process helps establish their position within the intervention and makes clear that participation requires acknowledging their actions and taking responsibility.

> In reality, it's more about framing; they are simply informed that all the users are present for the same reason—everyone is here because they have engaged in violence. There isn't a strategy like, 'He's resistant, let's approach it this way.' Instead, it's made clear that everyone has committed acts of violence. If someone believes he hasn't, he shouldn't be here, as we do not work with men who haven't used violence. Therefore, no real strategy is implemented, such as 'Let's act differently when they don't acknowledge it.' It's simply a framing, almost like clarifying their position regarding why they're here and what their purpose is. Right? What are they here to accomplish? (Practitioner – Interview).

> So, what I had to do first was set a frame. The initial step is framing. What is framing? It's about talking to the service user and being clear, right? 'I believe your process is going this way because this is becoming difficult.' (…) Claiming that you haven't used violence indicates to me that the process and the commitment we had weren't being fulfilled as they should be, and therefore, that's where it ends. Ultimately, we aren't doing them a favour if we keep a user here longer than necessary. We are merely protecting them; protecting them does not equate to helping; it harms the family situation. The more the partner is exposed, the more the children are at risk (…). The priority is always to set a frame to reinforce their commitment and participation, or to address the difficulties we assess at that moment. If they do not respond to this framing and don't fulfil the commitments we establish at that time, it is time to let them go (Practitioner – Interview).

While framing is a powerful and necessary strategy for addressing resistance in the Chilean intervention programme, it may not be sufficient on its own. Framing seeks to set a baseline of accountability, but as the data shows, this may fail to reach the underlying emotional precursor: shame. Incorporating discussions around shame could further strengthen the intervention.

Resistance takes many forms, but common manifestations, observed in both interviews and group sessions, are the way men avoid directly acknowledging their violent actions. Rather than discussing the violence itself, they tend to focus on the circumstances leading up to it, often portraying themselves as provoked or misunderstood. When they do refer to their behaviour, they frequently use vague language or euphemisms, such as 'what they did' (CRH09—Interview) or 'mistakes' (Session observation n° 4, 2nd level group workshop), instead of explicitly naming it as violence. Other forms are distancing themselves from their violence, as if it were something that happened in the past, or as if it were perpetrated by someone else. While this can be interpreted *only* as forms of denial or minimisation, this section argues that such narratives are simultaneously shaped by shame, specifically, the shame associated with being labelled as an abusive or violent man. These labels carry significant social stigma, particularly in the Chilean context. For example, participants indicate that society tends to label men who have used violence against their partners as 'violent' or 'sick', terms that imply identity flaws or pathology and suggest a lack of potential for change. The label of being a perpetrator also comes with ostracism and isolation, being 'looked at differently', like a 'monster', particularly, although not exclusively, if the violence exerted is exposed to public scrutiny. Despite their efforts to change, many participants reported that others continue to view them as unchangeable. This enduring stigma is likely one of the most persistent consequences of their behaviour for men.

> I think it's always about how others perceive you. If people at work, in your family, or among your friends find out that you were in a men's re-education programme, then… they see you as a violent person, as someone who is sick. I think that was difficult—it was hard to face people because you feel like they look at you differently. You feel like they see you differently. So, in that sense, owning up to the fact that I made a mistake and that I'm in this process not because I'm sick,

but because I want to be an agent of change, to eradicate the bad… That was hard. It was difficult at first to interact with people. They always look at you… maybe look at you strangely, whisper behind your back. I don't know; I think that's been the hardest part for me (CRH09- Interview).

I was one of the few, or I would say almost the only man who participated in that workshop, and when I shared my testimony, many women, I don't want to generalise, but many comments were saying, 'How can you have an abuser here, this and that?' And still, one feels bad because… I understand people who have gone through complicated situations, but… That's when you realise that once you're in this, it's very difficult for people to change their opinion of you (CRH10- Interview)

Practitioner: What would you say to someone going through a similar situation? (Referring to men who use violence).
Man 4: Think before acting.
Man 5: That the person who uses violence tries not to hold on to a sense of guilt.
Practitioner: There is prejudice; they are treated as a monster.
[Most men nod vigorously in agreement]
Practitioner: If I am someone who has used violence, I am a person who made a mistake and can change.
Man 2: If you have communication, you won't resort to violence' (Session observation nº 12, 1st level group workshop).

The next participant describes how his ex-partner made her experiences of abuse public. His immediate reaction was to seek revenge against her, yet he also found himself consumed by shame at how others perceived him as a perpetrator of domestic violence. Struggling with panic attacks and social judgment, he withdrew from public life, confining himself to his home for approximately six months to escape the perceived scrutiny and judgment from colleagues.

> Well, the first feeling I had was to take revenge on my son's mother. That was my initial reaction; I wanted revenge, I didn't want anything to do with her. In fact, I even said she should be the one here. I felt regret… and I spent about six months not leaving the house out of fear of how people might perceive me. Besides, I would say… I would run into my colleagues on the street, and they would look at me. I would hide; I had panic attacks. I came here to the CRH to ask for help, and they gave me a few sessions to help calm me down because, for me, it was… Let's say… I was ashamed to go out because of what had happened. Now, I manage it much better, and the criticism and the comments have become… part of daily life (CRH10- Interview).

This quote illustrates how shame can emerge when a man's self-image, as a moral authority and role model for his son, comes into conflict with his own violent actions. The participant describes holding himself to high standards of respect and integrity, particularly in relation to his son, an ideal that clashes with the violence he enacted against the child's mother. Although he uses the term 'guilt', guilt typically relates to specific actions, whereas shame involves a negative self-evaluation. His fear of being seen as a hypocrite by his son suggests a deeper experience of shame.

> The guilt over the domestic violence episode. Because I had a standard that my son should see me as a role model. And when this happened, my conscience told me no, and I projected myself 10 years into the future, wondering what would happen if someday my son says to me, 'How can you talk to me about respect when you hit my mom?' And that really bothered me (CRH10- Interview).

This internalised shame is not limited to participants. Interestingly, even male practitioners expressed embarrassment about being seen entering the centre's facility. In other words, being at the centre became a source of shame. To distance themselves from the label of 'violent men', practitioners kept their identification badges visible, allowing neighbours and passersby to recognise them as staff members (Fieldwork notes). Men also used strategies to distance themselves from 'the violent men', reluctant to see themselves through the eyes of their peers or find common ground with them. They viewed themselves as distinct, not as 'one of them,' and certainly not as 'true' violent men. For some, such as the next man, this

sense of separation lessened over time as they progressed through the programme. The distance became a protective mechanism, a ‘shield’ against the shame associated with being identified as part of a group of violent men.

> When I arrived, I said, no, I shouldn't be here. I didn't say it to the professionals, but internally, I thought to myself, I shouldn't be here, I'm not like them. And as I got to know the people, of course, I was on the path to becoming someone who could commit something worse (CRH10- Interview).

> Because I believe there are service users who are abusers, I mean, real abusers, violent people, violent individuals. I think you must embrace change. When you first come here, you arrive not wanting to be here. Because sometimes you think it’s a waste of time, like, ‘I have to work,’ but then you start to realise its importance and follow the thread, so to speak, of the centre. And it starts to get more engaging over time. But you have to adapt to change, I think. And embrace change (CRH23- Interview).

> And I came here to what was formerly called HEVPA, the centre for men who use intimate partner violence. The term was very, very strong—it scared me. I even remember arriving, back when it was located a few blocks away. I would walk there, and I felt bad because I thought people were looking at me like, ‘Oh, there goes the wife-beater.’ It was my own feeling, like a self-defence shield I put on myself (CRH10- Interview).

For some other men, the urge to distance themselves from other participants persisted even after completing the programme, highlighting its endurance and complexity, and warranting careful consideration. One such example is the next man, a member of the Chilean armed forces, who, at the time of the interview (conducted on the day he completed the programme), still perceived himself as distinct from the ‘other’ men in the centre. He made a clear distinction between himself and the group's negative label, which he felt ‘embarrassed’ and ‘ashamed’ of. This allowed him to reinforce and portray an image of himself as different

and less violent than his peers. The immediate consequence or outcome of this strategy was his several attempts to minimise his use of violence.

> I came to the centre, like super reluctant, like, damn, what am I doing here? Why am I here? And I felt kind of ashamed, kind of embarrassed. In fact, I still feel a bit uneasy about it because, like, if you see me, and then see me on the street, oh, he's a beater. I'm not a beater (CRH23- Interview).

Contradictions mark his accounts, oscillating between expressions of accountability and claims of using violence in self-defence, portraying himself as an equal victim of abuse rather than accepting the shameful label of a perpetrator. In the following excerpts taken from different parts of the same interview, he indirectly addresses his use of violence when he reflects on the 'things' he did in the past that he 'shouldn't have done'.

> (…) and prejudice, but you understand it, and you accept that, yes, it was violent. Yes, it was violent because I did things I shouldn't have done, I reacted poorly... I shouldn't have reacted that way, and one has to accept that that's how things were. So... that's basically why I'm here (CRH23- Interview).

While his behaviours 'were violent', his ex-partner 'was aggressive'. This distinction allowed him to frame his actions as separate from who he is as a person. This distancing is a strategy to manage the unbearable shame of identifying as a perpetrator.

> I don't want to blame her (ex-partner), but she was always aggressive. She always was. Even now, with the experience I've gained at the centre in learning to manage impulses, manage anger, and all those things, it's been really helpful because I've been able to handle it. It's no longer something like, oh, she's going to get mad or start saying things to me (CRH23- Interview).

In sum, while resistance is often the most visible response among men in DVPPs, this analysis reveals that shame is a powerful undercurrent shaping men's strategies of resistance. The theoretical and practical implications of this will be discussed in the next and final section of this chapter.

5.6 Discussion

This chapter aimed to explore men's understanding of their use of IPV. Why do men believe they resorted to violence? How do they think it happens, and how to stop it? These are some of the key questions this chapter sought to address. While men's accounts of their use of violence are not always consistent or clear, and some men may use them to justify or minimise their actions, dismissing their accounts without listening may be detrimental if the goal is to improve DVPPs (Morran, 2022). As Hearn (1998) argues, men's explanations of their violent behaviour are not just descriptions, they are also justifications, yet how men talk about their use of violence is crucial for a critical analysis of power: when men talk about their own violence, they are not just explaining what happened, they are also actively performing masculinities. Researchers must navigate this tension carefully, analysing not only what is said but also how and why it is said in a given context (Hearn, 1998). Because of this, interviews and observations were analysed not in parts or sections, but also as a whole, paying attention to the specificities of the Chilean context.

In this study, men's narratives about violence reflect findings that are well-established in research on the subject. Kelly and Westmarland (2016), for example, argue that men who use IPV frequently depict their violent actions as isolated incidents or out-of-character behaviours, which enables them to avoid taking responsibility for how they treat their partners. Stark (2007) contends that men who use IPV tend to portray their violence as isolated acts, thus detaching it from a broader context of abuse. This, in his words, 'reflects a male-oriented perspective on events' (p. 246). Similarly, the work of Seymour et al. (2021) suggests that men's accounts tend to downplay or ignore the gendered and structural dimensions of IPV, reinforcing existing gender inequalities. Evidence suggests that men characterise their violence as not genuinely violent or as a trivial incident with minimal long-term effects. Men may shift the focus by portraying their actions as mutual violence (Gadd, 2003) or by comparing themselves to other, more violent men whom they view as the 'real' perpetrators (Gottzén, 2016). Some may deny responsibility altogether by claiming not to remember the violent incident or attributing their actions to other factors such as alcohol or drug use. Why does this happen in the Chilean case study? Why do men invest so much effort in avoiding responsibility for their use of violence? Hearn (1998) gives a hint, though he does not examine

shame in depth in his book, something that is intended in this chapter: '[…] for most men there is a degree of ambivalence, embarrassment and even shame in doing and disclosing violence' (p. 220). This chapter applies and extends Hearn's ideas, arguing that the theoretical framework of the programme plays a relevant role in their accounts (how they understand violence and the resistance strategies observed), while also bringing into the analysis the importance of the Chilean context.

To begin addressing the central questions posed at the outset of this chapter, it is essential first to consider the influence of the programme's theoretical framework on men's accounts: men's accounts of violence exhibit a notable alignment with practitioners' discourse, particularly regarding the roots of IPV, its dynamics, and strategies for eradication, which are based on the cycle of violence and the emotional management theoretical framework (Walker, 1999). In this context, men do not simply repeat what they learn in the programme; they also interpret it creatively, using it to make sense of their own life stories and childhood experiences. This not only underscores the importance of the theoretical lens but also highlights the need for a close examination of how it is interpreted by the participants, which may vary from its original envisioned form. For example, it may inadvertently cause men to focus on regaining control over their behaviours and emotions by avoiding conflict, suppressing arguments, and restraining their actions to stop IPV, which can contradict the very objective of the programme to connect men with their emotions. On the other hand, according to men, the focus on emotional management has had a few advantages for their relationships and themselves (which will be analysed in depth in the next chapter). In this regard, emotional management may be necessary but insufficient, and simultaneously it can be problematic unless reframed within a broader critique of doing masculinities and the context in which emotions arise, as it risks deflecting responsibility and other resistance strategies.

Building on this, the programme's theoretical framework may reinforce an incidental (not deliberated), isolated (extraordinary, a 'particular situation' CRH23-Interview), and circumstantial (as a byproduct of emotions) understanding of violence among men in the Chilean programme. Stark (2007) has previously highlighted significant issues with the cycle of violence theory, emphasising how it perpetuates misconceptions about IPV. Abusive

incidents frequently involve a series of coercive and controlling actions that vary in intensity and can last for hours, throughout the night, or be interspersed with breaks when the abuser rests, leaves to purchase alcohol or drugs, or when either party goes to work (Stark, 2007). The findings in this chapter align with Stark's critique of the cycle of violence, extending the analysis as in the programme, Walker's theory is combined with a focus on emotional management. According to Stark (2007), the cycle of violence theory upholds the myth that assaults occur in 'neatly circumscribed' (p. 246) patterns, failing to capture the broader, coercive, and controlling dynamics that often characterise IPV. While the very act of storytelling may be used as the perfect scenario for men to justify their violence (Hearn, 1998), it is argued here that the theoretical framework used in the programme can reinforce resistance not only in the form of minimisation, but also victim blaming when, for example, men attribute a burst of emotions as a driver of their violence and thus projecting their emotions (shame, anger, powerless) onto their partners. The cycle of violence theory and emotional management framework drawn together may downplay the intentionality and power behind men's use of violence and abuse by framing it as an unavoidable, spontaneous, unplanned eruption triggered by unaddressed emotions rather than a deliberate choice, which helps deflect accountability by negating their ability to choose their actions (Partanen et al., 2006). Finally, it may inadvertently reinforce in men the view that violence can be stopped by using the emotional tools provided in the programme, yet research has demonstrated that moving beyond tools to a deeper reflection is key for sustained change in men in DVPPs (Wistow et al., 2017). In this PhD research, the latter idea is further elaborated by suggesting that change may *also* involve a more in-depth analysis of men's doing of masculinities and their link to their use of IPV. In addition, when the emotional management framework is applied without sufficient attention to the broader context in which emotions arise, it may sideline the discussion on men's process of doing masculinities and their link with their use of violence. This argument extends Garda's (2021), who contends that discussing men's emotions in DVPPs should only be made through the lens of their use of power. In this research, it is argued that the discussion with men should address more specifically how men enact masculinities, connecting the gender norms for men with their use of violence. To do that, an in-depth exploration of the context in which emotions arise is desirable. In this way,

DVPPs avoid centring the discussion on how traditional gender norms for men can be harmful for them, which risks portraying them as equal victims of patriarchy (McCarry, 2007), and men can use for mutual combat discourses.

A more nuanced and critical engagement with men's explanations of IPV further reveals that

reveals that such narratives are often rooted in contextually embedded notions of masculinities. Specifically, these accounts reflect gender norms that emphasise power, pride, and the role of the male provider. When men perceive a loss of authority or status within their intimate relationships, these norms can generate emotions of inadequacy, frustration, powerlessness, and shame, which many participants themselves identify as explanations for their use of violence. These emotions are not merely personal responses, but deeply gendered.

By attributing violence solely to unaddressed emotions, both the men and the programme risk shifting focus away from personal accountability and simultaneously overlooking the gendered norms that underpin and sustain intimate partner violence. Hearn's work explains the contradictions in men's accounts, which reflect what he calls the multifaceted nature of power, 'to examine how it is that men who may attempt to maintain or increase power through violence may not experience powerfulness' (Hearn, 1998, p. 193), which explains the emotional complexities that men's accounts reveal, where violence seems simultaneously legitimate and illegitimate.

This same depth of analysis is also necessary when examining men's resistance strategies, such as minimisation, victim blaming, and mutual combat. It seems that some aspects of men's violence are emasculating and deeply shameful. When their violence becomes publicly known, shame is the most prevalent feeling among men. Taking into consideration the Chilean context, it is argued here that shame is gendered and linked to the public perception of perpetrators as unmanly. The man's account of how people view men who use violence against their partners as sick or violent individuals represents just one aspect of the broader social perception. Although it was never directly addressed in the programme and remained unacknowledged by the men (the elephant in the room), underlying their shame lies a perceived loss of masculinity. In 2010, a campaign launched by the National Service for Women and Gender Equality in Chile (Figure 6), the same government service responsible for

implementing DVPPs in the country, stirred significant controversy. Yet, it encapsulated the feelings and perceptions that Chilean society was already forming around perpetrators of IPV. The slogan of the campaign was: 'Maricón es el que maltrata a una mujer, digamoslo al que lo merece', which translates to 'A faggot is someone who uses violence against women, tell it to those who deserve it'. The term 'maricón' is an offensive slang term used to refer to gay men, but it has varying meanings depending on the context, all of them derogatory. It is frequently employed to reinforce gender norms, targeting men who deviate from socially accepted attributes of traditional gender norms. The term is also commonly used to police heterosexual masculinity, often directed at men perceived as lacking bravery, courage, or honourable conduct, traits closely tied to dominant masculine norms. Within the framing of this campaign, it is male perpetrators of IPV who are portrayed as genuinely failing these moral standards, and thus as the ones who deserve to be labelled as 'maricones', rather than gay men. Being referred to the centre may thus feel emasculating for some of them, as it reflects their failure to fulfil the moral standards of what it takes to be a man. Research conducted in Chile supports this. In a survey conducted in the region of Araucanía (in the south of Chile), which has high reports of IPV, 471 men were asked about their perceptions of other men who use violence against their female partners and explored their discursive justifications of IPV. 58.4% of the respondents considered men who use IPV

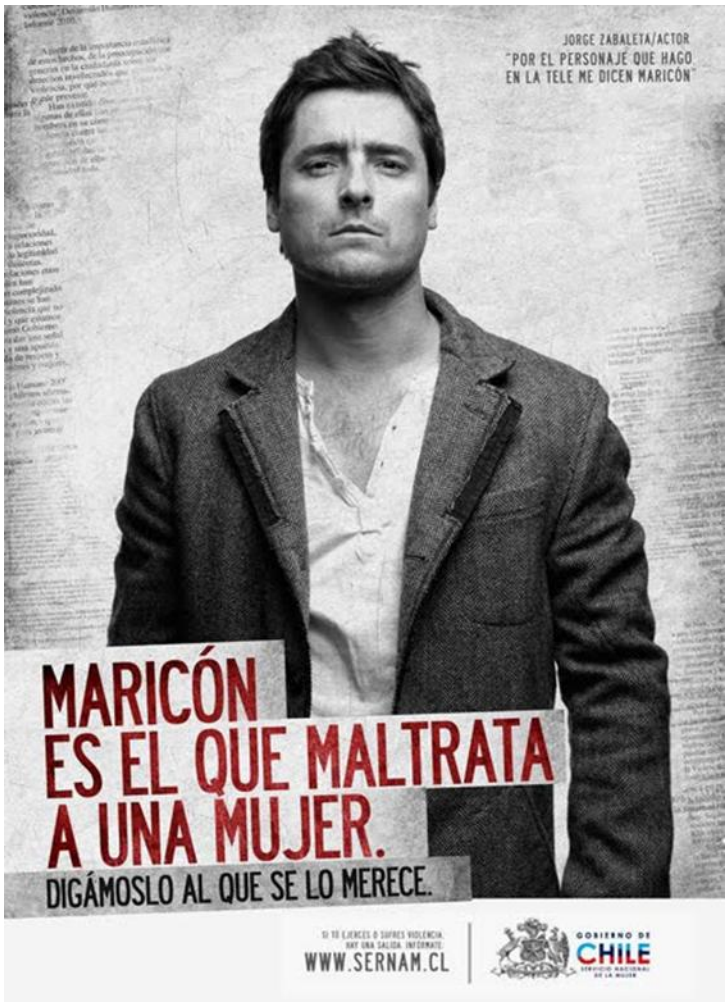


Figure 7. Public campaign to prevent domestic violence in Chile

cowards and publicly condemned those behaviours (Peña et al., 2017). However, this public condemnation of IPV represents a relatively recent shift in Chilean society. According to Olavarría, the patriarchal model governing gender relations normalised the idea that a man could beat his wife and children. This ideology was internalised from childhood, granting men authority and the right to exercise power to reaffirm their manhood. Such behaviour was even legitimised as a manifestation of affection, with punishment inflicted on a woman and her children being viewed as a show of love. Additionally, violence was seen as an expression of virility, a sentiment reflected in the now outdated Chilean saying, 'Quien te quiere, te aporrea' (translated as 'Who loves you beats you'). This saying was used to justify men's violence against children who were deemed deserving of discipline, and it ended up extending to women as well (Olavarría, 2001a).

