



University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**

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4 **A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWS**  
5 **REPRESENTATIONS OF MALE VICTIMS OF**  
6 **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

7  
8 A Thesis submitted by

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## **Abstract**

Research on domestic violence primarily centres on female victims of male-perpetrated violence; less research, however, has been conducted on male victims. This study investigated how male victims of domestic violence are represented in 35 online news articles using critical discourse analysis. The articles were obtained from Factiva from six major newspapers in Australia between 2018-2021. The most pertinent findings of this study included most articles were considered short in length demonstrating an absence of newsworthiness; men were rarely referred to by name making them an invisible entity; an over-reporting of fatal domestic violence compared to the larger proportion of abuse being non-physical; non-physical abuse was rarely reported on; men were rarely referred to as ‘victim’; and elements of victim-blaming were prevalent. These findings suggest that Australian media does not report male victimisation in ways that increase awareness and credibility. Further, this study demonstrates that there is long way to go in recognising and legitimising the experiences of victimisation that men experience as domestic violence victims.

## **Certification of Thesis**

I, Ashly Nichole Peterson, declare that the Master Thesis titled *A Critical Discourse Analysis of News Representations of Male Victims of Domestic Violence* is not more than 40,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis and the research held within it are dedicated to those who experience or have experienced domestic violence and do not or did not have the support, financial means, or the services available to allow them to escape when they wanted and needed to. Also, to those victims who stay because they truly love their partners despite the trauma they endure from them. There is no shame in loving someone, wanting them to love you and hoping things will get better.

“The more that we choose not to talk about domestic violence, the more we shy away from the issue, the more we lose.” — **Russell Wilson**

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2016, approximately 5.8 million Australians reported that they had experienced some form of family, domestic or sexual abuse (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). Domestic Abuse (DA), Domestic Violence (DV) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) have all been used interchangeably to describe when an individual intentionally exerts power and coercive control over their spouse or intimate partner (Swan et al., 2008; United Nations, n.d.). Domestic violence is the prevailing terminology used in news reporting, not IPV; therefore, DV was the terminology used in this thesis. It must be emphasised, however, that the phenomenon under investigation is related to violence between intimate partners which in an academic context, is now known and researched as intimate partner violence. Any individual who experiences intimidation, stalking, threats, and abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, spiritual, social, or otherwise), within the context of a current or former intimate relationship, is a victim of DV (Migliaccio, 2001; Services Australia, 2022; United Nations, n.d.).

Domestic violence is often viewed as a gendered issue, which is any social issue thought to primarily affect one gender, specifically within the outdated, dichotomous model of gender (Loseke et al., 2005; VicHealth, 2017). Concerning the gendered nature of DV, Australian women statistically encompass the greatest proportion of reported DV victims, and it is reported that one Australian woman dies at the hands of an intimate partner every nine days (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). Statistics demonstrate that DV is predominantly perpetrated by men (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2018), but they also reveal that a considerable number of Australian men experience DV. In 2018, AIHW reported that one in sixteen men will experience physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner and one in six men have experienced emotional abuse within an intimate

relationship. In 2022, the male population in Australia is estimated to be just over 13 million; one in sixteen equates to over 81,000 men who will experience physical or sexual violence and over two million men that will experience emotional abuse (*Australia Population*, 2022). These numbers, however, may not be complete; according to Relationships Australia NSW, up to 50% of the cases they assist with involve a man as the victim ('Relationships Australia NSW', 2021). These data may not reflect the official police data on rates of victimisation, however (Hine et al., 2022; *Measuring Victims of Crime*, 2011). Men are less likely to report their victimisation to police, therefore the statistical data collected by police is not likely to reflect the true proportion of male victims of DV (*Measuring Victims of Crime*, 2011). This is where other data sources can assist in understanding what proportion of DV victims are male. While men may be less likely to officially report their victimisation, they are able to self-report in surveys anonymously without fear of reprisal (*Measuring Victims of Crime*, 2011).

This project recognises all men who identify as male, regardless of birth-assigned sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. It also must be acknowledged that individuals within different cultural groups and the LGBTQIA+ community experience domestic violence at higher-than-average rates. The focus of this project, however, will look at all individuals who were identified as male within the news articles.

Domestic violence is commonly stereotyped as a problem almost exclusively perpetrated by men which overshadows the abuse and violence men experience (Hine et al., 2022). Hine et al., (2020, p. NP5595) state that men are a "hidden victim group" that experience physical abuse coercive control, gas-lighting, and even stalking (Hine et al., 2022; Hines et al., 2007; Tsui, 2014). Another form of hidden abuse is the threat of losing access to visitation with their children (Tsui, 2014). Men who experience DV are more likely to experience post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, feelings of isolation, suicidal ideation, and poorer relationship

outcomes with their children and future partners (Hine et al., 2022) (Hine et al., 2022). Male victims frequently deny, dismiss, and downplay their status as a victim of DV (Hine et al., 2022). Societal expectations dictate that men should be the dominant, stronger sex, therefore, when men do acknowledge their status as a victim to get support, their masculinity is called into question by themselves and others (Hine et al., 2022; Machado et al., 2017; Moon, 2018). When a man speaks out about the abuse and victimisation that have experienced, they are often persecuted and may even be labelled as the instigator and questioned about whether they hit their partner first (Lysova et al., 2022; Migliaccio, 2001; Roebuck et al., 2023; Scott-Storey et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2022). Prior research demonstrates there is a lack of support and services offered to male DV victims, who are also more likely to have their victimisation downplayed by organisations they are seeking help from (Hine et al., 2022; Hines et al., 2007; Lysova et al., 2022; Migliaccio, 2001; Taylor et al., 2022).

. Lee and Wong (2021) reported that although a significant portion of crime stories are comprised of cases about homicide, incidents involving men as the victim are less likely to be reported in the media. It was inferred that cases of men being murdered are less newsworthy as they are not perceived to be as vulnerable or innocent as women, children, and the elderly (Hanson & Lysova, 2021). Although news organisations are trusted to report on important matters, male victimisation may not be perceived as a significant crime in comparison to other types of violent crimes (Lee & Wong, 2020). According to Hanson & Lysova (2021), news reporting of DV often focuses on the experiences and situations of women as victims. It is argued that instances of men as DV victims do circulate, but often do not gain significant attention within communities. Further, discourses that do acknowledge male DV experiences frequently minimise the impact of physical violence and abuse on men in these circumstances

and often relay different accounts of victimhood compared to those involving women as victims (Hanson & Lysova, 2021; Tsui, 2014; Vernon, 2017).

A significant source of information in society is derived from the media, specifically the news (Lee & Wong, 2020; van Dijk, 2006). The information propagated by the media therefore, has a profound influence on organisational and judicial policymaking (Lee & Wong, 2020; van Dijk, 2006). Most news conglomerates are commercial enterprises and have a vested interest in reporting certain events more than others; as such, news reporting cannot be trusted to be fully objective (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2019). Events are selected based on their newsworthiness, calculated by the journalists and editors, and driven by the values of the news organisation (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2019; Lee & Wong, 2021). This calculation is based on what is most likely to appeal to the public and generate the most interest, resulting in increased revenues and viewers for the news organisation (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2019; Lee & Wong, 2021).

A thematic analysis was conducted by Hanson and Lysova (2021) in Canada looking at how male victims of intimate partner homicide were portrayed throughout news articles. Hanson and Lysova (2021, p.1) concluded that male victims were often blamed for their victimisation in news articles, or “represented as non-ideal and illegitimate victims” in the news media. Additionally, the male victim was often doubted as being the victim in the first place and blamed for the precipitating factors that lead to his homicide (e.g., the man was not fulfilling his duties as a husband or father correctly). Although this study is slightly different from the phenomenon under investigation in this project, it does provide some evidence that there is a particular way in which male DV victims are represented in news reporting.

The narrative of DV implicates men as being the perpetrators rather than victims; thus, examination of news discourses regarding male victims of DV requires further explication. As

such, the purpose of this qualitative study was to ascertain how male victims of DV are represented in Australian news reporting. This was achieved by conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is a problem-oriented approach that investigates the interplay of power, ideology and discourse to challenge injustices and to make power relations, domination and discrimination transparent (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Language plays a powerful role in influencing societal norms, the generation of stereotypes and the formulation of prejudice and discrimination (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2013; Wodak, 1989). According to van Dijk (2008), discourses can lead to the reproduction of social inequality and the development of in-group/out-group mindsets. It is these mindsets that are complicit in the development and maintenance of said stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that men face as victims of DV. As CDA has been developed to investigate complex social phenomena under a critical lens, it is a well-suited methodology to explore if male victims of DV are being marginalised through news reporting (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA is interested in ideologies that establish and maintain unequal power relations in discourse and revealing those ideologies that perpetuate dominance (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017).

It is important to note that extensive research has been conducted on women and domestic violence more broadly, as well as in the news (Anrows, 2016; Easta et al., 2015; Lee & Wong, 2020; Sutherland et al., 2015, 2019). This thesis does not seek to minimise or detract from that work, nor women's experiences of domestic violence. In respect of this, I endeavoured to keep comparisons between male and female victims to a minimum. At times, some comparisons will be made to highlight how the media portrays a particular construct differently for men than other victims for context only. It is also important to note that this thesis was not looking exclusively at female-perpetrated violence; the dataset included both hetero and homosexual relationships and thus male and female-perpetrated DV towards male victims.



Although I argue that male victims are marginalised through the way they are represented in news reporting, it is not women or female victims that are the source of that marginalisation and oppression. Instead, I argue it is the patriarchal structures and related socialisation that are the source of marginalisation (Chesney-Lind & Chagnon, 2017). This thesis does not argue that male victims are represented less favourably than female victims; in fact, it became clear that similarities do exist in how both male and female DV victims are represented in news reporting (Anrows, 2016; Chesney-Lind & Chagnon, 2017; Sutherland et al., 2015). Further, the rationale of this particular topic and research design has been developed with future research in mind. It was important to get a sense of how men are represented in news reporting so that a future study may look at similarities and differences between male and female victims. To date, however, no studies have explicitly explored representations of male victims in news reporting and it was deemed important to start from a narrow scope so that future studies can be broader. The findings from this thesis intend to address a gap in the literature by revealing exactly how male victims of DV have been represented in Australian news reporting from 2018 through to 2021.

## **1.1 Aims and Research Questions**

The aim of this project is to investigate representations of male victims of DV in online news articles, and in doing so answer the following research questions:

1. In news reporting, how are male victims of DV referred to and how is the domestic violence incident described?
2. In news reporting, what characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to male victims of DV and the domestic violence incident of which they are victims?

## **1.2 Motivations**

As the researcher, I bring my own experiences of child abuse and intimate partner violence with me, both as a bystander to others' experiences (male and female) and as a survivor. I am passionate about raising awareness that domestic violence affects everyone and that statistics only tell part of the story. The challenge I faced during my research journey was to remain aware of my own biases and experiences through self-awareness and reflection. Machin & Parsons-Smith (2019) relay the importance of critical reflection in psychology to identify and reduce negative mental processes that can impede and influence one's work. Throughout the analysis of this study, I aimed to critically analyse the data while taking into account my innate biases, which inevitably influenced my interpretation of the findings. I strived, however, to remain driven by the data and make conclusions from the data as opposed to seeking data to confirm my beliefs. This entailed considering different perspectives and meanings when undertaking this interpretivist work. I detail the strategies I used to manage 'the researcher within the research' in the *Methodology* section.

Given my experiences, I felt compelled to take on this project to make visible a phenomenon rarely acknowledged. There are organisations, politicians, and individuals fighting every day on behalf of female victims of DV; those standing up and speaking out for men are far fewer. For me, this does not represent the equality that feminism is supposed to advocate for. Gender theory provides a great foundation for understanding why this phenomenon, male victimisation, is kept hidden from the dominant discourses. Attitudes of what is masculine and what is feminine drive how society views, identifies and believes who a victim can and cannot be. At the same time, Hall's theory of representation helps to explore how meaning is formed and reinforced through the way individuals are represented (Hall, 2013). In the media, men are represented in ways that reflect the dominate attitudes towards masculinity and men but ultimately reinforce a culture that does not perceive men as legitimate victims. Finally, van

Leeuwen's social actor theory assists in categorising representations of social actors by highlighting whether they are excluded or included in the discourse (van Leeuwan 1996; 2008). van Leeuwan (1996) says social actors are rarely excluded unintentionally and social actors may be deliberately presented in certain ways that are driven by propaganda strategies (van Leeuwan, 1996). With respect to male victims, it becomes apparent that exclusion strategies are deployed by the sparsity of news coverage male victims receive and the ways they are portrayed when they do receive news coverage.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following the *Introduction* chapter, the second chapter encompasses the *Literature Review* which provides essential background information about domestic violence, language, media, sex and gender, attitudes and social norms, and representations of men. The third chapter, *Methods*, will inform readers about the Discourse Historical Approach and its key concepts, how data were collected, and how the research process was conducted. This will then lead into the fourth chapter, a combined *Findings and Discussion*, which will examine, interpret, and discuss the findings of the data analysis. Finally, the *Conclusion* chapter will summarise the findings of this project, provide recommendations for better reporting practices as well as for future research, and finally address the limitations of the study. The literature review in Chapter 2 will provide a sense of context for this study and outline a rationale for the planned analysis. In accordance with the exploration of the research on domestic violence, there will be consideration of the ways that language, representation, media, and gender function to position common understandings of DV.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Domestic Violence

Decades of research has explored the profound impacts of DV on female victims, including the establishment of structural to situational theories and models to explain and understand why DV occurs against women (Bohall et al., 2016; Gelles, 1980; Holmes et al., 2019; Hyde-Nolan & Juliaao, 2012; Johnson, 1995, 2006; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Pyles & Postmus, 2004; Roebuck et al., 2023). Research has also identified that female victims of DV are frequently faced with many impacts and challenges (ACT, 2022; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023; Barrios et al., 2021; Blunden & Flanagan, 2022; Diemer et al., 2017; MacGregor et al., 2021; Trevillion et al., 2012). Female victims experience moderate to severe bodily harm, threats, and fear of loss of life, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, suicidal ideations, disruptions to work, loss of relationships with family and friends, homelessness, and death, either self-inflicted or by the hands of their partner. (ACT, 2022; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023; MacGregor et al., 2021; Trevillion et al., 2012). Additionally, women may have difficulty getting support to leave the relationship or may not want to leave, hoping the abuse will stop or do to shame and embarrassment (Kennedy & Prock, 2018; Loke et al., 2012; McCleary-Sills et al., 2016). Some women fear or know they will be killed if they try to leave; for others, cultural factors may prevent them from leaving (ACT, 2022; Afrouz et al., 2023; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023). Women with children have additional concerns as to being able to provide for the children, losing care of them, having to co-parent with their abuser, or that harm will come to them because of leaving (ACT, 2022; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023; Blunden & Flanagan, 2022; Diemer et al., 2017). As such, considerable work has been undertaken and

remains needed to address these challenges for female victims to have access to the support and resources they need.

It is also proposed that there are different types of DV that exist between intimate partners and motivations for perpetration vary based on typology (Johnson, 1995, 2005, 2006). For example, in situational couple violence, both partners actively participate in acts of DV, potentially as a result of poor communication and emotional regulation that escalates but without intent to control (Johnson, 1995, 2005, 2006; Maloney et al., 2023; Neilson et al., 2023). In this theory, it is argued that DV is gender symmetric, victimisation and perpetration between men and women are almost equal (Johnson, 2006). Kimmel (2002) heavily criticises the notion of gender symmetry, however, and argues that it is a matter of poorly interpreted data that presents an illusion of symmetry. It has been identified that there has been an increase in female perpetrated DV (Boxall et al., 2020; Hester, 2012). Boxall et al. (p.10) stated that “the proportion of women identified as a POI [person of interest (in a domestic violence incident as the perpetrator)] also increased from 24 to 56 percent.” It is suggested, however, that the models and theories of why men perpetrate DV are not applicable to female perpetration (Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Swan & Snow, 2006). It is argued that, unlike male perpetrators, women do not perpetrate DV from a desire to maintain power and control over their partners. Instead, researchers have articulated that women predominantly perpetrate DV in relation to self-defence of themselves and their children (Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Swan & Snow, 2006). This in particular is one source of difficulty in legitimising male victims’ experiences of DV. Other studies have in fact identified that women do exert violence over partners to coercively control (Hine et al., 2022; Hines, 2010; Hines & Douglas, Emily, 2010; Lysova et al., 2022; Lysova & Dim, 2022).

Limited research has been carried out on male DV victimisation in comparison to other victims of crime (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018; Bates et al., 2019a; Hines et al., 2007; Swan et al., 2008). Statistics indicate that physical acts of violence are overwhelmingly male-perpetrated, however, DV is also perpetrated against men by male and female partners (Australian Institute Of Health And Welfare [AIHW], 2019). Several studies indicate men are less likely to report the various types of DV perpetrated against them (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018; Bates et al., 2019). According to AIHW (2019), nine out of ten men (approximately 97%) of male victims who were physically assaulted by an intimate partner, did not report it to or involve the police. Men are a minority group within the DV narrative and a process of marginalisation takes place concerning legitimatising their experiences as victims (Lysova et al., 2022; Migliaccio, 2001; Roebuck et al., 2023; Scott-Storey et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2022). For this project, marginalisation is defined in terms of an individual's alterity, wherein "being marginalized [sic] constitutes being defined as *other* [sic] by the dominant group, which designates an individual to a lower status in the social hierarchy" (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hines et al., 2007; Migliaccio, 2001, p. 207).

This marginalisation of the male victims of DV gained attention in the Australian media amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Gleeson, 2020). In 2020, Gleeson reported via *ABC News* that men are finding themselves unable to locate services specific to their plight as victims of DV. Due to a scarcity of appropriate resources, some men have even faced homelessness as a result. Gleeson (2020, para. 13) states that "...some causes of domestic violence may be going unaddressed because of a reluctance to recognise that men can be victims in the first instance, and a lack of services if they manage to overcome intense shame and stigma and reach out for help.") Further, Gleeson reported that 44% of calls to the service were related to the male caller's experience of domestic violence from their partner.

Huntley et al., (2019) conducted a systematic literature review and identified five key themes: men are afraid to disclose their victimisation; the stigmas of being a male victim challenge masculinity; a desire to remain committed to the perpetrator despite the abuse; the longer-term effects which lead to a reduction in confidence and/or increased despondence; and men's perception of services and their (un)availability specifically for men. A study conducted in California found that requests for a temporary restraining order (TRO) were 42% more likely to be rejected if the plaintiff was a male, and 84% more likely to have a permanent restraining order (PRO) rejected (Muller et al., 2009). In comparison, 95% of TROs and 31% of PROs requested by female plaintiffs were granted (Muller et al., 2009). A limitation of this particular study in relation to this thesis is that the study was conducted in the United States; therefore may not generalise well to an Australian judicial system. Another study explored male victims' experiences with support services, where one man reported "I called eleven different numbers for battered women and got no help" (Hines et al., 2007, p. 68).

Compared to victims of other crimes, male victims are underrepresented statistically, specifically in academic research, within policy-making, and within news reporting (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018; Hayes & Prenzler, 2015). It is suggested from the existing research that the experiences of male domestic violence victims are minimised in various contexts (Hine et al., 2022; Lysova et al., 2022; Roebuck et al., 2023; Scott-Storey et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2022). The source of these conflicting theories, arguments, and statistics is that researchers are using different sampling methods and theoretical perspectives to examine DV (Hine et al., 2022; *Measuring Victims of Crime*, 2011). Additionally, individuals are more likely to report their status as victim or perpetrator in anonymous self-reports than to involve police (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Lysova et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2022). This means that official data of actual incidents recorded by the police do not necessarily reflect the true rates of DV

occurring, regardless of which gender is victim or perpetrator (Hine et al., 2022; *Measuring Victims of Crime*, 2011).

The scope of this project does not allow for an in-depth consideration of the experiences faced by the Indigenous populations of Australia, nor those in the LGBTQI+ community. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that domestic violence also exists in these populations. For example, a survey carried out by Hill et al., (2020) found that men who identified as LGBTIQA+, particularly transmen, (a person who was born female but transitioned to male) had experienced higher rates of all types of domestic violence than that of female-identifying respondents or cisgender men (a person whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth) (*Inclusive Language*, n.d.). Additionally, survey data from Pitts et al., (2006) demonstrated that within the LGBTIQA+ community, 27.9% of males, 61.8% of trans-males and 36.4% of intersex males reported being abused by a partner. With respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island populations, female victims are the predominant focus of research leaving male victims in this population underrepresented. With that being said, a study comparing the differences in Indigenous victims compared to non-Indigenous victims found that Indigenous men do experience domestic violence at similar rates as non-Indigenous men (Boxall et al., 2020). Further research is needed to fully understand how DV is experienced by men in these populations within an intimate partnership context.

