Help-Seeking Among Abused Women in Greece

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Abstract

Violence against women in marital or marital like relationships is not a new phenomenon in most societies in the world. However, there are still societies where the issue has been studied very little. This work is the first empirical study conducted in Greece on abused women's help-seeking behaviour and the perceived support they received from formal and informal sources of help.

This was an exploratory study of fifty three Greek battered women, using qualitative and quantitative data and adopted a feminist and context-specific approach. In-depth interviews were carried out in the Refuge for battered women in Athens, and the Women's Issues Office and the Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology in Thessaloniki. The interviews were based on a structured interview schedule including both open and close ended questions and the data were organised around general themes. The main concepts that underpinned the study were those of the 'help-seeking' and 'help-giving' behaviours of the abused women and the potential agents of help, respectively. Also, the 'supportive' and 'challenging' nature of both the requests made by women to different agents and the responses provided by them. The above behaviours were examined after specific assaults experienced by women, a 'General' and the 'Last' Violent Events, and systematic and comparable data were gathered.

The findings revealed that the 'help-seeking and giving behaviours' are dynamic and complex processes which change over time. The women in the study were slow to seek help from others as a result of personal, societal and cultural barriers. Marriage and the family have a particular importance in Greek women's lives and they learn to gain social and religious approval by being good wives and retaining their relationships at any cost. The study showed that although this is the case, there is also a point in women's lives when they decide to take steps forward. Women's needs change over time and, accordingly, the nature of their requests to significant others and to formal agencies change as well. In the 'General Violent Event' the vast majority of the requests made were 'supportive' (i.e. requests for a listening ear, for understanding and validation, which would lead to maintaining the situation) and was mainly addressed to members of women's informal networks such as their female best friend, sister, cousin and bridesmaid. In the 'Last Violent Event' the requests were mostly 'challenging' (i.e. requests for arresting the man and/or help to leave their house, which would lead to challenge the man's violence and do something about it) and mainly addressed to the formal agencies. Responses received from various confidants also changed over time. In the 'General Violent Event', the 'supportive' requests were mainly responses such as a friendly talk, a listening ear and provision of advice. These 'supportive' responses were mainly aimed at encouraging women to stay in the violent relationship and try to cope with the situation. Still, some informants such as women's parents and in-laws were very judgmental and blaming. In the 'Last Violent Event', women mainly approached the formal agencies and asked for 'challenging' kinds of help aiming at challenging the man's violent behaviour and authority to beat his wife, including arresting the man or find safe temporary accommodation away from home. With the exception of the refuge, the women's 'challenging' requests appeared not to be met. Further, as opposed to their unhelpful responses in the 'General Violent Event', women's own parents were now perceived as "helpful" and supportive to the women's both 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests. In sort, both the help-seeking and help-giving behaviours appeared to be processual in nature.

DECLARATION

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other institute of learning.

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To the memory of my beloved mother, Αικατερινη,

whom I miss so much.

"...Adhikar is a Hindi word meaning, "It's my right".

It's my right as a sufferer of Domestic Violence to be believed. It's my right to expect and receive a professional service from every Agency. It's my right to expect an early Multi Agency response. It's my right to expect and receive the most appropriate intervention at the earliest possible opportunity and It's my right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times"

Project Adhikar International Conference

D.I. Terry Devoil, 13 May 1999.

"When I contacted the police during a previous violent event they made it clear that should I have any similar sort of problems in the future there would be nothing further the police could do to help, and also there was nowhere else they could refer me to for specialised help"

(Thessalonikian woman respondent, Int.19)

The Author

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Sevaste has been a volunteer worker in the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline in Manchester (W.D.V.H.) since September 1998. This has been an important experience and opportunity to put her beliefs and writings into practice and it has enabled her to make a practical contribution towards the problem's solution.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I set out to explore the 'help-seeking' behaviour of fifty three battered women in Greece and the 'help-giving' behaviour (or social support) of those whom they approached for help. More importantly, I intended to examine the extent to which Greek women disclose their situation in public and if not, why not. Also, under what circumstances are they turn to others for help, and who are the 'potential informants' most likely to be the most favourable for women to disclose to and at what stage in the relationship they are more likely to approach them? Further, what kinds of help are women likely to request and the subsequent of responses they receive from the various confidants they approach. Since these terms underpin this study, I will present the meanings they took for the purposes of this particular study. Finally, I will give a general overview of the chapters to follow.

The term 'help-seeking behaviour' is used throughout the thesis and is defined as any approach made by women to reach out for help when they felt they needed it. The term 'help-giving behaviour' is defined as any response made by any person approached by the women for help. It has been used interchangeably with the term

'social support' which includes the "gratification of emotional needs such as approval from significant others" (Hoff, 1990:82) as well as the material and tangible assistance provided by the informants. The 'potential informants' refer to anyone the woman was significantly related to and who could actually or potentially be called on for help. The 'informal' network includes family, friends, neighbours, extended family members and in-laws. The 'formal' network includes representatives from various social institutions the women might have called on for assistance. For the purpose of this study, the 'kinds of help' that are requested by women are categorised as 'supportive' and 'challenging' in nature (the concepts are taken from Cavanagh, 1978; Dobash, Dobash and Cavanagh, 1985). Similar categorisation is made for the 'kinds of responses' received by the informants. In either case, 'supportive' kinds of help/response refers to requesting/receiving some kind of help and assistance in the form of finding someone to talk to, someone who will listen without being judgmental, someone to provide comfort and caring and indicating support for the recipient's side and seeing things the same way as the woman. All these kinds of 'supportive' requests/responses focus on aiding the women to cope with the violence but do not attempt to challenge the violence or the relationship itself.

'Challenging' kinds of requests/responses refer to those in the form of material support to women, including providing accommodation, protection from violence, challenging the woman to evaluate her self, values and feelings, providing the woman whith either financial assistance or services such as giving her a lift to the police station or taking care of the children while she will be away from home and

challenging the violent man. These kinds of 'challenging' requests/responses are targeted towards questioning the men's violence towards women and are considered to be contributors towards helping women escape from the violent relationship and in the long run eliminate the violence from their lives.

I viewed the 'help-seeking behaviour' and 'social support' as dynamic and complex processes during which women would appear to progress through stages in relation to their consciousness of being battered and of their changing needs over time. Therefore, I decided that I would examine 'help-seeking and giving' after specific assaults experienced by women: these were the 'General' and the 'Last' Violent Events. In this way, an examination of the changing patterns of the behaviours throughout the violent relationship would be allowed. The 'General Violent Event' was chosen in order to provide information about the many or 'usual' violent events experienced by the woman throughout her life. The 'Last Violent Event' was selected because it was an event in which women were likely to seek assistance from others. All fifty-three women interviewed were asked the same questions about the 'General' and the 'Last' Violent Events in order to gather systematic data that would be comparable, and would reveal patterns of abuse, attempts made to reach out for help, and of the responses received from various sources.

A review of the literature on violence against women indicates that the exact degree of such violence is difficult to establish. Still, there are now official reports citing the incidence, prevalence, dynamics and consequences of male-partner

violence against women world-wide (United Nations, 1995). Developed countries with a history in researching domestic violence such as the United States (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Schechter, 1982), Canada (Johnson, 1993), Ireland (National Women's Council of Ireland, 1995), United Kingdom (Dobash and Dobash, 1992 and 1993; Hague and Malos, 1993; Hoyle, 1998; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984 and 1993; Hanmer and Hearn, 1995), Japan (Kozu, 1999), but also developing countries such as Pakistan (Home Office Research Findings, Oct. 1996), Russia (Horne, 1999), Chile (McWhirter, 1999), Mexico (Fawcett et al, 1999), Turkey (Yurdakul, 1999), Nicaragua (Ellsberg et al, 1999), have made challenging attempts to estimate domestic violence, to research the ways women try to deal with this situation and to question the public policies and practices applied to the issue of violence in the home.

A similar review of the Greek sociological and criminological literature indicates that research dealing with male-partner violence against women is very limited (Spinelli, 1997). However, contemporary academics as well as grassroots activists show more intensive interest in researching the issue. There is no official statistical data nation-wide of the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence but important attempts have been made towards the exploration of the topic (Tsikris, 1996; Antonopoulou, 1999). The Greek study was undertaken and completed with the view that it would contribute to the gradually increasing stock of information and evidence relating to the existence of the problem of domestic violence and the subsequent physical and psychological suffering of Greek women at the hands of abusive partners.

Greece has always been, and still is, a society with particularly strong traditional values concerning sex role differentiation, power distribution and family orientation (Kaklamanaki, 1984). In this context, society's values support the man in his position as the powerful head of the family whose absolute power can not be questioned by anyone. Women are socialised within these norms, ideals and values, which are reinforced by the Greek society at large and its religious, social and cultural institutions. The Greek woman internalises from a very early age the role of the carer of man and grows up with the ideal of getting married and continuing to care for, respect and honour her husband (Hart, 1992). She has been taught by her own parents that the ultimate goal of a good and respectful woman is marriage and the family. Once she has these she will then need to preserve the family's respectful image in the society. Her family would mean the world to her and the public image of it should always be a priority (Tsikris, 1996).

Taking all these into consideration and researching the help-seeking behaviour of abused women in Greece, I would expect to find a pattern of behaviour whereby the woman would try her best to keep the violence a secret from the rest of the world and for a long period of time. However, considering the intensifies and repetition of the violent episodes in a violent relationship (Hague and Malos, 1993:7; Hanmer, Radford and Stanko, 1989:308; Dobash and Dobash, 1998:156,160), I would also expect to find a pattern whereby women break the silence and ultimately reach out for help.

Greek families are usually open to many more members than the couple and the children alone (Cambell, 1964; Agathonos, 1990). Even if they do not share the same house with the married couple (although in many cases they do), friends, relatives, parents and in-laws very often pay them a visit. Indeed, some people in particular are even considered "family" according to the distinctive role they play in the couple's life. For example, the bridesmaid and /or the best man ("koumpara - koumparos") are very important people in the couple's life in Greece. Greek women tend to meet together and make friends and eventually trust and sympathise with each other. In difficult circumstances they ask for each other's help and advice. As my intention was to explore who are the potential informants from whom women would possibly seek help, and to reflect upon the literature which suggests that people try to cope with personal problems by initially seeking help from their interpersonal environment (e.g. friends, relatives) (Kelly, 1996:76; Kelly and Radford, 1998:70, 73), I would expect to find a pattern of behaviours whereby women would be most likely to seek help from the informal sources such friends, relatives or neighbours.

Furthermore, as women's needs were expected to change over time, I would also expect to find a difference towards the in/ability as well as in/effectiveness in the responses of the informal confidants. In the light of this, I was also seeking answers to the question of when and why do women turn to agencies for help and support.

As the police force is the institution that represents the power to intervene in violent situations and has the ability to establish and enforce the rights and wrongs expressed by society (Tsikris, 1996: 36-42), I was particularly interested in looking at patterns of women's help-seeking from the police. In relation to police helpfulness and effectiveness in meeting women's needs, I was looking at patterns of supportiveness perceived by women.

Further, I was interested in looking at women's help-seeking behaviour from any kind of women's-centred offices or services, and to explore patterns of the perceived support they had received from such sources.

Although all the above would appear to suggest that researching domestic violence in Greece would reveal evidence similar to that uncovered in all other societies where research of this kind has been carried out, I sought to examine the situation in Greece with respect to its own unique historical and socio-cultural influences concerning women's subordinate position in the family and society (Pantazi-Tsifa, 1984), the shortage of services like housing and shelters, the untrained social, legal and medical professionals, the lack of public awareness of the issue of violence and the widespread misinformation and myths about domestic violence.

In summary, this thesis is an investigation of the help-seeking behaviour of fifty-three Greek battered women who sought help from various formal and/or informal sources of help, as well as of the help-giving behaviour of those whom they

approached for assistance. It seeks to identify general patterns of both behaviours in the 'General' and the 'Last' Violent Events. In Chapter Two the relevant literature will be reviewed. Chapter Three gives an outline of the methodological issues and methods used to explore the topic. The findings of the research are presented in Chapters Four and Five. Finally, in Chapter Six I will draw the thesis together, discuss of the main research findings and provide implications for further research and challenges to ending domestic violence in Greece.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the theoretical background to the study of marital violence against women and help-seeking behaviour. My main research questions are relating to if, how, when, why, and where battered women in Greece sought help and if this help was given. It is important, however, to present the literature on marital violence against women as this includes the extent of the problem, the historical view of wife abuse, the battered women's movement, the nature, components and silence of violence, the different approaches to it, and the 'helping institutions' to battered women's seeking of assistance. This is done in order to put my study into context and to help the reader understand the implications and influences of all the above on the decisions of a battered woman to seek external help.

This chapter will consist of three parts. First, I will present the literature on marital violence against women including the subsections mentioned above. Then, I will

examine the existing literature as well as the empirical research conducted on marital violence against women in Greece and explain the need for exploring this issue in Greece. Finally, I will present the literature on social support and violence against women, including women's seeking help from informal as well as formal sources of help and help-giving by them.

2.2 MARITAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The myth of the family as a harbour of safety has long now been shattered. Prior to the 1970's, this myth had been kept alive by the historical and traditional view that what happens within a marriage is private and not open to public scrutiny. It is now well known and established that "women are more likely to be assaulted in their own homes and by people they know than outdoors by strangers" (Home Office Statistical Findings, 1996:2).

In the field of research on social sciences familial violence had suffered "selective inattention" (Dexter, 1958:176). The fact that from 1939 through 1969 the Journal of Marriage and the Family index did not contain even one article that had the word violence in the title, is the evidence of the great lack of scholarly interest in the subject (O'Brian 1971). The reason for this according to O'Brian (1971:692) was that violence was probably assumed as either "too touchy an issue for research" or "too idiosyncratic as to be unimportant as feature in 'normal families'. "

Despite the increasing research on the subject of domestic violence over the last couple of decades (Dobash and Dobash 1979,1992; Hague and Malos, 1993; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Schechter 1983; McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993) the degree to which this problem existed in our society had not been established for a variety of reasons. The main reasons fell into two broad categories: violence against wives had been passively accepted within our society and supported by its sociocultural, structural and political norms, and for this the problem had remained largely underreported. Secondly, the social, legal and medical professions had avoided getting involved in what they considered a private matter or they had been concerned mainly with the preservation of the family institution. As a result, the problem of violence against women was defined as a "dark figure" one, and many women were remaining in silence for many years as they were put off from seeking help from others, such as family, friends or formal agencies. In the last two decades, however, considerable changes have been made both in raising public awareness on the issue[1] and in the policies of the agencies themselves (Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998; Hoyle, 1998).

[1] See for example "Domestic Violence - Don't Stand For It" awareness campaign on domestic violence launched in England and Wales in October 1994; "Domestic Abuse - There's no Excuse" campaign launched in Scotland in December 1998; and "Breaking the Chain" campaign launched in England and Wales in January 1999.

2.2.1 The Extent of the Problem

In the last two decades, numerous studies of prevalence trying to measure or establish the extent of the "problem" were conducted. As a result, the magnitude of the problem has now been well established.

The first sources of data are given by national surveys which used representative samples. In the United States, Steinmetz (1977) found that 3,3 million wives are severely beaten by their spouses. Also, Strauss, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980) estimated that over 1.7 million spouses had weapons used against them and over 2 million were beaten up. According to F.B.I. findings, in the 1980's, 50,000 women were murdered by their husbands in the USA (F.B.I. 1991 cited in Asian Women and Domestic Violence, Information for Advisers, London Borough of Greenwich Women's Equality Unit, 1995:2). Further, the first national study of wife battering in Canada based on transition house records, estimated that at least 24,000 Canadian women were battered by their male partners during 1978 (Currie, 1990). The study was conducted on behalf of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) during 1979. At that time, the 73 safe houses which had been established provided the only source of data on wife battering (MacLeod, 1978 cited in Currie 1990:83). The larger recent Canadian survey of violence against women, involved a telephone survey of 12,300 English and French speaking women 18 years of age and older residing in households in ten provinces in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1993:47 and 53). The data were collected by the

random Digit Dialling approach and eligible respondents were randomly selected within the households contacted. According to this, one in six currently married women reported violence by their spouses, and one-half of women with previous marriages reported violence by a previous spouse (Statistics Canada, 1993:9).

In Britain, is estimated that 48% of all female murders are the result of women being killed by their partners. On average, two women per week are killed in England and Wales by their partners/ex-partners (Mirlees-Black, 1995). Also, according to British Crime Survey 1996, since 1981, the largest increase in violent crime has been in incidents of domestic violence (Home Office Research Findings, 1997). A number of local surveys in the UK show that between one in three and one in four women report having suffered domestic violence at some time in their adult lives (Women's Aid Newsletter, 1998:6). A household survey of 430 women in a London borough found that one in three women had experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives, and 12% had been victims of domestic violence in the past years (Mooney, 1994). Also, a survey of 484 women in Surrey's shopping centres found that one in four women defined themselves as having suffered domestic violence from male partner/ex-partner since the age of 18 years (Doming and Radford, 1996). Furthermore, a survey of 1,000 women in city centres in North England found that one in eight women reported having been raped by their husbands and partners (Painter, 1991).

Also, in 1996-97, nearly 55,000 women and children stayed in refuges in England and over 145,000 contacted Women's Aid for advice and support (Annual Survey,

WAFE, February 1998:2). The Women's Aid National Helpline receives nearly 400 calls a week from women seeking information, advice and support as well as referral to a refuge or somewhere safe to stay, and BT monitoring shows over 2,000 calls are attempted (WAFE, 1998:6). During 1996/7, the Women's Aid Federation of England received 145,317 calls, the Northern Ireland Women's Aid 14,948 calls, the Scottish Women's Aid 49,717 calls and the Welsh Women's Aid received 17,500 calls. This makes a total contacts of 227,482, a number equivalent to "one call every 2 and a half minutes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and does not include the many callers who are unable to get through (Economic and Social Research Council Report, 1998:21). In the same line, the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline in Manchester, UK, receives nearly 6.000 calls per year from women seeking various kinds of help (Appendix 2.1) and referrals to refuges (Appendix 2.2) (Women's Domestic Violence Helpline Manchester, Evaluation and Monitoring Report, 1995-6). Further, an average of 100 women are killed by partners or ex-partners in England and Wales every year (Home Office, 1996). Almost half of all female victims of homicide in England and Wales are killed by partners or ex-partners, compared to 6% of male victims of homicide (WAFE, February 1998:1).

In Ireland, although there are no national statistics determining the prevalence of violence against women, data from the independent report to the 4rth UN world conference on women reveal that the Women's Aid national Helpline received 17,510 calls from March 1992 to May 1995, from women who were being physically, sexually and mentally abused by men in intimate relationships

(National Women's Council of Ireland, 1995:15). All the above findings document the extent of wife battery and challenge the official processes which contribute to its public invisibility.

Police reports on assaults and murders are another source of data. However, they can sometimes be incomplete because the police do not always encourage legal prosecution. Still, according to Edwards (1989) the Metropolitan Police receive over 1,000 phone calls a week from women experiencing domestic violence. Also, West Yorkshire Police attended 2,675 calls to domestic incidents in a three month period (Leeds I-A.P. Progress Report, 1996:11), and in Ireland, in a four month period the Special Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit set up by the Gardai (police) in the Dublin Metropolitan Area (the only such unit), received 5,000 calls (National Women's Council of Ireland, 1995:15).

While exact statistics will never be possible to obtain, it is evident that marital violence is violence against the 'wives' and affects a large number of individuals/victims who have to pay a high personal, physical, psychological, mental, familial, social and financial price for surviving the violence (Stanko, Crisp, Hale and Lucraft (1997). Child abuse and child behaviour and developmental problems are also at stake. Research found that ninety per cent of children are either in the same or the next room when violence occurs. One third of them witness the abuse, try to protect their mother and may be abused themselves (Asian Women and Domestic Violence, Information for Advisors, 1995:2; Women Against Rape, 1998:1). The thought and fear that things will

worsen if the abused woman takes some action and seeks help from outsiders constitutes an important reason which prohibits her from reporting the violence, makes her decide to stay in the violent relationship and suffer the violence, and not seek help.

Before discussing the nature of the problem and the issues arising from it, a brief historical review on the status of abused woman will be given so as her decisions regarding seeking help from others can be more easily explained and clarified.

2.2.2 Historical Review

> *Men are "in charge" of a relationship; it must be structured to their liking or comfort; abuse and violence are among the means to "ensure" these outcomes and to control a partner or spouse who challenges the ordering of domestic life..."she provokes me because she knows what I like and what I don't like"; "she needs to be reminded who is in charge"; "a little voice clears the air between us". As I listen to them, I envision a chorus of men at any point in history chanting a version of this litany* (Marcus, 1994:23).

The issue of marital violence against women has a long-standing history in the development of Western societies. John Stuart Mill in his essay "The Subjection

of Women" (1869) pointed out the problem of abused wives (J.S. Mill, edition 1991:460):

> From the earliest twilight of human society, every woman was found in a state of bondage to some man...who are [men] never prevented from being able, through the laws of marriage, to obtain victims... and who can commit any atrocity against her except killing her - even that he can do without too much danger of legal penalty.

Or elsewhere:

> ...the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes - the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; It ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other (Smith, J.S., edition 1991:471).

A historical overview of wife abuse may be traced well before the biblical role assigned to women, but this point of departure has been chosen because of its important influence on subsequent Western attitudes towards the issue. The Adam and Eve story has been used to justify the mistreatment of wives through its implication that women are evil (Steinmetz and Strauss 1974:12; Bullough 1974:41). Throughout the Old Testament, women's subordinate and often violent treatment is revealed. The New Testament continued in the same vein despite Jesus' egalitarian teachings. St. Paul stated that women should not exercise

"authority over men, but to be in silence" and "wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife" (Timothy, 2:12; Ephesians 5:22-23 cited in Dobash and Dobash 1979). Further on, women in the Judeo-Christian tradition continued to be viewed as inferior beings, responsible for man's original downfall. Throughout the medieval period, wife beating was openly encouraged in the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions. Husbands could kill their wives for adultery without fear of punishment, and wives were expected to give absolute obedience to their husbands. After the Roman Empire, women were chosen as the special objects of religious persecution as part of the Holy Inquisition (Davis 1988:348). The influence of these teachings spread throughout the Christian world and became established in the normative structures of societies over the next several centuries.

These norms eventually became institutionalised in laws of widespread impact. As late as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, family laws upheld men's right to abuse their wives (Scheider, 1994:36). Napoleon's Civil Code, for example, relegated a woman's lifetime position to that of an "irresponsible minor" who was the property of her father and later of her husband (Davidson 1977:17). This Code influenced many of the nations of Europe. British Common Law had a section regulating the instruments allowed to chastise a wife (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). In the eighteenth century, this section was reformed to limit the instrument to a rod not thicker that the husband's thumb (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). In the same vein, in the nineteenth century, British law textbooks stated that "the husband had by law 'power and dominion over his wife' and could 'beat her, but not in a cruel

or violent manner' (Davis 1988:348). America also inherited these attitudes toward women since the colonies were greatly influenced by British Common Law. In its American modification, the law distinguished "correction" from abuse causing permanent injury, granted permission to a husband to inflict violence, characterised as "discipline" or "correction" upon his wife (Marcus, 1994). In this way, the American version of the common-law doctrine served to "naturalise" violence against women in that sphere to which they were assigned - the home (Marcus, 1994:21). Starting from several states such as Maryland, Alabama, Massachusetts, Oregon, which enacted legislation authorising the whipping of abusive husbands, it was not until 1920 (two years after the passage of the women's suffrage amendment) that the beating of a wife had become illegal in all states (Pleck 1987:108-121 cited in Marcus 1994:22).

Moving on to the more recent years, the history of legislation in Family Law does not have much better things to show. Thus, before 1976 individuals could only get injunctions ancillary to divorce proceedings or in tort (Hester, Pearson and Harwin, 1998:127). In 1976, the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1976 (DVMPA) was introduced and it empowered courts to grant non-molestation injunctions and orders regulating the occupation of the home to both married and unmarried women, including attaching powers of arrest in limited circumstances. Later, the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978 (DPMCA) consolidated the above position by extending similar powers to magistrates' courts - but only for married couples. Next, was the Matrimonial Homes Act 1983 (MHA) which actually repeated and extended the provisions of

the earlier legislation giving rights of occupation (former 'outster orders') to the matrimonial home (Hester, Pearson and Harwin, 1998:127). There had long been an awareness of the inadequacies of the injunctive protection introduced by the above Acts and they were granted largely ineffective: the law was contained in three statutes which had a variety of dissimilarities; the DVMPA had no guidelines on how the court should exercise its jurisdiction; the MHA only applied to married couples; powers of arrest were available only through the DVMPA and the DPMCA; and an unmarried person was at a disadvantage compared with one who was married (Hester, Pearson and Harwin, 1998:133).

In 1992, the Law Commission published a report called "Domestic Violence and Occupation of the Family Home" (Law Commission No 207) containing a draft bill. This followed a review which took account of evidence from a ranges of legal sources and mainly aimed at removing gaps, anomalies and inconsistencies in existing remedies. The major proposal contained in the report was that there should be a single, consistent set of remedies which would be available in all courts. Also, in 1992, the report of a National Inter-Agency Working Party on Domestic Violence was published by Victim Support. This report added to the pressure on the government which then held an enquiry in 1992-93. The enquiry resulted in a recommendation to government that the draft bill as contained in the Law Commission report, should proceed (Hester, Pearson and Harwin, 1998:134).

As a result, the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Bill, published in February 1995, broadly adopted the Law Commission recommendations including the

format of the draft bill. The Bill, although received all the support from all parties in the Parliament, few months later (in October 1995) received sharp criticism from various religious, 'moral majority' pressure groups, the UK Men's Movement and the Daily Mail, because of the threats to the 'family values' that it posed. In November 1995, the Bill was withdrawn before it received Royal Assent (Hester, Pearson and Harwin, 1998:134). It was not long after that Lord Chancellor reintroduced the measures as part of the Family Law Bill (in January 1996). As a result, the Family Law Act 1996 was formulated and until today constitutes the most up to date source of legal information on the issue. It received Royal Assent on 4 July 1996 and contained five parts only one of which (Part IV Family Homes and Domestic Violence) has been put into force whereas the rest four are due for implementation around the turn of the century. The FLA 1996, has the following general principles (Hester, Pearson and Herwin, Family Law Act Part IV:135):

- "The institution of marriage should be supported. Where a marriage may have broken down the couple should be encouraged to take all practical steps to save the marriage, whether by marriage counselling or otherwise.
- Where marriages are being brought to an end, this should be done with minimum distress to the couple and children, so as to encourage the best possible relationships between them in the future.
- Any risk of violence to a party,...., should be removed or diminished".

Overall, women's unequal status, and subordinate role and abuse had, historically, become legitimised in the religious and political institutions of Western societies, and the preservation of the marriage and the family is, even until today, legally reinforced and promoted.

2.2.3 The Battered Women's Movement: The 'Politicisation of the Personal'.

Violence against women:
No woman denies its existence; no woman justifies or excuses it.
(Marcus, 1994:13)

It is no wonder that the discovery of wife abuse as a "problem" is a recent phenomenon. It had always been accepted as the natural order of things. Violence against wives was, therefore, "discovered" in the 1970s. Since it had been legalised for centuries and was a "family matter", it was supposed to be handled privately. The family was idealised as being the secure nest to which people go for peace and safety. The reality especially for women and children is that the family is often a source of violence. However, most people did not want to accept that this problem existed or that it affected large numbers of women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:2). The emergence of the women's movement in the 1960s, from which a direct product was the battered women's movement, helped to expose and uncover the problems that battered women encounter.

The problem of violence against wives received intensive examination after the establishment of a Women's Centre in Chiswick, in England in 1972. It was established by a group of feminists as a place where women could go and discuss

and share concerns and problems. Large numbers of abused women went to the centre and as a result of a split in the organisation, the National Women's Aid Federation (WAFE) was formed in England. By 1975, it had established 25 refuges for abused women and their children, and until today over 250 exist all over the country (WAFE, October 1998:13). Through the efforts of this organisation, the plight of battered women was brought to the attention of various groups around the world (Dobash and Dobash, 1979:223). The WAFE sets a number of values and principles which make clear their approach to the problem of domestic violence: to believe women and children and prioritize their safety; to support women to take control of their own lives; to recognise and care for the needs of children affected by violence; and to promote equal opportunities and anti-discrimination in all their work and services (WAFE, Oct. 1998:1). In it's most recent publication "Families Without Fear", WAFE attempts to offer key recommendations for the development of an effective, multi-agency strategic response to create a future where all female members will live without fear. Accordingly, they suggest that a national strategy set up to end violence and abuse in personal relationships and to achieve true equality within all aspects of family life, must: "promote the PROTECTION of women and children at risk of violence and harm through beneficial changes to law, policy and practice, and hold violent men accountable for their abusive behaviour; ensure the PREVENTION of interpersonal and gender-based violence in the short and long-term through public awareness and education of children and the general public, as well as through an effective legal framework; and develop the PROVISION of effective services to meet the needs of all abused women and children" (WAFE, October 1998:2).

In the United States, the battered women's movement began a few years after its birth in Britain. Its first real beginnings are dated in 1973 and 1974 with the opening of Women's Advocates in Minnesota and Transition House in Boston, but it received wider public recognition and greater activity similar to that in Britain only until later (Dobash and Dobash 1992:26). Domestic violence refuges established and staffed by feminists and by women who themselves had been battered, provided refuge for victims and focused public attention on their plight. A primary goal of shelter organisers was to relieve victimised women of self-blame for their roles in 'provoking' abuse (Ferraro and Johnson 1983). By 1982, more than 300 shelters and 48 state coalitions had been established in the United States (Schechter 1983) and the 'battered women syndrome' had been recognised by the International Classification of Diseases (Schillinger, 1988:469). The early activists advocated an ideology of empowerment offering women psychological counselling combined with communal support and material assistance. Grassroots groups in their very structure and the nature of their services have said clearly to battered women: "it is not you that is sick. It is our society which is responsible in its structure of sexual domination, for condoning and perpetuating this behaviour and the institutions that sustain it" (Schillinger, 1988:470).

The battered women's movement was the outcome of a successful merger of organised feminists, formerly beaten women, social services reformers and social advocates (Pahl 1979:25-35). The movement catalysed public attention, because it focused on the problem of physical assault on helpless victims and systematically

portrayed images of women escaping violence (e.g. films such as "The Burning Bed"). This approach proved strategic in securing public money for refuge services, which are of crucial importance and stand at the heart of the battered women's movement. As a consequence, the belief that battered women faced unjust brutality from their partners and hostility or indifference from institutions was commonly held. Also, the family as a sacred private place was now open for public inspection and attack and social scientists led the way to a critical reassessment of the traditional family as the primary source of the violence problem (Davies, 1988:351). As Schechter (1982:32) puts it :

> "Although many political, strategic and ideological differences were evident...women agreed that men held power and privilege over women in personal life. Domination was uncovered, operating not only in the public political world but also in the private political sphere of the family."

The battered women's movement and the women's movement in general with the gender specific points and mandates in its agenda, together with the consequent "explosion" of academic and breakthrough works on all aspects of domestic violence (Pizzey, 1974); the development of social scientific explanations of family violence based on data about the frequency and distribution of wife assault; the explorations of technical avenues for the achievement of justice for women from legal researchers; and the number of conferences holding on family violence and bringing police, social scientists and other professionals together, are the

main reasons for which the problem of violence against women had been transformed from a private trouble into a public issue of national, social and legal concern. In this way, and by the constant challenge to traditional gender structure and to privatised patriarchal authority, feminists and reformers demanded to end the invisibility and inaction which surrounds male violence against women (Currie, 1990:89).

2.2.4 The Nature and Components of Marital Violence Against Women

The social problem of wife abuse involves acts where husbands "produce wives as victims" (Loseke, 1987: 231). It has been defined as "physical assault", "acts of violence", "physical attack", "savage abuse", "a pattern of physical abuse" (Loseke, 1987:232, referring on other studies), "real and serious physical assault" (Maynard, 1985). It is also defined as the use of "persistent, systematic, severe and intimidating force" (Dobash and Dobash, 1979), that yields "severe, repeated and demonstrable injury" (Strube and Barbour, 1983:785) and that produce "paralysing terror" (Loseke, 1987:232) or "terrifying intimidation" (Schechter, 1983). Also, wife abuse is characterised as "purposeful behaviour" (Schechter, 1983) and an act which "intents" to physically harm and inflict pain on a woman. In this way, violence can range from slaps and kicks, to a black eye, to broken bones, sadistic mutilation, torture and attempted murder and murder itself (Binney, Harkell and Nixon, 1981). As Evason (1982:32) quotes one of her respondents in her study: "For most of my married life I have been periodically beaten by my husband. What do I mean by "beaten"? I mean that parts of my body

have been hit violently, and that painful bruises, swelling, bleeding wounds, unconsciousness, and combinations of these things have resulted...".

The violence may or may not necessarily include battery and rape, be related to sex or refusal of sex, or be related to drunkenness. It may also be related to emotional or psychological violence. Leonore Walker in her book "The battered woman" (1979) defines a battered woman as any woman who is coerced into doing what a man desires, whether this coercion is accomplished through physical force or psychological behaviour. In the body of the book, she discusses psychological abuse quite fully when she describes the atmosphere or terror that envelopes the family of a batterer. She states that the environment is a tense and emotional one even when no violence is being perpetrated because the possibility of the violence is always present. Thus, even when the violence does not reach these levels of physical force, constant *fear* is still engendered by living in a relationship with serious threats of violence. In this way, some men keep their wives effectively as prisoners[2], insist on controlling their every movement and knowing every detail of their lives, and some women although not being physically attacked, feel constantly threatened.

To sum up, Loseke (1987:230-232) summarises five features of wife abuse events which characterise the very nature of the problem and which are the result of various definitions such as those described above. According to the author, the

[2] Psychologists in the USA have found parallels between the effects of domestic vioence on women and the impact of torture and imprisonment on hostages. See more on that in Graham,P., Rawling, E. And Rimini, W. (1988) "Survivors of Terror: Battered women, Hostages and the

phenomenon of wife abuse pertains particularly to events including *extreme* forms of violence; is characterised by its *repetition* since it is not an event per se but rather a label for a series of events. Repeat victimisation also found by the British Crime Survey, 1996 which estimated that half of all victims of domestic violence are involved in incidents more than once. The third feature of wife abuse is that it produces *physical injuries*; the fourth is that it produces *psychological injuries* since the events involved are subjectively experienced by women as devastating, and finally the fifth is that the husband *intends* his behaviour to be extreme, controlling and consequential.

Dominant ideologies for men and women, established institutions and structures as well as economic, social and emotional components are those parameters which embody the oppressed situation of women and make the process of help-seeking look more difficult and more distanced, and the prospects of help-giving less promising. Financial support, accommodation (with its great difficulties of obtaining and paying for it), child care, lack of affective help from institutions and agencies together with an interplay of personal and social factors are factors which have been discussed by many authors (Mullender, 1996:61-62; Binney et al, 1988; Homer et al, 1984; Pahl, 1985a) and are briefly presented next.

Stockholm Syndrom" in Yllo, K. And Bogard, M. (Eds) Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse,

2.2.4.1 Economic Dependency

Domestic violence against women is undoubtedly linked to the position of women in the socio-economic system, a position which is greatly characterised by their economic dependency. Lack of economic resources has long been seen as playing a major role in a battered woman's tolerance of abuse and help-non-seeking (Hilberman 1980; Strube and Barbour 1983:785). Feminists argue that the use of violence for control in marriage is perpetuated not only through norms about a man's rights in marriage but through women's continued economic dependence on their husbands which makes it difficult to leave a violent relationship (Homer et al, 1984:5-20; Binney et al, 1988; Mahoney 1994:75-76). As they claim, this dependence is increased by the lack of adequate child care and job training or by the inequality of income distribution in the family which would enable women to get jobs with which they could support themselves.

Furthermore, this economic dependency of women to men is an institutionalised and fundamental feature of our society. As Freeman (1987) states attempts by women to leave violent relationships or to find variable alternatives, continue to be constrained by this basic inequality. The dependency of women upon men for resources within marriage consolidates that inequality and at the same time establishes it through many different sets of relationships and institutions. Marriage, for example, takes its toll on women primarily through their position as wives. As Pahl (1985) claims, house work is menial, isolating with no future for

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London: Sage.

the women, no change of promotion, no raise on pay and in general, the services the wife may provide are considered as natural and expected. The wages earned by the husband are tangible and they only belong to him and consequently whatever money he decides to give her is not hers but his. However, if a woman decides to look for a job outside the home, either for money, self-expression or just something to do, she often finds herself having to fight against social pressures designed to put her back home.

In short, economic dependence appears to be a major factor that prevents termination of an abusive relationship. For example, the Cleveland Refuge's "Private Violence, Public Shame" study reveal that financial hardship as well as the burden of responsibilities and the prospect of poverty ahead can preserve a violent relationship. In their study, one hundred and forty five women (37%) whose family income level was between 100-140 percent off the poverty line, returned home to their violent partner after their last visit to the Refuge (Homer et al, 1984:82).