While this chapter has critically examined the limitations of the programme's theoretical framework, it is equally important to recognise that the programme does foster meaningful change for many participants. These accounts suggest that change is not only possible but already underway, albeit in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. The following chapter examines how such change occurs and what it entails in practice.

Chapter 6: How does change happen for some men who use violence against their partners in the Chilean programme?

6.1 Introduction

The chapter examines the mechanisms by which change occurs for some men in the DVPP, focusing on the role of group workshops in dismantling traditional masculine norms and promoting new forms of interaction and self-reflection. Through men's accounts, the chapter illustrates how the programme helps men question and deconstruct deeply ingrained aspects of their ideas about what it means to be a man. It discusses the shift from pragmatic conflict resolution to more reflective and communicative approaches, emphasising the importance of dialogue and emotional expression in fostering healthier relationships.

The chapter also addresses the non-linear nature of change, acknowledging that while progress is made in some areas, other aspects, such as the need for control, remain deeply embedded in the enactment of masculinity. It highlights the challenges practitioners face in facilitating this complex process of unlearning and re-signifying gender norms.

6.2 Dismantling and disrupting traditional masculine spaces of interaction and enacting masculinity

Group workshops encouraged men to respectfully share and exchange with one another, fostering a shift in how some engaged and interacted with their peers. As one man noted, within groups of male friends, there was often a tendency to undermine or call out behaviours that were not considered appropriate, such as sharing thoughts, experiences, or emotions that men often kept private. These were perceived as expressions of vulnerability, which were frequently dismissed as 'sentimental,' overly emotional, or, most significantly, unmanly. Yet, as this man suggested, male friendships held the potential for meaningful connection and support. However, these moments were often overshadowed by pervasive gender norms that discouraged emotional openness. Emotional suppression refers to the conscious or unconscious act of inhibiting or holding back one's emotions rather than expressing or processing them.

> Now, if I think about what I've learned [in the DVPP] beyond what we've already talked, it's having someone to talk to. Like the practitioner says, we can't always go around carrying a heavy load. And I'm like that; I tend to keep a lot of things to myself. Talking is a good tool to feel better, to let things out. You can't keep so much to yourself. Talking about problems. Sometimes you even get good advice. So, it really helped... Among ourselves [referring to the group of friends], sometimes there are good responses too, others say like, you are being sentimental, cut it out. I say it too sometimes, like, 'You know, I had problems with my partner.' 'There you go crying again' (CRH24 - Interview).

This likely explained why some men, like the one quoted below, expressed fear about sharing their emotions and thoughts with peers in their daily lives. They were concerned about being mocked or shamed, which discouraged them from speaking openly about their struggles and, notably, their use of violence. The practitioners, however, fostered a respectful and open space for dialogue, where ideas could be exchanged without fear of judgment. This approach was crucial in building trust and enabled some men not only to reflect on their actions but also to begin letting go of the shame associated with them.

> That I needed to express it—so that's what I value most about the centre, that it gave me that opportunity to share experiences and to be heard in a respectful environment. Because, of course, before, I was really afraid that people would make fun of me for what I felt, for what I did. So, in that sense, it was a big switch (…). I feel much more relieved as a person (CRH09 - Interview).

> Talking with the practitioner. It goes beyond what one learns. The fact of having someone to talk to, to share these things that are happening. It's more, it's broad, it's a lot of things, it doesn't just focus on what is learned or taught here, it was about coming to talk with him, for him to explain things to you (CRH24 – Interview).

In this context, the centre showed some of the men that different forms of male interaction were possible and, for some, necessary. The new ways of interacting fostered within the

centre led some men to question the very idea they had of male friendship and encouraged them to reflect on the types of bonds they had built with those they considered friends, as well as the level of depth they had come to expect from those relationships.

> It was like a shield; I didn't discuss my feelings. I always had few friends, and 'friends' in quotes, because in reality, building a friendship means sharing life experiences. I was usually there, but I would ask basic questions and just stay there and always respond with evasions and everything (CRH09- Interview).

Similarly, some of the men developed a renewed appreciation for their families while distancing themselves from friendships that had reinforced harmful habits, such as drinking.

> We spend more time together [referring to his family], and they feel more secure. I've mostly distanced myself from my coworkers. I've also distanced myself from friends. Before, I wasn't as interested in family. Now they call me 'the cat' because I don't even go out. They say, 'We don't see you at the bar anymore; you're focused on your work and family(Man, Fieldwork session observation n° 9, 2nd level group work).

The group workshops also challenged and deconstructed some of the deeply rooted aspects of the participants' masculinity, encouraging some to question long-held ways of being. One participant spoke about a characteristic he believed was widespread among men in Chile, and likely across many cultures: pragmatism. In this context, pragmatism referred to moving on from situations or conflicts quickly, rather than overthinking or dwelling on them, which often led to suppressing thoughts and avoiding confrontation. It implied a preference for letting things go and not spending too much time revisiting, reflecting on, or analysing past events.

> I remove myself from problems when I get angry. I go to the patio, wash the car (Man, Session observation n° 9, 1st level group workshop).

The group workshops played a crucial role in encouraging men to reflect on their behaviours and beliefs, fostering a shift toward more open and empathetic communication. Reflective practice, in this sense, allowed men to pause, step back, and consider not only their own ideas but also the perspectives of others, which helped prevent them from imposing their views as inherently right. This approach challenged avoidance-oriented responses that sought to

bypass discomfort by steering clear of conflict. Instead, it opened up new avenues for meaningful dialogue with their partners.

> Before, I used to keep things to myself; I don't know, like, If someone said something to me, okay, I would keep it to myself for one or two days... *We* tend to *forget things rather than overthink them* [emphasis mine]. Now, it's different. Now I say, 'You know what? I didn't think this was right; can we talk about it?' And we talk about it (CRH08 - Interview).

> Before, we couldn't reach an agreement. We would raise our voices, and sometimes I would get upset, but after an hour or two, *I wouldn't go back and revisit the issue. I didn't resolve it. The anger would fade, and that was it. Now, if something isn't going well, we've changed what we do. Instead of letting it go, we sit down and talk about it.* We ask, 'Why are we acting this way?' or 'What are we missing?' *We're turning to dialogue and communication*' [emphasis mine] (Man, Fieldwork session observation n° 9, 2nd level group workshop).

Reflexive practice became possible during moments of conflict through the use of specific 'tools', in this case, the time-out technique.

> I feel that it has been very helpful for me. I mean, it's a way of calming things down, *looking at them from a different perspective*, because perhaps when you're in the middle of an argument, you only see your own point of view and stop seeing the person in front of you, *trying to impose your terms instead*. So*, stepping back a little, thinking things through, and seeing the whole picture*—I think that tool has been very useful [emphasis mine] (CRH09- Interview).

By creating a space for open dialogue and reflection, the workshops promoted a re-evaluation of traditional gender norms and behaviours, prompting some men to reconsider how societal expectations around masculinity had influenced their past actions and beliefs. In this context, the group workshops helped some men reflect on restrictive gender norms that had pressured them to suppress emotions and avoid showing themselves in vulnerable positions. The workshops encouraged them to move away from the rigid ideals of masculinity that had been

deeply ingrained over time. Through this process, men were prompted to question the societal expectations that had shaped their behaviour and sense of identity.

> What happens is that throughout this whole process, we've analysed all these behaviours we have, and that society imposes on us. I mean, it's still deeply ingrained that men don't cry, or that they shouldn't cry, or shouldn't express themselves, that they should stay quiet (CRH08 - Interview).

The use of the phrase 'society imposes on us' indicated that the participant recognised the external pressures that had shaped his behaviour, framing masculinity as something constructed by societal expectations rather than as an inherent or natural trait. His emphasis on behaviours such as not crying and staying silent underscored how these norms had deterred men from fully engaging with their emotions and from expressing themselves authentically. He appeared to be in the process of challenging and analysing these norms, suggesting a shift toward a more reflective perspective on his performance of masculinity in terms of emotions. By acknowledging the deep entrenchment of these gendered expectations, he began to question their validity and, possibly, the harmful effects they had on men, and himself.

The next man shared that, thanks to the programme and a long journey of self-discovery he had undertaken independently, he had become more able to discuss his feelings openly and express them freely, without feeling that doing so diminished his sense of masculinity. He explained that he had learned to recognise and name the emotions he was experiencing, and rather than 'keeping it all inside', as he had done in the past, he now shares them not only with his current partner but also with his family. He reflected that this tendency to suppress emotions had been a significant factor in his use of violence. He further noted that this emotional growth, combined with a broadened understanding of what constitutes violence, had enabled him to adopt non-violent approaches to resolving conflict. The programme also encouraged him to reflect deeply on how societal expectations around masculinity, 'things that are so unconscious', as he put it, may have shaped his behaviour as a man.

> But we're a team nowadays, so everything is talked about. I feel like I have that freedom to be able to say, 'You know what? I feel sad, I feel frustrated, I feel

> exhausted'. Or even something I joke about—I say, 'I know I'm burnt out.' Actually, she (his current partner) told my sister about it, because they're very close friends. She said, 'Hey, it's funny when he says he's burnt out,' and my family teases me about it too. *But I can express it now. Before, I don't know if I felt sad, or exhausted, or overwhelmed—I kept it all inside, and I wouldn't talk about it.* Not anymore. *The programme helped me first to recognise violence, and then to express it—or to express my feelings.* That's what I think helped me the most: being able to express how I feel. Before, I don't know… *I would feel like crying, take a deep breath, dry my watery eyes, and just keep going. Not anymore. Now, if I feel like crying, it doesn't make me less of a man to cry in front of my partner*. And she hugs me, and that comforting hug is something that renews me. It's something we've had to work on so much more. These are things that are so unconscious, right? I grew up with the idea that men don't cry, men don't feel, men provide, men don't cook, men don't do laundry [emphasis mine] (CRH19- Interview).

Most importantly, this account illustrated a disruption of gender norms that, across many cultures, had traditionally emphasised traits in men such as stoicism, self-reliance, and emotional control. These expectations often discouraged emotional expression, which the man had previously perceived as unmanly. While he continued to recognise these gender norms and the societal expectations placed on men, he no longer saw expressing emotions, such as crying, as a threat to his masculinity. Instead, he came to view it as a meaningful way to connect more deeply with himself and his partner. Emotional expression was reframed as a relational act that fostered intimacy, exemplified by the comforting hug he received from his partner.

For some men, a link existed between feeling vulnerable, emotional openness, and relinquishing a sense of entitlement; however, as the next section will show, this process was neither straightforward nor did it occur in all the men at the centre. This change occurred for certain men within the group workshop environment, which they had perceived as supportive and conducive to personal growth. According to them, sharing thoughts and emotions placed them in a vulnerable position, one that some men had been willing to enter, encouraged by both peers and practitioners. By allowing themselves to be vulnerable in front of others, some

men had been able to admit mistakes and recognise that they were 'not always right', without feeling that doing so made them any less of a man.

> So, in that sense, this experience at the centre, of sharing experiences, of feeling that one is vulnerable, that one can make mistakes, I believe it was a fundamental experience for me. That's what I emphasise... *I learned I could make mistakes and that I was a human being with emotions* [emphasis mine] (CRH09 - Interview).

> In my case, I used to be very impulsive. I was the one who was always right. *I was the one who knew more. I didn't have the right mindset.* Sometimes I wouldn't let my partner speak*. I'd say: I know what to do, and I will do it.* Sometimes I'd go ahead, and things wouldn't work out. *Now, I listen to her, we talk, and she gives her opinion. We discuss what I'm going to do.* If it's good, we go with it; if not, we don't. I've made a bit of progress in this*. I'm more flexible now* [emphasis mine] (Man-Fieldwork session observation n° 9, 2nd level groupwork).

Some men began to let go of the belief that they had to be solely 'responsible' for overseeing household decisions, prompted by reflections on the personal and relational benefits of doing so. One man, for instance, shared that he felt a sense of relief after releasing the pressure of always having to 'lead' the family. Holding power and authority, he realised, had felt more like a burden than a privilege. This process of unlearning traditional gender norms took time and required deep reflection on how such changes could positively impact his life. Letting go of core aspects of conventional masculinity, such as the expectation to always be in charge, had the potential to shift power dynamics in the relationship.

> So, he [his partner's father] told me: 'What do you mean by 'our' rules? Don't you lead? You were raised in a macho culture.' Yes, I was, in the past, I told him. Today, I said to him: 'Haven't you seen your brother?' – He has a brother who, in a colloquial sense, is very macabeo[2] – 'What about my brother?' he said. 'Macabeo,

[2] In Chile, a 'macabeo' refers to a man who is extremely submissive or obedient to his partner, often to the point of being overly compliant or deferential. The term is used somewhat humorously or critically to describe a man who 'follows orders' from his partner without question, essentially letting her take the lead in the relationship.

> right? And does he have a problem?' 'No, none.' 'See? Isn't it easier to be macabeo than to lead?' And he laughs. I mean, when you take responsibilities off your shoulders, everything feels lighter. 'Have you heard of the loneliness of leadership?' 'Yes,' I told him, 'I have it too, but at work. Why should I have it at home if I can rely on others?' He stops and thinks. He doesn't quite get it because, obviously, he's almost 70 years old. The generation is completely different (CRH19 - Interview).

6.3 Wait, what happened? The non-linear process of change

The preceding section illustrated how some men had been able to reflect, thanks to the programme and particularly through the group workshops, on the benefits of letting go of certain gender norms and deeply ingrained dimensions of traditional masculinity. This section will show that such transformation was not straightforward and required sustained, in-depth reflection. The case of the previously quoted man (CRH19) served as a compelling example, highlighting both the extent of the changes he had achieved and the areas where further progress could be supported. As discussed earlier, this man reported becoming more open to expressing his emotions and gradually dismantling his sense of entitlement, an attitude that appeared to be linked to his belief in being solely responsible for household decisions as a man. This shift not only brought him a sense of relief but also enhanced intimacy with his current partner, reduced the unequal power dynamic they had, and enabled him to manage conflict through non-violent means. Furthermore, he appeared to be actively questioning traditional gender norms, signalling a transition toward a more reflective and self-aware approach to masculinity. However, his journey underscored the complexities involved in unlearning deeply embedded societal expectations, suggesting that while meaningful progress had been made, the process of change remained ongoing.

As the man later revealed in the interview, highlighting the importance of reading interviews holistically and attending to subtle details, he had been reading books on dark psychology. This field has been widely criticised for its focus on understanding human behaviour primarily

This concept contrasts with more traditional views of masculinity where the man is expected to be the dominant decision-maker. In this case, he seems to give up this role, and prefers to be a ‘macabeo’.

for purposes of manipulation, exploitation, and personal gain. Critics argued that promoting such tactics encouraged unethical behaviour and could be used to harm others. Literature on dark psychology often emphasised themes of power, control, and domination in relationships or social contexts, frequently including strategies for manipulation, coercion, and deception. At the time of the interview, the man was reading *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene, described as 'a practical guide for those who want power and who want to be armed against power' (Glenn, 2013, p. 932). The book, a widely known self-help text, explored strategies and principles individuals could use to gain, maintain, and enhance power, drawing on historical examples from political leaders, military strategists, and influential figures.

The man's journey toward what he referred to as 'emotional intelligence' had begun before his referral to the programme. Once enrolled, he engaged in extensive personal research on the topic, likely influenced by the programme's emphasis on emotional management, as discussed in the previous chapter.

> Because besides being here at the centre, I really enjoy reading, so I look a lot into… Psychology books. *Psychology applied to relationships*. What I'm currently reading is something called dark psychology; I'm not sure. My go-to book right now is *The 48 Laws of Power*, *so I'm always reading about this, and when I started here* [*in the programme*] *, I began researching a lot* [emphasis mine] (CRH19 - interview).

His preference for reading books on dark psychology, which emphasised manipulation and power, could have suggested a distorted or even instrumentalised understanding of what he referred to as 'emotional intelligence', one that may have prioritised control over genuine emotional connection. More significantly, it illustrated how newly acquired knowledge did not necessarily replace older ways of being but could instead coexist with, or even reinforce, them.

Although he had made some progress in challenging traditional gender norms, particularly around emotional expression and the perceived responsibility to lead, his continued desire to have things his own way suggested that ideas of being in control and having power were neither openly acknowledged nor critically examined, or even entirely deliberate. On the contrary, he expressed pride in his intellectual pursuits, presenting himself as an eager and

committed reader who believed he was taking the right steps toward improving his emotional intelligence. This tension highlighted the complexity of his journey: while he perceived that meaningful changes had occurred, certain deeply ingrained aspects of his masculine identity remained intact. This underscored how personal transformation is not always linear or complete, and how new knowledge can be selectively integrated in ways that align with pre-existing beliefs and behaviours.

> Researcher: What were you looking for in those books?
>
> Man: About emotional intelligence, a lot. Uh, my dad was such... a strong figure in our family, that my mom was left aside, so that... that's what... that's the gap I have. For example, over the past five years, I think my mom has told me she loves me twice. So, one kind of doesn't give it much importance, but then one starts to realise, and I don't know, I see my friends' moms, and they are all about their kids, which my mom didn't do. She didn't do it by omission, and because I think she wasn't allowed to. My dad, especially to me, was a very strong figure. Uh, and that caused, I think, all of this triggering... For me, women's tears didn't move me at all. But not at all, you know? I would see a woman crying, and it was unbelievable that it didn't move me. And I would worry because it didn't provoke anything in me. I mean, right? Today, I see my partner tear up, and I hug her, comforting her. Before, I'd see her crying, and I'd say, 'If you're done crying, talk to me (CRH19 - Interview).

6.4 Keeping dimensions of masculinity: 'The idea of the man is gone' ... is it?

The previous section examined the complexity of the change process and its close ties to the men's enduring conceptions of masculinity, ideas that, in some cases, were directly linked to their use of IPV. This section offered a more critical view of the potential for meaningful change within DVPPs and their limitations.

While the programme encouraged participants to reflect on gender norms for men (see Section 6.2), some overstated both their change and their contribution to gender equality in Chilean society. For example, when asked what it meant to be a man, many claimed that traditional masculinity no longer shaped their identities, suggesting they had entirely

relinquished conventional notions of manhood. Gender equality was often narrowly defined in terms of a fairer distribution of household chores. For some, taking on tasks traditionally assigned to women at home was seen as evidence of change, greater equality, and a redefinition of masculinity. However, such claims often overlook the subtle yet persistent influence of gender norms for men on their beliefs and behaviours, including those underpinning IPV.

> 'We discussed this, and it is deeply internalised in me. *The figure of the man is gone*... While it's true that I also try to adapt to all activities with the woman. I don't have problems with it because my mom always raised us that way. So, this is how it is, this is how the dishes are washed, which are tasks that, due to machismo, are directed towards women, but my mom always made sure to tell us: we are all a family, and here everyone does everything. So no, I don't have a problem doing those things that were traditionally assigned to women, but *as a man, we are now really looking for gender equality* [emphasis mine] (CRH08 - interview).

While the distribution of household chores may contribute to gender equality, a deeper, reflexive process is needed, one that extends well beyond the equitable sharing of household chores, involving exploring and understanding how their notions of masculinities were connected to their use of violence and abuse (as discussed in Section 5.4). For example, one participant who had previously reflected on relinquishing decision-making power in his relationship later explained that he would not abandon his gendered identity as a protector. In the following quote, this role was enacted in coercively controlling ways, as he restricted his partner's autonomy by regulating where she went and how much alcohol he deemed appropriate for her to consume.

