Brenda L. Russell *Editor*

Perceptions of Female Offenders

How Stereotypes and Social Norms Affect Criminal Justice Responses

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Chapter 1
Perceptions of Female Offenders: How Stereotypes and Social Norms Affect Criminal Justice Response

Brenda L. Russell

Introduction

In our society, we tend to think of a female offender as an anomaly. Perhaps it is because women commit only a small percentage of all crimes reported. Yet, over the past few decades, rates of incarceration for females have been on the rise. While there are many reasons for this increase in incarceration, the growth of female offenders has generated concern and has brought attention to a topic that had been previously discounted by scholars.

The increase in scholarly attention is significant. A cursory look at scholarly articles published in the English language across 29 databases (Proquest)—using key terms such as female offenders, women offenders, female criminals, female perpetrators, and female inmates—shows that in the past 10 years (2002–2012), there has been three times the number of scholarly articles and citations compared to the previous 10 years (1991–2001) and over ten times the number of citations, articles, and scholarly research performed that concerned female offenders in preceding years (1980–1990). While this increase in research can bring greater knowledge to our understanding of female offenders, scholarly attention to female offenders remains relatively low compared to the same attention given to—and our knowledge on—male offenders in such educated works as articles and publications. Perhaps that is because of our gendered stereotypes of women.

Quite often, the thought of a female offender can be counterintuitive. Our social norms dictate that women are not dangerous—that they do not commit crimes—and the thought of a female offender conflicts with prescribed gender roles: aren't women supposed to be nurturing and passive? If a woman does commit a crime, the common belief is that she is misguided and must have committed the crime because

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of her own victimization, was under the control of others, or is simply a criminal deviant whose actions strayed from typical "womanly" behavior. In an effort to explain male offenders and extended to include female offenders, (General theories particularly gender-neutral theories) have been put forth in an effort to explain criminality of male offenders. These same theories were later extended to include female offenders. Such theories as introduced over the years tend to influence how people perceive offenders (Chesney-Lind, 1989, 1998). However, over time, feminist theories have made their way into the criminal justice system and ignited heated debates in their attempts to explain gender discrepancies. Generally, it is these debates that trigger social change geared toward inclusion and fairness.

Over the past 40–50 years, there have been great strides in social change, particularly with regard to our attitudes about child abuse, sexual assault, intimate partner violence (IPV), and other "deviant" behaviors. During this time, there have been paradigm shifts in the way people think about victims and offenders, leading to modifications in research, theory, intervention, and legal reform. For example, not long ago, child abuse and domestic violence were condoned by society. Today, with the help of the women's movement and feminist groups, both of these issues are publically denounced and supported with institutional services and legal reform. Such societal progression stems from changes in values that drive or alter our attitudes and behavior. Of course, it takes time for such changes to translate into more practical applications, including increases in empirical research and theory that tend to initiate discussion and controversy, ultimately leading to political and ideological (i.e., legislative, therapeutic interventions, criminal justice response) changes over time.

During this shift in consciousness, it is not surprising that society has tended to focus on women as victims and men as their oppressors. The first wave of feminism is considered, the suffragist movement which occurred during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, and is highlighted by women's tireless mission to extend basic human rights (including the right to vote) to women. During this time, women were allowed to participate in social and political matters, and over time the expansion of rights for women continued to loosen the legal and moral authority husbands had over their wives. While such a release of patriarchal authority had occurred, the criminal justice response was relatively slow in adapting and implementing changes. In the second wave of feminism (often believed to begin in the 1960s and last until the 1990s), there was a push by feminists for legislative and legal reform to recognize rape and domestic violence as serious social issues that affected women. While we continue to fight for the equality of women and become more conscious of potential discriminatory actions toward others, there is no doubt our society has come a long way in recognizing violence toward women. Because of the increase in empirical research and theory on female victimization, we now understand more about male violence and women as victims than we ever did. However, society has been a bit slower recognizing women as offenders. Perhaps scholars have overlooked this topic because it corresponded to the second wave of feminism, which shifted societal values to acknowledge the discrimination and victimization of women. This shift may have created a mental mind-set of women as victims. Simply, the area of female offending has been understudied. Conceivably riding the waves

of the political climate, scholars feared studying females as offenders might expose women as something other than innocent victims and eventually reverse or slow the progress women have attained toward equality. Another reason may be that previous theories of male crime were generally extended to females (Chesney-Lind, 2006). So, what was the need to look further? For instance, some criminologists proposed that one of the reasons for the lack of research on female offending in previous years may be attributed to the "emancipation hypothesis" (that has since been debunked, Chesney-Lind, 1989). According to this theory, as women garner equality in all areas of life, this would extend also to major crimes. Despite the explanations for previous neglect on this topic, research has begun to emerge (albeit slowly), including the exploration of females as bullies, sexual harassers, sexual abusers, and perpetrators of abuse in intimate partner relationships.

In the late 1970s, research on family violence made the unexpected discovery that there is "gender symmetry" among male and female offenders. According to Straus and Ramirez (2007), there are nearly 200 studies that show that women— whether married, cohabitating, or dating—physically assaulted their partners as often as men. Not surprisingly, this research has caused great controversy, particularly between researchers who found evidence of gender symmetry and the feminists who fought long and hard to change social attitudes about women. Feminists and activists express underlying concerns of the research methods used to assess female violence, which cannot be understood in the context of patriarchal power and control (for critical reviews, see DeKeseredy, Sanders, Schwartz, & Alvi, 1997; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998). They argue that some scholars who study female offenders do not consider issues of gender and power that are systemic within our patriarchal society. More recent research has expressed the need to focus on the complexities and interactive effects of social structure and gender. Recognizing such diversity is one of the focuses of the third wave of feminism.

As the third movement of feminism begins in the twenty-first century, it embraces the diversity of feminist ideas and puts forth a dedicated effort to address the backlash created by initiatives made during the second wave. One example of such an initiative would be: mandatory arrest laws that were enacted as a component of the Violence Against Women Act in 1996. In an effort to call for more vigorous law enforcement response in domestic violence cases and ensure equal protection under the law, states across the country addressed the problem of domestic violence with mandatory arrest laws. Previously, law enforcement officers could not arrest, unless a domestic assault (misdemeanor) occurred in their presence. However, in order to assure that officers respond more appropriately, the laws relaxed within the legal constraints of police, which then allowed them to arrest on the basis that there was probable cause that domestic violence was committed. The intention of the law was to deter male abusers, or at minimum, increase arrest rates of batterers. Though, the law actually led to huge increases in the number of dual arrests. In fact, in California, rates of arrests for women in California increased over 446% (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2002). While rates of conviction for men raised 36%, conviction rates for women increased over 1,000% (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). Not only did such a law increase arrest and conviction but also there were a host of severe backlash effects for women (see Chap. 8, Hamel and Russell), one of which included the reluctance

to report further assaults for fear of their own arrest. Similarly, new legal initiatives and recent research has ignited online discussion forums. For instance, a large number of international men's rights' groups have recently developed online that target discussion on gender equity in the legal system. They too, serve to reshape the discourse in partner violence and equality in criminal justice. Thus, the dialog continues.

Such discussion has generated greater attention and an increase in research on female offenders. What can be gleaned from the research, thus far, is that men and women are perceived differently. Of course, these differences can be attributed to many things. In our long history of gender-based norms, we cannot ignore the influences of history, politics, culture, legislation, and other contextual forces that affect not only our search for answers but also the questions we choose to ask. Even in this relatively recent quest for equality, scholars and activists find there is so much more left to learn and do. For instance, in the relatively short period of time scholars have examined female offenders, research has revealed noticeable (and not so noticeable) discrepancies in the way in which women are treated within the criminal justice system. Less known is whether these discrepancies are actually beneficial or harmful in the elusive search for equality and for society in general. This book provides an insightful collection of cutting-edge research and theory on female offenders conveyed through diverse and sometimes contentious perspectives, yet collectively viewed from a gendered perspective with important political, social, and legal implications.

The Purpose of This Book

The purpose of this book is to provide readers with contemporary perspectives on female offenders from various evidence-based disciplines and experts in their respective fields as practitioners, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, and criminologists. This serves three purposes: (1) to emphasize the importance and need for continued research and discussion on a topic that has been previously neglected; (2) challenges readers to be cognizant of their own gendered awareness that can influence their own perceptions of female offenders; and (3) begin to understand the conflicting ideologies and multi-faceted dimensions associated with female perpetration of violence and criminal justice response. Furthermore, based on recent research and gendered portrayals in the media, there are differences in the way female offenders are treated within the criminal justice system. This book investigates some of the ways in which differential treatment occurs and provides theoretical and empirical evidence in an attempt to explain why differences exist. It offers contemporary views of the female offender, in the context of various crimes, such as bullying, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, assault, and IPV. It also explores the ways in which society perpetuates differences through sex-role socialization, social media, and investigates the resulting behaviors, such as how perceptual differences influence criminal justice response, such as law enforcement training, jury decision-making, offender treatment, sentencing, and other issues within the criminal justice and

social systems. The goal is to also present a reading that is thought-provoking and a starting point for lively discussion. Since research on the impact of perceptions of female offenders and the process of the criminal justice system is fairly new, many important questions remain as to the interaction between stereotypes, societal norms, and our perceptions of female offenders. After examining the legal, empirical, and theoretical foundations surrounding the issue, resulting conclusions invite readers to question their own perceptions about females in society and in the criminal justice system, whether equality in the criminal justice system is elusive, or within our grasp, and whether equality would actually benefit, or harm, society and/or female offenders.

Organization of Chapters

The topics in this book emphasize gendered perspectives that cannot be ignored when addressing female offenders. The book examines both theory and criminal justice response on numerous aspects of criminality. To begin, because there is no doubt that gendered perceptions of the world are developed in childhood, we first look at how these gender-based perceptions affect us from a developmental perspective. Next, we consider the empirical research focused on female perpetrators of sexual aggression and sexual assault to inspect how gender stereotypes influence our perceptions of sexually aggressive women. Lastly, we explore the central debate surrounding research in gender symmetry, which is woven into topics of IPV and the criminal justice system's training, response, treatment, and sentencing of female offenders versus male offenders. Based on these themes, the book has been organized into three particular sections.

In the first section, using examples from juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, Javdani (see Chap. 2) demonstrates how our gendered perceptions imitate and preserve our attitudes about female offending. After an explanatory discussion of the importance (but possible over-emphasis of person-centered or person-mediated explanations of girl's deviant behavior), Javdani also addresses how increases in female arrest and incarceration for girls and women (i.e., status offenses, drug offenses, domestic violence crimes) are affected by ecological or (macro) forces—including gender-based norms, cultural prescriptions, and institutionalized policies and practices—which should not be ignored when evaluating differences in the criminal justice system. Chapter 3 (Espelage and De La Rue) provides a novel study that examines predictors of bullying and sexual violence perpetrated by female middle-school students. The authors examined middle-school girls over a 2-year period to determine whether risk and protective factors were predictive of future bullying and sexual violence (or harassment) perpetration. While some protective factors decreased bullying, other risk factors increased bullying: those girls who embraced attitudes that trivialized the seriousness of sexual harassment were predictive of future sexual harassment perpetration. The authors (Espelage and De La Rue) emphasize the need for additional research, since predictors for female bullying and

sexual harassment were not similar. Researchers (Vandenberg, Brennan, and Chesney-Lind) in Chap. 4 explore how social norms are perpetuated through the media. In particular, the authors investigate how US newspaper articles depict female offenders. Vandenberg et al. (see Chap. 4) conduct a content analysis of 159 violent and nonviolent crime stories involving female offenders and reveal racial differences in the way the media portrays female offenders. In fact, they found the strongest predictor of story tone was a woman's race or ethnicity: stories about minority women had more negative tones compared to white women. Consequently, this chapter highlights the importance of media when influencing perceptions of female offenders; however, it also demonstrates the interactive (and possibly compounding effects) of how race and ethnicity affect perceptions of female offenders.

The second section of the book focuses on female sexual aggression by examining the research on women who use sexually coercive tactics and rape. Oswald and Holmgreen (see Chap. 5) provide a summary of the literature on sexual aggression in college-aged women. The authors explore review the literature on the prevalence of perpetration of sexual aggression and examine the various uses of sexually coercive tactics used by women. They then examine attitudinal and behavioral correlates of such behavior. Davies (see Chap. 6) explores perceptions of women who commit sexual assault. She examines the literature on sexual assault by women and addresses how victim gender, age, and sexuality can affect our perceptions of blame. Both authors address the implications of gendered perspectives in relation to sexual aggression and sexual assault.

Lastly, Chaps. 7–11 provide perspectives that are associated with IPV, in the context of the gender symmetry debate. In Chap. 7, Dutton and White address the gender paradigm that focuses on males as perpetrators and provide an empirical review of research on the prevalence of IPV among men and women. Then, they provide an overview of perceptions of women who perpetrate IPV, evolving attitudes toward IPV that suggest individuals are more accepting of female-perpetrated IPV compared to male-perpetrated IPV. Throughout their investigation, they touch upon the scant research that has studied attitudes toward female offenders who perpetrate IPV in same-sex relationships. Also, they explore motivations for female-perpetrated IPV and address how female offenders of IPV fare within the criminal justice system. Their review of the research finds that women tend to be treated more leniently in all phases of the criminal justice system, from arrest to sentencing. Dutton and White conclude that violent acts committed by women are less likely to be viewed as threatening or harmful, and less of a problem in society compared to men who perpetrate IPV, rendering women more lenient treatment. Buttell and Starr (see Chap. 8) follow this line of reasoning and call for a more gender-inclusive paradigm of IPV. The authors use theoretical arguments and review research to demonstrate that the current, male-dominated gendered paradigm renders female perpetrators of IPV relatively invisible in society and within the criminal justice system. They conclude that until there is a more gender-inclusive family violence model of IPV—where gender should not be of issue in decisions of IPV criminal response and treatment, interventions, and battering programs—which remain severely limited in their ability to achieve success. In Chap. 9, Ferraro lays the

groundwork to explain why gender *does* matter, at both individual and institutional levels. She argues that gender-symmetry theories rely on individualistic and binary models that confound sex and gender and refuse to consider contextual variables. She uses arguments that demonstrate gender-based issues unique to women such as rape, reproductive control, and violence during pregnancy, to illustrate her point about the importance of intersectionality—wherein violence against women is not a binary gender categorization, but rather needs to be considered within the context of intersecting influences such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. In Chap. 10, Hamel and Russell explore partner violence and examine the empirical evidence surrounding the debate around gender symmetry, using empirical evidence from a project called "The Partner Abuse State of Knowledge (PASK) Project". The authors explore the term "battering" and note how often it is used to depict a male within a domestic violence situation. They then address the ways in which research supports, or refutes, feminist theory. Once establishing the importance of recognizing gender symmetry, the authors relate how research and knowledge should be imparted to law enforcement to help provide a more informed social framework for officers who must make decisions to identify a dominant/primary aggressor in domestic violence situations. The authors use a national sample of law enforcement training manuals to examine how officers are trained to identify the dominant/primary aggressor. Hamel and Russell's study finds a general underrepresentation of empirically based knowledge and training examples of violence perpetrated by women.

Lastly, in Chap. 11, Mari Pierce explores the rates of incarcerated women and discusses the judicial discretion and the risks and costs associated with punishing male and female defendants. This chapter provides an evidence-based examination of how informal social control and familial paternalism theories relate to sentencing differentials to determine which theory warrants the strongest empirical support. Upon conclusion Pierce challenges her readers to weigh whether judicial discretion (often leading to sentencing disparities) based on these theories actually reduces societal costs and is truly in society's best interest.

Within this book lies research and debate. This debate addresses perceptions of female offenders and how these perceptions affect criminal justice response. Remember, it is these debates that trigger social change geared toward inclusion and fairness. Throughout the diverse and often conflicting views within this book, there is also agreement among scholars. One of the more important aspects that emerge from this book is the general agreement that additional research and discourse on the topic is imperative. There also seems to be a mutual understanding that gendered perceptions ultimately affect criminal justice response for both male and female offenders. It is important for scholars to take the time to identify shared beliefs and fundamental disagreements in order to come to a compromise that can ultimately guide us into new ideas in research and theory that allow for inclusiveness and fairness. One important point is that at this time, we are in the infancy of understanding female offenders and the criminal justice response. Only within the past 10–20 years have scholars turned their attention to female offenders. There is still so much information scholars do not know. While we recognize there are limitations and issues that this text does not address, it is hoped that this book will acknowledge

the need for another gender-paradigm shift and revitalize the stale debate between perceptions of offenders as being wholly male. This might begin with starting to rethink how we communicate our own gendered perceptions to our children. While we cannot ignore the gendered undertones of our perceptions and their influence on criminal justice response, with further research, we may be able to understand more about how gendered perceptions facilitate differences in female offending and treatment. We then need to acknowledge the ways in which differential treatment can actually be beneficial or harmful in our elusive search for equality and for society in general. While it takes time for such changes to translate into more practical applications, we hope this text serves as a springboard to increase discourse, empirical research, and theory that initiates discussion and controversy, ultimately leading to political and ideological (i.e., legislative, therapeutic interventions, criminal justice response) changes over time.

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Chapter 2
Gender Matters: Using an Ecological Lens to Understand Female Crime and Disruptive Behavior

Shabnam Javdani

Women and girl's crime and disruptive behavior represent important and growing social problems. The increase in criminalization of adolescent girls' behaviors is particularly alarming, as evidence indicates that girls' arrests over the past several decades has been increasing while that of boys has remained constant or decreased. For instance, in 2003, more than 643,000 arrests were made involving juvenile females, representing 29% of all youth arrests. Over 40% of these arrests were for property crime, running away, and curfew violations (Snyder, 2005). Moreover, while the total juvenile arrest rate has been decreasing over the last 20 years, it has been steadily increasing for girls. This increase in the arrest rate has been particularly dramatic for drug abuse violations and violent crime, such as assault (Snyder, 2005).

Scholars across disciplines have increasingly encouraged the development of female-focused theories (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Kruttschnitt, 1996; Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001). This chapter presents theoretical and empirical evidence to underscore the importance of social problem definition in the advancement of female-focused theories. In particular, frameworks focusing on social problem definition (Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Ryan, 1972) and gender theory (Anderson, 2005; Lorber, 1994; Stacey & Thorne, 1985; Wood & Eagly, 2002) are used to understand perceptions of girls' criminal behavior and advance implications for future research, policy, and intervention.

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Social Problem Definition

Based on a transactional/ecological framework (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979), one can understand the development of a social problem using multiple levels of analysis. This chapter will focus on the individual (or "micro"), proximal context (or "meso"), and ecological factors (or "macro" levels of analysis) (also see Javdani, 2006). Individual factors can include girls' traits or characteristics, such as personality, emotion regulation, and psychopathology. Proximal contexts can include settings in which girls participate frequently, such as the home/parenting or school/academic. Ecological factors include distal contexts, such as "macro" social forces, that can affect girls' less directly, such as gender-based norms, cultural prescriptions, and institutionalized policies and practices (e.g., within the criminal and juvenile justice systems). It is assumed that these levels of analysis are interrelated and mutually affect one another. However, a focus on each and how they can shape perceptions of girls' offenses can offer important implications for female-focused theories on crime and disruptive behavior. This chapter will argue for the importance of the ecological level of analysis and describe the over-reliance on person-mediated and person-centered approaches, particularly within the field of psychology.

Person-Centered and Person-Mediated Social Problem Definitions

Based on existing research, the dominant conceptualization of girls' crime and disruptive behaviors has hinged upon the first two levels of analysis: individual and proximal contexts. That is, girls' pattern of behavior is understood to arise largely because of girls' individual deviance (e.g., individual differences in personality; Hochhausen, Lorenz, & Newman, 2002) and risky proximal contexts (e.g., history of abuse; poor parenting; Mullis, Cornille, Mullis, & Huber, 2004), respectively. This has resulted in a potentially overly narrow understanding of the social phenomenon of female crime due to the limited attention paid to the ecological level of analysis. Further, though one level of analysis focuses on girls' risky individual characteristics while the other focuses on risky contexts, both levels may ultimately view girls themselves as the problem. This phenomenon occurs largely at the level of interpretation. Specifically, interpretations can be thought of as being: (1) person-centered or (2) person-mediated.

From the person-centered perspective, the problem is located directly within the individual (e.g., these girls *are* deviant and they think, feel, and behave abnormally). This perspective advances the argument that individual level characteristics of girls result in disruptive behavior. Examples include studies that compare mental health needs of female and male delinquents and demonstrate that a higher proportion of delinquent girls are diagnosed with psychological disorders (e.g., Odgers & Moretti, 2002), often characterized as being more severe (e.g., McCabe, Lansing, Garland,

& Hough, 2002). For instance, a meta-analytic review supports a polygenic multiple threshold model to explain female disruptive behaviors (Rhee & Waldman, 2002). This model purports that, though there are no sex differences in the magnitude of genetic and environmental influences, females require a greater level of etiologic liability in order to express the same level of delinquency as boys. Put colloquially, it "takes more" for girls to become delinquent. Taken together, the person-centered interpretations of female juvenile delinquency share important assumptions and conclusions. In particular, it is assumed that girls' delinquency *stems from* individual differences and *lies within* individual girls. This research has a decidedly narrow focus: the traits and psychopathology of individual girls. Essentially, the questions posed by this work can be captured by the statement, "what is it about the individual characteristics of these girls that makes them criminals?" Thus, influencing changes in girls' disruptive behavior is characterized almost exclusively as requiring changes within and control over individual girls. Notable problem solutions dictated by this social problem definition involve mental health treatment and incarceration. Indeed, these interventions are most often administered to delinquent girls (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

From the person-mediated perspective, the problem is theorized to have developed as a result of girls' proximal contexts, but is mediated by individual level characteristics, and thus continues to be located within the individual (e.g., childhood victimization has *made* these girls deviant and think, feel, and behave abnormally). Thus, person-mediated perspectives of female juvenile delinquency suggest that characteristics of an individual's social, historical, or developmental context has resulted in individual girls' disruptive behavior. Given its prevalence in this population, delinquent girls' exposure to a context of childhood victimization is often at the heart of person-mediated interpretations. Generally speaking, the main argument of this approach is that contextual factors lead to changes in individuals, which in turn influence the development of crime and disruptive behavior.