### **2.3 Sex, Gender, Attitudes and Social Norms**

*Sex* refers to the biological distinction between male and female, while *gender* is associated with socially constructed external behaviours related to masculinity and femininity (Blakemore et al., 2009; *Inclusive Language*, n.d.). Although a spectrum of gender identities exists (Abrams, 2019), there remains a dichotomous understanding of gender: male and female, man and woman, boy and girl, that define normative formulations of gender (Crabb, 2021; J.



Taylor, 2021). Blakemore et al. (2009) states that gender is the most basic way in which social life is organised, with society emphasising differences between boys and girls from conception onwards. According to (Butler), (2004, p. 42):

Gender is not exactly what one “is” nor is it precisely what one “has.” Gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalisation of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes.

Butler (1988) posits that gender is not naturally inherited upon birth but rather it is an act, a socially constructed performance where the script outlines who (based on sex) and how (behaviourally) an individual performs masculinity or femininity. Butler believes that gender is something a person “does” by performing a particular gender script, which is acquired from and conforms to socially developed gender norms.

Street and Dardis (2018) stated that hegemonic masculinity refers to “a societal pattern in which stereotypically male traits are idealized as the masculine cultural ideal.” While there will be individual differences in the degree to which men embody these traits, it is socially expected that men will endeavour to exemplify these qualities more so than not (Donaldson, 1993). In Western cultures, a boy is a boy because he behaves in what is idealised as “boy-like” by playing with trucks, rough-and-tumble play, getting dirty and the like (Moon, 2018).

Flood (2020) wrote a report for VicHealth which investigated attitudes about masculinity and health in Australia. They found that 33% of men and 66% of women agree that traditional gender stereotypes and masculine hegemonic beliefs are harmful and limiting for men, women, and children. It is interesting that only one-third of men found these stereotypes problematic whereas the majority of women believed they were in fact problematic. Flood (2020, pp. 4-5) differentiates attitudes from social norms by saying:

Attitudes refer to internally motivated judgements that people make about something, for example about what they like or do not like. ‘Social norms’ refer to beliefs about what other people do and approve of...Although attitudes and norms are distinct, they are related, in that either can influence each other... At the societal level, stereotypical masculine norms are embedded in media and popular culture, shape the cultures and social relations of workplaces, sports, and religion, and inform government policies on parenting, work and other areas.

Through this study, it was possible to gain a sense of how Australians hold particular attitudes about Australian men. These attitudes contribute to and perpetuate social norms about what is expected of men, but also what is incongruent with manhood and masculinity (i.e., victimhood). These socially constructed, normative ideals of masculinity have arisen out of patriarchal systems that date back to the beginning of civilisation. Being sensitive, vulnerable, or victimised is not often associated with men; to be these things, socially, diminishes the perception of a boy or man’s masculinity (Luther et al., 2018; Moon, 2018). Men are socialised to behave in certain ways which reinforces assumptions about masculinity and ‘being a man’ (Butler, 1988). At the same time, men are predominantly represented in the media in ways that reflect the performative act that is associated with normative conventions of what it means to be a man.

I argue that patriarchy and some feminist ideologies play a significant role in why male victims are a marginalised group. It is recognised that female victims are a marginalised group; but both victim groups are marginalised, sharing similarities and differences (Roebuck et al., 2023). The key source of this marginalisation lies within the social systems of patriarchy. Ortner (2022) describes patriarchy as a social arrangement of power; a system where men hold power over most social aspects, leadership roles, moral authority, property, and social privilege.

Patriarchy is “about the power of “men” over both women and other men” (Ortner, 2022, p. 307); like an exclusive club where women and “wrong men” are prohibited (Ortner, 2022, p. 309). This notion of wrong men is a critical concept to this thesis. Male victims are considered ‘wrong men’ because ‘right [real] men’ would not allow themselves to be subjected to DV (Croft et al., 2015; Hine, Bates, et al., 2022; Hine, Wallace, et al., 2022; Hines, 2010; Lysova et al., 2022). Even if this notion is not overt and explicitly stated, there is ample evidence to demonstrate male victims perceive this notion to be true (Bates et al., 2019b; Croft et al., 2015; Lysova et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2022).

On the other hand, feminists, both female and male, have fought hard for decades to tackle, minimise, and criminalise DV; a phenomenon that historically was socially acceptable for men to perpetrate in the home (Danis, 2003; Williams & Walklate, 2020). A significant amount of activism has taken place to elevate women from a place of oppression which is based on men as oppressors in patriarchal societies (Hunnicutt, 2009; Kuskoff & Parsell, 2021; Phillips, 2006). The feminist perspective argues that men that fall victim to DV are not victims of oppression but are the oppressors whose victims finally defended themselves (Phillips, 2006; Roebuck et al., 2023). This perspective portrays men as holding all social power with the ideology that men cannot be oppressed if they are the oppressor. In line with feminist theory, this may not account for the individual experience of the victim, irrespective of gender. Social power is defined as “the control exercised by one group or organisation or its’ members over the actions and/or the minds of the members of another group, thus limiting the freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies” (van Dijk, 1996, p.84). While research supports the view that in some cases the men were the oppressor and the woman retaliated, there is also research demonstrating the opposite to be true (Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Hine et al., 2022; Hines, 2010; Lysova & Dim, 2022; Roebuck et al., 2023; Swan & Snow, 2006). This

social power may be held by some men, but men who do not meet the standards of masculinity do not. I argue that some feminist ideologies wilfully fail to recognise men who are demonstrably oppressed by the same patriarchal systems that oppress women (i.e., “wrong men” as Ortner (2022) describes).

Fairclough & Wodak (1997) advise that how discourses are represented, and the positionality of people can lead to reproductions of unequal power relations. Feminist perspectives alongside established patriarchal institutions work in ways that delegitimize male victims’ experiences of victimisation. Politically, those who seek to present a more balanced perspective of DV are often criticised, ostracized, and condemned (Ortner, 2022; Roebuck et al., 2023; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 2008). This feminist perspective, paired with pervasive patriarchy, perpetuates stereotypical ideals of masculinity, and reinforces notions of male victimisation as illegitimate. Regardless of theoretical perspective, model, or typology, DV is a global issue that affects men and women who experience significant impacts. There is, however, significantly less research on male victimisation making it apparent that male victims are an overlooked population and forms the rationale for this thesis.

## **2.4 Language, Media, and Representation**

According to Hall et al., (2013), language is the way individuals within a society come to create and understand shared meaning, while representations are the ways meaning is conveyed through language. Language produces knowledge and creates a system of representation whereby meaning is constructed using signs and symbols. Over time these signs and symbols are constructed to hold meaning for people, ideas, concepts and so forth. Eventually, these signs and symbols coalesce into discourses that define and prescribe sets of practises that correspond with an individual’s behaviours and interactions.

Discourses are not singular statements, ideas, or institutional practises, but rather establish a collection of ‘knowledge’ that maintain characteristic similarity within a specific context or period (Hall et al., 2013). Discourses correspond with representations and descriptions of phenomena, and individuals through text and other media. Discourses, language, and social practise come together to construct a ‘sense’ of the phenomenon and define how it is perceived, talked about, and understood. This is then used to control how knowledge is practised and regulates communication about a topic in a specific time and place across a variety of texts (Hall et al., 2013). In terms of domestic violence, the discursive framing of victimhood typically acknowledges the plight of women as victims, relegating men’s experiences as less visible, and less discussed (Migliaccio, 2001). Men as victims do not obtain the same recognition and credibility that is afforded to female victims (Lysova et al., 2022; Migliaccio, 2001; Roebuck et al., 2023; Scott-Storey et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2022). This is evident in a range of social ‘texts’, including the representations that are cast in news articles recounting the experiences that male victims have with counselling services, the courts, domestic violence shelters and law enforcement (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hines et al., 2007).

Given that the production of meaning is socially constructed, a key location of this formation of social meaning is derived from the media (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Grosholz & Kubrin, 2007; Hall et al., 2013). ‘Media’ is an expansive term that corresponds with any form of communication intended to convey a specific meaning. For this project, media relates to news reporting undertaken by the industry recognised as the ‘mass media’ and conveyed in the form of news reporting (Lister et al., 2009). Much of what individuals know and how they learn about the world around them in this modern, technologically-driven era is gleaned from media interpretations and portrayals (Tsfati & Cohen, 2012). Additionally, media narratives are incredibly powerful, reaching a large population that impacts and shapes public perceptions,

societal norms and even policy-making (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; van Dijk, 1996). Dunaway et al. (2015) suggest that the decision to report news stories in a certain way is tactical, whereas Entman, (2007, p. 165) states “‘telling people what to think about’ [through media] is how one exerts political influence in noncoercive political systems... it is through framing [and news slant] that political actors shape the texts that influence or prime the agendas and considerations that people think about.”

An aspect of news reporting that is not always considered is what instances of manipulation are taking place, intentionally or not. This can happen as a result of the journalist’s political ideology and role perception, and it can also be related to the organisation’s political stances (i.e., right-wing vs left-wing); or stories can be written in such a way that it influences and even conforms to what is socially normative and accepted (Arias, 2019; Scherr & Baugut, 2016). One method used by the media to manipulate readers is to omit facts and information not deemed relevant, but such omissions may influence their reader’s perception of the event (Parenti, 1997). Beder (2004) even states that some editors are averse to reporting certain events due to their controversial nature, politically or socially, that may result in losing readers. This also speaks to the power that the media holds and maintains through selective coverage of events (Beder, 2004). This selectivity can manipulate viewers’ perception of an issue by only reporting on stories that present a particular narrative about that issue and not providing readers with all perspectives to consider. According to van Dijk (2006), this manipulation shapes and forms the shared social representations that individuals hold as a society long-term. He further states that once these social representations are developed and attitudes regarding them are solidified, little effort is required to reinforce these attitudes which drive beliefs and behaviours accordingly. Van Dijk (2006) concurs with Beder (2004) in that manipulation results in how information about a reader’s attention is drawn to certain facts and away from others. One example cited is how

headlines are used to ‘emphasize irrelevant details, rather than the most important topics of a discourse’ (Dijk, 2008, p. 366). For example, one article was titled “Gym owner put husband in headlock after ‘video binge’.” The fact that the perpetrator was a gym owner was not particularly relevant to the issue at hand. Additionally, van Dijk acknowledges that manipulation may not be intentional, but it is democratically illegitimate since it results in reproducing inequality that inevitably hurts those in the minority group of a particular issue.

Parenti (1997, p.5) stated that “mainstream media faithfully reflect the dominant ideology seldom straying into territory that may cause discomfort to those who hold political and economic power.” The dominant ideology around domestic violence is that men are perpetrators (Boxall et al., 2020; Migliaccio, 2001; Tsui, 2014). It is argued that acknowledgement of male victimisation is controversial because statistically most domestic violence is disproportionately perpetrated by men (Loseke et al., 2005). As such, overreporting of male victimisation or overly sympathetic news articles of male victimisation are likely to come under criticism by readers and result in a loss of revenue. This may reflect why news reporting of male victimisation is considerably less frequent, in addition to men being less likely to report their own victimisations (Hine et al., 2022; Lysova et al., 2022; Migliaccio, 2001; Roebuck et al., 2023; Scott-Storey et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2022). Domestic violence is discussed and recognised as a woman’s issue, but discourses need to consider the experiences of male victims as well. Legitimising men’s experiences of victimisation does not discredit nor minimise women’s experiences as victims. The selective reporting of male victimisation, however, is likely to influence public perception of this important social issue, which is a form of manipulation that does marginalise men as victims of DV.

According to Shoemaker, (2006, p.105) “news is a social construct, a thing, a commodity, whereas newsworthiness is a cognitive construct, a mental judgment.”

473 Newsworthiness could also be considered more of a collective understanding based on the social  
474 values of a given society. Journalists are seen as gatekeepers, assessing what is relevant and  
475 significant enough to be reported on or what may be deemed harmful and thusly omitted  
476 (Shoemaker, 2006). Logistically, only a small proportion of events can be reported on, so  
477 specific factors are considered when determining a story's newsworthiness (Fleming et al.,  
478 2006). These factors include "conflict or controversy; prominence; novelty, oddity or the  
479 unusual; sensationalism; importance, impact, or consequences; interest; timeliness; and  
480 proximity" (Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1987, p. 10).

481 Shoemaker & Cohen (2012) proposed that there are two overarching predictors of  
482 newsworthiness: deviance and social significance. Deviance, in the context of newsworthiness, is  
483 viewed as a trait that sets people, behaviours, ideas, or events apart from what is socially  
484 acceptable or normative and is indicated by novelty, oddity, conflict, controversy, and  
485 sensationalism (Eilders, 2006; Grosholz & Kubrin, 2007; Pritchard & Hughes, 1997). Research  
486 has shown that perceptions of deviance and crime are moderated by gender, meaning the gender  
487 of the perpetrator can moderate how severely the behaviour is perceived and punished (Herzog &  
488 Oreg, 2008; Piquero, 2001; Tittle et al., 2003). Social significance is broader in that it addresses  
489 how an event has an impact on a social system locally and globally, with respect to political,  
490 economic, cultural, and public significance (Shoemaker, 2006). Per Shoemaker (2006), coverage  
491 is not solely determined by newsworthiness, but events that are both high in deviance and social  
492 significance are more likely to be reported on.

493 Intimate partner violence should be considered high in both deviance and social  
494 significance. DV contravenes normative conceptions of healthy relationships and has a  
495 significant impact on the victims. At a societal level, domestic violence has been described as a  
496 pandemic, affecting children, families, and society as a whole. Although improving, historically



male victimisation has been seen as an outlier. An example of this derives from the way that the majority of DV stories reported on are cases of male-perpetrated domestic violence against women (Muroyi, 2016; Scharrer, 2008). The scarcity of reporting demonstrates that male victimisation does not meet the threshold of newsworthiness compared to other crime stories and thereby obscures the issue from public awareness (Grosholz & Kubrin, 2007). This reinforces public perceptions that male victimisation is an anomaly and in turn further marginalises male victims and their experiences (Davis & Dossetor, 2010; Fortunato & Martin, 2016; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The dominant discourse on DV in the media focus on the experiences of women, i.e. portrayals and discourses regarding violence against women or on men as perpetrators. It should be noted that this literature is seminal work, key to the methodology and theoretical framework of this thesis due to a lack of prior research focusing on portrayals of male victims in the media. Instead, the broader, overarching seminal literature used was applied to the issue of men being DV victims.

## **2.5 Representations of Men**

According to Turnbull (2020, p. 44) “every time you encounter a representation of anything, you evaluate its limitations and then weigh up its usefulness in terms of the credibility gap between what the representation suggests and your own experience or assumptions.” Discourses on men are represented in specific ways purely based on the link between their biological sex and societal notions of gender (Kimmel & Aronson, 2016; Luther et al., 2018). Luther et al. (2018) asserted that men in Western contexts have historically maintained positionality as the dominant gender with specific notions of masculinity stemming from this place of power. As such, representations of men and masculinity reflect what Foucault would refer to as a discursive formation (Hall et al., 2013). This refers to when a specific concept, like masculinity, is represented across a variety of mediums in a recognisable style and pattern. This

is particularly demonstrated in the way all forms of media represent, or frame, men within these scripts (Luther et al., 2018).

In popular cultural depictions, men are often portrayed as: “gallant and macho...[playing] roles as pioneers, western heroes, thieves, pirates, and war heroes” (Lont, 1995 p.265 as cited in Luther et al., 2018). Luther et al. (2018, p.180) stated that within media representations “Two dimensions exist for males... They are either sex-crazed and “manly” or comical and inept.” Framing men in the media in particular ways, like those above, does not explicitly say “this is what a real man looks like” yet influences normative perceptions of masculinity (Bicchieri, 2017). Specific discursive formulations regarding men exist with the underlying implication that men are not men if they are shown as sensitive, weak, vulnerable, and least of all, a victim. Representations of female victims are commonplace across all forms of media; men, however, are rarely depicted as such (Luther et al., 2018).

There is minimal research available on how the news represents male victims of DV. The main search terms and search strategies that were utilised to explore the existing literature can be found in Appendix C. One thesis explored the media representations of men and women on issues of domestic violence in Zimbabwean newspapers (Muroyi, 2016). This thesis, however, was more focused on the positive, biased representations of men as offenders (blameless) and negative representations of women as victims (blamed), not on the experiences of male victims. Hines and Douglas (2010) presented a conference paper titled *Media Portrayals of Intimate Partner Violence Against Men: Do they Reflect Reality? How Do They Impact Helpseeking Experiences?* Hines and Douglas conducted a comparative analysis of news article headlines covering both female DV victims and male DV victims. They found that when females were the DV victim, the term domestic violence was prominent in the headline while domestic violence was not mentioned at all in the headlines regarding male victims of DV. Their paper also

identified that public outcry was considerably higher when a female was assaulted (for example, by being *punched*) on a reality television show, as compared to when a man was assaulted on the same show. Hines and Douglas also demonstrated how men abused by their female counterparts on American sitcoms were considered funny, acceptable, and in many cases, justified.

More recently a thematic analysis study was conducted by Hanson and Lysova (2021) looking at news articles that portrayed male victims of female-perpetrated intimate partner homicide. The study was not published at the time this project commenced but is very closely related to what this project is also investigating. The key differences were the methodology, the dataset, and the investigation of fatal domestic violence only. Nevertheless, one of the findings were similar to the findings of this project. Despite approaching the investigations differently, one of the themes was “doubting the victim (who is the victim?)” (p. 9) which also married up with victim precipitation (victim-blaming). The other theme was victim recognition ‘he didn’t deserve this’ – this finding, however, was less prevalent in the findings of the current study. This finding relayed characterisations of men as genuine “victims of a serious crime rather than victims of their actions” (p.12). This is in contrast to the first theme where doubt was cast on whether the man was a victim.

The focus of the current project is to how are men represented in Australian news articles. Critical discourse analysis will be applied to a sample of Australian news articles reporting on incidents of domestic violence towards male victims to investigate whether portrayals of male victims in Australia mirror contemporary research.

## **2.6 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis is both a methodology and a theoretical framework that is used to critically explore how language is a social process (Fairclough, 1989). Language can be

used to perpetuate and maintain inequitable ideologies which reinforce power imbalances between social actors (Fairclough, 1989; van Leeuwen, 2008). Power, in social terms, is the ability of individuals to influence, control or shape behaviour, decisions and outcomes based on a social standing (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). More importantly, power plays a crucial role in determining access to resources, decision-making processes, and the distribution of privileges and opportunities (Fairclough, 1989; Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Fairclough (1989) states that language occupies a substantial role in generating, upholding, and altering social dynamics of power. A key goal of critical research is to highlight and reveal social wrongs, such as injustice, inequality, racism, sexism, and so forth (Fairclough, 2009). Discourse and society have a reciprocal effect on one another; language is shaped by society, but it also shapes society through ideologies, identities, and beliefs (Fairclough, 1992). Language, specifically meaning, is socially constructed by individuals which can vary broadly from culture to culture (Burr & Dick, 2017b). In essence, what may be seen as sexist or derogatory in one culture, may be perfectly innocent and harmless in another culture. Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 14) advise that “language is not powerful on its own” but “gains power by the use powerful people make of it.”

As identified earlier in this thesis, societal norms and gender roles often perpetuate the belief that men should be strong and immune from DV as victims, influencing how male victims’ experiences are perceived and communicated about. CDA can identify how power dynamics manipulate discourse about male DV victimisation, in terms of hidden assumptions, ideologies, and biases entrenched in language. It also encourages the critical questioning of narratives and to explore marginalised perspectives, such as DV is solely a women’s issue and can assist in highlighting overlooked experiences of male victimisation. Additionally, CDA can highlight underlying beliefs that might downplay or dismiss male victims’ experiences due to societal notions about masculinity. This critically driven theory provides the tools to examine how

language is used to legitimatise the marginalisation of male victims; specifically, how language can be used to silence male victims or portray them as the exception. Men are typically seen as the keepers of power; therefore, certain ideologies may dictate that men are ineligible to be victims or marginalised. This in turn can inform and challenge conversations about masculinity, gender roles, and the need for inclusive support for all victims of DV.

As CDA was developed to investigate complex social phenomena critically, it is a well-suited methodology to explore how male victims of DV are being represented in news reporting (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This project utilises two brands of CDA, Wodak's *Discourse-Historical Approach* (DHA) and van Leeuwen's *Representation of Social Actors*. DHA is interested in identifying ideologies that establish and maintain unequal power relations in discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). Ideology is highlighted in DHA, which Wodak and Reisigl (2017, p.88) defined as "an (often) one-sided perspective of world view composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific social group." A relevant example is gender ideology which describes beliefs about what roles men and women should fulfil in society (Saguy et al., 2021). Ideologies are often employed as a means for prevailing dominant groups to maintain a status quo of unequal power relations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). DHA seeks to reveal ideologies that perpetuate dominance while acknowledging the social and historical factors that were complicit in the evolution of said ideologies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). Ideologies can become ingrained in the fabric of society that it takes a long time and considerable effort to change them. As such, language is only as powerful as the value people assign to it, and people and organisations in positions of power, like the media, can make changes to discourses that shape public perceptions and beliefs about a given issue (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017).