> *I think being a protector is a behaviour that I will never be able to get rid of.* Besides, my partner is super thin; she weighs precisely half my weight. When we go out, she feels safe with me. And nowadays I don't know, *I prefer to stay at home. That was also a source of conflict between us. She likes to go out.* She likes the nightlife, but she drinks, and I don't know, just one drink, and she already feels

> bad. We don't have a problem with alcohol, any of us [emphasis mine] (CRH19 - Interview).

He appeared unwilling to let go of this aspect of himself, even though he understood that it aligned more closely with traditional notions of manhood, an idea that had been critically examined within the programme (see Section 5.2.2). In this case, the participant's identification with the protector role was central to his sense of self and appeared to be a source of pride; his partner also appreciated it (according to him), and he was consciously reluctant to relinquish it. He did not perceive his behaviour as controlling; instead, he framed it as care and responsibility for his partner's well-being. However, his description revealed how this role was enacted in ways that limited her autonomy, such as deciding where she should go and how much alcohol she should consume. These actions, while not recognised by him as problematic, reflected a belief in the superiority of his judgment and a tendency to sideline his partner's agency. His account illustrated the complexity of unlearning deeply embedded gender norms: while some progress was evident, it coexisted with unexamined and even celebrated aspects of traditional masculinity. The words of this participant reflect the challenges and dilemmas that the practitioners encounter in the process of facilitating men's reflection on the intricacies of IPV. It may be linked with how men enact masculinity, but, at the same time, some men expressed not being willing to give up core gendered norms that are constitutive of the self. Furthermore, the previous quote illustrates the areas for potential improvement in the programme, as it seems that the link between violence and how they were enacting manhood was not apparent for this man.

6.5 The simultaneously gendered and contextual nature of resistance: a glance into the group workshops

In the previous chapter (5.5), I examined resistance in men's accounts of their use of violence as an expression of underlying shame, illustrating the profoundly gendered nature of resistance within DVPPs. This section revisits that analysis from a gendered lens, but shifts the focus to the context of programme delivery to demonstrate how resistance is not only gendered but also shaped by the (relational) conditions of the intervention setting. This perspective helps illuminate the multifaceted nature of resistance and the complexities practitioners face in facilitating meaningful change.

Resistance is understood here as a process of opposing, holding back, or struggling against something, whether explicitly or subtly. In DVPPs, such resistance is expected: interventions are inherently uncomfortable, as they invite men to confront deeply held beliefs and behaviours, often tied to traditional ideas on how to be a man.

> A strategy I have found myself using to engage with them involves gradually gaining their trust (...) making them feel comfortable, but at the same time, I always tell them that while they should feel comfortable, not too comfortable, because our role is also to make them uncomfortable, as we will have conversations that touch on sensitive topics (Practitioner – Interview).

What perhaps makes change so uncomfortable for many men is the pressure to confront and redefine aspects of masculinity that are not only personally valued but also socially rewarded. As shown earlier, participants often resisted relinquishing certain masculine traits that they saw as integral to their identities. This resistance is evident in the following extract from field notes, where a practitioner reflects on a man's difficulty engaging with the concept of 'unlearning'.

> The practitioner mentions that men sometimes indicate that the concepts used in the intervention are very difficult for them to understand. He mentions the concept of 'unlearning' and remembers that one of the men replied that he 'cannot forget' (Researcher's fieldwork notes).

While some concepts taught in the programme may indeed be challenging for men to grasp, the case the practitioner referred to likely reflects more than a mere misunderstanding. 'Desaprender' (unlearning), a central concept in the programme, involves letting go of previously held behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs, in other words, of parts of the self. His resistance to 'forgetting' points to a deeper struggle: the desire to maintain a coherent and valued masculine identity, even when critically examined in the programme.

Men not only resist unlearning normative masculine ideals but also deploy (not deliberately) these very norms as resources for resistance. As discussed at the start of this chapter, the programme setting may facilitate change for some men, but not all. DVPPs inherently involve

a power asymmetry between practitioners and participants, which some men challenge directly.

> There are roles that are designated, and there is also a matter of power. Not supposedly, *We* have the power in the intervention (emphasis of the practitioner) (Practitioner – Interview).

One practitioner described how a participant persistently challenged his authority and the power dynamics between the practitioner and himself, undermining him based on his age and appearance.

> With service users who sometimes have this, I don't know, sometimes they have these attitudes of superiority, which are also typical of masculinities. Another example could be a service user who disrespected me.I felt it had been happening for a while. I think it eventually went too far, and later in the same session, he apologised because he realised he had crossed the line... But because of my age and appearance, I have a face that looks younger and more childlike. That's been the case all my life. My colleagues told me about another case that was much more serious, where the service user practically said to her [one of the female practitioners], 'Hey, what are you going to teach me? I'm 60 years old; you're like 20'. It wasn't as direct with me, but some service users think this way, or at least won't say it out loud… but some do. In my experience, it was super complex because in the sessions, this service user *presented himself as if he knew more than anyone else*, and he also mentioned that he had worked in an organisation for several years. So, yeah… one must try to turn them around, make them see… I tell them, for example, that no one has absolute knowledge. I have my knowledge, and that's why it's helpful, too, to have a team [emphasis mine] (Practitioner – Interview).

This quote reveals the complexities of working with male perpetrators, some of which have 'attitudes of superiority' typical of 'masculinities', such as refusing to position oneself as a learner ('as if he knew more than anyone else'), reflecting the gendered nature of resistance. In group workshops, these dynamics are often amplified by the delivery format, which

resembles traditional classroom structures and uses abstract, academic vocabulary. The following extract from the group work sessions reflects the programme's frequent use of academic vocabulary, incorporating abstract concepts such as patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. These terms are deeply complex and have been extensively debated in academic literature, often with varying interpretations and understandings.

> The hegemonic, patriarchal model, tough and cold, gives us an ideal of who we should be. Many of us grew up with the image of the cold, rigid man who acts before thinking, incites us to act violently, and shows us the ideal of manhood (Practitioner, Session observations n° 1, second level group workshop).

While some men adopt this academic vocabulary (as discussed in Chapter 5), others struggle with its meaning. The concepts used are not always academic. In one session, for example, a participant misunderstood the term symbolism, despite engaging thoughtfully with the content of the video being discussed. The concept of symbolism refers to the use of symbols, objects, words, or actions, that represent broader ideas or meanings beyond their literal sense. It is not something tangible or concrete but rather a way to convey complex or layered meanings.

> Practitioner: What symbolisms could we observe?
>
> Man*: I'm not sure about the meaning of the word symbolism.* But the lesson this child is learning, and that has been passed down through generations in the family, is clear. The man's power is created in the family: his authority, and also the woman's silence, her fear, her reluctance to speak to the authorities. She has always been mistreated and fears the belt [emphasis mine] (Session observations n° 6, 1st level group workshop).

The classroom-like structure, with PowerPoint presentations and a practitioner standing in front of a rectangular table, reinforces a hierarchical dynamic between the 'teacher' and the 'learner.' In the Chilean context, where many participants have low levels of formal education, such structures can evoke discomfort and resistance. The combination of abstract terminology and unfamiliar delivery methods may alienate participants who already feel out of place.

Several men mentioned during interviews that the programme's language could be challenging to understand but often attributed this to other participants rather than themselves. This rhetorical move enabled them to disassociate themselves from the 'uneducated' and instead position themselves as knowledgeable or even superior to their peers.

> There are many things within the therapy that are structured with technical terms. *I often found myself needing to explain to my peers*, like, 'Here's what they're trying to tell you with this technique or with what they're saying' to ensure people would really understand. I don't know if you've looked into it, but most of the people who come here have little formal education. So, when you talk to them *using technical terms* from your profession or the program itself, *there are people who will just say, 'Yes, yes, yes, yes,' but didn't actually understand*. And that's where I would try to explain it in more everyday language or with more relatable examples. Like, 'This is what happens; when this happens to you, what do you do?' That was really challenging for me [emphasis mine] (CRH08 – Interview).

> Man: The concepts sometimes *get* forgotten, and you have to keep going over them, or some concepts get mixed up with others—there are many similar concepts.
>
> Researcher: Is there any concept or idea that didn't make sense to you?
>
> Man: Not really, because everything connected well' (CRH05- Interview).

> I saw in the classmates that sometimes it was a bit difficult *for them to understand the word or the meaning of the word*, which sometimes led to confusion or going off track, and I was mentally trying to help them. 'What does it mean?' Until the question could be asked again, thank God, until they could return to the question itself, of course. It's very difficult, and personality is very important; a person who doesn't have personality [emphasis mine] (CRH05- Interview).

Many men positioned themselves as knowledgeable, as already possessing the knowledge the programme offered.

> I mean, you learn things [in the programme], but they are things I was already doing (CRH24- Interview).
>
> Many times, we have the tools already, but we don't use them (CRH08- Interview).

These discursive strategies, such as delegitimising practitioners and distancing themselves from a position of learners, are forms of resistance shaped by both gendered norms and the context of delivery. At their core, they often serve to protect and preserve their ideas about what it means to be a man, which remain meaningful and valued by the men themselves. The classroom-like structure of the programme, the vocabulary employed, the power dynamics between practitioners and participants all play a role in how men engage with, or resist engaging in, change. Understanding this interplay is crucial for unpacking why change can be so difficult, and how resistance is produced not only by individuals but within the very structures designed to facilitate it.

6.6 The process of resignification. Framing change aligned with the core principles of manhood

'We all make mistakes in life, and only those who are brave enough acknowledge them' (Man - Interview)

Considering their desire to retain, and resist, relinquishing elements of their gendered identities linked to ideals of manhood, some of the men who found the programme impactful framed their change process in ways that remained aligned with enduring gender norms for men. For example, one participant described the act of acknowledging his violence not as a failure, but as an expression of bravery and personal strength.

> I think that, in the end, we shouldn't feel ashamed of this. We all make mistakes in life, and only those who are *brave* enough to acknowledge them and even *braver are those who want to improve.* We're always going to make mistakes in life. I don't believe there's a single human who has never made a mistake,

> regardless of whether it's small or big. So first, *recognising it is* a *brave attitude, an honest attitude, and improving, above all, so we should feel proud of that.* Unfortunately, a mistake was made. Yes, yes, I realised it too late, yes, *I also lost a lot, I lost my family… It still hurts me, but I know that deep down I took the right step'* [emphasis mine] (CRH09 - Interview).
>
> So, in that sense, this thing at the centre, of sharing experiences, *of feeling that one is vulnerable, that one can make mistakes*, was a fundamental experience for me [emphasis mine] (CRH09- interview).

For this man, the change process was mediated through the resignification of accountability as a form of bravery and heroism. In this narrative, acknowledging mistakes and working to improve oneself is not seen as weakness, but rather as a noble and masculine act. Owning up to one's mistakes (violence), and trying to change ('improve'), is seen by this man as a heroic trait (bravery). Drawing on the heroic ideal, where the hero transcends fear, pain, or shame to accomplish something greater or extraordinary, this man redefined accountability as an act of moral courage. His story suggests that men can engage with vulnerability and growth without relinquishing a valued sense of masculinity. In other words, men can align with the core ideas of manhood (such as honesty and bravery) while allowing themselves to be vulnerable (admitting mistakes) without undermining their notions of what it means to be a man.

Admitting wrongdoing becomes a way of letting go of the need to be 'always right', a stance often associated with masculine entitlement and replacing it with the ideal of doing the right thing ('step in the right direction'). Yet, this journey is not without emotional cost. The participant openly described the pain of losing his family and the ongoing emotional toll this loss brings. Even so, he reframed change as a courageous and necessary step.

> Today, I don't feel like I'm part of the family. As I said, I did some very ugly things; I acknowledge that I made a lot of mistakes (CRH09 – Interview).

In this context, change involves both transformation and retention, allowing for the letting go of harmful gender norms while holding onto some that are re-signified. One way this was expressed was through the adoption of the programme's discourse around the 'agent of change', a figure promoted by practitioners as someone actively committed to ending

violence. While the concept aims to foster new ways of being a man, it also taps into conventional masculine ideals of heroism, leadership, and responsibility, providing some participants with a renewed sense of purpose.

> Our duty as men is to be agents of change who promote a new masculinity that allows us and those around us to be men in a way that does not harm others, that does not place demands or grant privileges over another person. When we talk about being an agent of change, it implies transforming society. The learning does not end with us; I can continue being an agent of change in everyday situations. In the education and values I pass on to my children, which differ from the traditional gender construction, I am already acting as an agent of change. How can we be men who actively participate in household tasks, are connected to their emotions and embrace a range of behaviours associated with these new masculinities (Practitioner, Session observation n° 6, 2nd level group workshop).

For some men, this role assumed a deeply personal significance, shaped by their unique life experiences. It resonated with them because it aligned closely with their realities. One participant, for instance, described his motivation to become an agent of change as rooted in his desire to be a positive role model for his son and to ensure that his child could grow up in a nonviolent environment. His son became a powerful source of inspiration, driving him to take tangible steps toward change, such as volunteering with people experiencing substance use issues.

> Well, as time went on, *more than the individual sessions, it was the group sessions that made me think*: I can be an agent of change, that word 'agent of change' that the professionals mentioned, and even my profession can help me achieve it. So I started reading about violence, the genesis of the problem, I began to read, read, and read [emphasis mine] (CRH10- Interview).

A similar dynamic appeared in another case, in which the participant viewed becoming an agent of change as a form of legacy-building, leaving a mark by helping others through testimony and leadership.

> To acknowledge that I made a mistake and that I am in this process not because I am a sick person, but because I am someone who wants to be an agent of change, to eradicate what is wrong (CRH09- Interview).

> You know what I've felt, obviously, and it goes hand in hand with my experience at work, is that I am much more communicative, much more visible to others in expressing my opinion. And well, I'm managing work teams, and that really satisfies me, trying to pass on knowledge, passing on experience is something that... It's something new for me. I mean, before, I was very closed off, I didn't share anything, and here I am, always trying to help, even at the same centre. I was always willing to give interviews to share my testimony because I feel that I need to transmit it, so I think that's what has changed the most. Now, *I don't want to just go from the cradle to the grave, but I want to try to make my testimony help someone else to do things differently than I did* [emphasis mine] (CRH09 – Interview).

However, this re-signification process was often gradual. For some participants, the programme initially functioned as a means to an end, for example, fulfilling legal requirements to regain visitation rights. Only over time, through participation in group discussions and shared reflection, did deeper transformations begin to emerge.

> When I'm asked why I came to the CRH, I've always been very honest about it: I came to avoid problems with the law. The justice system conditioned my visitations with my son on my entry into the HEVPA program, so I did it. Later, I started to become fond of it, I began to participate, and now I'm certified as a drug and violence prevention monitor. Now, in my free time on weekends, I go to a shelter for people with substance use issues; I help them because I've seen that violence is a serious issue (CRH10- interview).

As one key informant noted, the key challenge is to 'turn ideas around', to reinterpret traditional gendered norms for men not as inherently harmful (which some men could experience as an 'attack' against themselves), but as potentially positive when redefined

through non-violent practices. In other words, men can retain valued dimensions of masculine identity, such as protection, strength, or leadership, as long as these are re-signified in ways that do not reproduce harm.

> We would turn those ideas around, in the sense of saying, look, it's not about attacking or saying everything is bad or all men are bad. No, there are characteristics of masculinity, like this idea of protection, that can be positive. It's not negative; it's positive. So, if it's positive, let's cultivate it in a healthy way. Let's not turn it into violence. For example, the need to protect—okay, now what do you gain by going to your partner's mom's house? Leave her there, let it go, take a breath (Key informant- Interview).

6.7 Discussion

Although reducing gender differentiation in society remains essential to addressing gender inequalities (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006), the work of DVPPs represents only a partial contribution to this broader task. These programmes focus primarily on personal change, an important and necessary component, but cannot, on their own, address the wider structural dimensions of gender inequality. These dimensions extend beyond the scope of violence permeating everyday social, economic, and institutional life (Garda, 2021). Despite these limitations, the DVPP examined in this study, particularly its group workshops, played a pivotal role in facilitating change among participants. These spaces, to some extent, disrupted men's gendered identities and traditional homosocial interactions (Anderson, 2009).

Group discussions opened possibilities for some participants to reflect on and relinquish restrictive gender norms that compelled them to suppress emotions, 'keep things from themselves,' and avoid forming deeper emotional connections with other men and their families. In doing so, they began to question their need for control, admit wrongdoing, and acknowledge that they were 'not always right'. These shifts allowed for a space in which some men became vulnerable and recognised the emotional benefits of letting go of certain ideals associated with manhood. In this sense, the workshops offered promising opportunities to challenge male entitlement and other harmful norms underpinning IPV, potentially creating space for healthier, more fulfilling lives. I align with the work of Downes et al. (2019), in

recognising the potential of such programmes to support men in questioning the norms and expectations traditionally associated with masculinity.

Olavarría's work in Chile has shown that, while ideas about what it means to be a man may vary by social class, a consistent set of gender norms exists across these strata. These norms promote an idealised version of manhood that emphasises emotional restraint, stoicism, and strength. Men are expected to suppress and master emotions commonly associated with women or 'weaker men' and avoid revealing fear or vulnerability. Emotional expression is only acceptable when it reinforces or reaffirms masculinity (Olavarría, 2001b). Masculinity functions as a marker of distinction, instilling a sense of pride and moral responsibility that is reinforced by social interactions. From early childhood, boys are taught that being a man is both a privilege and a duty, something to be upheld with honour. This notion of manhood carries moral expectations: a man must be accountable, uphold his word, and maintain integrity, or risk being deemed 'not man enough'(Olavarría, 2001b, p. 160). A man's word, his so-called word of honour, serves as a testament to his character and trustworthiness.

Some of these gender norms were challenged by some participants, particularly those related to emotional expression and communication. For them, new ways of resolving conflict were not emasculating, but rather pathways to more meaningful lives. They spoke of feeling 'relieved' and recognised the benefits that emotional expression brought to themselves, as well as to those around them. This may help explain why emotional regulation and communication skills are often reported as central outcomes of DVPPs (McGinn et al., 2020). In the Chilean context, this process of learning new interpersonal 'tools' appears underpinned by a deeper re-evaluation of gender norms regarding emotional control and vulnerability. It suggests that emotional expressivity is not an inherent quality but is socially and contextually produced (de Boise & Hearn, 2017). By allowing themselves to be vulnerable in respectful environments such as the group workshops, some men began to acknowledge their mistakes and accept that their perspectives were not always correct. Overall, this points to a change among some participants toward a more reflective and less rigid understanding of masculinity.

However, the extent and depth of these changes must be approached with caution. 'The idea of the man' is far from dismantled (CRH08). Change, as Downes et al. (2019) and this PhD research demonstrates that it is not a linear process. Building on and expanding Morran's

work (2022), this chapter argues that change entails simultaneously letting go of harmful norms, such as the entitlement always to be right, while also retaining and re-signifying others. For example, vulnerability may be reframed through values traditionally associated with masculinity, such as strength, bravery, and heroism, rather than weakness. This research highlights that reframing is part of a complex, often contradictory process in which some gendered norms are reworked rather than abandoned, particularly those that are highly valued by men in a given social context.

This complexity is evident in how men continue to express power and control, despite having 'changed'. Several participants claimed to live in a gender-equal society and believed their behaviours aligned with this ideal. While this may reflect shifting societal expectations in Chile, the continued use of control against partners reveals a deeper and more persistent dynamic. These findings echo existing literature showing that many men fail to recognise gendered power relations within their intimate lives (Miranda & Muñoz, 2013; Seymour et al., 2021; Shamai & Buchbinder, 2010). A more in-depth answer will likely be found in the next chapter, which explores practitioners' working conditions and reveals their struggles to address men's claims of violence perpetrated by their female partners.

Why does control remain such a resilient feature? This chapter offers a partial answer. Control is a key tenet of this idealised manhood (Hearn, 2004), enacted both against oneself (through emotional suppression) and others, particularly women (Olavarría, 2001b). This chapter concurs with this idea, arguing that control is a constitutive element of masculine identities and a driving force behind IPV. In some cases, control is enacted deliberately and with the intention to harm. In others, it operates beneath awareness, woven so tightly into masculine identity that it goes unnoticed. This makes it one of the programme's most difficult challenges. For example, one participant's pride in describing himself as a 'protector' (CRH19) exemplified how coercive control can be reframed through morally valued gender norms for men. Miranda and Muñoz (2013) similarly found that being a protector was the most highly valued masculine trait among participants in another Chilean DVPP. This suggests that the identity of protector, though potentially dangerous when expressed through control, cannot be dismissed outright.