Examples of research in this area include delineating proximal risk factors such as childhood maltreatment, family dysfunction, low income, intergenerational cycles of incarceration, substance use, and co-occurring mental health disorders (Mullis et al., 2004; Odgers & Moretti, 2002). Notably, these risk factors represent multiple dimensions of risk: individual, family, and economic. However, these factors represent risks *for* the individual and are interpreted as such. This work suggests that, due to exposure to such risk, girls are unable to develop healthy identities and relationships and, in turn, become delinquent. For instance, a body of work has examined neurological sequelae of child abuse (e.g., Glaser, 2000). This research suggests that childhood victimization leads to neurological deficits, which in turn influence the development of psychopathology. Abnormal emotions, cognitions, and behavior can then result in delinquency and disruptive behavior. Similarly, an argument for a link between childhood victimization and development of personality disorders has also been advanced (e.g., Feldman-Schorrig & McDonald, 1992). Specifically, this argument states that when abuse is severe and occurs early in life, it affects personality factors such that abused girls tend to *seek out* further victimization. Other research suggests that childhood victimization can result in behavior that

is in and of itself criminal. For example, it is argued that childhood victimization leads to substance abuse and truancy (Lenssen, Doreleijers, van Dijk, & Hartman, 2000), and sexual victimization in particular leads to development of risky sexual behaviors, such as prostitution (Tubman, Montgomery, Gil, & Wagner, 2004).

Taken together, the narratives dictated by the person-mediated approach differ from those of the person-centered approach in that the former do not imply that girls' disruptive behavior directly stems from the girls themselves. Instead, the person-mediated perspective suggests that contextual factors, such as childhood histories of abuse and developmental context, influence changes in individual girls, who are as a result more likely to exhibit disruptive behavior. Thus, delinquency develops through different means. However, this distinction proves to be largely superficial when one reflects that contextual factors are considered important to the extent that they produce changes in individual girls. That is, individual differences mediate the relationship between context and disruptive behaviors in person-mediated approaches, whereas individual differences directly lead to disruptive behaviors in person-centered approaches. As a result, much of the critiques that have been levied against person-centered approaches apply to person-mediated approaches as well.

One important implication of both person-centered and person-mediated approaches is to advance a victim blaming ideology (Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Ryan, 1972), particularly given that a majority of girls involved in the juvenile justice system report childhood histories of abuse (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In particular, both perspectives locate the problem of girls' disruptive behaviors within the individual girls, and thereby imply that solving the problem requires changing the girls to reduce their deviant behavior. Furthermore, both perspectives are "othering" (Ryan, 1972) in that they identify differences between delinquent girls and other segments of the population and attempt to explain these differences as the cause of the problem. In so doing, these narratives fail to consider that delinquency is a *social* phenomenon, involving an individual's behaviors, her context, and the system's response to these behaviors; it is insufficient to be concerned with only the individual. Moreover, a narrow and inadequate problem definition results in a flawed understanding and can result in negative consequences for the individuals being studied. One notable difference exists between the two approaches: in theory, person-mediated approaches allow for delinquency to be affected by either changing individual girls *or* changing their contexts. Still, since the contextual forces that are often implicated within this approach take their toll before delinquency occurs (e.g., abuse has occurred, the family has been dysfunctional), changing the individual girl remains the most prevalent option in practice.

Ecological-Level Social Problem Definition

Another explanation for the prevalence and persistence of female crime and disruptive behavior is advanced by an ecological perspective. This argument is echoed in Schur's (1983) explanation, which states, "[d]eviance is not simply a function of a

person's problematic behavior; rather it emerges as other people define and react to a behavior as being problematic" (Schur, 1983, as cited in Girschick, 1999, p. 20). The justice system is a major social institution that defines and helps respond to crime; as such, its response to female crime can influence perspectives on what type of behavior, committed under what circumstances, and against what parties, constitutes *anti*social behavior (i.e., shapes the social problem definition of female crime). Moreover, research suggests that individual characteristics and proximal contexts explain only about half of the variance associated with antisocial behavior, leaving a full 43% of the variance unaccounted for (e.g., twin and adoption studies; Rhee & Waldman, 2002), underscoring the importance of other levels of analysis. For women and girls' crime and disruptive behavior, there are at least two interrelated ecological levels of analysis, often overlooked by person-mediated and person-centered perspectives: the response of the criminal and juvenile justice systems and gendered norms and prescriptions.

Empirical evidence suggests that the response of the criminal and juvenile justice systems differ based on gender (e.g., Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; Javdani, Sadeh, & Verona, 2011). More specifically, research suggests that the increase in female arrests is at least partly due to shifts in institutionalized policies and practices, rather than being only a reflection of a rise in women and girls disruptive behaviors. As echoed previously (e.g., Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004), and as reviewed in a recent paper (Javdani et al., 2011), specific institutional policies may have promoted an increase in female arrest and incarceration. Particular categories of offenses for which women and girls may be increasingly affected include status offenses (e.g., running away from home), drug offenses (e.g., drug use and distribution), and domestic violence-related assaults (e.g., aggravated battery; Javdani et al., 2011). Particular institutionalized policies and practices that may implicate the system's response involve re-labeling status offenses to violent offenses (e.g., "other assaults"), bootstrapping (i.e., re-arrest due to violation of a court order), increased criminalization of drug offenses and addiction, and pro- and dual-arrest practices involving domestic and partner violence (see Javdani et al., 2011 for a review). The implication of research in this area is that the system's response to female crime may contribute to the patterns of offenses and the resulting interpretations for women and girls' behavior.

A second, and related, ecological level of analysis is that of gender. Gender theorists have argued that gender as a construct itself operates at an ecological level of analysis (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Lorber, 1994; Stacey & Thorne, 1985; Wasco & Bond, 2010). That is, gender is not only an individual attribute but also a structural grouping variable that "places women and men into unequal categories, roles, and occupations" (Anderson, 2005; p. 858). Thus, at the ecological level, gender manifests in the form of gender-related power dynamics that operate partly independently of an individual's motivations and behaviors. A classic example is that of institutionalized practices and policies that create barriers to women's capacity to obtain leadership positions across a variety of organizational roles (e.g., see Eagly & Johnson, 1990). An ecological understanding views the organizational response (e.g., organizational policies creating barriers for women leaders to attend

to family responsibilities) as part of this social problem and does not interpret the existence of disproportionately fewer women leaders as a reflection of women's individual characteristics (e.g., lack of assertiveness). Gender becomes particularly important in its intersection with the justice system's response to women and girls' crime. That is, the justice system's response necessitates an examination of the potentially gendered institutional processes that can disproportionately impact women and girls, and which ultimately reflect the instantiation of gender-biased polices and practices. This understanding of gender implicates the response of the justice system in promoting inequality and maintaining women's subjugation by levying a differential response based on gender. In particular, evidence in a recent review indicates that gendered practices characterize the institutional response regarding status, drug, and domestic violence-related offenses, such that these practices have been associated with a greater increase in female versus male arrest and incarceration (Javdani et al., 2011).

Social Problem Definition Operating in Girls' Lives

The next section exemplifies the need for an ecological problem definition using qualitative interviews with girls involved in the juvenile justice system. Girls' narratives ($n = 19$) were collected during 1 year of a research study assessing the effectiveness of an intervention called the Girls Advocacy Project (see Javdani & Allen, in preparation). Narratives are reported here as a way to exemplify the context surrounding girls' disruptive behaviors. Interviews were collected as part of a larger interview that included quantitative and qualitative components. Excerpts reported here were collected during a semi-structured qualitative component during which girls were asked to "tell me a little bit about how you got involved with the juvenile justice system?" Narratives serve to highlight the contexts surrounding the particular offense categories described above (status, drug, and domestic violence).

Re-labeling Status Offenses into Violent Offenses

Status offenses constitute crimes for which juveniles, but not adults, can be arrested and include behaviors such as running away from home, curfew violations, and truancy. Historically, girls' arrests have fallen under categories such as "incorrigibility," which often occurred when girls were disobedient, particularly at home. This section will provide examples of instances during which girls "disobedience" at home has been re-labeled formally as violent offenses.

One girl's account highlights this dynamic well. This participant was arrested and incarcerated at the age of 12 and continues to be involved in the juvenile justice system 4 years later. She explains the context surrounding this arrest, which was for a domestic battery against her uncle, who was not arrested or charged with an

offense during this incident. When asked what the fight was about, this participant replies, "Ribs." She elaborates:

> It was on the fourth of July when I got um, arrested because, I was with my… my uncle arguing, and so, he hit me, I hit him …and [he called the police and]…. [After the police came] … I went to my room and they came and they asked me questions and stuff…and then they sent me to jail…[*What let up to the fight?*]... [My uncle] was drinking….I wanted to check on the food [the ribs], but he was drunk and he was in charge, and I just wanted to look in there, I wanted to see if it was done, because I didn't want it to burn because I was hungry, and…he [got mad]… and … started to swinging [at me].

At first glance, the formal charge of a violent offense may seem justified, given that the participant admits to hitting her uncle back. From a person-centered perspective, one could argue that this participant has problems with impulsivity and managing her anger. She stepped "out of line" in hitting an adult, who must have thought the threat was serious enough to call the police. From a person-mediated perspective, one can take the proximal context of this girl's life into consideration. For instance, her uncle's drinking may be a problem in her home context. In addition, this participant later elaborates several other disruptive elements at home, including her mother's drug use and her brother's involvement in local gangs. One can argue that these contexts create chaos in the participant's life and have left her with a paucity of skills to regulate her emotions and her actions. From both perspectives, this girl's actions are ultimately a problem, whether they exist in isolation (person-centered) or as a result of her problematic home environment (person-mediated).

Indeed, the response that was levied by law enforcement and later the local juvenile court betray their adherence to person-centered and person-mediated interpretations. Specifically, this participant was removed from her home, incarcerated for 1 month, and further sentenced to probation as a result of this offense. Her charge was aggravated battery, for which she was mandated to anger management courses, a curfew, and monitoring of her school attendance. She later reports that she did not comply with this court order, resulting in several technical violations of her probation, consistent with the pattern of "bootstrapping" other offenses onto an original offense.

What the system's response, at several phases, did not consider was a need to change this participant's context, and not focus solely on changing her behavior. This is most striking in the fact that the participant's uncle was not also responded to in formal or informal ways. A more critical examination of her context demonstrates that the argument that occurred was about this participant's desire to keep her dinner from burning. At most, this could be thought of as a minor act of disobedience to house rules that are not illegal. An ecological level of analysis would argue for almost a completely different response to this young lady that did not center on anger management or scrutiny of her school-related behaviors. Given the situation leading up to her arrest, neither anger nor academic problems were implicated. A potentially more effective response would center around changing key aspects of her context, for instance, helping her acquire needed resources (e.g., who to call if her uncle's drinking escalates), how to obtain food if she is hungry, and obtaining resources for her legal guardians.

This pattern was not an isolated one and was reported by more than half of participants. In some situations, the original offense for which the police were called was for a status offense. However, even in this situation, the formal offense was still for a violent crime. Another participant's narrative demonstrates this pattern. She describes an argument with her mother that occurred when she was 13 years old. Similar to the last participant's narrative, an in-home disagreement resulted in this girl's arrest and later incarceration. As she notes, her mother called the police to report the participant as a runaway. The system assigned her probation and mandated anger management, which the participant did not fully complete. After being placed in violation of her court order, she was detained again and is awaiting sentencing. She describes:

> I got in a fight with my mom….She called the police and I went to jail. But basically, she told the police that I hit her first, cuz she didn't wanna go to jail. So, I just was [I told the police] like, I did hit her first, I didn't wanna…like make her, I didn't want her to go to jail she had too much going for herself to go to jail. So I just said I did, I did hit her first myself….*[what actually happened?]*…well, she hit me first, she got mad over, cuz I didn't do something for her so she just hit me. I was just like, I was just defending myself…and like hurtin' me and I'm just sitting there, not sayin' nothing or cryin' or somethin', well I wanted to defend myself and I did…and I guess she think I'm not supposed to defend myself. And I am. Well, she called the police when I left out of there. And then we fightin', I like walk out the door, I went to stand outside. Cuz she wanted to keep, she wanted to keep fightin' me, and I didn't wanna keep fightin' her, and I was getting' tired, so I walked out the door and standed outside, so I guess she called the police and told em' I was runnin' away or somethin'. *[Had you run away?]* … No I was standin' outside of the house. She thought I was, she thought I was runnin' away when I went outside. *[What was the fight about?]* …It was on a Saturday. And I was asleep, she woke me up, told me, she called my name, or somethin' and we just got in a fight. She hit me. So I took a couple hits on her, and I got tired of hitting her and asked her to stop, she wouldn't stop, so I started fightin' back.

This participant later describes that her mother frequently called the police for other issues, such as school tardiness and truancy. As she later narrates, she felt that she was labeled as a "troublemaker" and, eventually, began to be charged for more serious offenses and formally charged and detained, even though her behavior did not escalate:

> The police that came there, cuz, we, like every time we'd be late, she called the police on us, and they'd always come over there and take us to school. [My mom] would call the police cuz she think that I'm not gonna go to school and I was gonna go. So she'd call the police, and the police would show up, and I guess they got tired of showin' up and they just took me to jail.

Similar to the previous narrative, person-centered and person-mediated interpretations would center around this participant's anger problems (hitting her mother back) and impulsivity (leaving her house before the argument was resolved). Indeed, the mandates for her to participate in an intensive anger management program suggest that her anger was thought to be a core concern. Further, despite the original call to law enforcement being for running away, the participant was charged with a much more serious offense once the argument with her mom was explained. What was overlooked was the fact that police saw her outside her home when they arrived, suggesting that she had not intended to run away from home, but rather

because "I didn't want to keep fighting." Ironically, this is a technique taught by anger management programs—to walk away from situations that may escalate. However, instead of charging this youth as a runaway, or not charging her at all, she was labeled as a violent offender and asked to complete a program in which she could obtain skills she was already demonstrating. Further, it appears from this participant's second quote that the system's response was related to its familiarity with this particular family, such that they "got tired of showin' up and they just took [her] to jail." Thus, the response of the system did not seem consistent with the seriousness of the particular act for which police were called (running away), but seemed to be a product of their perception of this girl as unruly and the frequent calls to police on the part of her mother. If an ecologically centered response had been levied, key targets for intervention could have included parenting practices for the participant's mother and obtaining needed resources to reduce further legal contact (e.g., a bus pass so the participant reduced school tardiness because of a long walk).

Drug-Related Offenses

Participants also frequently described being charged with drug-related offenses. Though there has been a surge in these offenses after implementation of particular policies, such as those constituting the "war on drugs," evidence indicates that women and girls have been disproportionately affected (e.g., Bush-Baskette, 2000; Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999). Additionally, research suggests that the contexts surrounding female drug charges are qualitatively different from that of men, with women participating in drug distribution more frequently by virtue of their association with higher-level male dealers (Javdani et al., 2011). However, as a result of particular drug policies (e.g., Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988; Bush-Baskette, 2004) women are increasingly charged with more serious offenses and levied harsher sentences. As Nagel and Johnson (2004) state, sentences of drug offenders are more likely to be determined "by the size of the conspiracy in which they are a participant, rather than by their role in the conspiracy" (p. 220).

One girl's account highlights the impact of some of these policy changes well. This participant was arrested for drug charges and conspiracy charges (for not providing police with accurate information) when she was 13 years old. She describes that she received drugs from a boyfriend and felt that she had little choice in "running" the drugs he gave her and giving them to her cousin, who had purchased the drugs. She later discovered that this boyfriend was dealing a large amount of drugs at school and had several girls storing and "running" drugs for him within the school:

Um…when I was in 7th grade …this boy…had, gave me some drugs to give it to uh…ma cousin, and um…I had…ok. Then, I went back…to class-, cause I was coming from the bathroom. I went back to class …then, when I came back after bathroom, he had gave it to me, didn't give it to…ma cousin…[I found out later]…that other girls had been hold[ing] the drugs for…him also. But I didn't, like I wasn't intending to hold it. [So later that day]… the

> attendance lady [caught another girl]…[She] told on me [and] I went to the office. But [by that time], I had already passed it to the person who supposed to have been passed to, but then I got in trouble because I [didn't' lie] …I don't know I was just so scared I just couldn't even think. [When the police came] … they just kept on pressuring me to tell them like who gave it to me or whatever, and they was just telling me all the bad thing that's what happen to me if I didn't tell. So, I end up telling them [about my cousin but not my boyfriend].

From a person-centered perspective, it can be argued that this participant engaged in poor decision making in several instances. Chief among them are her choice to accept "running" the drugs for her boyfriend and her unwillingness to tell police that her boyfriend was involved in drug distribution at her school. An appropriate response to this might be to demonstrate, through punishment, the consequences of these decisions. This exactly characterized the actual nature of the system's response, which included incarceration and probation for this participant.

From a person-mediated perspective, this participants poor decisions can be related to the peer pressure she felt from her boyfriend and the existence of drugs at her school (the setting in which she was peer pressured); both of which can be thought of as proximal contexts that influenced the participants poor choices. In addition to punishment advocated by the person-centered perspective, the person-mediated perspective might also engage this girl in skill building around negotiating and asserting needs when faced with peer pressure. However, these were not part of the actual response of the system in this case; the formal response instead focused on punishment, as the participant was not offered services other than incarceration and mandatory drug testing as a consequence of her probation.

From an ecological perspective, several other factors should be considered important. Key among them are gender dynamics surrounding both of this participant's decision points—accepting the drugs and keeping information from the police. How is gender at play at the ecological level? As others have argued (e.g., Miller, 2008), gender-based dynamics operate outside this individual girl and can work to systematically limit her choices in important ways. At the first decision point, her loyalty to her boyfriend and the consequences of violating this loyalty may have played an important role in her choice to take the drugs from him (see Miller, 2008). Indeed, it has been argued that these gendered social forces can be so strong that they serve to systematically limit choices (Lorber, 1994). This concept is consistent with theories of gender-based oppression (e.g., Frye, 1995), which argue that the social press to act in accordance with gender-congruent roles creates a limited opportunity structure in which the choice *not* to engage in a gender-congruent action (e.g., being loyal to one's boyfriend and doing what he asks) is associated with costs that far exceed the benefits of acting in gender-incongruent ways (e.g., expressing dissent). Similarly, at the second decision point, this participant acted in the role of protector and incurred harm in the form of obtaining a conspiracy charge in order to protect her romantic partner. Again, the cost of being disloyal and harming her relationship may, in this girl's life, be greater than the cost of harming herself. This is particularly evident given that the participant did not lie about her own role in the offense even though police did not find any drugs in her possession, but she refused to tell the truth about her boyfriend's role in the situation.

The system's response to this incident did not account for these gender-based dynamics. Moreover, it worked to aid in the protection of the individual most responsible for the distribution of drugs at this school—the participant's boyfriend. This is evident in the fact that no incentives, resources, or benefits were provided for the participant if she did provide information about her boyfriend to the police; rather, she only incurred punishment if she did not comply. One can infer that the justice system's response does not account for the difficulties, based on gendered dynamics, which are inherent in this participant's refusal to accept the task of running drugs for her boyfriend. In short, for this participant, saying no to her partner may be much more difficult than the justice system currently understands it to be. Further, she was charged for higher-level drug possession and distribution offenses because law enforcement was aware of the scope of this drug problem at the school. Indeed, police were not aware of the quantity of drugs she was carrying and assumed it was a large amount because of the serious drug distribution problem at her school. In this way, the participants own role and actions in the situation were less important than the scale of the situation itself. Ecologically centered responses could have focused on changing the school context to reduce opportunities for girls to be engaged in "running" drugs (e.g., monitoring bathrooms), protecting low-level offenders such as this participant instead of punishing them in order to increase the probability of hindering higher-level drug distributors, and providing education regarding individual rights to set limits and negotiate needs, particularly with romantic partners.

Domestic Violence-Related Offenses

A final offense category examined with respect to the ecological perspective is that of domestic violence offenses. This is a particularly important area given that women often report engaging in violence in the context of interpersonal relationships (Archer, 2000; Ehrensaft, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2004), while about 5% of women charged with domestic violence offenses report generally violent behavior across contexts (Miller & Meloy, 2006). Further, women and girls report motivations consistent with self-defensive and frustration-response behavior (Muftic & Bouffard, 2007). In recent years, changes in arrest policies have promoted an increase in the percentage of women arrested for domestic offenses (Blumner, 1999 as cited in Miller, 2001; Pollock & Davis, 2005; Zorza & Woods, 1994). Specifically, implementation of pro-arrest policies were advocated following the battered women's movement to increase accountability for batterers, including policies that mandate arrest given any evidence of violence (see Feder & Henning, 2005; Miller, 2001 for historical reviews). However, in practice, women in abusive relationships engaging in any type of violence, including self-defense, have been less likely to be characterized as victims and are increasingly being arrested under these laws (Chesney-Lind, 2002; DeLeon-Granados, Wells, & Binsbacher, 2006). As both quantitative and qualitative investigations with adolescent girls suggest, violence in the context of romantic relationships is a growing social problem for young women

(Miller, 2008) and at the root of a multitude of arrests for girls' violent crime (Brown, Chesney-Lind, & Stein, 2007).

A majority of participants reported dating violence, both mutual and unreciprocated, during their interviews. One participant's account helps delineate the context surrounding domestic violence-related offenses. This participant describes being in an abusive relationship with a boyfriend who physically and sexually assaulted her over the course of their relationship. Despite the fact that violence within the relationship was usually directed at her and, at times, mutual, she ended up being the sole party charged with assault. As she goes on to explain, the response she received was consistent with pro-arrest policies encouraging arrests when physical evidence is collected at the crime scene. As this participant describes, her destruction of her boyfriend's property (e.g., t-shirts) provided the evidence necessary to arrest her, despite the fact that these items were destroyed without physically attacking her romantic partner:

> I was sleeping and my boyfriend was hitting on me and I got up and I was the aggressor in the fight. Because every time the police showed up…it was his stuff that was ripped up, even when they came like all my hair was out, like he pulled all my hair out, I had marks… like on my neck and my face, I always, I still ended up going to jail, so. …I had…the marks on my face all he had was a ripped shirt. So he was the aggressor in the fight, but I was jailed because I started it. *[did your boyfriend go to jail too?]*… No.