Reisigl and Wodak (2017) described DHA as a socio-philosophical approach that is comprised of three types of critique. Firstly, there is the discourse-immanent critique which seeks to explore problems within a discourse. Then, there is the socio-diagnostic critique which identifies manipulation and persuasion in the discourse, and draws upon contextual (cultural, historical, and social) knowledge and theories to interpret it. Lastly, there is the prospective critique which allows the researcher to inform future best practices that evolve from the findings (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). This project utilised DHA to examine how male victims of domestic violence are represented in news articles by: analysing news articles for dominant, concerning trends or themes as asked by the research questions (discourse-immanent critique); unpacking the historical and social contexts that developed and maintained these trends and themes where applicable (socio-diagnostic critique); and finally, making recommendations to improve future news reporting on male victims of domestic violence (prospective critique). To assist in the discourse-immanent critique and answering of the research question, van Leeuwen (2008) provided a set of “tools” or categories that allow a researcher to identify how social actors are represented in discourse. Van Leeuwen’s approach seeks “to draw up a socio-semantic inventory of how social actors can be represented and to establish the sociological and critical relevance” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 23).

## Chapter 3: Method

### 3.1 Approach to Inquiry

This project was approached from a social constructionism perspective, which argues that individuals understand the world and all that encompasses it by way of language and how it is used to represent people, places, events, and objects through the production of discourses and systems of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Burr & Dick, 2017a). Young and Collin (2004, p.375) state that social constructionism “emphasizes that the social and psychological worlds are made real (constructed) through social processes and interaction.” For social constructionists, there is no single truth, and it is recognised that there will always be different perspectives, although particular perspectives will emerge as dominant and indicative of the prevailing politics of the context in question (Burr & Dick, 2017). According to Willig (2013), language is constructive and how we categorise research concepts through language influence how we interpret and perceive the research findings. Thus, researchers should be critically aware of how they are using language within and through their research endeavours. This awareness forms part of the researcher’s reflexivity, whereby one must acknowledge their subjectivity and its influence on the researcher as an interpretivist (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Willig, 2013).

It is for this reason that researchers must declare their theoretical positions and values so that their interpretations can be understood accordingly, as I have disclosed in the *Introduction*. Additionally, van Dijk (1996) states that meaning is derived from culture, and language on its own cannot produce meaning without the influence of culture. The meanings I attached, as the researcher, to the findings of the data were influenced by specific cultural beliefs and understandings as a Caucasian, cisgender, female American immigrant who naturalised to Australia. Additionally, my past experiences as a victim and bystander to both male and female-

perpetrated domestic violence also may have influenced my interpretations of the data. I personally have witnessed several instances of female-perpetrated domestic violence against their partners through means of coercive control, as well as physical, financial and emotional abuse. Despite the biases I hold, as a scientist, I recognise a need to maintain academic rigour in my approach. I did this by recording my reflections within the spreadsheet I used to analyse the data. At the end of each article that provided enough detail for a deep analysis, I reflected on my thoughts about the article. Some articles were simply too short and lacking in detail to record any significant reflections. Thereafter, I would debrief with my supervisors about my analyses and reflections. They reviewed the articles and then my observations and reflections for each. My supervisors challenged my interpretations of the data where it seemed evident the data was not driving my conclusions. They also highlighted additional explanations for the finding that I had not considered due to the lens I was viewing the data through. Appropriate amendments were made upon further consideration of the feedback given by my supervisors.

### **3.2 Data Collection and Sources**

This qualitative study aimed to critically analyse online news articles to identify the current representations of Australian male victims of DV. The articles were obtained from 2018-2021 from the six most subscribed Australian newspapers (see Table 1 on page 25) and analysed using *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA). The source of data for this project were archival news articles, specifically articles made available online. Online news articles were chosen instead of print articles for two reasons: first, practicality. Articles were easily accessible via the Factiva database and required no additional subscriptions. The second reason is that the readership of online news in the digital age is higher than print subscriptions (see Table 1) and therefore the impact of online news is greater (Roy Morgan, 2019; *Newspaper Influence*, 2015; Gorvett, 2020). Additionally, online news articles can be shared with non-subscribers through social



media networks like Facebook and Twitter, with an increased reach beyond subscribers alone (Bowd, 2016). The data were collected via the Factiva database to which the University of Southern Queensland holds a subscription. A search was undertaken specifically for articles that met the following criteria: the news report covered a domestic violence incident in an intimate partner context (or as implied in, or inferred from, the article); the victim of the incident is a man; and the article was published online in one of the six newspapers in Table 1, between 01/01/2018 and 31/08/2021.

**Table 1**

*Readership of Top Australian Newspapers (2019)*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Paper Readership</b>	<b>Online Readership</b>	<b>Paper + Online</b>
<b>Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)</b>	871,000	3,745,000	4,125,000
<b>The Age</b>	738,000	2,503,000	2,782,000
<b>Herald Sun</b>	1,155,000	1,919,000	2,729,000
<b>Daily Telegraph</b>	1,143,000	1,773,000	2,625,000
<b>The Australian</b>	851,000	1,824,000	2,421,000
<b>Courier-Mail</b>	874,000	1,077,000	1,748,000

*Note.* Adapted from Roy Morgan (2019).

Factiva was searched using the listed Sources and Keywords, in Table 2 (page 26), to locate articles that matched the specified criteria. Despite intimate partner violence being the preferred terminology in academia, a Factiva article search using “intimate partner violence” returned 51 hits and “victim” AND “intimate partner violence” only returned eight hits. The returned articles found using intimate partner violence did not meet the criteria and instead focused on government or organizational views or policy matters, not specific cases. As such, the terminology ‘intimate partner violence’ was excluded from the keyword search as it was not encompassing the data needed for the project. Although the keywords were quite prescribed and narrow, this was done strategically to limit the results; a search of domestic violence alone

yielded too many results to work with for a master's level project. These keywords were purposefully selected to target the phenomenon under investigation, specifically how men are represented as victims within the context of domestic violence.

**Table 2**

*Factiva Source Name*

<b>Factiva Sources</b>
The Sydney Morning Herald – Online
The Age - Online
Herald Sun - Online (Melbourne, Australia)
Daily Telegraph (Online) - Sydney
The Australian – Online
Courier Mail – Online (Brisbane, Australia)

**Table 3**

*Keywords for Search*

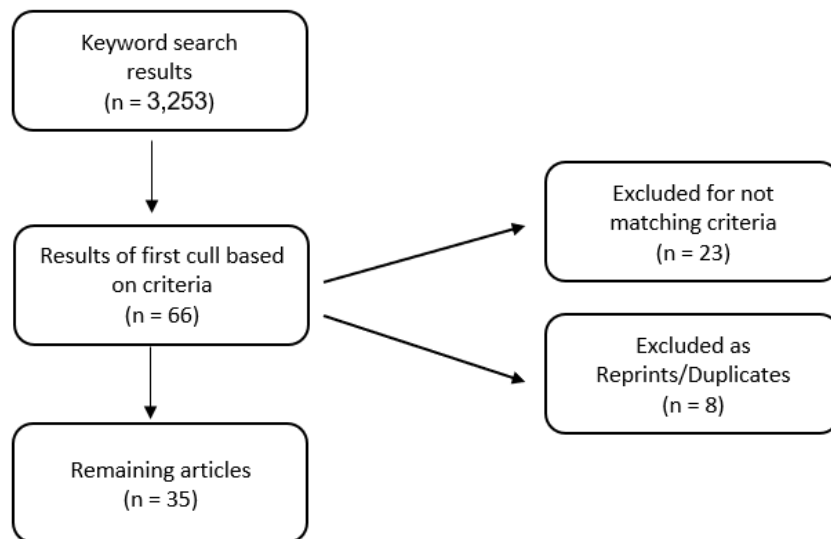
<b>Keywords (# of hits)</b>
"woman charged" AND "domestic" (48)
man abused by partner (0)
"man dead" AND "domestic" (18)
"man stabbed" AND "domestic" (12)
"man killed" AND "domestic" (9)
"victim" AND "domestic" (1,939)
"victim" AND "domestic violence" OR "domestic abuse" (1,237)
<b>Total: 3,253 articles</b>

When conducting the search in Factiva, there were 3,253 articles that I found using the specified search terms. Referring to Figure 1, p.28, all but 66 articles met all three criteria (as addressed above). If the articles did not meet all three criteria, they were excluded from the dataset. Thirty-one of those 66 articles were found to either be a duplicate (8) or they met the criteria, but contextually they did not fit the criteria after consulting with supervisors (23) (i.e., most of these articles were in relation to the court hearings, not the actual incident). As this was a

master's level project, 35 articles for a qualitative CDA study were deemed sufficient to eliminate those articles on the court hearings. The articles were then stored on Google Drive to be referred to as required and imported into NVivo. Nvivo was, however, only used to conduct a content analysis on the news article headlines while the remaining analysis was carried out between the article and the spreadsheet using the framework previously outlined. The list of included news articles has been provided in Appendix D with each news article assigned assigned a numeral; henceforth, articles will be referenced according to the numeral assigned to it.

**Figure 1**

*Inclusion/Exclusion Flowchart*



### 3.3 Data Analysis

To create a framework of analysis, I used van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors as well as concepts from other methods as justified below. Van Leeuwen (2008, p.40) stated that "Social actors can be represented in terms of their unique identity by being *nominated*, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others (*categorization*)". As such, the specific tools being used for this project are Nomination and Categorisation (see Appendix A).

**Nomination** is the way individuals are named within a discourse. Individuals can be referred to by their last name alone (*formalisation*); first and last name (*semi-formalisation*); first name only (*informalisation*), by kinship, titles or ranks (*titulation*) and lastly, by names made up to represent someone (*pseudo-titles*). **Categorisation** breaks down into **Functionalization** (referring to someone by role or occupation); **Identification** which is comprised of *classification* (age, gender, class, race, religion), *relational* (referring to the relationships between individuals), and *physical identification* (representing someone by their physical features); and **Appraisement** (individuals are 'appraised' or judged by the author within the discourse in such a way that portrays them either positively or negatively).

The following categories were also recorded: **Headline; Newspaper; Article Length; Incident Type; Location; and Framing** (*focus, foregrounding, backgrounding, omission, and connotations*). **Headline** was recorded as a means of organising the data but they are also "the most prominent elements of news reports" (Smitherman & Dijk, 1988, p. 221). Without a captivating headline, most articles will go unread; therefore, headlines play a vital role in newspaper readership. Further, Hines and Douglas (2010) found that the terminology 'domestic violence' was rarely used in headlines when the victim was a man. This project also investigated whether similar patterns exist in Australian news. **Newspaper** was recorded for demographic purposes to identify if there were any particular trends between the different types of newspapers (broadsheet versus tabloid, right vs left-leaning). **Article length** was included to demonstrate the

newsworthiness of a story; the longer the article length, the more newsworthy a topic is considered (Boukes et al., 2022; Elorza, 2014; Miller, 1997). **Incident Type** was included to identify if there were any prominent trends in reporting certain types of incidents (stabbing, poisoning, etc) and mortality rates; and, whether those reported on mirror prior findings of female-perpetrated DV (Boxall et al. 2020; Puzzanchera et al., 2021). **Location** was used to identify if there were any geographical trends in the articles that were selected for reporting as previous research has identified DV is more prevalent in lower socioeconomic communities (Davies et al., 2015; Rennison & Planty, 2003). Finally, the **Framing** of articles was captured by looking for instances of *focus*, *foregrounding*, *backgrounding*, *omission*, and *connotations*. These concepts are basic tools of CDA that look at how people and concepts are positioned within discourses and where reproductions of power, inequality and manipulation take place (Huckin, 1997). **Focus** was a category I developed to understand who the main social actor was in each article and how the victim was referred to linguistically. This category looked at which words were used the most to describe the victim, but also how frequently the victim was referred to compared to the perpetrator. This provided an understanding of which social actor (victim or perpetrator) had the greatest importance and prominence in the story (Ahlstrand, 2019; Baker, 2012b, 2012a; Bednarek & Caple, 2014). **Foregrounding/Backgrounding** refers to the way a discourse is written where some aspects are emphasised or positioned early in a discourse (foregrounded), while others are less prominent (backgrounded) or not included at all (**Omission**). Huckin (1997, p. 82) states that “the ultimate form of backgrounding is omission - actually leaving certain things completely out of a text.” Finally, **Connotation** is how something is said, written or portrayed to convey more than one meaning, interpreted through social, cultural, and personal knowledge (Chandler, 2021; Huckin, 1997; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

These specific categories were chosen to create a framework that allowed me to critically explore and make visible how men are represented as victims within news reporting. Using this framework, I identified how male victims of DV are portrayed within a selection of news articles. This approach allowed me to explore how narratives of victimisation are presented to the public through news reporting.

The data analysis began with the discourse-immanent critique phase utilising the framework outlined above via a spreadsheet (see Appendix B) to methodically analyse each article, looking at the following categories: **Headline; Newspaper; Word Count; Incident** (Type of DV Incident, Location mentioned); **Nomination** (formalisation, semi-formalisation, informalisation, titulation, and pseudo-titles); **Categorisation** (functionalisation, identification (classification, relational, and physical) and appraisalment); **Framing** (focus, foregrounding, backgrounding, omission, and connotations). I reviewed each article looking for relevant information that related to each of the categories listed above. I and copied direct quotes from the articles into the table with the relevant information that corresponded to each category. I also recorded my reflections after I analysed each article. For Headlines, a content analysis was conducted using NVivo to identify what words were most used which allowed key themes to be identified which can be found in 4.2 Headline.

I then conducted a second pass, this time looking across all articles, one category at a time with the intention to keep a narrower focus on each specific category. For example, I opened each article up looking for details specific to **Nomination** so that I could double-check that my initial assessment of this category was still the same. Where necessary, any amendments or additions made to the spreadsheet were under the relevant article and category. I did the second pass to ensure that I had not missed anything in my first review of each category. There was a lot of information to consider in each article and how it fit into the different categories under

investigation. I felt that completing a second pass while looking at one category at a time allowed me to be more rigorous. After I was satisfied that my initial findings matched the subsequent review, I evaluated the results looking for commonalities and patterns within the data. This process provided an opportunity to discover what trends existed between articles and develop a broader understanding of how men are generally represented as victims of DV in news reporting. The findings of each category are outlined and discussed in Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion.

After completing the discourse-immanent critique, (as outlined above), I began carrying out the process of Wodak's second critique, the socio-diagnostic critique. I reflected on what possible historical, social, or cultural factors may have influenced the patterns and themes found across the data and reviewed relevant literature to explain the findings.. Not all categories had relevant literature to my research questions so not all categories had this critique carried out as elaborately as others. For example, under ***Incident Type***, I investigated what types of violent incidents were most likely to be reported on when men were victims of DV. The rationale for this was to explore if the types of incidents reported were more uncommon, novel, or odd and consider if that made the article more newsworthy.

Finally, I completed the final phase of Wodak's DHA, which is the prospective critique. I chose to position this critique in the *Conclusion* as this is where recommendations are usually found. In this critique, I used the knowledge I gained from the data to make recommendations to inform reporting practices. These recommendations are largely not unique and have already been suggested in the DV, media, and news reporting space. Previous recommendations have been predominantly for the representations of women but would also improve representations of male victims.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

As previously mentioned, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach looks at discourses to provide three distinct critiques: the discourse-immanent critique which seeks to explore problems within a discourse; the socio-diagnostic critique which uses contextual knowledge and theories to interpret and understand the problematic discourses; and lastly, the prospective critique which offers up best practice recommendations to address problematic discourses. An adaptation of van Leeuwen (2008) *Representations of Social Actors* was used as the framework for the initial discourse analysis and form the foundation for the three critiques. This section will comprise the combined discourse-immanent and socio-diagnostic critiques, as well as a discussion of these findings. These critiques will be integrated to allow for a comprehensive understanding of each category. I will unpack each category adapted from van Leeuwen and where appropriate, reveal the prominent trends and problems found in these data (discourse-immanent critique) and simultaneously explore the contextual relevance of these findings supported by existing research (socio-diagnostic critique). The critiques could be written separately however each category is distinctly unique; therefore, combining these critiques allowed for better cohesiveness and contextual understanding. The final critique, prospective critique, will be found later in the Conclusion, in Chapter 5.

### 4.1 Newspaper

The newspapers selected for data collection were based on overall readership and subscriptions. This provides context to the narratives being presented about male victims of DV to the largest proportion of Australians. As shown in Table 4 (below), of the six newspapers, three of them maintain their headquarters in Sydney, New South Wales (NSW), one in Brisbane, Queensland (QLD), and two in Melbourne, Victoria (VIC) (*Australian Newspaper Directory*, n.d.). As the table below shows, more articles were published in Sydney than in any other city. Given that



NSW is home to 32% of Australia's population, it makes sense why it has more newspapers and a large readership (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Brisbane came in with the second-highest number of articles published about male victims of DV. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) estimated the population of Brisbane to be around 2.5 million, whereas Melbourne had a population of 4.9 million and Sydney at 5.2 million. Only one article came out of Melbourne while its population is almost the same as Sydney's, and double that of Brisbane.

**Table 4**

*Newspaper Demographics*

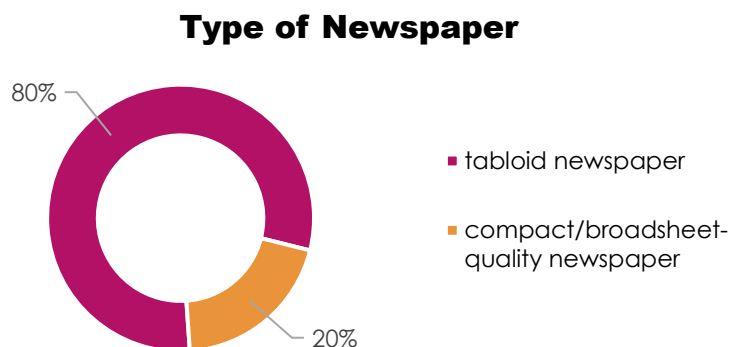
Name of Newspaper	Newspaper Headquarters	Format of Newspaper*	Political Leanings**	# of articles
The Daily Telegraph	Sydney, NSW	tabloid newspaper	Right	18
The Courier Mail	Brisbane, QLD	tabloid newspaper	Right-Centre	10
The Sydney Morning Herald	Sydney, NSW	compact/broadsheet-quality newspaper	Left-Centre	6
The Age	Melbourne, VIC	compact/broadsheet-quality newspaper	Left-Centre	1
Herald Sun	Melbourne, VIC	tabloid newspaper	Right-Centre	0
The Australian	Sydney, NSW	broadsheet	Right-Centre	0
Total				35

*Note.* Paper World, (n.d.)\*, *Media Bias/Fact Check News* (n.d.)\*\*

Half of the newspapers are classified as tabloid newspapers, while the remaining three are either broadsheet or compact broadsheet papers (Paper World, n.d.). The data revealed that domestic violence stories about male victims were 80% more likely to be published by tabloid papers (see Figure 2, below), specifically the Courier Mail and The Daily Telegraph.

866 **Figure 2**

867 *Newspaper Format Breakdown*



868

869         The man quoted as the ‘Godfather of tabloids’, Generoso Pope Jr, once observed the  
870 behaviour of bystanders at a traffic accident and realised that blood and gore are “what people  
871 want to see” (Vitek, 2008, p. 52). Tabloids have a reputation for printing sensational and  
872 scandalous stories, particularly the private lives of individuals (personalization), and overall,  
873 tainting the quality of news reporting (Skovsgaard, 2014). According to Skovsgaard (2014,  
874 p.202), tabloid papers are considered soft news and have “a more extensive use of narratives and  
875 more limited use of an analytical mode, as well as a greater emphasis on personal and human-  
876 interest stories.” The more blood, sex, drugs, and overall scandal, the more likely a story will be  
877 printed in a tabloid paper. Overall, stories printed in tabloids are often not taken as seriously as  
878 those printed in broadsheet formats (Bird, 2008; Örnebring & Jönsson, 2004; Skovsgaard, 2014).  
879 The research on tabloid papers and tabloidization is based on hardcopy newspaper reporting  
880 practices. Given that this project focused on articles obtained online, there was a concern about  
881 whether the same tactics would be applied to online articles. Research is showing, however, that  
882 online news is increasingly becoming more tabloidized than print papers (Burggraaff & Trilling,  
883 2020; Georgetown University, 2009). It is arguable that that tabloids are not necessarily seen as  
884 hard news; this is problematic in that victimisation should be important, regardless of how

scandalous or novel the incident was, to be recognised across all types of media. Accordingly, as 80% of the articles were published in a Tabloid paper, it would appear that male victimisation is not seen as a hard news issue.