These findings caution against assuming that increased emotional expression alone leads to positive change. While emotional openness is valuable to foster vulnerability, it should not be seen as a panacea. Unless accompanied by a critical reflection on how men's enactment of masculinity legitimises control, emotional expression may be reabsorbed into the same framework it seeks to disrupt. Thus, it is not enough to speak in terms of greater or lesser degrees of emotional expression and assume that the former will have positive outcomes. What matters is the purpose, context, and meaning of that expression, what emotions are elicited, how they are interpreted, and what role they play in maintaining or challenging power relations(de Boise & Hearn, 2017).

This makes the task of practitioners particularly complex. Although change cannot be assessed solely through self-reports, for some men who experienced the programme as transformative, their narratives associated change with masculine ideals such as bravery and heroism. These findings align with Morran (2022), and they may explain why the 'agent of change' strategy resonated strongly. It offers a re-signified version of masculinity, one that upholds moral leadership, responsibility, and social contribution, while distancing men from the violent behaviours that compromised those very ideals. This strategy aligns with traditional gender norms that cast men as authoritative role models and aligns transformation with restoring one's honour and integrity (Olavarría, 2001b)

Letting go of harmful gender norms is undoubtedly necessary for meaningful change, but not all gender norms are inherently damaging. For many men, retaining certain aspects of their gendered identity, particularly those tied to their sense of self-worth, appears essential. This tension can fuel resistance. As shown in this research and other studies (Hughes, 2023), masculinity itself may be a site of resistance to DVPPs. Stripping men of their gendered identities or asking them to abandon familiar models of manhood completely may generate resistance. For some participants, the idea of 'unlearning' or relinquishing key aspects of manhood felt threatening and alienating, given the gendered nature of change, as illustrated in this chapter. This highlights the need for practitioners to closely attend to what men value about being men, how those values are enacted, and, most importantly, where and how control is embedded in those enactments. These findings also underscore the need for renewed attention to how workshops are delivered and the crucial role of practitioners. In

the Chilean context, this points to the importance of more participatory and accessible approaches that avoid abstract or overly complex language, especially in programmes working with men who have limited formal education.

Chapter 7: Influence of New Public Management on the implementation of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses practitioners' experiences to reveal how macro-level arrangements, specifically the broader social policy framework that shapes social provision of programmes in Chile, affect practitioners' service delivery, overall practice, and their well-being. It explores how neoliberal reforms, particularly those driven by the New Public Management (NPM) agenda, have introduced significant challenges for professionals working in DVPPs, a task already highly emotionally demanding. However, these challenges are not exclusive to this sector.

By situating the DVPP within Chile's broader neoliberal policy landscape, this chapter argues that the challenges faced by practitioners are not merely operational but are rooted in structural conditions shaped by decades of neoliberal reform. To illustrate this, it draws on the perspectives of both the women's service staff and the DVPP practitioners. The chapter contends that outsourcing contributes to the precarious working conditions, hinders inter-agency collaboration, and reinforces gendered (unequal) divisions of labour within the DVPP. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the broader implications of these systemic challenges.

7.2 Framing the context: The need to go beyond (self) – care

The city council implemented the DVPP and hired the staff, while the state agency I partnered with provided the national technical orientations for the intervention. This institutional setup introduced a series of tensions in the staff's practice, adding to the already complex task of working with perpetrators.

In response to the emotional toll of working with men who use violence against their partners, self-care sessions were offered twice annually. Mandated by the state agency's guidelines, these sessions aimed to support the well-being of practitioners. They were intended to complement other personal activities and practices that individuals engaged in to maintain and enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Self-care is defined as 'those

activities carried out by individuals, families, or communities to promote health, prevent illness, mitigate it when it exists, or restore (health) when necessary' (Technical orientations, 2023, p. 134). The guidelines emphasise the responsibility of the protection system, including individuals, teams, work groups, implementing institutions, and the state agency, to care for those who provide protection and support.

> Caring for those who protect is a duty of the protection system for both individuals, teams, and work groups, as well as implementing institutions […] Self-care is considered fundamental in contexts of interventions for victims of violence and abuse, to minimise the negative effects on professionals in different aspects of their development (Technical orientations, 2023, p. 134).
>
> Two self-care sessions were annually organised by the implementing institution. To manage team well-being effectively, it is recommended that they participate in at least two care activities annually, facilitated by external agents not affiliated with the implementing organisation (Technical Orientations, 2023, p. 37).

And funds were available for two self-care sessions, which were conducted with external support, in accordance with national guidelines. While these sessions were necessary and appreciated by staff, during the period in which this research was conducted, frontline professionals, not only those in the DVPP under study, but also those working in other DVPPs in different regions under the same arrangement with the state agency, called for an increase in their number. This demand likely reflected both a desire and a need for greater organisational support. It was probably closely tied to the working conditions shaped by the outsourcing model and the emotional toll of working with perpetrators.

> I am told that thanks to negotiations between the Men's centres and the state agency, they managed to get the latter to accept an increase in self-care sessions, in addition to the two already available, which are fully funded. However, the extra sessions cannot be financed and must therefore be self-managed by the team (Fieldwork notes).

One could argue that the staff's weekly meetings, which were intended for discussing specific and complex cases, also served as spaces to debrief and raise concerns. Notably, the

coordinator maintained an open-door policy, encouraging employees to communicate freely. Drawing on experience across diverse private and public organisations, it could be confidently stated that the working environment at the centre was among the most positive and supportive observed, despite the challenges practitioners faced. The coordinators (in plural, as the centre had three different coordinators during the six months of fieldwork), along with the team, demonstrated cohesion and actively created recreational spaces both during and outside working hours. These efforts aligned with the state agency's technical guidelines and relevant research (Arón & Llanos, 2004). The coordinators' dedication to fostering a positive and supportive work environment was widely recognised and appreciated by the practitioners. However, the weekly staff meetings were not explicitly designed to offer a safe space for supporting workers' mental health, and the overall positive working environment should not overshadow the structural challenges stemming from the broader outsourcing model, which exacerbated the pressure placed on frontline staff and the emotional toll of working with perpetrators. Practitioners were left to navigate their roles, further strained by these structural conditions, without sufficient support to sustain their work. This chapter intends to examine this in detail.

7.3 Navigating 'In-Between': Implications for practice and delivery

'In between' was a concept developed in this research to describe the conflicting instructions practitioners received from multiple institutions and the dilemmas they faced in navigating these competing demands. It captured both a structural position, being accountable to more than one authority, and an emotional state of dislocation: feeling neither fully part of one institution nor the other, and thus not fully belonging anywhere. As women's services operated under a similar arrangement to the DVPP studied, some practitioners reported comparable experiences and challenges, depending on the institution responsible for implementing the programme.

The outsourcing arrangement of the social policy at the national level was a key factor in the production of the 'in between', placing the staff at both the men's centre and the women's services between two different institutions. This meant they often received diverging and, at times, conflicting instructions, as they effectively had 'two bosses' (the state agency and the city council). One practitioner described the situation as a 'tug-of-war', implying a constant

struggle. This dynamic placed significant pressure on each programme's coordinator, who was responsible for reconciling the various demands, and at times, for refusing some altogether. As a result, team cohesion was compromised, as staff members experienced conflict over whose directives to follow, particularly when their professional judgement diverged from the instructions they were given.

> We are like a part of the state agency, but we are not part of the state agency, so that leads to confusion because we have a boss here and here, and well, we have two bosses, and if they give us contradictory instructions, who do we follow? So, that's a bit of a tug-of-war. It also creates tension within the team (Practitioner - Interview).

> Sometimes it's complicated to have to work for two different entities, the state agency and the city council at the same time, because they don't always give the same instructions. Sometimes the state agency expects us to prioritise admissions, while the city council expects us to prioritise something else. So, they're not always aligned, and that can make things difficult because we don't know which one to follow or which of the two needs or demands we should address first (Practitioner – Interview).

In the case of the DVPP, although the state agency instructed staff to limit their work to interventions with men, the city council frequently expected them to take on additional tasks without extra compensation. In the absence of institutional boundaries, practitioners lacked the leverage to resist these demands. As a result, the responsibility for setting limits often fell to the coordinator, placing considerable strain on their role and leaving negotiations to their discretion.

> We recently had a meeting, and the state agency told us that as workers, we should only do what our agreement says and only work with service users. However, the city council still requires us to wrap up gifts, participate in parades, and perform a series of tasks that are not always specified in the agreement. So, they are on a different page (Practitioner - Interview).

Despite the distinct demands of the two institutions, staff members were expected to align with both sets of requirements. This created a burdensome bureaucratic environment that practitioners frequently identified as a source of frustration.

Frustration, understood as the emotional response to an annoying, discouraging, or disappointing situation, particularly when efforts to achieve a goal are obstructed, was a recurring theme in practitioners' accounts. One practitioner vividly described the emotional toll of excessive and unnecessary bureaucracy, which significantly complicated their roles.

> Too much bureaucracy, way too much bureaucracy. Bureaucracy doesn't make things easier; it only complicates them further. Papers for this, papers for that, everything must be highly structured, through this platform, through that other thing, so, in the end, it hinders the processes instead of making it more fluid or efficient (Practitioner -Interview).

Under the city council's guidance, the DVPP team was frequently tasked with additional responsibilities, including prevention, promotion, and service provision at social events. For instance, they participated in school presentations, attended fairs, and provided support during national holidays, such as wrapping gifts or handing out empanadas, as well as during environmental emergencies, like distributing plastic sheets in case of rain (Fieldwork notes). The following excerpt from the researcher's fieldwork notes is based on conversations with staff.

> The staff indicates that sometimes the city council takes on responsibilities, such as removing them from their regular duties for activities specific to the city council. They have them handing out empanadas. Additionally, some of these city council activities are carried out outside working hours, at night, without any payment involved (Fieldwork notes).

> On Monday night, there had been light rain in the area, so the staff was called on Tuesday to assist with the city council's tasks, likely distributing plastic nets or other activities (Fieldwork notes).

Although neither the city council nor any implementing institution had direct authority over the state agency's technical guidelines, these boundaries were often blurred in practice. Some practitioners attributed this disconnection to a limited understanding of each institution's roles and responsibilities. A similar form of institutional fragmentation affected one of the women's services. The following excerpt illustrates the challenges faced. The practitioner expressed frustration at receiving referrals for service users, such as women dealing with homelessness or substance abuse, whose needs fell outside the centre's scope, instead of those experiencing IPV, which the centre was specifically designed to address.

> Sometimes it's like we feel they don't know what the women's services do. They say, 'They help women', and they send us all kinds of women, but sometimes not the right profile. Since we focus on a specific type of violence, intimate partner violence, sometimes we get women who are homeless or women with substance abuse issues, and it's like, 'Deal with it' or 'Put her in a shelter,' but the shelter isn't for that. I mean, those shelters are for women at risk of death, not for women who just don't have a place to live. So, we encounter social cases that leave us in a bind because we also feel that, yes, there's a responsibility to help someone in need, a woman, right? But it's not the right institution. The city council has shelters too (Practitioner – Interview).

The lack of knowledge between institutions was also evident in the relationship between the women's Services and the DVPP. Despite holding regular monthly meetings, one practitioner observed that their understanding of how the DVPP operated was limited.

> I think we should also receive feedback on what they (DVPP) do in the *therapies*. We have a more general view of what is being done, but we don't know specifically. What topics do they work on? We know they form two groups, but it might be better to be informed about the work they do with the men' [emphasis mine] (Practitioner – Interview).

The term 'therapies' was emphasised to highlight the depth of this fragmentation, as DVPP practitioners consistently stated that they did not provide therapies because the intervention had an educational approach.

Because of the information gap between the programmes, victims-survivors were often left uninformed about their (ex) partner's participation in the DVPP or the possible consequences of their attendance. According to their experience, this information was significant for women involved in ongoing court cases or those still in a relationship with the perpetrator.

> Women's support service practitioner: When we contact them (women), we tell them that we are contacting them on behalf of the women's centre because their ex-partner has been referred to the men's centre, and we need to know if any new incidents have occurred, and that is all. And sometimes, though, in very few cases with women who have ongoing court cases, they ask about their ex-partner's situation, whether they are attending, and we cannot provide that information.
>
> Researcher: In your experience, what do they usually want to know?
>
> Women's support service practitioner: For example, did he enter the programme? We tell them, 'Well, we can't provide more information because we don't know, but it's better to ask the court [...] also keeping in mind that they (DVPP) keep a confidential process (Practitioner—Interview).

For example, women were often unaware that their partners' attendance at the DVPP could lead to changes in how the abuse was carried out, which, according to a practitioner from the next Women's service, sometimes shifted from physical violence to emotional manipulation.

> Some women come back to the centre, and their partners have already completed the programme. We have noticed that in some cases, violence involves very subtle manipulation, such as suggesting, 'I think you are wrong because I have already gone through a process, so it seems like you are the one who needs to be evaluated', making them believe that they are the problem. *Physical violence diminishes, and emotional manipulation becomes more subtle* [emphasis mine] (Practitioner- Interview).

Other service users, lacking prior information about how some men respond to the intervention, often held high expectations of the process, which later led to frustration, especially in understanding the complexity, unevenness, and personal nature of men's change, as Chapter 6 showed.

> What concerns me is this hope for change that women have. They expect the men's centre to achieve that, and it often happens that they complain to us. They complain like: 'Well, how is this helping him? (Practitioner - interview).

In the case of the DVPP, the city council also overstepped boundaries and enacted contradictory guidelines, as shown by the decision to eliminate a practitioner's position. This action appeared to overlook, possibly due to a lack of awareness, the state agency's technical guidelines, which required group sessions to be led by two practitioners, one female and one male. The importance of both practitioners was underscored by the technical orientations, which stated that if the female practitioner was unable to attend a session, the coordinator was expected to step in; otherwise, the session must be cancelled.

> In the CRH (Centro de Reeducación de Hombres or Men's Re-education Centre in English) intervention model, all interventions are carried out in pairs. A male-female psychosocial team must always work with the men at the Men's Centre (DVPP). The presence of a woman in group interventions is a fundamental part of the intervention model, as 'this model understands male violence as a pattern of behaviours aimed (consciously or unconsciously) at maintaining a relational asymmetry based on control and power'. The aim is to break this asymmetry, which would not be achievable in an intervention involving only men. On the contrary, the gender perspective becomes practical by ensuring the woman's presence in all phases of the re-education process undertaken by men who use violence. If, on any occasion, the female professional in the pair cannot attend, she must be replaced by the centre coordinator, or the session must be cancelled (Technical orientations, 2023, p. 7-8).

Two practitioners had previously facilitated group sessions, but financial constraints apparently made it difficult to maintain the required staffing levels.

> Researcher: And earlier you told me—in our conversations, there were two practitioners: a female and a male practitioner conducting the group work?
>
> Practitioner: Yes, it was a different way of working due to some administrative

> matter that I am unfamiliar with, something to do with money and such. But they were able to hire one more person, actually, two more people. It became an additional team, so to speak […] Unfortunately, it could not be maintained for long because one of the hires was funded externally and the other with internal funds, or at least, that is what I think, though I am not entirely sure. The point is that only one position remained for the group workshops. So, we had to adapt as a triad. And that is when things began to change slightly. The stages of intervention were divided into individual and group stages (Practitioner – Interview).

During fieldwork, the consequences of removing one practitioner became increasingly evident. After each session, the practitioner and I discussed what had occurred, an opportunity during which he often shared his thoughts, emotional state, and reflections on the men or his own performance. In this sense, he appeared to be seeking a space for reflection, constructive feedback, and sometimes just debriefing. I also had the opportunity to do the same, sharing my interpretations and emotional responses. These exchanges fostered mutual reflexivity, allowing us both to critically reflect on the sessions and our own positions within them. At times, we reached different conclusions, suggesting that, had another practitioner been present during the session, certain opportunities to explore the men's reflections more deeply might not have been missed. Technical difficulties during online sessions, such as poor audio or unstable connectivity, sometimes prevented the practitioner from fully understanding the participants (Fieldwork notes and observations).

The following example illustrates the differences in how the practitioner and I interpreted a man's contribution during an online group workshop. While observing the session, I took notes on the exchange between the participant and the practitioner. Afterwards, we discussed the session together. The extract below was taken from my fieldwork notes.

> Researcher: The participant said something interesting about his wife. It feels like he was blaming his wife for not assigning him 'more responsibilities' as a father instead of him being actively involved in parenting.
>
> (During the exchange, the following extract of the session is read out loud)
>
> Practitioner: What sexist behaviours do you think you should change?

> Man: Well, personally, I would have liked to be more involved in my daughter's education. During our time together, I wished to be entrusted with more responsibilities in that regard. I also agreed with her choice to take on more of that responsibility. I believe I had a significant contribution to make. I felt somewhat pressured.
>
> Practitioner: Sometimes, decisions are not within our control; they are sometimes societal impositions. However, it is never too late to engage actively.

After I read the exchange, the practitioner admitted that he had unintentionally misunderstood what the man had said. He believed the participant was reflecting on societal norms that often discourage men from being involved in their children's education. In contrast, I understood the participant's comments as a way of avoiding accountability. Even though misunderstandings like this are common, especially in online sessions, both perspectives could have been explored more deeply if two practitioners had been present. Another staff member also recognised the importance of teamwork, saying it helped address gaps or oversights that can happen when working alone and ensured that all necessary questions were asked and considered.

> When I started working with the other practitioner, I immediately realised how valuable it is to have a team partner. Of course, some questions slip by things you forget to ask. That is where the team partner handles it (Practitioner -Interview).

7.4 Working conditions and their (gendered) impact on practitioners' well-being

Building on the first half of this chapter, which analysed how the fragmentation of services shaped a sense of being 'in-between' for practitioners, this section delves further into their working conditions. In this context, it is argued that the emotional toll of their work seemed to stem not only from the precarity of their jobs and the lack of support received, but also from the nature of the intervention itself, working directly with men who have used violence against women. This interaction generates unique emotional demands that collectively undermine their well-being, particularly for female social workers.

7.4.1 Precarity and staff rotation

Practitioners consistently voiced their struggles in the workplace and requested that these concerns be documented during fieldwork. Some of the practitioners in the programmes examined in this chapter had been hired by the same implementing institution mentioned earlier (the city council). They were classified as freelancers and, as a result, excluded from protections under Chilean labour law. Their contracts were renewed annually, providing no long-term security. According to the Chilean legislation, freelancers are not entitled to benefits such as legal vacation, severance pay, rest periods, or overtime compensation. Their rights and obligations depend entirely on individual contract agreements (Dirección del Trabajo, 2017). As one practitioner explained, contractual conditions varied significantly across regions, resulting in unequal access to basic employment benefits.

> All the needs across the country are different because, for example, here, we can use our administrative leave days. We also have our vacation days, for instance, and we can use them. Ultimately, we do have access to certain benefits. However, colleagues in other parts of the country face different situations. For example, they didn't have administrative leave, and they couldn't make use of their vacation days' (Practitioner – Interview).

Practitioners hired by the city council were entitled to benefits, including vacation and administrative leave. However, they were ineligible for overtime pay, as their employment is not regulated under the Chilean Labour Code. Only those recognised as workers under this legislation are entitled to protections such as compensation for extra hours worked. Instead, any additional hours worked were 'compensated' by allowing equivalent time off on another day, a practice known as 'compensatory hours'.

> Practitioner: We are not public employees. But, for example, we have to attend these activities on weekends because we're supposedly 'part of the City Council' in quotes. But when it comes to things that would benefit us, we're not public employees. For the obligations, we're treated as public employees, but for the benefits, so to speak, we're not.
>
> Researcher: What are the benefits, for example, of being a public employee?