2.2.4.2 Psychological Components

Touching upon the psychological component which has a lot to do with women's decisions to seek help, and the maintenance of the phenomenon of marital violence against women, questions like "why women stay with their batterers" or "why they go back to them?" are spread all over the literature. A woman who stays with or returns to her violent husband takes the risk of being labelled a masochist, or of not

giving the marriage a chance to work, or again of not being prepared to give the husband an opportunity to change. According to Evanson (1982:45) the main practical difficulty that women face that results in their staying at home is that they have nowhere to go. Another reason is that they hope the marriage can still be saved, they feel that they should stay and keep the home together for the sake of the children, or again they hope that their husband will leave. In other cases women return under pressure from relatives and husbands. Moreover, as the study conducted by the above author in Northern Ireland reveals, other reasons appear to be: - fear of being unable to manage alone, - fear of being socially stigmatised or socially isolated, - fear of being found by the husband and beaten worse than ever. As the battered wives recorded themselves: *"if you have a family you have to stay for the children's sake", or "...I think too many women are scared to be on their own...". or elsewhere "...I had nowhere to go. I wouldn't have left without the children- who's going to take you in with children..."* (Evason, 1982:47).

Furthermore, according to Borkowski, Murch and Walker (1983:119-123), practitioners commented about the reasons why women find it difficult to leave violent husbands. As they state, women do so because: - they face the problem of finding somewhere else to live, - they feel its worth staying for the children's sake, - they change their minds once the crisis is over and they have calmed down. Also, because - they feel demoralised and as they blame themselves for the violence they have suffered they loose their self-confidence and feel unable to cope alone, - they are afraid of their husbands intimidation, - they do not want to carry the stigma of being a battered wife, - despite the violent interaction, they continue to be

emotional attached to their husbands. In addition, practitioners commented that some women need stimulus of violence since in that way they feel fully alive by having fully stretched emotions and that a small percentage of women find in violence itself some kind of emotional security.

Edwards (1989) in her book "Policing domestic violence" points out that apart from those certain structural imperatives that make women stay with or return to the violent husbands, such as the weakness of the law and the police response, as well as the inadequate statutory provision of the shelters, the author also reports findings of her studies on women in refuges, concerning reasons women gave for staying. Similar to the study of Borkowski et al (1983), Edwards (1989:169) found that the most frequently cited reason was that they had nowhere else to go, while the second most important was the fear of further violence to themselves and their children. Other women in the same study said that they stayed on because they wanted to "give it another try", others because "it was not bad all the time" and others for financial reasons, or fear of losing custody.

Generally, as it is appeared from the literature, the decision to leave the violent husband is certainly not the easiest thing a woman can do (Kirkwood, 1993; Binney et al 1988). For Dobash and Dobash (1979:146) for example, such a decision is a complex and difficult one and reflects various factors such as personal concerns, and social, material or structural factors which affect women's decision to leave or seek help, or stop her to implement that decision. Indeed, women's personal fears such as doubts about the ability to be successful on her

own, the fear of loneliness, the fear about the emotional and material welfare of children, the fear of loosing a great deal of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as the ambivalent and mixed feelings about herself and her husband are really very strong reasons why women fail to give up a violent relationship (Binney et al, 1988; Homer et al, 1984).

The importance of social and cultural factors which force women to consider her decisions to seek external help and/or leave her violent husband need also to be stressed (Mahoney, 1994:60; McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993:50-55; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kirkwood, 1993). Traditional values suggest that being a wife and mother are the most important roles for a woman and that one cannot be a full woman unless she is married. Nor surprisingly society places the burden of family harmony on the woman, with the implications that a failed marriage is her fault. This suggests that 'commitment' to the relationship constitute a salient factor in the decision to keep silent, suffer the violence and not seek help for a long time (Strube and Barbour, 1983:786). Thus, the deeply ingrained ideas that marriages should be preserved at almost any cost for the sake of families and that a wife takes on the stigmatised status of a divorcee, are combined with the notion that she is the one to blame for the split up of marriage. All these are urged upon her by friends, relatives and representatives of social agencies, and constitute important reasons that deter a woman from seeking external help and leave a violent relationship.

2.2.4.3 Social and Structural Components

Many authors have treated violence in the context of power and control and are placing the woman's experience in the context of her life in an oppressive patriarchal society (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Schechter, 1983). As they state, it is in the institution of the family that the patriarchal legacy persists through the continuation of a hierarchical relationship between men and women. Mythology, ideology and social institutions still protect male authority and this is reinforced and at the same time perpetuated through the socialisation of the children in the family. In this way, the dominant ideology and the social expectations place the husband as head of the household and responsible for the support of the family (breadwinner) and the wife as responsible for the housework, the reproduction and child care (Pagelow, 1981; Pahl, 1985; Kelly, 1988; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987). These roles of "wife" and "husband" did not grow simply from biological realities but also developed with the patriarchal nuclear family. The concepts of masculinity and femininity, which define these roles, create very powerful expectations as to how women and men should behave and these expectations in turn reinforce the values upon which our culture is based. Men are seen as dominant (and thus strong, active, rational, authoritarian, aggressive and stable) and women as dependent (and thus submissive, passive and non-rational). But these stereotypes and definitions reflect social attitudes which permit the expression of male violence as "natural" and justified (Mahoney, 1994:63).

Wife battering is characterised in our society as a social problem of vast proportions with its roots in historical attitudes toward women and the institution of marriage (Blackstone, 1966). The whole socialisation of women and men and the assignment of women to inferior roles that victimise them and keep them economically dependent make them vulnerable to abuse by the men with whom they live (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Yllo and Bograd, 1988; Edwards, 1989).

2.2.5 The Silence of Violence

Domestic violence against women is recognised as an issue of 'silence', which prevents women from acknowledging its real "size" and thus, as mentioned before, it is impossible to know exactly how widespread it is and difficult to learn about the actual details of violent episodes and the marriages in which they occur (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Evanson, 1982; Homer et al, 1984; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984). Research reveals that many wives endure violence for years without telling anyone and some never share their problems with an outsider before seeking refuge from Women's Aid. For example, it is estimated that up to 98% of domestic violence against women is not reported to police, and that two out of three women tell no one at first (Women Against Rape, 1998). In another study of 484 women's experiences of violence in Surrey, it was found that two out of three women who defined themselves as victims of domestic violence said they had not told family, friends or agencies about the violence (Dominy and Radford,

1996). Consequently, men's violence against their wives continues to be a hidden and underreported problem.

Moreover, this silence stems from shame, horror, or the fear for retaliation that these women feel, or from the "ideology of privacy" (Schneider, 1994:37) and their need for self-respect which means that they must hide their failure to produce a happy family. This has been used against the victim by the society and by the law, as evidence of women's "collusion", their "acquiescence", even of a thirst for punishment and pain. The social stigma attached to being a battered wife is great and is also an important reason that keeps women silent and deter them from seeking assistance (Mahoney, 1994:62). This experience of silence is directly related to the *isolation* that battered women experience (Homer et al, 1984:21). Isolation is "a function of weak social bonding that reduces the extent to which both victims of assault and violent partners are able to sustain attachments to friendship and community networks and receive social support to end the violence (Johnson, 1998:43). As she continues, keeping a woman social and physical isolated is one way for the violent man to assert dominance and control over her life. In the beginning, the battered woman finds it extremely difficult to share her problem with anyone, since she experiences it as unique. She is too embarrassed and humiliated, and is plagued by a sense of shame and guilt regarding what they see as behaviour that brings disrepute upon her marriage and herself. Battered women are also reluctant to seek help because they fear that friends or relatives will blame them for a supposed failure in the duties and responsibilities of a wife and a mother, and thus will justify a certain degree of chastisement. Moreover, in

cases where she has children, she may feel particularly trapped. She might fear for her children's custody, safety and emotional health or is unsure as to how to provide for them alone. She may also fear a drop in her standard of living or the stigma that a divorce brings or, if she leaves, adverse affects upon the children. In addition to battered women's private silence, are the *social attitudes* concerning the respective positions of men and women in society and the family, which are still against her as to who deserves help. Thus, women are often seen as incapable in their role as wives, since it is they who must "retreat" in order to keep the peace inside their family (Homer et al, 1984:22; Wilson, 1983).

2.2.6 Theoretical Approaches to Marital Violence Against Women

What is made clear from the literature is the major debate over the explanation of men's violence against women in the family. There is a wide range of theories starting from individualistic explanations and moving on to explanations based on learning theory and family systems. Within these theories, which came out of a psychological perspective supporting victim-blaming explanations, terms such as "the battered wife syndrome" (Walker, 1984), the "cycle of violence" and "learned helplessness" (Walker, 1979; Jackson and Rushton, 1982:5) are discussed. Also, in other theories, which are still particularly influential in North America, family is seen as a social system where individuals learn to accept violence as a power resource and some even maintain that women are as likely to be violent as men, although this is strongly contested by critiques of their research method (e.g. Strauss 1979; Strauss, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980).

As opposed to the above approaches, feminist research has developed a theoretical perspective based on the oppression and exploitation of women in society and locates men's violence as part of men's structural power within patriarchy (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Hanmer and Maynard 1987; Hague and Malos, 1993; Kelly 1988). It is this perspective that I will adopt in my work and will incorporate in the theoretical expositions of the help-seeking behaviour of battered women. More specifically, I see the dominant, patriarchally structured, ideologies about men and women, the socio-cultural implications which want the woman to be a good mother and patient wife imposed on every single woman in every society and culture, the legal system which 'naturalises' violence against women in the home by allowing perpetrators to act without fear of punishment by the state, as well as the rest of so-called 'helping institutions' which claim to help battered women to meet their rights only they do help themselves to meet their own, as structural systems devoted to maintaining men's control over women. For violence against women in the home was and is premised on beliefs regarding the 'rightness' of male power and the 'entitlement' of men to exercise control over women's behaviours, decisions and actions.

2.2.7 Violence Against Wives and 'Helping Institutions'

What began to emerge, as the problem became more public, was the entire range of difficulties faced by battered women in our society. When they went for help, they were often jolted by several realities concerning the deficiencies in the

responses of many different types of social agencies to them. First, the legal system did not equate physical abuse of a wife by her husband in the same light as abuse by a stranger. Also, in familial violence, visible bruises and injuries had to be present. In 1971, a wife abuse law in California stated that "it would appear that the harm required is greater than simple assault but less than aggravated assault" (Roy, 1977:20). The courts avoided judicial processing just as the police avoided arrests, since both viewed the abuse as more of a civil and social problem rather than a criminal offence. This left many battered women without the protection of the law, however weak that protection might have been in the first place. Although conditions have since then improved and various legal reforms and remedies for battered women have been developed, women still face the "inadequacy of reform efforts" (Schneider, 1994:37) and encounter difficulties when they seek help and support from the legal system (Maidment, 1982). For example, research reveal that when women contacted a solicitor for help and advice (e.g. action on separation, divorce proceedings, child custody, injunctions) they found them very 'negative'. They were described as 'unsympathetic', 'dismissive', 'having failed to understand the severity of the situation', or 'having said nothing about the violence' and 'given a bad advice' (Mooney, 1994:56).

Second, when turning to social services for help, abused women often faced practitioners whose goal was to protect the family from disintegration and who also lacked the resources needed by the victim and her children, especially immediate housing (Dobash and Dobash, 1977; Homer et al, 1984; Hague and Malos, 1993; Binney et al, 1988:19). Social workers are still often being seen as

not knowing how to respond to cases of wife abuse or as having other priorities - typically child care. The women feel that they are on their own and that their problems are not given the attention they deserved since they (the social workers) see them as mental health patients and are focusing either on child protection issues or on the men and ignore the women's safety and personal needs (Mullender, 1996:65). Further, psychiatrists, doctors and psychologists fail to identify many of the women as victims of physical violence and instead they treat and present them as trauma patients. As a result, the service most often offered to the women in these settings, is pain medication even though it may not be known whether the pain is organic or psychogenic in origin (Hatty, 1987:39-41).

Refuges, are services committed by principle to provide safe temporary accommodation, specialist help and support to women and children victims of violence (Hague and Malos, 1993; WAFE, February 1998:2), and as research has shown, together with support services, offer women the help and support that too often they have failed to find with other agencies (Pahl, 1985; Hague and Malos, 1993). Research reveal that women find women's refuges as offering 'valuable support', a 'safe atmosphere' and a great feeling 'to be among women who were on their side' (Mooney, 1994:57). Still, there are only less than one third of the refuge places in England recommended over 20 years ago by a Government Select Committee on Violence in the Marriage (now recognised as an underestimate of potential need for emergency safe accommodation) (WAFE, November 1997:1). Also, in some areas, refuges are constantly full and in all areas women's Aid

groups cannot meet the increasing demands for outreach, councelling and support to women who are not living in refuges but still want specialist help and support.

Refuges, are also amongst the poorest quality supported housing, with much lower staff-resident ratios, higher room occupancy and lack of play-space or facilities for children. This poor quality and patchy provision of the refuges and linked support services comes as the result of the arbitrary and piecemeal funding that they get (47% of refuge houses are funded by local authorities, 41% by housing associations and 12% by Women's Aid groups or other ad-hoc sources such as Lottery). As a result, many women are forced to remain in violent homes. Refuge projects have funding patterns that depend largely on geographical location rather than need. No-one body has clear responsibility for refuges and ancillary support services and consequently each potential funder sees it as some other department's responsibility. As a result, many refuges are significantly understaffing, 20% of refuge groups have no full-time staff at all, and many rely on the support of dedicated volunteers (WAFE, Feb. 1998:2).

The issues of inadequate refuge space and voluntary nature of funding emergency housing for women still continues not to be addressed at government level in the UK. It is interesting, by comparison, how in the US state funding is mandated to shelter work under the Violence Against Women Act 1994. Under the Safe Homes for Women Act 1994, mandated state funds are available for a national domestic violence hotline grant for a period of five years, to include training for hotline personnel and methods for the creation, maintenance and upgrading of a resources

base, the publishing of this service and the provision of multi-agency facilities. Also, there are grants to police to encourage arrest policies, community grants to facilitate programes to educate young people about domestic violence and grants for community projects including shelters (Edwards, S. "*Is Change Possible*?", February 1998:1).

The social agency which has received the most vociferous and sustained criticism has undoubtedly been the police (Edwards, 1989; Hanmer, Radford and Stanko, 1989; Mama, 1989). The police are a key 24 hour agency for women experiencing domestic violence. They are often the first port of call for women in emergency. A number of studies have documented the dismissive and derogatory way in which police officers have until recently tended to handle "domestic disputes" (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Hatty, 1987:39). Since 1990 there has been a radical change in police response to domestic violence. Domestic Violence Units to deal with domestic violence were set up in pioneering areas such as the West Yorkshire and London and the training of officers were of their primary aim (Hague and Malos, 1993:78-80). The majority of women contacted with Domestic Violence Unit police officers, reveal that they have found them to be supportive and helpful (Mooney, 1994:55; Hoyle, 1998:198-204), whereas, other women within the same samples expressed dissatisfaction in getting through to them on the telephone as their line was always engaged and in the length of time it took them to get to an incident (Mooney, 1994:56). In the second study, women expressed dissatisfaction because there had been a discrepancy between what they wanted and what they got they felt that the police had failed to provide adequate advice and information

to them (Hoyle, 1998:202). Despite these reforms, criticism has centred upon the tendency to emphasise the social welfare aspects of policing with the consequent neglect of the criminality of much violence occurring within relationships, and 'to do little at the scene apart from mediate' (Mooney, 1994:56). Also, there is still an emphasis on police's insensitive, indifferent and unsympathetic attitude and failure to act (Hague and Malos, 1993:70) and failure to "put policy into practice" (Morley and Mullender, 1994:17). The latter authors also argue that international evidence shows that effective policing requires more than a policy change. It requires co-ordination between police, often criminal justice agencies and community agencies. In WAFE's words, what is also required is "a co-ordinated multi-agency approach at all levels of government (local and national) involving all key criminal justice and social welfare agencies. Independent women's advocacy and refuge organisations must be involved centrally in reviewing the law and planning and delivering appropriate services" (WAFE, October 1998:2). Unfortunately, the literature suggests that this has been difficult to initiate, let alone achieve.

Medical agencies are another source of contact for battered women. As the medical personnel are frequently the first point of contact for women victims of such violence, their attitudes and responses would seem to be especially important. However, the historical reluctance of the medical profession to take up the issue of wife abuse is well documented (Kurz, 1987:16). Research found that medical personnel were more likely to disorientate the responsibility for the violence, believe that prevention is problematic, be sympathetic to both parties,

attribute the violence to characterological factors and finally not offering the women the help they were seeking (Borkowski et al, 1983:91). Mooney (1994) in her study found, that women who sought general practitioners' help within the last twelve months described them as "uninterested or too busy to listen", something that the author justified as the reflection of the general problems in the National Health Service and the increased work pressure on doctors (1994:54). Framing violence as a health issue runs the risk of "medicalising" what is essentially a social and political issue. As Conrad (1992) defines it, "medicalisation is the process whereby a social phenomenon such as alcoholism, hyperactivity or pregnancy, becomes frames in medical rather than moral, social or political terms". In this way, it can be subject to main critique since it seems to decontextualise social issues, bring them under medical control and individualise what should be seen as a collective social issue.

Difficulties that battered women face with respect to so-called 'helping' agencies response are countered in many research findings (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Mullender 1996; Hague and Malos, 1993; Maynard 1985; Pahl, 1985; Mama 1989; Hanmer et al, 1989; Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1995:86-89; Heise 1996:10). In general, service delivery is frequently not co-ordinated, many agencies deal only with particular aspects of the problem and formal and informal liaison amongst agencies is not optimal. In addition, many professionals continue to underestimate the severity of the violence experienced by their clients. In their majority, the 'helping institutions' are staying passive or naive bystanders to the problem of wife violence and the women's needs. As institutions such as the

police and medicine are male dominated and patriarchal in their structure and function, they reproduce the sexual division of labour as well as rationalise the exploitation and oppression of women. In other words, they are actively involved in the social construction of the battered woman's social isolation and her continued suffering as her attempts for seeking help go in vain. As Flitcraft and Stark (1980), referring to medical 'helping' profession in relation to battered women seeking help, put it:

> "Medicine's role in battering suggests that the services function to reconstitute the "private" world of patriarchal authority" (Flitcraft and Stark, 1980:81).

Or elsewhere:

> "Medicine's purposive failure to make wife battering visible is the patriarchy's success" (p.83).

Overall, in the last decade, a number of initiatives have taken place to tackle domestic violence at both local and national level. These include changes in police responses to domestic violence and the development of Domestic Violence Units, the introduction of legal remedies and amendments focusing on marital relationships, and the development of over 200 multi-agency forums in the UK to improve local responses (WAFE, July 1997:2). Also, pioneering projects are currently been conducted in the UK and in particular in places with excellent previous history on working against violence against women such as the Hammersmith and Fulham area of West London, inspired by and based on the

work of projects conducted elsewhere such as the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth USA, and aiming at establishing an as well integrated and co-ordinated community and criminal justice response to domestic violence as possible, through learning lessons from America (Hammersmith and Fulham Violence Forum, 1998). Also, evaluation reports based on various projects run in the previous years such as the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) in West London are been published, trying to contribute to the better knowledge and understanding of the issue of violence both for women themselves, their abusers and the professionals and agencies under consideration (Burton, Regan and Kelly, 1998). Despite all that, there is established evidence that for many women and children, escaping domestic violence is still as hard as it was twenty years ago. Recent attitudinal surveys have confirmed that domestic violence is still misunderstood by many agencies and individuals as a personal or relationship problem, or seen as an acceptable element of contemporary gender relations (WAFE, November 1997). Further, significant gap between policy and practice is still the case for many of the social agencies such as the police and their domestic violence units. More analytically, a recent report on "Policing Domestic Violence" reveals that although thirty-eight of the 42 forces in England and Wales which participated in the study had published a domestic violence policy document (p.5), only 39% of policy makers, 48% of line managers and 65% of operational domestic violence officers within the police (p.19) felt that there was a "significan policy/practic gap" (Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998). As far as the multi-agency work is concerned, independent research reveals that despite the big number of domestic violence fora that have been set up across the UK, no one model of

practice seems to emerge and the groups operate in a number of different ways according to their leadership or make-up (Hague, Malos and Dear, 1996).

> "Unless laws, regulations and practice are changed and a lead taken by government in terms of co-ordination and setting policy priorities in this area...the improved response of many individual agencies and multi-agency forums will only have a limited effect, despite the enormous commitment of many individuals working within them" (WAFE, October 1998:2).

In the next part of this review of the literature, I will discuss the relevant information existing on marital violence against women in Greece, as that was where the empirical research took place.

2.3 THE CASE OF GREECE

Although violence against women in marital or marital like relationships is not a new phenomenon in most societies in the world, there is now a rich literature concerning the issue. There are, however, societies - mainly from the developing countries - where the issue has never been studied and has remained relatively invisible. More specifically, in Greece there has not been any systematic scientific research into the forms of violence against women in the home (National Report of Greece, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995). Exceptions are a ground breaking study on "Women and Rape in Greece" by Tsikris (1996) and some earlier studies concerning issues such as the rural Greek

family and issues of honour (Campbell, 1964; Friedl, 1962; Sanders, 1962; Mendras, 1961) and others concerning issues of power structure and marital satisfaction in Greek family (Safilios-Rothschild, 1967). Scattered publications on violence against women in Greece are mainly based on translations of studies conducted abroad[3] or literature reviews with a gap on data and information from the Greek reality (Mouzakitis, 1989, 16: 217-227; The House of Women, "Abuse and Prevention" (in Greek), 4 December 1982:1-4). There is no empirical study conducted on marital violence against women in the home and help-seeking behaviour in Greece. Thus, the present study represents the first empirical study of this issue in Greece.

2.3.1 The Greek Context

As in other societies, the exact degree to which violence against women in the family exists in Greek society is difficult to establish for a variety of reasons (Spinellis, 1997:231). I briefly describe them as the situational, cultural and structural contexts introduced below.

Firstly, the lack or inadequacy of the data provided by the different institutions contacted by women survivors of violence inside or outside the family make it very hard to assess the extent, nature, severity and effects of this phenomenon in Greece. Secondly, violence against women in the family is under-reported because

[3] See Benard, C. and Schlaffer, E. The Daily Violence in the Marriage, translated by Dervisopoulou, A., Paratiritis, Athens, (in Greek) 1980; Farzie, M.O. Violence, translated by Nikolopoulou, B., Nea Senora, Athens, (in Greek) 1991; Antman, Marie-Elizabeth, Violence and Cunness, translated by Group of Sociologists, Kastaniotes, second edition, Athens, (in Greek) 1990; Hanmer, J. "Violence and Social Control of Women", in Questions Feministes 1, December 1977, translated by Papageorgiou, G., Athens, (in Greek).

it has often been accepted within societies world-wide, particularly those with very strong traditional values concerning the sex role differentiation and power distribution. In this context, social values and attitudes support the man in his position as the powerful head of the family whose absolute power cannot be questioned by anybody. Also, the legal professions have avoided getting involved in what they consider a private matter, and the legal and social agencies have been concerned mainly with family preservation.

In Greece, the question of violence against women has been put forward by the women's autonomous movement since 1978. It is due to the existence of this movement that the issue has become public; consciousness has been raised and public authorities have become more sensitive and responsive. According to the National Report for the Physical and Sexual Violence Against Women in Greece (Ministry to the Presidency, December 1990:5), in spite of the fact that the number of publications on this and similar matters, mainly from women scientists, has increased during the last years (Chliova, 1992:21-30; Chatzn, 1990:1-15; Chatzn, 1992:16-29), the amount of scientific research work continues to remain extremely low.

As a result, there are many difficulties in the development of an official estimate of the extent, the nature, the importance and the consequences of the phenomenon in Greece. Moreover, there is an agreement among the practitioners that while the research data may be limited, the extent of the phenomenon is much greater and much more acute. For example, according to the Director of the centre for battered

women in Athens (Reception Office), the number of women who visit the centre for help and assistance is around one hundred and twenty women per year, whereas they receive almost four times the same number in phone calls that are not presented anywhere in official statistics or papers as cases (personal communication, December 1996).

2.3.2 Existing Services as to Date

In Greece there is a substantial lack of specialised services where battered women may seek help. The only service dealing with the issue of domestic violence in Athens is the Centre for battered women. It was established by the initiative of the General Secretariat to Equality (GSE) and has been in operation in Athens since October 1988. There are two services operating under its care: - the Reception Office for battered women which offers free legal advice, psychological support and information on other available services; and - the Home for battered women (the Refuge) which has operated in Athens since 1993 in co-operation with the GSE and the Municipality of Athens. The Refuge offers hospitality to women and their children as well as psychological support and information on other available services. In addition, battered women can also go to the state hospitals, the Health Centres and the Mental Health Centres which, however, are not adequately staffed to handle such cases (Bouri, 1998).

In Thessaloniki, (in the North of Greece), the only specialised agency which is in operation is the Office for Women's Issues. It has been in operation since 1994 and was established by the initiative of the Deputy Mayor Prof. M. Tsouga and the Municipality of Thessaloniki. Also, an SOS call service for battered or raped women, operated by an autonomous women's group, had been in operation since October 1990. This service was in operation until 1996 and it used to provide free legal advice, psychological support and general information. In December 1998, getting a year's funding jointly by the European Union and the Greek Department of Employment, the SOS service is operating again offering the same services to women as in the past (Chronaki, Z., Helpline Co-ordinator, personal communication, December, 1998).

2.3.3 The Extent of the Problem

Violence against women in the home belongs to the extremely large and unseen part of the iceberg of crime together with shoplifting, tax evasion and other more or less severe crimes. It is commonplace that the greatest part of domestic violence never comes to the attention of authorities (Spinellis, 1997:232; Mouzakitis, 1989:219). The 'dark figure' of female victimisation within the family is usually approached with specifically designed victim surveys, which, however, has not been systematically conducted in Greece (National Report of Greece, 1990). In addition to this, police statistics or criminal court statistics do not provide any complete picture of the existing situation, since they do not include information on victims of crimes, i.e. number of victims, gender, and

relationship between victim and offender. Thus, for example, arrests or convictions of offenders of wife/partner battering or homicide cannot be identified among the existing data. The same applies to sexual crimes, which is a very good example for one to see the inadequacy of official crime statistics in the area of female victimisation in the home (Tsikris, 1996:35). Using the example of statistics on rape, the National Statistical Service of Greece, Volumes for years 1960 and 1965-1985 reveals this inadequacy of data. Within ten years, 1975-1985, and based on data covering all courts of Greece, only 149 people were convicted for rape of which 4 were females. Even in these complete and easily constructed statistics, figures do not depict reality.

At the same time, public or private grants for social research are limited in Greece. This has resulted in paucity of data in the area of family conflict and female victimisation. As a result, whatever research exists is mostly based on small samples or samples of convenience as is the present study. Despite the limited research studies, there is a consensus that violence against women in the family seems to be greater and more acute than what relevant but scattered data suggest (Epivatianos and Basiliadis, 1981:1051; National Report of Greece, 1995; Zaggelidou, Fountos, Epivatianos, 1994).

These limited and small scale research (mainly in the form of pilot studies) on marital violence against women in the home were conducted by independent researchers most of whom were working in the setting of the research. That research derives from various sources: research conducted by physicians, forensic

doctors; by students during the course of their degrees; research conducted in hospitals and police stations and women's organisations; and research conducted by the press. All the above sources do not meet the scientific nor the professional standards of research but they do provide some enlightening information about the situation (Agathonos, 1990:92). According to the first source, in Thessaloniki, the second largest city of Greece, with a population of 600,000 - approximating that of Wales, UK - in 1980, 100 cases of battered wives were referred by the police or the public prosecutor's office to the Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology of the University of Thessaloniki. The researchers, however, point out that during the same period in Wales the reported cases reached the number of 5,000, a number which was beyond any expectation (Epivatianos and Basiliadis, 1981:1049). The authors believe that the small number of reported cases in Thessaloniki can be attributed in two main reasons, stemming from the cultural and social particularities of the Greek people: firstly, to the typical attitude of the Greek man who although is considered authoritarian as a husband, he does not appear cruel towards his wife, and to the typical attitude of the Greek woman, who is tolerant and submissive and does not usually report the violence to the authorities or petition for divorce. Secondly, to her small degree of emancipation, the fear and stigma of the divorcee, and also her economic insecurity and dependency on the husband. Neither hypothesis have been tested by following researchers and one should be caution to the uncritical adaptation of them as they can function as stereotypical views about the Greek family and the Greek couple.

Indeed, another study on the issue appears to be in agreement with the above findings of few numbers of women reporting the violence to the authorities. According to Fereti (1990), only one in four Greek women report the violence to the police, whereas 21% seek medical treatment. Also, about 15% of the battered women are granted a divorce because of maltreatment and abuse, while 23% of the women's sample are victims of husbands' violence (cited in Agathonos, 1990:92).

Furthermore, an independent study conducted by a group of doctors of various specialisation in the General Hospital in Athens revealed, that, between 1988-1992, the number of women who sought medical help from the hospitals was 70% more than the number of them who had sought help within the previous five year period, between 1983-1988. The eight doctors had been studying about 350 cases of battered women who sought medical help within ten year period ("Ta Nea", 5 July 1993:20-21). According to their findings, between 1983-1987, 7% of the women who sought medical help from the hospital were self-defined 'battered wives', whereas between 1988-1992 this increased to 12.5%. Also, they found that women are most often battered in the head (62.4%), and the hands (10.7%), followed by the belly (8.4%) and the feet (4.6%). Another independent research was conducted by a trainee social worker during the course of her placement in the state hospital of Nikea. She found that 343 battered women sought medical help from the hospital during 1989, and 308 in 1990. In both years, the majority of women were between 31 and 40 years of age, followed by women between 21 and 30 years of age (Zorba, 1991, 48-49:14, 24).

Similarly, a survey in another Athenian General State Hospital conducted for a six month period in 1986, revealed that each month in the Hospital's books an average of 14 cases were classified under "beating". The patients were from light to seriously injured, all females, most of them married and with limited income. Other cases reached the Hospital with the same "symptoms" but they were classified as "accidents" and as such were not counted (Malli, cited in Spinellis, 1997:236). Similar "accidents" were revealed in another independent study in a state hospital in the city of Giannena with a population of 45,000, where, none of the women called themselves 'battered wives', and according to the researcher's assumptions, they were ashamed or afraid to declare the reasons of their injuries (Kastanou, cited in Spinellis, 1997:236).

A survey of police stations located in lower or lower-middle class areas of the greater Athens suggested that each station has two to four incidences of family conflict, wife battering or female victimisation in general each week (Malli, cited in Spinelli, 1997:235).

2.3.4 The Woman in Greek Marriage and Culture

Culture comprises a hybrid set of categories which encompass traditional, social, religious expectations imposed upon the woman and prescribing appropriate behaviour. The Greek culture greatly encourages women to follow the one and only idea of what is appropriate to their sex, and this is marriage and family life.

Familism has been described by investigators as the most important orientation in Greek life since it leads to the production and reproduction of the kinship, a fundamental principle of 'relatedness' in Greek culture, and to the creation of own "household" (nikokirio). The notion of '*nikokirio*' is referring to an "economic and politically autonomous, corporate and conjugal household" (Loizos, 1991:6) that informs the couple's different status and gender identities of maleness and femaleness, '*nikokiris*' and '*nikokira*', the man (who embodies the '*logos*'= *intelligent* reasoning, rationality) and the woman (who by 'nature' is gossip and thus her speech is inherently damaging, and is the queen of the domestic responsibilities and the producer of children, that is producer of a 'household of procreation'), the husband and the wife within it (du Boulay, 1974:101-102; Loizos, 1991:6 and 12; Hart, 1992:158; Daraki, 1995:168).

The family acts as the primary unit of socialisation into class and gender identities. The solidarity of the family and its social and economic independence from other families, has always been greatly valued by the Greeks (Friedl, 1962; Campbell 1964; du Boulay, 1974; Hart, 1992: 171-191). It's contexts and analysis reflect broader social relations and power structures. Women may occupy subservient positions in the family in relation to the men, and this is reflected in the wider community institutions, where religious laws, customs and practices keep women subjugated. Although their position in the family can shift within various groups according to class, age and ethnicity, most women are expected to serve their families, bear children and preserve Greek cultural traditions (Hart, 1992:182). These practices are challenged by many Greek women who struggle

for equality, self-determination and preservation (Paparega, 1986; Kaklamanaki, 1984)

Greece has been described by anthropologists and ethnographers as a society largely based on kinship (Loizos, 1991:3). Kinship is also expressed by the term '*ikogenia*', a term which derives from *ikos* meaning the "house" and '*genia*' meaning "birth", or "generation" and "race". It is a term resembling the English word *family*. Also, kinship can be expressed with the term *'syngenia'* (syn+genia) similar to the English notion of "relatedness", meaning "of common stock, generation, or lineage" (Loizos, 1991:137-138). Kinship as *syngenia* is used to define relations through blood and marriage ties. Also, it defines the ways a person in a particular relationship is expected to behave, that is his/hers behaviours/actions must be based on specific "codes of conduct" informing every kinship and every group of relatives (*syngenis)* who constitute it (Loizos, 1991:139). Although the concept of *syngenia* primary defines the blood relations (*syngenis)* as the most important ones, as they are considered closer to the couple than relatives (*syngenis)* by marriage (Loizos, 1991:138), relations with the latter (spiritual kin/ relatives by marriage) may be as important or more important in a woman's life than those with actual (blood ties) relatives (Hart, 1992:177). This depends on whether or not the woman develops a special friendship with a spiritual kin (e.g. the bridesmaids (*koumbari)* or other (e.g. neighbours) who can be of mutual assistance. The *koumbara* (for female) or *koumbaros* (for male), technically is a person chosen as "marriage sponsor" (arrange and finance the marriage ceremony), and who consequently has the right to baptise the first (in

some places all) born baby of the marriage (Hart, 1992:177). They are considered as 'people of the house' and are treated as such by both the husband and the wife. The wife may even decide to confess her personal problems to her *koumbara,* as she considers her a friend, a spiritual relative, and as she may holds *koumbara's* secrets in return.

The extended family, although not specific to Greek communities anymore, acts as the dominant mode of familial organisation, and can be extremely intrusive and controlling on how a couple live even if they choose to live separately from the matrimonial family in cases when they can support themselves financially. For many Greek women living within the boundaries of the extended family means adhering to tradition and cultural norms and expectations, a type of lifestyle which has led to great dissatisfaction and criticism by women in Greece (Daraki, 1995: 120).

Marriage is often the only solution for most women to get away from the "dynasty of the father to that of the husband" (Daraki, 1995:140, 163). Marriage in Greece, has always been considered to be of supreme value. It is considered as a social necessity for both men and women (women in particular) and women are gaining their social status through the marital one. As long as she remains unmarried, whatever the reason, she must observe the 'inferior status' in which the lack of a man automatically places her (du Boulay, 1974:121), and she is considered as a 'social handicap' and a 'burden to the family' (Daraki, 1995:122). A marriage should always be a successful one, that is to be a good, socially respectful, and a

long-lasting, and it is mostly expected that the woman/wife is the one who should ensure all that (Loizos, 1991: 35). In other words, if anything would go wrong in the marriage, the woman knows that everybody (community and kin) would blame her for not being able to hold her marriage together, and consequently for dishonouring her husband, her children, her in-laws and her own family. No wonder that the old Greek proverb "It's better to have my eye taken away, than to 'take away' my good name" (*Kallio na mou vgi to mati, para to onoma*), is still very much alive (Daraki, 1995:153).

Marriage in Greece also informs the complex values of family's 'honour' (timi), 'shame' (dropi), 'dignity' (aksioprepia) and 'pride' (*perifania*) and all actions oriented to prestige (Campbell 1964; du Boulay, 1974:104-108; Loizos, 1991:3; Hart, 1992:158; Daraki, 1995:123). All these notions/concepts play a pivotal role in policing, controlling and containing women's lifestyle, behaviour and in particular their sexuality. Such concepts of 'honour', 'shame' and 'dignity' prevail amongst Greek families (as much as in other communities like Italian) regardless of religion, caste and class. 'Honour' is integral to maintaining patriarchy and thus it has been repeatedly described in many traditional patriarchal societies (Baker, Gregware, Cassidy, 1999:165). It can mean respectability, status and reputation. Women are considered the upholders of the honour of the family. It can be used as a powerful ideological weapon to control women's sexuality, freedom and behaviour. Virginity, for example, used to be seen as a strict requirement for women, to be kept until marriage has taken place. Nowadays, this does not seem to have any real practice although in small Greek villages it seems to be still alive

(Krabaritou, 1996). 'Shame' has several contradictory meanings: it can be conceived as maintaining a woman's modesty - a highly prized virtue -; on in another occasion it can mean a woman's state of disgrace and shame. No matter what the women do in their lives they should always think about these concepts first. For example, when they decide to complain about anything in their home, even worse complain about the 'master of the household', they should be aware of the personal and familial costs that the consequent social disapproval for her actions will bring about (Loizos, 1991:3).