Finally, the political leanings of the newspapers were predominantly right-centre to right, with only two papers being considered left-centre; however, only seven articles were published between these two papers (*Media Bias/Fact Check News*, n.d.; *Paper World*, n.d.). The articles themselves were not determined as left or right but rather the newspaper they were published is known to present a particular political stance based on ownership, established by independent media research (*Media Bias/Fact Check News*, n.d.) What these leanings represent is a set of political ideologies which are “ideas, beliefs, values, and opinions, exhibiting a recurring pattern, that [provide] action for public policy making in an attempt to justify, explain, contest, or change the social and political arrangements and processes of a political community” (Freeden, 2001, para. 1). Typically, left-leaning political ideologies are associated with “ideas such as freedom, equality, fraternity, rights, progress, reform, and internationalism” (Heywood, 2015, p. 119). It is expected that male victimisation would fit within the scope of liberal/leftist media news values given the left ideology favours social justice and change.

Politically right-leaning beliefs are usually more associated with those individuals whose ideological beliefs are typically socially conservative (Busch, 2012). Social conservatives are more likely to belong to religious affiliations that hold certain gender beliefs about men and women (‘Religion and Social Issues’, 2017). Political leanings of newspapers influence how stories are written; these leanings reflect ideological beliefs that can alter the way an issue is perceived and represented in a news article. As Australia was colonised by the British, Christian beliefs were embedded into society during colonisation. Other major world religions, however,

also exist in Australia, all of which bring their views on gender roles and expectations (*Religions in Australia [ABS]*, 2017).

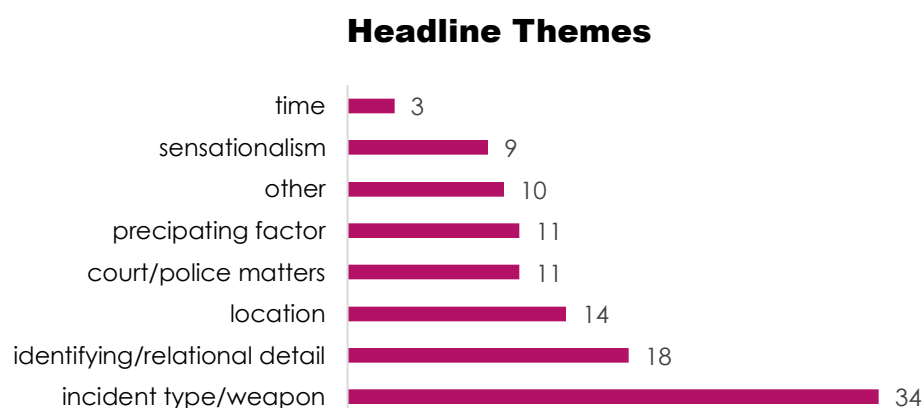
Historically, religions have typically maintained particular norms that women are to be submissive whilst men maintained a position of dominance in relationships (McClintock, 2021; Perales & Bouma, 2019; Sudarso et al., 2019). Perales and Bouma (2019) found that a Victorian Government report revealed faith-based practices, beliefs and attitudes contributed to the domestic violence issues under investigation. For example, the researchers highlighted that religious membership was sometimes a barrier to women seeking help in domestic violence situations. Due to religious beliefs, DV may be seen as an issue to be handled between husband and wife or between families, not the law (Perales & Bouma, 2019). Domestic violence seems more socially normative to occur against women and less so against men. The link between conservative, religious beliefs, political leanings, and gender role expectations now becomes a little clearer. If a DV story is reported by an Australian newspaper that maintains a right-leaning, socially conservative ideology, it is conceivable that those ideologies may influence how the story is portrayed to the public. This may entail minimising or downplaying the actual issue of DV against the male victim in favour of portraying him in a normatively masculine way. According to a Queensland Government Factsheet, “the media play an important role in society as a source of information, but also as a “watchdog” or scrutiniser” (Queensland Parliament, 2015). It is not clear how the media can play that role fairly or objectively if there is an inherent bias built into news corporations’ ideologies and reporting practices. Additionally, the individual journalist’s role perception and personal ideological beliefs may also influence the spin that is used within the news article (Scherr & Baugut, 2016).

## **4.2 Headline**

A content analysis was conducted on the 35 headlines and the themes that were identified can be found in Figure 3. It should be noted that several themes were identified for most headlines. The primary themes were *incident type/weapon* (words like ‘stabbing/stabbed’ (12) ‘murder’ (10)); *identifying/relational detail* were words that often were used to describe the victim and perpetrator (‘woman’ (18), ‘man’ (14), ‘wife’ (4) ‘boyfriend’/‘husband’/‘partner’ (9)); *location* entailed either geographical location or location within the home where the incident occurred (‘bayside’(1), ‘Coogee’ (1), St Marys (1), bed (1)); *court/police matters* pertained to words that often refer to some legal element of the situation like ‘charged’ (12), ‘accused’ (4); *precipitating factor* were words that denoted a reason the perpetrator attacked the victim (‘anger’/ ‘rage’ (3), ‘drinking’/ ‘drunk’ (2)); *other* was assigned to words that did not have a clear context to assign a theme to (‘put’ (1), ‘told’ (1)); *sensationalism* was words that felt as if they were included to entice the reader to click on the article (shocking (1), terrorised (1); and finally, *time* (‘hours’/ ‘night’/ ‘past’(1)).

**Figure 3**

*Headline Themes*



The primary theme found in domestic violence headlines was incident type and inclusion of a weapon, it further validates Generoso Pope Jr and his belief that blood and gore are “what

people want to see” and these factors serve as a hook to pull people into the story (Vitek, 2008, p. 52). Article headlines are designed to generate interest, or ‘clicks’ in an online environment clicks, therefore, the more enticing and scandalous an article headline is, the more views it will likely get from readers (Kuiken et al., 2017). These findings mirror those of Hines and Douglas (2010) who found that the wording ‘domestic violence’ was scarcely used in headlines where the victim was a male. Out of 35 articles, only two articles used ‘domestic violence’ and one article ‘DV’ in the headline. This is relevant because it seems like journalists avoid using this terminology when referring to male victims and exemplify another way male victimisation is hidden from public discourses. The narrative cannot change if journalists are not prepared to acknowledge these incidents for what they are.

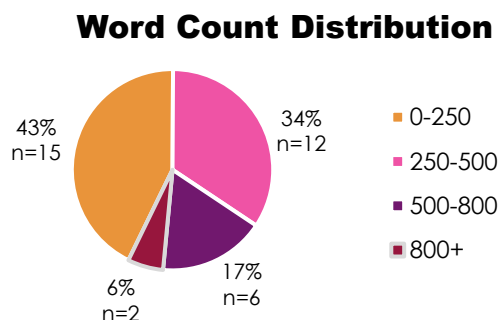
#### **4. Article Length**

Per Figure 4, out of the 35 articles, 77% came in at under 500 words per article, with almost half of those being under 250 words. It is argued there are no hard rules for how many words an article must have, but grey literature suggests that a newsworthy article is between 500 and 800 words (Boukes et al., 2022; *How Long Are The Most Shared Stories On Social Media?*, 2017; *What’s The Average Word Count of Viral Stories?*, 2013; Masini et al., 2018). According to research, more newsworthy stories will be higher in word count and contain more newsworthy factors than found in shorter articles (Boukes et al., 2022; Lee & Wong, 2020). These researchers also found that conflict was one of the most significant newsworthy factors and stories with conflicts tended to have longer article lengths. These findings align with what is already known about news reporting of crime which tends to be disproportionately covered due to the public interest in true crime (Bates, 1999; Lee & Wong, 2020). In the context of this project, the articles from the data were considered short to very short according to Masini et al., (2018) and therefore may reflect a sentiment that stories about men as victims of DV are not newsworthy. Despite

other research showing that violence generally captures public interest more and thus should be considered newsworthy, the limited word count of these articles demonstrates that male victimisation is not that newsworthy (Näsi et al., 2021; Potter & Kappeler, 1998; Vitek, 2008). Additionally, low word count means details are being left out or omitted, which was identified by van Dijk (2006) as a form of manipulation and a means of reproducing inequality. The inequality in this sense is that there are other stories of DV published with considerably higher word counts, but not generally the case when the victims are men. This reinforces the social representations that domestic violence is not a significant issue that men experience nor one that readers are likely to consume and empathise with.

**Figure 4**

*Article Length of News Articles*



*Note.* ( $n = 35$ ).

Conversely, other factors may have influenced the article's length. For example, hard-copy tabloid newspapers are known for being physically smaller in size than broadsheet papers. Given that 80% of the articles in the data set were produced by tabloid news corps, stories may be shorter in article length as a by-product of tabloid-style formatting practices (Andersson, 2013; *Differences Between Broadsheet and Tabloid Newspapers*, n.d.). Additionally, when comparing online news and print news, Burggraaff and Trilling (2020) posit that shorter articles

may be more a result of “the characteristic of the Internet itself” with stories being written for individuals that are seeking bite-sized pieces of information in a fast-paced world.

#### **4.4 Incident**

##### ***4.1.1 Type of DV incident***

There were five main categories of domestic violence incidents. As depicted in Figure 5, the most predominant incident type was stabbing, followed by using a vehicle to hit the victim. There were only a few articles that covered psychological abuse (i.e., stalking, revenge porn), sexual abuse (revenge porn) or financial abuse. Those articles that did relay accounts of non-physical violence were perpetrated by another male. Most articles only covered incidents of physical violence which hides from the public the other types of abuse men encounter in intimate relationships.

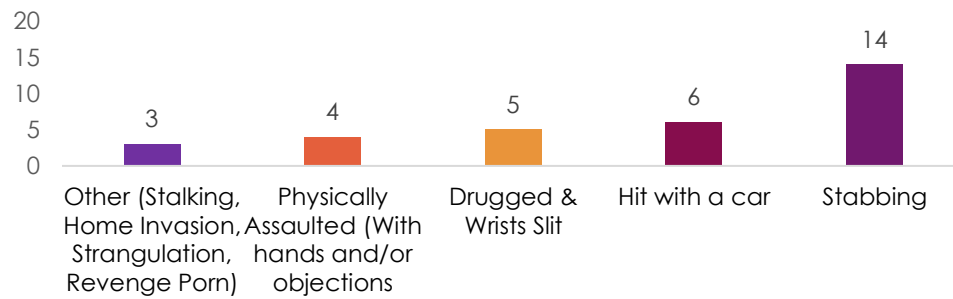
Statistical information on the methods women use in their attacks is scarce in an Australian context. According to Boxall et al. (2020), however, one-third of women in their findings used a weapon to attack their male partners, specifically “furniture, kitchenware, knives and other sharp objects, appliances and electronics (for example, a laptop)” (p.7). This data matches the trends found in crime statistics around women and their choice of weapon when perpetrating violence at least in a Western context. According to the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports, women are more likely to use a knife than a personal attack or blunt object as a weapon (Puzzanchera et al., 2021).

#### **Figure 5**

*Types of DV Incidents Reported On*



**Incident Type in All Articles**

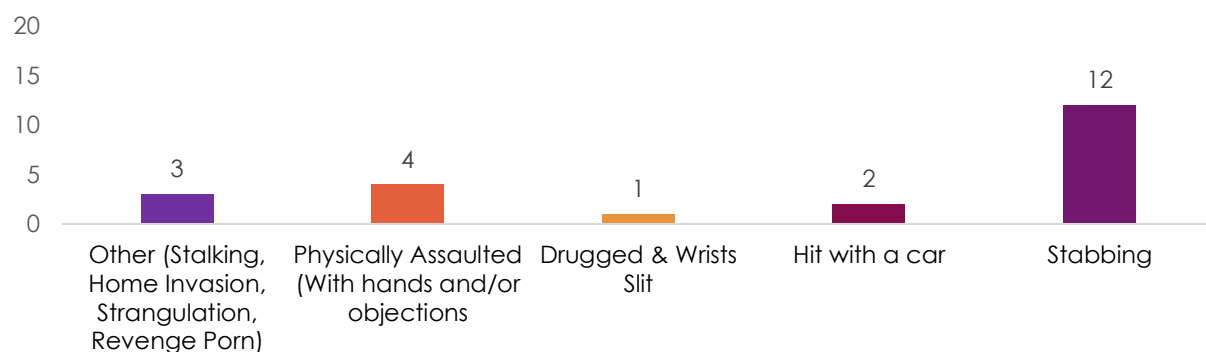


Some incident types were repeated due to the same story being printed multiple times. For example, drugging and slitting wrists were included five times, but all five incidences pertained to the same case. Only a handful of stories were reported on more than once, but the Venn and Musa cases received more coverage than the rest. Therefore, Figure 6 is based on the number of unique incidents that took place.

**Figure 6**

*Unique Incidents Reported*

**Unique Incidents Reported**



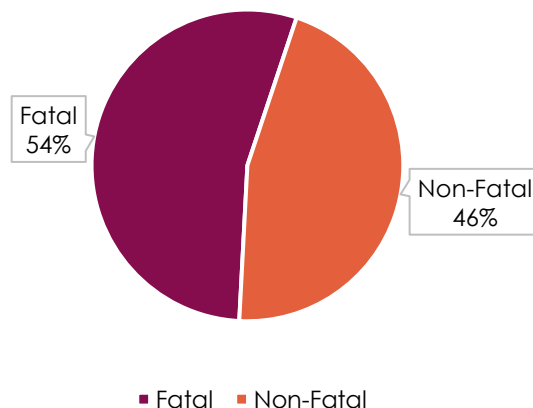
Another aspect of incident type was the proportion of fatalities versus non-fatalities reported. There did not appear to be a bias in the reporting regarding mortality because there was almost an even number of incidents where the victim was pronounced deceased versus non-fatal incidents (see Figure 7). However, it was then considered that the majority of domestic violence

is non-fatal. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) estimated that there were 548,000 men (from the age of 15) who experienced physical or sexual violence, but only about 25 men were killed by an intimate partner between 2014 and 2016. That averages out to be approximately 12 men killed per year from domestic violence. For a narrower and more specific incidence rate across a single year, 560 men were hospitalised by their intimate partner in 2014-2015 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). What these numbers reveal is that the proportion of non-fatal physical and sexual domestic violence (not taking into account psychological, financial, and so forth), is much higher than fatal domestic violence. Ergo, with 54% of incidents reported as being fatal, there is an over-reporting (and over-emphasis) on fatal domestic violence compared to all other forms of domestic violence men experience.

#### **Figure 7**

*Mortality Rate of Incidents Reported*

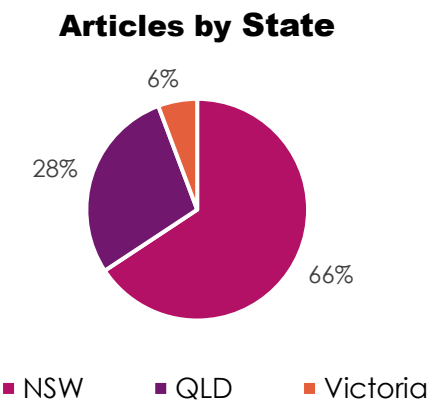
#### **Mortality Rate of Incidents Reported**



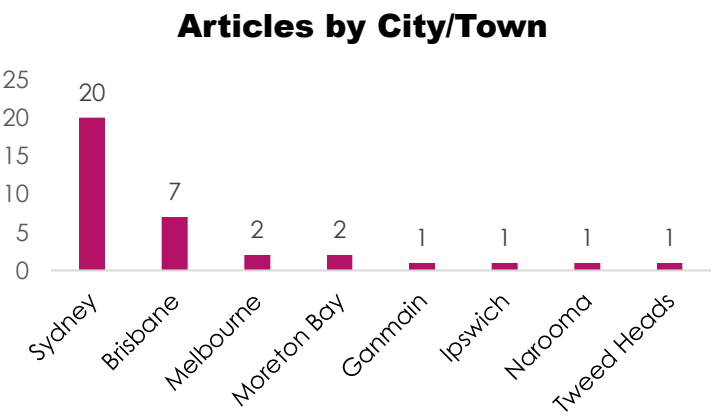
#### **4.1.2 Location**

The data for the location were collected based on what state (Figure 8), major city (Figure 9), and primary suburbs (Figure 10) which was derived from the locations that were mentioned in the articles.

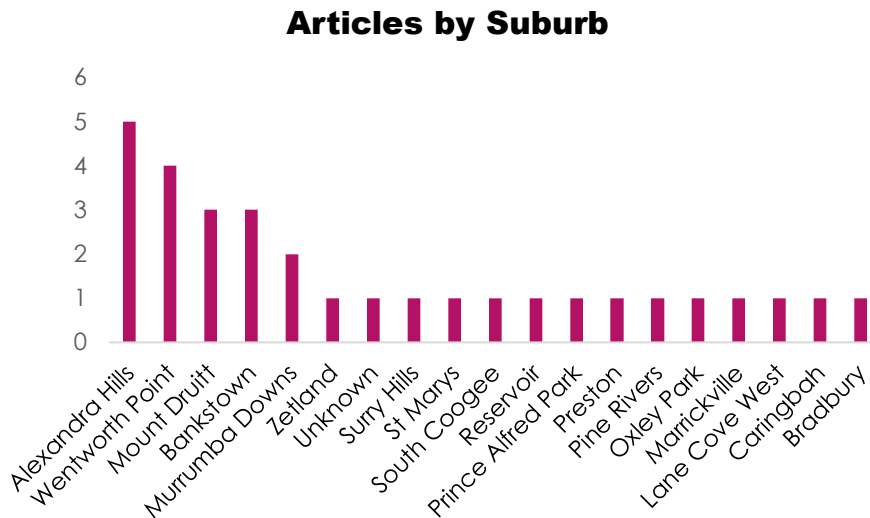
1043 **Figure 8**  
1044 *Articles by Location (State)*



1045  
1046 **Figure 9**  
1047 *Articles by Location (City/Town)*



1048  
1049 **Figure 10**  
1050 *Articles by Location (Suburb)*

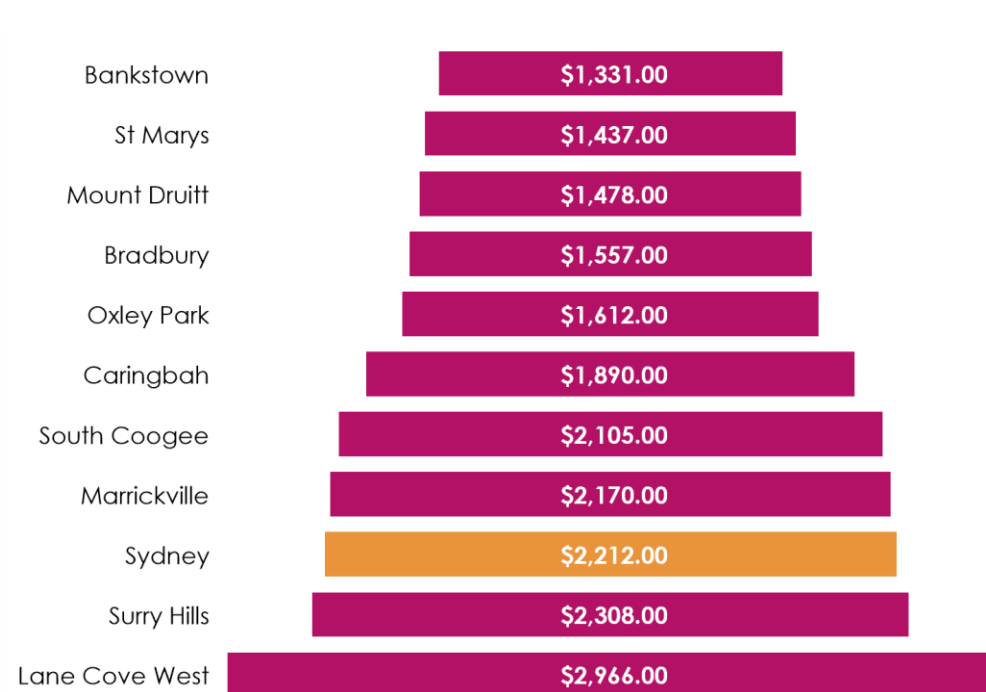


1051

1052    Locations that appeared multiple times were usually a result of the same incident being reported  
 1053    more than once. According to the 2021 Census, Sydney is the most populated city in Australia,  
 1054    so it is logical that a significant proportion of crime would take place there (Australian Bureau of  
 1055    Statistics, 2021). Of the 35 incidents, 20 of them took place in the greater Sydney area and as  
 1056    such New South Wales had the highest proportion of incidents (66%). As outlined in the  
 1057    *Newspaper* heading above, a proportion of the locations did fall under the median household  
 1058    income level for Sydney, which was \$2,212 per week, (excluding suburbs outside of Sydney)  
 1059    (see Figure 11) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). This finding supports previous research  
 1060    that domestic violence may be more likely to occur in homes with lower incomes (Bell, 2003;  
 1061    Davies et al., 2015; Rennison & Planty, 2003; Slabbert, 2017). There is no known research  
 1062    assessing income levels and male victims of DV.