This was not the only incident of abuse this participant described having endured in the context of this romantic relationship. She also describes that this was not the only time when physical marks were left on her body, but as she states later, the physical marks were from a previous incident with this same partner. Because law enforcement perceived that the ripped t-shirt of her boyfriend was from the current incident, but could not ascertain that the marks on the participant's body were from the same incident, she was ultimately arrested and he was not. In addition, her partners action to call the police and report that his girlfriend had "started it" seemed to be enough to warrant her arrest. When asked why she thought he was not also arrested, her response directly implicates the response of the justice system:

> Because like, they took more time out to talk to him… and …I wasn't really calm about it. [When the police took me] I'm thinking he taking me home, but he told me I was under arrest. [After this happened a few times] I had a list of battery charges and I thought I wasn't going to get out of jail because I was already on probation for a domestic battery charge

This description further contextualizes the response of the justice system: she was not calm, presented as angry, and did not feel she had enough time to explain the circumstances of the fight and the broader context of abuse to law enforcement, whereas her partner appears to have been able to relay his side of the story. Thus, despite several instances in which violence was directed solely at the participant and had left physical scars, the justice system's response did not take this broader context of abuse into account in their response to the incident.

Similar to the preceding accounts from other participants, the person-centered and person-mediated perspectives may seem reasonable. From the person-centered perspective, it may be reasonable to assume this participant has violent tendencies that are extreme enough to lead her to destroy her partner's property. This is further

corroborated by the fact that her partner was the "first to get to the phone" and call law enforcement.

From a person-mediated perspective, the participant may be viewed as "fragile" or characterized by emotion regulation deficits and poor decision making; a pattern consistent with battered women's syndrome (Fernandez, 2007). Inherent in this conceptualization is the argument that an environmental stressor, such as abuse, changes the cognitions, emotions, and behaviors of the victim in ways that are maladaptive. The solution in both cases is to change the woman's behaviors, emotions, and cognitions and, in so doing, place the burden of change on the battered woman, consistent with the victim blaming ideology (Ryan, 1972).

From an ecological perspective, the gendered response of the justice system demonstrates shortcomings in the scenario. For instance, one important event that seemed to shape the response of the system was the fact that the participant's boyfriend "got to the phone first." A false assumption that neglects gender-based dynamics including coercive control and fear in a battering relationship could assume that the person who calls the police was under the greatest threat (Miller, 2001). However, the opposite could indeed be the case, especially given that the participant later describes being afraid of retaliation on the part of her partner if she were to call the police. This participant does not recall being screened for previous abuse in this relationship and was not asked about feeling coerced or afraid. In the interview with our team, she reports dynamics in her relationship consistent with coercive control. Thus, a key difference in the response to this situation from an ecological perspective would occur as soon as law enforcement arrive: screening of relationship dynamics separately and in a safe environment, assessing the extent to which the destruction of the partner's clothing actually constituted a threat of *violence* against her partner, and assessing the participants perceived fear. Perhaps most importantly, providing resources for this participant that could provide her with support and education for navigating an abusive relationship so that she could be aware of her actual choices and how, in this case, law enforcement could have providing meaningful, instrumental support.

Though not all domestic violence calls are responded to in this way, this particular scenario underscores the shortcomings of the system's response. In particular, the system, in its effort to provide "equal treatment" under the law may have actually undermined the spirit of pro- and dual-arrest policies, which were historically created within the battered women's movement to promote batterer accountability. A failure to understand gender dynamics of power and control involved in an abusive relationship such as this will almost certainly result in *un*equal treatment and work to punish the most vulnerable parties.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented three different ways to understand the social problem of women and girls crime and disruptive behavior: person-centered, person-mediated, and ecological. Despite contributions from each of these three perspectives to an

understanding of female crime and antisocial behavior, it is argued that an over-reliance on person-centered and person-mediated approaches can advance a dangerously narrow view that places blame on the individual emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of women and girls, to the exclusion of understanding the broader ecological context in which their offenses arise. The response of the justice system and the operation of gendered prescriptions are two interrelated dimensions of the ecological perspective that operate in women and girls' lives, but are ultimately given little attention in both the understanding of, and social response to, female crime.

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Chapter 3

Examining Predictors of Bullying and Sexual Violence Perpetration Among Middle School Female Students

Dorothy L. Espelage and Lisa De La Rue

Introduction

Rape prevention educators from sexual assault coalitions often gain entry to schools by implementing bullying prevention programs because bully prevention is more palatable to administrators than rape prevention. However, these bully prevention programs rarely involve discussions of sexual violence because there is an inherent assumption that addressing risk and protective factors associated with bullying perpetration might reduce sexual violence perpetration over time (Basile, Espelage, Rivers, McMahon, & Simon, 2009; Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012). This assumption is further predicated on a theoretical argument that bullying perpetration and sexual violence perpetration can be explained by similar risk and protective factors. This practice ignores the possibility that unique predictors of sexual violence might be related to gender. For example, young girls who dismiss sexual harassment as normative might also be more likely to perpetrate sexual harassment. This study represents the first systematic investigation to examine the association between bullying perpetration and sexual violence perpetration among a middle school sample of females to explore whether these two phenomena originate from the same precursors. More specifically, multiple risk (e.g., anger, family violence exposure) and protective factors (e.g., caring, school support) are examined as predictors of bullying and sexual violence perpetration using longitudinal data in order to isolate the most pertinent unique predictors.

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Prevalence of Bullying and Sexual Violence Among Females

Involvement in bullying among youth is a concern in the USA and across the globe and has been the focus of scholarship for many years (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). A cross-national survey from representative samples of 11- to 15-year-old school children across 27 countries from 1994 to 2006 indicated that 1/3 of children reported occasional bullying or victimization and 1 in 10 children reported chronic involvement in bullying (Molcho et al., 2009). Bullying is recognizably a major problem for American schools today, and estimates suggest that nearly 30% of American students are involved in bullying in some capacity (Nansel et al., 2001). Findings from this nationally representative sample of sixth to tenth graders indicate that 13% had bullied others, 11% had been bullied, and 6% had both bullied and been bullied. "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (Olweus, 2001, pp. 9–11). The preceding definition highlights the aggressive component of bullying and the associated inherent power imbalance and potentially repetitive nature.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination under federal law Title IX (1972), and is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when the conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the education program, or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment. Further, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Basile & Saltzman, 2002) recently defined sexual harassment as a component of sexual violence. Sexual harassment during early adolescence tends to involve sexual commentary, spreading of sexual rumors, and inappropriate touching (Espelage et al., 2012). Both sexual harassment and sexual violence terms will be used throughout this chapter. Studies consistently find that sexual harassment is pervasive in secondary schools (e.g., AAUW, 1993; Stein, 2003). Most of the research in the area of sexual violence among young adolescents has focused on victimization so the data are somewhat limited. However, these data suggest that sexual harassment perpetration is common among school-aged adolescents, with one national study reporting peer harassment rates of 66% and 52%, for boys and girls, respectively, and 76% of the boys and 86% of the girls reported at least some harassment victimization (AAUW, 1993). In addition, a more recent study of 1,300 middle school students found that 32% of boys and 22% of girls reported often making unwanted sexual comments to other students (Espelage et al., 2012), suggesting that girls do perpetrate sexual violence during early adolescence, although forced sexual contact perpetration was low for females in that study.

Predictors of Bully and Sexual Violence Perpetration

Both bullying and sexual violence can be thought as emerging from the complex interactions among individual psychological attributes as well as girls' experiences at home, school, and in their community. In order to understand the potential overlap between bullying and sexual violence perpetration, it is helpful to draw

upon a social–ecological theoretical framework to examine the multitude of potential risk and protective factors (Basile et al., 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Espelage & Holt, 2012; Hong & Espelage, 2012). The ecological perspective provides a conceptual framework for investigating the independent and combined impact of these social contexts and dynamic, transactional influences on behavioral development. This ecological framework has been applied to the conceptualization of bullying perpetration and victimization and highlights reciprocal influences on bullying behaviors between individual, family, school, peer, and community (Espelage et al., 2000; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001; Hong & Espelage, 2012).

Bully Perpetration

Individual Risk Factors

Certain individual characteristics heighten one's risk for being victimized. In demographic terms, boys are victimized and also perpetrate bullying more than girls (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Espelage & De La Rue, 2011), although this depends somewhat on the form of victimization/perpetration. Whereas boys are more likely to experience physical bullying victimization (e.g., being hit), girls are more likely to be targets of indirect victimization (e.g., social exclusion) (Jeffrey, Miller, & Linn, 2001). In one of the few studies addressing the influence of race on bullying, Black students reported less victimization than White or Hispanic youth (Nansel et al., 2001). Juvonen and colleagues (2003) found that Black middle school youth were more likely to be categorized as bullies and bully-victims than White students. Another study found that Hispanic students reported somewhat more bullying than Black and White youth (Nansel et al., 2001).

Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, and Sadek (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on the cross-sectional outcomes for bullies, victims, and bully-victims across 153 studies. The strongest individual predictors of being a perpetrator of bullying included having high levels of externalizing behavior (and internalizing behavior to a lesser extent) and being a male student. Among the constellation of emotions associated with bully perpetration, empathy and caring behaviors have consistently been found to be negatively associated with aggression, including bullying perpetration (Espelage, Mebane, & Adams, 2004), and positively associated with and prosocial skills (Endresen & Olweus, 2001; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982). In several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of bullying behavior (e.g., name calling, teasing, threatening), anger was the strongest predictor of bullying (Bosworth et al., 1999; Espelage et al., 2001).

Great debate ensues around the potential longitudinal associations between bullying perpetration and later delinquency. Indeed, extant research suggests that bullies are more likely than their peers to engage in externalizing behaviors, to experience conduct problems, and to be delinquent into young adulthood (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). However, many of these longitudinal studies have included only male samples; thus, it is unclear whether bully perpetration during early adolescence among females would be associated with delinquency.

Contextual Influences

Family, peer, and school contexts can exert positive or negative influences on bullying involvement and are critical to measure when trying to understand bullying dynamics. Parent-level factors, such as negative adult influences and lack of parental support, have been found to be associated with bullying perpetration (Espelage et al., 2000). A few scholars have shown witnessing parental violence at home was a risk factor for peer conflicts (see Corvo & deLara, 2010 for a review; McCloskey & Stuewig, 2001), such as aggression and bullying among youth (Baldry, 2003; Bauer et al., 2006; Espelage et al., 2000; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003). These studies found that youth who are exposed to inter-parental violence at home are likely to engage in bullying in school, as well as become victims of bullying. Baldry's (2003) study, which investigates the association between inter-parental violence and bullying in a sample of Italian youth, found that both boys and girls who witnessed violence between their parents were significantly more likely to bully their peers compared to those who were not exposed to inter-parental violence.

Familial social support also is influential. Lack of parental social support is a risk factor for bullying perpetration (Espelage et al., 2000). Middle school students classified as bullies indicate receiving substantially less social support from parents than those who are not involved in bullying (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). The school and community contexts are salient contributors to bullying perpetration. Youth with lower levels of school connectedness were significantly more likely to be involved in bullying and peer victimization (Espelage et al., 2000; Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005; Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005). Because schools are embedded in neighborhoods, an unsafe neighborhood environment can influence bullying behavior due to inadequate adult supervision or negative peer influences. There are relatively few studies (Bacchini, Esposity, & Affuso, 2009; Espelage et al., 2000) that have investigated how bullying behavior is influenced by experiences in environments outside of school, such as neighborhoods. Nevertheless, researchers consistently found an association between neighborhood violence and bullying behavior.

Sexual Violence Perpetration

Individual Risk Factors

Although sexual harassment/violence is a pervasive problem for middle and high school students, the individual characteristics of some students may put them at increased risk for perpetration. In terms of gender differences, it appears that more boys than girls harass their peers (AAUW, 1993, 2001). Among girls, more African-American students (63%) report harassing peers than did Hispanic or White females (50% each). Many studies have documented a relation between hostile attitudes toward women and perpetration of sexual violence (see review by Basile et al., 2009), but no studies have examined anger as a predictor of sexual violence perpetration by middle school females.

Contextual Influences

Virtually nothing is known about contextual influences on sexual harassment/ violence in middle school settings. Studies are needed to explore family, school, and community influences on sexual violence perpetration. Drawing from what is known about sexual harassment generally, there is reason to believe that these contexts operate in a similar fashion as with bullying; that is, they serve to either promote or reduce sexual harassment. In terms of family context, following from the literature on bullying, it is probable that children from families which condone any type of aggressive behaviors (and more specifically those of a sexual nature) will be more apt to sexually harass their peers (Baldry, 2003). It also might be that, as is the case with bullying, youth with secure attachments and adequate parental support are less likely to be involved in sexual harassment, potentially protected by personality features derived from positive parental relationships. With respect to peer context, the AAUW studies (2001) revealed that perpetrators of sexual harassment felt their behaviors were justified because "all kids do it" and because of pressure from peers to engage in such behaviors. Social network analyses and hierarchical linear modeling were applied to a large sample of middle school students, and found that if students had friends that were dismissive of sexual harassment (condoning), their individual levels of sexual harassment increased over the middle school years (Birkett & Espelage, in press). Finally, in regard to school context, existing studies have found that sexual harassment often occurs in public arenas, and that treatment of these incidents witnessed by school staff have a critical impact on how students view the school climate. Finally, there appears to be a general acceptance of sexual harassment in schools that likely influences perpetration rates; as noted by students and teachers who argued that many females in their middle schools "were asking to get sexually harassed" because of the way they dressed or the way they interacted with boys (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, in press).

Overlap of Bully and SV Perpetration

While there are few studies that have examined associations between bullying and sexual harassment, such studies have found that these behaviors are associated. Pepler and colleagues (2002) found that sexual harassment perpetration in fifth to eighth grade students was associated with increased bullying rates. DeSouza and Ribeiro (2005) examined a sample of Brazilian high school students and found that for both males and females, peers who self-reported bullying perpetration were more likely to sexually harass peers. Pepler and colleagues (2006) also found a positive association between sexual harassment perpetration and bullying perpetration among students. In this cross-sectional study of nearly 2,000 adolescents, sexual harassment perpetration was more prevalent among students who bullied others than those who did not report bullying others. Finally, in a recent study of over 1,000 middle school students bullying perpetration was predictive of sexual

violence perpetration over a 1-year period for both males and females (Espelage et al., 2012). To add to this limited literature, the purpose of this chapter is to provide prevalence estimates of bullying experiences and sexual harassment/sexual violence (SH/SV) perpetration for female middle school students in a midwest school district. Further, another purpose is to identify risk and protective factors identified in the literature as associated with these two outcomes. To this end, this study included analyses to examine how risk and protective factors predict future bullying perpetration and sexual harassing behaviors in an effort to better understand shared risk and protective factors for these behaviors.

Methods

Participants

Participants for this study consisted of 576 female students in fifth to seventh grades from four public middle schools located in a Midwestern state. Ages ranged from 11 to 15 years with a mean of 12.6 years in the first wave of data collection. Students included 56.5% African American, 26.1% White, 11% other or biracial, 3.8% Hispanic/Latino, 1.5% Asian, and 1.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Data were collected over five waves, which included Spring 2008 (Wave 1), Fall–Spring 2008–2009 (Waves 2 and 3), and Fall 2009 (Wave 4).

Procedure

Data were collected in collaboration with school administrators, teachers, and community representatives. Upon receiving assent from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school districts, consent forms were mailed to parents and guardians of all registered students by the school districts. Parents and guardians were provided with phone numbers, addresses, and fax numbers to return the form if they did not wish their son/daughter to participate. All schools returned surveys for 90–95% of their student population. At the beginning of each data collection period, students were informed that the researchers were interested in knowing how they think and feel about some things in their lives (e.g., school, friends, family, community). They were asked to provide a written assent by signing their name on the survey coversheet. Students were informed that their name would be converted to a number and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Students who elected not to participate or who had parental consent forms sent back were asked to go to another supervised classroom. The remaining students were informed that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they had the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. The survey administration lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Measures

Bullying and sexual violence perpetration scales at Wave 4 were the outcome variables.

Predictor variables included Wave 1 bully and sexual violence perpetration scales and a wide range of individual, family, community, and school Wave 1 predictors.

Bullying and Sexual Violence Perpetration Waves 1 and 4

Bully Perpetration

The 9-item Illinois Bully Scale (Espelage & Holt, 2001) was used to assess the frequency of teasing, name-calling, social exclusion, and rumor spreading. Students are asked how often in the past 30 days they teased other students, upset other students for the fun of it, excluded others from their group of friends, and helped harass other students, etc. Response options include "Never," "1 or 2 times," "3 or 4 times," "5 or 6 times," and "7 or more times." The construct validity of this scale has been supported via exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Factor loadings in the development sample for these items ranged from 0.52 to 0.75, and this factor accounted for 31% of the variance in the factor analysis (Espelage & Holt, 2001). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 was found for the development sample and the Bullying Scale correlated 0.65 with the Youth Self-Report Aggression Scale (Achenbach, 1991) and was not significantly correlated with the Victimization Scale ($r=0.12$). The scale consistently emerges as distinct from physical aggression scales and correlated with peer nominations of bullying (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003). Alpha coefficients of 0.86 and 0.85 were found for Waves 1 and 4 in the current study.

Sexual Violence Perpetration

A modified version of the American Association of University Women Sexual Harassment Survey (AAUW, 1993) was used to measure the frequency with which students perpetrated sexually harassing behaviors within the last year. The original AAUW 15-item scale was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring and a two-factor solution (groping/sexual harassment; forced sexual contact) was indicated when evaluated with the screen test and the Kaiser criterion (Espelage et al., 2012). Given the low incidence of forced sexual contact among middle school students, we used only the first factor in the analyses reported here. The first factor, Groping/Sexual Harassment, contained nine items (e.g., making sexual comments, spreading rumors, and pulling at clothing of another student), had exemplary internal consistency ($\alpha=0.81$), and accounted for 23.62% of the variance in the factor score (factor loadings ranging from 0.46 through 0.62). Response

options included "Not sure," "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," and "Often." Higher scores indicated greater sexual violence perpetration. Alpha coefficients of 0.72 and 0.81 were found for Waves 1 and 4 in the current study, respectively.

Individual Characteristics at Wave 1

Anger

Self-reported anger was assessed using the University of Illinois Anger Scale (Espelage & Stein, 2006). Students were asked how often the following things happened to them in the past 30 days: "I got in a physical fight because I was angry"; "I lost my temper for no reason"; "I was mean to someone when I was angry"; and "I was angry all day." Response options included "Never," "1 or 2 times," "3 or 4 times," "5 or 6 times," and "7 or more times." Higher scores indicated more self-reported anger. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81 was found for Wave 1 of the current study.

Depression

The Orpinas Modified Depression Scale (Orpinas, 1993) includes six items that asks adolescents how often they felt or acted in certain ways (e.g., "Did you feel happy," "Did you feel hopeless about your future") in the previous 30 days. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Never) through 5 (Almost Always) is used to measure responses. All responses were summed with a range of 6–30; higher scores indicate more depressive symptoms. The Modified Depression scale has demonstrated strong construct validity through factor analyses and good internal consistency (0.74) when administered to adolescents 10–18 years of age (Orpinas, 1993). In the current study, good internal consistency reliability was found as the Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for Wave 1.

Delinquency

This 8-item scale is based on Jessor and Jessor's (1977) General Deviant Behavior Scale and asks students to report how many behaviors listed on the measure they took part in during the last year. The scale consists of items such as "Skipped school" and "Damaged school or other property that did not belong to you." Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale with options ranging from 1 (Never) through 5 (10 or more times). The original study by Jessor and Jessor utilized this scale in a longitudinal study of 432 largely white middle class students in grades 7–10. A mean Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.76 was reported across the 3-year study (1977). Since its development, this scale has been used numerous times resulting in Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.83 (Farrell, Danish, & Howard,

1992; Farrell, Kung, White, & Valois, 2000). In the current study, we found the scale to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74 for Wave 1.

Caring Behaviors

The 4-item caring acts scale (Crick, 1996) measures exclusion, rumor spreading, and other activities meant to damage another child's reputation or social relationships. Students are asked how often in the past 30 days they let others know that they cared about them; helped out other kids when they needed it, said or did nice things for other kids; and tried to cheer up other kids who felt upset or sad. Response options include "Never," "1 or 2 times," "3 or 4 times," "5 or 6 times," and "7 or more times." A confirmatory factor analysis supported the scales' construct validity (Crick, 1996), and the scale's Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 in a middle school sample (Espelage et al., 2004).

Family Abuse and Violence at Wave 1

Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment

Three items from the Student Health and Safety Survey (CDC, 2004) were used to measure past abuse in the family. Students were presented with the following stem "Before you were 9 years old, did you ever…" followed by three items to assess domestic violence exposure and history of childhood maltreatment: (1) see or hear one of your parents or guardians being hit, slapped, punched, shoved, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by their spouse or partner? (2) have injuries, such as bruises, cuts, or broken bones, as a result of being spanked, struck, or shoved by your parents or guardians or their partners? and (3) did someone ever force you to have sex or to do something sexual that you did not want to? Response options are "yes" or "no." Each item was entered as separate predictors in the regression.

Sibling Aggression Perpetration

A sibling aggression perpetration scale was created for this study and included five items that assessed aggression between siblings (Espelage & Stein, 2006). Items were selected from the University of Illinois Bullying Scale in order to parallel that scale. Five items emerged as a scale in factor analysis, which includes the following: I upset my brother or sister for the fun of it; I got into a physical fight with my brother or sister; I started arguments with my brother or sister; I hit back when a sibling hit me first; and I teased my siblings for the fun of it. Students were asked to indicate how often they did these things to a sibling or other children in their family during that last 30 days. Response options include "Never," "1 or 2 times,"

"3 or 4 times," "5 or 6 times," and "7 or more times." A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82 was found for Wave 1.