Accordingly, the Greek women seem to be locked within the terms of marriage and familism which, as informed by the general societal and cultural norms about man and woman, condone phenomena such as wife battering, attribute the blame to the women victims of male violence and influence their options and decision-making in the process of bringing problems into the open and seeking help. As a result, it has been argued that women within marriage have lost their 'personhood'. This is realised within the limits of household-phrased and domestically oriented action. In other words, women's personhood can be expressed in relational terms only (Loizos, 1991:4). Thus, when they make a decision (e.g. disclosing to others about marriage problems) which is not socially accepted, in most of the times they can only wait and postpone its' application for ... several years until other factors (e.g. danger, severity of the event) will make them put that decision into practice.

2.3.5 The Role of Law and the Police

According to the law 1329/1983 certain amendments to the Greek Civil Code and in particular to the section of Family Law were made. Their emphasis were on the constitutional principle of equality of men and women and the harmonization of the husband-wife relationships. Nevertheless, scholars believe that the recognition by the law of the individual needs of women does not change the family relationships of harmony and order, only rendered the family a source of conflict of attitudes and interests (Koumantos, 1988:10). In addition, they believe that negative influences of the pre-existing "male oriented system of law which created relations of dependency, submission and rivalry may be considered as one of the factors of victimisation of women within the family which still occurs in Greece as well as in other societies" (UN, 1989). Among other amendments to the section of Family Law, Laws 1288/1982 and 1558/1985 declared the establishment of a General Secretariat for Equality of two Sexes (GSES), an independent government agency, which would took a number of concrete measures towards the effective intervention in the cases of female victimisation within or outside the family (National Report of Greece, 1990). There are only broad constitutional and legal protections for women in Greece (Greece: Human Rights Practices 1995 report, section 5) and the various types of violence against women in the family do not constitute a separate offence under the Greek criminal law (Kravaritou, 1996; Spinellis, 1997:242). So, the question is to what extent the existing general provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure or other laws adequately protect women victims of family violence.

In Greece, as in other countries, police have been sharply criticised for their indifference to the problem of battered wives, for their lack of preparation in handling victims of family violence, for not taking seriously their complaints and needs, and for tending to regard incidents of family violence as not real police work (Fragoudaki, 1987:2; Zorba, 1991; Agathonos, 1990:47; Tsikris, 1996). The General Secretariat for Equality fo the Sexes asserts that police tend to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges and instead undertake reconciliation efforts, although they are neither qualified for nor charged with this task. The GSES also claims that the courts are lenient when dealing with domestic violence cases (Greece: Human Rights Practices 1995 report, section 5).

Independent research conducted in various police stations in Athens, found that police stations in Athens may handle two to four cases a day whereas the police stations in other parts of the country handle the same number of cases per week, or elsewhere per month. The researchers hypothesize that the greater the distance from the capital the fewer cases reach the police, which results to women being deterred from denouncing the aggressive behaviour of their husbands rather than men being prevented from behaving abusive (Spinellis summarising other studies, 1997:240).

Currently, there are no reliable, statistical data revealing the extent and nature of the phenomenon of women victims of husbands violence in Greece. From some scattered data presented above only a tentative picture of the problem may be drawn. Still, the Athen's Equality Secretariat which operates the only shelter for

battered women, believes that the actual incidence is high. Governmental actions and policies unfortunately are still not doing enough to prevent the female victimisation, to ensure that women's status is not defined relatively to the men, that women's rights are been applied to every day practice, and that women are protected by law when experiencing male violence in their own home.

2.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

The concept of social support can be found in many studies mainly concerning with the effects of caring, helping and social support on individual well-being (Hardy, Richman and Rosenfeld, 1991). The vast majority of work on social support is located in social psychology, but at the same time it occupies a voluminous amount of literature in a span of several others disciplines. For example, psychology, epidemiology, sociology or anthropology. Yet, the bulk of the mainstream literature comes from the USA and Canada and is largely found in social psychology journals. Despite its volume, this literature only very rarely addresses violence. Instead, it mainly addresses social support in relation to other issues such as the promotion of the development and adaptation of children and adolescents (e.g. in situations of working with adolescent depression, improving academic and behavioural adjustment, etc.) (Richman, Rosenfeld and Bowen, 1998, 3, 4:309). Also, it is addressed in relation to motherhood (Oakley, 1992), decreasing morbidity, reducing stress and feelings of loss, increasing feelings of well-being, etc (Ganster and Victor, 1985).

2.4.1 Social Support - Definitions and Literature

Defining what is meant by the term social support can present difficulties, since different disciplines start from different sets of problematics and concepts, use different research methods and one discipline seldom communicates with another. For example, Cohen and Syme (1985) in their interpretation of social support as the resources provided by others, drew attention to the absence of a unified conceptualisation of the meaning of social support, its role in health and behaviour and of ways to measure it. As a result, all different professionals who share a theoretical interest in social support, appear to have defined it differently, a finding which led Tilden (1985) to suggest that this is the reason why little maturation has occurred among the various studies.

Social support has been variously described as behaviour which is supportive (Hogue, 1985), or behaviour which is supportive and which has informal and formal components (House, 1981). Caplin and Killilea (1976) define effective support as that which enables an individual who is stressed, to accept the person offering help as an ally, with skill, time and understanding made available for as long as necessary. This definition includes informal support from family, friends, neighbours and the lay-network, and also formal support received from professionals who would have knowledge and skills not normally available from

family or friends. Norbeck (1985) also viewed professional support (e.g. social workers, doctors, lawyers) as surrogate support which is usually not provided in one's social network.

Social support is further defined as derived from either the gratification of the person's basic social need or the presence of psycho-social support from significant others; while elsewhere as interpersonal transactions which include affection, affirmation and aid (Kaplan, Cassell and Gore 1977; Khan and Antonucci 1980). House (1981) proposed that social support was a mixture of informal support, from family and friends, and formal support a mixture of sources such as professional and self-help groups. He gave a four part definition of social support, encompassing both formal and informal networks: emotional support (esteem, affect, trust, concern, listening); appraisal support (affirmation, feedback, social compassion); informational support (advice, suggestion, directives, information); and instrumental support (aid in kind, money, labour, time, modifying the environment).

Social support was also described as having three sub-concepts of emotional, informational and tangible support, all of which apply in the formal and informal systems of support (Schaeffer, Coyne and Lazarus 1981). Others, differed in their definition in that they did not include tangible aid in defining social support (Cobb 1976). More analytically, he defined support as being the belief that one is cared for, loved, esteemed, valued and part of 'a network of communication and mutual obligation' (1976:300). In the same line of giving an emphasis on the emotional/psychological context of support, Moss (1973) defined

it as the subjective feeling of 'belonging, being accepted or being loved, or being needed all for oneself and for what one can do' (1973:237).

Weiss (1974:21) conceptualised social support as comprising six functions of personal relationships: attachment, social integration, opportunity for nurturance, reassurance of worth, a sense of reliable alliance and the obtaining of guidance, each ordinarily associated with a particular type of relationship. He said that individuals needed to maintain a number of different types of relationship to establish the conditions necessary for well-being. As he further analysed his approach, Weiss tended to concentrate more to 'attachment' and social integration' and as he assumed a unitary rational individual, he failed to problematise gender, race or other social divisions in his account.

Moreover, the social network is defined as the set of relationships that a particular person has, or the special set of linkages among these relationships. Social networks can be identified by a number of several characteristics including structural characteristics (the number of direct contacts an individual has), the network density (the extent of contacts among members of an individual's social network), and the degree of connection (the number of relationships the individual has with other numbers of the social network) (Schaefer et al 1981; Mitchell and Trickett 1980).

The characterisation of the family as a unit rather than a set of individuals and the point that interaction occurs within the family itself and also between

the family and the social environment is an interesting claiming by researchers such as Tilden (1985). Within this theoretical direction, family social support is seen as a process of social relationships through which resources may or may not accessed, and such support is always seen as positive, nurturing and encouraging. Interestingly enough, not all scholars have shared the same view. For example, Wellman (1981) argues that not all ties are necessary supportive and that close friends and family are not always able to provide more useful support and help than more distant contacts. While commenting on the assumption that social support comes automatically with the marriage, many researchers argue that the existence of a social relationship does not imply that the support is derived from And as a sresult it may be said that satisfaction with support received is more important than the support available it (Gottlieb 1983; Leavy 1983). And althought others argue maintains that social support is rarely provided completely free of any expectation of a return of favours House (1981), still others further maintain that mutual obligation and the concept of reciprocity is more easily accepted within the informal support structures, and occurs more within the informal than within formal relationships (Tilden 1985).

It has been argued that social networks and social support are not the same concepts and they involve different elements overall. A social network refers to the web of social relationships an individual has, whereas social support refers to the various kinds of help which may or may not be available to an individual within the network. It has been pointed out that not all social networks are supportive and although people have connections with others, this connection or relationship is not equivalent to receiving support, nor is it a guarantee of access to

it (Gottlieb, 1983). It might also be available but still it may not always be regarded as helpful by the individual to whom it is offered. Therefore, the most essential measure of social support should be the recipients' perceptions of the social support offered to them (Leavy, 1983).

There are two main hypotheses about the link between social support and well being, and these are the direct effect and the buffering hypotheses (Cohen and Syme, 1985; Gottlieb, 1983). The direct or main effect model sees support as enhancing health and well-being irrespective of stress levels as people have higher self-esteem and feel more control over their environment, as a result of the perception that others will provide them help in stressful situations, while the buffering model claims that social support is beneficial in stressful situations and protects people from the pathogenic effects of stressful events as it may intervene between the stressful event and the person, facilitating coping and adaptation, preventing a negative stressful response and reducing the likelihood of illness (Cohen and Syme, 1985:6-7). The direct effect of social support is measured by assessing the degree of integration of the individual into the social network, whereas the latter, by assessing the availability of the resources that help in the individual's response to stressful events.

2.4.2 Measuring Social Support

Researchers have usually been unable to differentiate social network from social support, often mixing the two together in the mistaken belief that if individuals are part of a social network then they must be receiving support. As a result, a valid

and reliable measurement of social support is difficult to be found (Tilden, 1985). House and Khan (1985) found that the approaches to measuring the social support, consist of three elements: the social integration approach (the individual's connection to others); the structure of a person's social relationships (size and density); and the functional content of an individual's relationships (asking individuals about their perceptions of the quality and adequacy of the support provided to them by others).

According to Tilden (1985) support should be evaluated either by its function or by its structure. To measure the former means that one should investigate the subjective perception of support received by individuals, while to measure the latter requires an objective assessment of the amount of that support. An objective, quantifiable measurement is usually referred to as network analysis (e.g. number of ties, variety of relationships) and this is a measure of the quantity of relationships an individual has. In this way, some researchers see, for example, the network analysis as the precondition to the emergence of family social support, whereas others suggest that the quality, rather than the quantity of relationships should be seen as more important to an individual's well-being (Tilden, 1985; House, 1981).

Because of the multidimensional nature of social support, researchers agree that there has been a delay of the development of appropriate instruments to measuring social suport. The most popular one, used mainly by medical research projects, is the Personal Resources Questionnaire (PRQ) which is consisted of two distinct parts: the first addresses some aspects of the network

structure and provides descriptive data regarding situational support, and the latter is a scale developed to measure the level of perceived social support (Brandt and Weinert, 1981). The Greek study is taking a functional approach to social support as it is based on the women's own experiences and perceived support rather than interviewing members of women's networks (or professionals in formal services and agencies), and focusing on these members' responses to women.

2.4.3 Social Support and Battered Women Seeking Help

There is considerable research done on help-seeking behaviour of women and the help giving responses of the potential sources of help where women turn to for help, with emphasis on the responses of 'helping institutions' (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Dobash, Dobash and Cavanagh, 1985; Maynard, 1985; Mama, 1989; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Hague and Malos, 1993; Mooney, 1994; Mullender, 1996; Hoyle, 1998). The existing literature on social support tends to employ the concepts of 'help-seeking' and 'social support' interchangeably, considering them as concepts implying the same meaning (e.g. Cavanagh, 1978; Mitchell and Hodson, 1983). In this study I am also using them both in the same way, although I am aware of the fact that 'help-seeking' may be a narrower concept as opposed to 'social support', in that, although it focuses on women's active behaviour in seeking help from people outside the marriage, it does not look at responses possibly made by individuals inside the house (e.g. children), or people witnessing the violence and responding spontaneously (e.g. neighbours).

According to the literature, women do eventually turn to someone for support although it may be after suffering years of violence. Research work reveals that women usually turn to informal supporters long before seeking help from social agencies (e.g. Cavanagh, 1978; Binney et al, 1981). Findings support that support agents such as family members, relatives (other than parents), friends, and/or voluntary agencies tend to be the ones most frequently being consulted about the violence by the women. Cavanagh for example found that the majority of her respondents (76%) turned to their family for support. There is no analysis of who in the family women turned to for what type of support and this is something the Greek study tried to address. Over fifty percent of Cavanagh's respondents never contacted friends and neighbours for support (1978:158). Binney et al (1981:21) found that about twenty percent of his sample had no contact with friends or relatives and sought help from voluntary agencies. Mooney (1994:46) found that in her sample the women revealed the violence mainly to friends (46%), followed by the relatives (31%).

Findings concerning the helplessness of the informal supporters to women tend to be varied. The majority of these are revealing positive responses to women's help-seeking although it can be the case that there differing accounts of women within the same research sample towards their perception of the support they received. For example, Mooney (1994:53) found that the response from friends and relatives "varied considerably". Some were "very supportive" and "wonderful" whereas others expressed disbelief of women. Relatives, she found, were the most likely to have respond negatively to women's needs. Binney et al (1981: 21)

reveal that a fairly high percentage of women found contacts with relatives and friends useful. Relatives, for example, were particularly asked and gave help with emergency accommodation. Yet, Binney et al do not give specific information on why, who, or how women found them helpful. Further, Kirkwood (1993:125-127) found that friends and family responses to women in her study mainly provided negative support (p.126), although she mentions that in some cases women revealed that they talked to a particular member of the family or a friend who was very supportive (emotionally and psychologically) in helping them talk about and understand their experiences and what was happening to them. Kelly (1988:226), found that women in her study revealed that it was their female friends who were the most important source of support for them, and she explained it as being an issue of sharing trust and identification with other women. On the whole, informal support can be very important for a woman seeking help from her partner's violence, but they can also put pressure on her, express disbelief or rejection of reality and in this way compound her problems. They can sometimes be helpful providing her a temporary accommodation, but in other times can only offer very limited help because in most of the cases they will not have the necessary resources nor the information to help.

Existing research reveals that women also approach formal sources of help during the process of 'help-seeking' (for example, Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Hague and Malos, 1993; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Borkowski et al, 1983; Edward, 1989; Mooney 1994). The degree of their helpfulness and usefulness varies again. In general, the statutory agencies such as the law and the police appear to have

been of little help to women victims of men's violence (Hague and Malos, 1993:65, 68-71). Binney et al (1981:12), also looked at the role of the statutory and voluntary agencies to women and found that women had sought help from a wide range of sources but that there was a large disparity in the degree of their helpfulness because of the overall policy of agencies and the discretion of individual workers. Binney et al (1981:13) found that the women in their study sought help from five agencies, and half of the 3,090 consulted in total were of no use. The same authors state that 64 percent of the 656 women they interviewed had not found the police useful and the most usual complaint was that the police were unwilling to intervene because it was a domestic dispute. In other cases women claimed that the police did not believe that they had been beaten up or else had openly sided with the husband. Also, Pahl (1978) in her early study of the Canterbury Refuge reported that 63 percent of the battered women she interviewed had found the police unhelpful.

Further, data from a study conducted in Australia in 1982, indicate that the majority of women made initial contacts either with the police (63%) or the doctors (61.7%), where the action might immediate be required, and then the social workers/counsellors (38.5%). The women's refuge was used possibly as one of the last resorts (21.6%). In terms of their helpfulness, the police was rated the least helpful (27%), the social worker/counsellor considered in the middle range (48%), and the refuge was rated the most helpful (71%) (Otter, 1986:113). Also, Hanmer (1993:12) found that women in her research were approaching agencies for help but they were receiving uneven service and inconsistent

response. She found that on average women needed to approach 10.4 agency types to receive effective help. Also, Mooney (1994) in her sample found that formal agencies such as the police, the solicitors, the social services were not found helpful by the women who approached them for help. General practitioners and social services were found "sympathetic" or "offering a friendly ear", police were found "reluctant to do anything", "very rude and uncooperative", " did not want to know", and the refuge workers left women "very impressed with the response they received" (Mooney, 1994:54-57). In the same research, the police appeared to have built up a stereotype of the woman who makes a complaint only to go back on it and go back to the man "in question". Also, that battered women will not follow through with prosecution. As a result, police officers often appear unsympathetic toward women who express ambivalence about their relationships and pressing criminal charges. On the other hand, there may be a progress on police responses to women after the establishment of domestic violence units within police stations and the special training of officers on dealing with issues of domestic violence. In this vein, Hoyle (1998) found that in her sample both police officers were more sensitive and willing to help, and women themselves were more satisfied with their responses. It may be that these findings represent a change in police policy and practice over the last two decades.

Furthermore, when a woman presents herself at the social services, a source of great expectations by women, she will be told that there is nothing that can be done for her, firstly because she is not homeless as she has a home to go to and secondly because the social services cannot make a moral judgement on a

marriage (Pahl, 1985). Women often receive negative and unhelpful responses from the social agencies such as blaming, disbelieving, and judgemental towards the women themselves, and in this was they are deterred from further seeking help (Hague and Malos, 1993:137, 139-141). In the same way, as Cleveland's Refuge report reveals, many women said that the services available to them were inadequate or that they felt that the response to those who turned for help was unsatisfactory. Thus, women felt that they were very much on their own and their problems were not given the attention they deserved (Homer et al, 1984). Elsewhere, women themselves described the stance of the personnel of social services as *"unwilling to acknowledge the source of their assault, tending to minimise their injuries and surprisingly ready to return to the husband who beat them"* (Otter, 1986). Further, as the author states, *"the position caseworkers take often supports a belief that the wife encourages, provokes or even enjoys abusive treatment"*. As a result, many battered women have felt misunderstood and blamed and thus have seen no reason to search for help to social services. Additionally, Otter (1986:114-117) found that when responding to battered wives, social workers either "individualised the problem" or often emphasised the importance of family as a measure to protect the children and counselled to cope with the violence for the sake of the children. The same author reveals that social workers mainly recommend strategies such as individual counselling, couple therapy and family therapy to help women. Similarly, Evason (1982, p.39) found the same responses by quoting women's own accounts: *"...I had gone to the social worker and all I had got flung in my face was that marriage must be stable... You must stay together, you can take therapy sessions together, you must*

come and go with these hardships of life and all that rubbish...so it was no use going to these people again", or again "...I needed accommodation but she just talked to my husband...".

In general, both the informal and the formal support is still inconsistent towards women who seek their help although there may have been considerable changes in these agencies over the last few years.

Research has estimated that less than 60% of those experiencing violence tell their friends or family, or seek help from an agency (Economic and Social Research Council Report, 1998:21). The exploration of this facet of the issue is very extensive within the empirical research and relevant literature. For example, early research on what deterrs women from seeking help and reporting the violence to external potential sources of help reveal reasons such as the women's negative self concepts; beliefs that the man will change; economic hardships; concerns about the children who need a father's economic support; doubts about living alone and having to provide for children; beliefs about the stigmatisation of divorce (Truninger, 1971: 259-276). The same author claims that the stronger the commitment to the ideology of marriage, the less a wife will seek legal action against her violent husband. Other researchers such as Gayford (1976:196) propose that the fewer resources a wife has in a marriage, the fewer alternatives she has to her marriage, and the more entrapped she is in the marriage the more reluctant she will be to seek outside help. Similar components such as those of victim fear, powerlessness and threat of further victimisation that make women

fail to seek help and report the violence are also presented and discussed by other researchers (Kidd and Chayet, 1984:41).

In the same vein, Mooney (1994:60-62) found that a significant number of women in her sample had not told anyone of their experiences. Some of their quotations indicate how concerned those women were about the consequences of bringing out in the open, such as the possibility that by informing someone would lead to further violence: "I was feeling embarrassed and I considered it a private matter"; "to tell someone, even a friend, would make matters worse and they're bad enough". As far as the reasons for non-reporting to agencies, women spoke of being unaware that help was available, being concerned that they would not be treated seriously, and in other cases spoke of feelings of worthlessness and therefore undeserving of agency intervention.

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature on violence against women, its history and development, and the helping institutions. Also, I have looked at the literature on social support and women and identified the variety of the responses from informal and formal sources. I have also identified the lack of research on providing information on specific informants of help (e.g. mother, father, best friend) instead of categorising them under holistic groups such as family or relatives, which is one of the main objectives of the Greek study. Barriers to disclosing and consequently to reporting violence faced by women were also presented as this constitutes an important part of the Greek study. In terms of both

informal and agency support the literature has shown that women are still receiving inconsistent responses to their help-seeking.

In summary, it is made clear that within the last two decades considerable changes have been made in areas such as raising public awareness through campaigning on violence against women, and introducing new policies for combating violence in various state agencies (e.g. domestic violence policy documents in police Domestic Violence Units). This came mainly as the result of the work of women's groups, Women's Aid refuges and federations and of feminists activists and academics. Still, there is evidence that reveals that things need to improve more, state agencies to further improve the implementation of the new polices (Grace, 1995; Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998: 41-45), and multi-agency work or inter-agency initiatives to be better co-ordinated (Hague and Malos, 1993:167; 1996).

The Greek study aims to provide empirical knowledge about the Greek women's help-seeking behaviour by reflecting upon the literature presented in this chapter. In the next chapter I will describe the research design and the methods used to explore this topic.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

AND

METHODS IN THE FIELD

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the approache to the study and the methods used to collect and analyses data. It attempts to narrate the 'journey of the research' and present the process followed from the beginning to the completion of this study.

Since I wanted to record women's help-seeking behavior and their perceptions and understandings of the support they received, I tried to construct a research design to reflect these aims and objectives. In this chapter I provide an outline of the research approaches employed in the study and the pilot study, the research instruments, including the interview schedule, the settings where the actual fieldwork took place, issues of access, the research participants, and the dynamics of the relationship between the researcher and the interviewees. The sensitivity of the topic and its

implications and ethical issues are also explored. This is followed by information on the process of coding and analysing the data. Finally, I discuss issues of importance as well as limitations of the study and how I safeguarded the rights of the respondents.

3.2 DESIGNING THE INQUIRY: DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH APPROACHES

Research design is concerned with turning research questions into specific projects (Robson, 1993:38). This is of crucial importance for any inquiry. This study was concerned with interviewing Greek battered women and learning about their experiences of their partners' violence and their perceptions of the help they received from various formal and informal sources of help whom the women turned to for assistance and support. Also, I wanted to identify the number of women who sought help after a violent assault and who were satisfied (or not) with the help and support they received. To allow women to talk about their particular situations in their own words highlighting the factors which they believed to be most important, was a primary aim of the researcher. I was aware that I would be exploring a very 'sensitive topic' such as battering, that would demand all my attention, sensitivity and good preparation in order to protect women from possible harm and which inevitably might bring about a degree of emotionality. Therefore, I decided that I needed a methodology which would be in itself supportive and sensitive and yet would also

address the research questions. Reflecting upon the above concerns and interests, in this study I utilised a combination of data, that is both qualitative and quantitative, in an attempt to draw the best from both styles, thereby strengthening the research design. The "context-specific" and feminist approaches that I also use, best reflect the main research questions and approaches.

3.2.1 The Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

This research was an exploratory study which aimed to explore the number, experiences and perceptions of Greek battered women's help-seeking and of the support they received from formal and informal sources such as their families and the police. Reference to the major differences between the two traditional frameworks of research methodology will help to indicate more clearly the reasons for choosing this combined approach for the purposes of this study.

According to McCraken (1991:16), the most striking difference between quantitative and qualitative research is the way in which each tradition treats its analytic categories. The quantitative goal may be to isolate and define categories before the study is undertaken, while the qualitative goal may be to do that during the research process. Bryman (1988:94) lists eight important dimensions on which qualitative and quantitative research traditions diverge. He argues that, although the proponents of qualitative research see it as an end in itself because of its capacity to expose actors' meanings and interpretations from a quantitative perspective, qualitative research can

only be seen as an exploratory stage of a research project. It is therefore often treated as a second rate activity, implying that qualitative data cannot stand in their own.

The relationship between researcher and the subject portrays another difference between the two research traditions. Within a quantitative framework this relationship is more distant, while within a qualitative one it appears closer. Therefore, the case appears to be that quantitative researchers may adopt a posture of an outsider, while among the qualitative researchers there is a strong urge to "get close" to the subjects being investigated, to be an insider (Bryman, 1988:94).

Further, the relationship between theory/concepts and research differs in qualitative from the quantitative approach. While theory/concepts are regarded by quantitative researchers as a starting point leading to a hypothesis to be tested in the field, qualitative ones, in contrast, aim at the discovery of theory, rather than its verification (Bryman, 1988:97). The quantitative/qualitative dichotomy is commonly conceived of in terms of commitments to 'nomothetic' and 'ideographic' modes of reasoning. The former, taken to be indicative of the scientific approach, seeks to establish general law-like findings, which can be deemed to hold irrespective of time and place, while the latter locates its findings in specific time periods and milieu (Bryman, 1988:100). Within a quantitative research framework, social reality is perceived as more static, while the impact and role of change in social life tends to be neglected. From a qualitative perspective the criticism of quantitative research is that the latter rarely examines the processes, which link connections between variables and fails to

take into account the flow of events in which these variables are located. For Bryman (1988:102), the qualitative researcher is in a better position to identify the linkages between events and activities and to explore people's interpretations of the factors, which produce such connections.

Lastly, the quantitative research produce data which is most often characterised as hard, rigorous and reliable, while qualitative data is described as 'rich', due to the attention paid to intricate detail, and 'deep', because the sustained contact, with people studied, permits a penetrating account, which can explore incidents in great detail and can illuminate the full extent of subjects' accounts of a variety of phenomena (Bryman, 1988:104).

Despite the distinct dichotomical components of the two traditional methodological approaches in 'doing research' (Eisikovits and Peled, 1990:1), Bryman (1988) further maintains that data derived from qualitative research are sometimes quantifying and that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to produce a general picture will fill the gaps in knowledge. He argues that qualitative research may help to provide background information on context and concepts, and quantitative research might help to provide more participants for a qualitative investigation. In other words, Bryman calls for the emphases and strengths of the two to be brought together in a single study. In the same vein, Hammersley (1989) argues against distinguishing qualitative and quantitative research, arguing that a commitment to one or other does not capture the full range of options and that decisions may be made on the wrong

basis, rendering them less effective than they might otherwise have been. In other words, he maintains that the qualitative data can illuminate the quantitative one, and thus a combination of approaches is quite reasonable. The complementarity of both the approaches is now widely recognised also in the feminist literature (Reinharz, 1992; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Kelly et al, 1992). As I was aware of the strength that a combination of both the approaches could bring to the claimings of the findings of the study, I decided that the study would include both qualitative and quantitative data. The former would provide an in-depth *understanding* of the women's accounts and perceptions of help-seeking and giving, and the latter would provide a *description* of things such as the nature of the sample, and the frequency of the women's ways to help-seeking, and of the sources' patterns of help-giving.

3.2.2 "Context-Specific" Approach

Another approach I drew on in my research design is the "context-specific" approach. Designed specifically for studying wife abuse, advocates of this approach Dobash and Dobash (1983:261-277) hold the view that human actions, beliefs and intentions cannot be explained and understood without careful attention to the interactional contexts in which they occur. Thus, researchers should make sure they do not produce works that are inconcrete, a-historical, a-contextual or timeless in relation to the phenomenon under investigation and to the personal, cultural, social, institutional, interactional and political contexts in which it occurs.

Furthermore, contexts are important as a means of situating action and of grasping its wider social and historical import. This (context) can require detailed descriptions of the social setting within which action occurs. Also, the relevant social contexts may be a group, organization, institution, culture or society, the network of social relationships, and so on (Dey, 1992). Contexts are key to meaning, since meaning is dependent on these and therefore, meaning cannot be understood independently of the contexts in which it is observed. Influenced by the above, I tried to address the social support women received by putting it into the particular contexts of the women participating in this research.

3.2.3 Feminist Approach

As my aim was to bring Greek women's experiences into the realm of public discourse as well as to produce valid knowledge for women's worlds and lives which can be used both by women themselves and the policy makers and thus contribute to women's liberation, I thought that I needed to contextualise my study under the feminist framework of research.

Feminist approach was the last broad approach to research that I drew on in my research design. By drawing upon this approach I did not mean that I would use a particular methodology or method because as the literature on feminist research reveals there is not a single term "feminist methodology" as such. On the contrary,

there is great evidence of the huge variety of methods used by feminist researchers following the canon that there is more than one "correct" way of researching questions (Reinharz, 1992:13-17; Stanley, 1990; Harding, 1987).

Feminist research has been based on the significance of gender in society and has identified male bias in the social sciences which has produced distorted views of the world (Ross, 1982:360; Harding, 1991). Feminist research then is not about a particular methodology (theoretical framework) or method (technique) but is a critical perspective which aims to produce knowledge which will change the oppression of women and correct the invisibility of their experiences in ways relevant to ending women's unequal position in society. Also, feminist research supports the value of being open about and using one's own subjectivity in order to produce more valid data. It accepts that all research is political, in contrast to researchers such as Hammersley who dismisses feminism and feminist findings on the grounds of being "prone to dogmatism" (since being political), rather than "scientific, rational and valid" (Ramazanoglou, 1992:207). For feminism, for example, domestic violence can be studied from different methodological standpoints but cannot be studied a-politically, since domestic behaviours give a particular view of social relations.

Feminist thought and practice is both empowering women and problematising what we mean by knowledge, reason, objectivity and validity. It's methodologies have been developed in the context of power struggles not only over personal relationships, but also over ways of knowing and the criteria for validating the knowledge that

scholars produce (Ramazanoglou, 1992:209). For feminism, "knowing is a political process, so knowledge is intrinsically political" (Ramazanoglou, 1992:210), and as such it should be a challenge to the maintenance of the status quo. Feminist theorizing and methodology seeks to bring together subjective and objective ways of knowing the world. It begins and constantly returns to the subjective shared experience of oppression (putting emphasis on the personal account of one individual woman's oppression) out of which (sharing) came the feminist theory and methodology in its whole (Rose, 1982: 368).

In general, feminist methodologies, always politically committed towards the empowerment of women, are new ways of knowing and of seeking 'truths'. They have been remarkably "open, creative and productive in transforming and extending our understanding of social life" (Ramazanoglou, 1992:211), and have greatly influenced our ways of 'seeing', 'being' and 'knowing' (Harding, 1987).

3.3 ESTABLISHING THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE INQUIRY AND THE FINDINGS

As in this study I used both types of data (qualitative and quantitative), I was concerned with the establishing of the trustworthiness of both of them. The application of qualitative research requires a different approach to the traditional emphasis on validity and reliability than that appropriate to quantitative studies.

As I touched upon this in the previous section, qualitative research is subject to criticisms for failing to pass tests of methodological rigour and, in general, criticisms concerned with its 'scientific in/adequacy' (Sandelowski, 1986). In this way, qualitative research is often not seen as a scientific inquiry because it does not meet the criteria of rigour commonly associated with scientific inquiry. These criteria are: 1) true value, 2) applicability, 3) consistency and 4) neutrality (Sandelowski, 1986:29). According to the same author, quantitative research puts forward internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity as an answer to those four criteria, respectively. In this way, this approach claims all the scientific merits of the methodological rigour in 'doing good scientific research'. On the other hand, Guba and Lincoln (1981:104) evaluating the rigourousness in qualitative research and in respect to the four criteria of scientific adequacy in 'doing scientific research', suggest four other criteria useful in addressing such issues. He puts forward those of credibility, fittingness, auditability and confirmability. In order to gain trustworthiness and validation of my qualitative data, in this study I used these criteria.

Firstly, the true value in quantitative research is evaluated and enhanced when "the investigator can demonstrate that it measures what is being studied as it is defined in the study (content validity), that it compares well with other tests measuring the same phenomenon (criterion-related validity), and that the test results are congruent with theoretical explanations of the phenomenon (construct validity)" (Sandelowski, 1986:30). The truth is researcher-oriented and the relationship between investigator

and subject is not close. On the other hand, credibility rather than internal validity in the quantitative sense is suggested to be the criterion against which the truth value of qualitative research be evaluated (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:105). Qualitative studies are considered credible when efforts to understand and illuminate human experience are met. That is, the study presents such vivid and accurate descriptions of the human phenomena under consideration, that those involved recognise it from the descriptions, or those not involved can understand the phenomenon solely from the descriptions within the study: "A study is also credible when other people (other researchers or readers) can recognise the experience when confronted with it after having only read about it in a study" (Sandelowski, 1986:31).

I assessed this element by asking two respondents to verify data and coding. The selection of the respondents were determined by the willingness of the women to respond to this inquiry of the researcher's. My ideal thought would be for most of the respondents to had accepted it but the women were quite busy with their thoughts and making arrangements for their lives in the future that they simply expressed confidence in my writing correctly what they had said during the interviews. I met the two women separately in times and places of their convenience. During our meeting, each woman was given a copy of my notes based on her respective interview and derived from my 'keeping notes' method in the 'sharing the pain' notebook, my personal means of 'transcribing' the interviews (see more about it later in this chapter). I went through my notes repeating parts of their accounts that I had written down and how each segment was coded, and then I asked each woman to confirm or

challenge the assigned codes. Rather than seeking perfect agreement, the process of illuminating and negotiating differences yields valuable data from which more credible analyses can develop. Both women confirmed my understanding of interview content and of the codes as described.

Secondly, the applicability of quantitative research is valued by how well threats to external validity have been handled. External validity refers to the generalisability of findings and the representativeness of subjects, tests and testing situations (Sandelowski, 1986:31). As the qualitative research emphasises the study of phenomena in their natural settings and with few controlling conditions, the concepts of generalisability and representativeness are not particularly sought in such studies. As a result, Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest the criterion of fittingness against which the applicability of qualitative research be evaluated and the generalisability and representativeness can meet their antipodes. "A study meets the criterion of fittingness when its findings can "fit" into contexts outside the study situation and when its audience views its findings as meaningful and applicable in terms of their own experiences" (Sandelowski, 1986:32). That is, fittingness is present in a qualitative study when there is a close "fit" between the findings (in the various forms they can take, e.g. description, explanation or theory) and the data from which they are derived (Guba and Lincoln, 1986). Further, the findings are well-grounded in the life experiences studied and reflect their typical and atypical elements (Sandelowski, 1986:32). I assessed this criterion by an on-going evaluation of the appropriateness of fit between the data and the conceptual categories of findings.

Thirdly, the criterion of consistency in quantitative research is evaluated by that of reliability. Reliability in such kind of studies is viewed as a necessary precondition for validity and has as an inherent goal the value of repeatability. This criterion refers to the consistency, stability and dependability of a test or testing procedure, that is a reliable test should yield the same or comparable results every time it is administered to the same or comparable subjects (parallel-form reliability) and has homogeneous items (internal consistency) (Sandelowski, 1986:32). In contrast, qualitative research emphasises the uniqueness of human situations and the importance of experiences that are not necessarily accessible to validation through the senses. Variations in an experience rather than identical repetition are sought (Sandelowski, 1986:33). Relating to the criterion of consistency in 'doing scientific research', Guba and Lincoln (1981:108) suggest that of auditability in qualitative studies. According to the authors, auditability is determined when another researcher is able to clearly follow the "decision trail" of the researcher and reach essentially the same, comparable but not contradictory conclusions in regard to the researcher's data, perspective, situation and findings. The "decision trail" can be referred to coding decisions made from interview transcripts, the development of categories by grouping concepts that seem to address similar phenomena and/or the unfolding of propositions regarding conceptual linkages and theory development.

Being an exploratory study, I did not think that I needed to provide any formal test of reliability. Still, as I needed to assess the equivalent criterion of auditability in my

study, I used a consultant with some familiarity with the qualitative research process. She was one of the 'gatekeepers' of one of the four agencies where the fieldwork took place. She was happy to assist in that situation and we both coded two interviews. A copy of those was given to her to study one day before our meeting. When we discussed the coding of the raw data it appeared that there were not discrepancies in evaluating coding decisions or development of categories.

Finally, in relation to neutrality (that is, freedom of bias in the research process and product), the last criterion of rigor or merit in 'doing scientific research', quantitative research proposes the criterion of objectivity. Objectivity in that kind of studies refers to maintaining of the "hierarchy of distances" and a "series of dichotomies"; in other words it refers to the keeping of the proper distance between the investigators and their subjects and the data. Objectivity is achieved when reliability and validity are established (Sandelowski, 1986:33). In contrast to that, qualitative research values subjectivity, as it emphasises the meaningfulness of findings achieved by reducing the distance between researcher and participant and by eliminating artificial lines between subjective and objective reality (Sandelowski, 1986:34). Guba and Lincoln (1981:110) suggest confirmability as the last criterion of neutrality in qualitative research. According to the authors, confirmability refers to the findings themselves, not to the subjective or objective stance of the researcher, and is achieved when all the rest three criteria of rigor in research have been established. In relation to the above point, and since I had assessed the rest three criteria with the ways described before I believe that the criterion of confirmability in this study was also achieved.