1063    **Figure 11**

1064    *Median Household Income of Suburbs Reported in Sydney*



1065

1066 *Note.* Taken from 2021 Australian Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

1067         There was not enough data to inform conclusions for Queensland or Victoria, but two of  
 1068 the three Brisbane locations met or exceeded the median household income. It was only Ipswich  
 1069 that had a significantly lower weekly median household income at \$1,134 per week compared to  
 1070 Brisbane at \$1,849. As previously identified, only one domestic violence article from this period  
 1071 was identified in Victoria that met the criteria.

## 1072 **4.5 Nomination**

### 1073 **4.5.1 Formalisation**

1074         Formalisation is referring to a social actor by last name, with or without, honorifics (e.g.,  
 1075 Mr., Dr., etc.). Out of 35 articles, only 12 articles used formalisation concerning the victims and  
 1076 all the victims were referred to as ‘Mr.’ and their last name; but only five of the 12 were unique  
 1077 cases (e.g., “*Mr Crumblin*”(7), “*Mr Phillips*” (21), “*Mr Murray*” (22, 23), “*Mr Venn*” (11-13),  
 1078 “*Mr Thagipur* (33-35)”). An interesting finding, however, was that when the victims were

named, they all had honorifics included. The remainder of the articles only referenced the perpetrator by their last name. The male victims were rarely given a formal identity, but, when they were, they were all given a level of respect through the use of honorifics.

#### **4.5.2 Semi-Formalisation**

When an actor's first and last name are both included (with or without honorifics) in a discourse, it is called semi-formalisation. The data showed that 13 out of the 35 cases, semi-formalisation was used to refer to the male victims. These all took place in the same articles where formalisation also occurred, except in one additional article, where semi-formalisation was used but formalisation was not also used in another part of the article.

#### **4.5.3 Informalisation**

Informalisation is the referencing of a social actor by their first name only. Of the 35 articles, only one referenced the victim by a first name, and only as part of a direct quote by a family member: "*Now Ashley has gone it has left a hole in my family that can never be filled, cousin Ian Bray...*" (21). This suggests that referring to social actors by first name only in news reporting is not standard practice.

#### **4.5.4 Titulation**

Titulation is the use of honorifics such as Dr. (doctor), Prof. (professor) and kinship titles (e.g., Aunty). Only eight of the 35 cases included an honorific to identify the victim; all of which used 'Mr' exclusively. Kinship titles were not used.

#### **4.5.5 Pseudo-Title**

Pseudo-titles are ways the news media may falsely attribute an individual, a fake title that may be drawn from a situational, occupational, or behavioural attribute. There were no instances of pseudo-titles being used for victims in this dataset.

These subcategories of *Nomination* demonstrate how men were referred to within the data. How individuals are addressed and named carries significant implications; while this does vary from culture to culture, there are specific rules for what is socially acceptable in each culture concerning the use of names (Anchimbe, 2011). How individuals are referred to by name often relays certain values like respect and honorifics are often used as a sign of respect to the individual they are given to (Lakoff & Ide, 2005). While most victims were nameless, at least the ones that were named, were given respect and recognition through the use of an honorific, namely “Mr.” Anchimbe (2011, p.1474) argues that the ways individuals address each other has to do ‘with “representational” and “social” functions of language and how they correlate with negotiations of power, friendliness, and social balance between interactants.’ A report by ANROWS (2016) found that 31.5% of female victims were named in news articles of domestic violence, but after accounting for the duplicated stories, my data found only 18% of male victims were named (5 out of 28 unique articles). Van Leeuwen (2008, pp 39-40) states “Indetermination occurs when social actors are represented as unspecified, “anonymous” individuals or groups... indetermination anonymises a social actor. The writer treats his or her identity as irrelevant to the reader.” I argue that recognition and power are taken away from male victims who remain nameless in these articles and readers are manipulated to disregard these stories as insignificant. It is not possible to recognise one male victim’s story from another as a unique case of victimisation when their names are omitted.

#### **4.6 Categorisation**

Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 40) states categorisation is how “social actors are represented by their identities and functions they share with others” and he distinguishes this in three ways, functionalisation, identification, and appraisal. Functionalisation occurs when social actors are referred to by their professional roles, while identification describes mostly demographic

1126 information about the individual (gender, class, race, relationship, and physical characteristics).  
1127 Identification attributes are identified in three separate categories: classification, relational and  
1128 physical. Appraisalment is how social actors are characterised in some way as good or bad, or  
1129 portrayed positively or negatively.

#### 1130 **4.6.1 Functionalisation**

1131 As outlined above, functionalisation takes place when social actors are named and  
1132 referred to by their occupations or hobbies. Victims were only functionalised in five of the  
1133 articles, and only three of which were unique:

1134 *“Mr Crumblin was an **avid fisherman** ...My father was a very hard working man and*  
1135 *never let anything beat him”*(7).

1136 *“Mr Thagipur’s best friend Samuel Zizi said he had grown up in Iran before relocating*  
1137 *to Australia in 2012 and worked **hard as a painter** ... He was **hard working**”* (34-35).

1138 *“Mr Murray’s Facebook says he is a married father of two young girls and a son and*  
1139 ***works for Lenard’s Chicke.*** (22-23).

1140 Given that this category was so rarely included in news reporting, I have considered this  
1141 to be primarily omitted and thus address Functionalisation further under the Omission category.  
1142 The two articles that did make functional references, play directly into traditional, masculine  
1143 stereotypes that are still prevalent in Australian society (Donaldson, 1993; Street & Dardis,  
1144 2018). Being identified as **hard-working** is the epitome of the ideal standard for men and re-  
1145 enforces the assumptions of how a ‘good’ man should behave (Butler, 1988; Flood, 2020). It is  
1146 easy to recognise the patterns of masculinity and how they are represented within these texts  
1147 with respect to the positive appraisalment given around being **hard-working** and **worked hard as**  
1148 **a painter**. It is more socially acceptable to be a hard-working man than an, unemployed one. The



1149 second article identifies the victim as working for *Lenard's Chicken* which is a shop for chicken  
1150 products, which could be considered a manual, hard-working job. Both of these articles  
1151 identified the victims with honorifics when addressing them (*Mr Thagipur, Mr Murray*). It is  
1152 noteworthy that when the men's occupation was linked to hard work, they were also identified  
1153 by name, and with honorifics. This reinforces the belief held by other scholars that certain traits  
1154 are idealised as masculine and how masculinity is performed through occupation (Butler, 1988;  
1155 Donaldson, 1993).

1156

## 4.6.2 Identification

As outlined above, van Leeuwen (2008) identifies three types of identification that can be used to describe and refer to social actions, all of which were included in the data analyses. Each type of identification (classification, relational and physical) is further explained in detail below.

### 4.6.2.1 Classification

Van Leeuwen (2008, p.42) states that “social actors are referred to [classified] in terms of the major categories through which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people... [such as] age, gender, ...race, ethnicity/[nationality], religion, sexual orientation, and so on.” Twenty-six of the articles included the victim’s age, usually in the first sentence or paragraph and only 9 articles did not include the victim’s age. The ages of the victims ranged from the mid to late twenties (count of 3); thirties (count of 10); forties (count of 4); and over fifty (count of 9), with the 30s and over 50s comprising the greatest age range represented. Gender was also a prominent feature, sometimes more explicitly than others, however. For example, most articles paired age with “man” (e.g., “*a 64-year-old man*”) (9) explicitly identifying the victim as a man. Other articles were less explicit, but used male nouns and pronouns like boyfriend, husband, he, his, and him to denote the victim’s gender. Nationality was mentioned in two articles, twice in one article (“*he had grown up in Iran before relocating to Australia... well-liked in the Iranian community*”) (33-35). Sexual orientation was not explicit in most articles, but given that the gender of the perpetrator was identified in most cases and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator was identified, it was inferred that most cases were heterosexual relationships. Two articles, however, did specify a homosexual relationship, but only one article sensationalised the sexual relationship:

“*My dignity was sold for \$12.99: Gay pornstar’s ex-boyfriend*” (30) – Headline

1180           *“A Sydney man whose Brazilian ex-boyfriend secretly filmed him for an amateur gay*  
1181 *porn site says, “my dignity was sold for \$12.99”* – Opening sentence (the hook) (30).

1182 Race, ethnicity, and religion were not featured in any of the articles.

1183           Gender and age are commonly found in articles, however, the way these details are  
1184 presented can convey negative connotations. Identifying a man as older or elderly can be  
1185 perceived to mean weak, feeble, and unable to protect himself. In the case of nationality, the  
1186 world has certain perceptions of men from Middle Eastern countries, especially in Iran where the  
1187 regime and laws there are known to be patriarchal and tyrannical towards women (Fotouhi,  
1188 2014; Hanna, 2020). Finally, monopolizing on the vitriol that the gay community experiences  
1189 and the attitudes towards gay men (Hill et al., 2020; Rossi, 2016)), the focus on the victim’s  
1190 sexuality minimizes his experiences as a victim and casts more focus on his sexuality. It is the  
1191 type of narrative that would have individuals suggesting that the victim deserved what happened  
1192 to him, simply for being gay and living as a homosexual man.

#### 1193           **4.6.2.2 Relational.**

1194           Relational identification is how social actors are classified according to their relationships  
1195 with other social actors; in the context of this project, I was specifically looking at whether the  
1196 relationship between the victim and perpetrator was identified in the article. Based on my data  
1197 collection criteria, the victim needed to be identified as a male and as a victim of a domestic  
1198 incident. The articles selected did not always explicitly identify the relationship between the  
1199 social actors, sometimes the relationship could only be inferred from the details (see Framing). It  
1200 was found that the relationship link between the victim and perpetrator was not stated explicitly  
1201 in 13 of the articles, almost one-third of the data. The relationship had to be inferred in those  
1202 articles where the journalist referred to it as a domestic violence incident or the perpetrator was

1203 charged by the police with a domestic charge. The remaining 22 articles made the relationship  
1204 between social actors clear by defining the relationship or by using relational nouns, for example,  
1205 husband, partner, or boyfriend:

1206 *“the **husband** of a South Coast business woman”*(24)

1207 *“Atkin's **husband** of 30 years”* (24)

1208 *“It is believed the pair were **married for more than 45 years** and were retired.”*(11, 13)

1209 *“police believe the pair **were previously in a relationship**”* (4)

1210 *“her **former** partner”*(4, 28)

1211 One article also referred to the victim as a “**former lover**” and “**ex-flame**” to indicate the  
1212 intimate relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (33-35). Familial relationships were  
1213 also identified in the articles:

1214 *“It’s understood the man killed was **father-of-three** Sean Murray, 32”* (22-23)

1215 *“Wife charged with **dad-of-three**’s murder”* (22-23)

1216 *“Mr Murray’s Facebook says he is **a married father** of two young girls and a son”* (22)

1217 *“Mr Phillips’ mother, Marlene, said she was lost without **her only child**.”*(21)

1218 Additionally, the relational role to others was not as prominent as one might have  
1219 expected, such as that of being a father, only seen in a few articles. Further, there was a lot less  
1220 biographizing of the male and his relationships which ignores the role the man played in others’  
1221 lives; equally, it ignores the impacts that these incidents would have had on those who were  
1222 connected to the male victims.

#### 1223 **4.6.2.3 Physical.**

In the physical identification category, van Leeuwen (2008) refers to physical characteristics that are used to describe the individual like hair colour, eye colour, height, weight and so forth. In the context of this project, the physical category was used to explore how the victim was physically described, as well as how physical injuries were described in the article. There were only two references to the victim's physical characteristics (other than descriptions of the injuries), both of which convey a sense of helplessness or weakness on the part of the man:

*"A woman has been charged with murder after the death of an **elderly** man."* (9)

*"A woman, who allegedly attacked her **older** partner during a domestic incident."*(3)

The remaining physical descriptions of the injuries the victim sustained during the DV incidents:

*"Atkins then placed her husband in a headlock, punching him to the stomach and pelvis in an attempt, her husband believed, to punch his genitals."* (24)

*"Mr Muray died on the side of the road from the alleged stab wounds to his back."* (22)

*"A man... killed in a jealous rage before his body was stuffed in a wheelie bin"* (21)

*"A 49-year-old man was found deceased with stab wounds "to the neck area" (6)*

*"A WOMAN who police allege hit and killed her former lover following a heated argument was seen calmly walking past his mangled body as he lay helpless in a carpark."* (5)

*"he was allegedly hit by the Toyota Kluger that knocked over a bollard and pinned him against a brick wall"* (5, 34, 35)

*"attacked her 60-year-old partner, causing bleeding and scratching on his face"(3)*

1244           *“A woman in her 60s accused of killing her husband in their Brisbane bayside home*  
1245           *drugged the man with prescription medication before slitting his wrists, police will*  
1246           *allege.” (11)*

#### 1247   **4.6.3 Appraisement**

1248           Appraisement is a description or evaluation of social actors in positive or negative terms  
1249           (van Leeuwen, 2008). Several articles had some form of appraisement when reporting about the  
1250           victim; eight articles portrayed the victim negatively, five portrayed the victim positively, and  
1251           one contained both positive and negative attributions. Negative appraisement often featured an  
1252           insinuation that there was a justification for the victimisation.

1253           *“Husband’s \$20k purchase that drove wife to murder... **after he bought a \$20,000 boat***  
1254           *in the days before his death.”; (12)*

1255           *“It is understood Mr Venn had **suffered from bipolar** for much of his life.” (12)*

1256           *“a man, who police say had been **ordered not to come within 100 metres of the home in***  
1257           *Sydney’s west, died from stab wounds... There was also an **apprehended domestic***  
1258           ***violence order in place** and part of those conditions were for the man to not go within*  
1259           *100 metres of the Rickard Road unit”; (6)*

1260           *“[the victim] is **significantly affected by alcohol** at the time... it can’t be discerned that*  
1261           *he was aware of how he was stabbed”; (31)*

1262           *“A man was stabbed to death in a suspected domestic incident in Bankstown...**after he***  
1263           ***apparently breached an AVO order** ... the man had an AVO against him*  
1264           *forbidding him from being within 100 metres of the unit prior to the incident on*  
1265           *Sunday.” (6)*

1266 Positive appraisalment often referenced the victim's positive characteristics as well as their role  
1267 as a friend/family member and work ethic:

1268 *"My father was a **very hard-working man** and **never let anything beat him**," Kevin*  
1269 *said... He was **a loving father**" (7)*

1270 *"Witnesses tried in vain to save **well-liked Payman** "Paul" Thagipur"(5, 34, 35)*

1271 *"Mr Thagipur (inset), **who was well-liked** in the local Iranian community" (5, 34, 35)*

1272 *"He was **a legend**, he was **affectionate, kind**, a very **nice person**, he **never annoyed***  
1273 ***anyone** ... he was **my best friend, like my brother**," Mr Zizi said... He was **the***  
1274 ***best person** ... (he would) open the door for anyone, he was **a gentleman**. He was*  
1275 ***hard working and caring about his family all the time**"(34, 35)*

1276 One article utilised both positive and negative appraisalment, *"Mr Phillips also **had drug***  
1277 ***problems** but was remembered as **a kindhearted and friendly "big kid"**."(21)*

1278 These types of appraisements are extraneous details that influence the reader's perception  
1279 of the crime, the victim and even the perpetrator. This is particularly noticeable in the articles  
1280 where the appraisements can be perceived as distributing fault for the victimisation onto the  
1281 victim, otherwise known as victim-blaming. Men are not typically seen as a 'vulnerable  
1282 population' so may seem more socially acceptable to justify why these men were victimised  
1283 (where negative appraisalment occurs) (Lee & Wong, 2020). As Lee and Wong state, however,  
1284 victims that are seen as worthy are more likely to receive news coverage. Where positive  
1285 appraisalment was identified, some details are usually associated with normative masculinity; in  
1286 those articles, the victim was not burdened with fault or victim-blamed.

1287 These findings are not unique to male victims. Significant research has investigated  
1288 female victim-blaming and identified similar findings to this project, such as justification,

provocation, reasoning, or rationality, all framed in ways that excuse the perpetrator's actions (Anrows, 2016; Lee & Wong, 2020). So, while there is an issue with how male victims are represented and framed, the phenomenon is not unique to male victims and reflects a larger issue with how victims in general are portrayed and represented. This highlights the importance that language and representation play in news reporting and how specific word choices relay meanings that can manipulate the reader's perception of the social actors in the story. Finally, it is argued that how victims are portrayed (victim-blamed), is what leads to public cynicism towards victims and can lead to re-victimising the victims.

## **4.7 Framing**

According to Entman (1993, p. 52, as cited in D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010) "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation." Carter (2013) states that frames are socially constructed, persistent over time, and help organise the world meaningfully; consumers of news utilise frames as a reference point to understand the salient facts presented to them and which all other information is assessed. The constructs of *Focus*, *Foregrounding*, *Backgrounding*, *Omission*, and *Connotations* were investigated to understand how framing was used in news discourses on domestic violence incidents with male victims.

### **4.7.1 Focus**

Focus is a concept developed from utilising content analysis to explore who the main social actor was in the news articles. This was determined by how often the articles referred to the victim compared to the perpetrator (Columbia University, 2022). This was achieved through identifying and counting the nouns, proper nouns, pronouns, and possessive determiners in each



article to get a sense of which social actor was the primary focus of the article (Columbia University, 2022). Additionally, it was revealed how male victims are being referred to linguistically within these articles. Table 5 shows the top ten words most used words to describe the victim. Many of the words are related to the victim in the context of his relationship with others, either as a part of the family unit or status as a significant other. The victim was also far more likely to be referred to as ‘man’ than by his name.

**Table 5**

*Most common words used to identify male victims in news articles*

Word	Count
man	36
boyfriend	11
victim	7
partner	6
husband	5
brother	3
dad	3
father	3
guy	3
male	3

As highlighted through this thesis, it has been identified that the language used to represent an individual is important and carries implications. An interesting finding was that there were only seven instances of the man being referred to as a victim. Fohring (2018, p.152) states “Socially, the word [victim] is associated with a powerful stigma and may draw blame, derogation, weakness and shame.” This has not stopped the media from using the term, or worse, referring to victims as ‘alleged victims’ (Anrows, 2016). It is posited that ‘victim’ was used so infrequently in this data because the victims were men. As argued previously, masculinity and victimhood are seen as incompatible pairs; labelling men as victims, therefore, contravenes normative views of masculinity. Further, as identified under nomination, the male victims were rarely referred to by their names. In place of their name, they were instead referred to as “a man” or “the man.” By reducing a person who has been victimised to a nameless figure, a noun, his identity is erased and therefore easily dismissed by readers as insignificant.