> Practitioner: For example, those bonuses… recently, there's been a movement among the state agency's workers as well, a movement that started very recently, where they were protesting precisely about this—working conditions and the issue of implementing entities. That's when we found out, for example, that the state agency funds our salaries. But we learned that, in other regions, it's a fifty-fifty split: half comes from the implementing entity, and half from the state agency. There's no standardisation… salaries are not the same across all regions. Some have employment contracts; we are paid on a freelance basis. Different conditions also have an impact. And that's another thing—for instance, since we're freelancers, we don't receive overtime pay. Instead, they tell us, 'No, you'll have compensatory hours'. But the workload remains high, making it challenging to take those compensatory hours (Practitioner – Interview)

Practitioners' experiences and interviews revealed a pervasive sense of injustice linked to the City Council's expectations that staff work beyond regular hours or undertake tasks outside the programme's requirements, such as representing the council in parades or serving food at national events, without additional pay (Fieldwork notes).

> I think we all feel frustrated, for example, when we have to go out during the rainy season to deliver tarps; at those times, we're truly considered part of the City Council. For example, at Christmas, we must take care of preparations and tasks, such as wrapping gifts. For Father's Day, we must help distribute empanadas. We have to participate in everything—the parades, everything—but when it comes to benefits, I feel like we're left behind. We might get the basics, but I feel like there's still a lot to improve (Practitioner – Interview).

Low monthly salaries, approximately £730 (900,000 CLP), further compound the issue. With little room for career advancement, many practitioners see their roles as temporary and plan to move on as soon as better opportunities (more stable and better-paying positions) arise.

> What happens is that, of course, the working conditions are not the best, especially when considering what we've already discussed about the issue of working on a freelance basis without having a formal contract. For instance, if you

> get sick, you don't receive paid sick leave. Or, I don't know, wanting to take out a mortgage, and the bank penalises you for being a freelancer. All these things do cause a certain level of strain on people, on workers. If better job opportunities arise where the working conditions are improved, you're not going to think twice before leaving (Practitioner – Interview).

These precarious conditions led to high staff turnover. During fieldwork, three different DVPP coordinators had rotated through the role, and many new hires had joined only recently. The practitioner with the most experience at the centre had started at the onset of the pandemic, while the others had joined in 2023. One practitioner stated that although she enjoyed the work, the lack of stability would prevent her from staying in the role in the long term.

> Working with an invoice and not having a contract, being employed for over a year without job security—knowing that if something happens to me, the company won't cover it; if I'm assaulted on my way home, no one protects me; if I get sick, they don't pay for medical leave; if I'm fired, they don't pay severance. It's a series of things that don't provide job stability. So, any slightly better option becomes tempting to leave this place (Practitioner – Interview)

High rotation in the DVPP was also acknowledged by other collaborating agencies, with some even joking that the DVPP was 'cursed' due to its constant staff changes.

> Amid laughter at the outreach fair, other front-line workers said that the men's centre seemed cursed, with staff turnover being much higher than the women's support services (even though the latter has a much heavier workload and a waiting list) (Fieldwork notes).

While 'cursed' was the word used for some to describe the high rotation, others called it 'chaotic'.

> Practitioner: And I was hired at the centre. I arrived at the small chaos that was happening, though I really like the job.
>
> Researcher: Why do you mention there was a little chaos?

> Practitioner: It was mostly because of what was happening at the centre. They were going through changes. There was a bit of commotion, and the new coordinator had to start managing this new team (Practitioner – Interview).

Interestingly, although women's support services and other programmes overseen by the same state agency reported heavier workloads and similarly precarious working conditions, it was the DVPP that stood out for its exceptionally high staff turnover, as noted by other frontline professionals encountered at the outreach fair.

During fieldwork at the centre, the staff encountered additional challenges, as service disruptions due to water, electricity, or internet failures frequently affect operations. Although these issues were beyond the centre's control, they highlight the city's inadequate infrastructure and its impact on its ability to maintain normal operations.

> The internet wasn't working very well at the Center today. I told the practitioners that for the observations, I would log in using my cell phone to avoid using the Center's bandwidth. They told me it usually works fine, but something always seems to happen (Fieldwork notes).

Despite the precarious working conditions, the staff noted improvements in infrastructure and organisation. In previous years, the centre had operated out of a small two-room building (a house), forcing staff to adapt the intervention to the limited space available (Fieldwork notes). By the time the fieldwork was conducted, the team was working in a larger, four-room building, which they described as 'way more comfortable' (Practitioner—Fieldwork notes). Both the staff and the state agency widely acknowledged that the DVPP's situation had significantly improved.

These improvements were likely linked to recent collective actions. Frontline professionals from various programmes under the state agency I partnered with had organised to advocate for better conditions. Their efforts resulted in securing five additional days of holiday leave and a salary adjustment. These gains were negotiated nationally to establish standardised working conditions across programmes.

> The staff mentions that workers have negotiated with the service and reached an agreement. Their salaries will be increased, although they will still not earn the

same as the staff members of the stage agency. They finally managed to secure a pay adjustment and have five days of winter vacation. Previously, they only had administrative leave, with no vacation time (Fieldwork notes).

I don't know how I can improve; honestly, I'm not even sure if the city council has the authority to make those changes. I think something can be done little by little, but I'm not sure if it's the city council's responsibility to do it. From what I understand, all city councils operate in the same way. *In fact, all the women's support services and men's centres, as well as all these programmes related to the state agency that are executed externally, face the same challenges.* There's currently a mobilisation happening where a request has been submitted to the Minister, asking for these aspects to be addressed, such as for us to have contracts' [emphasis mine to show the connection between precarious working conditions and outsourcing] (Practitioner – Interview).

7.4.2 Training, professional preparation and job satisfaction

Beyond precarious employment and frequent staff turnover, issues that the staff themselves identify as interconnected, practitioners often carried out their work without the training required to undertake such a significant task as the one assigned to them. While most had some background in domestic violence, none had prior experience or specialised training in facilitating behavioural change among IPV perpetrators before joining the DVPP. As one practitioner noted at the start of the job, she felt she 'had no tools'.

I go to the interview, and the person who interviews me says: 'Um, there's the position of coordinator and there's the position of social worker for the centre.' And I say: 'No, I want to work as part of the intervention team'. And they gave me the job. I said to myself that it would be a tremendous challenge because I am very committed to the issue of women. On the other hand, I thought, how will I deal with this? Despite everything, I felt I had no tools (Practitioner- Interview).

This gap may have arisen because the state agency was the leading provider of DVPPs in the country, making these services relatively scarce and not widely accessible. In this context, the need for comprehensive training became even more urgent and essential.

In terms of prior work experience, some practitioners reported backgrounds in drug abuse rehabilitation. Others had academic knowledge in the field of men and masculinities, which perhaps helps explain the programme's focus on men's emotions (Chapter 5). Others had legal expertise related to domestic violence and violence prevention.

> Before working here, I also had the experience of working with other men in a similar problematic context, which is the issue of drug consumption. So, I've always been somewhat in this area, which tends to be more complex and also tends to have a low success rate, because both drug consumption and violence are difficult to overcome. So, you could say that I already had some experience (Practitioner- Interview).

> Well, I do have previous experience… At one point, I had to do the initial reception to sponsor men, so that the lawyers could legally represent men who had used violence against their partners (Practitioner- Interview).

Despite the evident need for training, staff received only minimal formal preparation. Most underwent a brief half-day induction focused on the centre's core principles. Those who had previously interned at the centre found that experience more useful than the induction itself, highlighting the need for differentiated training tailored to varying levels of prior experience.

> Researcher: I don't know if you've received any training from the state agency?
>
> Practitioner: I was fortunate to have completed my internship at the centre as a student, so I had some experience, and the induction, so to speak, wasn't really necessary... I didn't really receive an induction as such, and if I hadn't had previous experience from the internship, I know there was space provided so that one could at least catch up on the technical guidelines. So that's that, and the goodwill of

> the colleagues who were there at that time, because none of them continues now; they used to explain things to you (Practitioner- Interview).

Only two formal training sessions were mentioned during the interviews. The first was a brief, one-day course offered to all front-line workers within the state agency, including those from Women's Support Services and other programmes, resulting in content that was too general to meet their specific needs. This course focused on different types of domestic violence and the procedures for reporting it. The second training session was designed to prepare practitioners to register service users' information using the agency's online platform. None of them received specialised training in critical areas recommended for working with perpetrators, such as the dynamics of power and control in intimate partner relationships, the impact of IPV on families and victims (particularly children), safety planning, risk assessments, and the legal aspects of domestic violence (Stover & Lent, 2014).

> Researcher: I'm not sure if you have received any training from the state agency regarding prevention issues. Any courses?
>
> Practitioner: Yes, we took some courses. We took a course to learn how to use an online platform. We were trained on this issue, specifically the system for registration, and within that training, they also covered basic concepts essential to understanding the intervention. Also, I read the technical guidelines, which I believe are also a form of training, because it's not just about doing what one wants; there are technical guidelines, development, and theory, but only that really. Well, they also recently offered to do this same training that I did last year, so I'm not going to do it, which is about becoming preventive monitors for reporting gender-based violence (Practitioner- Interview).

Much of their training, as declared during the research fieldwork, was informal, drawing on peer support, self-directed study of technical guidelines, and knowledge gained through independent learning based on the available resources. While the study of technical orientations served as an initial framework for their practice, peer-to-peer informal training was particularly vital, mainly due to the lack of formal training initiatives and the continuous

staff rotation that resulted in constant changes to delivery, especially the structure of the programme.

> One of the major challenges is the rotation, which is not limited to the men's centre. We are talking about nationwide agencies, where professionals rotate constantly, making processes more difficult. For instance, we have recently encountered documentation issues due to the frequent changes in the intervention structure. I don't know; in one year, they changed the structure of one-on-one sessions about 5 or 6 times. What we were supposed to do in the first session moved on to the third, fourth session, and so on. This also relates to different coordinators and teams that have worked here. As we are now a new team, things will probably change again. So, the problem is that nothing remains; it keeps changing continuously, often complicating the process. Someone arrives and then leaves the job unfinished. Another person arrives, takes up the job halfway, finishes it as best as possible, or sometimes doesn't even resume it. And so on, continuously (Practitioner - Interview).

One of the key informants interviewed highlights the challenges related to practitioners' working conditions, encapsulating the dimensions discussed in this section. The key informant references 'A la Chilena' (the Chilean way in English) to describe practitioners' working conditions and how they impact the overall practice and delivery. A la Chilena is a phrase that can carry different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. It often reflects cultural, social, or practical behaviours and attitudes characteristic of Chilean society. Sometimes the Chilean way is used to refer to the creativity of performing a task without proper tools or resources, which has a positive connotation. Similarly, but with a negative connotation, the phrase is used by the key informant to critically describe perceived inefficiencies, informality and overall, the precarious working conditions of the staff.

> One of the serious problems is that everything is done 'the Chilean way': they (the state agency) don't want to pay the staff what they deserve, they don't want to make them working contracts, they don't want them to do self-care sessions, they don't want them to have supervision, they don't want to provide training (…) they have a terrible quality assurance system (Key informant - Interview).

The absence of adequate training had a noticeable impact on practitioners' preparedness and overall job satisfaction. This sentiment was both observed and, at times, openly expressed. One example of this was how practitioners responded to a recurring theme raised by male participants: women's violence against men.

The following quote likely encapsulates the core tension. One practitioner expressed feeling 'tired' not only of engaging with 'men's narratives', particularly those involving minimisation or claims of mutual combat, but also of the way the programme addressed these narratives. For this practitioner, the approach discouraged open discussion of women's violence with male participants. For some, this strategy took the form of avoidance or redirection, which they found uncomfortable and at odds with their practice and experience, ultimately contributing to job dissatisfaction. This strain became more pronounced as the programme approached its closure in December 2023, prompting some to consider leaving their roles altogether.

> Maybe it is good to change my job. Sometimes, I feel tired of dealing with men's discourse… Sometimes I have to say things I don't think like I must ignore women's violence, it is something we should not talk, address, as if it didn't exist (Practitioner, Fieldwork notes).

The institutional strategy of redirecting or avoiding discussions about women's violence aimed to prevent the validation of men's victim-blaming narratives. It was a way to reframe the debate, focusing on the issue of accountability.

> (Exploring women's violence) gives them (men) the chance to talk more about the partner and say, 'She started it. When they come in with that perspective, we tell them to focus solely on themselves and their responsibility (Fieldwork notes).

Practitioners were thus expected to steer men's attention back to their own harmful behaviours. Some men appeared to internalise this strategy. In one of the workshops, a man initially framed his partner's actions as the cause of the separation ('Maybe it was her attitude'), but gradually shifted toward acknowledging his own role, echoing the strategies promoted by practitioners and their guidance ('as you say, we should focus on ourselves').

> I believe the most serious issue was that she made the decision, as they say, when the glass overflows, seeing that I couldn't change. I remember very little; sometimes, I forget how I got to that point. Maybe I don't have it clear… We never fought over money, never fought over food, never fought over jealousy. Maybe it was her attitude, which, as you say, we should always focus on ourselves, not on her. That used to make me explode. If I were angry, instead of helping me, she would upset me even more, so there was no limit; we argued until we hated each other, without considering the child or anything. The most serious issue that led to the separation must have been the contempt, belittling her, making her feel bad. During arguments, you try to hurt the other person (Man, Session observation n° 2, 2nd level group workshop).

However, this approach also left men's questions unanswered and placed practitioners in a conflicted position, as reflected in their expressions of fatigue and discomfort. One of the men interviewed portrayed himself as a 'victim of domestic violence', claiming he had acted in self-defence because he was 'tired' of being abused. During the interview, conducted at the end of the programme, he avoided addressing his own use of violence and instead provided detailed accounts of his ex-partner's aggression. He also noted that women's violence was a frequent topic of discussion in the group workshops.

> That's why it's so important to break the cycle, the cycle of violence. I mean, we educate ourselves, but what about the women? We often bring this up: What happens with the woman? (CRH08- Interview).

Another way of dealing with men's narratives was framing all forms of IPV as equally harmful and unacceptable, regardless of the perpetrator.

> When the men keep talking about their partner, blaming her repeatedly, that's when we intervene to reframe the situation, saying, Hey, we're working with you, not with her (Practitioner – Interview).

> One of the practitioners told me they cannot justify the violence used by women against men, regardless of the context in which it occurs. At the centre, they

> emphasise that no form of violence should be tolerated and that each person is responsible for how they respond to anger. Men have the right to feel anger, but how they react is their responsibility. This framework helps practitioners avoid focusing on women's violence or the context in which it occurs, particularly because men often claim they acted in self-defence, that their partner initiated the violence (Researcher's Fieldwork notes).

This framing revealed a significant training gap. Practitioners were expected to challenge narratives of victimisation and mutual combat (narratives in which both partners are framed as equally responsible for violence), discourses that men frequently mobilised, and which reinforced problematic ideas of gender symmetry. Yet, framing all violence as equally harmful could have had the opposite result.

7.4.3 Undervalued and overloaded: female social workers navigating emotional and operational demands

Gender disparities in practitioners' experiences were evident across various roles within the programme. Many of the social workers, initially hired as practitioners, later assumed the coordinator role, thus navigating both the emotional demands of direct intervention and the operational responsibilities of coordination. This dual burden became particularly acute during periods of staff shortages.

Over just seven months (March to September 2023), three women, all social workers, rotated through the coordinator position. Typically held by female social workers, the coordinator role entailed meeting institutional targets, such as admitting 100 men annually, alongside managing financial accountability, utility bills, staff payments, and day-to-day logistics. Much of the coordinator's time was consumed by bureaucratic processes and responding to urgent problems, a reality described by one practitioner as 'apagando incendios' (putting out fires), a metaphor for reactive crisis management (Fieldwork notes).

> Coordinating the functioning of the house, ensuring timely payments, such as for electricity, water, and rent. Ensuring that drinking water is available, and on the administrative side, handling fee payments and contracts. Additionally, overseeing maintenance, particularly in terms of team dynamics and leadership, falls more

> on the practical side rather than the administrative side. Mhm, also ensuring the achievement of our centre's goals, which involve admitting 100 users annually (Practitioner – Interview).

During staff shortages, maintaining the psychologist's presence in intervention sessions was prioritised. Consequently, social worker practitioners were expected to cover additional administrative and managerial tasks, often stepping into the coordinator role on an interim basis. These temporary replacements ranged from a few hours, when the coordinator was on leave or attending duties elsewhere (e.g., at the women's shelter), to several months while awaiting permanent recruitment. Crucially, these additional responsibilities were not accompanied by increased pay.

Given the already heavy workloads, it seems unlikely any practitioner could sustain both roles without negative impacts on their physical and emotional health. Indeed, during fieldwork, one female practitioner who temporarily acted as coordinator described feeling emotionally overwhelmed and 'burnt out', attributing her stress largely to the burdensome bureaucracy of the city council (Fieldwork notes). She expressed a pervasive sense of unfairness in being expected to perform coordinator duties without additional compensation, highlighting feelings of injustice, undervaluation, and frustration.

> Last week, one staff member was overwhelmed and crying at work (I found out later). She told me that everything is a buildup of things. There was a great sense of injustice because the replacement did not involve extra pay, only extra work. The bureaucracy of the executing agency is too much. She says everything would be easier if the state agency were in charge (Fieldwork notes).

This emotional strain intersected with gendered dynamics in the intervention itself, where female practitioners consistently reported feeling undervalued by male participants. A male practitioner reflected on the unequal dynamics that sometimes arose during group sessions. Despite formally equal roles, men in the group often deferred more to him, viewing his opinions as more legitimate than those of female colleagues. This contributed to a subtle but persistent hierarchy within the intervention, exemplifying the gender disparities discussed here.

> It's good to co-facilitate with a woman because some men seek allies. For example, they tell me, 'You are a man, you understand.' When I co-facilitated the group space, it felt like I took over and spoke a lot, and the users validated me more than her (Male practitioner, Fieldwork notes).

Several factors likely contributed to these gender disparities. First, as the male practitioner suggested, some men 'seek allies', feeling more comfortable or believing they are better understood by a man. This dynamic was unintentionally reinforced by often taking over the conversation, speaking more frequently than his female colleague.

Second, practitioners highlighted inadequate training, particularly among social workers, as a barrier to equitable intervention roles. Some female practitioners felt unprepared for the emotional and psychological challenges of working with men in crisis. One practitioner acknowledged a gap in her training for this specialised intervention, limiting her role largely to referrals and information sharing, rather than deeper engagement with men's emotional processes.

> Female practitioner: I truly feel that (the programme) is more psychoeducational or closer to psychology, rather than socio-educational... I believe that I lack some things in that regard. For me, it has been a challenge to be here without also having the training required to do things that are important in these interventions because it is different to work in the field; that connection with people, with the territories, and many elements are vital for that type of work, here it is different: it is an intervention. Sometimes, it is practically a crisis intervention because some men arrive at the centre quite emotionally unstable. In that sense, I feel that my work is a bit more limited.
>
> Researcher: In what sense?
>
> Female practitioner: In the sense that in the social area... What can I do? Referring them to other services, linking them to other devices, and providing information. But delving deeper into the issue of intervention and what is only related to the psychologically based instruments, we focus on men's emotional state, emotions, and how men recognise emotions. How do they convey those emotions?

> Understanding that impact can be very basic, but I feel that I am more limited (Female practitioner- Interview).

Third, negative attitudes toward women among some men and the greater authority often attributed to men compounded these disparities. One female practitioner recounted how a man initially questioned her competence, a reflection of his bias against women and his deference to male authority.

> Female practitioner: I remember that in one of my first interventions with a service user, he already had previous interventions (with other psychologists), and when he saw me, the first thing he said to my (male) colleague was, 'Does she know what happened to me?' Yes, she is already informed, my colleague replied. It felt like he kept repeating the same thing every few minutes, resisting this female figure; that is how I interpreted it. Eventually, the user yielded to me… I later conducted interventions with him alone.
>
> Researcher: Like a devaluation of the female figure?
>
> Female practitioner: Yes, exactly' (Female practitioner – Interview).

> *Men come to the centre with a negative view of women,* and I [female practitioner] try to help them understand the impact of violence on women by explaining how women experience it and face discrimination since birth [emphasis mine] (Researcher's fieldwork notes).

> In a conversation with a female practitioner, she refers that in the first session, some men don't look her in the eye — *they lower their gaze and only look at the psychologist* [emphasis mine] (Researcher's fieldwork notes).

Reflecting these dynamics, female practitioners reported feeling undervalued by men more frequently than their male counterparts and expressed anger toward them. Notably, anger was a common emotion across the whole team, as observed during fieldwork.

> She talks about how draining it is to work with men—how, deep down, she feels angry, but still manages to speak to them in a really polite way (Researcher's fieldwork notes).

> It makes her angry when she sends the man the link or schedules them for the individual stage, and they don't respond or leave her on read on WhatsApp (Researcher's fieldwork notes).