Parental Monitoring and Family Social Support at Wave 1

Parental Monitoring

The Parental Supervision subscale from the Seattle Social Development Project (Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, Catalano, & Baglioni, 2002) was used to measure respondents' perceptions of established familial rules and perceived parental awareness regarding school work and attendance, peer relationships, alcohol or drug use, and weapon possession. The subscale includes eight items measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) through 4 (Always). Example items include, "My family has clear rules about alcohol and drug use" and "My parents ask if I've gotten my homework done." A Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 was calculated for Wave 1.

Family Social Support

Family social support was measured using the family subscale from the Vaux Social Support Record. The VSSR is a 9-item questionnaire that is an adaptation of Vaux et al's. (1986) Social Support Appraisals (SSA) 23-item scale that was designed to assess the degree to which a person feels cared for, respected, and involved (Vaux et al., 1986). The family subscale is three items that measure the support available from the family. Scores range from 0 to 6, with higher scores indicating greater perceived support. A sample item is "There are people in my family I can talk to, who care about my feelings and what happens to me." The family subscale showed good internal consistency across samples. Mean Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.80 for the five student samples, and 0.81, and for the five community samples. Internal consistency reliability for the family social support scale was 0.78–0.82. Alpha coefficient of 0.82 was found for Wave 1 in the current study.

School Social Support at Wave 1

School social support was measured using the school subscale from the Vaux Social Support Record (Vaux et al., 1986). The school subscale is three items that measure the support available from the school. Scores range from 0 to 6, with higher scores indicating greater perceived support. A sample item is "There are people in my school I can talk to, who care about my feelings and what happens to me." The school subscale showed good internal consistency across samples. Mean Cronbach's alpha

coefficients were 0.80 for the five student samples, and 0.81, and for the five community samples. Internal consistency reliability for the school social support scale was 0.78–0.82. Alpha coefficient of 0.80 was found for Wave 1 in the current study.

Community Violence at Wave 1

Exposure to community violence was measured with five items from the 12-item Children's Exposure to Community Violence scale (Richters & Martinez, 1990). Students are asked "How often do you hear or see the following in your neighborhood, school, or at your home?": (1) I have heard guns being shot; (2) I have seen somebody arrested; (3) I have seen drug deals; (4) I have seen somebody being beaten up; and (5) I have seen gangs. Response options range from 1 (Never) through 4 (Often). Alpha coefficient of 0.91 was found for Wave 1 in the current study.

Dismissive of Sexual Harassment at Wave 1

An adapted version of the National Institute of Justice Survey of Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Sexual Harassment (Taylor & Stein, 2007) was used to measure dismissive attitudes toward sexual harassment. Students were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with ten items including "sexual harassment is just having fun," "When boys make comments about girls' bodies, girls should take it as a compliment" and "If I have flirted with a person in the past, then I am encouraging them to sexually harass me." Response options ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) through 4 (Strongly Agree).

Results

Prevalence of Bully Perpetration and Sexual Violence Perpetration Wave 1

Prevalence of bullying perpetration was calculated as the number of students whose bully perpetration scale scores were one standard deviation above the mean. Using this as a cutoff, 12% of females could be considered bully perpetrators. Given the dearth of literature on SV perpetration among middle school female students, prevalence data are presented for selected items to inform future conceptualizations of SV. In relation to the AAUW-revised sexual harassment/violence perpetration scale,

28% of girls reported making sexual comments to other students in the last year, 7% of girls spread a sexual rumor, and 2% of girls pulled at someone's clothing.

Correlational Analysis

An initial correlational analysis was conducted to examine the relations among all of the study variables (Table 3.1). A review of the correlational analysis reveals that many of the Wave 1 predictors share an association with bullying perpetration and sexual harassment perpetration at Wave 4. Specifically, dismissive attitudes towards sexual harassment, anger, depression, delinquency, and community violence were all significantly positively related to later levels of bullying and sexual harassment. In addition, a history of child abuse and sibling aggression was significantly and positively related to each outcome. Parental monitoring and family support both showed significant negative correlations with bullying and sexual harassment at Wave 4. However, what is important to notice is that the magnitude of the associations between the predictor variables and the two outcomes were strongest for bullying perpetration. These findings suggest that when these predictors are considered comprehensively and baseline levels of bullying and sexual harassment perpetration are accounted for, it is likely that these variables will explain more variance in bullying than sexual harassment perpetration.

Longitudinal Predictors of Bullying Perpetration

The first regression model included independent variables from Wave 1 predicting bullying perpetration at Wave 4, controlling for Wave 1 bullying perpetration. The overall model was significant ($F(15,487)=14.91$, $p<0.001$; adjusted $R^2=0.29$; Table 3.2). Six of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of later bullying perpetration and explained 29% of the variance of the outcome of bullying perpetration. The strongest predictor was sibling aggression ($\beta=0.24$), followed by depression ($\beta=0.15$), delinquency ($\beta=0.11$), and previous bullying perpetration ($\beta=0.18$). These findings indicate that higher rates of bullying perpetration at Wave 4 (after controlling for bullying at Wave 1) is predicted by greater sibling aggression, greater depression and delinquency at Wave 1. From a protective standpoint, less involvement in bully perpetration at Wave 4 (after controlling for bullying at Wave 1) was associated with greater caring behaviors directed toward other students. Finally, greater perceived family social support was associated with less bullying at Wave 4. Interestingly, exposure to domestic violence and experiencing childhood sexual abuse and neglect were not significant predictors of bullying perpetration over time (Table 3.2).

In an effort to get a more nuanced understanding of the bullying behaviors, Table 3.3 displays frequency information for specific bullying behaviors targeted

Table 3.1 Correlations of study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Grade	—																	
2. Race	−0.07	—																
3. Bullying perpetration wave 1	0.15**	−0.29**	—															
4. Bullying perpetration wave 4	0.37**	−0.19**	0.46**	—														
5. Sexual violence perpetration wave 1	0.13**	−0.12**	0.46**	0.40**	—													
6. Sexual violence perpetration wave 4	0.16**	−0.01	0.20**	0.30**	0.30**	—												
7. Dismissive of SH wave 1	0.11**	−0.16**	0.28**	0.20**	0.25**	0.20**	—											
8. Anger wave 1	0.10*	−0.28**	0.77**	0.38**	0.29**	0.13**	0.20**	—										
9. Depression wave 1	0.18**	0.03	0.31**	0.29**	0.25**	0.16**	0.14**	0.30**	—									
10. Delinquency wave 1	0.13**	−0.27**	0.55**	0.37**	0.34**	0.16**	0.30**	0.44**	0.29**	—								
11. Caring wave 1	−0.01	0.25**	−0.10*	−0.14**	0.06	0.05	−0.18**	−0.07	0.13**	−0.20**	—							

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
12. Parental monitoring wave 1	−0.01	0.24**	−0.31**	−0.25**	−0.20**	−0.12**	−0.36**	−0.24**	−0.14**	−0.39***	0.24**	–						
13. Family social support wave 1	0.04	0.06	−0.11**	−0.24**	−0.11**	−0.08	−0.21**	−0.08*	−0.14**	−0.25**	0.26**	0.50**	–					
14. Spousal abuse wave 1	−0.02	−0.11**	0.15**	0.10*	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.15**	0.23**	0.23**	−0.04	−0.23**	−0.18**	–				
15. Child abuse wave 1	0.04	−0.12*	0.12**	0.17**	0.13**	0.12**	0.08	0.16**	0.32**	0.17**	0.01	−0.15**	−0.17**	0.38**	–			
16. Sibling aggres	0.15**	−0.15**	0.60**	0.44**	0.33**	0.19**	0.14**	0.50**	0.32**	0.33**	0.07	−0.17**	−0.08*	0.08*	0.17**	–		
17. School social support wave 1	−0.13**	0.08	−0.18**	−0.17**	−0.08	−0.07	−0.17**	−0.12**	−0.18**	−0.26**	0.28**	0.36**	0.46**	−0.07	−0.09*	−0.11**	–	
18. Community violence wave 1	0.07	−0.60**	0.41**	0.26**	0.18**	0.13**	0.21**	0.40**	0.22**	0.38**	−0.21**	−0.26**	−0.15**	0.21**	0.21**	0.28**	−0.07	–

*Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.001*

Table 3.2 Regression analyses—predicting later bullying perpetration

	Bullying perpetration wave 4		
	b	SEb	β
Predictor variable			
Grade wave 1	−0.03	0.23	−0.06
Race	−0.05	0.02	−0.07
Bullying perpetration wave 1	0.14	0.05	0.18**
Anger wave 1	0.01	0.02	0.02
Depression wave 1	0.08	0.02	0.15**
Delinquency wave 1	0.13	0.03	0.11*
Caring wave 1	−0.04	0.02	−0.10*
Spousal abuse wave 1	−0.05	0.04	−0.04
Child abuse wave 1	0.04	0.05	0.03
Mild sexual violence perpetration wave 1	−0.08	0.06	−0.04
Sibling aggression wave 1	0.12	0.09	0.24**
Parental monitoring wave 1	−0.01	0.06	−0.01
Family social support wave 1	−0.16	0.04	−0.15**
School social support wave 1	0.05	0.03	0.05
Community violence wave 1	−0.02	0.03	−0.04

Note: Race was dichotomized into Caucasian (1) and African American (2)
*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.001$

towards male or female peers. The girls in this study tended to engage in similar amounts of bullying behaviors across genders and did not show substantial deviations in who they targeted. The girls in this study did tend to threaten male peers more and engaged in more rumor spreading directed towards girls.

Longitudinal Predictors of Mild Sexual Violence Perpetration

The second regression also used Wave 1 independent variables to predict later levels of mild sexual violence/harassment perpetration. The overall model was significant ($F(17,485)=3.81$, $p<0.001$; adjusted $R^2=0.09$; Table 3.4). Two of the independent variables were significant predictors. Attitudes that were dismissive of sexual harassment ($\beta=0.18$) and earlier sexual harassment perpetration ($\beta=0.18$) were predictive of later sexual harassment behaviors. Table 3.5 displays frequency information for sexual harassment behaviors. Most behaviors occurred rarely or never, and the most frequent behavior was girls' calling both girls and boys "gay."

Discussion

In this study of early adolescent females, bullying perpetration was associated with later sexual violence perpetration when cross-sectional data were considered, but this association was nonsignificant in the longitudinal analyses. These findings

Table 3.3 Wave 5 frequencies of bully perpetration by gender of target

	Never (%)	1 or 2 times (%)	3–6 times (%)	7+times (%)
Behavior targeting boys				
Purposely upset boys	65.2 (135)	23.2 (48)	5.8 (12)	2.4 (5)
Teased other students	70.0 (145)	20.8 (43)	3.4 (7)	1.4 (3)
Spread rumors	86.5 (179)	5.3 (11)	1.5 (3)	1.4 (3)
Threatened another student	59.4 (123)	20.3 (42)	7.7 (17)	7.7 (16)
Called students gay	65.2 (135)	24.2 (50)	2.4 (5)	3.9 (8)
Behavior targeting girls				
Purposely upset girls	62.8 (130)	25.1 (52)	5.7 (12)	2.9 (6)
Teased other students	69.6 (144)	19.8 (41)	4.8 (10)	1.9 (4)
Spread rumors	82.6 (171)	8.7 (18)	4.3 (9)	1.9 (4)
Threatened another student	65.7 (136)	15.9 (33)	8.2 (17)	6.3 (13)
Called students gay	73.4 (152)	18.4 (38)	2.4 (5)	1.9 (4)

Note: Percentage and (number). Past experiences = girls who reported incidents of abuse more than a year ago

could be due to the high stability of bully perpetration during the middle school years. Further, the individual and family predictors are better predictors of bully perpetration than sexual harassment perpetration. Interestingly, when we predict sexual violence perpetration overtime, bully perpetration was not a significant predictor either. The only significant predictor of sexual violence included dismissiveness of sexual harassment.

For girls who engage in bullying behaviors there appear to be a set of contextual factors and individual predictors that remain stable as risk and protective factors. Specifically, the family environment poses a concern when there are low levels of family support and high levels of sibling aggression. At the individual level depression and delinquency remained as significant predictors for bullying perpetration, which is consistent with recent research with male samples (Farrington & Tfoti, 2011). When considering sexual violence perpetration by females it appears that a significant risk is the attitudes and behaviors that young women have regarding sexual violence and harassing behaviors. When girls engaged in sexually harassing behaviors and were also more dismissive of sexual harassment, this created a significant risk for later being a perpetrator of sexual violence. In combination, these results suggest that those variables that predict bully perpetration among girls are not good predictors of sexual violence perpetration.

Table 3.4 Regression analyses—predicting later sexual harassment perpetration

	Sexual violence perpetration wave 4		
	b	SEb	β
Predictor variable			
Grade	−0.00	0.01	−0.01
Race	0.02	0.02	0.07
Bullying perpetration wave 1	0.01	0.03	0.02
Dismissive of SH wave 1	0.04	0.02	0.10*
Sexual violence perpetration wave 1	0.23	0.06	0.20**
Anger wave 1	−0.01	0.02	−0.06
Depression wave 1	0.01	0.01	0.06
Delinquency wave 1	0.01	0.03	0.02
Caring wave 1	0.01	0.01	0.06
Parental monitoring wave 1	0.00	0.01	0.01
Family social support wave 1	−0.01	0.02	−0.02
Spousal abuse wave 1	−0.03	0.02	−0.05
Child abuse wave 1	0.04	0.03	0.07
Forced sexual contact wave 1	−0.05	0.04	−0.05
Sibling aggression wave 1	0.01	0.01	0.05
School social support wave 1	−0.02	0.02	−0.05
Community violence wave 1	0.02	0.01	0.09

Note: Race was dichotomized into Caucasian (1) and African American (2)
$*p < 0.05; **p < 0.001$

Table 3.5 Wave 5 frequencies of sexual violence perpetration

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Often (%)
Behavior				
Made sexual	78.7	5.3	1.4	1.4
comments	(163)	(11)	(3)	(3)
Wrote sexual	89.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
graffiti	(186)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Spread sexual	88.9	3.9	0.5	0.5
rumors	(184)	(8)	(1)	(1)
Homophobic	79.7	9.7	3.9	0.5
teasing	(165)	(20)	(8)	(1)

Note: Percentage and (number). Past experiences were those girls reported incidents of abuse more than a year ago. Percentages may not add to 100% since responses of *not sure* were not included in this table

Predictors of bully perpetration included sibling aggression and lower levels of family social support. These factors predicted later levels of bullying, consistent with research that shows children in families that encourage "fighting back" and display indifference to their youth have children who display high levels of bully perpetration (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Loeber & Dishion, 1984; Olweus, 1995b). These young girls may be coming from family environments that are more likely to condone aggression, and therefore they may be quicker to use bullying behaviors as a way to interact with their peers.

An additional contextual factor that predicted bullying was engagement in delinquency and prior bullying behaviors. It is likely that these associations could be linked to the girls' friends and their behaviors. Indeed, peer group membership is an important influence on adolescent girls' behaviors. Girls who hang out with friends who engage in bullying often take on these same behaviors (Espelage et al., 2003). The same has been noted for delinquency, where females who engage with delinquent peers are at an increased risk of continued delinquency in the future (Jennings, Maldonado-Molina, & Komro, 2010). This suggests that the peer group is influential in maintaining aggressive or adverse behaviors, especially when these behaviors are present early on. Therefore, there is a strong need to engage in efforts to target the peer group, as prevention efforts aimed solely at the individual level are likely not to be as effective.

This is not to say that individual level predictors are not also important to consider. In this study, depression was a significant predictor of bullying perpetration. Researchers have shown that depression may influence a girl's propensity to engage in aggressive behavior and have hypothesized this may be due to girls feeling a greater indifference to engagement in prosocial behaviors and a greater attachment to deviant peers (Ehrensaft, 2005). This is also consistent with lower levels of caring behaviors being predictive of later bullying behaviors. When girls are experiencing greater levels of depression they may have less motivation to develop and maintain prosocial relationships. This is consistent with what was noted above, where girls who are engaged with peer groups who engage in less prosocial behavior are at greater risk of future bullying perpetration.

In this study there was no overlap between predictors of bullying perpetration and that of sexual harassment. Girl's dismissive attitudes toward sexual harassment and previous engagement of harassing behaviors predicted later sexual harassment. Girls in this study tended to maintain their level of sexually harassing behaviors, suggesting that early experiences may play a significant role in establishing a pattern of behavior. Indeed, findings from the AAUW (1993) revealed that 38% of girls reported having first been sexually harassed in sixth grade. Further, the few empirical studies of sexual harassment among middle school students have supported that sexual harassment is pervasive even among young adolescents, and that rates of sexual harassment increase throughout middle school, indicating a need for early intervention (for review see Espelage & Holt, 2012). However, it should be noted that the low base rate of sexual harassment among the girls in this sample may have made it difficult to detect predictors of this behavior. That said, the findings here suggest that more research needs to be conducted with middle school girls to determine what risk and protective factors are associated with the onset and continuation of sexual harassment perpetration. But even more pressing is that bully prevention programs that target individual and family variables will have limited efficacy in reducing sexual harassment perpetration unless the conversations focus on gender and attitudes that are dismissive of unwanted sexual commentary and behaviors.

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Chapter 4
What's the Story? The Impact of Race/Ethnicity on Crime Story Tone for Female Offenders

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Introduction

Criminal events, although relatively rare, receive disproportionate amounts of media attention (Chermak, 1998; Fishman & Weimann, 1985; Grabe, 1999; Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1997). However, not all crimes that come to the attention of the media become published news items (Chermak & Chapman, 2007). "As occurrences are identified, sifted, and evaluated by journalists and their editors on a day-to-day basis, decisions about what is newsworthy do get made: some occurrences are selected for coverage while others are not" (Lundman, 2003, p. 359; see also Lundman, Douglass, & Hanson, 2004, p. 251). Journalists decide which stories to include and which to ignore. Journalists also decide how to present their stories. The stories about crime that appear in the news often follow pre-constructed "scripts" (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Lundman, 2003, p. 360; Oliver & Myers, 1999, p. 46) that "confirm existing images and assumptions" (Garofalo, 1981a, p. 334). Both the selection and the construction of crime stories are important considerations because ideas about crime and criminals are based, in large part, on the stories that individuals learn about from the media (Antunes & Hurley, 1977; Chermak, 1994; Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Fishman & Weimann, 1985; Garofalo, 1981a; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Surette, 1992). In other words, "the public's mental images of crime—as well as criminals, victims, and criminal justice—are shaped, to a great extent, by the mass media" (Garofalo, 1981a, p. 334).

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Many researchers have examined how crime is portrayed by the media and the extent to which depictions accurately reflect the types and amount of crime in society. For example, past researchers have examined the overrepresentation of crime coverage by the media (see for example, Johnstone, Hawkins, & Michener, 1994), discrepancies between media depictions of crime and actual crime statistics (see, for example, Buckler & Travis, 2005), the symbiotic relationship between the media and criminal justice officials and the effects of this relationship on the accuracy of crime reporting (see, for example, Welch et al., 1997; Welch, Fenwick, & Roberts, 1998), and the characteristics of crime incidents (e.g., location, number of victims, offender motive) believed to enhance their newsworthiness (see, for example, Chermak, 1994, 1998). While several researchers have examined the general topic of crime coverage by the media, fewer have focused on how the media depicts offenders. These less common examinations provide somewhat conflicting conclusions about the "typical offender." Most find that stories about minority offenders predominate (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Dates & Pease, 1997; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Grabe, 1999; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Surette, 1992),[1] but there seems to be disagreement about whether media outlets are more likely to report stories involving male (Barak, 1994; Dates & Pease, 1997; Grabe, 1999; Madriz, 1997) or female offenders (Chermak, 1998; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994). Some argue that females are more likely to be portrayed as victims than as offenders (Bond-Maupin, 1998; Cavender, Bond-Maupin, & Jurik, 1999; Grabe, 1999; Grabe, Trager, Lear, & Rauch, 2006; Madriz, 1997; Naylor, 2001).

Most researchers, however, have not considered how female offenders are presented in crime stories, and whether portrayals of these women differ by their race/ethnicity. Furthermore, few researchers have assessed the overall narrative tones of crime stories. In other words, it is largely unknown whether some journalistic accounts of criminal events provide more favorable or unfavorable depictions of events and actors than others. Such an analysis is warranted since crime narratives tend to perpetuate dominant societal stereotypes and influence how individuals perceive and treat others (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Fishman & Weimann, 1985; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Surette, 1992).

To date, only five studies included examinations of crime story tones for white and minority female offenders (Bond-Maupin, 1998; Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009; Farr, 1997, 2000; Huckerby, 2003). In all of these studies, the stories about minority women were more likely to carry negative tones than the stories about white women. While this conclusion was consistent across the five studies, in none of the investigations did the researchers consider how overall story tone (OST) may have been influenced by the type of offense reported (i.e., violent crime versus nonviolent crime) or by the amount of attention given to a particular story (i.e., the story's salience level).

Because little is known about depictions of female offenders by the media, more research is needed. We believe there are significant differences in the ways that the

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[1] Due to the limited number of studies that focus solely on offenders, this citation includes studies that focused on broader issues with similar conclusions.

media portray white and minority female offenders, but that the extent of these differences may vary by offense type and by crime story salience. In order to examine that possibility, we conducted an exploratory quantitative analysis that was followed by in-depth qualitative analysis of front-page newspaper stories that featured female offenders. The articles we examined were collected from four different U.S. newspapers from the 2006 calendar year—the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times.*

Literature Review

Crime Story Selection and Violent Crime

Journalists make conscious decisions about which stories to report and which to ignore based on their "newsworthiness." Crime stories most likely to be considered newsworthy are those that "emphasize the unusual and ignore the routine" (Chermak & Chapman, 2007, p. 352; see also Antunes & Hurley, 1977; Buckler & Travis, 2005; Chesney-Lind, 1999; Garofalo, 1981b; Lundman, 2003; Lundman et al., 2004; Naylor, 2001; Windhauser, Seiter, & Winfree, 1990). For this reason, it is not surprising for one to find that violent crimes receive a disproportionate amount of media attention (Windhauser et al., 1990, p. 77; see also Antunes & Hurley, 1977; Chermak, 1998; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Humphries, 1981; Sacco, 1995; Welch et al., 1997, 1998). Antunes and Hurley (1977), for example, found that "murder and rape are reported far out of proportion to their frequency of occurrence, while burglary, larceny and…auto theft are substantially underreported" (p. 758). Furthermore, most media accounts of violent crime focus on homicide (Chermak, 1994; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Entman, 1992; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam, Iyengar, Simon, & Wright, 1996; Johnstone et al., 1994; Lundman, 2003; Lundman et al., 2004) because of the serious and atypical nature of these events. In short, the crime stories presented by the media represent uncommon occurrences, which lead readers to develop distorted views of the extent and type of crime that exists in society. Furthermore, distorted representations alter public perceptions of likely offenders and/or victims. Consequently, "the media contribute to one of the most common forms of propaganda, the creation of criminal stereotypes" (Welch et al., 1998, p. 233).