Finally, as I only used the quantitative data to provide descriptions of the nature of the sample and/or the frequencies of the women's behaviours and the informants' attitudes and not to claim representativeness or generability of the findings, I did not see it appropriate to deal with issues of validity or reliability of the quantitative data in this study.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In order for the researcher to address the project's aims and objectives, there is a need to decide upon the selection of the most appropriate method (i.e. technique) to be used for gathering the data. Preoccupation with method has been an important topic within feminist social science. Sandra Harding (1987) suggests that the preoccupation with method has switched attention from the more interesting aspects of the research processes, particularly from the differences between 'method', 'methodology' and 'epistemology'. When methodology and methods are discussed, they are discussed in relation to epistemology: "Epistemology is the study of the grounds and validity of scientific and other knowledge" (Aldridge, 1991:23). In a more analytic definition given by Stanley and Wise (1990:26), epistemology is "a theory of knowledge which addresses central questions such as who can be a 'knower', what can be known, what constitutes and validates knowledge, and what the relationship is or should be between knowing and being (that is, between epistemology and ontology)".

Having decided about the methodological approaches that would underpin the research process overall, having explored the literature on doing research on sensitive issues and continuously having in mind the research aims and objectives and how best I should address them, I thought that I would better serve the above by using qualitative research methods to gather my data.

The in-depth interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armoury, and has been the major research method used by feminist researchers to encourage and enable women to tell their own life stories, and disclose rich details and information about previously 'hidden truths'. I was confident that my interviewees would be more willing to talk under a discussion way of interviewing rather than a stiff, hard and one-way interaction that a social survey questionnaire would bring about. "By listening to women speak, understanding women's membership in particular social systems, and establishing the distribution of phenomena accessible only through sensitive interviewing, feminist interview researchers have uncovered previously neglected or misunderstood worlds of experience" (Reinharz, 1992, p.44).

Further, the in-depth interview takes us into the mental world of the individual to see the way in which she sees and experiences the world (McCracken, 1991:9). As other feminist researchers have shown, in-depth interviews offer the potential to explore experience and the meanings such experiences have for the respondents. Also, they provide very good contexts for women to express their differences as well as their

similarities, and they also include opportunities for clarification and discussion and an opportunity to explore women's views of reality. The researcher has the further opportunity to probe deeply, to uncover new clues, to open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure valid, accurate, inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience (Burgess, 1984; Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984; De Vault, 1990; Kelly, 1988). In general, in-depth interview mainly facilitates a conversation in which the researcher encourages the interviewee to relate, in their own terms, experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the research question.

Interviewing is regarded as one of the basic ways to investigate society and it has become both a tool of investigation and an object of discussion in social science. It has a wide range of forms and a multiplicity of uses (Fontana and Frey, 1994). It has been argued that sociology is a 'science of interviewing', because of the significance of the 'interview' as a mode of human relationship and interaction as well as sociological investigation - questions and answers are one of the basic ways that people interact with each other (Benny and Hughes, 1984). Having made the decision that in-depth interviewing would be the most appropriate component of my design, I needed to think more deeply about what approach to take in interviewing and about more practical details, such as my relationship with the women I would interview and the ethics of the situation (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1993).

According to Lee and Renzetti (1993:5), a 'sensitive topic' is one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders

problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding and/or dissemination of research data. In relation to that, some feminist researchers are now advocating the use of as less intrusive ways of interviewing (and methods in general) as possible, suggesting that in this way participants talking about painful personal experiences (e.g. domestic violence, child abuse) will certainly feel less traumatised (Kelly et al, 1992; Maynard and Purvis, 1994). Having in mind the above, having explored the literature reviews on the various forms (structured, unstructured, semi-structured) that interviews usually take and their uses and applications on research projects (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979; Swanson, 1986), having explored the reviews on the appropriateness of methods used in sensitive topics (Oakley, 1981; Devault, 1990), and also having in mind that I would try to gather comparable information from respondents so as to be able to see possible patterns in their accounts of the violent events, I decided that I would need to use systematic questioning and a combination of open and close ended questions to elicit my data.

3.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The research aims and objectives were formulated taking into consideration the various situational, cultural and structural contexts that influenced the researcher's decisions and scientific inquiries. These contexts were extensively mentioned in Chapter One and reflected the current reality of the invisibility of violence against women in the Greek family. Trying to explain that situation through exploring the existing relevant literature on the issue, I concluded at the following reasons: firstly,

the lack or inadequacy of the data provided by the different institutions contacted by women survivors of violence inside or outside the family make it very hard to assess the extent, nature, severity and effects of this phenomenon in Greece. Secondly, violence against women in the family is under-reported because it has often been accepted within societies world-wide, particularly those with very strong traditional values concerning the sex role differentiation and power distribution. In this context, values support the man in his position as the powerful head of the family whose absolute power cannot be questioned by anybody. Also, various social agencies and legal professions have avoided getting involved in what they consider a private matter, and they have been concerned mainly with family preservation.

It was within these contexts, situational, cultural, and structural that I formulated the aims and objectives of my research. More specifically, my aims were to identify if and, in that case, what type of social support sought by abused women from formal and informal sources of help, namely their immediate family and extended kin (i.e. including sisters, cousins, etc.) and statutory or voluntary agencies dealing with the issue. I also sought to add to the understanding of the reasons that support is sought at particular periods of time (marked by specific chronological events) in women's lives, and to identify when these periods occur. All the above points were explored by drawing upon women's own accounts of the confidants' responses and the perceived support they received.

With all the above aims in mind I decided that the specific research questions I wanted to look at were as follows:

1. Do Greek women usually seek help and support[1] when they experience violence from their husbands?

2. What kind of support do women seek, when and from whom?

3. Who provides such support, and how and when is it provided?

4. Which sources of support do women find as the most useful and helpful and under which circumstance and chronological contexts?

5. What are the problems encountered by women themselves as to the reasons that prohibit them from seeking (initial or further) help and support from various sources?

Once the research questions was formed and qualitative methods chosen, I needed to prepare an interview schedule. As a matter of fact, this task did not prove to be of great difficulty since it was agreed during a series of the supervision meetings that the researcher did not necessary 're-invent the wheel' and compose a new schedule, but she could use a modified version of and existing interview schedule used in similar research projects. I decided to use the schedule used in a project that was exploring the same issues, that of 'Violence Against Wives' and 'help-seeking behaviour', previously conducted by my supervisor. After I spend some time to adopt the interview schedule to the needs of my own research in the Greek population and context in general, and having received multiple comments during the supervision

meetings on that, the formal interview schedule of this study was formulated. Having written that, the interview schedule was subject to further changes and adaptations after being piloted on seventeen Greek women (see more about it in 'The Pilot Study Sample, Processes and Uses' section below).

The interview schedule used in the actual fieldwork consisted of various categories for gathering information from women participants. In the first category, socio-demographic information was asked for both the women themselves and their husbands/partners. Next, questions about the woman's matrimonial family as well as kin and friends systems in relation to the amount of contacts they had with each other were asked, followed by questions on the woman's as well as husband's parents relationships to each other. A next section gathered information about the woman's relationship with her husband as that currently was, as this was before the marriage and as it was after it. Extensive questions about the last violent event were next asked and that included triggering causes of violence, details of what exactly happened, woman's reactions to that, other's presence and reactions during the event, etc. The next two parts were both asking the same questions only referring to different chronological contexts: the first was about information on what did the woman do after the Last Violent Event, and the second, after a Typical/General Violent Event. More specifically, the questions involved whom did she talk to and how soon after the event, what did she expect to receive in return, how the people/agencies informed

[1] In this study, support is taken to include formal (from family, kin, friends, neighbours) and informal (from statutory and/or voluntary agencies dealing with the issue of violence against women in the

responded to her quests for help, how helpful did she find them, and reasons for not contacting any other potential source of help. The final part was about 'the future and plans in general', followed by a sort epilogue on feelings and comments about the interview. The interview schedule was ten pages long, with the front page used as the informatory page on the number of the interview, date, time it started and finished, venue, and other comments. It worked very nicely as expected after the pilot. It was of course translated into Greek and a copy of it in both Greek and English is included in the Appendices section (see Appendices 3.1 and 3.2).

3.6 THE PILOT STUDY

Once the research question was formed, the qualitative methods chosen, and the interview schedule developed, the interview schedule was then tested. In order to test it and collect more information relevant to the study, the interview schedule was piloted (Appendix 3.3). The pilot study conducted with seventeen Greek women who had experienced violence by their husbands or partners. It took place between June and July 1997, whereas the preliminary preparations of gaining access started between November and December 1996.

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family.

3.6.1 Gaining Access for the Pilot Study

It is considered important to consider the pilot study because the same services were also used for the purposes of the actual fieldwork. I did not need to go through all the formal correspondences with them (apart for the forensic doctors and women's issues office) , since I had establish a good relationship with them during the pilot.

There is only one Refuge for abused women in all of Greece and this is located in Athens. Through personal telephone communications, I managed to gain *informal* access to the Refuge granted by the Refuge's Social Worker and the Director of the Reception Office, December, 1996). This, I have to say, was not particularly easy since they thought that it would be a journalistic sort of research and not a scientific one. I had to make my approach as a researcher clear and I needed to repeatedly mention that I would keep strict professional confidentiality both while gathering my data and in the later stage of disseminating it. Here I believe that the fact that all the introductions, explanations, inquiries and general arrangements were initially made over the phone, made the 'gatekeepers' be more concerned and worried and less able and willing to grant me access to the women. Nevertheless, they were very polite and when they first met me in person and I explained the research aims and purposes in a more detailed way, they allowed access. I was very happy myself because it appeared that I was the very first researcher to not only have access to the refuge but also to interview women and further to look at the files of the 105 women who stayed in the refuge from the day it opened up to the days that I was conducting the pilot study

(that is from 19.5.1993 to 24.6.1997). In March 1997, I constructed and posted the collaboration letter to the Social Services Department asking for their *formal* written agreement for access to the Refuge and to interviewing women who stay there (see Appendix 3.4). As a matter of fact, I was formally granted access only after I arrived in Greece and met the social services and the refuge staff in person. Meanwhile, a letter formally confirming access and cooperation was sent to the my Department, University of Manchester soon after I left for Greece for the pilot study (see Appendix 3.5).

After meeting and discussing the research with the Director and assistant director of the Refuge, permission was also obtained from the Board of Directors of the Equality Office to conduct the pilot study. The researcher cooperated with all three places which provide services for battered women in Athens. They included: - Equality Office (Department of Social Services, Municipality of Athens), - the Reception Office and - the Refuge for battered women and their children located in three different areas in Athens. The cooperation with the staff of all these three services was excellent and proved to be beyond every expectation.

3.6.2 The Pilot Study Sample, Processes and Uses

The women included in the pilot study were self-identified as women suffering violence by men and were willing to participate in the project. It was anticipated that the number of women would be small (personal communication with the Social

Worker, December 1996). More specifically, the research concentrated on seventeen Greek battered women who were obtained from various sources:

- one was staying in the Refuge for battered women in Athens,
- five had left the Refuge a short time before interview and were contacted by a Social Worker and agreed to participate,
- five were contacted through another interviewee (snowballing technique), and
- six were women who had asked for immediate help from the Social Service Department, Office of Equality, Municipality of Athens.

The pilot interviews took place in various places and at different times within the day and that was always arranged according to the woman's convenience. More specifically, one interview took place in the refuge for battered women, two interviews were conducted at the woman's work place (coffee shop), two in women's own house, two in women's friends house, four in the reception office for battered women, and six in the social services department of the municipality of Athens.

For the pilot study, the interviews were tape recorded. This gave me practice in dealing with the tape recorder itself, the tactics of introducing it to the women, transcription of data and so on, in case I needed to use it during the actual fieldwork. After permission was granted to use the tape recorder by each individual woman, it was usually turned on for a while before the interview began. It was obvious to the researcher that most of the women did not seem to be comfortable with this, so in order to put them at ease in front of the tape-recorder a few minutes of introductory

points and remarks took place before beginning the interview. This helped to relax the women. The interviews lasted between one hour and a half to four hours with an average of two hours and half. The Social Worker warned the researcher that some women might not agree to the recording of the interviews. In the end, five out of the seventeen women refused tape recording.

The pilot study proved of great value to the researcher. It demonstrated that the open ended questions encouraged relaxation and therefore led to more detailed responses. The researcher had also in mind that it is desirable to make the interview pleasant to the women interviewed (Burgess, 1988). The majority of the interviewees said that they felt good talking through their experiences, that there were no questions that embarrassed them or made them feel uncomfortable and that, in a number of cases they actually had found the interviews therapeutic. This was also a very frequent statement of the fifty three women who were interviewed during the fieldwork. The interview schedule was tested throughout the pilot interviews. That was very important and useful in helping to develop the subject matter and the tactics tackling the topics to be covered, particular ways of introducing as well as approaching certain topics and finding ways for eliciting women's views in detail (Morton-Williams, 1988). Also, through the pilot interviews I had the opportunity to see possible parts or sections of the interview schedule that might have caused particular difficulties to the respondents in eliciting the required information. In relation to that, and of course after a number of discussions during supervision sessions, it was decided that the sections on the first and worst violent events would better be excluded from the

fieldwork interviews since women found it difficult to remember many details about these: some of them could not recall very clearly the reasons that caused the first violent event or had exactly happened, and they could not distinguish one single event as the worst, since they had to choose among a great number of very serious violent events. As a result, the interview schedule to be used in the field was consisted of sections on the last and the general violent events only.

3.7 FIELDWORK

One of the most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its expressed commitment to viewing events, action, norms, values and so on, from the perspective of the people who are being studied. This is often expressed in the literature as " seeing through the eyes of the people you are studying" (Bryman, 1988:61). This task in my case embodied particular advantages since I was conducting research in my own language, same culture, same country and similar perception of the 'cultural' background of the 'cases'. For McCracken (1991:11), the fact that qualitative researchers work in their own culture, makes the in-depth interview a powerful tool. They can draw on their understanding of how they themselves see and experience the world, and they can supplement and interpret the data they generate.

Having the complete and revised (after the pilot stage) interview schedule, the preparations for the actual fieldwork stage began. The fieldwork was conducted between January and April 1998 after having gained access (September and October

1997) from four different services dealing with cases of domestic violence: The Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology of the University of Thessaloniki (see Appendix 3.6), the Women's issues office of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (see Appendix 3.7), the Reception office for battered women in Athens, and the Refuge for battered women of the Municipality of Athens.

3.7.1 Gaining Access

Gaining access from the last two places mentioned above was a matter of a couple of phonecalls since they knew me from the pilot study. As a matter of fact, they asked me to get them as much material as possible to enrich the library they have within the social services department. I started to establish a friendly relationship with them and that helped a lot in terms of facilitating the process of arranging the interviews and informing me when a new woman was arriving in the refuge. As far as the forensic doctors were concerned, gaining access proved to be an easy task. Two things helped: first, I personally knew one of the three forensic doctors and that was of course a great advantage in gaining access to the women examined by him in the forensic laboratory; and second, the other forensic doctors were the authors of an early research paper (Epivatianos and Vasiliadis, 1981) based on a sample of battered women approaching the laboratory for the forensic examination. The paper of course was written from the point of view of the forensic medicine. I considered that as a very fortunate sign because, they would expected to be interested in my project since they themselves had worked on that about twenty years ago. Indeed, it was proved so.

In the last case of gaining access from the women's issues office in Thessaloniki, the task was not particularly difficult. The psychologist who was in head was also doing a part time Ph.D. in England, and from the very first minutes that we met and introduced ourselves we both felt as if we had something in common. She accepted me in her office and gave the permission to conduct the interviews there whenever she was away. In other cases, she gave me access to a very small side-room next to her office where I would be able to interview the woman. She also asked for my research questions (interview schedule) and definitions in writing which I delivered the very next morning.

3.7.2 Interviews

The position I adopted in relation to the issue of where I should conduct the interviews was guided by two main considerations. Firstly, the concern that the interviews should be held in an atmosphere in which the women would feel comfortable enough to talk freely and openly (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Mies, 1993). The second consideration was related to the idea that each of the respondents should be free to nominate the interview location of their own choice so that any stress or anxiety might be minimised for them.

All women who were asked to take part in the study agreed to do so after a brief explanation from the researcher about the purpose of the research, following the

initial introduction and information given to them by the workers of each agency. In fact, many were anxious to take part in anything that would help other women experiencing violence. It is important that there was no 'non-response' rate in this research since all of the fifty three women who were informed about the project were willing to participate. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, the fact that the researcher was a woman was acknowledged by all women as very advantageous. Also, as mentioned above, it was very important that the researcher shared the same culture and first language with the women interviewed because she could probe and follow meaning about the nature of specific cultural contexts (McCracken, 1991:11).

Before the beginning of any interview I made sure that each woman knew exactly what the research was about, that it was completely confidential and that she could withdraw from the interview at any time. All these rights were mentioned very clearly on "The Consent Form" (see Appendix 3.8 [in English] and Appendix 3.9 [in Greek]). Due to the sensitivity of the specific topic under study together with the researcher's prior knowledge and awareness of the fact that these women would not be familiar with scientific research procedures (as no other previous research has been done on the issue), I considered the protection of respondents as paramount during the duration of the project. Accordingly, I was very committed to the fair and ethical treatment of women who participated in the research (Sarantakos, 1993:21-26). Furthermore, respondents' participation was strictly voluntary. No names, addresses or other identifying information was requested or recorded. Participants were asked to

assign fictitious names for themselves if they preferred to ensure confidentiality and further protect the anonymity of themselves. None of the women changed their name.

3.7.3 Researcher - Respondent Relationship

One of the key issues which feminist researchers have contributed greatly to is the relationship between the researcher and the women involved in the study, and the ethics of research (for example Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1990). I was aware of the complexity of the relationship between the researcher and the participant when using qualitative research. The feminist approach to the study is reflected in the researcher's acceptance of the existence of these varying power dynamics in the relationship and of her constant conscious attempts to keep it an equal, non-hierarchical and non-exploitative one, since a hierarchical for example relationship might prohibit or discourage full discussion. Further, feminist approaches claim that research participants should be considered as the owners of their information and as competent social actors who "have the power and knowledge which the researchers need" (Stanley and Wise, 1993:20). In relation to this, each time I was introduced to the woman by the worker of the agency, I described the focus of the study and the topics to be discussed in the interviews. I also provided each one of them with the following information: the purpose of the study was to learn about the social support you received while you were in the violent relationship and up to date; participation in the study is totally voluntary and may be discontinued at any time; no identifying information will be requested or recorded; you can get a copy of the report made at

the end with the results of the study; and the research results might be disseminated in the form of reports, publications or announcements. Almost all of the above and particularly the last one was very consciously used from my part in order to ensure that the participants knew the researcher's purpose, that is, how I intended to use the research data. These tactics would create a more equal relationship between the researcher and the researched in terms of verifying the fact that there were many ways in which the interviewee could be powerful too (Burgess-Limerick, 1993:359).

Research ethics, including ideas about informed consent and the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of participants, must be agreed between the researcher and the researched before starting any kind of research (Barnes, 1979). This concept raises important issues such as the question of power, empowerment, rapport and trust. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), there are no single or simple determinations of ethics and these must always be considered anew in each situation. Various researchers have argued that asking questions about people's private experiences and lives in general through interviewing, is an act of power and control (Reinharz, 1992; Davies, 1992). Although the researcher might be able to create a non-hierarchical or exploitative relationship with her interviewee during interviewing, it needs to be acknowledged that it is still the researcher who has the power to use the data by analysing and disseminating it (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Once the researcher practice her duty to inform the participants about which ways s/he is going to write about their experiences, s/he will have contributed to a more equal relationship with them.

Further, in the woman-to-woman interview situation, as was the case of this study and which is typical of feminist approaches, creating an equal power relationship is seen as important because interpersonal power relations are a fundamental feature of gender and the structural relations of system and subordination which gender inscribes. As women are regarded as relatively powerless and oppressed, then clearly it is important in feminist research to allow women to define their own experiences from their points of view (Holland and Ramazanoglou, 1994).

In addition to ethics, the concept of 'trust' must be considered. A feminist researcher should begin a research project intending to believe the participants and should only question a woman if she begins not to believe her (Reinharz, 1992:29). Research participants may be suspicious about the researcher's academic interest in their lives and how this may be used in an academic 'world' which is probably indifferent to their everyday life (Behar, 1992). Consequently, as a researcher one has to be trusted if s/he is going to gain information about other women's lives. In relation to this, it was my view that, since the first alert, information and familiarization of women with the research would be made through the workers of each of the four agencies, that hopefully would make the women feel reassured about the researcher's trustworthiness and wish not to exploit them.

Some feminist researchers have also defined themselves as 'listeners' during the interview process and this was how I saw myself (Armitage, 1983:5). Within the

interpretation of an account, a researcher needs to take into consideration not only what the participants said but also how they constructed their accounts (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992). 'Listening' is an important way to explore people's lives (Anderson and Jack, 1991). During listening, an interviewer must concentrate on what interviewees' presence of feelings are, how they describe facts and events and what they are likely to mean by the language they use. The presence of the researcher's self is also central to the conduct of social research, and also their emotional involvement in the research process is unavoidable and feminist scholars agree that it should be acknowledged (Kelly and Burton, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Further, a researcher has also an obligation to invite participants to talk through asking them questions, and s/he should be prepared to share her/his thoughts and interests with the researched when being asked by the latter, as long as s/he does not forget that the questions should be based on the participants' experiences and not on the researchers' (Chase, 1995). In relation to that, it appeared that I only used self-disclosing very judiciously since my view was that although it could sometimes enhance an interview, it could also be inhibitating. Primarily I wanted to listen to a woman's experience but I also was prepared for disclosing information about my own life, only if I would feel any 'invitation signal' to do so. In the majority of the interviews, that did not prove to be the case.

From the above points, it is made obvious that I found it difficult to achieve a completely symmetrical power relation with the women during the interviews, but it was more of a constant shift of power balance and dynamics in general between the

researcher and the researched. A more "involved" position on the part of the researcher was abandoned and a self-evaluation as well as a 'descriptively reflexive' stance was adapted[2] (Stanley, 1990). The latter concept of reflexivity is presented as very crucial within the qualitative research approaches. Stier (1991:2) refers to it as something 'bending back on itself'. In this sense, a researcher must concern herself where she positions 'I' as a person in research and to reflect analytically on this in research accounts.

Overall, this "continuum of involvement" of the part of the researcher during the interview process, is also been defined as ranging from "nil involvement" through "stranger" and "acquaintance" roles, to "active friendship" (Plummer, 1983). Being aware of all the above points, I sought to develop a degree of involvement with the respondents which would approximate most closely to Plummer's "acquaintance" level and where the researcher "...wants to obtain a casual working relationship with her subject..." (Plummer,1983:139).

[2] According to Stanley (1990), reflexivity can be distinguished between 'descriptive reflexivity' and 'analytic reflexivity'. Descriptive reflexivity is concerned with describing the 'findings' of the research, inclining the relationship and feelings of researcher and researched and also the relationship between them, while analytic reflexivity focuses on explicating the basis of knowledge-claims within details of the 'research process' of knowledge production. Stanley (1990) points out that most feminist uses of reflexivity are of the descriptive kind only and that, unlike ethnomethodology or

3.7.4 Sample

The sample included fifty three women who approached the above services between January and April 1998 and asked for help. More specifically, sixteen women were found from the forensic doctors in Thessaloniki, ten from the women's issues office also in Thessaloniki, seven from the reception office in Athens, and twenty from the refuge in Athens. The women's (as well as their husbands') socio-demographic characteristics were as following:

3.7.4.1 The women of the study:

The age of the participants ranged between 25 and 62 years, with the average mean being 41. Thirty two percent of them (n=17) had graduated from secondary education (Lyceum) and twenty eight percent (n=15) had a University degree. From the rest, 19% (n=10) had finished primary school, 19% (n=10) finished high school and 2% (n=1) had a college certificate.

Of the 53 women in the study, 49% (n=26) were at the time of the interview unemployed and 34% (n=18) were working in the private sector. Almost all defined themselves as Christian Orthodox (98%, n=52). At the time of the interview 39,6% (n=21) were married and living together, and 24,5% (n=13) were married and living

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phenomenology, feminist social science still has an under-developed idea about other more analytic forms of reflexivity.

apart. Only 32% (n=17) of them had the house they were living in their own name, and for the majority (43,4%, n=23) the house was on the husband's name. For 11,3% (n=6) the house was in both names and for the remaining 13,2% (n=7) the house did not belong either of them (e.g. on rent, in-laws house).

The majority of the women had no income on their own (49%, n=26) and 34% (n=18) were earning up to £400 per month. At the present time, £400 will buy 185.000 Greek drachmas. The rest 17% (n=9) were earning from 185.000-230.000dr, that is £400-500 per month. At the time of the interview, the majority of women were still staying in their house (54,7%, n=29). Forty one percent (n=22) were staying elsewhere, e.g. the refuge, one with her parents (1.9%), and one with friends. Nine women had no children, and 53% (n=28) had 2 children, 17% (n=9) had 3, and 13% (n=7) had 1 child. The children's age varies from 6 months to 35 years old, and in 53% of the cases (n=28) they witnessed the last violent episode.

Finally, 72% (n=38) of women said that their parents had usually no fights during the woman's childhood and 19% (n=10) had fights in the house with the father being abusive and violent to the mother. The remaining 9,4% (n=5) of women revealed that their parents had arguments but not fights.

3.7.4.2 The women's husbands/partners:

The age of men who battered women in this study ranged between 27 and 69 years, with the mean being 45 years. Twenty (38%) had finished primary school and 13 (25%) had a University degree. Of the rest, 17% (n=9) had finished high school, 15% (n=8) finished the Lyceum and 6% (n=3) had a college certificate. They come from all segments of society, including clerks, university teaching staff, policemen, and the majority run their own private business or were working for a private company/employer (81%, n=43). Seven men (13%) worked in the public sector, two (4%) were pensioners and one (2%) was unemployed. Fifty three (98%) of the men were Christians Orthodox and one was an atheist.

Based on the women's knowledge about their husbands' parents' relationship during their childhood, women reported that 34% (n=18) of them had parents who were fighting and arguing a great deal and for 32% (n=17) their parents were not fighting or arguing. Of the rest, 23% (n=12) had parents who were arguing but not fighting and 11% (n=6) of the women said they did not know.

3.8 RECORDING DATA

The method of recording data of the study was keeping notes. Although tape-recording, which was the recording data method in the pilot study, had proved a very useful and convenient technique, for the actual fieldwork I decided to keep as

extensive notes as possible. The reason for that was the big number of women that I was expected to interview after I was informed so by the doctors in the forensic laboratory in Thessaloniki. Their big sample was referred to battered women in general (i.e. battered by strangers, by children, by brothers or other members of their family), whereas my focus was on interviewing women experiencing violence from their husbands. With this specification, the number of women that I could interview decreased a lot and consequently I did not have the time to make arrangements for tape-recording. Nevertheless, my experience of keeping notes proved also very helpful for the research purposes and unexpectedly cathartic for the researcher.

After each interview, I was always taken two or more hours to 'transcribe' the open-ended questions of the research schedule so as not to loose contact with as verbatim a record of the woman's accounts as possible. In other words, I functioned as a tape recorder myself and the only way I could make it right was, straight after finishing the interview with the woman, to isolate myself somewhere quite and with no interruptions (i.e. it was always the university library since the family I was staying with for the time of the fieldwork was an always busy and noisy place) and write all the answers from the beginning. Of course, the notes taking during the interviews were most helpful and informatory. I named the notebook where I kept all that 'Sharing the Pain' and it was constantly under my occupation and was never seen by anybody else. The notes were interchangeably written in both English and Greek.

Listening to and/or 'identified' with the experiences of traumatised woman is associated with lots of pain and stress transferred to and shared from the committed feminist interviewer (Reinharz, 1992:34; Hoff, 1990). The discovery of the amount of pain in women's lives can reverberate in one's own head for some time. Indeed, in my case too, both during and after each interview I usually felt overwhelmed and became anxious and depressed. While I was looking for a way to somehow off-load some amount of this pain (and being aware of the impossibility of talking about any of those with anybody since in that way I would break confidentiality), I realised after a couple of interviews that my writing in the 'Sharing the Pain' notebook where I was analytically writing the traumatic bits of the women's stories and answers in general, played a cathartic role in off-loading some of the stress and anxiety I was already feeling.

Keeping the research diary was another very helpful way to keep track of everything that was going on during the fieldwork. Feelings from meeting and talking to women I never knew before (and probably will not see again), possible particularities of each interview, reflections on my role and stance towards gaining information about other women's lives, questions of how and if I managed to empower them and give them hope for escaping violence or if I just managed to filled in another research schedule and should feel happy about that, were all written down. Also, the research diary was helpful in terms of keeping information about meetings and contacts with relevant professionals in the field and further reflecting upon that. In general, a reflexive attitude toward the entire research process giving raise to both psychological and

contextual questions was followed and a "journey format" in the style of the writing was kept (Reinharz, 1992:212). This, together with the information based on the 'sharing the pain' notebook, was very useful to reflect upon during the actual imputing of data to the computer.

3.9 CODING AND ANALYSING DATA

In this study, the quantitative data derived from close-ended questions were analysed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and descriptive statistics were conducted. Qualitative data derived from the big range of open-ended questions were typed in the Microsoft Word 6 for Windows.

Qualitative data have been described as an 'attractive nuisance' (Miles, 1979). Its analysis can be as much a very personal way of working as it can be the following of certain general rules. Fascinating and frightening at the same time the analysis, at times, emerged as an endless process. Although the sample may appear numerically small, the emerging raw data was immense and appeared very difficult to be analysed at first sight. McCraken (1991:17) argues that the major principle in qualitative research is that "less is more", as it involves work for longer and with greater care. What I found very useful for the analysis of my data in general, was the fact that as I wanted to have some basis of comparison between the study participants, I had used a structured schedule for collecting my data and as it appeared, the coding and 'managing' of the data was worked out in a systematic way as well.

Burgess (1990) argues that the field research involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. In my case, this proved very much the case. In the early stages of the data collection broad categories in data automatically appeared according to the questions asked. Although I was thrilled to see that happening I did not want to run the risk of losing the whole process of qualitative analysis and in this way, I was very careful in including every single bit of data given under the same question. Accordingly, and looking for "supporting" and "non-supporting" data to build-up the analytic categories developed from the early stages I found myself already dealing with the first step towards the analysis, that of categorisation (Hughes, 1994:35; Bryman and Burgess, 1994).

'Transcribing' the interviews: As explained above, the data were gathered through the method of keeping notes and keeping a research diary. Keeping notes in such an extensive way as I did, proved to be a valuable as well as cathartic technique which, though, demanded a huge amount of attention to the interviewee's accounts, and huge amount of time for the actual 'recording' of each interview. Although I did not have to literally transcribe the interviews listening through the tape recorder and using a transcription machine, still I had to type all the material I gathered from my notes into the computer. Due to lack of facilities in Greece, this process of imputing the data to the computer began as soon as I returned to England. In this way, both a hard copy version of the interview and a machine readable file were created (McCraken, 1991:42).

Coding: Coding represents a key step in the process of analysing data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:61). It may "simply be the process of categorising and sorting data" (Charmaz, 1983:111), and it may serve to "summarise, synthesise and sort many observation made out of the data" (Charmaz, 1083:112). Originally, key points were highlighted through reading and re-reading the data. I tried to 'conceptualise' the data so as to make 'raw' data more easily discussed. The way to that was by conceptualising it, that is by using a label to stand for or represent an idea, a phenomenon, a concept and so on (Strauss and Corbin, 1991:63). As a result, aside to the accounts given by women to each one of the open ended questions, a key concept was labeled and was given a number. This kind of 'memos keeping' involved words invented by the researcher or 'in vivo codes' names and phrases used by the interviewees (Strauss and Corbin, 1991:72). Additionally, it proved to be very helpful and convenient since it was the first step towards the creation of contextual categories and sub-categories derived from the data.

Organizing the data and the categories: This involved reading, reading and...re-reading through the data so as to become even more familiar with it. The initial concepts, memos and fieldnotes were written on the same page aside the 'transcribed' word processed data. That offered the researcher the opportunity to familiarise more with the data and facilitate the 'conceptualisation process' (Strauss and Corbin, 1991:63). The use of a word processor (MS Word 6.0 for Windows) made the process of analysis easier and more familiar to the researcher. Thus, data was organised and

categorised in the computer by the either more general and abstract concepts or sometimes original wording taken out of data as subheadings. Once certain categories had taken place, then the word processor was used to re-organise those categories linking them together and framing more general categories and sub-categories. Looking for similarities, regularities as well as differences among the data to generate categories, and attempting the actual categorization of themes and concepts, and the making of patterns was the most difficult and at the same time the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis. As the data had started to take a textual form, that is as categories of meaning and conceptual categories emerged, the need to link it with the literature was evident.

Presenting the data: For the final presentation I selected extracts from the interview material which provided an insight into the accounts of the respondents. This part was comprised of both a guiding commentary from the literature and an illustrative extract from the interviews. This analytical approach is termed by Plummer (1983) "systematic thematic analysis" and has been described by him as a point where *"the sociologist slowly accumulates a series of themes - partly derived from the subjects' accounts and partly derived from sociological theory"*(Plummer, 1983:114).

3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Small samples in qualitative research are rarely representative in the quantitative sense. In this terms, the researcher is aware of the fact that no claims can be made as

to the issues of generability and representativeness of the findings of the study as the small number of the respondents constitute a 'convenience' sample (Robson, 1993; Sandelowski, 1986:31). Furthermore, since such study on abused women's help seeking behaviour was the first one to be conducted on this issue in Greece, a comparison of the findings with those of other studies was not possible. Such a comparison would be anticipated to be very useful in providing a more complete picture of women's experiences of help-seeking in Greece as well as in offering additional confirmation of the results of this study.

However, the participants were selected because they can illuminate the phenomenon being studied, and anyone's experience, if well described, represents a "slice from the real world" (Denzin, 1983:134, cited in Sandelowski, 1986:32). In this way, this research allows one to gain an understanding of the subjective perceptions and experiences of this group of women. As a result, the above limitations are weighed against the depth of understanding and insight to be offered by this research and the opportunity to explore this topic.

3.11 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

I hope that this research will constitute a potentially valuable source of information for professionals and voluntary organisations which work with women who have been abused by male partners in Greece. Moreover, it is hoped that public awareness will be raised and that Greek society start moving towards the development of a better

understanding of the dynamics of male violence against women. In addition, as all kinds of feminist research can be described as 'action research' approaches since feminism sees research inquiry as premised on the need for social change (Reinharz, 1992), the researcher hopes that these findings might be used by policy makers and for social action leading to social change. In the same way, the findings could be of great help to the service providers in Greece in organizing their future intervention plans more effectively and more substantially. Furthermore, the research may also be useful for professionals from other disciplines. Finally, as this research is the first to be conducted in Greece, it is a hoped that it can help lay the foundation for more research projects on violence against women in Greece.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS I:

THE LAST VIOLENT EPISODE

4.1 Introduction

A central concern of a number of studies in the literature on wife abuse has been the circumstances and the characteristics of the violent events. (Walker, 1979; Gelles, 1972, 1974; Benjamin and Adler, 1980:350; Dobash and Dobash, 1982:191; Dobash and Dobash, 1998:141-168; Peterson, 1991:7; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984: 65; Neville and Pugh, 1997:371).

In this chapter a detailed reference to the circumstances and characteristics of the last violent episode is given. In particular, findings concerning the frequency, duration and the location of the violent event, the women's reactions and perceived causes of their husbands' violence are presented, followed by information on the most common violent acts of husbands, the means most often used, the injuries women suffered, the

action taken by them and the role other people played when present in the violent events.

Reference to the responses of people approached by the women after the 'Last Violent Event' is also given. These responses were categorised into 'supportive' to women and challenging' the violence and/or the men (these concepts were originally used by Dobash and Dobash 1979). 'Supportive' responses include actions taken by other people such as trying to calm the woman, chatting with her, asking her to try to cope. Negative responses include critisizing and blaming the woman's wrong behaviour or simply avoid saying or doing anything but leaving the room where the violent event was taken place. 'Challenging' support includes actions taken by people aimed at questioning the man's right to behave violently to his wife, such as calling the police (e.g. neighbours, woman's best friend, children), taking the woman away from the violent husband to maintain her safety (e.g. neighbours) or helping her to leave the house and the relationship.