Overall, the accounts of female social workers show the weight of doing both emotional and operational work in a programme that often stretched them beyond their limits. They managed day-to-day tasks, responded to emergencies, and supported men through complex processes, often without the training, pay, or recognition that their roles required and deserved. At the same time, they faced disrespect and dismissal from some of the men they were trying to help. These overlapping pressures left many feeling angry and exhausted. Their experiences highlight deeper issues within the programme roles and organisation and raise important questions about who bears the burden.

7.5 Discussion

In this chapter, 'context' refers to the broader national design and implementation of public policy, and how these are experienced and navigated by practitioners, which can only be fully understood against the backdrop of Chile's political and economic history. Specifically, this chapter contributes to the literature by offering a grounded, gendered, and practitioner-focused analysis of how outsourcing impacts DVPPs in Chile, a perspective largely absent from international debates.

In the country, public policy has been profoundly shaped by the principles of New Public Management (NPM), a paradigm of public administration rooted in neoliberal ideology. NPM reframes the state's role from direct service provider to strategic overseer, favouring outsourcing and adopting private-sector management practices such as goal setting and performance indicators.

The adoption of the NPM agenda in Chile cannot be separated from its historical roots. Chile has often been described as a laboratory of neoliberalism. After the 1973 military coup, backed by the United States, Chile became the pioneering testing ground for neoliberal state policies, setting a precedent for shaping neoliberal reforms in western countries (Munoz Arce & Pantazis, 2019). These reforms not only reshaped the economy but also redefined the role of the state and public institutions (Muñoz Arce & Pantazis, 2019). As Jessop (2002) argues, neoliberalism is an economic *and* political project. In Chile, neoliberalism restructured public administration and redefined the relationship between the public and private sectors, as well as between the state and its citizens (Hughes, 2003). A central expression of this restructuring is the adoption of NPM, which Mullin (2016, p. 10) describes as the 'operationalisation of neoliberalism within organisations'.

Importantly, NPM is not merely a shift in management techniques borrowed from the private sector (as the latter is often considered more efficient than the former); it reflects a new paradigm rooted in ideological motivations (Finley et al., 2012). One of its core tenets is transforming the state's role from service provider to supervisor. Under NPM, services are outsourced to private companies, non-profits, or other third-party providers, which handle the actual implementation and operations. The state, in turn, focuses on setting targets, monitoring results, and ensuring accountability. This model relies heavily on contract-based funding, linking financial resources to outcomes.

Several scholars have raised concerns about NPM in Chile, particularly regarding outsourcing, arguing that it has contributed to institutional fragmentation, generating competition between agencies and hindering collaboration and knowledge sharing (Morales, 2015). Furthermore, it has adversely affected practitioners' working conditions. While substantial research exists on NPM's broader impacts in other service provision, little is known about how it affects the work of DVPP practitioners and how it shapes the challenges they must navigate. This chapter seeks to address this gap through the accounts and experiences of DVPP practitioners, including those involved in women's support services. These accounts reflect agency fragmentation, one of the main detrimental consequences of outsourcing (Morales, 2015).

The fragmentation resulting from the separation between policy design and service implementation has significant consequences for victim-survivors, men in DVPPs, and practitioners. In doing so, the chapter illustrates how macro-level arrangements shape micro-level service delivery. Overall, this fragmentation weakens the collaborative response to IPV. Without shared understandings between institutions, the safety and needs of victim-survivors risk being sidelined.

If, as Gondolf (2002) argues, the outcomes of a DVPP may be hindered by the coordinated system in which the programme is situated, then the findings of this study raise important questions with regard to victim safety and the possibility of meeting the needs of those requesting these service provisions. The DVPPs in Chile were shut down nationally in 2023, justified by authorities based on metrics such as participant attrition and attendance rates. However, such metrics obscure structural and systemic barriers.

The working conditions and challenges created by the outsourcing model, combined with the demands of their role, significantly impact practitioners' well-being. These findings suggest that the institutions involved must go beyond individual self-care initiatives and address the structural arrangements that shape their working conditions to improve practitioner well-being.

In the case studied, both the DVPP and one of the women's services were implemented by the same city council, while the state agency I partnered with held formal supervisory authority. Although this agency was responsible for oversight and enforcing technical guidelines, in practice, the city council frequently ignored these directives, undermining the agency's role. Each institution followed distinct procedures, goals, and bureaucratic logics. This institutional disconnect made collaboration difficult and created confusion about roles and responsibilities: what they do and how.

Outsourcing has left practitioners in a grey area. This chapter employs the concept of being 'in-between' to capture the precarious and fragmented working conditions of DVPP practitioners, who are situated ambiguously between two institutions. This position renders them accountable to both, yet not fully supported by either. The concept also builds on the

emotional experience of not feeling a sense of belonging, linked to the precarious and ambiguous working conditions.

The concept of 'in between,' developed in this research, engages with the notion of a liminal space proposed by Muñoz et al. (2022), which describes the ambiguous and fraught position of those who implement social policies from outside the state, without fully belonging to either the private sector or the state. This notion has been key to advancing the understanding of precarious labour in contexts of outsourcing. However, this research builds on it by focusing on how such institutional ambiguity is experienced in everyday practice. In this study, the experience of being in between emerged in practitioners' daily efforts to navigate competing mandates, such as meeting state-imposed targets while managing the city council's bureaucracy, as well as in the emotional and ethical burden this entailed. Most importantly, the concept offers a gendered perspective, highlighting how being in between was experienced differently by female and male practitioners.

Institutional fragmentation was noticeable not only between the programmes overseen by the state agency and those implemented by the city council, but also between the DVPP and women's services. Although more research is needed to fully understand how this fragmentation impacts victim-survivors, this chapter considers some of the challenges that arise from the weakened ability to respond effectively to their needs. Ideally, coordination between these programmes should be guided by a victim-centred approach that carefully listens to and responds to the requests of victim-survivors.

In the case of the DVPP investigated, conflicting guidelines might hinder the programme's alignment with international standards for best practice. Standards for DVPPs are necessary to ensure quality and safety in the work with perpetrators (WWP EN, 2018). Guidelines to support DVPPs were first introduced in the US in the mid-1980s, mainly as a response to the programmes that proliferated after the implementation of mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence (Day et al., 2018). While some guidelines were only vague recommendations, others outlined the intervention format, duration, and appropriate methods, rapidly evolving as practice standards (Maiuro & Eberle, 2008). There is a widespread agreement, supported by research and practice, around the importance of two practitioners in facilitating group workshops. International experience shows that in most cases, two co-facilitators are

responsible for leading group workshops in DVPPs (Price & Rosenbaum, 2009). Most of them, by rule, are co-working teams led by one female and one male practitioner (Cohen & Mullender, 2003), a pattern also observed in several programmes in Latin America (Iniciativa Spotlight et al., 2021). Numerous international standards have endorsed co-facilitation as an essential element of good practice. Co-led groups can enhance practitioners' ability to manage the group, debrief, and attend to client needs, as those leading the groups can gain more significant insights into the service users (Morrison et al., 2017). This chapter provided empirical evidence on how diverse perspectives and interpretations of men's reflections can deepen the dialogue during group work sessions.

Another key standard for best practice emphasises that practitioners should be emotionally supported and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of their challenging role effectively (Evans & Hotten, 2022; Kashkooli-Ellat, 2022). In the field of DVPPs, research has demonstrated that working with men who have used violence against their partners involves safety risks that should be addressed by the organisation for whom they work (Morran, 2008). Recent research underscores the importance of organisations establishing adequate support mechanisms for DVPP practitioners (Renehan, 2021), such as better supervisory support to help practitioners cope and navigate their role's demands (Morran, 2008). Research across various fields underscores the emotional toll experienced by practitioners engaged in direct work with clients who have undergone trauma (Barros et al., 2020; Leicht, 2008; Way et al., 2004). In Chile, working in psychosocial programmes is acknowledged as one of the most resource-intensive areas for workers, characterised by its stressful and demanding nature (Bilbao et al., 2018). What takes place within DVPPs in the country remains largely underexplored.

This study reveals that precarious contracts, low pay, inadequate training, and bureaucratic overload intersect with gendered workplace dynamics to shape practitioners' experiences in the DVPP. These conditions not only erode the well-being of those responsible for facilitating change (especially social workers) but also may impact the delivery of services. For example, high staff turnover, a direct outcome of precarious working conditions, disrupts the consistency of programme delivery. Moreover, the limited institutional support left practitioners unprepared to respond to men's questions about women's use of violence. As a

result, such violence was often avoided, minimised, or treated as equivalent to men's violence against women. Yet research has shown that failing to consider the context, motives, and intentions behind men's violence risks overlooking the power dynamics that underpin most IPV, as well as the broader gender asymmetries involved (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). This stance, therefore, risks concealing the structural inequalities at the heart of IPV, potentially weakening accountability, and offering men another discursive tool to position themselves as equal victims of IPV. Furthermore, and most importantly, it denies victim-survivors' agency when it comes to self-defensive violence. As St. Vil et al. (2016) 'self-defensive violence became the norm in some relationships', and some women even 'used violence because […] they were tired of being hurt and disrespected' (p. 67-68).

The lack of support particularly impacted female social work practitioners, preventing them from navigating men's emotional needs and reinforcing the existing gender disparities between practitioners. Despite the potential harms to practitioners' well-being, self-care sessions seemed insufficient, highlighting the need for more organisational support. Female social workers also often assumed dual responsibilities, serving as intervention practitioners and stepping in as coordinators when necessary, exposing them to a higher risk of burnout due to the overwhelming bureaucracy of the two institutions. Prioritising psychologists in interventions while requiring female social workers to assume dual roles—as both practitioners and coordinators, without additional compensation exacerbates the precarity of their work and reinforces the 'doing' of gender in organisations (Baines & Cunningham, 2020). This practice, rooted in unnoticed routines, sustains unequal, gendered dynamics, undervalues the contributions of social workers, and perpetuates a workload imbalance that relies on unpaid or underpaid labour (Baines & Cunningham, 2020). These dynamics do not occur in a vacuum. They are embedded within broader societal patterns that devalue traditionally 'feminised' professions, such as social work (Aspeé & González, 2018), and exacerbated existing inequities associated with men's devaluation of women and their dismissal of women's authority in the intervention setting.

Chapter 8. Summary of findings and conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Drawing on qualitative semi-structured interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, this study sought to answer the following questions: How do men understand their use of violence? How does change occur for men participating in a DVPP? How does the broader national public policy framework influence the implementation of a local intervention for IPV perpetrators in Chile?

This chapter revisits these core questions, reflecting on how the findings support, contribute to and expand existing knowledge. It closes by outlining the study's limitations, proposing directions for future research, and discussing the implications for policy and practice.

8.2 Research question 1: How do men understand their violence?

This research question aimed to investigate men's understandings and interpretations of IPV, focusing on how they explained the origins of their violent behaviour and the dynamics that sustained it over time.

The findings showed that men's perspectives on their use of violence aligned, to some extent, with those of the practitioners. While differences existed between the men and the practitioners and within the practitioner team, notable areas of overlap existed. Consequently, to better understand men's perspectives, it was essential also to analyse the shared ideas about IPV held by the practitioners, including their theoretical frameworks and interpretations, and to examine how these were put into practice during the group workshops observed during the fieldwork. As discussed in Chapter 6, and drawing on Hearn's work (2012), the ways men talk about their violence are central to analysing power dynamics within the context of IPV.

8.2.1 Findings and contribution to knowledge

The theoretical tenets underpinning violence and abuse are a key component of the programme. As evident, and repetitive as it may seem, theory and practice are inextricably linked, and this research offers empirical evidence to support that claim.

Drawing on end-of-programme interviews and groupwork observations (which offered valuable insights into both the content and delivery of the intervention, as well as how men responded to it), this PhD research revealed that men's understandings of IPV shared notable commonalities with those of the practitioners. This suggests that the theoretical framework informing the intervention, particularly ideas around the cycle of violence and emotional management, influenced how men made sense of their use of violence.

Perpetrators in this PhD research described their use of violence in ways that reflect patterns identified in earlier studies (Hearn, 1998; Seymour et al., 2021). For example, Stark (2007) argues that men often view their violence as incidental, framing it as a series of isolated and clearly defined episodes, a perspective he describes 'masculine' and sees reflected in the cycle of violence theory. While some participants may have already held such views before entering the programme, their explicit and implicit references to practitioners' theoretical ideas suggest that the intervention helped shape their understanding of IPV.

Interestingly, while the cycle of violence theory was not included in the programme's official technical orientations, it was nonetheless introduced by practitioners. As examined in Chapter 7, practitioners, working under conditions of limited institutional support, turned to peer learning and self-training, integrating additional ideas to support their work. In practice, the cycle of violence was often paired with an emotional management framework, the latter of which was part of the technical orientations, creating a hybrid theoretical approach that differed from the programme's intended design.

This combination risks obscuring the gendered power dynamics at the core of IPV. By shifting the focus to men's emotions, violence may be reframed as a consequence of poor emotional management (as understood by practitioners, difficulties in recognising, identifying, and expressing emotions), rather than as rooted in control as constitutive of masculinity and in the gendered norms that underpin men's use of violence. This reframing creates space for narratives in which men depict their violence as unintentional or provoked, thereby potentially minimising their accountability.

This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of men's violence, bringing together contributions from feminists and masculinity theorists. Building on Downes et al.

(2019), who extended feminist analyses (R. E. Dobash et al., 1999; Stark, 2007), by arguing that men's use of IPV is not only linked to reaffirmation of gender norms for women, but also for men. This PhD study offers further evidence that men's violence is often tied to their own perceived failures to meet normative expectations, particularly around fatherhood and breadwinning. These gender norms for men hold weight in the Chilean context. For some men, violence was used to reclaim power in response to a perceived loss of their position as men, which they thought was diminished, usually by their (ex) partners, but also the complex context in which they were living. Men's accounts, explicitly and implicitly, reveal a power dynamic and a perceived imbalance. Interventions working with male perpetrators must address these ideas thoughtfully and make men critically reflect on them rather than dismiss them outright as *mere* forms of resistance, especially minimisation, victim blaming and victimisation. Programmes should engage critically with them, encouraging men to unpack the gendered roots of their use of violence.

Men's accounts are, simultaneously, narratives of resistance in which shame plays a central, underlying role. In this context, it is unsurprising that part of the change process involves recovering a sense of self-worth as a man (examined in more depth in the next section). This shame is deeply gendered and must be addressed explicitly. The findings highlight the emotional toll of being labelled a perpetrator. Many men struggled with the dominant image of those who use violence against (ex)partners: once a perpetrator, always a perpetrator. The label evokes associations with monstrosity, sickness, and permanent moral taint, regardless of any efforts toward change. In the Chilean context, this is further compounded by cultural representations of perpetrators as 'unmanly' (Peña et al., 2017), a perception reinforced by public campaigns. Yet this powerful stereotype, experienced by some men as a lasting social stigma, was rarely addressed in the programme. This shame is not only tied to perceptions of being 'less of a man' or unmanly, but also to what men's narratives reveal: that their use of violence reflects a sense of powerlessness and a failure to fulfil key gender norms that are constitutive of their identities as men. These contradictions resonate with and extend Hearn's work (2012a) on the multifaceted and contradictory nature of men's power in relation to violence.

Finally, this research deepens ongoing debates about the role of discussing men's emotions in DVPPs. Mexican practitioner and scholar Roberto Garda (2021) warns that focusing on emotions risks diverting attention from the core issues of power and control. This research both supports and complicates Garda's critique. While emotional management helped some men experience relief and reconnect with others, particularly children and family members, it is not a sufficient framework for understanding IPV. The programme supported men in letting go of certain gender norms, such as emotional suppression and rigid pragmatism, and encouraged a shift towards greater emotional openness and vulnerability. For some, this also involved acknowledging past mistakes and moving away from long-standing beliefs about always needing to be right. However, emotional management should not be treated as a primary explanatory framework for IPV. Emotional management strategies, though helpful to some extent, are insufficient for sustained change unless they are situated within a broader analysis of masculinities and power, which may avoid narratives that portray men as victims of patriarchy (Aguayo, 2022; McCarry, 2007). When critically examined, men's discussions of emotions in DVPPs can, in fact, offer valuable insights into how power operates in the context of IPV.

8.3 Research question 2: How does change happen for men in the programme?

The previous section discussed men's understanding of their use of violence, which can also be interpreted as a relevant dimension of their process of change. The findings illustrated that practitioners' theoretical ideas on emotional management and the cycle of violence tended to obscure the connections between men's violence, power, and gender norms that were salient in their narratives of their violence.

This second question examined the change process for men, specifically focusing on the influence of their peers and practitioners during group workshop sessions. Semi-structured interviews with men were key, as they revealed their internal reflections on different stages of the programme and its value.

8.3.1 Findings and contribution to knowledge

Most research in the field of DVPP has focused on whether men can change and to what extent, with considerably less attention paid to *how* change occurs within these programmes.

This has left a gap in the literature (Downes et al., 2019), and Chile is no exception (Madrid et al., 2023). However, unlike in the global north, particularly countries like the UK and the United States, there has not been a parallel proliferation of evaluations of these interventions in Latin America, which may be attributed to the broader socio-economic and political context in most Latin American countries during the 1980s. This study addresses that gap by exploring the change process amongst men in a Chilean DVPP and the tensions it involves, with potential applications for other men.

In the UK research has conceptualised change in various ways: as letting go (Downes et al., 2019), replacing (Dobash et al., 1999), or retaining (Morran, 2022) certain gender norms that shape how men perform masculinities. These dimensions are often treated as distinct processes. Building on Morran's work, I explicitly introduce and apply the concept of re-signification to demonstrate that men not only reject or retain gender norms for men, but they also actively reinterpret some traits. For example, expressing vulnerability can be re-signified not as weakness and unmanliness, but as strength and a valid form of masculinity.

By integrating these dimensions (letting go and retaining), and adding re-signification as a distinct analytical lens, this research offers a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of how change unfolds. These processes are not mutually exclusive but rather interwoven, reflecting a complex dynamic that poses significant challenges for both the study of change and the interventions that work with perpetrators. This complexity may even limit the extent of change that DVPPs can achieve, particularly when gendered norms are reconfigured rather than relinquished.

Although the absence of victim-survivors in this study limits the assessment of the extent of men's change, the findings suggest that some participants are exploring alternative ways of being a man. In doing so, the study supports previous research demonstrating that DVPPs have the potential to challenge and transform men's gendered identities (Anderson, 2009; Downes et al., 2019). These new ways of being a man are primarily linked to improvements in emotional management. A significant aspect of relinquishing gender norms involved participants expressing emotions, particularly with their partners but also with peers in the group. The process of letting go of emotional restraint occurred through conducive relational spaces, such as the group work offered by the programme. The collective setting could be

further explored as a site where men support one another through the change process. For many participants, this was experienced as a relief, akin to shedding a heavy burden, as it required abandoning norms of emotional restraint.

Research on men and masculinities has often highlighted the 'costs' of conforming to idealised norms for men, sometimes portraying men as victims of patriarchy. This study acknowledges the harmful effects of rigid gender norms on perpetrators themselves; however, it also moves beyond that perspective. Whilst emotional expression may signal progress, as Hearn and others have argued, it is overly simplistic to assume that men who express emotions are necessarily more egalitarian, or that such expression automatically contributes to gender equality (de Boise & Hearn, 2017). What matters more is how such behaviours contribute to, or challenge, gender inequalities. This requires deeper analysis of men's intentions and motivations in their use of violence, including how emotional expressions may be used to maintain power and control. In this study, such analysis is necessary given that many participants enacted their ideas of masculinity in controlling ways, suggesting that control remains a central and enduring element in how masculinity is performed. Thus, whilst emotional expression can be transformative, it can also be deployed manipulatively.

Nevertheless, emotional management holds considerable potential. Some men described becoming more willing to listen to their partners and to seek mutual solutions rather than insisting on having their own way. Others reported that expressing emotions enabled them to admit mistakes and relinquish the need always to be right. In this sense, emotional management can potentially reduce men's power in relationships. Yet change is not linear. Persistent gender norms and contradictions were also evident. For instance, one man expressed vulnerability and indicated being more open about his emotions, acknowledging how hurtful it was to be called stingy during an argument. Nevertheless, the conflict was resolved only when his partner agreed with him. Another man described feeling proud of developing emotional management whilst simultaneously boasting about reading books on 'dark psychology'. These contradictions suggest that emotional openness may still be entwined with control and other gender norms involved in men's ideas on what it means to be a man.