Racial/Ethnic and Gender Stereotypes

In their most basic form, stereotypes are cognitive techniques that operate like "mental filing cabinets that allow the individual to group like objects together in the mind" (Entman, 1997, p. 29). In this way, stereotypes provide useful mental shortcuts that

allow one to make sense of information with relatively little cognitive effort (Entman, 1997; Fairchild & Cozens, 1981; Gladwell, 2005; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Willemsen & van Schie, 1989). When individuals compartmentalize others, they focus on obvious characteristics, such as a person's race/ethnicity or biological sex (Healey, 1997). In short, individuals often rely on gender and racial/ethnic stereotypes when attempting to categorize others. Although racial and ethnic stereotypes are not inherently negative, perceived group differences are "broadened and precipitated when stereotypes are attached to them—especially stereotypes containing the assumption that people who look different will behave differently" (Rattner, 1996, p. 135; see also Kurokawa, 1971; Willemsen & van Schie, 1989). When individuals are repeatedly exposed to information that fits into negative categories, they may develop prejudices toward members of other racial/ethnic groups (Entman, 1997).

Researchers have found that there is a tendency for Americans to automatically attribute positive images to whites and negative images to individuals from other racial/ethnic groups (Brennan, 2002, 2006; Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009; Dates & Pease, 1997; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Peffley, Shields, & Williams, 1996). With regard to perceptions of offenders, "[the] presumed link between criminality and Black men has a long established presence in American culture" (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002, p. 400; see also Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Dates & Pease, 1997; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Grabe, 1999; Hawkins, 1995; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Pollak & Kurbin, 2007; Surette, 1992). Therefore, minority women may also be inclined to be perceived as criminal.

Gender-role expectations influence perceptions of "appropriate" behavior for women (Armstrong, 1999; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Chesney-Lind, 1999; Grabe et al., 2006; Naylor, 2001; Willemsen & van Schie, 1989). Several scholars have argued that the sex-role stereotypes for white women, however, differ dramatically from those held for minority women (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Brennan, 2006, 2009; Huckerby, 2003; Landrine, 1985; Reid & Comas-Diaz, 1990; Young, 1986). Landrine (1985), for example, found that white women were more likely to be stereotyped as "competent, dependent, emotional, intelligent, passive…and warm" (p. 72), whereas black women were more likely to be stereotyped as "dirty, hostile, and superstitious" (pp. 71–72). Furthermore, black women, like their male counterparts, are also commonly depicted as aggressive or dangerous (Brennan, 2002, 2006; Farr, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Young, 1986). And, other scholars have found a strong tendency for minority females, in general, to be stereotyped as "hyper sexed" (Farr, 2000, p. 55; see also Madriz, 1997; Young, 1986) and as "welfare queens" (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997, p. 393). In short, "[w]hite women fit more closely the gendered, racist, classist conception of 'femininity' [put forth by Klein (1973)]" (Madriz, 1997, p. 343).

These findings are noteworthy because an important assumption of traditional femininity is that women are not expected to commit crime (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Willemsen & van Schie, 1989). Willemsen and van Schie (1989) found that "stereotypes about criminal behavior were very pronounced and predominantly masculine" (p. 635). They also noted that these "stereotypes influence[d]

the interpretation of behavior" (Willemsen & van Schie, 1989, p. 625). Therefore, when females commit crime, they have not only broken the law, but have also "transgressed the norms and expectations associated with appropriate feminine behaviour [sic]" (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002, p. 50). Because minority women are viewed more negatively than white women and are more likely to be stereotyped as "masculine," one would expect that they would be more likely to be associated with criminal behavior than white women. Such an association likely has ramifications for how minority women are depicted in the news, and we discuss this possibility in greater detail below.

Minorities Are Overrepresented as Offenders in the News

Individuals come to "perceive things the way the media portray them" (Surette, 1992, p. 76). But, as noted earlier, news reports of crime do not accurately reflect reality. Many have found that minorities are overrepresented as offenders in news reports of crime (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Dates & Pease, 1997; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Grabe, 1999; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Pollak & Kurbin, 2007; Surette, 1992). In one study, African-Americans appeared in television news stories as perpetrators of crime one and a half times more often than they appeared as victims (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002). Minorities are also more likely to be depicted as *violent* offenders ("How do Americans view one another," 1990; Barak, 1994; Barlow, 1998; Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Gilliam et al., 1996; Humphries, 1981; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Sarat, 1993; Smith, 1990).

While these findings are informative, it is important for us to point out that most researchers have not considered how an offender's sex and race may interact to create more or less favorable media coverage. This is likely because many scholars have based their examinations on either all-male samples or on samples that are heavily male-offender dominated. One conclusion that seems to underlie such studies is that the typical offender in crime stories is a young, minority male (Barak, 1994; Barlow, 1998; Chermak, 1994; Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Graber, 1980; Humphries, 1981; Madriz, 1997; Surette, 1992). Messages such as this eventually lead individuals to conclude that most offenders are African-American or Hispanic males (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 2012).

Crime Story Salience, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity

Although certain types of offenses and offenders are more likely to appear in the news, not all crimes stories are covered similarly. Salience, or the amount of physical attention given to certain news items, is another important journalistic consideration (Buckler & Travis, 2005; Chermak, 1994, 1998; Chermak & Chapman,

2007; Gilliam et al., 1996; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Grabe, Lang, & Zhao, 2003; Lundman, 2003; Lundman et al., 2004). Newspaper stories are more salient when they: (1) have more physical space devoted to them (Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Ditton & Duffy, 1983; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998), (2) have larger headlines (Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Grabe et al., 2006; Windhauser et al., 1990), (3) appear on the front pages of newspapers (Buckler & Travis, 2005; Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Grabe et al., 2006; Lundman, 2003; Mawby & Brown, 1984), (4) appear as the lead story (Budd, 1964; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994; Grabe et al., 2003; Lundman, 2003; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Pollak & Kurbin, 2007), (5) receive repeated days of news coverage (Chyi & McCombs, 2004; Lundman et al., 2004), and/or (6) are accompanied by a photograph (Budd, 1964; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Grabe et al., 2006; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Thorson, 1995). Therefore, journalists convey messages about a story's relative importance by making some stories more visible.

Stories about violent crime are displayed more prominently than stories about nonviolent crime (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Chermak, 1998; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Naylor, 2001). For example, Mawby and Brown (1984) found that stories were very prominently displayed (i.e., had high levels of salience) when they focused on murder, robbery, or when victims suffered injury. On the other hand, stories about other violent and nonviolent offenses received less attention. With regard to female offenders, in particular, Grabe and her colleagues (2006) found that stories about violent women were more likely to: (1) appear on the front page or in the main section of the newspaper, (2) be featured as a lead story, (3) have larger headlines, (4) receive more days of coverage, and (5) be accompanied by a photograph of the offender. In other words, stories about female offenders who commit a violent crime get considerable attention.

In terms of race/ethnicity, few have examined how newspaper stories about minority offenders are presented. Some researchers have found that stories about minority offenders are more attention-grabbing than stories about white offenders (Entman, 1992; Lundman, 2003; Lundman et al., 2004). For instance, Lundman (2003) noted that "[b]lack violator homicides [received] significantly more coverage and more front page articles," (p. 373) than homicide stories involving white offenders (see also Lundman et al., 2004).

The Tone of Crime Stories for Female Offenders

In addition to deciding which stories to report and how to package them, journalists must also determine a story's overall tone. As Chyi and McCombs (2004) note, "When covering a news event, journalists decide which elements to include or exclude in a story. Therefore, a single news event can be framed in various ways,

producing different versions containing different attributes" (p. 24). A story's overall tone shapes a reader's impression based on "what was portrayed, reported, suggested, or implied in the context" of the crime story (Grabe, 1999, p. 38; see also Pollak & Kurbin, 2007, p. 66).

Some researchers have examined certain contextual elements of crime stories (e.g., the presence of a mug shot), and some have also considered whether these contextual features differed among white and black offenders. For example, Chiricos and Eschholz (2002) found that when suspect mug shots accompanied news stories, African-American offenders were disproportionately represented (42% of all images) relative to other racial/ethnic groups. "In fact, blacks were almost twice as likely to be shown in this negative light as whites" (p. 411).

Entman's (1990, 1994) research was a bit more complex. Specifically, Entman (1990, 1994) made qualitative and quantitative assessments of the overall tones of crime stories. He collected data from local (Entman, 1990) and national (Entman, 1994) television news programs and examined the words spoken by the news anchors and others in the stories to determine whether the offender was portrayed positively or negatively. He analyzed the narrative content of a crime story along with other important story aspects (e.g., presence of a mug shot, presence of the offender in police custody, type of offense, number of victims). Therefore, he was able to determine whether or not the messages presented about minority offenders were favorable or unfavorable. He found that both local and network television news programs used words and images to portray minorities more negatively than whites and, as a result, implicitly reinforced "modern racism."[2] Based on these, and other similar findings, researchers have concluded that minority offenders are portrayed more negatively than whites.

While the findings from the above studies are instructive, they tell us little about whether stories about minority females differ from stories about white females. To date, only five studies have been published regarding how media portrayals of offenders differ for minority women versus white women (i.e., Bond-Maupin, 1998;

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[2]In contrast to "traditional" racism, in which individuals overtly express the belief that racial/ethnic minorities are inferior and should be separated from the dominant social group, "modern racism" refers to the implicit ways in which minorities are discriminated against in society (for a further discussion, see Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994). Entman describes the three related, but distinct components of modern racism:

First…is anti-[minority] affect—a general emotional hostility toward [members of racial/ethnic minority groups]. […] The second element … is resistance to the political demands of [minorities]. […] The third component … is a belief that racism is dead and that racial discrimination no longer inhibits [minority] achievement. (Entman, 1990, pp. 332–333; see also Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Davis, 1991; Kennedy, 1997).

Entman (1990) posits that his findings may be a result of "the commercial pressures the [news] stations face and an unintentional class bias that appears to suffuse the manufacturing query of news" (p. 333).

Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009; Farr, 1997, 2000; Huckerby, 2003).[3] The main conclusion that seems to underlie all of these studies is that white women are more likely than minority women to have their behavior excused in some way. But, this conclusion may not be generalizable to female offenders as a whole because of the atypical female offenders analyzed in most of the studies. To elaborate, Huckerby's (2003) research amounted to a comparison of two highly publicized cases of maternal filicide (i.e., for Khoua Her and Andrea Yates). In two of the other studies, Farr (1997, 2000) examined women on death row. Bond-Maupin (1998) studied television portrayals of female offenders involved in an array of largely violent offenses, but she failed to explicitly examine whether an offender's race/ethnicity influenced how she was depicted.[4] Brennan and Vandenberg (2009) examined newspaper reports of varying types of crime for white and minority female offenders, but their analyses were limited to 54 stories. Furthermore, they did not consider how a story's overall tone may have been affected by the type of crime a female offender committed or by the amount of attention (i.e., salience) her story was given.

In this study, we extend previous research by examining whether (and to what extent) a female offender's race/ethnicity conditions the tone of a crime story written about her. Based on the findings from previous studies, we believe that crime stories about minority female offenders will be more negative in their overall tones than the stories written about white female offenders. We believe that this will hold true even after we consider the effects of story salience and the type of offense committed.

Methodology

Article Selection

We scanned through reels of microfilm for stories about female offenders that appeared on the front pages of the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times* during the 2006 calendar year.[5] We used this method because it allowed us to see exactly how a story was displayed and whether

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[3]Also noteworthy is the work conducted by Madriz (1997). She focused primarily on how race/ethnicity impacted perceptions of "ideal" (p. 343) offenders and victims. More specifically, she examined how women's fear of crime was affected by the common perception of offenders as young, minority males and the common perception of victims as white, middle class females. She did not, however, examine depictions of female offenders. In another study, Chesney-Lind (1999) examined how female offenders, in general, were demonized by the media. But, she did not look at differential racial/ethnic portrayals.

[4]Bond-Maupin (1998) only briefly discussed differences in the media's portrayal of white versus minority women. Instead, her discussion was centered on the seemingly racially- and ethnically neutral themes of sexuality, conventional gender norms, and male control.

[5]These four newspapers were selected because they provide a geographically representative sample of news reporting in the USA, and they were among the top 10 most circulated newspapers in 2006 (BurrellesLuce, 2006). In addition, these papers are based in cities that are racially and ethnically diverse. It was important to select papers from such cities to ensure that there was a sufficient number of stories about female offenders of varying races/ethnicities.

it contained photographs. The use of microfilm provided us access to these images, which would not have been available had we searched for articles via Lexis–Nexis or similar databases. We focused specifically on front-page stories because previous scholars have determined that newspaper editors place stories on the front page when they deem them important and/or when they desire to attract the greatest number of readers (Buckler & Travis, 2005; Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Lundman, 2003; Mawby & Brown, 1984). In addition, even if individuals do not subscribe to a newspaper service, they will be likely to see front-page articles, at least in passing, during their daily routines. In other words, those passing by or skimming the front page are likely to be exposed to its content on some level. A total of 159 crime stories about female offenders were found in the four newspapers from across the country; 124 of these included indications of the offender's race/ethnicity.

Method of Analysis, Dependent, and Independent Variables

Overall Story Tone

Table 4.1 provides the distribution for the dependent variable of interest (i.e., OST) and the independent variables we considered (i.e., offender race/ethnicity, the story's level of salience, and offense type). We relied on thematic content analyses to capture the major themes present in stories we read (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). In doing so, we paid careful attention to whether the offender's behavior was neutralized in any way. Sykes and Matza's (1957) Techniques of Neutralization guided our assessment.[6] Our assessment produced an OST variable that measured the impressions readers likely had of the female offenders after they considered "what was portrayed, reported, suggested, or implied in the context" of the stories about women who violated the law (Grabe, 1999, p. 38; see also Pollak & Kurbin, 2007, p. 66).

Sykes and Matza (1957) identified five different excuses that juvenile offenders used to justify their delinquent behavior (i.e., denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeals to a higher loyalty). We found that journalists used similar excuses when writing about certain offenders. At the same time, however, we also encountered at least two additional techniques of neutralization that appeared in the news stories we read: "reformation through disengagement" (for further discussion, see Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009) and "character praise." The presence of such neutralizers served to make a story's overall tone less negative.

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[6]To be clear, we do not intend to test the perspective put forth by Sykes and Matza (1957). Rather, we have simply borrowed their terminology and concepts to examine potential ways journalists may create favorable or unfavorable impressions of female offenders.

Table 4.1 Variable descriptives ($N = 159$)

Variable	n	%
Overall story tone (OST)		
Negative	80	50.3
Neutral	55	34.6
Positive	24	15.1
Race/ethnicity[a]		
White	56	45.2
Combined Minority Group[b]	68	54.8
Black	25	20.2
Latina	36	29.0
Other[c]	4	3.2
Multiple minority women in story[d]	3	2.4
Story salience level		
Low (0–3 points)	56	35.2
Medium (4–6 points)	41	25.8
High (7–13 points)	62	39.0
Offense type		
Non-violent[e]	79	49.7
Violent[f]	80	50.3

[a]The total number of stories in this category is not equal to 159 because there were 35 stories where the race/ethnicity of the female offender could not be determined

[b]Because of the low number of women within each individual racial/ethnic group, our analysis compared presentations of white women relative to minority women of any background. The "Combined Minority Group" includes black, Latina, European Muslim, and Native American women

[c]The "other" category includes European Muslim and Native American women

[d]Three stories included multiple female offenders of different racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. The race/ethnicity of the women in these stories, therefore, was coded as "multiple"

[e]The crimes categorized as nonviolent offenses included the following: illegal immigration ($n=11$), drug offenses ($n=10$), legal ethical violations—such as coaching witnesses, bringing contraband weapons into correctional institutions, perjury, obstruction of justice, and treason—($n=5$), CIA information leak ($n=2$), white collar crime—such as corporate fraud, corporate spying, embezzlement, forgery, improper use of city funds, insider trading, IRS fraud, medical malpractice/negligence, pretexting, receiving financial kickbacks, and theft by a public servant—($n=37$), illegal eavesdropping ($n=2$), illegal doping by an athlete ($n=4$), escape/absconding/failure to appear ($n=1$), theft/receiving stolen property ($n=2$), traffic violations ($n=1$), status offenses/violations of a city ordinance ($n=2$), and abuse of a corpse ($n=1$). And, one "general story" about female offenders was classified as a nonviolent offense story

[f]Violent offenses consisted of the following crimes: murder ($n=63$), child abuse ($n=7$), kidnapping ($n=2$), sex offense ($n=1$), terrorism ($n=3$), assault ($n=3$), and robbery ($n=1$)

We also considered whether a story had qualities or characteristics that made it more negative. In other words, our content analyses also considered whether any "exacerbators" were present. Exacerbators may be interpreted as the opposite of neutralizers (for further discussion, see Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009). These included mentions of guilt, real injury to a real victim, praise for the condemners, self-interested motivation, no hope of reformation, and character assassination.

By considering the emphasis that a particular story gave to elements that either neutralized or exacerbated the offender's crime, we were able to assess each story's overall tone.[7] Some stories depicted the offender in a more positive light; the offender's negative behavior was excused and/or her positive characteristics were emphasized. Approximately 15% ($n=24$) of the stories had an overall favorable tone. A greater percentage of stories (35%) had an overall neutral tone (i.e., the stories were more balanced in terms of the extent to which various neutralizers and exacerbators were used). Finally, relative to stories with neutral or positive tones, 50.3% ($n=80$) of the stories conveyed an overall negative tone because of their overwhelming focus on one or more exacerbators.

Race/Ethnicity

It is interesting to note that many newspaper articles never made direct mention of the offender's race/ethnicity in their narratives. Nonetheless, we were able to determine the offender's race/ethnicity by using a combination of other information presented in the article. The information we used included, but was not limited to: a photograph of the female offender, the offender's surname, and indirect statements made about her race/ethnicity (e.g., mention of the fact that she spoke only Spanish). Short of a direct mention about the offender's race/ethnicity, we believe that these other pieces of information enabled us to correctly determine an offender's race/ethnicity.[8] Table 4.1 indicates that 56 stories (45.2%) were about white women and 68 stories (54.8%) were about minority women.

Overall Story Salience Level

Table 4.1 also shows the distribution for the variable that measured the story's overall salience level. This variable was constructed based on factors that previous researchers have determined to be important in attracting a reader's attention. Because certain features are more likely to attract reader attention, however, the various components of our scale did not carry equal weight. In order of their relative

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[7]Inter-rater reliability for the variable that measured overall story tone (OST) was approximately 94% among three coders. In cases of discrepancy, coders discussed their rationales until at least two coders were in agreement.

[8]Because an assessment of an offender's race/ethnicity is subjective when it is not explicitly stated, three individuals worked together to code this variable. We each read and scored all newspaper stories independently on two separate occasions. There was approximately 99% agreement for each rater across time, and an inter-rater reliability of 97% agreement across raters. In cases where at least two of the coders could not agree on the race/ethnicity of the female offender, race/ethnicity was coded as missing. In no case was an offender's race/ethnicity coded solely on the basis of her surname.

importance, the characteristics used to construct this variable included: presence above the center fold on the front page, presence and size of any front-page photographs, article alignment on the left side or in the center of the page, size of the headline font, headline width (measured by the number of columns it spanned), and the length of the article on the front page (measured by the number of paragraphs). A more detailed discussion of the measurement of this variable is presented in Appendix A.

We then calculated the overall salience score for each story. Some stories were found to garner little attention while others were highly prominent on the front page. Table 4.1 indicates that 35% of the stories had low salience scores, 26% had medium levels of salience, and 39% were highly salient.

Offense Type

Because we also believed that it was important to consider how offense type may have affected the overall narrative presentations of crime in the media, we paid careful attention to the type of offense that was reported in a given story. The types of crimes reported on the front page ran the gamut in this study. In order to organize the different types of offenses that were reported, we created a dichotomous variable that grouped stories about violent offenses into one category and stories about nonviolent offenses into another. The number of stories gathered for both groups was nearly equal; 49.7% of stories featured nonviolent offenders, while 50.3% of stories were about violent female offenders.

Quantitative Findings

The primary purpose of this paper was to determine the extent to which media portrayals of white female offenders differed from portrayals of minority female offenders. And in-depth qualitative analysis was the primary method of analysis in this study. To guide our qualitative analyses, however, we first estimated an exploratory multivariate model where we simultaneously considered the effects of the three independent variables deemed important—the offender's race/ethnicity, the alleged offense type, and a story's salience level. Thus, we estimated a multivariate binary logistic regression equation. Table 4.2 presents the results gleaned from our estimated exploratory equation.[9]

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[9]Our relatively small sample size, along with the wide ranging nature of the offenses we encountered, precluded estimation of a model with more variables. Moreover, the purpose of this paper was to determine whether a female offender's race/ethnicity mattered even after the type of offense committed and the prominence of a given story were considered. While these three variables have been discussed at some length in the extant literature, researchers have not yet examined whether the effect of race/ethnicity diminishes if these other potentially important variables are considered.

Table 4.2 Multivariate logistic regression of the story's overall tone[1] ($n = 124$)

Predictor	B	S.E.	e^{β} (odds ratio)
White	−1.777**	0.497	0.169
Violent offense	1.471*	0.506	4.355
Salience			
Medium	0.363	0.518	1.438
High	0.542	0.500	1.720
Constant	−0.285	0.447	0.752
Likelihood ratio			
Model χ^2 statistic	17.435*		
Nagelkerke R^2	0.175		

[1] In order to estimate a multivariate binary logistic regression equation, we recoded the 3-category overall story tone variable into a 2-category variable. Specifically, for the dichotomous variable, a value of "0" represented stories that had either positive or neutral tones, while a value of "1" represented stories with negative tones

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.001$

As reflected in Table 4.2, a female offender's race/ethnicity was the strongest predictor of a story's overall tone ($p < 0.001$). Specifically, relative to a story written about a minority female, the odds that a story written about a white female would be negative were 83.1% lower. This was true irrespective of the type of crime that was committed or the amount of attention a story received on the front page.