4.2 CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAST VIOLENT EVENT

4.2.1 Frequency of Violence in the Last Violent Event.

Frequency in other countries:

There is evidence that wife abuse escalates in frequency and severity over time rather than being an one-off event (Hanmer and Stanko, 1988:308, summarising other

studies; Woffordt, et al 1994:195). Sadly, once it has happened a single time, it is rare for it not to happen again (Hague and Malos, 1993:7). The frequency of violent events may vary dramatically from as little as once a year to as much as one or more times a day (Flynn, 1977). In a study by Andrews and Brown (1988:308) in London, two-thirds of those who reported domestic violence said that the assaults happened regularly. In Serbia, Mrsevic and Hughes (1997:124) found that the frequency and duration of violence against callers to the one and only SOS Hotline for Women Victims of Violence in Belgrade, were very high. The majority of women who called the SOS Hotline reported that the incidents of violence occured daily or weekly (58% and 27%, respectively) and had been ongoing for years (44%).

Also, a survey of battered women conducted in Canberra 1984 for the Australian Law Reform Commission and consistent with the situation reported in other Australian cities, reported that the violence typically occured once a week for 24% of victims and daily for 16% of victims. In a quarter of the sample, the violence had been continuing for fifteen to twenty years or longer, and for 37% on women, the violence had persisted for five to ten years (Hatty, 1987:41). Dobash et al (1985) report 109 women having received approximately 32,000 assaults throughout their married lives (p. 164), or about two attacks each week (p.143). Also, Strauss (1990a) comparing frequency rates of assault in two shelter samples in the 1985 National Family Violence Survey, found that women in the shelters reported an annual frequency of 65 to 68 assaults per year, a frequency 11 times greater than the average frequency of six times per year reported by the 622 (12% of the sample) women who reported violence

in the NFVS. As Pagelow (1981:45) points out: "One of the few things about which almost all researchers agree is that battering escalates in frequency and intensity over time". And as Ferraro (1988:137) also mentions: "...once begun...the prospects for eliminating abuse appear slim".

Moreover, it has been observed that, whatever its frequency, when violence occurs it tends to be severe in the majority of cases (68-84%) (Rounsaville, 1978), and severity tends to increase through time (Langeley and Levy, 1977:25; Dobash and Dobash, 1985:142). As Hanmer et al (1989:366) point out, in an estimated 90 per cent of cases assaults over time continue and they even become more frequent and more severe.

Frequency in the Greek study:

In the Greek study, there was a great variety in the frequency rates of assaults that the 53 women reported. To the question "How many times has your husband been violent towards you within the last two years of marriage?" their replies varied from one to ninenty six, with one to two assaults per week being the most frequent pattern. In total, the 53 women reported being assaulted approximately 1,304 times within the last two years of their marriage.

To gather more information about the circumstances and characteristics of the Last Violent Event as well as in order to contextualise women's behaviour, a number of questions were asked, including sources of confrontations, acts of violence, the types

of physical force that men used to hurt women, injuries caused, duration, presence and action of other people, and women's feelings.

4.2.2 Causes of Violence in the Last Violent Event.

Causes in other countries:

Many researchers are concerned with the various sources of confrontations throughout the couple's married life. Based on telephone interviews with 670 Serbian women victims of violence, Mrsevic and Hughes (1997:108) found that the most frequent cause of violence women reported was consistent with the feminist explanation of men's violence being a means of controlling women's physical, sexual and emotional labour. The more this control over women increases the more men's demands for women to meet also increase. As a result, the least important things that may create inconvenience (e.g. the baby cried or there is no beer in the fridge) in men's lives can result in women's battering for "nothing" (49%). Also, the same authors found that the second most frequent cause of violence associated with incidents of violence in their sample was alcohol (33.5%). As women were trying to make sense of the violence they often made excuses of their husbands' violent behaviour because they were under the influence of alcohol. Another, most frequent cause of violence in this research was men's jealousy (10%). Men's fear of losing control over women's lives resulted in, feelings of jealousy, usually unfounded, and suspicion that the women are seeing other men. Other reasons mentioned in the same research were disputes about "the couple's apartment" (9%), "money" (8.5%), "children" (5%) and other" (11%).

Similarly, Dasgupta and Warrier (1996:251) using in-depth interviews with twelve highly educated Indian women leaving in the United States found that the most frequent sources of violence from their husbands were "money expenditures": although eleven of the twelve women held jobs could not have access to family income or their own earnings and could not spend money without the husband's approval. Also, "men's jealousy": many of the husbands thought their wives were seductive toward other men and therefore "un-Indian" in their behaviour and deserved to be hit. All 12 women reported that they were beaten up unless they were totally subservient to their husbands' demands. They also cited that when they tried to challenge their husband's authority by arguing with them or when tried to make some decisions on their own, physical abuse escalated. Further, another reason for physical abuse by men was the "perceived inadequacy of the women's dowry" in the cases in which dowry was transferred. According to this belief, money and other kinds of gifts should be given by the bride's parents even after a few years of marriage and in case this (the dowry) was perceived as small then a husband had the right to beat his wife, a behaviour that was also supported by the husband's parents and kins.

In the same vein, ethnographic interviews conducted with 37 women in South Africa found that interviewees cited patriarchy, women's rights and position in the society, economic deprivation, apartheid and unemployment as major reasons with respect to abuse of women in society, and the same women cited as the most frequent reasons of violence against women by men, the "alcohol and drug abuse", "socialisation of

women into subservient roles", "jealousy", "men feeling threatened" and "men treating women as property" (Dangor et al, 1998:131).

Furthermore, Dobash and Dobash (1982:190) analysing the sources of conflict of the violent episodes throughout their married life reported by 109 battered women they interviewed, found that the most frequent source was the almost always unfounded men's "sexual jealousy" over their wives (44%), the disagreements relating to expenditures of "money" (16%) and the disputes on "domestic duties" and the accompanied husband's expecations regarding them (16%).

Causes in the Greek study:

The reported causes of last violence against the 53 women in the present study of Greece are in agreement with findings from other parts of the world and other research projects. The majority of women in the sample (28%) revealed that the main cause of the man's last violence was an event that was categorised as "role expectations" (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Women's Reports on Causes of Violence During the Last Violent Event

Cause	n	%
Role expectation	15	29
Jealousy	11	20
Drunkness	10	19
Another Woman	9	19
Money	8	15
Total	53	102*

* rounding error

Women talked about how insignificant were the reasons that made men violent towards them such as:

> I did not do the ironing and we started arguing about that and he became violent in seconds (Int. 9)

***

> It was nothing really. I disagreed with him in some issues, we had an argument, he told me to keep my tongue short next time and when I went on arguing he became violent (Int. 22)

***

The largest single category identified by the Greek women was "role expectations" (29%). Women tended to refer to those causes as *"nothing"*, what might appear to be violence with almost no cause. When they were asked to give more information about

the event they defined it as a "*role expectations*". Research in the refuges in the UK also found that women reported that they were beaten for "anything" (Edwards, 1989:171).

Twenty percent of women in the Greek study reported "*men's jealousy*" as the cause of their violence. Women revealed that they were very often accused by their husbands of seeing another man or of flirting with other men and when women denied the accusations the men became violent. Women said that the accusations were wrong and that they were suffering the violence unjustifiably. This finding also supports previous studies which indicate that accussing the woman is a common technique among perpetrators and that only in a small percentage of cases were the accusations are valid (Edwards, 1989).

> He used to say "I know that you are always have an eye on my friend and you are flirting him when I am not present. Next time I'll catch you and you will regret it" (Int. 13).
>
> ***
>
> He told me that I will only make the shopping list and gave it to him to buy the things because he thought that I flirt with the shoppers (Int. 29).
>
> ***

Almost twenty percent of the women reported "*drunkness*" as the cause of men's violence (see Table 4.1). While they were describing the details of the event, they

tended to feel sorry and make some kind of excuses of him and it was obvious that they were linking alcohol with their husbands' violent behaviour. As feminist literature supports, alcohol can be seen as a contributing factor to violent behaviour but it cannot be accepted as a simple cause or sufficient explanation to it (Mullender, 1996:43 summarising other studies).

> He had drunk a lot again and he did not know what he was doing. Next morning he was not believing me when told him what had happened (Int. 19).
>
> ***
>
> He came home and smelled awful. He'd been drinking for the whole evening, I am sure! When I complained about the time, he started hitting me (Int. 32)
>
> ***

Ninenteen percent of women reported that "*another woman*" was also a cause of the last violence. Women revealed that since the time their husbands had an affair with another woman the men became violent towards them more frequently. This supports findings from other research which found that "other" causes of violence included men's relationship with another woman (Mrsevic and Hughes, 1997:108).

> I know that he had an affair and I could not pretent anymore that I do not know. When I asked him to discuss and tell me the truth he became violent (Int. 21).

***

My son told me that he saw dad in a coffee shop with another woman. It was the time when he was supposed to be at work. When he came back home and I told him that I knew, he refused everything, called me crazy and became violent (Int. 42).

***

Finally, fifteen percent of women reported "*money*" as the cause of men's last violence. Women revealed - and that was mainly in the cases where women did not have their own income - that money problems were the reason for much of the violence they suffered. The majority of the women in the sample, that is 26 women (49%), were unemployed and they described their experiences with the disputes and consequent fights they had with their husbands regarding the expenditures of money and their access on the family income in general.

Whenever I asked for some money to buy some things for myself he would always call me names and said that I was not a woman for the nightclubs rather than the house. When I started arguing about that he started shouted at me and saying that I get a job first and then spend money on my things (Int. 12).

***

I had invited some friends in the house and I wanted to prepare some snacks and parties and I asked him for some money to buy things. He refused and I

was angry because it was always them who invited us for dinner and we never invited them to our house because of him. He was shouting at me saying that we do not have money to spend for these things and he became violent when I continued arguing (Int. 45).

***

4.2.3 Duration of Violence in the Last Violent Event.

Duration in the Greek study:

Forty two women (79%) reported that the last violence lasted up to 30 minutes, five (9%) said it lasted about an hour, three (6%) said it lasted about an hour and a half and the remaining three said it lasted more than one hour and thirty minutes. No matter the actual duration of the violent event, women revealed that it felt like it lasted a lifetime.

4.2.4 Violence in the Last Violent Event.

Violence in other countries:

It is evident from previous research that injuries can be inflicted on women by using various degrees of force as well as different means of imposing this force on women's bodies. For example, women interviewed by Neville and Pugh (1997:372) revealed that they were threatened with a weapon (n=4), and 13 per cent of Hatty's sample revealed that physical abuse were inflicted through the use of a weapon too. Similarly, Mullender (1996:20) points out that injuries can be caused with the use of objects and weapons and their use actually becomes more likely over time. She quotes

findings from research undertaken by Jones et al (1986) who found that under a quarter of all incidents in the Islington crime survey involved "bottles, glasses, knives, scissors, sticks, clubs and other blunt instuments" all of which inflicted terrible injuries to women. Dobash and Dobash (1982:194) found that many men use their feet in attacks on their wives, and once a woman was pushed or punched on the floor, then, she was commonly severely kicked in the head and body.

Violence in the Greek study:

Varying degrees of force and different means were also used by the women's husbands (see Table 4.2). The 53 women revealed that during the Last Violent Event "men's own hands" were most often used to hit women (70%, n=37). In all cases physical force such as hitting, grabbing, pulling hair, pushing were used. In addition, in 7% of the cases (n=4) men used both hands and feets to hit women. In 6 cases (11%) men, along with breaking things from the house, threw various objects at the women such as chairs, and in 6 other cases (11%) men used knives and other dangerous objects (keys, kitchen tools, chairs, gun) and threatened women with death.

Table 4.2

Means of the Last Violence

	N	%
Men's own hands	37	70
Hands and feet	4	7
Throw various objects	6	11
Throw dangerous objects	6	11
Total	53	99*

* rounding error

4.2.5 Injuries in the Last Violent Event.

Injuries in other countries:

In other research, the extent of injury suffered by many women victims of men's violence is well-documented in evidence from different research. Hague and Malos (1993:7) point out that physical abuse towards women may involve anything from threatening behaviour, slaps and pushing to black eyes, bruises and broken bones, to extremely serious incidents of multiple assault which required immediate medical treatment. It can involve attempted stranglings, threats with a weapon or with death, resulting in internal injuries or handicaps and dissabilities. Hatty (1987:42) cites findings of research undertaken in Canberrean battered women according to which physical abuse was often inflicted through punching, kicking or hitting (38%), attempted strangulation/smothering (16%) or use of weapon (13%). The victims in the same research indicated that the last reported incident was characterised by the following: 13 per cent of victims were sexually assaulted; 22 per cent sustained

severe injuries such as broken bones, internal injuries, or loss of consciousness; and 66 per cent experienced severe bruising, lacerations or blood loss.

Injuries suffered by women victims of male violence ranges from inconsequential to severe. Dobash and Dobash (1984:274) found that the assaults recorded in police files assumed a variety of forms including "slapping, punching, kicking, kneeing, butting, hitting with objects and attempting to drown, smother or strangle the woman", with punching to the face and/or body the most common form of attack. The same researchers (1982:197), having interviewed 109 battered women found that nearly 9 per cent of the women reported receiving fractures or losing teeth at some time during their married life, and nearly 80 per cent reported going to a doctor at least once during their marriage for injuries resulting from attachs by their husbands. Nearly 40 per cent said that they sought medical attention on five separate occassions. In the same paper, Dobash and Dobash give a list of injuries suffered by the women they interviewed including serious woundings, bloodied noses, miscarriages and severe internal injuries often resulted in permanent scars and poor health, while stress the seriousness of emotional distress that very often accompanies physical injuries.

Pahl (1985:4 and 31) gives a whole list of injuries suffered by the women in her study including damaged eyesight, stab wounds and fractured skulls. She also describes the horrific injuries of a pregnant woman whose hand was being banged repeatetly against a cupboard resulting in sought of medical treatment which involved stiches and X-ray. Further, Neville and Pugh (1997:372) having interviewed 29 African

American women found that physical force, such as hitting and grabbing, was used in most (n=23) cases. In their sample they found that approximately one third (n=10) of the women sustained physical injuries such as bruises.

Injuries in the Greek study:

All 53 women were asked about the injuries they suffered in the Last Violent Event. Women described their experiences and talked about the injuries they suffered none of which was characterised as 'horrific' in relation to the degrees of force revealed in the various studies mentioned above. Most women sustained physical injuries, with bruises the most common ones. The majority of them said that they did not seek medical attention simply because they did not see that as necessary. In the cases where some women did seek medical treatment they were always released from the hospital the same day.

Also, the majority of women revealed that the most usual part of their body to be hit was the head (90%), followed by the externities (26%) and abdomen (23%) (see Table 4.3). Previous research conducted by forensic doctors in Greece (Zagelidou, 1994; Zagelidou, 1989) revealed similar patterns.

Table 4.3

Injuries Caused in the Last Violent Event

	Zagelidou, 1984	Zagelidou, 1989	This study, 1998
Head	73%	81%	90%
Externities	56%	64%	26%
Thorax	45%	26%	2%
Abdomen	11%	15%	23%
Total cases	92	480	53

4.2.6 Women Fight Back.

Women Fight Back in other countries:

Research findings based on women's own accounts of experiencing men's violence confirm that most violence by women is conducted in self-defence and is limited in its nature (Hague and Malos, 1993:16). Domestic violence research in both Britain and elsewhere has found that only rarely do women responding to men's attacks with counter-violence.

In the Dobash and Dobash's original study, only four women of the entire group said that they always tried to use any significant degree of physical force to hit their husbands back. This percentage should be seen as against 25 per cent wife assaults in 34,000 police records studied by the researchers in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1974. Of all the cases between domestic partners, over 98 per cent were assaults by men

against women. In the same study, when women asked about their typical response to violent episodes in their marriage, 33 per cent said they never hit their husbands back, 42 per cent said seldom and 24 per cent of women attempted to use force on a few occassions (Dobash and Dobash, 1982:196).

On the other hand, studies in the United States present bigger percentages of women using physical force towards their husbands. These percenteages fluctuate between 23 and 71 per cent of women having used violence in retaliation at least once, but the most frequent motive for this behaviour was self-defence, that is it was not intended so much to cause injury as to stop the violence and protect themselves (in Hague and Malos, 1993:17). In the same vein, women in Saunders' study of 52 couples where abuse where had taken place, "fought back" in the context of self-defence with violence been overwhelmingly initiated by husbands (in Mullender, 1996:13).

Women fight back in the Greek study:

The 53 Greek women were asked if they did anything to react and fight back in order to protect themselves during the Last Violent Event. More than half of the women (51%) said they did not. Women justified their decision not to fight back because of the physical difference in size and fear of making things worse.

> He is much more physically strong than me (Int. 13).

***

I thought that I would make him more angry and would make things worse (Int. 29).

***

4.2.7 Presence of Other People in the Last Violent Event.

Presence of other people in other countries:

The literature reveals that lots of violence against women takes place at home and frequently in front of other members of the family such as children and, to a lesser extent, other members and friends (Hoff, 1990:83; Mayhew et al, 1993). For example, Hanmer (1995:10) found that Asian women experiencing violence in extended households were even less likely to be able to hide it from other people. Also, in their original study, the Dobash's found that 59 per cent of the first violent incidents did occur without anyone observing them but over 75 per cent of the women in their study reported that the last attack was observed by at least one other person, usually their children (Dobash and Dobash, 1982:198). The reactions of others present in the assaults were found as varied with children either "keeping silent" and "being unable to comprehend what was occuring" or "intervening physically or verbally"; the husbands friends and relatives "less likely to intervene" or "do nothing" or "tell the husband to stop"; the woman's friends or relations "more likely to intervene"; and the outsiders "touch off " or "aggravate an assault" (p.198-199).

Presence of other people in the Greek study:

All 53 women in the Greek study were also asked about the presence of other people during the Last Violent Event. Of the total 53 cases, 16 (30%) involved no other person present and for the majority of the rest 37 cases (70%) the violence took place in front of one or more people (see Table 4.4) . The Last Violent Event took place in front of children (53%, n=28), neighbours (9%, n=5), man's relatives (his brother-in-law and his mother, n=3) and woman's best friend in one case.

In three cases, the Last Violent Event took place in front of the man's relatives (twice in front of his brother-in-law and once in front of his mother). In all cases the witnesses provided either direct or indirect support for the man. His brother-in-law supported him directly by making verbal comments on the woman's behaviour, and the mother indirectly supported her son by "avoiding saying anything at all, instead got the baby in her arms and left the room" (Int. 23).

In one case where the woman's best friend was witnessing the last violence, she provided positive support to the woman and challenged the man's behaviour by calling the Police. Friends, and in particular female friends, were a very important source of informal help to the majority of women in previous research findings (Kelly, 1988:226; Mooney, 1993). This is also supported by the research from this study of Greek women.

Table 4.4

Presence of Other People in the Last Violent Event

	N	%
Children	28	53
Neighbours	5	9
Man's relatives	3	8
Woman'sbest friend	1	3
None	16	30
Total	53	103*

* rounding error

4.2.8 Children and the Last Violent Event.

Children and violence in other countries:

Violent events occuring in the home are very often observed by others and, indeed, most usually by children. In cases where married couples have only infant children they are not considered as observers of violence. Over the course of a violent marriage though, and as the children grow older, it becomes very difficult for them to avoid witnessing the attacks. As Dobash and Dobash (1982:198) found, 59 per cent of women in their sample reported that the children usually were present during an assault. Similarly, Kelly (1988:132) found that eleven of women's children witnessed the violence. Further, women revealed that children often intervened to protect their mothers and three women in her sample felt their children had prevented them from being killed. Similarly, in the Greek study children found to be social actors and providers for support to their mothers where possible given their age.

Children and violence in the Greek study:

Twenty eight cases (53%) children witnessed the last violent episode. A few of them were the receipients of man's violence when stepping in to stop the violence (cases=6). These children were aged six to seventeen. They did not resist or challenge their father's strength and the man knew he could impose his power over them. In all twenty eight cases, except for 3 where children stayed in their room and, kept silent during the fight, children tried to do something about it. They got involved and tried to help their mothers in any way they could (see Table 4.5). In 7 cases, they stepped in and tried to stop their father; in 5 cases children were crying and asking him to stop; and in one case they asked their mother to leave the house in order to protect herself. In the last six cases, children called the Police. It was always the grown-up daughters who called the Police. In these six cases, the daughters were aged between 26 and 32. It appears that the children are active supporters and challenge the behaviour of their father. A similar pattern has been noted by Kelly (1988) and Wilcox (1997). It also appears that children react according to their age. For example, teenage children decide to step in and try to stop their father's violence; infants can only cry and ask for protection from themselves, whereas adult children (i.e. 26 and 32 old) are able to do more and may call the Police.

Table 4.5

Children's Reactions on witnessing the Last Violent Event

Type of Reaction	N
Stepping in and trying to stop the father	7
Stepping in and being beaten	6
Calling the Police	6
Crying and asking the father to stop	5
Staying in their room and keeping silent	3
Asking the mother to leave and protect herself	1
Total	28

4.2.9 Neighbours and the Last Violent Event in the Greek study

The neighbours were involved in five cases (9%). They appeared to have challenged the man's violent behaviour. The 'challenging' responses varied from verbal threats (n=1) to personal attemps to stop him and keep him away from the woman (n=1) and calling the Police (n=3).

Neighbours in the Greek study played a very important role at this stage by taking action on hearing and witnessing violence. Their responses challenged men's right to behave in this way and helped women maintain both their safety and their feelings of self-confidence.

Previous research however, found that in most cases neighbours

tended to ignore the situation and therefore did not support women who suffered their husbands' violence (Cavanagh, 1978; Wilcox, 1997:134).

Overall, in 37 of the 53 cases in this study the Last Violent Event took place in front of other people. Ten of the witnesses actively supported the women and challenged the man's violence by calling the Police (6 daughters, 1 best friend and 3 neighbours), three provided positive support for the man (all of them were man's relatives) and the rest were trying to help and support the woman by various means such as stepping in during the violence, condemning the violence, confronting the man about his behaviour, verbally threaten him and asking the women to leave their houses in order to protect themselves.

This Chapter analytically presents the circumstances, characteristics and contexts of the Last Violent Episodes as these were experienced and described by the 53 abused women.

As violent men in other societies, those 53 women's husbands too used violence because they considered it as their right and privilege as men and heads of households. They believe that it is the 'natural law' reinforced and promoted by the religious and sociocultural institutions which rightfully put their wishes and needs come first and consequently those of their wives come second.

In cases where these women did not satisfy or conformed with the men's needs and views, the men would re-establish the power hierarchy 'in his castle', through the use

of force, if needed. All that matters to him, is the woman to be silenced ... and him to maintain the control and the authority...

Overall, the Last Violent Episode could last from half an hour to several hours, but in any case the women revealed that it always felt like it lasted for a lifetime. According to the 53 women's accounts, the causes led to the last violence were related primarily to the husband's expectations regarding the wife's domestic work and sexual jealousy, followed by the man's drunkenness, affair with another woman, and the expenditures of money and woman's access on the family income. The Greek women in the study, suffered injuries mainly at head and externities and these were caused mostly by men's own hands. Still, men used diverse forms of physical force to chastise their wives, such as slapping and punching, and in the fewest of cases they also used their own feet to kick their wives. Throwing objects was also often used (chairs, as well as knives, keys or gun). In the majority of cases, the Last Violent Event took place in front of other people, mainly children, followed by neighbours, men's relatives, and woman's best friend. Children were the most frequent witnesses of the violence and when they could provide their mother support, it could took a range of forms, from emotional support to physically standing between the couple, calling the police, or providing accommodation in the few cases where the children were living in their own house. Finally, neighbours proved another important source of help for women since they actively supported them by calling the police, keeping the woman away from the violent man, and verbally disapproving men's behaviour.

In the next chapter I will look at women's help-seeking behaviour and the responses to their requests for help, as these were described by women themselves and were presented within the cross-situational contexts of the General and Last Violent Events.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS II:

WOMEN'S HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR IN A GENERAL AND THE LAST VIOLENT EPISODE

5.1 Introduction

Battered women's help-seeking behaviour may be influenced by the nature and response of people in their informal social support network together with more formal sources of help. These potential sources of help form a link between themselves and the societal structures that define the values and norms for women in relation to the institutions of family and marriage. Both may help to reinforce and maintain patriarcal structures and existing power relationships. Responses may either support or challenge these norms as we shall be seen in the findings.

According to the context of the requests made by women to significant others and/or formal agencies, they were categorised either as 'supportive' or 'challenging'. As mentioned in the earlier chapters (see Chapter One and Four), 'supportive' requests included finding a friendly and trustful person to talk to, and

provide emotional and moral support, understanding and advice. 'Challenging' requests included intervention to stop the violence, information on accessing legal advice, contact with the police, practical and material help such as providing accommodation, money and childcare. The subsequent responses of the confidants women talked to were also categorised as either 'supportive' or 'challenging'. For example, responses which were targeted at being kind to the woman while also related to maintaining the violent relationship by asking or advising the woman to cope with the situation were categorised as 'supportive'. Similarly, responses targeted at challenging and questioning the man's authority to beat his wife by providing practical and tangible help to the woman to leave the violent relationship or to stop the man's violence were categorised as 'challenging'.

This chapter will present evidence on women's help-seeking from significant others after a General and the Last Violent Events. Also included are disclosure patterns to various state agencies, such as the police and the refuge for battered women. Finally, barriers to women's reporting the violence both to informal supporters and to formal agencies will be analysed.

5.2 A COMPARISON OF A GENERAL AND THE LAST AND VIOLENT EVENT.

5.2.1 Disclosure Patterns to Significant Others

A factor that appeared vitally important to each woman in this study was the support and assistance of people in her informal social support network. What was examined here more particularly was the sort of help that women asked from

informal supporters and the support (if any) provided by them. Comparing the above, I was in the position to explore if the potential confidants were perceived by women as helpful or not helpful.

Similarly to earlier research findings such as Dobash, Dobash and Cavanagh (1985), Cavanagh (1978), Binney et al (1981), Hanmer and Hearn (1994), Neville and Pugh (1997), these research findings also support the idea that women are more likely to talk more to private sources about the violence than to ask for assistance from public institutions. In this research, women revealed that they contacted a number of people from their informal social network who tend to be the same for both the last and a general violent event. They are most likely to be their own parents, their best friends and their sisters, other kin, as well as their husbands' parents, and their neighbours. Table 5.1 below gives us a list of all the significant others contacted by the 53 Greek women interviewed.

Table 5.1

Significant Others Contacted by Women.

General and the Last Violent Event.

Significant others contacted	Last Event	General Event
Her mother	+	+
Her father	+	+
Her sister	+	+
Her brother	+	o
Her son	+	o
Her daughter	+	o
Her cousin	+	+
Her best friend	+	+
Bridesmaid	+	+
His mother	+	+
His father	+	+
His sister	o	+
His uncle	+	o
Her aunt	o	+
The neighbours	+	+
Total	13	11

Note: + = contacted, o = not contacted

As one can see from the above table, women in this study tended to disclose the violence to a number of individuals. It is important to notice the similarity in those individuals contacted both in the last and in a general violent event. Nine out of the fifteen (60%) individuals contacted for help in the two different periods of time (the last and a general violent event) remain the same. This evidence supports the idea that women prefer to share their experiences of violence with people they feel very close to and who already know "their secret" from previous disclosures.

The kind of support women asked for in the Last Violent Event included understanding, emotional support and advice, as well as in the fewest of cases information on accessing to legal advice, money, accommodation and practical help with the Police and the children, (the vast majority of cases. In women's own words they asked for:

> Understanding and good advice (Int. 8)
>
> ***
>
> I wanted her to be there for me and help me decide what was best to do. Also, I wanted her to come to the Police with me for support and help. Furthermore, I would ask her if I could stay in her house for some day (Int. 7)
>
> ***
>
> I hoped she would take my side and come and help me with the children. Also, I hoped she could lend me some money so as to be able to look for a place to stay a couple of days (Int. 21)

***

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 inform us about the number of contacts the 53 women made to singificant others in the general and the last violent event respectively.

Table 5.2

Number of Contacts to Significant Others.

General Violent Event

Informal Sources	Times contacted	
	n	%
Her best friend	28	52
Her mother	9	17
Her father	8	15
Her sister	12	23
Her cousin	3	6
Her relatives	1	2
The bridesmaid	4	8
His mother	10	9
His father	8	15
His sister	2	4
His relatives	1	2
N contacts	86	
N women	43	

Note: More than one response was possible. For 10 cases there are no data: 7 women had not contacted anyone in a General Violent Event. For 3 women, the 'General Violent Event' was not applicable because the Last was also the first violence they had experienced.

Table 5.3

Number of Contacts to Significant Others

Last Violent Event

Informal sources	Times contacted	
	n	%
Her best friend	33	62
Her mother	19	36
Her father	8	15
Her sister	27	51
Her brother	7	13
Her son	2	4
Her daughter	3	6
Her cousin	2	4
The bridesmaid	12	23
His mother	5	9
His father	3	6
His relatives	1	2
The neighbours	5	9
N contacts	127	
N women	53	

Note: More than one response was possible.

It was considered important to examine the specific nature of the request made by women (Tables 5.4 and 5.5), the person to whom requests were put and the nature of the response received from the sources approached for help (Tables 5.6 and 5.7). Various types of requests for assistance made by the women some of which were more 'supportive' in nature while others were more 'challenging'. For example, finding a person to be sensitive and trustful and to listen to her and

believe her, seeking moral support, and/or asking for accomodation and taking care of the children, were some of these requests. A careful account of all the requests made by women reveals that they are mainly characterised as supportive and sympathetic toward women, involve action and intervention and sometimes both. Accordingly, the requests were characterised and categorised in relation to their nature as "supportive"[1] of the women, "challenging" the violence and "both" where the requests involved elements of both sympathy and intervention. In the last case, and for reasons of measurement and comparison, the request will be defined as "challenging".

By contrast to the Last Violent Event where women asked for tangible support, in a General Violent Event women asked for emotional support including telling of their pain to someone they trust, crying on someone's shoulder, listening, validating their experience, having a friendly talk and asking other's intervention in order to speak to the man and try to make things better. Although this last request seems 'challenging' in nature, it was coded as a 'supportive' request because it aimed at maintaining the violent relationship which was hoped to be achieved after someone would speak to the man and try to make him reconsider his violent behaviour towards his wife. These types of requests made by women to significant others were coded as 'supportive'. Only rarely did women in a General Violent Event ask for something more challenging like asking for accommodation for one or two nights. In women's own words, they needed:

[1] The terms "supportive" and "challenging" are taken from Dobash and Dobash (1985:156)

Comforting, validation of my experience, and psychological support (Int. 6)

***

Just listening was the best thing she could offer me... (Int. 7)

***

I only wanted to tell my pain to her who I knew would believe and advice me the best (Int.13)

***

I really wanted to have a friendly, long talk with her where she would listen, validate, make me feel relieved inside and keep it confidential (Int. 16)

***

What is obvious from the above comparison is women's need for support in the chronological context of a General Violent Event, tend to fall into the categories of social support described by House (1981) as Emotional and Appraisal support. Emotional support includes needs for trust, concern, listening and Appraisal support includes affirmation and feedback. In the case of the Last Violent Event, however, women's needs tend to fall into the categories of Informational support (as this includes needs for advice, suggestion and information) and Instrumental aid (e.g. 'Challenging' requests such as accommodation, money, practical help with the Police and the children). So we see how the needs of those women changed over time fluctuating from emotional and psychological ('supportive' requests) to practical and tangible ones ('challenging' requests). Tables 5.4 and

5.5 below show the specific type of request women made to each potential informal supporters.

Table 5.4

Type of Request to Significant Others

General Violent Event

Informal Sources	Supportive	Challenging
	n	n
Her best friend	23	5
Her mother	7	2
Her father	8	-
Her sister	9	3
Her cousin	3	-
Her relatives	-	1
The bridesmaid	4	-
His mother	10	-
His father	8	-
His sister	2	-
His relatives	1	-
Total	75	11

Note: Numbers were too small for each category to include percentages. For 10 cases there are no data: Seven of those had not contacted anyone in a general violent event. For three, the genral violent event section was not applicable.

Table 5.5

Type of Request to Significant Others

Last Violent Event

Informal sources	Supportive	Challenging
	n	n
Her best friend	8	25
Her mother	9	10
Her father	3	5
Her sister	9	18
Her brother	5	2
Her son	-	2
Her daughter	3	-
Her cousin	-	2
The bridesmaid	-	12
His mother	5	-
His father	3	-
His relatives	1	-
The neighbours		5
Total	46	81

Note: Numbers were too small for each category to include percentages.

As Table 5.3 presented earlier reveals, in the Last Violent Event informal supporters were contacted by a total of 127 times as compared to 86 times contacted during a General Violent Event (see Table 5.2). Out of the 127 times, only 46 concerned a "supportive" type of request which were mainly put to woman's parents and her sister, and a majority of 81 times concerned a "challenging" type of request which were mainly addressed to woman's best

friend, followed by her sister, her mother and the bridesmaid (Table 5.5). At this stage, women in this study tend to make much more "challenging" than "supportive" types of requests as they approach informal sources of help, which contain material and financial support, accommodation, practical help with the Police and the keeping of their children. Parents and members of the matrimonial family (sisters, brothers) followed by best friends and own children, appear to be the recipients of both 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests, as opposed to the woman's in-laws who are always the recipients of 'supportive' types of requests. This can be seen within the context of women's low expectations since they did not prove helpful in the previous contacts as well as women's beliefs that others would most probably take her husband's side. This supportive kind of help women asked from their in-laws in the Last Violent Event was mainly related to "letting them know about the situation and have them aware of the things", as well as a degree of "understanding, moral support and talking with their son", but not "sympathetic listening and psychological support or trust and advice" which were sought from others.

The neighbours appear to receive only 'challenging' requests and this may be seen under the specific circumstances that their help was sought: more specifically, data from the interview transcriptions reveal that it was always in cases of emergency when neighbours were called for help, for example in witnessing (9%, n=5) the man's violence taking place on the street and reacting in a 'challenging' way to take the man away from the woman (n=5) and call the police n=3).

> They took him away and they tried to see if I was not hurt badly. Also, one of them called the Police (Int. 9)
>
> ***
>
> They took a good care of me and they all were yelling at my husband because they found his behaviour unacceptable. They also tried to take care of the children and make sure they were safe (Int. 35)
>
> ***

Some adult children of the abused women were asked for help in the Last Violent Event. Some would either witness the violence (53%, n=28) or (in the cases when they were living in their own houses), and others were approached by their mothers (n=5) and asked for help such as temporary accommodation and support. In the cases where children witnessed the violence and were very young (i.e. babies and infants), they could not provide any kind of help, whereas, where the children witnessed the violence and were teenagers, they often took direct action: for example, they imposed themselves physically in-between the father and mother and asked the father to stop; they shouted at their father and asked him not to hit their mother anymore; and they asked their father to leave or asked their mother to leave in order to protect herself. Also, they supported their mother emotionally and in six cases they called the police. Finally, in the cases (n=5) where the children did not witness the violence because they were living in their own homes they responded very supportivelly to the 'challenging' requests made by their mothers (e.g. offered her temporary accommodation).

Because of the limited number of cases in which abused women approached their adult children for help (n=5), this did not constitute an important category of assistance within this research. Women in this study appeared reluctant to ask their adult children for help and support. This supports the prevailing cultural value that parents and indeed mothers in Greece are socialised to provide the best for their children and to keep them unspoiled of the burdens and difficulties of life for as long as they can (Maratou-Alipravti, 1995). What is more, mothers are perceived by the Greek society as successful in this important role of theirs when they manage to hide problematic situations from their children. The "child-centred" family (Agathonos, 1990:83) is a cultural reality that reinforces the above notion of keeping the children away from any knowledge about parents' difficulties and consequently of any knowledge about their fathers' violent behaviour (Mousourou, 1984). As a result the women in the study wanted to keep their children "out of this" in order to protect their feelings, psychological health, personal safety and ultimately to maintain their own dignity and name of good mothers in the society.

All these points make clear how strongly these women had internalised their perceived roles as wives and mothers, a combination of roles whose implementation results in the endurance of violence and the survival and continuation of the violent relationships they are trapped in. This is because these roles put forward the traditional, patriarchically structured ideals of different gender roles men and women have and the keeping of the family together by any

costs. In the Last Violent Event, abused women were more likely to re-assess themselves and their lives and actively seek help (Table 5.7).

Table 5.6

Helpfulness of Responses to Requests for Assistance from Significant Others.

General Violent Event

Informal Sources	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful
	n	n	n
Her best friend	21	6	1
Her mother	1	-	8
Her father	1	-	7
Her sister	8	3	1
Her cousin	3	-	-
Her relatives	1	-	-
Bridesmaid	4	-	-
His mother	-	1	9
His father	-	2	6
His sister	-	2	-
His relatives	-	-	1
Total	39	14	33

Note: For 10 cases there are no data: Seven of those had not contacted anyone in a general violence event and for three the genral violent event section was not applicable.

Table 5.7

Helfulness of Responses to Requests for Assistance from Significant Others.

Last Violent Event

Informal Sources	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful
	n	n	n
Her best friend	33	-	-
Her mother	14	-	5
Her father	6	-	2
Her sister	12	-	5
Her brother	6	-	1
Her son	-	2	-
Her daughter	-	3	-
Her cousin	2	-	-
Bridesmaid	12	-	-
His mother	-	-	5
His father	1	2	-
His relatives	-	-	1
The neighbours	5	-	-
Total	92	6	19

As Table 5.7 shows, at the stage of Last Violent Event, both types of requests ('supportive' and 'challenging') were met by most informal supporters, except men's relatives and women's in-laws. For example, women's mothers-in-law believed that they (i.e. the women) were to blame and never admitted their sons' wrong and shameful behaviour. Consequently, their response was perceived "not helpful" by the women who asked for their assistance.