Out of the 35 articles, 15 articles referred to the **victim** more than the perpetrator; 17 of the articles referred to the **perpetrator** more, and 3 of the articles focused equally on both the victim and perpetrator. Although there was not a large difference in the number of articles focusing more on the perpetrator, the difference within the articles was stark. Of the 15 that focused on the victim, only two of them focused on the victim more (each mentioned the victim 12 times more than the perpetrator), the remainder only mentioned the victim between one and five times more than the perpetrator and these articles were often shorter in length. In contrast, eight of the 17 articles that focused on the perpetrators, mentioned the perpetrator five times or more, with the average being 16.75 more words mentioning the perpetrator. In the articles that had a stronger focus on the perpetrator, the article went more in-depth into the perpetrator's history and past deviances, what caused the perpetrator to attack the victim and information about their charges and court matters. This is not necessarily unique to male victims but this practice in reporting is problematic because it glamourises the actions of the aggressor instead of the contributions and loss of the victim (Lee & Wong, 2020)

#### *4.7.2 Foregrounding*

Huckin (1997) defines foregrounding as how a writer will give textual prominence to certain details in a discourse; furthermore, Huckin states that news articles will foreground the most important and salient information in the opening sentences. The information most likely to be foregrounded in the articles under investigation were generally the details that covered the 5Ws (who, what, when, where, and why). These questions are a framework often used in journalism, and according to Hart (1996) "answers to these five questions provide enough information for an audience to understand what happened, and whether and how it will affect them." The 'who' was often reduced to a noun (a man) rather than a proper noun (their name). The 'what' referred to the domestic violence that took place and often included details about the

police or emergency services attending, and what the perpetrator was charged with. The ‘when’ and ‘where’ were addressed by the dates and locations mentioned. Lastly, the least answered question was ‘why’ – why the domestic violence incident happened, or why the perpetrator attacked the victim. A potential explanation for this being excluded is that the journalist could not obtain this information if the incident was still under police investigation. Some examples of the 5Ws foregrounded:

*“A 27-year-old woman has been charged with reckless wounding and common assault after stabbing a man in the head overnight. Police and emergency services were called to a home at Luxford Road, Bidwell, about 12.25 am on Saturday.” (1)*

*“A woman in her 60s accused of killing her husband in their Brisbane bayside home drugged the man with prescription medication before slitting his wrists, police will allege. Judith Ann Venn, 66, briefly faced the Cleveland Magistrates Court on Tuesday charged with the domestic violence murder of a 64-year-old Lance Hilton Venn at Alexandra Hills last Friday.” (11)*

*“A man has been stabbed and a woman is in custody after a domestic violence-related incident at a home in South Coogee. Police were called to the home on Elphinstone Road shortly before 3 am on Sunday after a 25-year-old man was stabbed in the shoulder.” (18)*

*“The woman charged with murdering a 50-year-old man north of Brisbane on Sunday remains in custody. Kevin Crumblin, 50, died on Sunday after he was allegedly stabbed. Rachel Maree Smithers, 41, has been charged with his murder occurring in a domestic violence situation.” (7)*

#### **4.7.3 Backgrounding**

1380 Opposite to foregrounding is backgrounding, otherwise understood as de-emphasising certain  
1381 elements; either details are deemed as less important or secondary to the foregrounded details  
1382 (Huckin, 1997). According to Kalogeropoulos and Newman (2017), up to 49% of individuals do  
1383 not read an entire story to completion. With journalists being aware of this, they organise a paper  
1384 according to what they perceive to be the most newsworthy at the beginning of the article and  
1385 least newsworthy at the end. The most commonly backgrounded information entailed prior  
1386 offences or ‘bad behaviour’, witness and impact statements, court proceedings and charges,  
1387 medical-related information, and mental health or substance use. This backgrounded information  
1388 was situated within the articles predominantly at the end of the article or middle-to-end of the  
1389 article, never included in the beginning of the article. Examples of prior domestic violence  
1390 offences or poor behaviour:

1391       *“Police said the man [the victim] had been charged in December last year with domestic*  
1392               *violence-related offences. Those charges were due to be heard in court in July,*  
1393               *and the man had an AVO against him forbidding him from being within 100*  
1394               *metres of the unit before the incident on Sunday.” (17)*

1395       *“Hogan [the perpetrator] became pregnant to another man when Considine [the*  
1396               *perpetrator] was previously behind bars. Hogan met Mr Phillips [the victim] in*  
1397               *2015 during another of Considine’s stints in custody, Mr Brown said, and they*  
1398               *had a sexual relationship until her boyfriend was released.” (21)*

1399       *“On January 10 this year, the couple’s adult daughter, who lives in a smaller flat on the*  
1400               *same property, was approached by Atkins [the perpetrator] who told her she had*  
1401               *to move out immediately as she was getting a divorce. Her daughter tried to calm*  
1402               *her down before Atkins punched her “several” times in the face.” (24)*

1403           *“Police allege the woman [the perpetrator] was involved in an altercation with another*  
1404                     *patron at a licensed premises at Bidwill earlier and tried to regain entry after*  
1405                     *being ejected by security.” (2)*

1406   Examples of witness and impact statements:

1407           *“Now Ashley has gone it has left a hole in my family that can never be filled,” cousin Ian*  
1408                     *Bray, who considered him a little brother, said in a victim impact statement. Mr*  
1409                     *Phillips’ mother, Marlene, said she was lost without her only child. Her cousin,*  
1410                     *Dawn Tossell, recalled thinking “no one deserves that” when she saw a news*  
1411                     *report about the incident and felt sickened and distraught when she learnt who*  
1412                     *had been dumped in the bin.” (21)*

1413           *“One resident, Pisan Kar, called the events “very frightening”. Mr Kar has lived in the*  
1414                     *unit block for two years and said he now feared for the safety of his wife and*  
1415                     *young children. “I was at work all day (on Sunday) and then came back at 3 pm*  
1416                     *and there were police everywhere,” Mr Kar said. “I don’t know my neighbours at*  
1417                     *all but it is very scary. My wife and children are here and it makes me worried.”*  
1418                     *(17)*

1419           *“The judge said the victim was left feeling humiliated, distressed, betrayed and*  
1420                     *traumatised by his irrational and threatening behaviour and he still feared for*  
1421                     *himself and his children.” (25)*

1422           Another theme was related to the court proceedings, criminal charges, and the  
1423   perpetrator’s eligibility for bail (which was frequently denied or restricted):

1424           *“The 37-year-old woman was refused bail yesterday to appear at Bankstown Local Court*  
1425                     *today.” (17)*

1426           *“Smithers attempted to apply for bail, but as she is charged with murder can only apply*  
1427                     *for bail in the Supreme Court.” (7)*

1428           *“The court heard Tawhai, who has been in Australia for 15 years, faces likely*  
1429                     *deportation to New Zealand after his jail term.”(25)*

1430           *“He denied bail and said there was an unacceptable risk of further committing a serious*  
1431                     *offence and endangering the safety of the community.” (31)*

1432           In the cases where there was not a fatality, the articles often gave some details about the  
1433 victim’s medical treatment:

1434           *“The man declined medical treatment for his facial wounds.” (3)*

1435           *“He was transported to the Princess Alexandra Hospital where he required surgery and*  
1436                     *the insertion of a rod into his leg.” (29)*

1437           *“...the man’s injuries were so bad as he was being taken to the Gold Coast University his*  
1438                     *heart stopped before he was then stabilised by paramedics. “Without the acts of*  
1439                     *emergency services, it was looking very grim for the victim about what may have*  
1440                     *happened to him,” Ms Thom said.” (28)*

1441           *“He was taken to Prince of Wales Hospital where he remains in a stable condition.” (18)*

1442           When either the victim and/or perpetrator had mental health issues or drug and alcohol  
1443 use was sometimes backgrounded as well. In some ways, the inclusion of these factors seemed to  
1444 point to a rationale for why the incident happened:

1445           *“Defence counsel Anthony Lewis said Considine grew up in Reservoir with 14 siblings in*  
1446                     *a childhood marred by his father's constant physical abuse until he turned 15 and*  
1447                     *fought back. His adulthood had been one of instability, failed attempts to gain*

1448 *work, periods of homelessness and constant drug abuse. He was using heroin, ice*  
 1449 *and cannabis daily when he murdered Mr Phillips.” (perpetrator) (21)*

1450 *“Police allege the woman was involved in an altercation with another patron at a*  
 1451 *licensed premises at Bidwill earlier.” (perpetrator) (2)*

1452 *“Chief Inspector Sly said police believe she “may have taken some pills or prescription*  
 1453 *medicine”. ” (perpetrator) (6)*

1454 *“Police attended and found the woman well intoxicated,” a police spokeswoman said.”*  
 1455 *(perpetrator) (3)*

1456 *“Mr Prasad also said this was the first time his client was in custody and her childhood*  
 1457 *trauma and mental health issues would make her time in custody more onerous.”*  
 1458 *(31, 32)*

1459 *“It is understood Mr Venn had suffered from bipolar for much of his life.” (victim) (12)*

1460 *“the court heard that the duo were drinking before an argument.” (victim and*  
 1461 *perpetrator) (31, 32)*

1462 *“Some of the victim’s family, friends and colleagues cried in court as he described*  
 1463 *suffering the early signs of post-traumatic stress disorder.” (victim) (30)*

#### 1464 **4.7.4 Omission**

1465 Huckin (1997, p.82) states that omission is the “ultimate form of backgrounding” as well  
 1466 as the most potent “because if the writer does not mention something, it often does not even enter  
 1467 the reader’s mind and thus is not subjected to his or her scrutiny.” Six key pieces of information  
 1468 were frequently omitted across the 35 articles. The omitted information generally pertained to the  
 1469 who and the why of the 5Ws. It could be argued that at the time of producing the article, the

journalists did not have access to the information that was omitted. Although a few cases did have follow-up articles (9-13 Venn; 22-23 Murray; 31-32 Twaddell; 5, 33-35 Thagipur), many incidents were only reported on once; this suggests that the journalists only took a cursory interest in the story, or it was not deemed newsworthy enough to follow up on with additional information (Boukes et al., 2022).

As identified in the *Nomination* category, writers often did not identify the victim through proper nouns. In most cases, the victim was reduced to being called a man with no other significant information identifying him as a unique individual, yet the perpetrator was generally named in full. According to Valentine et al., (1996) having a name is a basic human right that was written into declarations and adopted by the United Nations. Panwar (2022) states that “names are more than monikers...In some cultures... we’re given names that are deeply rooted in social and cultural beliefs.” So, when a news article omits the victim’s name from a story detailing their victimhood, it not only minimises their identity but also their existence and relevance as an individual. Laws legislate that names cannot be published in articles to protect the identity of children (*Identification in Criminal Matters and in Court Records*, n.d.); however, the perpetrators were named in many articles of this dataset. It seems unlikely that was the reason for omitting the victim’s name in these articles but there may have been other unknown reasons for why the majority of these news articles did not publish the male victim’s name

Under *Functionalisation*, the victim’s occupation was frequently omitted while the perpetrator’s occupation was more likely to be included. Of the 35 articles, only two mentioned an occupation, and one mentioned either an occupation or hobby (it could not be discerned if “avid fisherman” was occupational or recreational). A big part of the male identity is what he does as an occupation and is a construct seen across the world, not just in Australia (Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2021). Although gender roles are evolving, humans are still predominantly



socialised to believe that a man's primary role is that of a provider (Croft et al., 2015; Gonalons-Pons & Gangl, 2021). This socialisation is derived from not only men themselves and their male peers, but also demonstrated even in how men are typically paid more than women in the workforce (Blom & Hewitt, 2020; Croft et al., 2015). Consequently, women are more likely to be the parent who stays at home with the children (Croft et al., 2015). Although more men are taking up the role of a stay-at-home parent, this still contravenes conventional gender roles (Croft et al., 2015). Although men should not be reduced to what they do for a living or their earning capacity, the reality is that occupation is a fundamental part of how men identify with themselves and others in the world. Excluding this information erases a fundamental part of who the victim was in their life; their occupation contributed to their overall identity as an individual and as a man.

The third item that was omitted regularly was the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. In many articles the relationship is implied, either by how police charged the perpetrator (domestic charges), or by the journalist stating it was a 'domestic incident'. It was not always clear what the relationship was between the social actors of the article. For example, one article reported:

*"A 37-year-old woman, who was known to the man, was later taken to Bankstown Hospital under police guard for treatment," NSW Police said in a statement. Chief Inspector Sly said police believe she "may have taken some pills or prescription medicine". Following her release from hospital, the woman was taken to Bankstown police station about 12 pm on Monday and charged with domestic violence-related murder. (6)*

While it seems evident that there was a relationship between them, based on the 'charged with domestic violence-related murder' the article only refers to her as a woman who was known to the man. Another incident was similarly reported:

1518           *“Police will allege two men and a woman were involved in a physical altercation at the*  
1519 *unit, where one of the men sustained stab wounds to his abdomen,” a NSW Police spokesman*  
1520 *said... following reports of a domestic-related assault.”*(16)

1521 Incidents are only vaguely referred to as a domestic violence incident but do not elaborate on the  
1522 relationship or always explicitly identify who the perpetrator or victim is. It is hard not to  
1523 consider how stories about male-perpetrated domestic violence are often relayed in the news. In  
1524 the absence of academic research, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that the relational roles  
1525 played by the victim and perpetrator are usually explicitly stated and regularly emphasised (i.e.,  
1526 husband murders wife, woman battered by boyfriend, and so forth) when men are perpetrators of  
1527 DV (Woods, 2023; Davis, 2023; Goodwin et al., 2023). Therefore, it is questioned why the  
1528 relationship is downplayed or non-existent when a man is the victim.

1529           Additionally, the articles were not always clear about which social actor in the article was  
1530 the victim. At times the identity of the victim was ambiguous, or the story was written in such a  
1531 way that created questions about whether the victim was the victim or not. For example, one  
1532 article opens the story with:

1533           *“A woman has been charged with murder after a man, who police say had been ordered*  
1534 *not to come within 100 metres of the home in Sydney's west, died from stab wounds.”* (6)

1535 And later the article states:

1536           *“... the man had been due to face a hearing at Bankstown Local Court in July after being*  
1537 *charged in December "with assault and offences relating to the brandishing of a knife". "There*  
1538 *was also an apprehended domestic violence order [DVO] in place and part of those conditions*  
1539 *were for the man to not go within 100 metres of the Rickard Road unit.”* (6)

1540 The key points here are that the deceased was previously known to police, had previously  
1541 committed domestic violence, and had been ordered to stay away from the residence where his  
1542 death took place. A reader could easily conclude that by the man showing up at the residence  
1543 despite the DVO, he was there intending to cause harm and becomes the perpetrator in the story.  
1544 The reader might also assume that this was a case of self-defence, casting the woman into the  
1545 role of victim. Based on these assumptions, naturally, the reader begins to feel sympathy for the  
1546 perpetrator, the woman. The narrative seems to imply that the man should not have been there in  
1547 the first place and got what he deserved revealing a bias in the reporting. It demonstrates how  
1548 language can manipulate and persuade readers in a way that fails to acknowledge that there are  
1549 multiple perspectives to a situation. Research has shown that it can be difficult for police to at  
1550 times correctly identify who is the person in need of protection and some researchers state that a  
1551 proportion of domestic violence is mutually perpetuated (Johnson, 2006; Nancarrow et al.,  
1552 2020). The journalist, and subsequently the readers, do not have all the facts about this story.  
1553 Writing the story this way, however, detracts from the man's role as the victim and casts a  
1554 judgement of fault onto the individual who ended up deceased. When assumptions and value  
1555 judgements are produced in the various mediums of news and social media, they influence how  
1556 their readers perceive an incident and can cause inappropriate conclusions to be made,  
1557 sometimes resulting in what is commonly known as a trial by media (Shiyab, 2021; Surette,  
1558 1989).

1559 Precipitating factors that lead to the male victim being attacked in each incident was  
1560 another detail that was frequently omitted or subtly implied in the news articles. The journalist  
1561 provided the reader with specific details which leads the reader to come to certain conclusions  
1562 because of those details. For instance, it would be easy for the reader to conclude that the reason

1563 an incident occurred was due to alcohol, substance use or cheating, based upon the information  
1564 selected by the journalist in the story. A few examples:

1565 *“Police attended and found the woman well intoxicated,” a police spokeswoman said.”*

1566 (3)

1567 *“The Ganmain woman appeared via video link for a bail application in which the court*  
1568 *heard that the duo were drinking before an argument.” (31, 32)*

1569 *“Police allege the couple were drinking from 3 pm to 7 pm on Monday” (28)*

1570 It is implied, not so subtly, that alcohol played a role in these incidents and was the only detail  
1571 given in some cases to indicate why the victim was attacked.

1572 Other articles elude to the perpetrator being a scorned woman and imply a sense that the victim  
1573 had been unfaithful:

1574 *“Ms Stevens allegedly got out of her ute and ripped the windscreen wipers from the*  
1575 *smashed Honda, using them as a weapon to assault the woman and her male passenger. The*  
1576 *male passenger is a previous partner of Ms Stevens, police said” (8)*

1577 *“Police investigators are looking into whether a love triangle was behind the incident*  
1578 *and said Musa had arrived at Mr Thagipur’s apartment when another woman was inside.” (5,*  
1579 *35)*

1580 The “male passenger is a previous partner of Ms Stevens,” could be perceived as she was  
1581 a scorned woman who attacked him and the female out of revenge or jealousy. Again, one can  
1582 only speculate because the actual reason is not explicitly stated. With respect to the second  
1583 incident, the inclusion of a ‘love triangle’ shifts some of the responsibility of what happened onto  
1584 the victim. By suggesting there may have been a love triangle and another woman was inside his  
1585 apartment the reader may start to empathise with the perpetrator and admonish the victim. Yet, in

a different article, Musa and Mr Thagipur were described as previously being in a relationship; meaning the relationship had ended and he was simply moving on with his life, an action that may have triggered her. The impact of these stories being worded in such a way is that it potentially shifts the reader's sympathy from the victim who was attacked, to the perpetrator who did the attack. This is because it is perceived as 'justified' due to how the incident is reported.

Finally, in the cases where the man was attacked but was non-fatal, the articles did not always indicate if the man received medical treatment for his physical injuries. Not many articles considered the victim's mental health or the long-term impacts the incident might have had on the surviving victim. In the same vein, none of the articles listed any organisations for its readers about where they could get help if they too are experiencing domestic violence, like 1800RESPECT.

#### ***4.7.5 Connotations***

Whitmer (2020) defines connotations as "the emotional meaning of a word, or at least the emotional associations it carries within a particular culture." In other words, when a writer (or speaker) chooses certain word choices, there may be an intent to convey meanings beyond what the literal word means. This may be done in the hopes that the reader (or listener) has the same cultural understanding as the writer/speaker and can interpret the hidden meaning of what is being written or said. In some cases, this is not intentional and can lead to miscommunication. For example, this can easily occur between two individuals from different cultural backgrounds who understand the meanings of a word or phrase differently; as one can imagine, this can lead to unintentional misunderstandings and offence. Per van Leeuwen (2008), connotations can be positive or negative, depending on the word choice and where emphasis on certain words may be placed. For example, a woman smiling and saying, "Doesn't she look *amazing*?" would convey that the speaker genuinely feels that the woman looks attractive. On the other hand, "Doesn't *she*

1610 look amazing,” said a particular tone and a sour facial expression connotes that the speaker is  
1611 not happy about the woman or how she looks.

1612 In news reporting, the inclusion or exclusion of certain pieces of information and  
1613 particular word choices can lead the reader to see the article in a certain way, either positively or  
1614 negatively. This is often linked to perceived news bias, as the University of Michigan reveals  
1615 through examples of how the 2003 Iraqi war was reported on by two different news outlets on  
1616 the same situation (*News Bias Explored*, n.d.). Newspaper A claimed, “Iraqi fighter jets  
1617 threatened two American U-2 surveillance planes, forcing them to return to abort their mission”,  
1618 while Newspaper B reported, “U.N. arms inspectors said Tuesday they had withdrawn two U-2  
1619 reconnaissance planes over Iraq for safety reasons.” The first article has greater negative  
1620 connotations to it than the second article. The words *threatened* and *forced* are likely to cause the  
1621 reader to have a greater negative reaction to the situation in Iraq than Newspaper B, which was  
1622 considerably more benign.

1623 A key finding of this project was how fault was conveyed in the articles which were  
1624 stated more explicitly in some articles, and merely connotated in others. Despite the men being  
1625 subjected to DV, several articles portrayed the victimisation as justified, blaming the victim for  
1626 their victimisation due to their actions. These findings match those found by Hanson and Lysova  
1627 (2021) who stated, “male victims of female perpetrated IPH tend to be blamed for their  
1628 victimization and represented as non-ideal and illegitimate victims in the news media” based on  
1629 the findings of their study. In this section, I chose to use headlines to demonstrate this as often  
1630 headlines are the only part of a story someone will see. Though headlines are often written with  
1631 the intent to intrigue (clickbait), they have the power to influence the reader's perception of an  
1632 issue on their own (Kuiken et al., 2017). Some examples of how fault (victim-blaming) is  
1633 conveyed in the articles are as follows:

1634           Headline: *Scorned lover in car park rage (5)*

1635           Interpretation: A scorned lover is commonly used for a woman who has been cheated on.

1636   So immediately the headline has readers believing the victim has wronged her, and she has  
1637   retaliated against him for it. It would be easy for the reader, therefore, to perceive the victim at  
1638   fault for his victimisation because he was unfaithful according to the headline. This perception is  
1639   not an uncommon one, for example, a popular song by Carrie Underwood, *Before He Cheats*,  
1640   glamorises a woman taking revenge against her boyfriend because she believes he is cheating.  
1641   Within the song, the singer describes that he is ‘probably’ with another woman, and so she  
1642   slashes his tyres, and keys his car whilst taking a baseball bat to its headlights. This song is  
1643   heralded by women and the actions described in the song are deemed entirely appropriate  
1644   because she believes he is cheating on her. When a man behaves in such a way it is easily  
1645   recognised as domestic abuse.

1646   Another example:

1647           Headline: *Husband’s \$20k purchase that drove wife to murder (12)*

1648           Interpretation: This headline shifts the blame of Mrs Venn’s actions onto her victim,  
1649   justifying her behaviour because of what the victim did first. Stating that the wife was driven to  
1650   commit murder implies a sense of the wife having no control over her behaviour in the situation  
1651   and takes away her responsibility for her actions. This case got significant media coverage and it  
1652   was the only case that came up in the data more than twice (for a total of five different articles).  
1653   None of the five articles mentioned why the \$20k purchase was so detrimental to Mrs Venn that  
1654   would cause her to ‘snap,’ but what seems more important to the journalist here is highlighting  
1655   why her actions should be perceived as rational, maybe even reasonable. While Mr Venn’s  
1656   behaviour could be grounds for a divorce, it does not justify her murdering him.

1657 Again, another example:

1658           Headline: ***Woman charged with murder of man subject to AVO Bankstown (6)***

1659           Interpretation: This headline is perhaps a little more subtle than the two previous  
1660 headlines, but one can ‘read between the lines’. The woman murdered a man whom she has  
1661 already been to the police about for his violence against her. As the reader, I immediately saw  
1662 that he had an AVO and concluded that her behaviour must be the result of self-defence and  
1663 therefore justifiable. Nowhere in the article, however, does it say she acted in self-defence, nor  
1664 does it outline any actions or behaviours by the man that would suggest that she was acting in  
1665 self-defence. There is a lack of evidence to support this theory in the article, but because the  
1666 victim had an AVO against him, he should not have been near her at all. Therefore, it is easy to  
1667 conclude that he breached the AVO and was doing something that caused her to murder him.  
1668 Once again shifting the responsibility of the victimisation from the perpetrator onto the victim.