Though not as influential as race/ethnicity, a female offender's crime type was also a statistically significant ($p = 0.004$) predictor of a story's overall tone. The odds that a story would portray the offender negatively were 4.36 times higher for stories that focused on violent women relative to stories that focused on nonviolent women. While this variable was a statistically significant predictor of a story's overall tone, its predictive power was not as strong as that of race/ethnicity. In other words, offense type was important, but an offender's race/ethnicity was a stronger determinant of a story's overall tone. With regard to the third variable, upon holding constant the other variables in the equation, a story's overall tone was not affected by whether it received a lot of attention, a moderate amount of attention, or very little attention on the front page.

Qualitative Findings

The results of the exploratory multivariate analysis presented above suggested that the offender's race/ethnicity affected the story's overall tone, even after the effects of offense type and the amount of attention given to the story on the front page were taken into consideration. Thus, regardless of the type of crime committed and the degree to which the story was attention-grabbing, stories about white female offenders were more likely to have neutral or favorable tones than stories about minority female offenders. While these results are informative, they are somewhat difficult to

digest in strictly quantitative terms. Therefore, in the sections that follow, we use excerpts from some of the various crime stories analyzed in order to explain how story tone differed depending on the race/ethnicity of the female offender.

Effect of Race/Ethnicity in Stories About Nonviolent Female Offenders

The majority of the nonviolent crime stories in our sample ($n=46$, or 58.2%) discussed women who had actually or allegedly committed a white collar offense. Some of the stories about white collar crime were highly salient on the front page ($n=17$, or 37.0%), while others received moderate ($n=14$, or 30.4%) or low levels of attention ($n=15$, or 32.6%) (table not shown). Irrespective of the amount of front-page attention devoted to a particular story about a white collar female offender, however, the race/ethnicity effect was the same—stories about minority women who engaged in such offenses were more likely to be negative than stories about white women. The stories written about Sherron Watkins, a white woman, and Priscilla Slade, a black woman, illustrate this point. To be clear, both of these women were alleged to have committed white collar crimes and, for both of these women, their stories were highly prominent on the front page.

The *Houston Chronicle* painted a favorable image of Sherron Watkins, the former vice-president of Enron, accused of insider trading. The headline of her story was "Whistle-Blower tells Jury of 'Blatant' Lies," and the front-page photograph that accompanied the article showed her smiling and nicely dressed in a blue business suit, with a silk scarf tied casually around her neck (Flood, 2006, p. A1). From these features, readers cannot determine that Watkins, herself, sold "around $47,000 worth of stock [based on] insider information the public did not know" (Flood, 2006, p. A16). Moreover, the overall tone of the story was positive because the reporter denied Watkins' criminal responsibility, emphasized her devotion to the company (i.e., appeal to higher loyalty), and praised her character.

To elaborate, the article revealed that Watkins was never charged by prosecutors with insider trading or with any other crime (Flood, 2006). Furthermore, the majority of the article discussed her loyalty to the Enron corporation and her investigation into the company's "irregularities." Indeed, readers were told that her skillful investigative work uncovered criminal discrepancies within the company's finances. When she brought these issues to the attention of those in charge, they dismissed her concerns and took additional steps to hide their wrongdoings. But, Watkins was unwilling to drop the matter and continued to conduct vigorous investigations; she was eventually given the nickname "Buzzsaw" by other Enron employees (Flood, 2006, p. A16). Furthermore, she was recognized for her whistle blowing and efforts to reform Enron by being named "one of Time magazine's People of the Year in 2002" (Flood, 2006, p. A16). This placed Watkins among an elite group of individuals, which served to reinforce the notion of her exceptional moral character.

While the story about Sherron Watkins included several neutralizers that served to deliver an overall positive message, an article written about Priscilla Slade, a black corporate offender and the former President of Texas Southern University, took on a much different tone. In contrast to the story about Watkins, the headline of an article about Priscilla Slade boldly stated "Slade, 3 Others Indicted" (Tresaugue & O'Hare, 2006, p. A1). The front-page story also contained a photograph of a seemingly smug Slade, who, readers were told, misspent nearly 2 million dollars during her University tenure. Readers were further informed that she used University funds to pay a "$138,159 landscaping bill, which included a security gate and tree removal" at her personal residence, a "17,675-square-foot…custom-built Mediterranean style house in a neighborhood full of million-dollar homes" (Tresaugue & O'Hare, 2006, p. A1, A16). Slade claimed that Texas Southern University mistakenly paid the bill without her knowledge, but that she reimbursed the University after the apparent misunderstanding came to light. As the article progressed, however, readers learned that it was unlikely that Slade "innocently" misspent University funds.

Aside from her most recent use of University dollars on landscaping and home furnishings, there were other instances in which Slade inappropriately spent school funds. During the initial phases of the investigations against her, TSU conducted internal audits and "found that Slade had spent nearly $650,000 over seven years on personal purchases not allowed under her contract" (Tresaugue & O'Hare, 2006, p. A11). Furthermore, the reporters discussed the measures Slade took to conceal her spending. An investigation conducted by the District Attorney's office found that she spent money in ways "intended to circumvent Texas law." Accounts of Slade's sneaky behavior sent the message that she was aware that her actions were wrong, and that she went to great lengths to hide what she was doing.

To summarize, the story about Slade had an overall negative tone because it emphasized her criminal responsibility, her low likelihood of reformation, and her greedy nature. In contrast, the story about Watkins highlighted her lack of responsibility, her company loyalty, and her reputable character. Both of these stories received the same amount of front-page attention, and both women were alleged to have committed white collar offenses. What differed in these stories, however, was the race/ethnicity of the offender, and this difference affected each story's overall tone.

These racial/ethnic differences were not limited to stories about white-collar criminals. Rather, such portrayals were also consistent across stories about women who committed other types of nonviolent crimes. For example, one moderately prominent story in the *Chicago Tribune* focused on Janice Sidwell, a white 39-year-old recovering methamphetamine addict. This article had an overall neutral tone because the reporter gave equal weight to exacerbators and neutralizers. The reporter described how Sidwell was able to avoid spending time in prison by participating in "a meth court, devoted to alternative responses to methamphetamine crimes" (Casillas, 2006, p. 1). Sidwell and the father of her children, Rick Cantwell, were "caught twice for selling and using meth." Such a statement provided evidence of her criminal culpability and suggested that previous rehabilitative efforts had failed.

Furthermore, the reporter indicated that Sidwell lost custody of her two children, Damien and Angel, and that the court was still their legal guardian, which may have led readers to assume that Sidwell was a bad mother (i.e., character assassination).

These exacerbators, however, were tempered by the neutralizers that also appeared in the story. In fact, much of the narrative described Sidwell's desire to turn her life around in order to provide a better life for her family (i.e., appeal to a higher loyalty). Sidwell viewed the loss of her children as a "wake-up call" that led her to participate in parenting classes. This point was echoed by the chief probation officer of Pike County who stated, "Come hell or high water, she wanted her children back" (Casillas, 2006, p. 16). Readers also learned that even though the court still retained legal custody of Damien and Angel, the children were allowed to move back in with Sidwell and Cantwell, who "plan to marry after they graduate from drug court in the fall" (Casillas, 2006, p. 16). In the meantime, they "are trying to catch up on the moments with their children that they missed because of meth" (Casillas, 2006, p. 16). Sidwell was quoted as saying, "Drug court saved our family" (Casillas, 2006, p. 16). She then turned to her children and said, "Mommy's never going to leave you again" (Casillas, 2006, p. 16). In short, during the course of her participation in the drug court, Sidwell stopped using drugs, was reunited with her children, and resolved to create a better life. Such narrative elements prevented readers from forming a fully negative opinion of her.

In contrast, a *New York Times* article about Debra Harris, an African-American female who had recently been arrested because she provided a dirty urine sample during a final visit with her parole officer, took on a much different tone. Readers quickly learned that Harris had a lengthy prior criminal record. In fact, before her most current parole violation, "she had been imprisoned three times over the years" (Eckholm, 2006, p. A12). Reporters were also told that she was well known to the law enforcement officers in her community. Thus, from the start, Harris was portrayed as a woman who willfully used drugs without regard for the consequences and was depicted as a woman who was unlikely to be rehabilitated.

What was also interesting about this story was that after readers were briefly acquainted with Harris, the story then turned to discussions of African-American males and Latinos in her community who also had been arrested and imprisoned for drug offenses. These drug offenders, like Harris, were no strangers to the criminal justice system and had cycled in and out of it repeatedly. The juxtaposition of Harris with deviant males left readers believing that all minority drug offenders, regardless of their sex, were beyond the hope of rehabilitation. Indeed, the article concluded with a quote from Harris, herself, who stated, "In some ways, I feel like I'm back in the same old spot. [House arrest] keeps my life structured for now. It's crazy out there" (Eckholm, 2006, p. A12). The implication was that without oversight from the criminal justice system, she would be unable to resist criminal temptation and would inevitably reoffend.

In short, the stories about minority drug offenders were more negative than the stories about their white counterparts. The underlying message was that minority women, such as Harris, willfully use drugs and are unlikely to stop. In contrast, white women, such as Sidwell, may be able to stop using drugs and become good

wives and mothers. Again, because both of these stories received the same amount of front-page attention and were about female drug offenders, they serve to highlight the important role that a woman's race/ethnicity plays in influencing a story's overall tone.

Effect of Race/Ethnicity in Violent Crime Stories

Media portrayals of violent offenders also differed for white and minority women. Over 75% of the violent crime stories in our sample were about actual or alleged murderers. In most cases, these stories focused on women who killed their children or their intimate male partners. We now turn to some of these stories.

One of the most prominent stories about filicide in our sample came from the *Houston Chronicle*. This story reported that Andrea Yates, a white woman from Texas, had drowned her five children in the family bathtub, but was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Although this story contained three exacerbators (i.e., attribution of responsibility, real injury, and real victim), the tone was overwhelmingly positive due to the disproportionate amount of attention given to the neutralizers in the story (i.e., denial of responsibility, character praise, appeals to higher loyalty, and condemnation of the condemners).

In particular, the reporters provided excuses for Yates's actions. Upon reading the article, readers learned that she did not act out of malice or cruelty; rather, she killed her children because she was mentally ill. Journalists reinforced this notion by stating that Yates "appeared stunned and slightly confused, staring wide-eyed with her lips parted" (O'Hare & Lezon, 2006, p. A1) when the jury reported that they had found her not guilty by reason of insanity.

Overwhelmingly, her actions were mitigated through descriptions of her severe mental illness. Yates "was diagnosed with severe depression with psychotic features and schizophrenia" and "[t]he drownings occurred just months after Yates' father died, which devastated her and caused her already shaky mental health to rapidly decline" (O'Hare & Lezon, 2006, p. A13). In addition, the reporters noted that before Yates killed her children, she "already had suffered a series of psychiatric hospitalizations and survived two suicide attempts" (O'Hare & Lezon, 2006, p. A13). Her criminal responsibility was minimized, therefore, by the fact that her actions were influenced by forces outside of her control (i.e., mental illness).

The article also contained information to suggest that, aside from her mental illness, Yates was an extraordinary woman. She was described as "a deeply religious woman who had never before been in trouble with the law" (O'Hare & Lezon, 2006, p. A13). The reporters also pointed out that she "was valedictorian of Milby High School's class of 1982" (O'Hare & Lezon, 2006, p. A13). Therefore, readers were left to assume that had Yates's mental illness been addressed, she would not have killed her children.

While there is no doubt that Yates's actions were neutralized, not all women who kill their children are afforded such treatment. A story in the *New York Times* about Nixzalis Santiago, a Latina, illustrates the dramatic difference that race/ethnicity

has on story tone for women who kill their children. Unlike Yates, Santiago was not portrayed as mentally ill. Rather, she was depicted as a woman who willfully assisted her husband in torturing and killing their daughter, Nixzmary. This story was overwhelmingly negative; it contained four exacerbators (i.e., attribution of responsibility, real injury, real victim, and no hope of reformation) and no neutralizers.

Throughout the story, Santiago's crime was described in graphic detail. In fact, the first sentence of the article indicated that "the bruised body of a 7-year-old girl was discovered in a blood-stained Brooklyn apartment" (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. A1). The reporters then related how Nixzmary "was sometimes bound to a chair in her room and forced to eat cat food" and "was often held in isolation, [so] she was sometimes made to use a litter box" (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. B5). Moreover, the child "had been 'systematically tortured' for several weeks" before her death (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. A1). For example, right before her death, Nixzmary "had been tied up…, she was denied food and her head was submerged under water…. The final, fatal beating apparently came after she took yogurt from the refrigerator" (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. A1). At the time of her death, she "was not quite four feet tall and weighed 38 pounds" (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. A1). The implication here was that a helpless, malnourished girl was killed for trying to survive. Real injury happened to a real victim in this case. The accompanying photograph of the victim served to solidify this point.

In addition to the fact that "[t]here was barely a spot on this child that was not marked by her *parents*…," prosecutors stated that in the mere moments before her death, the girl "had been lying on the floor, naked and unconscious, *as Ms. Santiago stood by*" (Feuer & Lueck, 2006, p. B5; emphases added). These statements, combined with the horrific images presented above, implicated Santiago as a deliberate contributor to the death of an innocent child in a very brutal way. Readers were likely to perceive her as fully culpable for her role in the death of her daughter.

The stories about Andrea Yates and Nixzalis Santiago illustrate the importance of an offender's race/ethnicity in the determination of a story's overall tone. Both of these stories were displayed prominently on the front page and both were about women who committed the most egregious violation of gender-role stereotypes (i.e., they killed their children), but the narratives written about them were vastly different. While Yates had her actions neutralized, Santiago was demonized and the story about her was very negative. Therefore, the race/ethnicity of the offender affected each OST.

Some of the other homicide stories were about women who killed their intimate male partners. Even in these stories, the female offender's race/ethnicity was an important determinant of the story's overall tone. To elaborate, one story featured in the *Los Angeles Times* discussed Mary Winkler. The headline for this story, "What Drove the Preacher's Wife," immediately indicated to readers that this woman's actions were in desperate need of investigation (King, 2006, p. A1). This story was coded as having an overall neutral tone because the reporter gave equal weight to several neutralizing and exacerbating elements.

Readers learned that Winkler, a white female, shot her husband in the middle of the night with one of his shotguns. The story provided information about her crime,

and it was clear from the narrative that Winkler killed her husband (i.e., she was responsible for causing real injury to a real victim). In fact, the third paragraph of the story provided a graphic description of the event:

> Fired at close range, the single round from the 12-gauge "turkey gun" pumped 77 pellets into [Matthew] Winkler, fracturing his spine and perforating his ribs, left lung, diaphragm, stomach, spleen, pancreas and adrenal glands. The force of the blast flipped him off the bed. He landed on his back in a tangle of bed sheets (King, 2006, p. A1).

However, other portions of the article made it difficult for readers to believe that Mary Winkler could have done something so terrible. She was described by many "as a model minister's wife," and, one church member who knew the Winkler's stated, "if you had asked me to name the most ideal couples in the congregation, Matthew and Mary would have been one of them, right up there at the top" (King, 2006, p. A1). Furthermore, members of the church recalled how she would bring Matthew lunch in the church office and take walks with him in the city park. Others commented that "[s]he seemed a bit reserved, maybe, almost shy, but as more than one church member put it the place of a preacher's wife is 'in the background'" (King, 2006, p. A1). Such a narrative served to support the notion that Mary Winkler had an upstanding character and was the epitome of a preacher's wife. Thus, it was hard for readers to reconcile this image with that of someone who could have committed such a brutal crime.

But, readers soon learned about the preacher's controlling and hot-headed nature. Mary Winkler stated that she was subjected to "constant carping from her husband, criticisms about 'the way I walked, what I ate, everything'" (King, 2006, p. A1). The reporter also noted how "when Mary Winkler shopped, she sometimes first would pick out what she wanted and then leave to go find her husband so that he could give final approval" (King, 2006, p. A28). Moreover, there was documentation in the article about Matthew Winkler's "occasional flashes of temper" and "his 'man of the house' notions about marriage" (King, 2006, p. A29). In fact, friends reported that "Matthew Winkler must have done something terrible to provoke his wife" (King, 2006, p. A28). The implication was that Matthew deserved the harm that came to him (i.e., he is not a "real" victim).

In contrast to the story about Winkler, a story from the *Los Angeles Times* about Regina Rachid, a Brazilian woman, had an undeniably negative tone. From the story, readers learned about how Rachid exploited and murdered Raymond Merrill, a white man from the USA, after she developed an intimate relationship with him. While the story about Mary Winkler contained an equal balance of neutralizing and exacerbating elements, the story about Regina Rachid contained seven exacerbators and no neutralizers.

The story began with descriptions of how Rachid and Merrill met through an online dating web site. Merrill was described as a man "approaching his 56th birthday [and] aching for companionship" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A1). Rachid was described as "a 40s divorcee with a seductive smile and some rough friends" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A1). Consistent with the stereotype of Latinas as oversexed women, much of this article described Rachid's overt sexuality. The reporter explained how Rachid sent many photographs of herself to Merrill who, in turn,

used "a gauzy photo of [the] buxom [woman] in a low-cut dress…as a computer screensaver" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). Rachid also sent Merrill other "steamy glamour photos—including one of her topless, her arms embracing her breasts, the top button on her jeans opened" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). These descriptions painted a portrait of Rachid that matched the image of the classic "femme fatale" (i.e., character assassination), which was further solidified by a photograph that accompanied the article.

After conjuring this image of Rachid, the reporter then proceeded to describe Rachid's predatory nature in great detail. Merrill wanted to find "the right mate" on the internet (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). Unfortunately, when he turned there, "[d]eep in cyberspace, Regina Rachid was waiting" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). Rachid exploited Merrill's feelings of love in order to systematically gain access to his credit cards and bank accounts. At one point, Merrill wrote to Rachid, "With each breath that I take, I love you more and more" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). Rachid, however, responded with, "[l]ove doesn't pay my bills, doesn't pay the supermarket…. Love like this doesn't give me peace!" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A10). Therefore, while Merrill had developed real feelings for Rachid, the only thing she cared about was manipulating his emotions in order to extract money from him (i.e., self-interested motivation).

Merrill, therefore, was portrayed as a naïve man who was too blinded by his feelings of love to see Rachid's cold, callous nature. "He was besotted, even as her financial demands intensified and fraudulent charges mounted on his credit cards. Merrill made plans to sell his house, move to Brazil and marry Rachid" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A1). In a tragic turn of events, however, police noted that "Less than two weeks after arriving on his wedding trip to Brazil,…he was dead" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A1).

The reporter then provided vivid detail about Rachid's role in the victim's death. In her home, authorities found packages of the date-rape drug Rohypnol and another sedative, Rivotril, both purchased with forged prescriptions. Authorities believed Merril passed his final days sedated while Rachid and an accomplice coerced him into providing passwords for the accounts that held his life savings (McDonnell, 2006, p. A11). After Merrill provided this information, Rachid's "apparent boyfriend" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A11) and another male accomplice strangled Merrill to death with a copper wire. His body was then "doused with diesel and set ablaze" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A11), and the "charred corpse lay unidentified in a pauper's grave for months" (McDonnell, 2006, p. A1). Based on these descriptions, there was little doubt that Rachid was responsible for the physical and psychological suffering she inflicted on Merrill.

To add further insult to injury, Rachid continued to use Merrill's credit cards and attempted to drain his bank accounts after his death. However, her actions eventually caught the attention of the authorities, and Rachid became the subject of collaborative investigations led by the San Bruno Police Department, the FBI, the U.S. Consulate in Sao Paolo, and UBS bank officials (praise for the condemners). To summarize, the tone of the story for Rachid was unquestioningly negative and focused on her willingness to kill, her predatory nature, the likelihood that she would have continued to violate the law had she not been apprehended by the criminal

justice system, and the nature and extent of the injuries she inflicted on her victim. In contrast, the story about Winkler, a white woman, contained several neutralizers that allowed readers to conclude that she should not be feared because some deeper issue was at play.

Discussion and Conclusion

Few scholars have examined the impact that a female offender's race/ethnicity has on the tone of a crime story written about her. To date, only five studies have examined how media portrayals may differ for minority women relative to white women (Bond-Maupin, 1998; Brennan & Vandenberg, 2009; Farr, 1997, 2000; Huckerby, 2003). In all of these studies, the stories about minority women were more likely to carry negative tones than the stories about white women. While this conclusion was consistent across the five studies, in none of the investigations did the researchers consider how OST may have been influenced by the type of offense reported (i.e., violent crime versus nonviolent crime) or by the extent of front-page attention given to a particular story (i.e., the story's salience level).

In addition, almost all previous studies focused exclusively on violent women (Berrington & Honkatukia, 2002; Bond-Maupin, 1998; Farr, 1997, 2000). This was likely because their actions were newsworthy. Like other researchers (Antunes & Hurley, 1977; Chermak, 1998; Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Humphries, 1981; Sacco, 1995; Welch et al., 1997, 1998; Windhauser et al., 1990), we also found that violent crime was overrepresented for our sample of news stories. However, stories about women who committed nonviolent crimes still accounted for nearly half of all the stories in our sample (49.7%). Furthermore, nearly one-quarter of the nonviolent crime stories we collected (23.3%) focused exclusively on women who engaged in various white-collar offenses. Our study provided the first qualitative examination of stories for such offenders; the stories about white women were more favorable. We encourage other researchers to move beyond examinations that focus solely on violent females.

Overall, a female offender's race/ethnicity was the strongest predictor of story tone in our study, even after we considered story salience and crime type. Our finding supports the work of Gilliam and his colleagues (1996), who noted that "it is race and not violence that is the more important element of crime news coverage," (p. 19). Our finding is also consistent with the contention that beliefs about culpable offenders are rooted largely in negative racial and ethnic stereotypes (Barlow, 1998; Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Lundman, 2003; Lundman et al., 2004; Peffley et al., 1996; Welch, 2007).