She did not show surprise at all. She said that this is bad but these things happen in the families and that I would definitely get over it as the time goes on. Because I was pregnant she advised me to go to the Hospital and check if me and the baby was both all right and she tried to excuse her son's behaviour by saying that pregnancy period gives the couple a hard time..." (Her mother-in-law, Int. 9).

***

> They were not saying a thing. They could not admit that their son was behaving violently and they would not say anything. They did not do anything to help and of course they were not going to ask him to apologise to me about his behaviour (Int. 50).

***

By comparison, their fathers-in-law response was perceived "helpful" in some of the cases but still "not helpful" in the rest. Women found some of their responses helpful because they showed a kind of understanding to them and promised to talk with their son ('supportive' assistance), although in most of the cases this technique would be applied with a big delay for women who had already decided to leave their husbands and were not looking for reconciliating interventors anymore.

> He was very understanding this time and it was a relief to hear him admitting that I was right. When I told him about going to the Police, however, he was not happy at all. He said that maybe I had better leave the Police out of this because this would become very embarrassing for his

son's name and dignity in the community and society we live and work. Despite that he was very sympathetic to me, asked me what he could do to help in anyway and said that he could not forgive his son's behaviour (Her father-in-law, Int. 52).

***

Overall, the women's in-laws responded negatively to women's requests in the Last Violent Event (Table 5.7) and were found very unhelpful in a General Violent Events (Table 5.6) saying, "*A man*", especially their own son, "*can never be wrong*". It is probably the woman's fault, they declare, even though they see with their own eyes how this woman has suffered by their son's violence. And they go further than that; they provide positive support for the man and negative for the woman through a range of statements and comments such as ignoring violence, pretending nothing happened ("*they did not want to know*"), approving violence directly or indirectly ("*we women deserve to be slapped every now and then*"), reinforcing traditional gender attitudes and roles ("*a woman must know what her husband wants, likes, needs and what he does not*"), or elsewhere encouraging the woman to put up with it (*"try to sort it out and keep the family together; " do it for the children's sake", "all families have problems"*). Women in this study revealed that most of the above reactions, which resulted in the 'endorsement' of violence were also the reactions of their own parents when they were contacted in the context of a General Violent Event.

5.2.1.1 Responses in the Last Violent Event

In the context of the Last Violent Event women's parents responded differently than in a General Violent Event. More parents were understanding and were perceived to be very supportive to women who sought their help. More specifically, the level of their support changed dramatically and from "not helpful" (almost 89%) in a general violent event (Table 5.6), they are perceived "very helpful" (around 75%) in the last violent event (Table 5.7). This change supports the idea from earlier research findings (Chatzifotiou, Dobash and Hearn, 1998) that at this point women appear more decisive and more ready to trust and re-assess their own selves and lives, and, somehow their parents feel they are not able to help them do what they should have supported them to do years ago. All their advice and instructions to their daughters (e.g. forget it, keep the family together, think of the children and their own dignity in the society, keep their dirty laundry for themselves), were of no use any more. When their child is in important danger they are prepared to give up their traditional ideas about marriage and the family, to stop pretending they do not know anything about it and appear ready to protect, stand by and support their daughters. For example:

> They took my side, they said they believed me and especially my mother was very upset and suggested I take my son and stay with them for a couple of days (Int. 22).

***

> They were shocked to see me in this condition. They were very supportive now and they said I would have all their support if I wanted to go to the police and press charges (Int. 30).

***

They were very understanding this time and said they would support me in my decisions. Also, they insisted on taking me to the hospital to make sure I was all right (Int. 47).

***

In the few cases where the responses of the rest of the supporters did not meet the equivalent requests and were found "not helpful" (see Table 5.7) in the last violent event, was mainly because of the problematic material circumstances (distance, personal/familial problems) and were unable rather than unwilling to provide assistance. Also, they lacked the information about what the woman can best do in terms of asking for formal support, or what relevant and specialised agencies existed. This finding supports previous research findings such as Canavagh's, 1978:57; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Dobash and Dobash, 1985:157; Chatzifotiou, 1997:45). For example:

> I knew my sister would like to take me in her house but she had problems with her husband too and I would only make things worse for everybody (Int. 13).

***

My mother told me that I could have all her support but she could not help me financially because she did not have any spare money to give me (Int. 30).

***

My parents did want to help but they did not know anything about where I could find specialised help and accessing relevant resources for my case. Still they were there for me (Int. 47).

***

Overall, in the Last Violent Event women found informal supporters' assistance mainly helpful and useful and this finding supports other research findings such as Binney's et al (1981:21) who found that the women they interviewed found contacts helpful with relatives (61%) and friends (58%). In the Greek study, though, there were the exceptions of women's in-laws (in particular the mothers-in-law) and the man's relatives who were found 'not helpful' due to their unwillingness to take the woman's side and provide help when asked for assistence.

5.2.1.2 Responses in a General Violent Event:

Moving on to the context of a General Violent Event, Table 5.2 shows that the women made a total of 86 contacts with potential supporters. Of these, 74 requests were for 'supportive' help and only 11 were for 'challenging' help (Table 5.4). The 'supportive' requests were mainly addressed to woman's best friend, followed by her sister, her mother and her mother-in-law. 'Challenging' requests were mainly to her best friend and sister. As Table 5.6 shows, women's own parents

together with women's in-laws were found "not helpful" in their responses towards women's requests. More specifically, women now revealed that, again, when their best friend was contacted they were found "very helpful" in the majority of times (75%), and their sister's help, who was the person to be contacted more frequent after their best friend, was also found "very helpful" (66%).

> She was very supportive. When she realised his violence was happening every so often, she advised me to do something because things would get worse for me. She believed that it was up to me to put an end in it and she many times suggested I call the Police, press charges and start thinking about divorce (Her best friend, Int. 6).

***

> She was always there for me. She would give up anything she was doing at the time just to be near me whenever I needed her. She was keeping things confidential and was trying to raise my confidence. She made clear to me that she would support me with any decision I would take in case things would not go any better (Her best friend, Int. 7).

***

> She wanted me to know that I could count on her if I needed something like money or anything. She was the only one I trusted and appreciated deeply. (Her cousin, Int. 1).

***

> She was surprised when she first heard about about this. But then she stood by me, was a good listener without giving me orders or accusing

me that it must had been me to blame. She also became very worried as time went on and the situation would not change" (Her sister (Int. 13).

***

There was variation in the social support women received from other individuals who were told about the violent episodes. As Table 5.6 shows, for example, in a General Violent Event their mother-in-law reactions as well as their husbands' relatives tended to be perceived as "not helpful":

> They both were very surprised. My father-in-law suggested that he might have a word with his son and see if things were as I was telling them. My mother-in-law said that I must have done something wrong and that we women know very well that a man does not blame his wife for nothing (Her in-laws, Int.13).

***

> Both his parents and his uncle took his side and tried to make the fool out of me. What was worse was that my mother-in-law said that it was probably me to blame for the battering. She used to say I was his wife and I should know what he likes, what he needs and what he does not (Her in-laws, Int. 16).

***

Also, their parents' help in a General Violent Event appears different from the Last Violent Event and was perceived by women as "not helpul" on average (89%) (Table 5.6) as opposed to 26% in the last violent event (Table 5.7).

She used to say that I was the one who knew more and that I should do whatever I thought right for the best of my family (Her mother, Int. 1)

***

She was usually telling me to be patient and that things would go better. She would not even consider though that I had the choice of divorcing my husband because of the children's sake and the stigma of a divorcee that both me and themselves (her matrimonial family) would have to carry for the rest of our lives (Her mother, Int. 8)

***

She was not looking very happy to hear such things and she used to say that I had made my bed, now I should lay in it (Her mother, Ints. 16).

***

He agreed with my mother. He used to say that this was my problem and that they are only the viewers of a play where I was starring (Her father, Int. 1).

***

He said that I must had been exaggerating and that things could be so bad. He almost supported my husband's behaviour by saying that I probably did something that men could not take...(Her father, Int. 8).

***

Overall, in a General Violent Event, women's parents and in-laws were the ones who proved to respond negativelly to women's requests, each from a different perspective and point of view. The former because they did not want the society to talk about them and felt ashamed that they did not succeed in bringing up children

to have a good marriage, and the latter because they felt they had to protect their son as well as themselves from accusations which would put them in the center of social gossiping and discussions.

Women in this study were also asked the specific time they talked about the incidents to potential informal supporters. The same information was asked in both the Last and General Violent Event. As Tables 5.8 and 5.9 show, the majority of the immediate disclosing women, that is those who disclosed on the very same day of the event, first talked to a female and indeed their best friend in both the General and the Last Violent Event.

Table 5.8

Length of Time Before Disclosing to Informal Sources.

General Violent Event

Informal sources	Same day	Next day	More than a year
	n	n	n
Her best friend	8	15	_
Her mother-in-law	3	_	3
Her cousin	2	1	_
His sister	2	_	_
Her sister	2	10	_
Her mother	_	_	10
Her father	_	_	5
Her father-in-law	_	_	5
Bridesmaid	3	3	_
N=43	20	29	23

Note: More than one answer was possible. For the general violent event there are no data for 10 cases. Seven women had not contacted anyone before they disclosed in the last violent event, and in three cases the general violent event section did not apply because it was the first time they suffered physical violence from their husbands.

Table 5.9

Length of Time Before Disclosing to Informal Sources.

Last Violent Event

Informal sources	Same day	Next day	More than a year
	n	n	n
Her best friend	23	10	-
Her mother	10	5	-
Her father	5	-	-
Her children	8	-	-
Bridesmaid	8	4	-
Her sister	9	10	-
The neighbours	5	-	-
N=53	68	29	-

Note: More than one answer was possible.

It is interesting here that, firstly, the majority of disclosing women first talked to another woman about their experiences of violence and secondly, that this woman was always someone whom women in the study felt very close to and therefore felt comfortable sharing their problem. Thus, in the Last Violent Event, women

first told their best friend and their mother, their sister and the bridesmaid. In the General Violent Event, women tended to talk to their best friend first, their sister and the bridesmaid, whereas their mothers were contacted much later.

Overall, support requested from and provided by other women was the case for the majority of women. Female friends proved very important to all 53 women who were interviewed in this study, and this is also a finding of previous research such as Kelly's who notes that the women she interviewed showed a high degree of trust of and identification with other women (1988:226). Mooney also found the same, although she discussed friends in general (1993:15). This could be seen within the context of friends being more likely to be more similar in age, beliefs and experience and therefore less judgemental and easier to turn to. Also strong female friendships would not be expected to face the reality of women's experiences with disbelief or rejection.

5.2.2 Disclosure Patterns to Agencies

Alongside the support and assistance from women's informal social support networks they also sought help from formal sources such as the police, the refuge for battered women, the women's issues office, the hospital, the lawyers, and the forensic doctors.

A great deal of attention has been given in relevant literature to social support from formal agencies. These research findings reveal that women do seek

professional help at various points in their lives, and have great expectations of the support to be provided (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987:36 and 154; Hanmer, Radford and Stanko, 1989; Mullender, 1996). The vast majority of women in the Greek study revealed that it was not until the Last Violent Event that they decided to make contact with formal sources of social support such as the Police, the Refuge for battered women, laywers and others.

The data from Table 5.10 show a changing pattern in women's help-seeking behaviour at different periods of time. For example, in a General Violent Event the police was contacted only by the 17% (n = 9) of the women in the study, whereas in the Last Violent Event this increased dramatically to 64% (n = 34). Similarly, in the Last Violent Event most of the women contacted the refuge (38%) followed by the forensic doctor (30%) as opposed to their contacts during a General Violent Event (Refuge 4%, n = 2) and the lawyers 6%, n= 3). Overall, it is obvious how distanced women in this study were from approaching the formal sources for help in the General Event and how different that was for the Last Violent Event. Table 5.10 shows that the overwhelming majority of these women (75%, n = 40) had not contacted an institution or official about the violence prior to the Last Violent Event.

Table 5.10

Women's Contacts with Official Institutions.

General and the Last Violent Event

Sources contacted	Last Event	General Event
	%	%
Police	64	17
Refuge	38	4
Reception Office	21	-
Womens Issues Office	19	-
Hospital	8	4
Forensic Doctor	30	-
Lawyers	4	2
District Attorney	2	4
TV Channels	2	-
N/A	-	6
N of contacts	99	19
N of women	53	13

Note: More than one response was possible. In the 'General Violent Event', 40 women made no contacts at all.

The change in women's help-seeking behaviour over time comes as a result of various factors which influence their way of thinking, the consequent decision-making and help-seeking. Some of these factors may be the reconsideration and re-assessment of the self and their situation (Chatzifotiou, Dobash and Hearn, 1998), the increased severity and frequency of violence (Johnson, 1990), and the increased fear for their lives along with the fear for their childrens' lives and safety (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984). On the contrary, there were other reasons why women stayed in the situation for years, and did not seek professional help or

challenge their husbands' violence until the last violent event. Such factors can be related to constraints such as: personal (believe in the uniqueness of the event; hopes for the future of relationship), psychological (emotional dependency; men become apologetic), social (what will people say), family concerns (negative consequences for the entire family), statutory (there are no specialised state agencies), information (lack of knowledge of the few existing services), and cultural constraints (the stigma of battering with the consequent feelings of shame and devaluation of themselves as wives and mothers). For examples, see Huisman (1996, 2,3, p.275), Dasgupta and Warrier (1996, 2,3, p.255), Hanmer and Saunders (1984:50-59), and Dobash, Dobash and Cavanagh (1985). All these factors and more will be presented in the "Barriers to reporting to Agencies", later in this chapter.

The literature on formal agency social support in relation to battered women reveals that the vast majority of these institutional sources such as police, social services, law, not only are found "not helpful" by women who approached them for help but they also contributed to the maintenance and reinforcement of such violence (Dobash and Dobash, 1985; Hanmer, 1984; Hague and Malos, 1993; Mrsevic and Hughes, 1997). Depending on their response, social agencies can proved to be supportive to women and challenge the violence against them or, on the other hand, can contribute to its reinforcement and maintenance by responding indifferently or negatively. As a consequence, women are victimized once more and naturally they quickly become discouraged from seeking further help and support (Mullender, 1996:33). Tables 5.11 and 5.12 show the degree of perceived

helpfulness received from the formal sources they contacted both in a General and the Last Violent Events.

Table 5.11

Women's Reports of Helpfulness to Requests for Assistance from Agencies.

General Violent Event

Formal Sources	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Total
	N	N	N	N
Police	1	1	7	9
Refuge	2	-	-	2
Reception Office	-	-	-	-
Womens Issues	-	-	-	-
Hospital	2	-	-	2
Forensic Doctor	-	-	-	-
Lawyers	-	1	-	1
District Attorney	1	1	-	2
Media/TV	-	-	-	-
N=13				

Note: More than one response was possible. Fourty women made no contact with the agencies.

Table 5.12

Women's Reports of Helpfulness to Requests for Assistance from Agencies.

Last Violent Event

Formal Sources	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Total
	N	N	N	N
Police	4	10	15	29
Refuge	17	3	-	20
Reception Office	11	-	-	11
Womens Issues Office	5	-	5	10
Hospital	3	1	-	4
Forensic Doctor	16	-	-	16
Lawyers	1	1	-	2
District Attorney	1	-	-	1
TV Channels	-	1	-	1
N=53				

Note: More than one response was possible.

The data from Tables 5.11 and 5.12 examines the helpfulness of responses from formal sources, and these findings are partly supported by findings from other research (Radford, 1987:37; Edwards, 1987:154; Hague and Malos, 1993:65). The women in the Greek study, revealed that both in the Last and in a General Violent Event, police responses were 'not helpful', or that they received no response at all. For example, in the Last Violent Event 52% (n = 15) of women found the police "not helpful" as did 78% (n = 7) of them in a General Violent Event. According to women's own words:

I did not like their attitude at all. I asked for a Policewoman but there were only very few and they could not send one for me at that time. I found their comments insulting both as a woman and a person. Most importantly, my husband still was coming outside my house and calling me all the time, so they did not do as I asked them to, that is to keep him away from me and the children...I did not found them helpful at all (Last violent event., Int. 6).

***

Not helpful at all. They did not try to support me and my rights, only asked my husband to apologise to me and then told me that I should now be happy with that...I never asked them to do that! (Last violent event, Int. 9).

***

I called the Police twice on the same day but they did not appear at all. They only told me on the phone that it is a domestic affair and they would not feel it was their job to interfere. Of course I found them not helpful at all (General Violent Event, Int. 30).

***

They suggested I should try and make things up for my family's sake. They did not even talk about me but about my husband and how much he must be suffering with all this situation and that he will definitely have regretted the whole thing and would like to see me talking about things. They were not helpful at all (General Violent Event, Int. 18).

***

Such responses could be seen against a background of failing to understand that violence against women is an unacceptable, criminal behaviour. Being a male-oriented and male-dominating workplace, police may express patriarchal assumptions about women who seek help (Hanmer and Saunders 1984; Mullender 1996:34). Another very interesting element that stems from these data is that contacting the police appears to be the most common help-seeking strategy employed by these women both in the Last and in General Violent Events, and that police appear to be the only one of the nine formal institutions contacted by women in the Last and General violent events that have mostly been found "not helpful" by the majority of women in the General Event and about half of the women in the Last Violent Event. All the other institutions were defined as either "helpful" or "very helpful" by the women who approached them for support. Although the numbers for the General Violent Event are very small, the findings seem to be different to earlier research findings which reveal that the majority of formal agencies such as social workers, lawyers, medical services were found "not helpful" to the majority of women (Maidment, 1982; Mama, 1989; Maynard, 1985; Mrsevic and Huges, 1997:109 and 126; Dangor et al., 1998: 142).

More specifically, 85% (n = 17) of the women who contacted the refuge in the Last Violent Event found them "very helpful", 75% (n = 3) of those contacted the medical institution found them "very helpful" too, 100% (n = 16) of those contacted the forensic doctor found them "helpful" and 50% found the lawyers

"very helpful" (Table 5.12). In the General Violent Event the numbers are too small to draw conclusions (Tables 5.11).

Of course, the nature of the assistance provided must be seen relative to the type of request made. The data of the Greek study revealed various types of requests for assistance to formal agencies. For example, requesting assistance in stopping the violence ('challenging'), or finding someone to believe her and to be sensitive to her ('supportive'). They also sought moral support and/or advice on medical or legal issues,and requested intervention in order to keep the man away or to obtain temporary accommodation. As women themselves put it:

> I expected them to be sensitive with my feelings, objective in my case and believe my story. I also hoped they could give me a good professional advice too (Last violent event, Int. 7, 'Supportive').
>
> ***
>
> I wanted to press charges and to "lock him up" (Last Violent Event, Int. 18, 'Challenging').
>
> ***
>
> I wanted them to listen to me and show me their understanding. Also, I wanted to press charges and put him in jail (Last Violent Event, Int. 31, Both = Challenging).

***

Table 5.13 below is the result of this analytic examination. As it can be seen in these data, the nature of requests made by the 53 women changed over time. In a General Violent Event the vast majority (75%) of the requests made were 'supportive', whereas in the Last Violent Event (89%) were 'challenging'.

Table 5.13

Nature of Help Requested by Women from Formal Sources.

General and the Last Violent Events

Type of request	General Event		Last Event	
	N	%	N	%
Supportive	12	75	11	11
Challenging	4	25	88	89
Total	-	100	-	100
N of contacts=115	16		99	

Note: In a General Violent Event 40 women made no contact to any agency and 3 were not applicable because for them the 'Last' was also the first violent event.

These data may be seen relative to the idea of women re-assessing the situation of their husbands' violence and being now more determined to do something effective to stop the violence or escape from it. By comparing the Tables 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13, that is the degree of help received and the nature of the request made, we can find the degree of consistency or inconsistency between the perceived nature of responses ('not helpful', 'helpful', 'very helpful') and the type of request ('supportive', 'challenging'). Consequently, examine whether it was the supportive or the challenging requests that were mostly met by the institutions.

According to the data from Tables 5.14 and 5.15 presented below, in a General Violent Event the police were mainly asked for 'supportive' help and in the Last Violent Event they were mainly asked for 'challenging' help. Tables 5.11 and 5.12 presented earlier, showed that police responses were generally seen as '"not helpful". By comparison, all other formal agencies responded positively to both types of requests, both 'supportive' and 'challenging'. In particular, we see in Table 5.15 that in the Last Violent Event the refuge, the reception office, the forensic doctors, and the lawyers were asked for 'challenging' kind of help and were mainly found "very helpful" (see Table 5.12). The same level of response was perceived by women when contacted the refuge, the medical and the lawyers in the General Violent Event (Table 5.11) and asked them for 'supportive' kind of help (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14

Type of Request by the Institutional Agencies Contacted by Women.

General Violent Event

	Type of Request		
Agencies contacted	Supportive	Challenging	Total of Contacts
	N	N	N
Police	6	3	9
Refuge	1	1	2
Medical	2	-	2
Lawyer	1	-	1
District attorney	2	-	2
N of contacts=16	12	4	

Note: Forty women (75%) made no contacts with the agencies. For three women (6%), the General Violent Event section was not applicable.

Table 5.15

Type of Request by the Institutional Agencies Contacted by Women.

Last Violent Event

	Type of Request		
Agencies contacted	Supportive	Challenging	Total of Contacts
	N	N	N
Police	-	34	34
Refuge	-	20	20
Reception Office	-	11	11
Women's Issues	5	5	10
Medical	3	1	4
Forensic doctor	3	13	16
Lawyer	-	2	2
District attorney	-	1	1
TV channels	-	1	1
N of contacts=99	11	88	

It is very interesting from the above data that the police appear to have an important role to play in women's minds. They believe that being a statutory agency, police have the resources needed to provide meaningful challenges to the men's violence, and this is why women make 'challenging' requests of them. For these women, police are the most powerful institution that can enforce the law and women appear to rely on them to intercede in domestic situations, expecting that something will be done to bring the change they want. However, after various attempts women get discouraged and disapointed by their service and stop calling

them for the next events. Still it appears that women call the police again (i.e. in the last violent event) since they do not have many choices of other services.

In the Last Violent Event, the refuge, the forensic doctors and the reception office received 'challenging' kinds of requests (Table 5.15). All their responses were perceived by women as "helpful" and very "helpful" (Table 5.12). Such responses could be expected from the particular services and can be seen in the context of their commitment to addressing the issue of domestic violence, supporting women and their needs and providing challenges to men's violence. Applying for divorce and children's custody, getting the forensic report necessary for the court and involving the public in the help for finding a job were the contexts of women's challenging kinds of requests to lawyers, forensic doctors and TV channels, respectively. Their responses were perceived "helpful" by women.

The medical institution was asked mainly for 'supportive' help (i.e. listening and treatment of injuries) and their responses found to be "very helpful". Still, women revealed that although they only asked for 'supportive' help and for the medical examination from the doctors, they would expect hospitals to be equipped with staff specifically trained to deal with cases of abuse and violence.

In the case of women's issues office, women requested both 'challenging' and 'supportive' help to the same degree (50% and 50%, respectively, Table 5.15). While the numbers are small, 'supportive' requests appear to be met since all (n=5) of the responses was found "very helpful". 'Challenging' requests appeared

not to be met since all of the responses (n=5) was found "not helpful" (see Table 5.12). Evidence from the fieldwork and the transcripts from the interviews revealed that half of the women approaching the women's issues office for help asked for temporary accommodation, a need which was unfortunately not met. These women expressed their concerns and great dissapointment about the limited alternatives they had in terms of the existing services in their town. It needs to be noted that the part of the sample addressed to the women's office (as well as to the forensic doctors) was collected from Thessaloniki while the rest of the sample was collected in Athens (refuge and reception office). As research in services provision in Greece reveals (National Report of Greece, 1995), the accommodation needs expressed by women are met by the Refuge for battered women and there is only one for the entire country (with 10 million population) and it is located in Athens. As a result, women in Thessaloniki (the biggest city in the Northern Greece) as well as in the rest of Greece are left with no alternatives. They either cannot travel to Athens because they will have to leave their children and job behind or because they do not have their own income or cannot afford the trip. Even they could travel to Athens, there is unlikely to be a place for them. Women expressed dissapointment about this lack of important services such as the refuge and the women's lobbies and groups, a finding which supports other research data (Dangor et al, 1998:143).

In general, 'supportive' requests (i.e. listening ear, validation and advice) were almost always responded to positively both in the Last and General Violent

Events. 'Challenging' requests (i.e. arresting the man, temporary accomodation for the woman) are not always met (see police and women's issues office).

An interesting pattern in these women's help-seeking behaviour appears through careful examination of the number of contacts women made and the kind of help sought in the Last and General Violent Events. By comparing Tables 5.10 and 5.13 presented earlier, we find that in a General Violent Event, the women tended to contact agencies less (Table 5.10) and they tended to ask mainly for 'supportive' kinds of help (Table 5.13). On the other hand, in the Last Violent Event women appeared to have substantially increased their attempts to find help. They now contacted the agencies more frequently (Table 5.10) and at the same time they have both changed and increased the nature of their requests. The women now ask mainly for 'challenging' (i.e. challenging the man's violence and their relationship) instead of 'supportive' (i.e. coping with the situation) kinds of help, and it has increased because 'challenging' requests consist of both 'supportive' and 'challenging' nature ("both" was defined as 'challenging').

In other words, it seems that *the more the women contacted agencies the more the variety their requests for different services, and the less they contacted agencies the less the variety of their requests.* Such a conclusion may be seen in the context of women's gradual awareness of the many and different dimensions of the problem of violence, information on the widespread nature of the phenomenon and its frequency, the increase of their needs for help and the regaining of strength and self-esteem that their contact and communication with the agencies eventually

(and supposedly) brings about. It could also be expected that the more the women make use of agencies the more fearless, full of strength and determined they become and they are less likely to stay with or return to the batterer (Gondolf and Fisher cited in Hutchinson and Hirschel, 1998:441). Of course, this last point can be made provided agency responses are helpful and effective. Data in the Greek study reveal that there is still a long way before that is achieved.

5.2.3 Barriers to Reporting the Violence to Significant Others.

Apart form collecting information about women's disclosing behaviour to significant others, women also were asked to discuss the reasons that made them decide to disclose to the specific individuals or agencies rather than others. In addition, women who did not disclose the violence and did not seek assistance were also asked to discuss the reasons for this decision. The same sort of information was obtained for both General and the Last Violent Event.

Women gave a variety of reasons that contributed to non-disclosing to significant others. Although the numbers are small, it can be seen that thirteen per cent of women (n=7) did not contact anyone in a General Violent Event and 3 women did not experience any violent event before, so for them this section was not applicable since the last violence was also the first (see "Note" in Table 5.2). The reasons given by women for not disclosing to others were coded and put into conceptually derived categories. The following quotes illustrate the nature of various areas of concerns:

Family concerns: Women were very concerned about the effects disclosing to their own parents. Family values are tought to women by their parents and it is as if they would dishonour them and thus be disrespectful towards their parents.

> My parents were too old to do anything; they had bad health and letting them known would make them worse. Also, I did not want to hurt their feelings (Int. 6).
>
> ***
>
> I did not want to spoil my parents' dreams of their daugther's happy marriage (Int. 7).
>
> ***
>
> My parents were very respectful people and finding out about that they would feel disperpectful and rejected by their community (Int. 9).
>
> ***

Women's socialisation in men's and women's roles: Women revealed that it was very hard for them to decide to talk openly about the violence they had suffered because they had never learned to disagree with what the roles of wives and mothers required them to do.

> I was brought up knowing that I must not get anyone else involved in my house (Int. 7).
>
> ***

> My parents taught me that marriage means everything to a woman and that being a good wife should me the most importatn role I would have (Int. 14).

***

Low expections of help: Women in the study said that they did not feel other people would be willing to help them for various reasons such as indifference to their problems, inability to help, too busy with their own lives, etc.

> I did not trust people that much to be willing to talk with them about my family problems (Int. 19).

***

> I did not think that people would really care about me and would be of important help and support (Int. 22).

***

Negative experiences with previous reactions: Women described their bad experiences with previous attempts to seek help from significant others and as a consequence they knew that they would not get anything different this time. They felt that almost everybody was supporting their husbands and that they had no right to complain and rebel against them because, after all, all families have had those sort of problems.

> My mother-in-law used to say to me: remember, a man is supposed to provide for his family. He does not need to deal with such problems. It's the wife's duty to deal with them (Int. 11).

***

> My parents use to tell me: do not worry, family is all about problems; you'll sort it out yourselves (Int. 20).

***

Personal beliefs, fears and hopes: Sinilar to the above, and also as a consequence to that comes the concerns of the women about things such as retaliation, increase of violence, as well as future change of the men's behaviour. The concerns that they would not probably be trusted and believed by others were of big importance to women that made them not seek help for a long time.

> I know my in-laws thought their son was the master of the universe and they *would never take my side or believe in me* (Int. 1).

***

> Each time I hoped that we would get over it and that *things would change* (Int. 14).

***

> I feared that *if he'd find out* that I talked to people he would be more violent (Int. 45).

***

> I believed it was an one-off event and that it would never happen again (Int.3).

***

Personal responsibility and self-blame: As a result of their socialisation into female's role stereotypes women revealed that they felt it was all their fault and

held themselves responsible for the violence. In addition to that, they believed that people would say the same and consequently they would not take her side and would not support her.

> People would hold me responsible for what happened and they would believe it was my fault. Most of the times, I also believed the same (Int. 41).
>
> ***
>
> If your own husband hits you, people believe that you must have done something to deserve it (Int. 53).
>
> ***

Psychological constraints: Very similarly to *'personal fears and beliefs'* women admitted that they were very much in love with their husbands and they felt emotionally trapped and dependent on them. Some women also admitted that even if the husband could change now, they could forget everything.

> I really was very *emotionally dependent* on him. I could not imagine my life without him and was prepared to do anything to keep us together (Int. 9).
>
> ***
>
> He was very *apologetic*, were asking for forgiveness and were promising *he would change* (int. 14).
>
> ***

Socio-cultural factors: One of the most often reason that made the majority of women in the study not to disclose the violence they suffered was related to the

sociocultural values and norms. The cultural realities of the concepts of *pround* and *dignity* that characterise Greek families were very much obvious in the women's decisions to disclose or not. The feelings of *shame* and guilt that disclosing to relatives or neighbours brings, were important components that deterred women from doing so. Also, the knowledge that even their own people (kins, etc) would gossip around instead of being sensitive and keep it confidential, put women off from telling to anybody and seeking help for a long time.

> *I was very ashamed* to reveal my problems to relatives and neighbours. I could speak to them about other things but not this. This was a hard and humiliating thing to talk about(Int.8).
>
> ***
>
> I tried to *save as much pride and dignity* as was left (Int. 21).
>
> ***
>
> People would say *I am a bad woman* who tries to distroy my family instead of hidding the problem, keep it a secret and do my best to keep the family together (Int. 48).
>
> ***
>
> They would feel pity for me and my parents because, you know, *children are their parents' reflection.* If you are bad, they then loose all their respect and degnity from the society (Int. 44).
>
> ***

> They would start *gossiping around* instead of keeping it confidential and the next day the whole village would know about my "disgraceful" private life (Int. 48).

***

> People believe that a man can do anything he wants not only with his own life but with his family's members lives too. *Men are like that* and as such they can never be the ones to blame (Int. 15).

***

Concerns about children: Another important reason that made women postpone their disclosing to others was the children. Most of them believed that a family should have both parents even when things were going wrong, and that children were better to have "*an assertive*" father than have no father at all.

> I could not do that to my children. They deserved to have both their parents and I had to try hard to make sure that they would (Int. 11).

***

Limited personal resources: Most of the women revealed that they had no resources whatsoever and they would find themselves in a worse situation once they had tried to leave than staying with the violent partner and trying to make things work.

> What I really needed at that time was some financial help and a place on my own. I did not have my own income and the

house was not in my name so I knew there would be nothing out there for me. The only solution really was to stay and try to make things work (Int. 29).

***

Practical problems: In some cases women could not contact the people whom they had chosen to disclose to and in these conditions they prefered not to talk to anyone else who was not of their choice.

I would have called the bridesmaid with whom I feel very close but she was away on a short holiday break. I did not want to call any other relative becauseI did not trust their willingness to help (Int. 1).

***

Isolation: For some women, the fact that they had not often contacts with other people (e.g. own parents) because of the husbands' wishes, they just did not feel comfortable to call them and ask for their help. Personal pride and shame were very much involved.

My husband had forbiden me to have any contacts with my parents and consequently I could not ask for their help after such a long time of absence (Int. 21).

***

He did not like any of my friends and I was not supposed to contact them. So, I could not just call them now because I needed them (Int. 28).

***

Religion restrictions: Finally, for many women the knowledge that specific people would simply not help them get what they wanted due to religious beliefs and values, put them off from asking for help and support.

> My sister and parents were very religious persons so I did not expect them to be of the help that I needed. They would only try and change my mind about going to the Police and make it an issue (Int. 33).

***

5.2.4 Barriers to Reporting the Violence to Formal Agencies.

Alongside the concern about women's experiences of the agencies response to their requests, another issue of concern was an exploration of why women decided not to seek assistance from agencies.

According to the findings there is a great lack of women's contact with the formal agencies. As Table 5.10 shows, in the General Violent Event 40 of the 53 women did not contact any formal agency, while only 13 women made contacts. While the numbers are small, contacts with the police, for example, differed from those found by Hanmer and Saunders who found greater police contacts in Leeds, UK (Hanmer and Saunders, 1984:59).

It is widely confirmed throughout the literature that it takes several years before women decide to seek professional assistance. There are various reasons for women's decisions not to approach formal agencies (Radford, J. 1987:36; Binney et al, 1981; Dobash and Dobash, 1979:164; Dobash and Dobash, 1985:150-153; Hanmer and Saunders, 1984:24 and 50-59; Huisman, 1996, 2, 3, p. 262; Mama, 1993: 135; Pahl, 1985:82). In this research, 53 women disclosed the specific constraints on reporting and revealed their own reasons for not contacting agencies and about their husband's violence. The thematic categories showed concerns about: social constraints, concerns about the police, negative memories of previous experiences with the police, lack of information on existing services and lack of services.

Social constraints: Women were very concerned about what people would say if they saw the police outside their homes. Feelings of embarrassment and shame put women off and calling the police.

> I did not want people to know, I was feeling so embarrassed! Bringing Police to the house would make everybody in the neighbourhood talk and gossip about us (Int. 48).

***

Police concerns: Serious concerns about the police response were an important reason that deterred women from reporting the violence. Most women predicted that the police would not treat them right and fair, and would only try to reconciliate them and, even worse, make them feel they were to blame.

I was not sure that the Police would like to help me rather than help my husband (Int. 41).

***

I believed that the Police would not treat the situation in a sensitive way (Int. 17).

***

I was afraid that Police would blame me and would not be helpful (Int.9).

***

Negative memories of previous experiences with the Police: Women who sought Police's assistance in the context of previous violent events were very unsatisfied with the services they received (see Part B.2, Table 2). That negative experience influenced their decision not to report following incidents until the last one.

What they told me the other time was that they did not have any proof anyway and they only tried to make it up for us by saying that we have children and own family to think of (Int. 19).

***

I was not treated neither sympathetically nor seriously by them and that treatment put me off from contacting them for a long time (Int. 51).

***

I remember that at the first incident I had to call them three times on the same day and they still did not respond. They only said there were very busy on more serious things and that there were

> not many things they could do unless we would try to sort it out ourselves (Int. 21).

***

Lack of information about existing services: A surprisingly large number of women in this study revealed that the main reason they did not seek help from any formal service or organisation was simply because they did not have relevant information about existing services working on domestic violence. Only 1 out of 26 women who were interviewed in Thessaloniki had heard about the Refuge for battered women in Athens.

> I did not know any relevant agency to provide help and advice on cases of domestic violence. Is there? (Int. 1).

***

> I wanted to leave the house and stay in a place where I would be away from him and feel safe. I wished there was a house for battered women or something similar where women can be together, share experiences and get specialised help and advice (Int. 30).

***

No services = No way out: Women in this study revealed that staff in hospitals and the police had no information about and did not try to help them through an interagency (net)work as no such network existed.

> When I contacted the Police during a previous event they made it clear that I better not have any similar sort of problems in the future because there was nowhere they could refer me to for specialised help (Int.19).

***

This Chapter demonstrates the changing patterns in women's help-seeking behaviour to informal and formal sources concerning the General and the Last Violent Events. This provides information regarding the understanding of the different factors influencing decisions to seek help and to selectively disclosing their experiences to different potential supporters at different points in time.

