

**PATRIARCHY: THE PREDOMINANT DISCOURSE
AND FONT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

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Declaration

I, Catherine Gilda Bettman, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Patriarchy: the predominant discourse and font of domestic violence*, contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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Abstract

Despite the progress human beings have made in medicine, science and technology, domestic violence continues to occur in many intimate heterosexual relationships. Yet, according to ethnographic accounts of largely indigenous peoples, it is evident that as recently as the twentieth century, there have been societies where domestic violence was absent or minimal. This knowledge prompted an investigation into how discourses of different cultural groups shape men's understandings of masculinity and sense of entitlement to use violence in a heterosexual relationship.

The study was qualitative, based upon grounded theory and narrative principles. Men from as many different cultural groups as possible (eg. ethnic, religious, age, and class), who had used violence in an intimate heterosexual relationship, were sought to participate in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Twenty four men agreed to take part. After an analysis of their narratives, by far the most overwhelming discovery was that cultural differences seemed to be eclipsed by the pre-eminence and strength of gendered discourse in keeping with Western patriarchal dictates in regards to masculinity and violence. Androcentric and hegemonic masculinity, and a tolerance of violence, were consistently evident. Based upon the men's conversations, and drawing upon ethnographical accounts to provide the opportunity of a broader outlook and different perspective on the inquiry to hand, it was concluded that violence is a discursive phenomenon and that patriarchal discourse is the font of domestic violence.