Notions of who is likely to offend are coupled with ideas about who is likely to be rehabilitated and, therefore, who may deserve more (or less) favorable treatment by the criminal justice system. Consistent with this notion, Hurwitz and Peffley

(1997) argued that negative depictions of black drug users influenced public support for harsh punishment over rehabilitation.

Negative portrayals influence not only the opinions of the general public, but also the opinions of those who work within the criminal justice system. Legal decision making is "complex, repetitive, and often constrained by information, time, and resources in ways that may produce considerable ambiguity or uncertainty for arriving at a 'satisfactory decision'" (Demuth, 2003, p. 880). Criminal justice agents, therefore, use "perceptual shorthand" (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; see also Bridges & Sheen, 1998; Demuth, 2003) based on stereotypes to efficiently make decisions. The use of cognitive shortcuts, however, may lead judges to

> project behavioral expectations about such things as offenders' risk of recidivism or danger to the community. Once in place and continuously reinforced, such patterned thinking and acting are resistant to change and may result in the inclusion of racial and ethnic biases in criminal case processing (Demuth, 2003, pp. 880–881).

The results presented in this paper, then, are important because they may provide a starting point that future researchers may use to examine the racial/ethnic disparities that pervade our criminal justice system.

While the results of this study may be instructive, there are some limitations that must be noted. Though we analyzed a considerably greater number of stories ($N = 159$) than other researchers who have examined media accounts of female offenders, our sample size was still relatively small. This limited our ability to conduct a more in-depth investigation. Researchers who gather a greater number of stories, for example, may be able to examine whether differences emerge in stories *among* minority female criminals. To elaborate, these scholars may be able to determine how portrayals of African-American female offenders differ from the depictions of Latinas and/or Native American women. Similarly, due to our study's relatively small sample size, our analyses were limited to comparisons of narratives between two broadly defined crime categories (i.e., violent versus nonviolent crime). With more stories, future researchers may be able to conduct more in-depth examinations of how race/ethnicity impacts the presentation of stories about specific types of nonviolent and violent crime (e.g., stories about female drug offenders or terrorists).

Another advantage that would come from an increase in the size of the sample for this type of study is that researchers would be able to examine the effects of other potentially important covariates in a multivariate model. For example, a larger sample sizes may allow researchers to control for victim characteristics (e.g., victim age, victim-offender relationship) and other offender characteristics (e.g., offender age, socioeconomic status). Our qualitative assessment of the stories included in our study suggested that the age of the victim did not impact the portrayals of white versus minority women (i.e., based on our review of stories about women who kill their children and women who kill their intimate male partners), but we did not control for the effects of victim age in a multivariate model.

Aside from the limitations of this study, the results gleaned from our quantitative and qualitative analyses are important because they have direct implications for how people perceive criminal events and offenders. It has long been established that

minority offenders are overrepresented at every stage of criminal justice processing (for a detailed discussion, see Walker et al., 2012). What is less clear, however, is why this happens. A number of scholars have posited that this phenomenon is related to the negative racial/ethnic stereotypes that are prevalent in American society (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000). And, many have argued that the media play a major role in perpetuating stereotypes, including notions about who is likely to be guilty and, thus, who deserves harsh punishment (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Entman, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1997; Madriz, 1997). Because everyone is exposed to messages from the news media, it is unlikely that anyone will be immune from its influence.

Appendix A. Measurement of the Overall Story Salience Variable

Our measure of a story's salience considered attributes related to a story's physical placement on the front page as well as several other physical characteristics. It is important for one to consider a multitude of features that may work in tandem to enhance an article's salience. In order for us to construct our overall measure of story salience, we borrowed some methodological insights from previous researchers (i.e., Buckler & Travis, 2005; Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Grabe et al., 2006; Johnstone et al., 1994; Mawby & Brown, 1984) to create a 13-point scale that summarized the amount of visual attention given a particular front-page story. The more important indicators of story salience received more points (i.e., such indicators carried more weight).

Table 4.3 presents the distributions for the seven variables used to create our 13-point scale as well as the number of points assigned to each variable's attributes.

First, a story's placement above the center fold on the front page is one of the most important measures of physical prominence (Budd, 1964; Chermak, 1998; Grabe et al., 2006). This is because the top portion of the newspaper is what is displayed in newsstands or is likely to be visible when a newspaper is merely lying around (e.g., on a coffee table, at a convenience store check-out, or under the door of a hotel room). A story positioned above the fold, therefore, gets the most attention from readers or from those who merely have an opportunity to glance at it. Because placement above the fold is the most important determinant of story salience in our study, stories received four points if they were located above the

Table 4.3 Measures of story salience and point values (*N* = 159)

Story salience measures	Points	*n*	%
Placement			
Below the center fold	0	76	47.8
Above the center fold	4	83	52.2
Front-page photograph			
No photograph present	0	88	55.3
Small	1	34	21.4
Medium	2	15	9.4
Large	3	22	13.8
Alignment			
Right	0	50	31.4
Left or center	2	109	68.6
Headline size			
Small or medium	0	131	82.4
Large	2	28	17.6
Headline width			
Less than 3 columns	0	106	66.7
3 or more columns	1	53	33.3
Front length			
Less than 6 paragraphs	0	77	48.4
6 or more paragraphs	1	82	51.6

center fold (47.8% of stories) and zero points if they appeared below the center fold (52.2% of stories).

Stories with photographs also attract more attention than stories without photographs (Budd, 1964; Grabe et al., 2006; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Thorson, 1995), and readers are more likely to be drawn to stories that are accompanied by larger photographs than by smaller ones. Therefore, when a photograph was present, we coded its size; larger photographs received more points.[10] Specifically, Table 4.3 shows that stories with small photographs received one point (21.4%), stories with medium-sized photographs received two points (9.4%), and stories with large photographs received three points (13.8%). If a story did not have any photograph, it received zero points (55.3%).

The placement of a story on the front page was also taken into account. Stories that are aligned on either the left-hand side of the page or in the center are more likely to be the lead stories of the day (Budd, 1964; Mawby & Brown, 1984; Pollak & Kurbin, 2007). In addition, individuals in American society read from left to right, so these are the stories that readers are likely to notice more quickly. Therefore, two points were assigned if the article appeared on the left side of the paper or in the center of the page. A total of 109 stories (68.6%) received two points (40.3% originated on the left side

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[10]When an article contained multiple front-page images, the size of the largest photograph was coded.

of the page and 28.3% were located in the center of the page). The remaining 50 stories (31.4%) were aligned on the right side of the page and received no points.

We also considered the amount of space devoted to a story's headline because others have noted that this relates to a story's prominence (see, for example, Grabe et al., 2006). Therefore, we assessed and coded whether the headlines were small, medium, or large based on their size relative to other headlines that appeared in a given newspaper.[11] Small headlines accompanied 60 (37.7%) articles and medium headlines appeared with 71 (44.7%) stories. Points were not assigned to stories with small or medium headline sizes (82.4%) because they are not as prominent as stories with large headlines. The 28 stories with large headlines (17.6%), in contrast, received two points.

Table 4.3 further indicates that the second headline characteristic we considered was its width, defined as the number of columns it spanned. Because the majority of papers we reviewed had six columns on the front page, we considered stories to be prominent when their headlines spanned at least half of the front page (i.e., three or more columns). While headline width is an important factor to consider in the measurement of salience, it does not have as much influence as other features. This is partly because the font size of headlines may be relatively small even when the headline spans three or more columns. Therefore, consistent with other research, we assigned one point to stories with relatively wider headlines. Only one-third of headlines were three or more columns wide; these stories were assigned one point. Those with smaller headlines (66.7%) were assigned no points.

The final indicator of crime story salience reflected the number of paragraphs that appeared on the front page. In our study, the number of paragraphs on the front page ranged from one (21 stories, or 13.2%) to 24 (1 story, or 0.6%). The mean number of paragraphs was 5.51 per story, with a standard deviation value of 3.01. These statistics, along with the values reported for skewness (1.48) and kurtosis (7.97) indicated that this variable was not normally distributed. In order to address these issues, Table 4.3 indicates that we grouped stories with fewer than six paragraphs (48.4% of all stories) into one category and stories with more than six paragraphs (51.6%) into another. Because the longer stories were more noticeable, they received one point; shorter stories received no points.[12]

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[11]Grabe et al. (2006) measured headline size in millimeters. Because we used microfilm to collect our data instead of physical newspapers, we were unable to measure actual headline size. We were, however, able to assess the relative sizes of headlines that appeared within each newspaper. For assessments of headline size, inter-rater reliability among three coders was approximately 92%. In cases of discrepancy, coders discussed their rationales until at least two were in agreement.

[12]Longer stories received only one point because, while length is an important determinant of salience, we believed its importance was surpassed by other characteristics, such as article placement, headline size, and the presence of photographs. Thus, relative to our other indicators of story salience, a story's length was not weighted as heavily.

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Chapter 5
Female Sexual Aggression on College Campuses: Prevalence, Correlates, and Perceptions

Debra L. Oswald and Lucie Holmgreen

Sexual aggression (often referred to as "sexual coercion") refers to a broad range of behaviors designed to result in sexual interaction with an individual against her/his will. Thus, it encompasses verbally coercive tactics, such as threats to end a relationship, as well as physically coercive tactics (the use or threat of force, or "sexual violence," e.g., Krahé, Waizenhöfer, & Möller, 2003) such as those constituting rape. Additionally, sexual aggression encompasses the exploitation of another person's incapacitated state (i.e., through ingestion of drugs or alcohol; e.g., Banyard et al., 2007). In this chapter we review the growing literature on college-aged women who engage in sexually aggressive behaviors. This includes a review of the literature on the prevalence rates for various types of female-perpetrated sexually aggressive strategies. We then seek to gain further understanding of why women engage in sexually aggressive behaviors by considering the personality, attitudinal, and behavioral traits of women who are sexually aggressive. Furthermore, we seek to understand public perceptions of sexually aggressive women. Finally, we consider the implications of sexual aggression perpetrated by women.

Prevalence and Strategies of Female-Perpetrated Sexual Aggression

A number of studies investigating female sexual aggression in college samples, largely published over the past 15 years, have painted an increasingly clearer picture of the phenomenon. Self-reported lifetime prevalence rates of sexual aggression by

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female college students range from 1% (Forke, Myers, Catallozzi, & Schwarz, 2008) to 43% (Anderson, 1998). These estimates likely vary so widely because of their use of different definitions of sexual aggression. In addition to definitional variation, studies vary with respect to sample diversity, focus on incidence or prevalence, timeframe studied, whether or not the aggressive behavior occurred in a same-sex or opposite-sex relationship, whether only incidents occurring within the context of a romantic relationship are examined, and whether data are provided as to the different kinds of sexual coercion tactics and/or outcomes. Given these disparities, caution must be taken when assessing the prevalence rates of female sexual aggression. Despite the many differences in methodology, however, a number of summary conclusions based on previous findings are possible.

Women consistently report using verbally coercive strategies at much higher rates than physical coercion. For example, Russell and Oswald (2001) found that 23% of coercive college women reported obtaining intercourse from an unwilling partner by "saying things they did not mean" (p. 108) and 10.4% reported using continual arguments to gain intercourse, with only 2.6% reporting having "used physical force to obtain sex play" (p. 109). These rates seem to be similar to men's use of verbally coercive strategies. The same authors (2002) found that 25.3% of college men classified as coercive reported "saying things they didn't really mean," and 7.6% "reported using physical force to obtain sex play or sexual intercourse" (p. 278). In contrast, physical coercion is much less commonly used. For example, Hines (2008) found that, among an international college sample, only 1.5% of women (and 2.2% of men) reported using force to obtain sex, as opposed to the 21.2% of women (and 29.3% of men) reporting the use of any type of sexual aggression. Studying aggression within heterosexual dating relationships on campus, Katz, Carino, and Hilton (2002) found that "the modal form of sexual coercion across sexes was 'I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force)'" (p. 98).

A second consistent finding is that both sexes report fairly similar rates of exploiting (or, sometimes, causing) a target's incapacitation due to alcohol or drugs to obtain sexual acts. For example, Banyard et al. (2007) found that college women and men both reported using drugs or alcohol to obtain unwanted sexual contact at similar rates (8% and 6%, respectively). Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) found that college men did not differ significantly from college women with respect to experiencing unwanted sexual intercourse due to an aggressor's exploitation (or inducement) of their incapacitated state; however, when lesser unwanted sexual acts were included, men reported even higher rates than did women. Ten percent of male and female date rape victims in Struckman-Johnson's (1988) college sample reported being too intoxicated to consent. Similarly, Waldner-Haugrud and Magruder (1995) found no significant difference in the percentage of college men and women who experienced unwanted sexual activity due to intoxication (56.9% and 60.7%, respectively). Finally, Larimer, Lydum, Anderson, and Turner (1999) found that college women did not significantly differ from men in their self-reported rates of sexual victimization (6.11% and 3.66%, respectively) or of perpetration (0% and 2.44%, respectively) due to intoxication.

A third conclusion about female sexual aggression on campus is that women seldom report using force or threat of force to obtain sexual acts (nor do men report being threatened with force or threat of force at high rates). For example, in a sample of 171 college women, Shea (1998) found that only 2 women were classified as having been "sexually assaultive." In another sample of 261 college women, Shea (1998) found that only 1% of the women qualified as sexually assaultive. In Larimer and colleagues' (1999) study of college students within the Greek system (sororities and fraternities), no women (*N* = 131) reported using force to obtain intercourse. Only 2.6% of Russell and Oswald's (2001) sample of college women reported that they had ever "used physical force to obtain sex play (e.g., kissing, petting)" (p. 109). One percent of the college women sampled by Struckman-Johnson (1988) reported having used force to obtain sex on a date while in college. Hines and Saudino (2003) note that the college women in their study "did not use threats or force to make their partners have sex with them; they insisted on the acts instead. Males tended to use all forms of sexual coercion to make their partners have sex with them (insisting, threats, and force)" (p. 214).

Victimization rates seem to confirm that men also report relatively less experience with physical coercion than other types of sexually coercive strategies (presumably by a female partner, although perpetrator gender often is not assessed). In Banyard et al. (2007) study of college students, none of the 18 sexually victimized men reported that a perpetrator used force, while 9% of the women reported experiencing forced sexual contact. Three-and-a-half percent of college men in dating relationships in Waldner-Haugrud and Magruder's (1995) sample reported having been physically forced into any kind of sexual activity (with no forcible incidents resulting in intercourse).

Examination of perpetration and victimization rates reported by women and men allows for a final conclusion; specifically that women tend to report higher victimization, but lower perpetration rates than do men. This finding is likely due to the imbalance in the use of physically coercive strategies by each sex. That is, while women and men seem to use verbally coercive strategies as well as intoxication strategies at similar rates, men's greater use of physically coercive strategies against women mean that women's overall victimization rates are higher than men's victimization rates. This is consistent with Ellis (1998) biosocial theory of sexual assault, which posits that women perpetrate fewer acts of physical sexual assault than do men due to evolutionary pressures, physiological differences, and social learning.

For example, Forke et al. (2008) studied a relatively diverse (57.1% White) college sample of both sexes, asking about sexual violence during college [with victimization defined as "being pressured, coerced, or forced into having sexual contact" (p. 635)]. They found a self-reported prevalence rate of sexual violence perpetration of 1.0% for women (and a statistically significantly higher rate of 2.6% for men). Hines (2008) found much higher rates of self-reported perpetration in an international, multisite study of college students, with 21.2% of women reporting using any kind of sexual aggression in the past year within a relationship (compared to a significantly higher rate of 29.3% for men). Similarly, Hines and Saudino (2003) found that 13.5% of college women (compared to a significantly higher rate of 29%

of college men) reported lifetime prevalence of sexual aggression perpetration in a dating context. In contrast, Struckman-Johnson (1988) found comparable rates of sexual aggression perpetration on a date during college between women and men (1% and 3%, respectively), with men only reporting a higher rate when lifetime prevalence was assessed (10% versus 2% for women).

With regard to gender differences in self-reports of sexual victimization, a similar pattern emerges where women are more likely to report victimization (presumably at the hands of a male partner) than are men (presumably at the hands of a female partner). Forke and colleagues (2008) found that 7.2% of men (as compared to 15.6% of women) reported experiencing sexual violence during college. Similarly, Banyard et al. (2007) found that college men reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact short of intercourse during the current academic year at a rate of 8.2% (compared to 19.6% of women). Larimer and colleagues' (1999) study of college students belonging to a Greek society found that men reported lower past-year rates of experiencing the use of force in an attempt to gain intercourse than did women (0.61% and 4.6%, respectively). Additionally, men reported lower rates of being given drugs or alcohol in an attempt to gain intercourse than did women (9.15% and 16.79%, respectively). Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) reported that 23.5% of college men reported having experienced unwanted sexual activity due to physical coercion and 26.8% due to verbal coercion (with significantly higher rates of 31.3% and 34%, respectively, for women). Examining many different coercive tactics among college students, Waldner-Haugrud and Magruder (1995) found that men were less likely than women to report having experienced, verbally coercive (with the exception of blackmail) as well as physically coercive tactics (with the exception of the use of a weapon) in a dating relationship. Additionally, women were found to report more severe outcomes (e.g., intercourse) than those reported by men.

An exception to the above trend in findings on sex differences in self-reported victimization rates is a study by Hines and Saudino (2008) which found that college men and women reported similar rates of overall sexual victimization. Unlike the studies mentioned above, which did not specify the sort of relationship a victim and perpetrator must share (Banyard et al., 2007; Forke et al., 2008; Larimer et al., 1999; Muehlenhard & Cook, 1988; Waldner-Haugrud & Magruder, 1995), Hines and Saudino only asked about aggression which occurred within the context of a romantic relationship; this difference may explain why the authors found similar rates of victimization among men and women. While the above studies did not ascertain the sex of the perpetrator, Muehlenhard and Cook (1988), for example, conclude that the majority of perpetrators against the men in their sample were female as most of their sample reported being heterosexual and the majority of the male experiences were nonviolent. Caution should be used, however, when making inferences about sexual aggression from data on victims without confirmation of perpetrator sex, especially as some samples, for example, show higher rates of sexual victimization of men by other men than by women (e.g., Coxell, King, Mezey, & Gordon, 1999). In contrast, however, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1994) found that, of their sample of college men, less than one-third of the men reporting coercive experiences reported a male perpetrator, suggesting that most college men reporting sexual victimization experience aggression from a female perpetrator.

While a more thorough description of college women's sexual aggression remains wanting, some research has gone beyond description to begin to predict female sexual aggression. Interestingly, many of the characteristics found to predict sexual aggression in women have also been linked to sexual aggression in men. Correlates of aggression are important for many reasons, including the possibility that some of them may be both causal and amenable to prevention or treatment efforts.

Correlates of Female Sexual Aggression

In order to understand which women engage in sexually aggressive behaviors in their intimate relationships and why, researchers have examined a number of variables. While some researchers have investigated the association of sexual aggression and personality in women (e.g., Hines, 2008; Russell & Oswald, 2001; Shea, 1998), others have focused on various attitudes and beliefs about relationships (e.g., Anderson, 1998; Katz et al., 2002; Krahé et al., 2003). Finally, some research has investigated behavioral characteristics of women who engage in sexually aggressive behaviors (e.g., Hines & Saudino, 2003; Krahé et al., 2003).

A number of personality characteristics have been found to correlate with or predict sexual aggression in college women. For example, Shea (1998) found that coercive women obtained higher scores than did non-coercive women on a measure of self-monitoring, suggesting that sexually aggressive women may change their behavior in response to others at higher rates than do other women. At least one study has found the same correlation in sexually aggressive college men (Flezzani & Benshoff, 2003).

Russell and Oswald (2001) found that a ludic lovestyle (a way of being in relationships characterized by high levels of control and manipulation and low levels of attachment; Lee, 1973) as well as high self-rated levels of femininity predicted female sexual aggression in a female college sample. Additionally, a lovestyle characterized by a logical approach to partner selection (pragma) was negatively associated with sexual aggression in women. The authors note that a ludic lovestyle has also been linked to male sexual aggression (Kalichman et al., 1993; Sarwer, Kalichman, Johnson, Early, & Akram, 1993) and speculate that, consistent with sexual scripts, high levels of femininity may be linked with a self-perceived "seductive" approach to sexual relations which is in fact perceived by at least some recipients as sexually coercive.

In an international study of college students, Hines (2008) found that traits associated with a borderline personality [e.g., "instability of self and relationships, manipulation, self-harming behavior, fear of abandonment, anger, jealousy, impulsivity, and emotional volatility" (p. 299)] predict sexual aggression against intimate partners in female (as well as male) college students. Interestingly, this personality profile was also found to predict other forms of intimate partner violence (physical and psychological) in college students, suggesting that it may cause a general propensity to act out in aggressive ways within intimate relationships.

Finally, Hines and Saudino (2008) studied sexually aggressive college students and found that several "Big Five" personality factors predicted female but not male

sexual aggression within (predominantly heterosexual) romantic relationships. Specifically, perpetration of sexual aggression among women was predicted by high levels of extraversion and conscientiousness, while none of the five traits predicted sexual aggression in men. The authors reason that attendance at parties with alcohol as well as a greater history of consensual sexual experiences may mediate the relationship between high extraversion and sexual aggression. With regard to high conscientiousness, the authors speculate that "greater need for power and control" in such women may drive their higher levels of sexual aggression.

In addition to personality, a second set of variables linked to female sexual aggression are best described as attitudinal or perceptual in nature. Sexually coercive college-aged German women, for example, report greater perception of pressure from peers toward being sexually experienced (Krahé et al., 2003). The authors note that their findings parallel those of Kanin (1985) with regard to male rapists; this suggests that greater perceived benefits to sexual aggression may increase one's risk of perpetration.