1669           The primary significance of these headlines, as demonstrated repeatedly, is that the  
1670 burden of responsibility is shifted from the perpetrator, onto the victim. Additionally, the way  
1671 these headlines are written does not convey a sense of objectivity on the part of the journalist.  
1672 Maybe they are intentionally written to be provocative to generate clicks but the result is blaming  
1673 the victim for their victimisation and evoking sympathy for the perpetrator. If a man snapped and  
1674 killed his wife for purchasing a \$20k dress the man would be justly crucified in the media; but in  
1675 the Venn case, the perpetrator seems to be given a pass because of what *he* [the victim] did.  
1676 Accordingly, I conclude that it is problematic how victimisation and perpetration is conveyed  
1677 and perceived in the media, and the public more widely.

1678           To conclude, I wanted to provide a more in-depth analysis of a few articles. These were  
1679 selected on the basis that they had a decent article length that allowed for a deeper analysis.



1680 These articles, from my analysis and interpretation, connotated specific, underlying meanings  
1681 through word or phrase choices. I will denote each article I am addressing with the headline of  
1682 the article and then provide a snippet from that article that I have interpreted to have specific  
1683 connotations. Subsequently, I will provide my interpretation of those statements as a news reader  
1684 and why those connotations are concerning.

1685 ***Drunk woman charged over attack on partner (3)***

1686 *“A woman, who allegedly attacked her older partner during a domestic incident...  
1687 Bankstown police will allege an intoxicated 52-year-old woman from Malabar attacked  
1688 her 60-year-old partner... “Police attended and found the woman well intoxicated,” ...  
1689 “She began thrashing and shouting at police when they attempted to arrest her.” ...The  
1690 man declined medical treatment for his facial wounds while the police officers were not  
1691 hurt.”*

1692 In the first statement, the article gives a sense that the woman is considerably younger  
1693 than her partner by referring to him as *older*, but then their ages are stated, denoting only an  
1694 eight-year age difference between them. From reading the first sentence, I expected to see  
1695 something like a 15–20-year age gap. By referring to him as older, it conjured a perception of a  
1696 feeble, white-haired man possibly too frail to fight off her attack. They refer to the woman as  
1697 ‘intoxicated’, then ‘well-intoxicated’. There is an emphasis on alcohol being a significant factor  
1698 in the woman’s behaviour. This plays into a typical stereotype of a drunk woman who is acting  
1699 belligerent but should not be taken too seriously. It almost somehow detracts from the  
1700 seriousness of the incident. This is exacerbated by the article saying that the man declined  
1701 medical treatment and the police officers were not hurt. This connotes that whilst she was  
1702 drunk and physically aggressive and abusive, she didn’t do any real damage to anyone, so this  
1703 incident is not a big deal.

1704           **Venn Couple: Shocking allegations as woman charged with husband's murder** (13)  
1705   and **Husband's \$20k purchase that drove wife to murder: police** (12)

1706           (13) *"A woman in her 60s accused of killing her husband in their Brisbane bayside*  
1707           *home... It is believed the pair were married for more than 45 years and were retired...*  
1708           *Police allege she put Mr Venn to sleep with medication before cutting his wrists with a*  
1709           *blade... police will allege Venn also took the same medication and had to be*  
1710           *resuscitated."*

1711           (12) *"man allegedly drugged and slain by his wife of more than four decades was killed*  
1712           *after he bought a \$20,000 boat, police claim... Venn allegedly told officers she killer [sic]*  
1713           *her husband after he bought a \$20,000 boat in the days before his death. It is understood*  
1714           *Mr Venn had suffered from bipolar for much of his life."*

1715           Both articles were written by the same journalist one day apart; and, both articles were  
1716   almost identical with the exceptions I've included. From even these small excerpts, it is easy to  
1717   identify the newsworthiness factors that are present, like novelty, oddity, sensationalism, and  
1718   interest. I posit that the presence of so many newsworthy factors is why I found five articles  
1719   specific to this case, more than any other incident in my data. The first connotation I noticed was  
1720   the journalist highlighting the woman's age *"a woman in her 60s"* and revealing her  
1721   socioeconomic status straight away by stating *"Brisbane bayside home"*; essentially identifying  
1722   the murderer as elderly, well-off and likely retired. Then the journalist goes on to talk about the  
1723   pair being married for 45 years. This again emphasises the age of both the husband and wife but  
1724   also connotes a sense of oddity. This is largely because it is expected that a couple married that  
1725   long would have developed resilience and strategies to get through difficult life situations rather  
1726   than resorting to homicide. The article later says, *"she put Mr Venn to sleep with medication*  
1727   *before cutting his wrists with a blade."* By phasing it this way, instead of saying she drugged Mr

1728 Venn, for example, the journalist is telling us that Mrs Venn is not a ‘complete monster’. After  
1729 all, she showed him compassion by putting him to sleep first before she murdered him. Then we  
1730 are informed that Mrs Venn decided to also end her life by taking “*the same medication and had*  
1731 *to be resuscitated.*” As the reader, I immediately began to question why Mrs Venn tried to  
1732 suicide; these are the conclusions that came to mind: was it out of guilt for what she had done;  
1733 she did not want to spend the rest of her life in prison; or more benignly, maybe she could not  
1734 imagine life without her husband. It is never clear if it was always her intention to suicide or a  
1735 decision she made after she murdered him but seems relevant to understanding her actions.

1736 In the follow-up article the next day, the above is re-iterated but additional facts have  
1737 come to light, such as the precipitating factors. In this article, an attuned reader will immediately  
1738 detect a sense of victim-blaming in the headline, “*Husband’s \$20k purchase that drove wife to*  
1739 *murder.*” Immediately setting the scene, the wife was driven to murder because he did a naughty  
1740 thing, spending \$20k, so his murder is his fault. This is doubled down in the first sentence when  
1741 the journalist informs us that the police allege a \$20k boat purchase caused the murder. Then,  
1742 once again reinforced by stating the perpetrator admitted to police that she killed him because of  
1743 said boat purchase. Additionally, a standalone statement printed on a separate line highlights that  
1744 Mr Venn “*suffered from bipolar for much of his life.*” In the context of the article, it seems Mrs  
1745 Venn may have also suffered from Mr Venn’s bipolar disorder. Anyone familiar with bipolar  
1746 disorder would immediately assume that Mr Venn purchased this boat during a manic phase,  
1747 perhaps without consulting her or against her wishes. It is never revealed if the money was his  
1748 money, their money, on credit, etc. For the wife to react in such a way, however, it makes the  
1749 reader wonder if Mr Venn spent their life savings and jeopardised their future. Oddly, the  
1750 journalist never refers to this as a murder-suicide (or an attempted one) which is what it was an  
1751 attempt at.

1752           This story is newsworthy, not because the husband is killed per se, but because they lived  
1753 in a wealthy area where this kind of thing is more shocking than in a lower socioeconomic area,  
1754 the perpetrator is a woman of retirement age, and she killed her bipolar husband of 45 years.  
1755 Although it is implied that she killed him with compassion by putting him to sleep first, he had it  
1756 coming because he spent \$20k on a boat. Finally, the rationale for why Mrs Venn attempted to  
1757 take her own life is never revealed. The majority of this article focuses on the perpetrator and the  
1758 victim mostly plays a supporting role in the story.

1759           ***Threesome murder: Man killed in jealous rage, stuffed in wheelie bin (21)***

1760       *"A man invited to be part of a sexual threesome by a Melbourne couple was killed in a jealous*  
1761 *rage before his body was stuffed in a wheelie bin and left by the side of the road... Jason*  
1762 *Considine agreed for girlfriend Natasha Hogan to invite Ashley Phillips to join them for sex at*  
1763 *their Preston unit to ensure "she would not be going behind his back",... Considine, 36, and*  
1764 *Hogan, 27, have been in a "toxic" relationship since she was at high school...marred by*  
1765 *domestic violence and drug abuse... Considine's hope is that when Hogan is released from jail*  
1766 *she can regain custody of her two daughters and they can visit him in prison. He is the father of*  
1767 *one of the girls, and Hogan became pregnant to another man when Considine was previously*  
1768 *behind bars. Hogan met Mr Phillips in 2015 during another of Considine's stints in custody, Mr*  
1769 *Brown said, and they had a sexual relationship until her boyfriend was released. In early 2017*  
1770 *the couple discussed inviting another man to take part in a "threesome", the prosecutor said,*  
1771 *and Considine agreed so as to prevent Hogan from cheating on him... Mr Phillips also had drug*  
1772 *problems but was remembered as a kindhearted and friendly "big kid" who loved tinkering with*  
1773 *cars and playing with his cousin's children at family gatherings... Considine grew up in*  
1774 *Reservoir with 14 siblings in a childhood marred by his father's constant physical abuse, until he*  
1775 *turned 15 and fought back. His adulthood had been one of instability, failed attempts to gain*

1776 *work, periods of homelessness and constant drug abuse. He was using heroin, ice and cannabis*  
1777 *daily when he murdered Mr Phillips.”*

1778         This article had a lot to unpack but the above excerpt evidences the main connotations I  
1779 intend to highlight. The headline and the first sentence set the scene for what is a highly  
1780 scandalous story that is less about the victim, and instead focuses heavily on the perpetrators and  
1781 on how outlandish and provocative the story is. While it is an objective fact for the article to state  
1782 that Mr Phillips was killed after being invited to participate in a threesome with this couple, it is  
1783 the sexual nature of the situation and the novelty of his body being “stuffed in a wheelie bin” that  
1784 made this a newsworthy story. Additionally, the couple has a tumultuous history together, and  
1785 each had their own issues making this entire story read like a Netflix script. It is argued that  
1786 polyamory and non-heterosexual, non-monogamous relationships are rarely portrayed positively  
1787 in the media. The way the article is written connotes that these individuals are sexual deviants.  
1788 This seems particularly evident of Ms Hogan who, according to the article, was only permitted a  
1789 threesome to not cheat on Mr Considine behind his back which she has already done previously:  
1790 *“Hogan became pregnant to another man when Considine was previously behind bars. Hogan*  
1791 *met Mr Phillips in 2015 during another of Considine's stints in custody, Mr Brown said, and they*  
1792 *had a sexual relationship until her boyfriend was released.”* When the article does focus on the  
1793 victim, Mr Phillips, he is discredited in one breath and then an ‘okay guy’ in the next: *“Mr*  
1794 *Phillips also had drug problems but was remembered as a kindhearted and friendly "big kid"*  
1795 *who loved tinkering with cars and playing with his cousin's children at family gatherings.”*  
1796 Depending on a reader’s worldview, Mr Phillips is likely to be viewed in one of two ways: the  
1797 reader might have some empathy for Mr Phillips who, despite having a drug problem, is a decent  
1798 guy who did not deserve this. Alternatively, someone who is strongly conservative may view Mr  
1799 Phillips as a drug addict and sexual deviant whose murder is insignificant and move on to the

1800 next article. Finally, it is revealed that during the court proceedings that Mr Considine was the  
1801 primary offender, yet the journalist tries to provoke the reader to feel sympathy for him after the  
1802 article. This is done by detailing the perpetrator's difficult upbringing and his drug use at the  
1803 time of his murdering the victim. So again, this article's primary focus was more on Mr  
1804 Considine and Ms Hogan than it was ever on Mr Phillips, the victim.

1805

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion section will summarise the *Findings and Discussion* and be followed by Wodak's perspective critique. This critique will detail recommendations for better news reporting practices regarding male victims of DV. Finally, I will address the limitations of the study and explore considerations for future research.

### 5.1 Summary

This project aimed to explore how male victims of domestic violence are represented in news articles in Australia. This was done using critical discourse analysis, specifically by utilising both Reisigl and Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach with tools derived from van Leeuwen (2008), specifically Social Actors, to answer the following research questions:

1. In news reporting, how are male victims of DV referred to and how is the domestic violence incident described?
2. In news reporting, what characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to male victims of DV and the domestic violence incident of which they are victims?

These questions were answered in the following analysis of the captured data which will be summarised herein.

The data were taken from the top six most subscribed newspapers in Australia over 3 years from 2018-2021 with three of the papers located in Sydney, two in Melbourne and one in Brisbane. The locations of these newspapers meant that the data were restricted to those greater areas encompassed within these three major capital cities. That being said, a significant proportion of the data were recorded from Sydney, and only one article came out of Melbourne while Brisbane fell in the middle. This was curious considering Melbourne is considerably more populated than Brisbane, therefore surely the incident rates of domestic violence should be

higher for a more populated city. The median income of the locations are on par with previous research that demonstrates lower-income areas are more likely to experience domestic violence, but higher-income areas are not immune to cases of domestic violence either (Davies et al., 2015; Rennison & Planty, 2003). Three of the papers are classified as tabloid papers which are known to intrigue readers with provocative writing styles (Skovsgaard, 2014). These papers were also identified as primarily right-leaning, politically, which may influence the reporting style used to report these incidents (Freedon, 2001). Political ideologies influence the construction of new values and ultimately newsworthiness (Bednarek & Caple, 2014). From a critical discourse analysis perspective, political ideologies do not always allow for objective truths to be presented (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Dijk, 1998). Although it is impossible to be completely objective, certain political ideologies can prevent individuals from considering an issue from a perspective that deeply contrasts with their own beliefs. This in turn makes it unlikely that a differing narrative will be presented equally or at all. Furthermore, while right-leaning papers may have been influenced by their news values to report these stories in a certain way, the left-leaning papers only produced a handful of articles on the matter. Left-leaning papers are typically synonymous with a liberal/socialist ideology that places a greater focus on equality, social matters, and egalitarianism (Samochowiec et al., 2010) but male victimisation was predominantly absent from the left-leaning newspapers used for this thesis. This suggests that male victimisation is not recognised as an important social matter for the left, possibly as it clashes with other leftist issues, and the cases of male victimisation are more likely to be downplayed and minimised on the right. As such, neither side is taking on a role of advocacy for male victims which prevents the narratives on male victimisation from evolving socially and culturally.



1852           The headlines for the articles mostly entailed what type of incident took place and what  
1853 kind of weapon was used to facilitate the incident, as well as relational details between victim  
1854 and perpetrator and where the incident took place geographically. The use of the terminology,  
1855 ‘domestic violence’, was almost non-existent in headlines which supported prior research  
1856 findings that revealed these words were less likely to be used when the victim was a male (Hines  
1857 & Douglas, Emily, 2010). Three-quarters of the articles had an article-length of less than 500  
1858 words, and half of those were less than 250 words. Prior research has also identified that articles  
1859 that are considered the most newsworthy have longer word lengths than those that are considered  
1860 less newsworthy yet at the same time, stories with conflict and crime are overreported  
1861 disproportionately (Boukes et al., 2022; Masini et al., 2018).

1862           With respect to Incident Type, the primary incident type did not exclude male perpetrated  
1863 DV against male victims, but the data were primarily comprised of female perpetrated DV.  
1864 Accordingly, it was found that stabbing was the most common type of incident reported on. This  
1865 mirrored prior findings that women are most likely to use a knife against their DV victims  
1866 (Boxall et al., 2020). There was seldom any reporting of non-physical violence or abuse,  
1867 however, which begs to question why coercive control and other types of abuse are not  
1868 considered newsworthy. It is posited that with 54% of the stories being fatal, it is only the most  
1869 novel, shocking, gruesome, or horrific of incidents that are considered newsworthy enough to  
1870 make it to print and therefore, it is concluded that non-physical violence is less newsworthy  
1871 (Leung, 2019) and less entertaining. The news can be classified as what van Dijk (1993) would  
1872 refer to as an elite group or institution which has the power to enact, legitimatise and reproduce  
1873 inequality through the influence that newspapers have over society. By ignoring other types of  
1874 abuse, or by requiring most instances to be fatal before being reported, news organisations are

1875 doing nothing to improve the awareness around male victimisation; even worse, they are putting  
1876 male victims in a box where only the most shocking cases are coming to light.

1877         The way men are referred to in the articles was analysed using van Leeuwen (2008) via  
1878 the *Nomination* category and sub-categories. The majority of articles did not refer to the victim  
1879 by name at all. Those that were named were treated respectfully and referred to as a “Mr” but  
1880 that was only 12 articles (and only five unique cases/incidents) and in the same vein, the same  
1881 articles plus one extra were the only articles to refer to the man by his last name as well. The  
1882 victims were never referred to directly by first name, outside of a quote from a family member  
1883 once and there were no instances of kinship titles or pseudo-titles used in the data. Van Leeuwen  
1884 (2008, p. 40) says “In stories, for instance, nameless characters fulfill only passing, functional  
1885 roles and do not become points of identification for the reader or listener. In press “stories,”  
1886 something similar occurs.” By not referring to victims by name, van Leeuwen would argue these  
1887 men are not relevant in their own stories which just highlights how marginalised this group of  
1888 victims are within the domestic violence awareness sphere.

1889         Again, using van Leeuwen (2008), *Categorisation* and its sub-categories were included to  
1890 identify how men were represented by their relationships and functions with others. In terms of  
1891 occupation and hobbies, they were rarely mentioned, but when they were, the results would  
1892 easily be identified as typically masculine (“hard-working painter” or “avid fisherman”). This  
1893 aligns with the theory of hegemonic masculinity, where certain normative masculine traits are  
1894 idealised and upheld as the standard for men to be legitimised as men (Street & Dardis, 2018).  
1895 Regarding identity, gender and age were the most commonly included details. Nationality was  
1896 included if the individual was non-Australian and sexuality was included when it could be seen  
1897 as deviant (“Gay pornstar’s ex-boyfriend” or “threesome murder”), which could be viewed as an  
1898 ‘Us vs Them’ mechanism to justify the fate that befell them (van Dijk, 1998). Relationally, the

link between the victim and perpetrator was not always clear nor explicitly stated, and a few articles included other relationships like the perpetrator's role as a father or as a son. Physically, not many articles detailed the victim's physical attributes, only highlighting when the victim was 'older' or 'elderly.' The remaining physical features related to the injuries that were sustained during the domestic violence incident some of which were frequently phrased in a sensationalised way ("his mangled body", "his body stuffed in a wheelie bin"). Finally, when assessing how the victim was appraised, there was a concerning trend of portraying the victim negatively, often insinuating some form of responsibility to be owned by the victim for their victimisation ("after he bought a \$20,000 boat" or "significantly affected by alcohol"). Some articles did appraise the victim positively though, but typically those were associated with the victims that portrayed normative masculinity through their occupation or relationships with others. This finding aligned with previous research, but the research that was carried out with female victims (Anrows, 2016). As such, it became apparent that this phenomenon of victim-blaming is not unique to male victims per se, but rather a serious flaw in journalistic practice. It would appear that faulting the victim for their victimisation, rather than holding the perpetrator accountable, is a common occurrence in the news media.

*Framing* was the final category, which was comprised of several sub-categories as well, used to understand the 'bigger picture' of reporting DV stories with male victims. Focus not only looked at how men are referred to within the articles but also quantified the articles in a way to determine which social actor was the primary focus in the article. The victim was most referred to as 'man' above all other nouns or pronouns but was only referred to as a 'victim' 7 times in total. By excluding the men's names from the discourse, their essence as a person, their humanity, is removed (van Leeuwen, 2008). There is an element of power taken away from these men by keeping their identity hidden and reducing them to just a 'man.' It is easier to ignore and

1923 dismiss the story of an unknown; a man who has an identity, a background, and a family is much  
1924 easier to relate to, emphasise with, and feel outraged for.

1925         Although the victim was the primary focus in roughly half of the articles, those articles  
1926 were often considerably shorter than the articles that focussed on the perpetrator which often  
1927 went into significant detail about the perpetrator's backstory. The *Foregrounded* information  
1928 primarily focused on the 5Ws of journalism, although the "why" of the "Who, what, when,  
1929 where, and why" was less prevalent than the other Was but it is posited that the journalist may  
1930 have been unable to ascertain that information at the time of writing the article. Regarding  
1931 *Backgrounded* information, it was found that the following details made up the remainder of the  
1932 article: prior offences, witness and impact statements, medical treatment of the victim, substance  
1933 use and finally the charges and related court proceedings for the perpetrator. Omission, the  
1934 ultimate form of backgrounded was the exclusion of information that one would otherwise  
1935 expect to be included. As already identified, the victim's name, occupation, and relationship to  
1936 the perpetrator were often absent from the articles. Additionally, in some cases, the articles were  
1937 written in a way that did not reveal whom the actual victim was out of the included social actors,  
1938 nor were the factors that led to the victimisation. Lastly, information related to the medical  
1939 treatment of the victim was not always included, especially not mental health. To finish,  
1940 *Connotations* was the final subcategory of *Framing* that was investigated, and the findings  
1941 explored the meanings of words and phrases; this section looked at what was being insinuated. A  
1942 significant finding was how fault was conveyed in the articles which equated often to a certain  
1943 amount of victim-blaming, rather than the perpetrator being held accountable for their actions.  
1944 Additionally, several articles tried to rationalise or justify the perpetrator's behaviour and actions  
1945 due to various reasons or circumstances. These reasons ranged from implied infidelity of the  
1946 victim, impairment due to substance use, mental health, and sexual deviance. Leung (2019, p.