To make sense of these contradictions, I draw on the concept of resistance. This research demonstrates that men often resist, deliberately or not, letting go of valued aspects of masculinity that are grounded in gender norms. Not all retained traits are re-signified in non-controlling ways. For instance, the role of protector, though seen by one of the men as an expression of care or responsibility, may be enacted through coercive control. These enactments show how control is not only deeply embedded but also morally justified. Gender norms underpin men's use of violence, and control, it seems, is foundational to how many men enact masculinity. This control is sometimes maintained consciously, other times unconsciously, and in some cases, remains invisible even to the men themselves. Interventions must engage seriously with men's perspectives rather than simply dismissing them as excuses or minimisations.

Much of the literature on DVPPs treats resistance narrowly, as a refusal to take responsibility or as denial and victim-blaming. However, recent scholarship has challenged this framing, arguing that such a lens may obscure the complexity of men's narratives (Gadd, 2003; Renehan, 2020; Hughes, 2023). Much of the literature on DVPPs treats resistance narrowly, as a refusal to take responsibility or as denial and victim-blaming. However, recent scholarship has challenged this framing, arguing that such a lens may obscure the complexity of men's narratives (Gadd, 2003; Renehan, 2020; Hughes, 2023). Building on this idea, this study broadens the concept by demonstrating that resistance is not merely an obstacle to change but an intrinsic part of the change process. This presents a key dilemma for practitioners: how to engage men without reinforcing resistance whilst also challenging the norms to which they are attached. A central task for interventions is to unpack how men 'do' masculinity, particularly in ways that reproduce control, and to create space for critical reflection. One possible pathway is to support the re-signification of values such as protection or responsibility in ways that are non-controlling, for example, protecting a partner without monitoring or restricting her life. Rather than demanding that men abandon all gendered norms constitutive of their identities as men, programmes could invite them to reinterpret these norms in ways that support respect and women's agency. This approach probably accepts the limitations of DVPPs in removing gender differentiation entirely, considering that many men are reluctant to relinquish socially and personally valuable gender norms. This

poses a critical challenge for DVPPs: how to work with men's attachment to gender norms whilst confronting the power dynamics those norms uphold.

Resistance is also simultaneously deeply gendered, as it is embedded in shame. In Chile, DVPPs may be particularly shame-inducing for men, as perpetrators of violence are perceived as less masculine, partly because such violence violates the longstanding ideal of the man as protector and holder of the strictest moral standards (Shepard, 2001). This moral framing can generate resistance, as men grapple with the dissonance between their self-image and actions. Hearn's (1998) analysis is particularly relevant here. He emphasises the contradictions and ambivalence that violence poses for perpetrators: it is often used to assert power, yet it simultaneously undermines it. The contradiction that Hearn outlines, between enacting control and feeling powerful, offers a valuable lens for understanding resistance amongst perpetrators. In this research, however, the complexities of men's violence extend beyond this framework, as it links gender norms and violence with emotions of inadequacy, powerlessness, and diminished masculinity.

Resistance is also elicited by the gendered dynamics within the programme itself, such as the power imbalances between practitioners and participants, and the challenges posed to men's self-perception as knowers (Hughes, 2023). Whilst the programme can be improved by adopting more accessible language and a participatory approach, resistance is unlikely to disappear entirely, given that it is intrinsic to the change process.

The process of change is neither straightforward nor linear. Developing new ways of being a man is constrained not only by the implementation context that impacts practitioners' delivery (to be discussed in the next section) but also by the internal contradictions of the change process itself. Whilst men may express more emotions, seemingly breaking from traditional norms, this can occur through coercively controlling dynamics (e.g., emotional manipulation), thereby perpetuating gender inequalities. These dynamics may go unnoticed if emotional expression is viewed uncritically as inherently progressive. Whilst this does not invalidate men's accounts of change, it calls for critical analysis. Ultimately, this study argues that power and control should be central to men's reflections on how they practise masculinity. These considerations must also be central to the theoretical and practical frameworks used in DVPPs.

8.4 Research question 3: How does the broader national public policy framework impact local intervention of a DVPP in Chile?

This question examines the relationship between national-level social policy design and local-level intervention practices (how DVPPs are implemented by frontline staff in a specific setting in Chile).

8.4.1 Findings and contribution to knowledge

This research provides empirical evidence of how the New Public Management (NPM) agenda, specifically through outsourcing arrangements, shapes the challenges that practitioners navigate in their daily work. By bridging macro-level public policy design and micro-level implementation dynamics, it illuminates the often-overlooked realities of those responsible for delivering interventions (Renehan, 2020). As Morran suggests, DVPPs are not 'abstract entities' (2019, p. 8); this PhD research argues that the national social policy framework (how it is designed and implemented under the NPM agenda) has concrete implications for service delivery, practice, and practitioners' wellbeing.

NPM emerged as the dominant model for reforming public sectors globally, aiming to make government services more efficient and citizen focused. However, this PhD contributes to a well-established body of literature that fundamentally challenges these assumptions (Araya & Cerpa, 2009).

In the case studied, outsourcing arrangements, central to the NPM agenda, produce precarious working conditions. Practitioners are employed under short-term contracts, often with inadequate remuneration, minimal institutional support, and no clear organisational affiliation. This lack of stability results in chronic staff turnover. The outsourcing model also leaves workers structurally and emotionally in between institutional boundaries, a concept developed in this research to describe the lived experience of navigating dual accountability. Practitioners reported feeling caught between conflicting institutional demands, receiving contradictory instructions while lacking a sense of belonging to either authority.

The 'In Between' concept builds upon Muñoz et al.'s (2022) notion of liminality but introduces a key analytical distinction. While liminality captures the ambiguous professional categorisation of workers, in between foregrounds the institutional architecture that

systematically generates these contradictions. It highlights not only the emotional dislocation experienced by practitioners but also the structural production of fragmentation and confusion, particularly in decision-making. This distinction is significant because it shifts the focus from individual adaptation to the need for structural solutions, such as clarifying lines of authority or rethinking outsourcing models entirely.

The implications of outsourcing extend beyond individual practitioners to affect institutional coordination and weaken collaborative responses to IPV. The research reveals that being 'in between' is merely the visible tip of a broader system of fragmentation. This disconnection is evident between the city council and state agency programmes, as well as between programmes operating under the same supervisory authority.

Critically, conflicting guidelines between institutions can also undermine adherence to key international standards for DVPPs. For example, budget constraints led to the abandonment of the recommended co-facilitation model, one male and one female practitioner, despite its recognised importance for group dynamics and client outcomes, as outlined in the DVPP technical guidelines. Such transgressions raise serious concerns about the capacity of programmes to meet international benchmarks (WWP EN, 2018).

These structural issues have profound implications for practitioner wellbeing and service delivery. Practitioners are not only affected by working conditions that elicit feelings of frustration, a persistent sense of undervaluation and injustice. They are also impacted by the inherently complex nature of working with men who have perpetrated violence against women. Female practitioners, particularly social workers, bear a disproportionate share of this burden, a finding that extends existing UK-based research (Renehan, 2021), by highlighting how NPM reforms in Chile tend to reproduce the gendered divisions of labour.

With limited access to structured training and institutional guidance, practitioners rely heavily on peer learning and personal initiative. While the technical orientations (manual) offered some support, the theoretical foundations of the programme were insufficiently addressed during training. Practitioners gradually constructed their own understandings of IPV, a process that risks eroding the feminist key ideas on control and evidence on women's use of violence (St. Vil et al., 2016). A particularly concerning finding was the uncertainty

practitioners experienced in responding to these questions. These moments were often avoided or handled by equating women's and men's violence, unintentionally reinforcing problematic notions of gender symmetry in IPV. Without a solid grounding in feminist theoretical frameworks, practitioners risk overlooking the structural power inequalities that underpin men's violence against women. This research thus introduces a crucial analytical link between structural working conditions and the dilution of feminist-informed approaches within DVPPs.

In sum, this research provides comprehensive evidence that neoliberal outsourcing models create systemic conditions that undermine practitioners' capacity to deliver interventions as intended. By documenting how macro-level policy arrangements shape front-line service delivery in complex and often counterproductive ways, this study offers both empirical insight and theoretical innovation. It challenges the foundational assumptions of NPM and underscores the urgent need for improved working conditions, not only to safeguard practitioner wellbeing but also to ensure safe delivery of domestic violence interventions.

8.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Acknowledging Chile's political context, it is important to recognise the structural persistence of the neoliberal model. Despite moments of political change and widespread public demand for reform, as exemplified by the mass social protests of 2019, the model has remained largely intact, enduring across different administrations. While this limits the scope for systemic transformation, this research offers grounded recommendations that may still be pursued within the constraints of the current system.

One of the guiding assumptions of the NPM is that standardisation will lead to services that are efficient, responsive, and of high quality. However, this study suggests that standardisation should be rethought not just in terms of procedures and outputs, but in relation to minimum working conditions. The findings show that these conditions are fundamental for sustaining meaningful intervention work. A key implication of this study is the need to move beyond individualised solutions, such as self-care, and address the roots of practitioner burnout and dissatisfaction. Therefore, improving working conditions, from a

gendered perspective that recognises the unequal impact on practitioners, and ensuring access to regular support and training are central to the sustainability of DVPPs.

While national technical guidelines establish some baseline criteria, they are neither sufficiently clear, particularly in terms of the theoretical principles underpinning the intervention, nor able to ensure sustained improvement in practice on their own. These findings raise further questions about the meaning of victim safety and how it can be prioritised under the current conditions. Thus, a shared framework across services, centred on the needs of victim-survivors, and common guidelines for those who work with them, is essential.

At a policy level, the state agency's role as a supervisory and coordinating body must be strengthened. Currently, practitioners are caught between institutional demands from city councils and the state agency, with inconsistent guidelines. Clearer minimum standards are needed, not only for DVPPs, but also for programmes serving women, to reduce fragmentation and support more coordinated responses.

The findings reveal a clear and urgent need for comprehensive training programmes for DVPP practitioners, covering areas such as the dynamics of power and control in intimate partner relationships (with a specific focus on coercive controlling behaviours), and a critical reflection on gender norms for men constitutive of men's ideas on how to be a man and its connection to IPV. Policies should ensure that practitioners receive ongoing professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge, which will support them in understanding IPV as a gendered phenomenon. In this context, this study also calls attention to the importance of clearer theoretical and methodological grounding. The existing technical guidelines are extensive but lack depth in their theoretical underpinnings. Programmes underpinned by feminist and masculinities perspectives are better positioned to engage men's narratives critically, attending to how power and control shape their use of violence.

8.6 Limitations and directions for future research

This research presents several limitations. Although 36 men participated in group workshops, only 7 were interviewed, a relatively small sample. Given the richness of the interview data, future studies could benefit from increasing the number of participants to capture a broader

range of experiences. The perspectives gathered here largely reflect those of middle-aged men from low socioeconomic backgrounds. While DVPP practitioners assisted with recruitment, the process proved challenging, as some participants were difficult to reach or hesitant to engage. Future research could broaden the scope by including men from different nationalities, age groups, and socioeconomic contexts. Consequently, while the findings are valuable, they are not generalisable to the broader population of programme participants.

Furthermore, incorporating the perspectives of other stakeholders, particularly professionals in the field and, most importantly, victim-survivors, could provide a more comprehensive and critical understanding of the change process. Including victim-survivors' voices, in particular, might have added further nuance or posed important challenges to the interpretations of change presented here. These limitations were shaped by the practical constraints of limited time and funding.

Nonetheless, and especially in light of the programme's recent closure, the findings offer important insights that could inform future campaigns and policies aimed at preventing IPV in the Chilean context. In particular, they may help develop prevention efforts directed at young people and other men, fostering early critical reflection on the relationship between gender norms and men's violence.

8.7 Conclusion

Despite the considerable work that remains in developing group-based interventions for men who use violence, I maintain an optimistic outlook regarding their potential to catalyse meaningful change. Rather than dismantling these programmes, as occurred in the Chilean context, policymakers should have pursued comprehensive strengthening and reform initiatives. The scope for improvement was substantial, particularly considering the documented relationship between delivery and the precarious working conditions of practitioners, conditions largely shaped by outsourcing practices.

DVPPs constitute valuable research sites for examining change processes, an area that has received insufficient attention. The field has been heavily focused on measuring whether change can happen in DVPPs rather than understanding how it happens, whilst neglecting how the context shapes these programmes.

Perpetrators of IPV and practitioners working with these men have frequently been overlooked in both public policy and research. This study shows, however, that their perspectives can fundamentally inform policy development.

Overall, the word messiness in the title of this thesis refers not only to the non-linearity of change experienced by the men. After all, non-linearity does not necessarily imply disorder. In this thesis, messiness characterises my own analytical process as I attempted to make sense of the contradictions in men's narratives, as well as the broader research process of understanding the case study through different (and sometimes opposing) perspectives and experiences. Paradoxically, the notion of messiness can also be applied to the implementation of the programme itself, particularly within the context of outsourcing arrangements, as also experienced by the practitioners (chaotic, cursed, words used by the participants to describe their work).

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Appendix I: Summary project document sent to Santiago

Durham University
Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse

Research project:

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile**'**

- Context:

  This project is part of a doctoral program funded by ANID (National Agency for Research and Development). The research is being carried out by Fernanda Chacón and supervised by Dr. Nicole Westmarland and Dr. Nicole Renehan, researchers affiliated with Criva (Center For Research Into Violence and Abuse), University of Durham, England.

- Benefits of participation:

  The lead researcher commits to providing an executive summary (no more than 10 pages, in Spanish) and a presentation to the central and regional state agency teams at the end of the project. The format of the presentation will be coordinated with the stakeholders.

  The complete research (in English) will also be available. Once completed, it will be uploaded to ANID's archives and the project's website.

- Research Objectives:

  To understand how change occurs in men who have used domestic violence within the program (difficulties, motivations, facilitators, learning and application, areas for improvement).

To understand how the program attempts to ‘create’ this change in the context of the Tarapacá region (intervention models, methodologies, tools, facilitators and barriers).

- Location:
  Men's Center in XXXX, XXX
- Duration:
  March 2023 - October 2023.

- Methodology:
  The study includes a mixed design, combining various qualitative research methods (semi-structured interviews and observations both at the study site and during the program’s group sessions). It considers the participation of a broad spectrum of interest groups (users, program staff, Women's Center staff, and key informants).
  I hope to obtain the participation of the intervention team at the center, respecting their guidelines and work schedules. Through the center, users participating in the program and staff from the Women's Centers will be contacted.

- Activities:
  Interviews: Approximately 30 (subject to variation depending on participant availability), including:
  ⎩ Men completing second-level sessions. Users from previous years who have completed the program may also be included. A semi-structured interview will be conducted with each participant (10 to 15 interviews).
  ⎩ Staff from the Men's Center + Regional Manager for Attention and Repair VCM: Two interviews (at different times) (8 interviews total).
  ⎩ Staff from Women's Centers: Interested in interviewing the professional who provides psychological support to the partners or ex-partners of men referred to the center (1 interview per center).
  ⎩ Key informants in domestic violence and/or male re-education programs (8 to 10

interviews). The total number of key informants will vary according to suggestions made by the center and the central team.

Observations: This research has an ethnographic component that includes observations of first-level and second-level group sessions (approximately 6 each).

- Ethical Considerations:

Protocols:

Protocols have been designed to mitigate risks during interviews with center users, as well as for the lead researcher during the fieldwork. A data management protocol has also been designed, which is briefly described below:

Informed Consent:

All participants in the research must provide free and informed consent for each of the activities described above. Each participant will receive an information sheet that outlines the research objectives, their rights, the handling of personal information, how interviews/field notes will be stored, contact information, limitations of confidentiality, among other aspects.

Confidentiality/Anonymity:

In-person interviews will be recorded (voice recorder). Online interviews will be conducted via the University's Teams account and will be video-recorded. Once transcribed, the audio-visual recordings of the interviews will be deleted. Only the transcriptions will be stored in the researcher's institutional account. The interviews will only contain the participant's identification number, and will not collect personal information (e.g., names, place of work, etc.), but if such information is revealed, it will be modified/deleted to ensure the participant's anonymity. All information collected during the fieldwork will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the project, even after it concludes. Confidentiality may only be breached if a participant discloses information that could jeopardize their physical integrity or that of others, or if the researcher becomes aware of such situations. This is clearly mentioned in the participation sheet given to participants prior to informed consent. In these cases, the researcher will discuss the situation with the

supervising faculty to determine (if necessary) the actions to be taken.
The results of the research will be published in scientific articles, books, or presentations, always ensuring the anonymity of the participants.

- Agreements:
  To safeguard the interests of both parties, the researcher will prepare a 'collaboration agreement' by mutual consent, describing the responsibilities and commitments involved.

Appendix II: Collaboration agreement with the local State agency

This document has been designed to establish the responsibilities and commitments to be carried out during the fieldwork to be conducted between March and October 2023 at the Men's Reeducation Center of XXXX. The parties, xxxxxxx and Fernanda Chacón (Lead Researcher), agree on the following:

1. All information collected during the fieldwork will be confidential, and the identity of participants will be protected through anonymity. The limitations of confidentiality are described in the participant information sheet.
2. The lead researcher is responsible for securely storing the information.
3. All individuals participating in the study must do so voluntarily, with full knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, the research objectives, and the information's final use.
4. The analysis of the collected data will follow the criteria of rigour in qualitative research, including validity (correct interpretation through various sources of information) and credibility (the findings must make sense to the participants and best reflect the studied phenomenon).
5. At the end of the study, the researcher commits to sending an executive summary of the results and a presentation.
6. The researcher holds intellectual rights over the collected information.
7. The results may be used for educational purposes, published in scientific journals or reports, and disseminated at conferences and/or discussions, always ensuring the anonymity of the participants.
8. The counterpart will act as a 'seed,' providing access to service users and intervention teams (Women's support services and the DVPP), who may decide to participate in the study voluntarily and have been previously informed.

9. The sessions will be observed, and official documentation will be accessed following the guidelines/criteria established by the intervention team of the Men's Re-education Centre and the regional VCM head of the state agency in XXXX.

Appendix III: Participant information Sheet – DVPP staff (Observations)

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile'

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being undertaken as part of a PhD. project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Fernanda Chacón, PhD. Student, Durham University, Centre for research of violence and abuse (CRIVA).

Contact researcher e- mail: fernanda.m.chacon@durham.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the Chilean National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation.

What is the purpose of the research?

The study is being completed as there is little known about how domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile work and how the process of change happens for men attending the centres. Observations of the sessions and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (men, key informants, and programme staff) will be conducted to answer these questions.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as your employer has agreed to participate in this study, and because you are part of the programme's implementing/delivering team.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

For this part of the study, the researcher will participate in at least 12 workgroup sessions to observe how the sessions are carried out and to document the process. Before the observation starts, the researcher will go through a consent form with you to make sure you voluntarily agree to take part. The observations will not be recorded. However, the researcher will take notes during every session. As part of the observations, conversations that might take place between you and the researcher in the work environment will be included in the study. Your participation in the research will not be used to assess or audit the work you do in the programme.

What will happen to my personal information?

The researcher will ask for your e-mail, which will be used to arrange the interview if required. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone else, will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Will I be named in the research?

No. The researcher will take notes during the observations. As part of the observations, information provided in conversations at the work environment between you and the researcher might be used as part of the study. In case information that could potentially identify you (e.g names, location and family make–up) is disclosed during the observations, it will be removed/changed from the data when it is transcribed, analysed and reported. This means that what you say is anonymised.

Your participation will be confidential, meaning only the researcher can identify individual participants' responses. Only the researcher will have access to the field notes gathered from the observations. Field notes will be typed in word, and no personal information that can identify you will be written down. You can ask the researcher if you have any questions or concerns before or during the observation period.

No information about individuals will be reported back to managers at your organisation.

Limitations to the confidentiality described, include the following circumstances:

Whatever you say is confidential unless you disclose information that puts you or anyone else in immediate danger or serious harm, or if the researcher sees or is told about something that

is likely to cause serious harm. If this happens, the researcher is under obligation to disclose the matter with the supervisors to discuss further actions.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and your written consent will be required before the observations take place. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. If you want to withdraw after the session observations, you should inform this up to two weeks from the day the observation took place. This means your participation in the session will not be used in the study. If during conversations with the researcher there is information that you want to share but you do not want it to be used in the study, please inform this to the researcher during the conversation.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used for educational purposes, and published in academic books, reports or journals and on the project website. If you would like to access a summary of the findings at the end of study, the researcher will provide you with the web address when this becomes available. No one taking part will be named or identified in any reports or publications that the researcher later produces.