The ideology of the privacy of the family reinforced by the general societal condoning of wife battering and attributing blame to women victims of male violence, restrict women's options and decision-making in the process of seeking help. Indeed, women in this study revealed the many barriers to their decisions to reporting the violence to significant others or to formal agencies. The strongest reasons appeared to be sociocultural constraints which make women postpone disclosing to others. Feelings of "shame" and loss of the important Greek values of "pride and dignity", fear of general disbelief and disapproval of her actions to 'go public' about her own husband, concerns about the effects on children, and the unavoidable social gossiping around her family and her "disgraceful" private life, were the main worries that made women wait and hoping for the future and thus experience many violent events before they found the strength to reassess the situation and make the problem public.

Women in this study were very selective about the people to whom they disclosed. Women usually choose another female, their best friend, sister and/or bridesmaid. All the above were perceived "very helpful" by women both in the General and the Last Violent Events. Surprisingly, the responses of women's parents varied from the Last Violent Event as opposed to the General Event. They appeared very sympathetic, understanding and actively supportive of their daughters requests. Women's in-laws were perceived as "not helpful" in both the General and the Last Violent Events. In terms of women seeking assistance from the Greek formal institutions, these findings demonstrate that the problem of women's reluctance to report the violence is most often exacerbated by social, medical and legal institutions. According to women's accounts, the police were the most common source of help sought in the General and mainly in the Last Violent Event, although women did not find their responses helpful or adequate. Police's actions revealed a powerful legacy of policies and practices that either explicitly or implicitly accept or selectively ignore male violence, blame the victim and make her responsible for its solution and elimination. Finally, the women in this study revealed the urgent need for more services dealing with women's issues which would assist and support them and offer information and advice on this and similar problems.

In summary, the overall findings of this chapter show that women's needs change over time fluctuating from emotional and psychological (needs for 'supportive' help) to practical and tangible (needs for 'challenging' help). In the 'General

Violent Event', the women's informal support network provided them with 'supportive' help which was aimed at coping with the violent relationship but often confirmed the man's authority to physically abuse his wife. In other cases, however, informants such as parents and in-laws not only were 'supportive' but were very judgmental and blaming. Both in the 'General' and the 'Last' Violent Events, formal agencies tended to provide women with 'supportive' help even when their requests were for 'challenging' help. Refuge was the only agency which helped women in both the 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests. In the 'Last Violent Event', the women's parents appeared to provide both 'supportive' and 'challenging' help, a finding which demonstrates that help-giving is processual in nature and can change over time. Finally, in terms of "why women did not disclose their experiences earlier to potential sources of help" the findings show that the main reasons were that women tended to justify the man's violence; they felt they were to blame for the violence; felt ashamed or too proud to bring their private life into public gossip; were concerned about the children; and, lastly and most importantly, were afraid of the social disapproval and the social disbelief following disclosing.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This work has examined the experiences of 53 Greek battered women, in particular their help-seeking behaviour and the self-perceived support of those from whom they sought help. My intention was to explore the help-seeking behaviour of abused women in Greece and bring the experiences of the 53 women interviewed into light as they revealed information about the different ways they approached the problem of violence as well as the different responses they received from a variety of confidants they asked for help. As I wanted to cover an as big a range of sources of help as possible, I included categories of both formal and informal potential agents. Women's matrimonial family as well as in-laws, friends, other relatives, neighbours, children and significant others constituted the main category of informal sources of help. Institutional as well as voluntary services such as the police, the doctors, the social workers, and the refuge for battered women constituted the other main category of formal sources of help. The main concepts that underpinned this study were those of the 'supportive' and 'challenging' nature of both the requests made by women to different agents and

the responses provided by those agents, respectively. As explained from the outset of the study, the concept of 'supportive' was referred to requests or responses targeting to practices such as putting up with the situation, coping with violence, and thus maintaining the current family status of men having the right to abuse the women. The concept of 'challenging' was referred to requests and responses which would aim at intervention, changing the situation, and questioning the right of men to inflict violence towards their wives.

Having introduced the research questions and main concepts from the first chapter of Introduction, I then presented in chapter two the relevant literature on violence against women in other countries and in Greece, the literature on social support and violence and the literature on the so called 'helping institutions' and violence. In chapter three, I presented the 'research journey' and analysed the methodological context and the methods I used to approach and explore the help-seeking behaviour of the Greek battered women. The findings of the research were presented in chapters five and six, and in this final chapter of Summary and Conclusions I will present a summary of those main findings.

As presented through the chapters of this thesis, numerous research studies reveal that battered women do approach various informants for help at some point in time. The Greek study revealed that to the extent that women do reach out, they tend to do so first to trusted friends and relatives and only later and under certain circumstances to professionals in formal institutions and agencies. Overall, patterns of women's help-seeking and confidants' help-giving behaviours in

Greece are generally very much similar to those reported in other industrial societies such as Canada, US, Australia and United Kingdom. The Greek study showed that Greek husbands, like males in other societies, use physical force to control their wife's behaviour and resources. Their right to do so has been condoned and reinforced by the social, historical and cultural attitudes in Greece that place women in the family and society in a subordinate position to men. The following is a summary of the main research findings:

6.2 WHAT RESTRAINED GREEK WOMEN FROM REACHING OUT FOR HELP?

The 53 women in this study expressed feelings of embarrassment and shame at disclosing their situation to others and stated that they initially preferred to try to solve their problems on their own rather than create more problems for their family and children. These feelings of shame ('ntrope') and embarrassment explicitly show the women's perceived responsibility of the violence and the future of their marriage. As shown before (see chapter two), the family in Greece is characterised by the principals of exclusive personal loyalty (Hart, 1992:171). It's solidarity, material stability and social integrity and advancement is axiomatic in Greece. The pervasive emphasis on the priority of males over females in Greece renders women conscious of the limitations on their movement and self-expression in public. Accordingly, Greek culture expects women to treat men with deference, to protect them from "nerves", to follow their orders and so on. These socially constructed behaviours together with the patriarchal ideology of the

absolute privacy of the family home are further reinforced by the general individual and societal beliefs, ideas and attitudes about the male-female relationships. Every action women take to jeopardise the above ideas will receive general disbelief and disapproval of the public. Accordingly, if she tries to leave she will either be stigmatised and judged for breaking up the family, and if she stays she will have to continue living in fear and misery.

To the extent that women have thought beyond personal shame and societal disapproval, they still had to think about the possibilities of receiving the support they want from the public sources of help, that is the institutions such as the police, courts, doctors, etc.. As the Greek study showed, women's perceived lack of trust and/or negative previous experience of agencies responses make them very concerned about the actual help they could expect to get if they decide to bring their problem into the public. They mainly saw the agencies as a reflection of the prevailing societal norms and attitudes and under that perspective they were not convinced that the benefits would overweigh the risks of such an action.

In short, the image of the woman as a self-sacrificing martyr is one that holds considerable emotional currency in Greek gender ideology (Hart, 1992). The specific social, political and cultural norms and ideas of the sanctity of the family and the marriage in Greece strongly internalised by women, together with the patriarchal ideology embodied in the community's attitudes and the institutional policies and practices which assign responsibility to women for keeping the

family together, served as the main reasons why Greek women often felt restrained from disclosing their experiences and seek help.

6.2.1 Restraints Broken Down? Initial Steps to Help-Seeking.

Although women in the Greek study believed that violence between partners was a private issue that should be resolved within the family, at some point in time they did approach outsiders whom they wanted to disclose their experiences to hoping that they would respond positively to their requests.

At this initial stage of help-seeking, women chose to talk to people from their informal networks. They most often approached their best friend who in all cases was a woman, followed by their sister or cousin and the bridesmaid ("koumpara"). The women revealed that they would feel more comfortable turning to another woman for help because "*women understand each other*", "*she was expected to provide more help than anybody else* " and because "*she was occasionally been helped by me and I expected her to be of the same help in return*". In all cases, the chosen informants were also the closest persons to the women and they were not expected to make the woman's problem any more public.

For a very long time and during the course of the 'General Violent Event', woman disclosing her experiences to another woman was perceived as simply a "friendly talk" and "sharing or telling their pain to someone". Women did not feel any particular danger or threat so as to seek help or make requests of a 'challenging'

nature. On the contrary, their requests were 'supportive' in nature, that is they only requested a "sympathetic ear", someone to validate what they were going through when violence was occurring and some advice in terms of making things better. In all cases, they received responses which were perceived to be of the same 'supportive' nature as the informal informants were offering them exactly what the women had asked. Both the requests made by women and the responses provided by the confidants were 'supportive' in nature. These included those kinds of assistance such as listening support, emotional support, reality confirmation support, personal assistance support, all oriented towards coping with the violence or the aftermath of it rather than challenging the man's violence or the relationship.

During this early stage of help-seeking, women's feelings are unstable and confused with low self-esteem, insecurity, self-doubt, guilt and self-blame for the violence and hopes that their husband will change and it will not happen again being common. Describing their feelings during the 'General Violent Event', they reveal that all they want for the moment is someone to verify their reality and to give them the vote of confidence that things would go better.

In short, at this initial stage in the help-seeking process, patterns appear of women disclosing to their best friends before anybody else and requesting 'supportive' kinds of help. They get what they want since the informants appear to respond positively, that is encourage women in coping with the violence and maintaining the structure of their family.

6.2.2 Restraints Broken Down: Later Stage in Help-Seeking.

After the initial stage, women revealed that they gradually started to realise that the violence was not a one-off event. Also, in some cases the injuries might had become worse so inevitably the problem could not be kept private any longer. The women had to face the fact that the situation was not getting any better, but was getting much worse and may have affected the children in the home. Accordingly, women revealed that potential catalysts in their decision to seek help from formal agencies and challenge their husbands' violence included the realisation that their partner would not change and was not able to accept his promises. Also, the increasing feelings of physical danger and the re-assessment of themselves and the situation they had been living in for years. At this stage, women sought the assistance of public agencies supposedly dedicated and committed to helping people in need.

During this stage of women help seeking from formal agencies, it appeared that the first social agency to be approached was the police. As opposed to the "initial stage" in help-seeking described before, women reveal that at this later stage they made 'challenging' requests. That is, kinds of help which suggest that they want to change the situation, escape from the violence and questioning the men's authority to inflict such violence upon them. As a result, they asked the police to arrest or evict them, press charges, place injunctions or occupation orders; in other words they ask for tangible assistance and support. The police's responses were perceived as 'not helpful' to women's 'challenging' requests. In some cases police

tried to listen and be sympathetic to women but they failed to respond accordingly to the nature of requests made. Police were perceived as ineffective for not providing the requested help, and as condoning wife beating by failing to protect wives and punish husbands.

In short, police were the key agency approached by the majority of women in the course of the 'Last Violent Event'. Women requested 'challenging' kinds of help and support but they only received unhelpful and ineffective responses. Still, police "did their job well" which was to maintain the status quo simply by safeguarding the structure of the marriage and the authority of the husbands within it.

6.3 UNIFYING RESPONSES? THE CASES OF WOMEN'S OWN PARENTS AND IN-LAWS.

Women in this study revealed that the attitudes of other informal supporters such as their own parents and their in-laws were not uniformly 'supportive' and in many cases were very judgmental and blaming. It was felt that both in the 'General and Last Violent Events', the in-laws in particular did not respond in a positive way either to the 'supportive' or 'challenging' requests made by the women.

As described in chapter two, in-laws in Greece play a very important role in the couple's life and the whole marriage is very much influenced by them. Greek

women owe constant honour, respect and appreciation to their in-laws as much as to their husbands. Yet, when it comes to asking for their help, both in the 'General' and in the 'Last' violent events they appeared to respond by "ignoring the violence", pretending "nothing serious happened" and blaming the woman.

As far as women's own parents responses were concerned, these were perceived 'not helpful' in the 'General' but 'very supportive' in the 'Last' Violent Event. More specifically, women's own parents when approached in the course of the 'General Violent Event' responded that daughters should tolerate the situation because "εσυ θα εφταιγες" ("you must have asked for it") or advised and encouraged them to put up with it so as the ultimate goal of keeping the family together would be achieved. However, in the context of the 'Last Violent Event' parents responses to 'challenging' requests were perceived very helpful as they included encouragement to go to the police, confronting the man, press charges, material assistance, etc.

Both in-laws and own parents' responses reflect the traditional gender roles and attitudes in Greece whose "asymmetry" reinforces the maintenance of the subordinate position of women in the family, the institution of marriage and the patriarchal society in general. Living in this social and cultural reality, women in this study were convinced that the same patriarchal ideology would also be embodied in the formal institutions whose policies and practices were expected to dictate the keeping of the family together and thus, by implication, the maintenance of wife beating as the one appears to be the extension of the other.

6.4 REFUGE: SOURCE OF CONSTANT 'SUPPORTIVE' AND 'CHALLENGING' HELP AND SUPPORT.

The last major finding that this thesis revealed is the ever helpful response of the refuge to battered women who reached out for help. The responses of the refuge workers were perceived as 'very helpful' by all women in the study. The refuge provided immediate help to both the 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests made by women. That is, women not only found a "sympathetic ear" to their problem but also they were given the opportunity to escape from the violent husbands and find a safe accommodation and a friendly environment where they could talk with other women who experienced the same problem as well as having some space and time for themselves to think and take decisions.

Women revealed that the refuge responses, either applied in the 'General' or the 'Last' violent events, were completely different from that manifested by other agencies approached for help such as the police. Simply by its existence, refuge meant a lot to the women and the refuge workers were described as doing their best to communicate to women that their personal safety and welfare were regarded as prime importance. In this way, and by constantly reminding women of its women-centred aims and objectives as well as responding positively to both 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests, refuge was the agency always to be viewed as the most favourable to all women. Not surprisingly, women suggested that in order for them as well as for other women in the same situation to be best helped, more refuges should open all over the country. This point was particularly

emphasised by Thessalonikian women who did not have such a service in their area. But, as one might wonder, is the increase of the refuges for battered women the one and only thing that would contribute to the reduction and elimination of the violence against women in Greece? Can a larger number of refuges and services in general guarantee a solution to this problem? Both these questions lead to the main question of what are the implications of this study and what further steps one could take for future working on and researching the issue of domestic violence in Greece.

In summary, this study showed that help-seeking is very much an ongoing interactive process over time. The data show that women's needs change over time and, accordingly, the nature of their requests to significant others and to formal agencies change as well. For example, in the 'General Violent Event' the vast majority of the requests made were 'supportive' (i.e. requests for a listening ear, for understanding and validation, which would lead to maintaining the situation) and was mainly addressed to members of women's informal networks such as their female best friend, sister, cousin and bridesmaid. In the 'Last Violent Event' the requests were mostly 'challenging' (i.e. requests for arresting the man and/or help to leave their house, which would lead to challenge the man's violence and do something about it) and mainly addressed to the formal agencies. Responses received from various confidants also changed over time. In the 'General Violent Event', the 'supportive' requests were mainly responses such as a friendly talk, a listening ear and provision of advice. These 'supportive' responses were mainly aimed at encouraging women to stay in the violent

relationship and try to cope with the situation. Still, some informants such as women's parents and in-laws were very judgmental and blaming. In the 'Last Violent Event', women mainly approached the formal agencies and asked for 'challenging' kinds of help aiming at challenging the man's violent behaviour and authority to beat his wife, including arresting the man or find safe temporary accommodation away from home. With the exception of the refuge, the women's 'challenging' requests appeared not to be met. Further, as opposed to their unhelpful responses in the 'General Violent Event', women's own parents were now perceived as "helpful" and supportive to the women's 'supportive' and 'challenging' requests. In sort, both the help-seeking and help-giving behaviours appeared to be processual in nature.

6.5 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications this study has for future research and social change are several. Having explored the process of women's help-seeking behaviour alongside the various responses they receive, some light is shed upon the complexity of the relationship between women and confidants. Based on these findings, future research might examine the interaction of help-seeking and help-giving behaviours applied in a large scale research or focus on specific agencies and violent events.

This study showed that the 53 Greek women in this small study go through various stages of consciousness before disclosing their experiences of violence to

others and, when they do, they mainly face inadequate and unhelpful agency responses such as trivialising the problem, a lack of concern about women's needs and requests and encouraging them to "go back and sort things out". Taking that into consideration, future research should stress the fact that domestic violence is a form of oppression of women and a human rights crime and researchers should not view violence against women simply as an individual problem but also as a structurally gendered one which is related to the subordinate position of women in the family and society in general.

Changes and improvements need to be made in various policy areas and legislation. The general public's awareness and interest in domestic violence should be constantly raised by grassroots groups and professionals working in this area. These should be the official acknowledgement of the widespread incidence of domestic violence in Greece and greater attempts should be made towards understanding its prevalence, causes and consequences. Community based and nationwide pragrammes aimed at protecting women's rights and directly addressing domestic violence should be developed and run all over Greece, covering urban and rural areas. More services for battered women should be established and social services should not remain limited in their spectrum of responsibilities and provisions. Although some women victims of spousal abuse can seek generic social services from public centres or women's centres, this research shows that women's needs change over time according to the stages they are going through. Responding to this finding and suggesting challenges for the future, I argue that more organisations that specialise in violence in the home must

open in Greece. Currently, in the public sector there is only one organisation in Greece that is devoted to battered women and provides a wider range of services such as consultation and counselling and shelter. In the private sector, there is one hot line which was put into operation in December 1998. The line will be funded until the summer of 1999 and is based on volunteers with no relevant qualifications or training in dealing with cases of domestic violence. Further, collaboration among workers in the various delivery systems as they attempt to support women victims of domestic violence should become the preferred methods in service delivery.

One of the biggest challenges I see for now and for the future in researching violence against women is funding of service organisations and academic projects. Still, this cannot improve without a change in public recognition of the magnitude of the problem. Until recently, in Greece there has not been any strategic focus of, or co-operation between, women's groups and the professionals working in services for victims of domestic violence. Although some progress seems to has been made mainly on the front of various independent groups getting together and trying to formulate a common agenda of theory and practice, much remains to be done to challenge the cultural norms, attitudes and beliefs that keep Greek women trapped in abusive relationships and overall contribute to domestic violence. Indeed, lack of attention to attitudes and community norms has been an overall weakness in the anti-violence movement globally (Heise, 1996; Kelly, 1996).

In the same vein, and reflecting upon one of the main findings of this research, the women's unmet need for 'more services and better responses' appears to be as great in Greece as it is internationally. I would argue that 'better responses' should mean encouraging women to recognise and disclose violence and encouraging more constructive, less victim-blaming attitudes among professionals as well as family members, friends and the community at large.

Further, every agency's policy and practice agenda should have as a starting point the principle that women are the sufferers of male violence and that men should by all means be accountable and responsible for this. Women's safety should be the priority in every policy making document. To best serve the needs of women, a large network of agencies providing help and support is necessary. Refuges for example, are one of the key agencies to combat violence against women and to provide them an immediate safety place and environment and to offer them the opportunity to leave the violent man. Still, a refuge alone is not enough. A woman who experiences violence from her partner needs to have a safety net around her, something that only the inter/multi agency work could provide her. In this way, a refuge needs to be in co-operation with other services and agencies such as the local authority, the housing, the women's aid, the social, legal, health and medical services, the police, the helpline, the probation, the support centres for women and children, the voluntary sector groups, other women's and community organisations, etc.

Overall, the exploration of the experiences of the 53 Greek battered women reveal that patterns of the help-seeking and support closely resemble those reported by researchers in other countries. While this is a small study, the evidence begins the process of examining this issue in a country with a unique socio-political and cultural context and with no previous empirical research on the help-seeking behaviour among battered women. This will contribute to knowledge of services and interventions for helping women victims of male violence and greater knowledge about women's own needs may assist in the development of support networks providing all types of assistance.

Although attempts to understanding and confronting the problem of violence and to organise systematic and effective support to women have only just begun in Greece, future research should help in further exploring, understanding, intervening and eliminating the problem. Greece, like much of the rest of the world, has a long way to go before this issue is better understood and women's suffering more fully appreciated, but I would hope that this initial exploratory study would assist in adding to our awareness of basic human rights and to the sense of empowerment needed to defend them.

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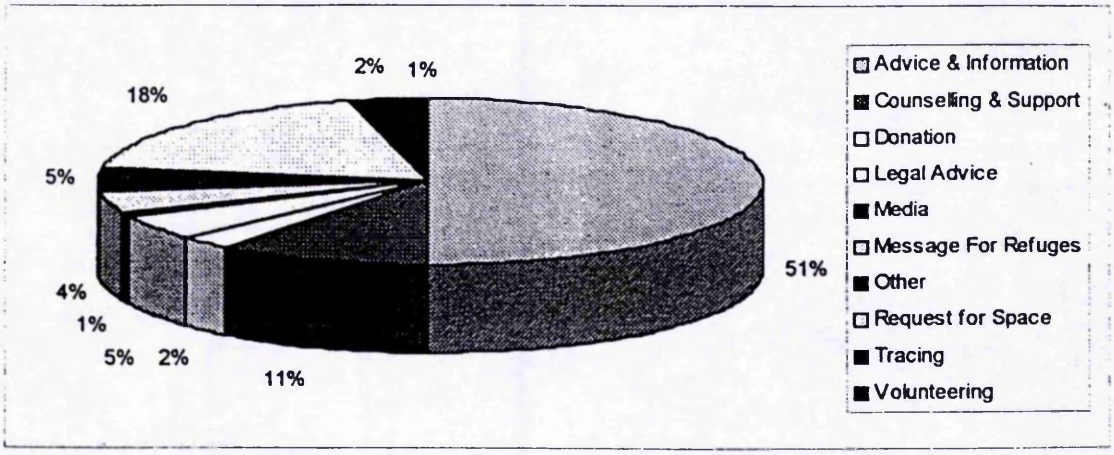
APPENDIX 2.1

Number and Types of Calls to the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline Manchester (W.D.V.H.) during 1995-1996.

Types of Calls To The WDVH (Mcr)

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Advice & Information	163	226	309	327	272	230	226	133	122	255	213	183	**2659**
Counselling & Support	29	51	50	68	83	32	36	29	27	55	52	51	**563**
Donation	5	5	13	14	16	8	9	9	18	15	8	13	**133**
Legal Advice	27	36	31	24	21	4	4	8	9	34	37	35	**270**
Media	3	3	3	7	3	2	2	5	0	3	4	1	**36**
Message For Refuges	15	12	19	20	33	14	7	13	10	14	25	24	**206**
Other	10	17	11	18	16	31	25	22	25	16	45	37	**273**
Request for Space	60	78	110	117	122	52	54	71	45	90	81	95	**975**
Tracing	8	9	12	13	7	4	14	5	15	16	13	14	**130**
Volunteering	3	4	6	6	4	9	9	9	2	5	9	10	**76**
Total	**323**	**441**	**564**	**614**	**577**	**386**	**386**	**304**	**273**	**503**	**487**	**463**	**5321**



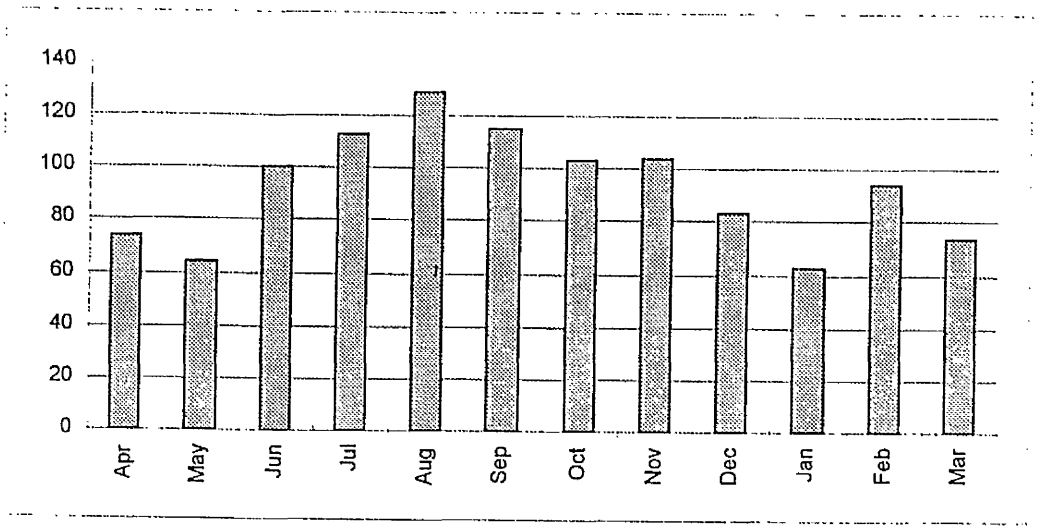
Please note that calls received usually cover several topics.

APPENDIX 2.2

Number of Referrals to Refuges made by Women's Domestic Violence Helpline Manchester (W.D.V.H.) during 1995-1996.

Refuges Whom We Referred Onto

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
74	64	100	113	129	115	103	104	83	63	94	74	1116



APPENDIX 3.1

FIELDWORK INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Help-Seeking Among Abused Women in Greece

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

For interviewer to complete:

1. Interviewee No: _____
2. Date -- / -- / --
3. Time interview began (24 hr clock): _____/_____
4. Location: _____
   _____
   _____
5. Anyone present: _____
   _____
6. Any other comments: _____
   _____
   _____
7. Time interview finished (24 hr clock): _____/_____

1. SOME FACTS ABOUT YOU

Please start the questionnaire by answering a few questions about yourself and your childhood.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your partner's age? ____
3. What is your religion?

   1___None 2__Greek Orthodox 3__Muslim 4__Other
4. What is your husband's/partner's religion?

   1___None 2__Greek Orthodox 3__Muslim 4__Other
5. Where do you live now?

   1__Your own house 4__ With friends/neighbours

   2__ Your parents house 5__ Elsewhere (Specify __)

   3__ With relatives (Specify?__)
6. Who else are you living with ?

1___Your husband/partner *4__Your husband's parents M__F__B__*

2___Your children *5___Other (specify)*

3___Your parents M__ F__ B__

7. Is the property you have been living in ....

   1__ in your name only 2__ in his name only 3__ in joint names 4__other

Children

8. How many children do you have? ___
9. How old and what sex are they?

Age	Sex	Staying with 1. 2. 3. 4.
1		
2		
3		
4		

Note: 1=with the couple, 2=with you, 3=with the husband, 4=other __ (specify)

Education

10. Have you finished:

1___Primary school 2___High school 3___Lyceum

4___College (one or two years) 5___University 6___Other

11. Has your husband/partner finished:

1__, 2__, 3__, 4__, 5__, 6__ (circle)

Work

12. Are you:

1___Unemployed 4 __Working: 4.a What job? __

2___Pensioner 4.b Part/Full Time? __

3__Student

13. Is your husband/partner:

1___Unemployed 4 __Working: 4.a What job? __

2___Pensioner 4.b Part/Full Time? __

3__Student

14. It would help me if you could please point out which net monthly income group you are in:

1__200.000dr. or less 2___201.000dr - 300.000dr. 3___301.000 - 400.000dr.

4___ 401.000 - 500.000dr. 5 ___501.000 and more

Family (outside the household)

Family members	Age	Live nearby (Y/N)	Amount of contact (1-6)
Mother			1.2.3.4.5.6
Father			1.2.3.4.5.6
Sister 1			1.2.3.4.5.6
Sister 2			1.2.3.4.5.6
Brother 1			1.2.3.4.5.6
Brother 2			1.2.3.4.5.6
Other 1			1.2.3.4.5.6

Other 2			1.2.3.4.5.6
Other 3			1.2.3.4.5.6
Friends/Relatives			
1__			
2__			
3__			
4__			

Note: 1=Daily, 2=Weekly, 3=Monthly, 4=Yearly, 5=Never, 6=N/A

15. From what you remember, how was the relationship bwteen your parents when you were a child? Were there any quarrels and fights in your own family?

1__ Yes 2__ No 3__Don't know

16. If Yes, could you tell me about it?

_____

17. To the best of your knowledge, when your husband was a child, were there any quarrels and fights between his parents?

1__ Yes 2__ No 3__Don't know

18. If yes, could you tell me about it?

_____

Couple's relationship

I would like now to discuss about your relationship before and after the marriage.

19. Are you ...

1__Married and living together
2__Married and living apart
3__Divorced
4__Not married and living together
5__Not married and not living together
6__Other (specify)

a. Before marriage

20. How long had you known him before you got married/started living together?

1___years 2___months 3___weeks

21. At that time (before married/living together), was he ever violent towards you? 1___ No 2___Yes 2.a. If Yes, how often? ____

2.b Can you tell about it? ___

b. After marriage

22. How long have you been married to/had a relationship with him when he first hit you?

1___years 2___months 3____weeks

23. How many times has he been violent towards you during the last two years of your marriage?

1__ Exact number 2__ Estimate number

2. THE LAST ASSAULT AND WAYS OF COPING

Now I would like to ask you some things about the most recent violent event itself. I would like you to tell me what happened.

24. Can you tell me what led to the attack? Was there an argument? What about?

1_ Sexual jealusy 2_ Money 3_ Job 4_Role expectation

5_ Children 6_ Relatives 7_ Alcohol 8_Other (specify)

25. Can you describe me what exactly happened?

Violence _____

Injuries _____

Duration _____

26. What did you do immediately after to sort out the situation?

Fight back _____

Asked for help _____

Called the police _____

27. Who else was there?	28. What did they do?
1__no one	
2__children	
3__friends	
4__relatives	
5__other (specify)	

29. How did you FEEL after he hit you?

1_Ashamed 2_ Apologetic 3_ Angry 4_ Shocked

5_ It was inevitable 6_ Other

30. Will this last event make any difference to the way you feel about him?

Yes __1 No __2

31. If Yes, how ?

1__Never same again 2__Fear of him 3___Expect it again 4__Other

3. HELP FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS AND FORMAL AGENCIES

Now I would like to find out whether you might have sought help from your/his friends, your/his family and/or the formal agecies after the Last Violent Event.

3a. THE LAST VIOLENT EVENT

3rd party contacted?	How long after fight? (H/D/W.)	What did you expect from them?	How did they react?	How helpful were they?	If not contacted, why not?
Your family					
your mother					
your father					
your sister					
other relative__					
children					
your friends(M/F)					
neighbours					
His family					
his mother					
his father					

his sister					
other relative__					
his friends(M/F)					
Formal Agencies					
Refuge					
Doctor-Hospital					
Women's groups					
Social Services					
Police					
Lawyer					
Priest					
Other					

3b. A GENERAL VIOLENT EVENT

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about the violence that usually occured in the relationship in the past. What it was usually like and who you usually contacted.

3rd party contacted?	How long after fight? (H/D/W.)	What did you expect from them?	How did they react?	How helpful were they?	If not contacted, why not?
Your family					
your mother					
your father					
your sister					
other relative__					
children					
your friends(M/F)					

neighbours					
His family					
his mother					
his father					
his sister					
other relative__					
his friends(M/F)					
Formal Agencies					
Refuge					
Doctor-Hospital					
Women's groups					
Social Services					
Police					
Lawyer					
Priest					
Other					

33. How many times did you come to the refuge/doctors/women's office for help?

1__First time 2__ Second 3__Third 4__Fourth 5__Other

34. Did you come here:

1__ Alone 2__ With a friend 3__A relative 4__Other

35. Overall, I would like you now to tell me how helpful all the above were:

Sources of help	Not at all Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	N/A
Your family				
your mother				
your father				
your sister				
other relative__				

children				
your friends(M/F)				
neighbours				
His family				
his mother				
his father				
his sister				
other relative__				
his friends(M/F)				
Formal Agencies				
Refuge				
Doctor-Hospital				
Women's groups				
Social Services				
Police				
Lawyer				
Priest				
Other				

36. Can you tell me in general, who of the above or other was the strongest help for you?

1__ Yourself 2__Your friend/s 3__Mother 4__Father 5__Other

4. FUTURE AND OTHERS

37. How do you feel now about yourself ?

(probe: your rights, any changes, etc) _____

38. What do you plan to do now?

_____

39. What are your hopes for the future?

_____

40. If you were going to talk to (or give advice to) other women experiencing violence from their husbands/partners, what would you like to tell them?

_____

Epilogue

41. Are there any questions or any comments you would like to make? ___

42. How did you feel about this interview? Were there any questions you felt uneasy about? ___

43. Do you happen to know other abused women who would be willing to talk about their experiences? If Yes, how many?

1__ Number of women 2___No

_____

This is the end of the interview. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

THE UNIVERSITY
of MANCHESTER

APPENDIX 3.2

ΑΥΣΤΗΡΑ ΕΜΠΙΣΤΕΥΤΙΚΟ

ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ ΣΥΝΕΝΤΕΥΞΗΣ

ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΙΑ ΚΑΚΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΗ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗ

Να συμπληρωθεί από τον διενεργούντα την συνέντευξη:

1. Αριθμός συνέντευξης: _____
2. Ημερομηνία -- / -- / --
3. Ώρα έναρξης της συνέντευξης: _____/_____
4. Τόπος: _____
5. Άλλοι παρόντες: _____
6. Άλλα σχόλια: _____

   _____
7. Ώρα λήξης της συνέντευξης: _____/_____

1. Μερικά πράγματα για σας

Σας παρακαλώ απαντήστε μερικές ερωτήσεις για τον εαυτό σας, τον σύζυγο και την παιδική σας ηλικία.

1. Πόσο χρονών είστε; _____ 2. Πόσο χρονών είναι ο σύζυγός σας; ____

3. Ποιά είναι η θρησκεία σας;

   1__ Χριστιανή Ορθόδοξος 2__Μουσουλμάνα 3___Καμμιά 4___Άλλο

4. Ποιά είναι η θρησκεία του συζύγου σας;

   1__ Χριστιανός Ορθόδοξος 2__Μουσουλμάνος 3___Καμμιά 4___Άλλο

5. Πού μένετε **τώρα;**

   1__στο δικό σας σπίτι 4__σε φίλους/γείτονες

   2__στο πατρικό σας 5__Αλλού (πού;___)

   3__σε συγγενείς (ποιούς;__)

6. Ποιός άλλος μένει μαζί σας ;

   1 ο σύζυγος/σύντροφος *4 οι γονείς του συζύγου Μ__Π__Μ.Π_*

   2 τα παιδιά σας *5 με άλλους (ποιούς;__)*

   3 οι γονείς σας Μ_ Π_ Μ.Π__

7. Το σπίτι που μένετε είναι στο:

   1__όνομά σας 2__όνομα του συζύγου 3__και στους δυό σας 4__άλλο

Παιδιά

8. Πόσα παιδιά έχετε; _____

9. Πόσο χρονών και τί φύλο είναι;

Ηλικία	Φύλο	Διαμονή 1. 2. 3. 4.
1		
2		
3		
4		

Σημείωση: 1=με το ζευγάρι, 2=με εσάς, 3=με τον σύζυγο, 4=αλλού (πού;__)

Εκπαίδευση

10. Έχετε τελειώσει το:

1 Δημοτικό 2 Γυμνάσιο 3 Λύκειο

4 Κολλέγιο (ένα ή δύο χρόνια) 5 Πανεπιστήμιο 6 Άλλο

11. Ο σύζυγος/σύντροφος έχει τελειώσει:

1__, 2__, 3__, 4__, 5__, 6__ (βάλε σε κύκλο)

Εργασία

12. Είστε:

1 άνεργη 4 εργαζόμενη: 4α. τί δουλειά;__

2 Συνταξιούχος 4β. πλήρης/μερική απασχόληση;___

3 φοιτήτρια

13. Ο σύζυγος/σύντροφος είναι:

1 άνεργος 4 εργαζόμενος: 4α. τί δουλειά;__

2 συνταξιούχος 4β. πλήρης/μερική απασχόληση;__

3 φοιτητής

14. Σε ποιά κατηγορία εισοδήματος ανήκετε:

1. μέχρι 200χιλ.δρχ. 2. 201-300χιλ.δρχ.. 3. 301-400 χιλ.δρχ.

4. 401-500 χιλ.δρχ. 5. Πάνω από 501 χιλ.δρχ.

Οικογένεια (αναφορά στην πατρική οικογένεια)

Οικογένεια	Ηλικία	Μένει κοντά (Ν/Ο)	Ποσ. Επαφής (1-6)
Μητέρα			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Πατέρας			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Αδελφή 1			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Αδελφή 2			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Αδελφός 1			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Αδελφός 2			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Άλλος 1			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
'Αλλος 2			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6
Άλλος 3			1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6

Φίλοι/Συγγ.			
1__			
2__			
3__			
4__			

Σημείωση: 1=Καθημερινά, 2=Εβδομαδιαία, 3=Μηνιαία, 4=Ετήσια, 5=Ποτέ, 6=Ο/Ε

15. Από ό,τι θυμάστε, πώς ήταν η σχέση των γονιών σας όταν ήσασταν παιδί; Υπήρχαν π.χ. καυγάδες και τσακωμοί στο σπίτι;

1 Ναι 2 Όχι 3 Δεν ξέρω

16. Αν ναι, μπορείτε να μου πείτε λίγα πράγματα;

_____

17. Από όσο ξέρετε, όταν ο σύζυγος ήταν παιδί, υπήρχαν καυγάδες και τσακωμοί μεταξύ των γονιών του;

1 Ναι 2 Όχι 3 Δεν ξέρω

18. Αν ναι, μπορείτε να μου πείτε λίγα πράγματα;

_____

<u>Η σχέση σας με τον σύζυγο/σύντροφο:</u>

Θα ήθελα τώρα να μου πείτε λίγα λόγια για την σχέση σας πριν και μετά τον γάμο.