2228) states “In newspaper reports, DV is often portrayed as a problem induced by the victim, which limits the public’s understanding of DV. Therefore, the media have an unshakable responsibility for shaping the public’s knowledge about DV.” This was said in a paper published about news representations in Hong Kong about female victims, yet also applies to male victims in Australia. As previously suggested, this propensity for victim-blaming points to (global) problematic journalistic practice when reporting on victims of domestic violence.

## **5.2 Prospective Critique (Recommendations for News Reporting)**

The final critique outlined by the DHA is the prospective critique. Its purpose is to enable the development of discursive guidelines and incite change to existing language to improve communication; and, ultimately to minimise the reproduction of inequality and discrimination (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). Newspapers hold the power to influence and modify the narratives and ideologies that society has around a specific issue. By ignoring, downplaying, and minimising the phenomenon of male DV victimisation, this issue does not get the attention needed to bring awareness nor incite changes in policy-making and help-providing services. There are a few recommendations that can be made as a result of this project that would go a considerable way to reduce the marginalisation of male DV victims.

First and foremost, there needs to be more media coverage of male victimisation in domestic violence incidents, and not limited to physical ones but cases of psychological, financial, and sexual abuse as well. Moreover, more efforts should be made to balance out information provided about both, victim and perpetrator, and more weight should be given to the victim as the ‘main character’ in the reports. This means ensuring that victims’ names are given unless a reason is given for why this is not possible (to protect children or an investigation is ongoing, for example). If a backstory is going to be provided on the perpetrator, equal information should be given to the victim. In the same vein, the information given about the

1971 victim should be objectively conveyed and where possible avoid using appraisement. Meaning,  
1972 avoiding language and wording that incites victim-blaming or conveys a degree of fault and/or  
1973 responsibility on behalf of the victim. There should be better language used to ensure that  
1974 accountability and responsibility are placed on the perpetrator and their actions rather than  
1975 justifying them.

1976 Further, the identification of who the victim is, who the perpetrator is and what their  
1977 relationship is to each other should be clearly and explicitly outlined, regardless of each social  
1978 actor's gender. Likewise, a standard format could be developed for reporting these stories to  
1979 ensure that stories about men and women are reported on in measurably, similar ways. This  
1980 would entail using consistent language and outlining specific details regardless of the gender of  
1981 the victim and perpetrator. While not entirely necessary, acknowledging the contributions of the  
1982 deceased victims and the impact that their loss will have on their family and friends could be an  
1983 aspect of this standard format. Again, although not necessary, it could be included to remind  
1984 people of the very real and negative impact that domestic violence has on communities and raise  
1985 awareness.

1986 An awareness of the difference between types of domestic violence and their  
1987 corresponding terminology would improve the way these phenomena are communicated about  
1988 and represented. Instead of referring to all incidents as a domestic violence incident, it would be  
1989 better to refer to these incidents as intimate partner violence incidents. Lastly, papers should do  
1990 more to inform readers and raise awareness on the issue more broadly. This means including  
1991 information to the reader about where they can get help if they are also experiencing domestic  
1992 violence, either generic or gender-specific, as long as both are included. Finally, reinforce the  
1993 narrative that violence is violence, and no one should have to experience DV, regardless of  
1994 gender.

Australian researchers, Easteal et al., (2015), identified that representations of DV often carry themes of mutual blame shared by both victim and perpetrator in news reporting. They also suggest reforms to how domestic violence is reported and reframing representations to present more realistic narratives, education, and information for women. These recommendations align with DV activists' efforts across the globe. In the UK, Level Up activists have influenced changes to media guidelines on how UK press report fatal domestic abuse of women ('Media Guidelines', n.d.). Their guidelines state that reports should hold perpetrators' accountable for their actions, not frame the murder because of the victim' actions. The guidelines also state that the crime should be clearly labelled as domestic abuse and helpline numbers should be included at the end of each article. Sutherland et al. (2015) identified there are up to 23 media guidelines on how to improve reporting of violence against women, six of which are in Australia. What is missing from these guidelines are recognition of male victims and their lived experiences. Despite that, most of the guidelines would apply to reporting DV against men as well as women. For example, Sutherland et al. found that eighteen guidelines recommend the use of domestic abuse or domestic violence rather than terms like domestic dispute or incident. Most guidelines also advise to avoid any form of victim-blaming, directly or indirectly. Finally, most guidelines recommend the inclusion of hotline numbers or other support services for victims.

### **5.3 Limitations**

This project was not without its limitations which will be outlined here accordingly. The newspapers selected were concentrated on the east coast of Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria). Additionally, the newspapers that were most subscribed to were metropolitan-based newspapers, which meant that regional news reporting and incidents occurring in regional areas were not analysed in the study. According to Shaughnessy et al., (2015), there are two types of bias, selective deposit and selective survival, to be aware of when

using archival data as were used in this project. Selective deposit refers to a bias in how archival data are selected to be stored in an archive, whereas selective survival bias is a result of incomplete or records missing entirely. In context, the data of this project were sourced exclusively from the UniSQ Factiva subscription, therefore, articles that were not made available to Factiva were unable to be included in the study, or if any articles had been removed before my collection, this would have impacted the articles included.

An additional factor is that articles were exclusively sourced from online versions of the newspapers; so, whether reporting practices differ between print and digital was not investigated. If there is a difference, then some of the criticisms laid may be addressed in print versions. For example, online articles may be shorter in length as a result, not of gender bias, but due to the current trend of keeping articles short in a fast-paced digital world. Additionally, the positionality of a story in a hardcopy printed paper often demonstrates the value placed on that story in terms of newsworthiness. The deeper into the physical newspaper, the less newsworthy an article is generally and therefore shorter in length inherently. This piece of contextual information is not ascertainable based on the way the data were collected for this project.

A high proportion of the articles did not explicitly identify the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. It is possible, therefore, that some articles were included but should not have been because the social actors were not current or former intimate partners. In the same vein, articles may have been excluded even if they did meet the criteria because the relationship was not explicit or implied well enough. The stories that were included were included on the basis that the relationship could be inferred with reasonable confidence based on other details in the article. A sample size of 35 for a qualitative study is not insignificant but the findings are not representative of all articles that have been published on male victims of DV. Given the



2042 methodology, the small sample size and even the sampling method, generalisations cannot be  
2043 made based on this research.

2044 Another limitation of the critical discourse analysis approach is that the researcher cannot  
2045 be wholly objective, and one would argue that is even the point of this type of analysis. As I  
2046 came into this project with a certain set of experiences that motivated me to undertake this  
2047 particular project which may have influenced my interpretation of the texts. Thus, another  
2048 researcher with different life experiences may interpret the articles in a different way than I did.  
2049 That being said, the analysis and interpretation of each article was reviewed by the principal  
2050 supervisor and problematic or bias-laden judgements were discussed and re-considered as part of  
2051 a triangulation process.

2052 The search for data was narrow and prescriptive to keep the data within a manageable  
2053 scope for a Master's project. This would have significantly narrowed the articles that were  
2054 available for selection. A search that entailed only the keywords of 'domestic violence' might  
2055 have resulted in more articles that were relevant to the project. An analysis of news  
2056 representations of female victims of domestic violence would have offered greater insights into  
2057 how these two groups are represented, both alike and differently. It also may have been able to  
2058 highlight gender bias better than investigating male representations alone.

## 2059 **5.4 Future Research**

2060 The area of male victimisation within a domestic violence context has been identified as  
2061 under-researched. This project addressed how male DV victims are represented in a small  
2062 selection of online news articles, but a larger project would consider looking at other types of  
2063 media representations of male victims, be it social media, television, or movies. Better yet, a  
2064 larger-scale study that looked at all newspapers in Australia would allow for different analyses

2065 and comparisons such as stories produced in rural areas versus urban regions. Additionally,  
2066 another study investigating how male victims are represented in the news compared to female  
2067 victims would yield interesting findings. It would also be intriguing to isolate newspapers based  
2068 on political leanings and news values to determine if there are any differences between left and  
2069 right-wing media reporting of DV and male victimisation. Given that the male victim's  
2070 occupation was included in some cases but not all, an opportunity for future research might  
2071 explore this construct in news reporting more in-depth. For example, future research might  
2072 identify what contextual factors are most likely to be included in journalism across different  
2073 crimes and genders of victims and perpetrators. This would identify how relevant the omission  
2074 was to representations of men. Finally, an investigation into news reporting of male violence in  
2075 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and LGBTIQ+ should be considered as well.  
2076

2077

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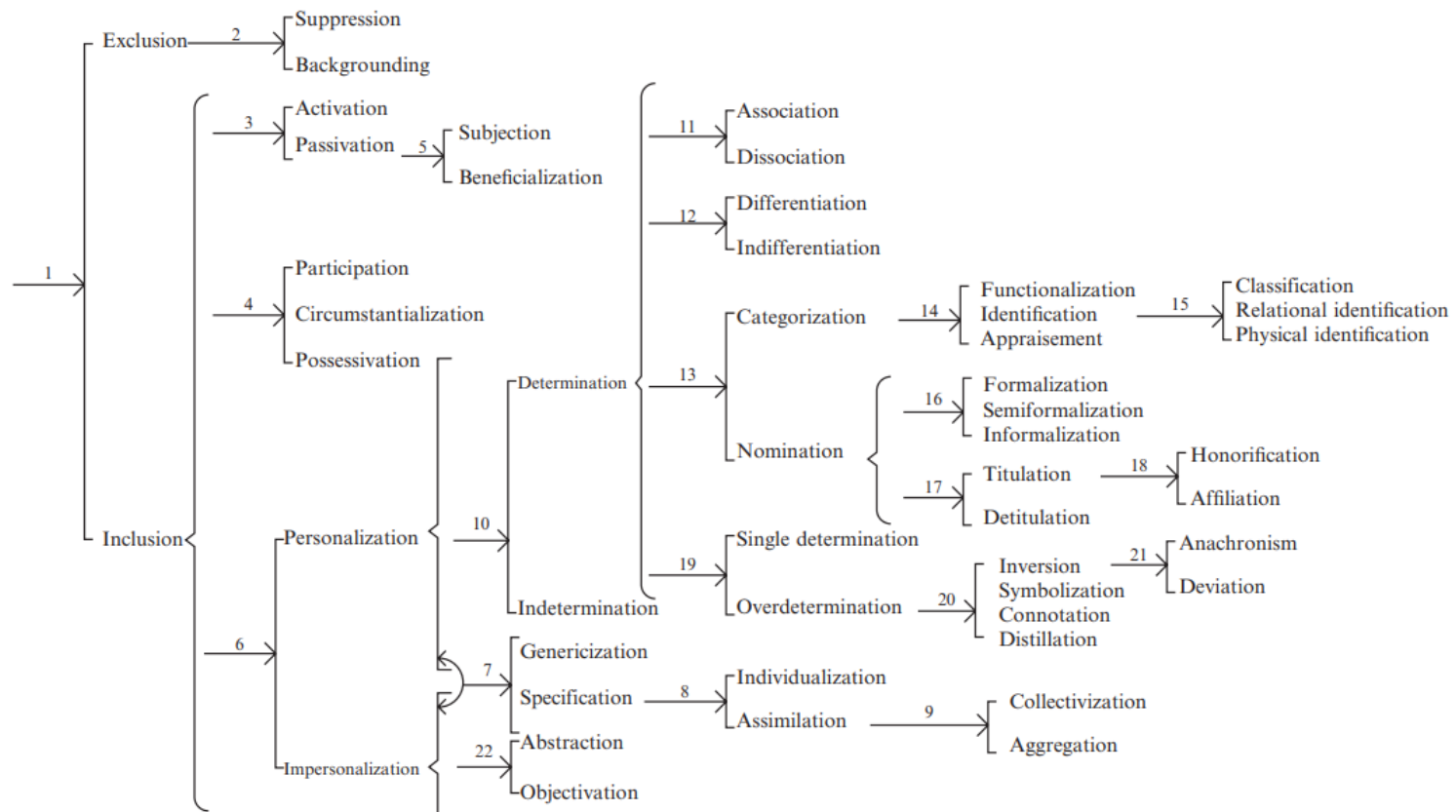
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van Leeuwen (2008, p.52) Social Actor Network

## Appendix A



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## Appendix B

Framework and spreadsheet used to analyse each article, with examples included.

		Why is the journalist telling me this?	6. Woman charged with murder of man subject to AVO Bankstown	
			Perpetrator	Male Victim
Newspaper			The Sydney Morning Herald	
Word Count			334	
Incident		What type of DV incident was it? (Type of abuse, modality)	Stabbing; fatal	
		Location(s) mentioned	Bankstown, Sydney's West, 'Rickard Road, Bankstown', 'Rickard Road unit',	
Nomination		<b>Formalisation</b> Last name only (w/ or w/o honorifics)	No Name	No Name
		<b>Semi-formalisation</b> First & last name		
		<b>Informalisation</b> First name only		
		<b>Titulation</b> (Honorifics, Kinships)		
		<b>Pseudo-titles</b> controversial cancer therapist		
Categorisation		<b>Functionalisation</b> when the social roles are named based on their occupations such as 'the teacher', 'the schoolgirl', and 'the prostitute'.	-	-
		<b>Appraisalment</b> The social actors can also be labelled "in terms which evaluate them, as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied. be achieved by "the set of nouns, adjectives and idioms that denote such appraisal. Can be negative or positive	...she "may have taken some pills or prescription medicine"	"a man who Police say had been ordered not to come within 100 metres of the home"
	Identification	<b>Classification</b> social roles are characterised or classified in relation to their "age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on"	a woman (age not mentioned at first); a 37-year-old woman	a 49-year-old-man

		<b>Relational Identification</b> social actors are identified by using "their personal, kinship or work relation to each other"	<p>"A 37-year-old woman, who was known to the man..." "charged with domestic violence-related murder"</p> <p>""There was also an apprehended domestic violence order in place and part of those conditions were for the man to not go within 100 metres of the Rickard Road unit," he said."</p> <p>The relationship is never explicitly disclosed, but can be inferred that they were at least previously in a relationship</p>	
		<b>Physical Identification</b> the social roles are categorized based on physical traits which "uniquely identify them in a given context" (p. 57). Nouns and adjectives indicating physical characteristics		"died from stab wounds" "deceased with stab wounds "to the neck area""
Framing	<b>Focus</b> How frequently is the victim mentioned; how frequently is the perpetrator mentioned? Who is the article really focusing on?	Perpetrator is mentioned 7 times (woman, her, she)	Victim is mentioned 6 times (man)	
	What is foregrounded?	A woman murders a man who had been ordered by Police (DVO) to stay away from her/her home while children were potentially present and may have witnessed it, and certainly saw enough to make the call to 000.		
	What is backgrounded?	<p>Whilst the first sentence says "who police say had been ordered not to come within 100 metres of the home" -- the first time I read this I interpreted as the woman had been ordered. It was not until I got to the end of the article where I read that the man was facing a hearing for being charged with assault and brandishing a knife and had a DVO in place ordering him not to go to the unit, that I realised the first sentence was talking about HIM, not her. It's my fault for reading it wrong, but sort of seems like it was written in a way that could be easily misinterpreted.</p> <p>I wonder why his past crimes are put at the end? Do we want to make her the complete villain because, after all, she killed him and in front of two kids... But, was it in self-defence?</p>		
	What is omitted?	Their exact relationship, the relationship of the kids to both of them, if there was a history of him abusing her, was there a history of mutual abuse? Was it kill or be killed for the woman?		
	Are there connotations?	<p>Well, certainly saying police believe she "may have taken some pills or prescription medicine" leaves a certain taste in your mouth. She very well could have been attacked and reacted in self-defence, but this statement almost undoes the speculation that she was maybe a victim herself.</p> <p>Also, there's a connotation around the first sentence - referring to the Order, that this guy was no good to begin with and got what was coming to him for breaking the order.</p>		

<p><b>Reflexivity</b></p>	<p><b>Thoughts</b></p>	<p>This one is so interesting. The lead sentence is written in such a way that unless you're really paying attention, you can easily assume it was the woman ordered to stay away from the house, and after all, she did the murdering so she's the villain in the story.</p> <p>But then when you go back and read it again with fresh eyes, you then see a <b>man</b> who was ordered not to go to this house, got what he deserved. By adding that "Police say had been ordered not to come to the home", you place this guy in the "baddie" column, and suddenly his death no longer seems as tragic, nor should we be so sympathetic about it.</p> <p>So it really does depend on how you interpret the first sentence as to how you view the article the first time around. Once you get to the end though, you definitely come to realise he was the one who was ordered not to go on to the property where the murder took place.</p> <p>This article 'eludes' to him battering the woman and perhaps lets you question if this was in self-defence on the part of the woman sort of, though never explicitly stated...</p> <p>But then the quote by the Police "she may have taken some pills or ..medicine" throws you.. should we be sympathetic for her or not? She murdered him, but was it in self-defence? Or was she high as a kite? And, after all, she did murder him in front of two children. So now she's the villain? Despite his past behaviour warranting a DVO?</p>
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## Appendix C

<b>Search terms used to explore existing literature on phenomena</b>	<b>Search Strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Male victims of domestic violence in the media</li><li>• Male victims of domestic violence in news/news reporting</li><li>• Media representations of male victims of domestic violence</li><li>• Male victims, domestic violence, news</li><li>• Male victims, domestic violence, media</li></ul>	<p>The search terms presented on the left were used to search Google Scholar, Research Gate and the databases that University of Southern Queensland (USQ) currently have access to, namely EBSCOhost. In most cases, Google Scholar and Research Gate were searched initially to locate source material. Then, those sources were searched for via the USQ Library to gain access to the articles that were not open source. Peer-reviewed, online articles were preferred.</p>



## Appendix D

1	Sydney woman charged after domestic violence stabbing	Sydney Morning Herald - Online	2019
2	Woman charged over alleged head stabbing	The Daily Telegraph - Online	2019
3	Drunk woman charged over attack on partner	Daily Telegraph - Online	2019
4	Woman charged with murder after deliberately hitting man with car	The Sydney Morning Herald - Online	2020
5	'SCORNED' LOVER IN CAR PARK 'RAGE'	The Daily Telegraph	2020
6	Woman charged with murder of man subject to AVO Bankstown	The Sydney Morning Herald	2021
7	Woman faces court charged with DV murder of partner	The Courier Mail	2020
8	Woman charged after allegedly ramming car, using windscreen wipers in assault	The Sydney Morning Herald	2021
9	Woman charged with murder after death in bayside suburb	The Courier Mail	2020
10	Woman charged with husband's murder	The Courier Mail	2020
11	Wife, 66 drugged husband, put him to bed, slit his wrists	The Courier Mail	2020
12	Husbands 20k purchase that drove wife to murder, police	The Courier Mail	2020
13	Shocking allegations as woman charged with husbands murder	The Courier Mail	2020
14	Mt Druitt - Man stabbed, woman injured in Mount Druitt domestic	The Daily Telegraph	2019
15	Mt Druitt - Man stabbed in Mt Druitt home	The Daily Telegraph	2019
16	Man stabbed during western Sydney assault	The Daily Telegraph	2020
17	Kids in unit as man stabbed to death	The Daily Telegraph	2021
18	Man stabbed, woman in custody in South Coogee	The Sydney Morning Herald	2018
19	Man stabbed in St Marys	The Daily Telegraph	2019
20	Man stabbed, woman injured in domestic violence assault	The Daily Telegraph	2019
21	Threesome murder - Man killed in jealous rage, stuffed in wheelie bin	The Age	2019
22	Wife charged with dad-of-threes murder	The Courier Mail	2020
23	Wife charged with dad-of-threes murder	The Courier Mail	2020
24	Gym owner put husband in headlock after video binge	The Daily Telegraph	2021
25	How dumped lover terrorised ex	The Courier Mail	2020
26	Man dies in fourth Sydney stabbing in 24 hours	The Sydney Morning Herald	2018
27	I'll f*** your life up': Radiochemist told to seek anger management	The Daily Telegraph	2021
28	Woman allegedly stabbed partner	The Daily Telegraph	2020
29	What drove girlfriend to bash her man with a metal pole	The Courier Mail	2021
30	My dignity was sold for 12.99 - Gay pornstar's ex-boyfriend	The Daily Telegraph	2020
31	Woman accused of stabbing man, puncturing his lung	The Daily Telegraph	2020
32	Woman accused of puncturing lung during night of drinking	The Daily Telegraph	2020
33	Woman accused of killing ex-boyfriend with car after argument	The Daily Telegraph	2020
34	Woman accused of killing ex-boyfriend allegedly strolls past body	The Daily Telegraph	2020

35	Love triangle probe for man fatally run over in car park	The Daily Telegraph	2020
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