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sufficiently serious acts, rather than as a relationship quality. Sociological discourses offer frameworks for structural and social factors influencing the distribution of power within relationships and controlling behaviours therein. An approach integrating the sociological scholarship would allow courts to more skilfully recognise and respond to financial abuse.

This is the first article in a three-part series examining 'private' child support arrangements in Australia. This brief primer sets out the basic 'nuts and bolts' of administrative assessments and the provisions for formal child support agreements that can be accepted by the Child Support Registrar. It also sets out the options for parents to make 'informal' agreements that do not conform with the official child support register. This piece acts as useful technical background to the two accompanying empirical articles by the authors in this issue.

There is a notable lack of empirical data on the prevalence of private child support arrangements and the dynamics surrounding them. This article examines the reasons some non-resident fathers give for paying more than their 'official' child support obligation, as well as the reasons some resident mothers report accepting lower payments. We analyse data from 733 separated parents registered with the Child Support Agency surveyed as part of a large national study conducted in early 2008. One quarter (n=185) of respondents reported paying more, or taking less, child support than was due. As might be expected, the majority of those private child support arrangements appeared to occur in cases where the Child Support Agency was not responsible for collecting payments. Our data suggest that private child support arrangements may be more widespread than previously discussed, and can be motivated by the desire to: (a) protect or encourage parent–child contact; (b) stop fights over parenting arrangements; (c) improve the perceived fairness of payments — or some combination of these. Our data also suggest that female payees were more likely to report feeling intimidated and/or pressured to take less child support than male payers who reported paying over and above their child support assessment. These pre-reform data raise the spectre that coercion may underpin a number of private child support arrangements, and that some male payers may be informally paying extra child support in order to have regular contact with their children.

We extend our two earlier articles in this special issue by conducting a detailed cross-case analysis of the reason(s) that individual payers and payees gave for paying more or taking less child support than required. We focus on apparently consensual arrangements occurring in the context of private transfers because the 'black box' nature of these transfers means that the presence of financial abuse may be hidden. Data were collected in 2008 (ie, pre-child support reform). The analytic sample (n=107) comprised: (a) 64 female payees who reported accepting less child support than was due; (b) 43 male payers who reported paying more child support than was due. Among those who reported private transfers of child support, we found evidence of both cooperation and possible financial

coercion. Future research needs to explore potential gender differences in the language of financial 'pressure' and 'intimidation', and examine the nature of private child support arrangements struck as a result of intimidation and/or pressure.

The article draws on interviews with 56 women (including 20 women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) to consider their experiences of legal representation after leaving a violent relationship. Women were recruited mainly from family violence support services, community legal centres and private lawyers. Common themes included that women who engaged private lawyers often faced significant costs and debt, proceedings were often commenced and prolonged by their abusive partner as an extension of coercive control, and high costs were experienced as a form of secondary abuse. Legal costs limited the financial security and options for some women post-separation and compounded their experience of family violence. Pressure to settle cases unfairly or unsafely was connected by some to the costs and limitations of legal representation. The article highlights the importance of consistent legal representation for women leaving violence and the need for appropriate training for lawyers working in this context.

Intimate partner violence is recognised globally as a complex social problem, sitting at the intersection of health, law and finance. Now commonly recognised as a pattern of coercive control, rather than isolated incidents of physical violence, intimate partner violence encompasses a range of control tactics. Financial violence/control is often used in intimate partner violence to entrap an intimate partner. It does not need physical proximity to cause harm and is defined as the ways in which perpetrators use financial resources to control and terrorise their intimate partner. Its continuation post-separation is the focus of this article. I draw on interviews with 15 women, intimate partner violence victim-survivors with experience of Aotearoa New Zealand's Family Court, to provide insight into what financial violence/control looks like post-separation and the ongoing costs it, and court proceedings, impose on survivors of intimate financial violence.

The Aotearoa New Zealand Family Violence Act 2018 includes in its definition of family violence that financial abuse is a form of psychological abuse. Violence is defined as behaviour that is coercive or controlling and abuse is defined as either a single act or number of acts that form a pattern. This article shows how, what would otherwise be relationship property and shared equally by the partners to the relationship, once it is put in a settlor controlled trust, extensive litigation is required to get access to that property. This article provides examples of how this form of coercive control over the claimant partner and assets which they are entitled to, is permitted by the Aotearoa New Zealand legal system. Whilst the legal system has made some concessions for the claimant partner, it has not gone nearly far enough to stamp out this form of financial abuse. This article proposes that the legal system re-prioritise the interest at stake by giving clear priority to relationship property interests and simple and inexpensive access to relationship property whether it be in a trust or any other form of legal fiction such as a company.