19. Είστε **τώρα** ...

1. παντρεμένη και ζείτε μαζί
2. παντρεμένη και ζείτε χωριστά
3. χωρισμένη
4. ζείτε μαζί αλλά δεν είστε παντρεμένη
5. δεν ζείτε μαζί ούτε είστε παντρεμένη
6. άλλο (τί)

α. Πριν το γάμο

20. Πόσο καιρό τον γνωρίζατε πριν παντρευτήτε/ζήσετε μαζί;

1 ___χρόνια 2___μήνες 3___εβδομάδες

21.Εκείνο το διάστημα ήταν καθόλου βίαιος απέναντί σας;

1 Όχι 2 Ναι 25. Αν ναι, πόσο συχνά; _____

25α. Μπορείτε να μου πείτε σχετικά;_____

β. Μετά το γάμο

22. Πόσο καιρό είσασταν παντρεμένη όταν σας χτύπησε για πρώτη φορά;

1 ___χρόνια 2___μήνες 3____εβδομάδες

23. Πόσες φορές ήταν βίαιος απέναντί σας κατά τα δύο τελευτέα χρόνια του γάμου σας; 1. Ακριβής αριθμός ___ 2. Περίπου___

2. Η τελευταία κακοποίηση

Τώρα θα ήθελα να μου πείτε μερικά πράγματα για την τελευταία αυτή κακοποίηση που σας έκανε να έρθετε εδώ. Θα ήθελα να μου πείτε τί έγινε.

24. Θα μπορούσατε να μου πείτε ποιά ήταν η αιτία/αφορμή;Πώς ξεκίνησε γενικότερα;

1 ερωτική ζήλεια 2 χρήματα 3 δουλειά 4προσδοκίες ρόλων

5 παιδιά 6 συγγενείς (ποιοί) 7 ποτό 8 άλλο (τί)

25. Θα μπορούσατε να περιγράψετε τί συνέβη;

κακοποίηση, _____

τραυματισμούς, _____

διάρκεια _____

26. Τί κάνατε ακριβώς μετά για να αντιμετωπίσετε την κατάσταση;

ανταποδόσατε το χτύπημα; _____

ζητήσατε βοήθεια; _____

καλέσατε την αστυνομεία; _____

Ποιός άλλος ήταν εκεί;	Τί έκαναν;
1 κανείς	
2 παιδιά	
3 φίλοι	
4 συγγενείς	
5 άλλοι (ποιοί)	

27. Πώς αισθανθήκατε μετά την κακοποίηση;

1 ντροπιασμένη 2 απολογούμενη 3 θυμωμένη 4 σοκαρισμένη

5 το περιμένατε 6 άλλο (τί)

28. Αυτό το τελευταίο γεγονός θα σας κάνει να αλλάξετε τα συναισθήματά σας;

1. Όχι

2. Ναι 29. Αν ναι, πώς;

1. ποτέ δεν θα αισθάνομαι το ίδιο ξανά, 2. θα τον φοβάμαι περισσότερο

3. θα το περιμένω πάλι (την κακοποίηση) 4. Άλλο (τί)

3. Βοήθεια που ζητήσατε από φίλους, συγγενείς και επίσημους φορείς

Ζητήσατε ήδη κάποια βοήθεια από φίλους, συγγενείς ή άλλους επίσημους φορείς μετά από το σημερινό γεγονός;

3α. Το τελευταίο επεισόδιο κακοποίησης

Επικοινωνία με 3ο μέλος	Πότε (μετά την κακοπ.) Ωρ./Μ/Εβδ.	Τί περιμένατε από αυτούς;	Πώς αντέδρασαν;	Πόσο βοηθητικοί ήταν;	Αν δεν επικοινωνήσατε με κάποιον, γιατί όχι;
Οικογένειά σου/φίλοι					
Η μητέρα σου					
Ο πατέρας σου					
Η αδελφή σου					
Άλλος συγγενής —					
Η φίλη σου (Θ/Α)					
Η μητέρα του					
Οικογένειά του/φίλοι					

Ο πατέρας του					
Η αδελφή του					
Άλλος συγγενής __					
Ο φίλος του (Θ/Α)					
Επίσημοι φορείς					
Ξενώνας					
Γυναικεία Οργάν.					
Υπουργός					
Παπάς					
Δικηγόρος					
Αστυνομικός					
Κοιν. Υπηρεσία					
Γιατρός/Νοσοκ.					
Άλλος					

Πόσες φορές ήρθατε στο Νοσοκομείο για βοήθεια εκτός από αυτή; _____

Ήρθατε εδώ:

1. __μόνη 2.__με κάποιον φίλο 3.__με κάποιον συγγενή 4.__άλλο

3β. Ένα σύνηθες επεισόδιο κακοποίησης

Τώρα θα ήθελα να μου πείτε αν ζητούσατε **συνήθως** βοήθεια από άλλα άτομα μετά από κάποια επεισόδεια κακοποίησης που συνέβησαν στο παρελθόν γενικότερα.

Επικοινωνία με 3ο μέλος	Πότε (μετά την κακοπ.) Ωρ./Μ/Εβδ.	Τί περιμένατε από αυτούς;	Πώς αντέδρασαν;	Πόσο βοηθητικοί ήταν;	Αν δεν επικοινωνήσατε με κάποιον, γιατί όχι;
Οικογένειά σου/φίλοι					
Η μητέρα σου					
Ο πατέρας σου					
Η αδελφή σου					
Άλλος συγγενής __					
Η φίλη σου (Θ/Α)					
Η μητέρα του					
Οικογένειά του/φίλοι					
Ο πατέρας του					
Η αδελφή του					
Άλλος συγγενής _					
Ο φίλος του (Θ/Α)					
Επίσημοι φορείς					
Ξενώνας					
Γυναικεία Οργάν.					
Υπουργός					
Παπάς					
Δικηγόρος					
Αστυνομικός					
Κοιν. Υπηρεσία					

Γιατρός/Νοσοκομ					
Άλλος					

Γενικά, πόσο βοηθητικούς βρήκατε τους παρακάτω;

Πηγές βοήθειας	Ν/Α	Πολύ βοηθητικούς	Βοηθητικούς	Μη βοη-θητικούς
Οικογένειά σου/φίλοι				
Η μητέρα σου				
Ο πατέρας σου				
Η αδελφή σου				
Άλλος συγγενής __				
Φίλοι (Θ/Α)				
Γείτονες				
Οικογένειά του/φίλοι				
Η μητέρα του				
Ο πατέρας του				
Η αδελφή του				
Άλλος συγγενής __				
Φίλοι (Θ/Α)				
Επίσημοι φορείς				
Ξενώνας				
Γυναικεία Οργάν.				
Υπουργός				
Παπάς				
Δικηγόρος				
Αστυνομικός				
Κοιν. Υπηρεσία				
Γιατρός/Νοσοκομ.				
Άλλος				

Μπορείτε να μου πείτε ποιός στάθηκε η μεγαλύτερη πηγή βοήθειας για σας; ____

Το μέλλον και τα σχέδια σας

Πώς αισθάνεστε τώρα τον εαυτό σας;

(π.χ. τα δικαιώματά σας, κάποιες αλλαγές) _____

Τί θα κάνετε μετά από εδώ; _____

Ποιές είναι οι ελπίδες σας για το μέλλον; _____

Αν θα μπορούσατε να δώσετε μια συμβουλή στις γυναίκες που ζουν σε σχέσεις κακοποίησης, τί θα θέλατε να τις πείτε; _____

Επίλογος

Υπάρχουν κάποια σχόλια ή ερωτήσεις που θα θέλατε να μου κάνετε; _____

Πώς σας φάνηκε η συνέντευξη; Αισθανθήκατε άβολα με κάποιες ερωτήσεις; _____

Γνωρίζετε άλλες κακοποιημένες γυναίκες που θα ήθελαν να συζητήσουν για την κακοποίηση τους;

1. Όχι 2. Ναι Πόσες; ____

Εδώ τελειώνει η συνέντευξη. Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για τον χρόνο που διαθέσατε και την συνεργασία σας. Ελπίζω να βρήκατε τη συνέντευξη ενδιαφέρουσα και χρήσιμη.

APPENDIX 3.3

PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Marital Violence Against Women in Greece and Social Support

For interviewer to complete:

1. Interviewee No: _____
2. Date -- / -- / --
3. Time interview began (24 hr clock): _____/_____
4. Location: _____

   _____

   _____
5. Anyone present: _____

   _____
6. Any other comments: _____

   _____

   _____
7. Time interview finished (24 hr clock): _____/_____

Introduction

Hello, I am Sevaste Chatzifotiou, and I am a research student at University of Manchester, U.K.

I am really pleased to meet you and want to thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I appreciate your co-operation in this important research. The way I see the interview going is that I would like to ask you some questions about what has happened to you and go through a questionnaire with you covering the social support and help you have/have not received as well as facts about yourself, and your relationship. By social support I mean any help you got, both emotional and practical, and from anyone at all.
This is a confidential research interview. By this I mean, I am not going to tell anyone about what you have said and the information will only be used for the purpose of the research.

I hope this research will be helpful directly to you, and to other women in a similar situation in the future. What you say will be analysed anonymously and I would also like to ask your permission to tape the interview.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask me before we begin?

1. SOME FACTS ABOUT YOU

I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about yourself and your childhood.

1. What is your date of birth? .. / .. / ..
2. When did you entered home for battered women? .. / .. / ..

   If out of the refuge already: When did you leave? .. / .. / ..
3. Do you identify with a religion? Yes __1 No __2
   a. None ____
   b. Greek Orthodox ____
   c. Muslim ____
   d. Jewish ____
   e. Witnesses of Jehovah ___
   f. Other (specify) ____
4. What is your place of birth? _____
5. Did you grow up there? Yes ___1

   No ___2 .....Where else did you stay and for how long?

   Place _____ Length of stay _____
6. Where did you live before moving here?

   _____
7. What kind of house did you live in? Is it...
   a. Flat (owned) Yes ___1 No ___2
   b. House (owned) Yes ___1 No ___2
   c. Council flat (owned) Yes ___1 No ___2
   d. Flat (rented) Yes ___1 No ___2
   e. House (rented) Yes ___1 No ___2
   f. Other (specify) _____
8. Is the property you have been living in ....
   a. in your name only Yes ___1
   b. in his name only Yes ___2

c. in joint names Yes ___3

d. other (specify) _____

9. Did you live with your husband only? Yes ___1 No ___2

If Yes, go to Q. 11. If No, go to Q. 10

10. Who else were you living with you?

a. your children Yes ___1 How many? ___

b. your parents (both) Yes ___2 Mother __3 Father __4

c. his parents (both) Yes ___5 Mother __6 Father __7

d. other (specify) _____

11. Are you **now** ...

a. married and living together ___1

b. married and living apart ___1

c. divorced ___1

d. not married and living together ___1

e. not married and not living together ___1

f. other (specify) ___1

12. Were you **at the time of the last violence...**

a. married and living together ___1

b. married and living apart ___1

c. divorced ___1

d. not married and living together ___1

e. not married and not living together ___1

f. other (specify) ___1

EDUCATION

13. How old were you when you left school?

14 or less ___1

15 ___2

16 ___3

17 ___4

18 or over ___5

don't know ___6

14. Have you done any other courses or studying since? Yes ___1 No ___2

If No, go to Q. 17

15. What was this? (specify) _____

16. Have you obtained any qualification from this? Yes ___1 No ___2

WORK

17. Do you do any kind of paid work now?

Yes ___1 No ___2 (go to Q.19)

18. If Yes, what kind of work is this?

_____

(e.g. sales, secretarial work, domestic)

19. If no, did you do any before? Yes___1 (go to Q.20) No ___2

20. What was that work?

_____

21. It would help me if you could please point out which net monthly income group you are in:

200.000dr. or less ___1

201.000dr - 300.000dr. ___2

301.000 - 400.000dr. ___3

401.000 - 500.000dr. ___4

If more, specify ___5

FAMILY (OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD)

22. Are your parents alive? Yes ___1 No ___2 (go to 23)

23. Are they living together? Yes ___1 (go to Q. 22) No ___2

24. If No, why not?

a. dead _____1 - Who? Morher ___ Father ___

b. divorced _____2

c. other (specify) _____3

25. What did your father do for a living?

_____

26. What did your mother do for a living?

_____

27. How many brothers do you have? Brothers No: _____

28. How many sisters? Sisters No: _____

29. From what you remember, how was their relationship? Were there any quarrels and fights in your own family?

Yes ___1 **(go to Q.30)** No ___2 **(go to next section)** Don't know ___3

30. Can you tell me more about it?

(follow all the questions below) _____

31. Was your father ever violent to your mother or any other member of the family?

Yes ___1 No ___2 (go to Q. 33) Don't know ___3 (go to Q. 33)

32. If Yes, to Whom?

Recipient of Violence Extent and nature

_____ _____

33. Did your father get into fights with people outside the family?

Yes ___1 No ___2 (go to Q. 35) Don't know ___3 (go to Q. 35)

34. If Yes, could you tell me about it?

_____

35. Did your mother ever hit your father?

Yes ___1 No___2 Don't know ___3

36. Was your mother ever violent towards your father or other members of the family?

Yes___1 No___2 (go to 38) Don't know___3 (go to 38)

37. If Yes, to whom?

Recipient of violence Extent and nature

_____ _____

38. Did your mother get into fights with people outside the family?

Yes ___1 No ___2 (go to 40) Don't know___3 (go to 40)

39. If Yes, could you tell me about it?

_____

40. Are any of your brothers or sisters violent?

Yes___1 No___2 Don't know___3

41. If Yes, could you tell me about it?

	Recipient of violence	Extent and nature
Brothers	_____	_____
Sisters	_____	_____

42. Are there any other relatives you are close to?

Yes___1 No___2

43. Could you tell me who they are? (number them starting from the closest ones)

a. aunt ____

b. uncle ____

c. grandmother ____

d. grandfather ____

e. other (specify) _____

CHILDREN

44. Do you have any children? Yes___1 No___2 (go to Q. 57)

45. How many girls and how old are they?

	Exact age	Total number
46. under 1	_____	_____
47. between 1-5	_____	_____
48. 6 - 11	_____	_____
49. 12 - 16	_____	_____
50. older	_____	_____

51. How many boys and how old are they?

Exact age Total number

52. under 1 _____ _____

53. between 1 - 5 _____ _____

54. 6 - 11 _____ _____

55. 12 - 16 _____ _____

56. older _____ _____

57. Are there other children who live with you? Yes ___1 No ____2 (go to next section)

(probe: step children ___, other _____)

58. Do they all live with you? Yes___1 (go to next section) No___2 Some ___3

59. If no or some, which ones do not?

_____

60. Would you mind saying where they are? (record verbatim)

_____

61. Would you like to say why they are there? (record verbatim)

_____

2. COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP

I would like now to discuss about your relationship in general (for married: both before and after the marriage).

62. How long have you been married to/had a relationship with the person who was violent to you?

years ____1 months ____2

63. How long had you known him before you got married/started living together?

years____1 months____2 weeks____3

64. How often did you go out together before getting married?

everyday____1 ...times a week___2 ....times a month___3 other____4

65. Did you enjoy going out together?

Never___1 Seldom___2 Sometimes___3 Often___4 Always___5

66. Did he go out without you at all? yes___1 No ___2 (go to Q. 73)

67. If yes, how often?

Seldom___1 Sometimes___2 Often___3 Always___4

68. Did he go out alone____1, or with friends_____2?

69. What did you think of his going out without you?

Did not like it___1 Did not mind___2 Like it ____3 Other (specify)____4

70. Did you ever tell him what you thought about his going out?

Yes___1 No___2 Don't know___3

71. What did he think about his going out?

Did not like it___1 Did not mind___2 Like it___3 Other(specify)_____4

72. Did he enjoy it?

Never___1 Seldom___2 Sometimes___3 Often___4 Always___5

73. Did you go out without him for a social occasion? Yes__1 No__2 (go to Q.78)

74. If yes, how often?

Seldom___1 Sometimes___2 Often___3 Always____4

75. Did you go out alone___1, or with friends___2?

76. What did you think about your going out without him?

Did not like it___1 Did not mind___2 Like it___3 Other (specify)_____4

77. Did you enjoy it?

Never___1 Seldom___2 Sometimes___3 Often___4 Always___5

78. At that time (before marriage/living together), was he ever violent towards you? Yes___1 No___2 (go to Q. 81)

79. If yes, could you tell me about it?

_____

(probe: reasons, nature, extent, location, audience, reactions)

80. How many times has he been violent towards you during the time before getting married/living together? (exact number or estimate)

one time _____1

two times _____1

three to five times _____1

six to ten _____1

eleven to fifteen _____1

more than fifteen times _____1

81. Were there any changes in these situation/s after you got married?

Yes ___1 (go to 82) No ____2

82. Could you tell me about it?

_____

83. At that time, during the marriage, was he ever violent towards you?

Yes____1 (go to 84) No____2

84. Could you tell me in what ways?

_____

85. Did the prospect or fear of further violence make it hard for you to carry on with your usual activities, such as work or childcare?

Never ___1 Seldom___2 Sometimes____3 Often____4 Always___5 N/A___6

86. How many times has he been violent towards you during your marriage/living together? (exact number or estimate)

one time _____1

two times _____1

three to five times _____1

six to ten _____1

eleven to fifteen _____1 more than fifteen times _____

THE ASSAULT AND WAYS OF COPING

Now I would like to ask you some things about the battering itself.

I would like you to remember **the first time he hit you...**

87. How long had you known each other when he first hit you?

    days___1 weeks___2 months___3 years___4

88. Were you married or living together at that time?

    Yes___1 (go to Q. 89) No___2 (go to Q. 90)

89. How long for?

    days__ months__ years__

90. Can you tell me what led to the attack? Was there an argument? What about?

    (probes: source of conflict ____

    sexual jealousy _____

    money _____

    job _____

    role expectations _____

    children _____

    other (specify) _____

91. Can you describe me what exactly happened?

    _____

92. What did you do immediately after to sort out the situation?

    _____

93.. When the above happened, did you hit or tried to hit him back?

    Yes ___1 No ___2

94. Were you alone? Yes ___1 (go to Q.97) No ____2 (go to Q.95)

95. Who else was there?

    children ____

    friends ____

    relatives ____

    other (specify) _____

96. What did they do?

_____

97. How long did the battering last?

hours _____1 minutes _____2

98. How badly were you hurt?

(probe: nature of injuries) _____

99. Did you need medical attention?

Yes, but did not get it ____1 (go to Q. 100)

Yes, and sought but was inadequate _____2

Yes, sought and was adequate

(specify: doctor, ...) _____3

No _____4

100. Why not?

_____

Now, I would like you to think of **the worst violent event** you experienced where he hit you ...

101. Could you tell me what exactly happened?

_____

102. In what ways was it different from the one we discussed before?

(probes: immediate reactions, feelings, other people present,)

_____

HOW DID YOU **TRY TO COPE LATER ON** THE VIOLENT EVENT

I would like to know what things did you tried or did to deal with the violence after some time from the violent events you experienced.

	FIRST		WORST	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
103. talked to him about the problem	1	2	3	4
104. talked with other relative about the problem	1	2	3	4
105. talked with friend about the problem	1	2	3	4
106. talked with a neighbour about the problem	1	2	3	4
107. talked with professional person	1	2	3	4
108. doctor ___1				
109. lawyer/solicitor ___1				
110. social worker ___1				
111. marriage councellor ___1				
112. psychiatrist/psychologist ___1				
113. priest ___1				
114. other (specify) ____				
115. prepared for the worst	1	2	3	4
116. did not worry about it.	1	2	3	4
figured everything would probably work out fine	1	2	3	4
117. did something for partner (cup of coffee)	1	2	3	4
118. got busy with other things in order to keep your mind off the problem	1	2	3	4
119. apologise	1	2	3	4
120. act as nothing happened	1	2	3	4
121. took some positive action	1	2	3	4

122. What?

_____

123. Other (specify)_____

124. Could you tell me how did you feel after he hit you ?

contrite	___1	angry	____5
ashamed	___2	shock	____6
apologetic	___3	accepted it as inevitable	_____7

bitter ____4 other (specify) _____8

125. How do you think he felt after he hit you?

contrite ____1 angry _____5

ashamed ____2 ignored it _____6

apologetic ____3 could not care _____7

bitter ____4 other (specify) _____8

126. Did the violence make any difference to the way you felt about each other?

(probe: never same again 1, fear of him 2 , expected it 3, other 4)

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Before we move to questions about the help you asked for and the reactions and help you received, I would like to ask you some things about the people in your life and the things you do with them.

127. How many people were there that you could be with when you wanted to have fun and relax? _____ people

128. How satisfied were you with the kind of companionship you got from these people?

very disssatisfied _____1 dissatisfied _____2

satisfied _____3 very satisfied _____4

129. How many people were there that you could talk to about how you were feeling or personal problems? _____ people

130. Who are these people? (family or friends) _____

131. How satisfied were you about the kind of emotional support you got from these people?

very dissatisfied _____1 dissatisfied _____2

satisfied _____3 very satisfied _____4

132. During the month before the last violence, how often did you and him get together with one or more friends? _____ times

133. How often did you get together with one or more friends by yourself, without him?

_____ times

134. How often did you both get together with one or more relatives?

_____ times

135. How often did you get together with one or more relatives by yourself, without him?

_____ times

136. When both of you met with friends or relatives, where did this usually take place?

almost always at your home _____1

most of the time at your home _____2

equally at your home and outside your home _____3

most of the time outside your home _____4

almost always outside your home _____5

137. How often did you both visit your parents?

_____ times

138. How often did you both visit his parents?

_____ times

139. How often did you visit your parents by yourself, without him?

_____ times

140. How many of your close friends did you meet through your husband/partner? (e.g. wives of his friends)

none of them _____1 a few of them _____2

many of them _____3 most of them _____4

HELP FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Now I would like to find out about whether you may have sought help from your **friends and family** after the first time he hit you as well as your thoughts and feelings about it.

141. **After the first violence**, did you talk with anyone immediately about it?

Yes _____1(go to Q. 142) No _____2 (go to Q. 143)

142. **If yes**, to whom?

_____

143. **If you did not** talk with anyone after the first violence, approximately how much time went by before you did speak with someone about your situation?

years _____ months _____

144. To whom did you apeak then?

_____

145. Did you experienced any more violence until you spoke with somebody?

Yes ____1 (go to 146) No ____2 (go to Q. 147).

146. If yes, how many times ?

_____ (number)

What were your thoughts and feelings that made you decide so? (to speak with someone or not).

	Did not believe it	Believed somewhat	Believed strongly	B.very strongly
147.I thought I could handle the problem without any help from anyone	____1	____2	____3	_____4
148. I thought that none of my friends or relatives would be willing to help	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
149. I thought that none of my friends or relatives would be able to help	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
150 I thought I would not be believed by none	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
151. I thought I would spoil my parents' name in the neigborhood and the community	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
152. I thought I would be rejected by both				

family and friends _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

	Did not feel it	Felt it somewhat	Felt it strongly	F. very strongly
153.I felt too embarassed to talk about it with friends or relatives	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
154.I felt too scared or my husband/partner to bring it up with friends or relatives	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4

REACTIONS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY

REACTIONS OF FRIENDS (first time)

I would like now to discuss with you about the reactions of your friends when you **first talked with them** about the violence in your relationship with your husband/partner. How much did they do of the following things?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit
155. urged you to talk about what happened and how you felt	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
156. pointed out the good parts of your relationship with him	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
157. were surprised	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
158. were sympathetic	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
159. validated your experience	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
160. seemed uncomfortable talking with you about it	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
161. told you to talk to a lawyer or the police	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
162. phoned or got together with you				

more often _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

163. told you to see a councellor
or a priest _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

164. told you that things were not
so bad _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

165. tried to change the topic _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

166. became annoyed when you
did not accept their advice _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

167. offered you a place to stay _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

168. saw less of you _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

REACTIONS OF FAMILY (first time)

I would like now to discuss with you about the reactions of your parents when you **first talked with them** about the violence in your relationship with your husband/partner. How much did they do of the following things?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit
169. urged you to talk about what happened and how you felt	1	2	3	4
170. pointed out the good parts of your relationship with him	1	2	3	4
171. were surprised	1	2	3	4
172. were sympathetic	1	2	3	4
173. validated your experience	1	2	3	4
174. seemed uncomfortable talking with you about it	1	2	3	4
175. told you to talk to a lawyer or the police	1	2	3	4
176. phoned or got together with you more often				

_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

177. told you to see a councellor
or a priest _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
178. told you that things were not
so bad _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
179. tried to change the topic _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
180. became annoyed when you
did not accept their advice _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
181. offered you a place to stay _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
182. saw less of you _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

REACTIONS OF FRIENDS (last time)

I would like now to know about what the reactions of your **friends** have been **more recently when you talked with them** about the violence in your relationship with your husband/partner. How much did they do of the following things?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit
183. urged you to talk about what happened and how you felt	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
184. pointed out the good parts of your relationship with him	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
185. were surprised	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
186. were sympathetic	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
187. validated your experience	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
188. seemed uncomfortable talking with you about it	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
189. told you to talk to a lawyer or the police	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
190. phoned or got together with you more often				

_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

191. told you to see a councellor
or a priest _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
192. told you that things were not
so bad _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
193. tried to change the topic _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
194. became annoyed when you
did not accept their advice _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
195. offered you a place to stay _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4
196. saw less of you _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

REACTIONS OF FAMILY (last time)

I would like now to know about what the reactions of your **parents** have been **more recently when you talked with them** about the violence in your relationship with your husband/partner. How much did they do of the following things?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit
197. urged you to talk about what happened and how you felt	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
198. pointed out the good parts of your relationship with him	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
199. were surprised	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
200. were sympathetic	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
201. validated your experience	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
202. seemed uncomfortable talking with you about it	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
203. told you to talk to a lawyer or the police	_____1	_____2	_____3	_____4
204. phoned or got together with you more often				

_____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

205. told you to see a councellor
or a priest _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

206. told you that things were not
so bad _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

207. tried to change the topic _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

208. became annoyed when you
did not accept their advice _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

209. offered you a place to stay _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

210. saw less of you _____1 _____2 _____3 _____4

HOW MUCH HELP YOU GOT AND FROM WHOM (formal sources)

Now I would like to ask you about who did you go for help or advice and how much help you got **from other sources of help** except from the ones already discussed (frienda - family) after the **first time of violence**. Did you go to:

3rd party contacted	How long after figh hrs,dys,wks	What did you want them to do	Did they do what you wanted why/why not	Did you do they want you to do/or advice given	Did you do what they advised why/why not	If 3rd party not contacted why not
211. Police	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
212. Minister	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
212. Social Worker	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
213. Doctor	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
214. Priest	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
215. Lawyer	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
216. Womens Aid/groups	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
217. Refuge	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6
218. Other	____1	____2	____3	____4	____5	____6

Now I would like to ask you about who did you go for help or advice and how much help you got from them after the **worst time of violence**. Did you go to:

	3rd party contact	How long after fight hrs,dys,wks	What did you want them to do	Did they do what you wanted why/why not	What did they want you to do/or advice given	Did you do what they advised why/why not	If 3rd party not contacted why not
219.	Police	1	2	3	4	5	6
220.	Minister	1	2	3	4	5	6
221.	Social Worker	1	2	3	4	5	6
222.	Doctor	1	2	3	4	5	6
223.	Priest	1	2	3	4	5	6
224.	Lawyer	1	2	3	4	5	6
225.	Womens Aid/groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
226.	Refuge	1	2	3	4	5	6
227.	Other	1	2	3	4	5	6

Now I would like to ask you about who did you go for help or advice and how much help you got from them after the **last time of violence**. Did you go to:

3rd party contact	How long after fight hrs,dys,wks	What did you want them to do	Did they do what you wanted why/why not	What did they want you to do/or advice given	Did you do what they advised why/why not	If 3rd party not contacted why not
228. Police	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
229. Minister	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
230. Social Worker	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
231. Doctor	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
232. Priest	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
233. Lawyer	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
234. Womens Aid/groups	___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
235. Refuge	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6
236. Other	___ ___ ___1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5	_____6

<u>In general</u>, I would like you now to tell me <u>how helpful</u> all the above were:

	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
237. Police	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
238. Minister	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
239. Social Worker	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
240. Doctor	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
241. Priest	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
242. Lawyer	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
243. Womens Aid/groups	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
244. Refuge	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
245. Relatives	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
246. Friends	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
247 Neighbours	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
248. Mother	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5
249. Other	_____1	____2	_____3	_____4	_____5

250. Can you tell me in general, who of the above was the **strongest help** for you?

_____

REFUGE FOR BATTERED WOMEN

I would like now to ask you more specifically some questions about your decision to come to the Refuge and your experience during your staying here.

251. When exactly did you decide to go to the Refuge?

(probe on specific events and/or moments) _____

252. How did you find out about the Refuge?

_____

253. How much involved do you feel you were in making this decision?

personal decision ___1

friends' pressure ___2

family pressure ___3

other (specify) ___4

254. How did you first approach the Refuge?

by yourself ___1

with somebody else ___2 (specify who?)_____

255. What were your thoughts and feelings about going to the Refuge and asking help?

(probes: guilt ___1

insecure ___2

comfortable ____3

confused ____4

other (specify) ____5

256. In general, how did you find the staff?

very helpful _____1

somewhat helpful _____2

not helpful _____3

other (specify) _____4

257. Are/were your needs identified/recognised by the staff?

Yes ___1 No ____2 Other _____3

258. How easy or difficult it was to disclose what happened to you to them?

very difficult ___1 (go to 259)

somewhat difficult ___2 (go to 259)

easy ___3

very easy ___4

other ___5

259. If very or somewhat difficult, can you tell me why?

_____

260. How easy or difficult it was to disclose what happened to you to other women in the Refuge?

very difficult ___1 (go to Q. 261)

somewhat difficult ___2 (go to Q. 261)

easy ___3

very easy ___4

other ___5

261. If very difficult or somewhat difficult, why?

_____

262. Can you tell me what aspects did you find most satisfactory and/or unsatisfactory in the Refuge?

_____ / _____

263. In general, do you think Refuge houses are a good idea? Yes __1 No __2

264. Do you think there should be more refuge houses in Greece and/or more publicity about them?

Yes ____1 No ____2

FUTURE AND OTHERS

265. How do you feel now about yourself ?

(probe: your rights, any changes,...) _____

266. Where do you plan on going after leaving the refuge?

_____

267. What are your plans/hopes for the future?

_____

268. If you were going to talk to (or give advice to) other women experiencing violence from their husbands/partners, what would you like to tell them?

_____

Epilogue

Are there any questions you would like to ask me? Or any comments you would like to make?

How did you feel about this interview? Were there any questions you felt uneasy about? Any other questions you felt I should have asked you?

THANK YOU

APPENDIX 3.4

COLLABORATION LETTER

Sevaste Chatzifotiou
PhD student
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
Williamson Building
3rd Floor, R. 3.62
University of Manchester
Oxford Rd,
Manchester
M13 9PL
UK

7 April 1997

Mrs Georgia Bouri
Municipality of Athens
Social Services Department
Office for the Equality of Sexes
70, Sofokleous str.
Athens
105 53
Greece

Ref: Marital Violence Against Women in Greece: Research on Social Support for Women survivors of Marital Violence.

Dear Mrs G. Bouri,

As you are already informed through our telephone communications, I will shortly be conducting research on marital violence in Greece. I will be concentrating on the experiences of women survivors of marital violence and the existing support (formal and/or informal).

I would appreciate your written agreement for co-operation with your office, as this is the link to both the Reception Office (from where I have already gained an agreement for co-operation) and the Refuge for battered women.

The research is being supervised by Professors Rebecca Dobash and Jeff Hearn from the department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Manchester, who are considered to be experts on the topic of violence. Further, the research project is being subsidised by the Greek Scholarships Foundation (I.K.Y.) and it also has been approved by Professor Chris Mouzakitis from the department of Social Work at T.E.I. in Athens, who is my supervisor in Greece.

I propose to share the research findings among those participating in the research by offering the opportunity to participate in seminars at the University of Manchester as well as to discuss possibilities of similar arrangements in Greece.

I hope to conduct research that is beneficial both to yourselves, the University and the women concerned. The final findings of the research will be used as part of my doctoral thesis but I would anticipate additional publications, which could either name your agency or anonymise it as you preferred.

Finally, I would be requesting your co-operation in the following areas:
- access to documentation about service provision, structure and planning,
- policy regulations,
- statistics if available,
- access to the refuge and permission to seek the agreement of women to be interviewed by me.

All material used and persons interviewed will be treated as strictly confidential and anonymity will be guaranteed.

I am very aware of the pressures on your time and would endeavour to conduct my research with as little disruption for you as possible. I would also welcome the opportunity to discuss

this further with you if necessary and I look forward to receiving your agreement in writing to the address given above.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Sevaste Chatzifotiou.

APPENDIX 3.5

Letter of Access to the Refuge for Battered Women - Athens, Greece.

MUNICIPALITY OF ATHENS
DIRECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
AND HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF EQUALITY
70, SOFOKLEOUS STR.
ATHENS 10553
TEL.: 5244657
FAX : 5244134

ATHENS 10-5-1997

SEVASTE CHATZIFOTIOU
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
OXFORD ROAD
MANCHESTER M16 8JQ
U.K.

REF. Marital violence in Greece: Research on social support for women surviving marital violence.

Dear S. Chatzifotiou,

With reference to your letter of 7.4.97 asking for co-operation with our office, we are glad to inform you that we will be very happy to have you here working for your research.

We appreciate your willingness to work on this very important as well as unexplored issue of violence against women in Greece. We very much hope for the best results possible of the research and wish you good luck.

We are looking forward to meeting you in June.

Yours sincerely,

Georgia Bouri
Social Worker.

APPENDIX 3.6

Letter of Access to the Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Thessaloniki, Greece.

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Laboratory of Forensic Medicine & Toxicology
54006 Thessaloniki - GREECE
Director: D. Psaroulis, Assoc. Professor
Tel: 031 999 202
Fax: 031 999 686

c/o Dr. M.Tsougas

Thessaloniki, 10/01/98

Sevaste Chatzifotiou
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of Manchester
Williamson Building
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
U.K.

Ref.: Access

Dear S. Chatzifotiou,
With reference to the request for your accessing the Laboratory of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology of the Department of Forensic and Legal Medicine in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and interview the battered women who come here for help as part of the fieldwork of your doctoral thesis, we are in the pleasant position to inform you that you are welcome to do so.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

M. Tsougas, Assoc. Professor.

APPENDIX 3.7

Letter of Access to Women's Issues Office, Department of Social Services

Thessaloniki, Greece.

Municipality of Thessaloniki
Social Services Department
Dodekannisou 9
Thessaloniki
Greece
tel. 0030 31 555053

c/o Dr. A. Panera

Thessaloniki, 20/01/98

Sevaste Chatzifotiou
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of Manchester
Williamson Building
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
U.K.
fax: 0044 161 275 4922

Ref.: Access

Dear S. Chatzifotiou,
We are in the pleasant position to inform you that you are welcome to interview the battered women who visit the Social Services Department of the Municipality of Thessaloniki and ask for help. We understand that this constitutes part of the fieldwork of your doctoral thesis and that some of this work may be published.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

A. Panera, Psychologist.

APPENDIX 3.8

THE CONSENT FORM

Dear __

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project.

I consider it as my duty, before we start the interview, to reassure you that as a participant you have some very definite rights:

- your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary,
- you should feel free to withdraw from the interview at any time,
- all you say will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to myself,

a report on the results of this research may be send to you if you wish

The interview material may be used for my research report but by no means will your name or any kind of identifying characteristics be included in it.

I very much appreciate your interest and participation

Sevaste Chatzifotiou.

APPENDIX 3.9

THE CONSENT FORM

(IN GREEK)

Αγαπητη Κυρια,

σας ευχαριστω για την προθυμια σας να συμμετεχετε σε αυτη την ερευνα. Ειναι καθηκον μου να σας επισημανω οτι ως συμμετεχουσα εχετε τα συγκεκριμενα δικαιωματα:

1. η συμμετοχη σας ειναι εθελοντικη,
2. μπορειτε να αποσυρθειτε απο την συνεντευξη οποιαδηποτε στιγμη,
3. ο,τι ειπωθει θα ειναι απολυτα εμπιστευτικο και σε καμμια περιπτωση δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθουν αναγνωριστικα η προσωπικα στοιχεια,
4. αν επιθυμειτε, μια εκθεση των αποτελεσματων της ερευνας μπορει να σας σταλει.

Με το υλικο αυτο, το οποιο θα χρησιμοποιηθει και για την διδακτορικη διατριβη μου, πιστευω οτι θα βοηθησω στην καλυτερη αντιμετωπιση του προβληματος της γυναικειας κακοποιησης στην Ελλαδα.

Με πολυ εκτιμηση,

Η διενεργουσα την συνεντευξη

Σεβαστη Χατζηφωτιου

Η συμμετεχουσα