What if I want to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, then you need to contact the researcher's supervisors.

Nicole Westmarland, e-mail: nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk

Nicole Renehan, e-mail: nicole.renehan@durham.ac.uk

Appendix IV: Participant information Sheet- DVPP staff (Interviews)

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile'

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being undertaken as part of a PhD. project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything unclear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Fernanda Chacón, PhD. Student, Durham University, Centre for research of violence and abuse (CRIVA).

Contact researcher e- mail: fernanda.m.chacon@durham.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the Chilean National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation.

What is the purpose of the research?

The study is being completed as there is little known about how domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile work and how the process of change happens for men attending to the centres. Observations of the sessions and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (men, key informants, and programme staff) will be conducted to answer these questions.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as your employer has agreed to participate in this study, and because you are part of the programme's implementing/delivering team.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in two interviews that should take around an hour and a half each, and in which I will ask you about the facilitators and barriers

of men's change, how is the programme implemented, the methodologies used, how the process of change happen for men and your understandings of intimate partner violence. Interviews can be conducted face to face or online, at a place and time of your convenience. Before the interview starts, the researcher will explain the study to you and go through a consent form to make sure you are happy to participate. Face-to-face interviews will be audio-recorded. If you prefer an online interview, it will be conducted through the researcher's Microsoft Teams account and will be video recorded.

Your participation in the research will not be used to assess or audit the work you do in the programme.

Do I have to answer every question?

No. By taking part in this interview you do not have to answer all of the questions. If you are uncomfortable or do not want to answer any of the questions just let the researcher know and the question can be skipped.

What will happen to my personal information?

The researcher will ask for your e-mail, which will be used to arrange the interview if required. Your e-mail will not be shared with anyone else, will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Will I be named in the research?

No. The interviews will not collect personal information (e.g. names, location and family make-up). If information that could potentially identify you is disclosed during the interviews, it will be removed/changed from the data when it is being transcribed, analysed and reported. This means that what you say is anonymised.

Your participation will be confidential, meaning only the researcher can identify individual participants' responses. What you say in the interviews will be typed out word for word by the researcher, and the transcription will be held on a secure computer and in the University's cloud storage. Video and audio recordings will be destroyed after the transcription. The identity of participants will remain confidential after the end of the project.

No information about individuals will be reported back to managers at your organisation.

Limitations to the confidentiality described, include the following circumstances:

Whatever you say in the interviews is confidential unless you disclose information that puts you or anyone else in immediate danger or serious harm, or if the researcher sees or is told about something that is likely to cause serious harm. If this happens, the researcher is under obligation to disclose the matter with the supervisors to discuss further actions.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and your consent will be audio recorded and required at the beginning of each interview. You should know that being audio recorded for the interviews is essential to your participation in the study. It is also important that you are comfortable with being recorded at all times, and should feel free to stop the recording at any time if you are not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. If you want to withdraw after the interview was conducted, you should inform this up to two weeks from the day the interview took place, so that your data can be removed before the transcription. This means your information will not be used in the study.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used for educational purposes, and published in academic books, reports or journals and on the project website. If you would like to access a summary of the findings at the end of study, the researcher will provide you with the web address when this becomes available. No one taking part will be named or identified in any reports or publications that the researcher later produces.

What if I want to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, then you need to contact the researcher's supervisors. Nicole Westmarland, e-mail: nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk Nicole Renehan, e-mail: nicole.renehan@durham.ac.uk

Appendix V: Consent form DVPP staff (observations)

Consent ID: _____

Participant ID: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in the sessions give their informed consent to make sure that you fully understand what participating in this research project will involve for you before you agree to it.

Checking the box below indicates my consent:

☐ I have read and understood the participant information sheet

☐ I voluntarily agree to take part in the sessions that the researcher will observe

☐ I understand that my participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected

☐ I agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals

☐ I understand that the researcher may take notes on conversations at the work environment

☐ I understand that there may be instances where during the course of conversations information is revealed which means that the researcher might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet

I agree to participate in this research project:

_____ _____

Participant's Name Participant's Signature

Date: _____

Appendix: VI: Participant information Sheet - men (observations)

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile'

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being undertaken as part of a PhD. project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Fernanda Chacón, PhD. Student, Durham University, Centre for research of violence and abuse (CRIVA).

Contact researcher e- mail: fernanda.m.chacon@durham.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the Chilean National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation.

What is the purpose of the research?

The study is being completed as there is little known about how domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile work and how the process of change happens for men attending to the centres. Observations of the sessions and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (men, key informants, and programme staff) will be conducted to answer these questions.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as you have been referred to attend the programme.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

For this part of the study, the researcher will participate in at least 12 workgroup sessions to observe how the sessions are carried out and to document the process. Before the

observation starts, the researcher will go through a consent form with you to make sure you voluntarily agree to take part. The observations will not be recorded. However, the researcher will take notes during every session. As part of the observations, conversations that might take place between you and the researcher in the work environment will be included in the study. Your participation in the research will not be used to assess your progress in the programme.

What will happen to my personal information?

The researcher will ask for your e-mail, which will be used to arrange the interview if required. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone else, will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Will I be named in the research?

No. The researcher will take notes during the observations. As part of the observations, information provided in conversations at the work environment between you and the researcher might be used as part of the study. In case information that could potentially identify you (e.g names, location and family make–up) is disclosed during the observations, it will be removed/changed from the data when it is transcribed, analysed and reported. This means that what you say is anonymised.

Your participation will be confidential, meaning only the researcher can identify individual participants' responses. Only the researcher will have access to the field notes gathered from the observations. Field notes will be typed in word, and no personal information that can identify you will be written down. You can ask the researcher if you have any questions or concerns before or during the observation period.

Limitations to the confidentiality described, include the following circumstances:

Whatever you say is confidential unless you disclose information that puts you or anyone else in immediate danger or serious harm, or if the researcher sees or is told about something that is likely to cause serious harm. If this happens, the researcher is under obligation to disclose the matter with the supervisors to discuss further actions.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and your written consent will be required before the observations take place. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. If you want to withdraw after the session observations, you should inform this up to two weeks from the day the observation took place. This means your participation in the session will not be used in the study. If during conversations with the researcher there is information that you want to share but you do not want it to be used in the study, please inform this to the researcher during the conversation.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used for educational purposes, and published in academic books, reports or journals and on the project website. If you would like to access a summary of the findings at the end of study, the researcher will provide you with the web address when this becomes available. No one taking part will be named or identified in any reports or publications that the researcher later produces.

What if something goes wrong?

If you feel upset during the conversations with the researcher, you will be asked if you would like to speak to a member of staff about how you feel if you want to. You may wish to spend some time discussing with the researcher any feelings of upset. However, it is important that you know that the researcher will not be able to deal with any concerns you have about the programme content or programme staff, but you will be encouraged to speak to the staff about these concerns yourself.

I have also provided you with contact numbers and services below that will be able to help.

- Salud responde: 600 360 7777 (opción 1). Línea especial de atención psicológica y contención emocional.
- Consultas remotas, Salud digital, Ministerio de salud: https://atencionremota.minsal.cl/

What if I want to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, then you need to contact the researcher's supervisors.

Nicole Westmarland, e-mail: nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk

Nicole Renehan, e-mail: nicole.renehan@durham.ac.uk

Appendix VII: Initial consent form service users (observations)

Consent ID: _____

Participant ID: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in the sessions give their informed consent to make sure that you fully understand what participating in this research project will involve for you before you agree to it.

Checking the box below indicates my consent:

☐ I have read and understood the participant information sheet

☐ I voluntarily agree to take part in the sessions that the researcher will observe

☐ I understand that my participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected

☐ I agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals

☐ I understand that there may be instances where during the course of conversations information is revealed which means that the researcher might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet

I agree to participate in this research project:

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix VIII: Consent form service users' script (observations)

Consent IDs: _____

Participants ID: _____

Date: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in the sessions give their informed consent to ensure that you fully understand what participating in this research project will involve before you agree to it.

Can you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the participant information sheet?
- You voluntarily agree to take part in the sessions that the researcher will observe
- You understand that your participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected?
- You agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals?
- You understand that there may be instances where during the course of conversations information is revealed which means that the researcher might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet
- You will take part on this basis?

Appendix IX: Consent script programme staff (DVPP) (interviews)

Consent ID: _____

Participant ID: _____

Date: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in interviews give their informed consent.

Before we start the interview, I want to record your consent to make sure you know what you are agreeing to do.

Can you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the participant information sheet?
- You voluntarily agree to take part in an individual interview, which will be audio or video recorded?
- You understand that your participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected?
- You agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals?
- You understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interviews information is revealed which means that the researchers might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet?
- You will take part on this basis?

Appendix X: Participant information Sheet- men (interview)

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile'

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being undertaken as part of a PhD. project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Fernanda Chacón, PhD. Student, Durham University, Centre for research of violence and abuse (CRIVA).

Contact researcher e- mail: fernanda.m.chacon@durham.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the Chilean National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation.

What is the purpose of the research?

The study is being completed as there is little known about how domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile work and how the process of change happens for men attending to the centres. Observations of the sessions and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (men, key informant, and programme staff) will be conducted to answer these questions.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as you have been referred to attend the programme.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in one interview that should take around an hour and a half, and in which I will ask you about the impact that the programme

has had in your life and your relationships, the tools that were more useful for you, and the circumstances around how you have come to attend to the programme. The interview could be conducted within the centre's facilities and during the days you are asked to attend the centre, so you do not have to incur in extra expenses. It could be also conducted online. Before the interview starts, the researcher will explain the study to you and go through a consent form to make sure you are happy to participate. Face-to-face interviews will be audio-recorded. If you prefer an online interview, it will be conducted through the researcher's Microsoft Teams account and will be video recorded.

Your participation in the research will not be used to assess your progress in the programme.

Do I have to answer every question?

No. By taking part in this interview you do not have to answer all of the questions. If you are uncomfortable or do not want to answer any of the questions just let the researcher know and the question can be skipped

What will happen to my personal information?

The researcher will ask for your e-mail, which will be used to arrange the interview if required. Your e-mail will not be shared with anyone else, will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Will I be named in the research?

No. The interviews will not collect personal information (e.g. names, location and family make-up). If information that could potentially identify you is disclosed during the interviews, it will be removed/changed from the data when it is transcribed, analysed and reported. This means that what you say is anonymised.

Your participation will be confidential, meaning only the researcher can identify individual participants' responses. What you say in the interview will be typed out word for word by the researcher, and the transcription will be held on a secure computer and in the University's cloud storage. Video and audio recordings will be destroyed after the transcription. The identity of participants will remain confidential after the end of the project.

Limitations to the confidentiality described, include the following circumstances:

Whatever you say in the interview is confidential unless you disclose information that puts you or anyone else in immediate danger or serious harm, or if the researcher sees or is told about something that is likely to cause serious harm. If this happens, the researcher is under obligation to disclose the matter with the supervisors to discuss further actions.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and your consent will be audio recorded and required at the beginning of the interview. You should know that being audio recorded for the interviews is essential to your participation in the study. It is also important that you are comfortable with being recorded at all times, and should feel free to stop the recording at any time if you are not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. If you want to withdraw after the interview was conducted, you should inform this up to two weeks from the day the interview took place, so that your data can be removed before the transcription. This means your information will not be used in the study.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used for educational purposes, and published in academic books, reports or journals and on the project website. If you would like to access a summary of the findings at the end of study, the researcher will provide you with the web address when this becomes available. No one taking part will be named or identified in any reports or publications that the researcher later produces.

What if something goes wrong?

A full distress protocol has been devised in the event you become upset during the interview. You will be given the choice to pause, continue or withdraw. You will be asked if you would like to speak to a member of staff about how you feel if you want to.

You may also wish to spend some time following the interview discussing with the researcher any feelings of upset. However, it is important that you know that the researcher will not be

able to deal with any concerns you have about the programme content or programme staff, but you will be encouraged to speak to the staff about these concerns yourself.

I have also provided you with contact numbers and services below that will be able to help.

- Salud responde: 600 360 7777 (opción 1). Línea especial de atención psicológica y contención emocional.
- Consultas remotas, Salud digital, Ministerio de salud: https://atencionremota.minsal.cl/

What if I want to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, then you need to contact the researcher's supervisors.

Nicole Westmarland, e-mail: nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk

Nicole Rehenan, e-mail: nicole.renehan@durham.ac.uk

Appendix XI: Consent Script- men (interviews)

Consent ID: _____

Participant ID: _____

Date: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in interviews give their informed consent.

Before we start the interview, I want to record your consent to make sure you know what you are agreeing to do.

Can you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the participant information sheet?
- You voluntarily agree to take part in an individual interview, which will be audio or video recorded?
- You understand that your participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected?
- You agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals?
- You understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interviews information is revealed which means that the researchers might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet?
- You will take part on this basis?

Appendix XII: Distress protocol for men

The researcher recognises that perpetrators of domestic violence may become emotional when talking about themselves and their process of change. When reflecting upon their behaviours and attitudes men may also become upset. Such emotions are expected but in the instance that a participant becomes distressed, this protocol should be implemented.

• The researcher will ask the participant if they want to continue, take a break, suspend the interview and reschedule it later, or withdraw.

• The researcher will listen to what the participant is saying and will not attempt to minimise their experience in any way.

• The researcher will refer the participant back to the contact details of available resources on the participant information leaflet.

• The researcher will provide the participant with the opportunity to discuss any issues with their Designated Facilitator or Interventions Manager

Appendix XIII: Participant information sheet- programme staff women's support services

'Understanding change in service users of a re-education programme for men who use domestic violence in Chile'

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being undertaken as part of a PhD. project. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Who will conduct the research?

Fernanda Chacón, PhD. Student, Durham University, Centre for research of violence and abuse (CRIVA).

Contact researcher e- mail: fernanda.m.chacon@durham.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is funded by the Chilean National Agency for Research and Development (ANID), Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation.

What is the purpose of the research?

The study is being completed as there is little known about how domestic violence perpetrator programmes in Chile work and how the process of change happens for men attending to the centres. Observations of the sessions and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (men, key informants, and programme staff) will be conducted to answer these questions.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as your employer has agreed to participate in this study, and because you are part of the programme's implementing/delivering team.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in one interview that should take around an hour and a half, and in which I will ask you about how the process of change happens for men, your understandings of intimate partner violence and how the women's support services work coordinatively with the domestic violence perpetrator programme. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or online at a time and place of your convenience. Before the interview, the researcher will explain the study to you and go through a consent form to make sure you are happy to participate. Face-to-face interviews will be audio-recorded. If you prefer an online interview, it will be conducted through the researcher's Microsoft Teams account and will be video recorded.

Your participation in the research will not be used to assess or audit the work you do in the programme.

Do I have to answer every question?

No. By taking part in this interview you do not have to answer all of the questions. If you are uncomfortable or do not want to answer any of the questions just let the researcher know and the question can be skipped

What will happen to my personal information?

The researcher will ask for your e-mail, which will be used to arrange the interview if required. Your e-mail will not be shared with anyone else, will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it.

Will I be named in the research?

No. The interviews will not collect personal information (e.g. names, location and family make-up). If information that could potentially identify you is disclosed during the interviews, it will be removed/changed from the data when it is being transcribed, analysed and reported. This means that what you say is anonymised.

Your participation will be confidential, meaning only the researcher can identify individual participants' responses. What you say in the interview will be typed out word for word by the researcher, and the transcription will be held on a secure computer and in the University's

cloud storage. Video and audio recordings will be destroyed after the transcription. The identity of participants will remain confidential after the end of the project.

No information about individuals will be reported back to managers at your organisation.

Limitations to the confidentiality described, include the following circumstances:

Whatever you say in the interviews is confidential unless you disclose information that puts you or anyone else in immediate danger or serious harm, or if the researcher sees or is told about something that is likely to cause serious harm. If this happens, the researcher is under obligation to disclose the matter with the supervisors to discuss further actions.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and your consent will be audio recorded and required at the beginning of the interview. You should know that being audio recorded for the interviews is essential to your participation in the study. It is also important that you are comfortable with being recorded at all times and should feel free to stop the recording at any time if you are not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. If you want to withdraw after the interview was conducted, you should inform this up to two weeks from the day the interview took place, so that your data can be removed before the transcription. This means your information will not be used in the study.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used for educational purposes, and published in academic books, reports or journals and on the project website. If you would like to access a summary of the findings at the end of study, the researcher will provide you with the web address when this becomes available. No one taking part will be named or identified in any reports or publications that the researcher later produces.

What if I want to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, then you need to contact the researcher's supervisors. Nicole Westmarland, e-mail: nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk. Nicole Rehenan, e-mail: nicole.renehan@durham.ac.uk

Appendix XIV: Consent script programme staff (women's support services) (interviews)

Consent ID: _____

Participant ID: _____

Date: _____

This research project requires that all persons who participate in interviews give their informed consent.

Before we start the interview, I want to record your consent to make sure you know what you are agreeing to do.

Can you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the participant information sheet?
- You voluntarily agree to take part in an individual interview, which will be audio or video recorded?
- You understand that your participation is anonymous and confidential and only the researcher will have access to the data collected?
- You agree that any data collected may be used for educational purposes, and published in anonymous forms in academic books, reports or journals?
- You understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interviews information is revealed which means that the researchers might be obliged to break confidentiality and agree that this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet?
- You will take part on this basis?

Appendix XV: Interview guide with DVPP practitioners

1. Could you tell me about yourself, your experience, and perhaps your studies (any training) in violence prevention and your role in the programme?
2. What are the goals of the programme?
3. Could you tell me about the approaches/intervention models used in the programme?
4. How do you balance the therapeutic approach and education?
5. Could you tell me about the characteristics of the center's users and the challenges of working with the population you serve?
6. Why do you think men use violence towards their partners or ex-partners? (explore their understanding of VAW, Dynamics of violence).
7. How does the local context affect the intervention? (implementing institution, men's characteristics)
8. How do you try to ensure women's safety during the intervention process with men?
9. How do the users' partners and ex-partners (women) frame the intervention?
10. What is the expected change in service users and how do you assess that change?
11. What strategies do you use for the user to problematise violence? (explore how they foster intrinsic motivation).
12. What facilitates change in men?
13. What motivates men who use violence to change?
14. How do you approach men not sufficiently motivated to change and/or participate in the programme?
15. What are the obstacles to change, and what do you think the programme does or should do to overcome them?
16. How do you think the programme can improve?

Appendix XVI: Interview guide with men

1. Could you tell me about yourself and your family?

2. Could you describe the circumstances that led you to the programme?

3. What were your thoughts when you found out you had been referred to the DVPP?

4. What being a man mean to you and how has this impacted your life and family and relationships?

5. What benefits has the programme had for you and your relationship with your ex and/or current partner?

6. What were or have been the motivations for change? Is there something or someone that has helped you along the process?

7. How do you resolve conflict with your partner?

8. Can you think of some situations where what you learned was not helpful or did not work?

9. How was your life before the program, and how is your life today? (Explore changes in priorities, activities, and interests).

10. Have you been able to explore the reasons for the violence you exercised?

11. What has been the most challenging part of the change?

12. How could the program be improved?

13. What advice would you give to those starting at the centre?

Appendix XVII: Interview guide with women's support services practitioners

1. Could you tell me about yourself and your experience in the area?
2. What are the goals of the Women's support services?
3. Can you describe the relationship of the Centre with the implementing institution?
4. Could you describe the referral and pathways of the service users to the Women's support services?
5. Could you describe your coordination work with the DVPP? What challenges exist in this coordination? What are the benefits of working in coordination with the DVPP?
6. Based on the work you do with the women. What do they expect from the DVPP? What concerns do women have regarding the change process of their partners or ex-partners?
7. How does the DVPP impact the lives of women and their children?
8. How could coordination with the men's centre be improved?
9. What would you improve in the intervention with women?

Appendix XVIII: Interview guide with key informants

1. Could you tell your work experience in the field of domestic violence and re-education of men who have used IPV?

2. What does change look like/mean for men? (indicators of change, the nature of change, impact)

3. What do you think is the relationship between violence and masculinity?

4. What motivates men to change?

5. How does change happen for men?

6. What facilitates change?

7. What are the obstacles to change?

8. How is change sustained over time?