Various attitudes about sex roles and relationships are associated with sexual aggression. Katz and colleagues (2002) found that college women who were sexually coercive in dating relationships were more likely than non-coercive women to perceive a pattern of making demands followed by a partner's withdrawal; the same was true of coercive men. Greater tolerance of sexual harassment has been linked by Russell and Oswald (2001) to female sexual aggression in a college sample; it has also been linked to male sexual aggression (Reilly, Lott, Caldwell, & DeLuca, 1992). Additionally, adversarial sexual beliefs (the perception of sexual relationships as mutually exploitative) are associated with sexual aggression in both college women (Anderson, 1998) and college men (e.g., Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991). In contrast with Russell and Oswald's findings relating to sexual harassment, which suggest that some of the attitudes which serve to perpetuate gender inequality may be associated with sexual aggression in both sexes, Shea (1998) found that sexually coercive college women were less accepting of traditional sex roles than were their non-coercive peers. Oddly, in another sample of college women reported by Shea, sexually coercive women were more likely than other women to endorse the belief that the "man should have the 'final say' in how far sexual contact should progress" (p. 99). More research is clearly needed to determine the role of traditional sexual scripts and gender roles in verbal sexual coercion by women.

While most studies have attempted to understand sexual aggression by focusing on personality and attitudinal variables, a growing body of research has identified history of the perpetrator and victim as being related to perpetration of aggression. Multiple studies have found relationships between sexual victimization and perpetration among both men and women. Child sexual abuse has been linked to later sexually coercive behavior in college women (Anderson, 1998) and in a female college-aged German sample (Krahé et al., 2003) as well as in college men (e.g., Senn, Desarais, Verberg, & Wood, 2000). Similarly, researchers have found correlations between being the victim of sexual coercion in adulthood and being sexually coercive in college women (Russell & Oswald, 2001; Shea, 1998) and in college men (e.g., Russell & Oswald, 2002).

Sexually aggressive college-aged women are more likely than other women to engage in risky sexual behaviors themselves; for example, they report higher numbers of consensual sexual partners (Krahé et al., 2003), tend to have sex with partners earlier in their relationships, and are more likely to drink alcohol on their first dates (Shea, 1998). Additionally, Shea (1998) found that sexually aggressive college women are more likely to use physical aggression in their relationships than non-coercive women. In contrast, Hines and Saudino (2003) found that physical and sexual aggression was only correlated in college men and not in college women. Finally, women's own use of ambiguous sexual communication strategies (such as "token resistance") is associated with their use of sexual coercion (Krahé et al., 2003; Shea, 1998). Researchers have pointed out that a false consensus bias may be at play, leading women to believe that their partners behave as they do and therefore do not necessarily mean "no" when they object (e.g., Krahé et al., 2003).

A great deal of more research is needed to explicate the correlates of sexual aggression in women. While it seems likely that at least some of the abovementioned factors have a causal relationship with sexual aggression, it remains possible that third variables are involved or the factors are caused by sexual aggression itself. What is clearer is that available evidence suggests that many of the same factors associated with sexual aggression in men are also linked to sexual aggression in women. Further understanding of the correlates of sexual aggression (in both sexes) will help researchers to identify factors which may be appropriate targets for intervention. To the extent that such factors are casual and amenable to change, this line of inquiry should ultimately aid in lowering rates of sexual aggression.

Perceptions of Women Who Are Sexually Aggressive

The research clearly indicates that both women and men engage in sexually coercive and aggressive behaviors in their dating relationships on college campuses. While it has been widely recognized that men's sexual violence perpetrated against women on college campuses is a problem, sexual violence perpetrated by women against men has received less attention (see Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Ross & Babcock, 2010). There is only now emerging awareness among researchers that women also engage in sexually aggressive behaviors. How is it that the issues of women's perpetration of sexual aggression have been ignored or minimized for so long? While certainly many factors are involved (see Straus, 2009), we argue that gender-based stereotypes and assumptions about aggression are one reason for the lack of attention given to female-perpetrated sexual aggression.

Typical gender stereotypes assume that men are aggressive while women are warm and nurturing (e.g., Spence, 1993). Furthermore, stereotypic representations of violence generally portray men as aggressors and women as victims. These stereotypes predispose perceivers to look for and recognize men's aggression while simultaneously ignoring female-perpetrated aggression. These gender-based stereotypes have influenced the ways in which people identify, interpret, and respond to

female sexual aggression. A growing body of research highlights the fact that perceivers have very different interpretations of men and women who engage in the same aggressive behavior.

The assumption that men are the perpetrators of aggression and women are the victims appears to hinder people's ability to identify women as perpetrators of aggressive behaviors, especially if that behavior is gender-relevant. For example, experimental research by Baron, Burgess, and Kao (1991) found that both men and women are less likely to identify a sexist comment as gender-based discrimination (targeted against women) if the perpetrator is a woman rather than a man. Thus, biases and assumptions regarding who engages in gender-based behaviors appear to minimize identification of behaviors perpetrated by an unexpected person (i.e., a woman).

Additionally, aggressive behaviors are interpreted differently depending on whether they are perpetrated by a man or woman. In experimental research where participants read a scenario about an aggressive event with manipulated perpetrator gender, victim gender, and type of aggressive act (e.g., yelling, punching), it has been demonstrated that male-perpetrated violence is rated more harshly than the same violence perpetrated by women (Harris, 1991; Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). Male-perpetrated aggression is perceived as more aggressive and more harmful than the same behavior perpetrated by a woman. This is especially true in the case of male-perpetrated violence against a female target (Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). Male-perpetrated violence against women is also more likely to be considered illegal and likely to result in the belief that there should be law enforcement interventions (such as arrest and restraining orders) than is female-perpetrated violence against men (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). Furthermore, retaliation by female victims of male violence is perceived as more acceptable than retaliation by male victims of female-perpetrated violence (Harris, 1991). Interestingly, both men and women tend to rate male-perpetrated aggression more negatively than female-perpetrated aggression (Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996). Thus, a body of research suggests that perceivers' interpretations of male-perpetrated aggression functions in a way that supports the stereotypes of man as aggressor and woman as victim.

These effects appear to be especially strong when the aggressive behavior is sex related. There are clear stereotypes and scripts about men's and women's roles and responsibilities in regard to initiating sexual relationships. Men are expected to be the initiators of sexual encounters while women are expected to be sexually passive or to be the "gatekeepers" and deny sexual advances from men (Krahé, 2000). These traditional sexual scripts not only place women in the role of being the recipient of sexual advances (rather than as the initiators) but also highlight the stereotype that women are less interested in sexual activities and play the role of rebuffing sexual advances. Furthermore, given the traditional sex role script that men are responsible for initiating sexual intercourse, their advances might be more likely to be labeled as aggressive. In contrast, women's sexually aggressive behaviors might be viewed less negatively given the commonly held belief that women are less able to physically harm men than vice-versa (e.g., Harris & Knight-Bohnhoff, 1996).

Female-perpetrated aggression might also be less likely to be identified as it varies dramatically from people's expectations, or scripts of a "real rape." Scripts of a "real rape" involve a strange male perpetrator, a dark secluded location, and physical force that results in noticeable physical harm (e.g., Anderson, 2007; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Krahé, 2000). Rapes that do not meet these criteria are often viewed as less serious, with less harm caused and lower levels of blame placed on the perpetrator. Unfortunately, this "real rape" script differs dramatically from the more common date rape and sexual coercion that occurs on college campuses and can hinder identification of sexual aggression perpetrated by men. This "real rape" script also differs dramatically from sexual aggression perpetrated by women. Indeed, female-perpetrated aggression fails to meet the "real rape" script simply by violating the assumption of a male aggressor. Likewise, the suggestion of men as victims of either female- or male-perpetrated rape is often met with resistance, disbelief, and homophobia (e.g., Anderson, 2007; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008). Thus, female-perpetrated sexual aggression does not fit the traditional sex scripts of women's roles in sexual encounters and for many people does not fit the script of a "real rape." Unfortunately these scripts can obscure identification and awareness of female-perpetrated sexual aggression and male victimization.

Research has examined perceivers' reactions to sexual aggression perpetrated by women compared to men. Studies that experimentally manipulate vignettes of sexually coercive interactions have found that perceivers' reactions to the event vary depending on factors such as perpetrator gender, victim gender, and type of sexually coercive behavior. The vast majority of this work has focused on heterosexual relationships (see Davies chapter in this volume for research that includes sexual aggression perpetrated by women). The type of sexually coercive behavior used, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator, has dramatic effects on perceptions of aggressiveness. Generally verbally coercive strategies (such as threats to end the relationship or verbal pressure) are perceived to be less aggressive than use of intoxication, which is perceived as less aggressive than physical force (Oswald & Russell, 2006; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1991).Verbally coercive strategies are rated as low in aggression because they are perceived as not very distressing to experience, and the victim (especially if male) is expected to have the responsibility and ability to control these coercive strategies (Katz, Moore, & Tkachuk, 2007). Overall, women, compared to men, generally tend to view all sexually aggressive tactics as more aggressive and problematic, report more empathy for rape victims, and place more blame on the perpetrator of sexual assaults (e.g., Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004; Grubb & Harrower, 2008; Osman, 2011; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1991).

Furthermore, even when men and women engage in the same aggressive tactics, men are perceived as being more aggressive than women (Oswald & Russell, 2006). While a male perpetrator is perceived as being aggressive, the same behavior from a female perpetrator is viewed as promiscuous. Interestingly, Oswald and Russell found that the female perpetrator is perceived as most aggressive when she uses a verbally coercive strategy, not when she uses physical force to obtain sex from an unwilling male partner. Verbal strategies often consist of psychological or emotional coercion.

This result then is consistent with the common assumption that women cannot inflict as much physical harm as can men and that instead female aggression is emotional or psychological in nature.

While female perpetrators are not viewed as acting aggressively (e.g., Oswald & Russell, 2006), male victims are simultaneously denied acknowledgment of their victimization. Female victims of male-perpetrated aggression are perceived as having been victimized (Oswald & Russell, 2006). In contrast, male victims of female-perpetrated aggression are perceived as being "romantically interested" in the perpetrator. Perceivers report more empathy for victims of rape perpetrated by a male than by a female (Osman, 2011). Furthermore, more empathy is reported for female victims of rape than for male victims of rape, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. Other research has found that male victims are more likely to be held responsible for their victimization than are female victims (Gerber et al., 2004). These findings clearly demonstrate that women's perpetration of aggression against male victims is minimized and that, simultaneously, male victimization is denied.

To date, much of the research on women's sexual aggression has tended to focus on heterosexual relationships. However, aggression also takes place in same-sex relationships. Research comparing disapproval ratings of perpetrators' sexual aggression on a date for both same- and opposite-sex relationships found that participants are equally disapproving of sexual aggression when it is male-perpetrated and directed against either a same- or opposite-sex partner and when women are aggressive toward a female partner (Hannon, Hall, Nash, Formati, & Hopson, 2000). However, participants' disapproval ratings are lower when a woman is sexually aggressive toward a male partner. Furthermore, male participants blame a male victim of female-perpetrated aggression more than if the perpetrator is a man (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006). These results further suggest that women's aggression, especially sexual aggression directed at a male victim, is minimized.

Implications of Ignoring or Minimizing the Issues of Female Sexual Aggression

The issue of failure to identify female-perpetrated sexual aggression can have a number of negative implications for victims. Given that female-perpetrated aggression is viewed as less aggressive, less serious, and less likely to cause harm than male-perpetrated aggression, it is likely that victims of female-perpetrated aggression are less likely to receive acknowledgement from the law enforcement community. Perceivers are more likely to view an aggressive act as illegal and believe that there should be law enforcement interventions such as arrest and restraining orders when it consists of male violence against a woman rather than female-perpetrated violence against a man (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). Research looking at whether or not female- and male-perpetrated aggression is viewed differently has found that

even when the behaviors are identical, women's aggression is less likely to be viewed as meeting the necessary legal elements for a rape conviction (Russell, Oswald, & Kraus, 2011). Perceivers rated male victims of sexually aggressive behavior as more likely to have consented to sexual intercourse than were female victims. Consent is an important legal element when jurors decide whether or not a rape occurred. Not surprisingly, then, Russell and colleagues (2011) found that female aggressors are perceived as less guilty of committing rape than are male aggressors, even when engaging in the same aggressive behavior. This suggests that perceptual biases about male and female aggression can also translate into more difficulty successfully prosecuting women when they engage in sexually aggressive behaviors perpetrated against a male intimate partner.

The harm of failing to see female aggression as such can also extend to health services offered and provided to the victims. Despite the perception that men are not traumatized or hurt by sexual aggression (e.g., Chapleau et al., 2008), research has found that men who have been the targets of women's sexually coercive advances experience a range of reactions to the incident (Byers & O'Sullivan, 1998; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1997). Men who experience intimate partner violence report a number of negative psychological consequences (see Randle & Graham, 2011). Experiencing intimate partner violence has been associated with psychological distress including posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and suicidal ideation in male samples. Thus, many men who are victimized by intimate partners do experience psychological distress. This is in stark contrast to the general public (mis)perception that men do not experience trauma or stress at the hands of an intimate partner, especially if that partner is a woman.

Failure to acknowledge a person as a victim, indeed even increasing blame directed toward victims, can result in secondary victimization and can interfere with the person seeking help or treatment (Macchietto, 1998; Muehlenhard, 1998) or possibly result in the person staying in an unhealthy relationship. Not identifying a person as coercive when he/she is using verbal threats, purposeful intoxication, or physical force to obtain sexual intercourse from an unwilling partner may prevent appropriate interventions and result in the person's continuing to engage in these aggressive behaviors. The fact that perceivers are less likely to label female aggressors and their behaviors as coercive, or the targets as victims, indicates the seriousness of the problem. This further highlights the need for proper education about the various forms of sexual coercion perpetrated by both men and women on college campuses.

Research examining aggression perpetrated by women, especially research done on college campuses, is slowly growing. However, there are limitations to this research which will hopefully be addressed in future studies. The reported prevalence rates across studies vary dramatically. These differences may be due to the difficulty in assessing prevalence rates on socially sensitive topics such as sexual aggression and victimization. Furthermore, prevalence rates are difficult to assess given that most of the participant samples are convenience samples rather than randomly selected samples. Different studies also use different definitions of

sexual coercion, making comparisons across studies difficult. Much of the work on female aggression to date has examined heterosexual aggression; less is known about same-sex aggression. Most of the research looking at female sexual aggression on college campuses is done with samples that are predominately White/Caucasian. Research that examines factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religious diversity is crucial for better understanding prevalence of women's aggression across populations. Furthermore, it is important to understand how these cultural and demographic factors might influence perceptions of female-perpetrated aggression. Social norms and perceptions about the appropriateness of aggression may vary by culture, and generalizations of research findings based on White college student samples should be made cautiously until replicated with more diverse samples.

Conclusions

Researchers are becoming increasingly aware that both men and women can be sexually aggressive. However, despite the prevalence of female-perpetrated aggression, these behaviors are often underestimated, and their seriousness is minimized. Furthermore, the trauma resulting from female aggression is minimized and at times even denied (Chapleau et al., 2008). This is unfortunate as it can prevent victims from receiving proper legal assistance and medical treatment. Ignoring female sexual aggression hinders the development of proper intervention programs (see Straus, 2008, 2009). Furthermore, it can hinder young adults as they attempt to develop healthy relationships. Young adulthood is an essential time for developing relationship interaction styles and patterns that endure into adulthood. Thus, identifying relationship aggression, understanding why this aggression occurs, and working to prevent relationship aggression, whether from a male or female, is essential for establishing healthy fulfilling relationships.

A discussion of female-perpetrated sexual aggression as a problem does not minimize the seriousness of the problem of rape and sexual aggression perpetrated by men against women on college campuses. Indeed, female victimization is a serious issue. Highlighting the fact that women can also be aggressive does not mitigate the need for programs directed toward aggressive men. However, there also needs to be increased awareness that sexual aggression, and intimate partner violence more generally, can also be perpetrated by women and that this aggression does cause harm to victims. Furthermore, much of the aggression in college-aged dating relationships is bidirectional (Straus, 2008), and men who report engaging in aggressive behaviors also report having been victimized by an intimate partner (Russell & Oswald, 2002). College-based sex education and rape intervention programs need to highlight the idea that aggressive and sexually coercive behavior, regardless of perpetrator sex, is inappropriate and unhealthy. Awareness that both men and women can be aggressive should result in the promotion of healthy relationships, benefiting everyone.

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Chapter 6
Effects of Victim Gender, Age, and Sexuality on Perceptions of Sexual Assaults Committed by Women

Michelle Davies

Traditional approaches to the study of sexual offending have been largely conceptualised from a feminist viewpoint. Feminist explanations for rape and other sexual assaults focus around societal hatred of women, the existence of a rape supportive patriarchal culture, which endorses the sexual offending of females by males (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980). Burt asserted that rape myths—prejudicial and false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists—are prevalent in Western society. Rape myth endorsement is empirically related to the blaming of female rape victims (Krahé, 1988), traditional negative views about women (Burt, 1980), and hostile male aggression (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). However, traditional explanatory perspectives do not consider sexually abusive situations where the victim is not female and/or the offender not male. Indeed, although a considerable effort has been made to develop and validate etiological models of male sexual offending, few equivalent efforts have been made to understand female sexual offending (Gannon, Rose, & Ward, 2008), meaning that female sexual offending has not been considered as much of a viable research area as that of male sexual offending or indeed taken seriously as a significant sexual crime. Female sexual offending, where acknowledged, has been seen as a rare event (Lambert & Hammond, 2009), and thus victims of such crimes have been omitted from the bulk of discourse on sexual offending, either in relation to its effects, or on third party perceptions about such situations (Davies, 2002).

In recent years, a flurry of research has considered the perceptions that people make about sexual assaults committed upon male victims (see Davies & Rogers, 2006; Davies, 2011, for detailed reviews), but the majority of this research has portrayed the perpetrator as male. To date, there is much less research that details perceptions of female perpetration on either male adults or children. The traditional belief is that a woman cannot force a man to have sex or that a man

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would be unwilling if a woman forced sex upon him (Sarrel & Masters, 1982). Female perpetration of sexual offences, especially against those who were potentially bigger and stronger than them, has been deemed impossible, not only as a general myth but by researchers also. Subsequently, research into perceptions of female perpetration has been neglected due to researchers deeming it unimportant, impossible, or its depiction unrealistic (Davies, 2002).

Nevertheless, women do sexually offend, with it being estimated that up to a fifth of all child sexual abusers being female (see e.g. Fergusson & Mullen, 1999), although conviction of female sexual offenders is minimal (see e.g. Beech, Parrett, Ward, & Fisher, 2009). Women commit sexual offences against adult men and women, and children, both in situations involving sole offending and as a co-offender. Interestingly, there is evidence that females who act as sole offenders are most likely to abuse males (Muskens, Bogaerts, van Casterens, & Labrijn, 2011), showing that female offenders can indeed abuse victims who are potentially bigger and stronger than them. Sexual offences committed by females elicit similar reactions in their victims as sexual offences committed by males. Post-abuse responses include short- and long-term emotional and behavioural issues, low self-esteem, anger, self-harm, substance abuse (see e.g. Hislop, 2001), sexual and relationship problems, and fear of members of the gender that abused them (Davies & Rogers, 2004) in both male and female survivors (Dube et al., 2005). Additionally, in some cases, further specific issues relating to female perpetration, such as feeling isolated and increased feelings of stigma occur (Bunting, 2005; Davies & Rogers, 2004).

What is known about women that do sexually offend is that they can be categorized into loose typologies (see Gannon et al., 2008, for a further discussion). According to Gannon et al., female sexual offenders include those that abuse adolescent males (what Matthews, Matthews, & Speltz, 1989, called the "teacher–lover" subtype), those who offend against pre-pubescent children, those who offend with a male co-offender, and those who offend in the midst of a wider, more generic criminal career. Although these are by no means exhaustive categories they give a rough guide to how female sexual offences have been viewed within the perceptions literature and also within the media. Matthews and colleagues' (1989) "teacher–lover" subtype is the one that seems to have received most attention in the media, not because it is considered particularly severe, but because it is one that is sensationalised and considered an educational or even a positive experience for the victim (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006; Davies & Rogers, 2004). Whilst film portrayals of the sexual abuse of females by males are done so sensitively, it is striking that films depicting sexual liaisons between women and adolescent boys often portray the event as positive or even humorous (Mendel, 1995).

The empirical investigation of the perceptions of the sexual victimisation of adult males by female perpetrators was subjected to a small amount of experimental work in the 1980s and 1990s. Smith, Pine, and Hawley (1988), for example, compared perceptions of male sexual victimisation when perpetrator gender was varied. They found that male victims of sexual assault by female perpetrators were

considered more likely to have encouraged the episode and to have derived sexual pleasure from it than was the case for men who were victims of male perpetrators. This difference was particularly pronounced for male respondents (47% said that the sexual assault of a man by a woman was pleasurable for the victim, compared with a figure of 9% for the female respondents). Smith et al. asserted that men's relatively positive views about sexual assaults carried out by female perpetrators was due to their endorsement of stereotypic views about male sexuality, such as men should always be ready for, and enjoy sex, with a willing woman.

Smith and colleagues' (1988) findings were furthered in a set of studies in the 1990s by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson. They investigated a number of factors that influenced judgements towards unwanted sexual attention in hypothetical situations. In their 1993 study, male and female respondents were asked to indicate how they thought they would feel if they became the victim of a sexual assault by a person who was either the same or the opposite sex as themselves. Women said that they would respond with a strong negative reaction to a man's uninvited genital touch, with a sense of physical violation and fear of physical harm. However, men considered that they would find the same genital touch by a female initiator to be only minimally negative. Both men and women felt that a genital touch from a same sex person would be very negative. In a follow-up to this study, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1994) asked college men to rate their reactions on a number of variables, including feelings of pleasure and violation, to an uninvited sexual advance from a female acquaintance. They found that men were more negative towards this situation if the female used a high level of force, or if she was portrayed as unattractive. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson explained these findings in terms of gender role socialisation that has encouraged men to be dominant and to initiate sexual behaviour while the same behaviour by women is discouraged, or is not expected. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson's explanation for this is that a man's sexual initiation is seen as more threatening, and thus more serious, than that of a woman. Male subjects were less tolerant than female subjects of this male refusal. Some were scathing: one said "Don't be a wuss," another said that he would love a woman to do that to him, although others labelled her as "forward" or "pushy." Moreover, even in situations involving minor sexual violations (such as non-consensual kissing), participants regarded it as more acceptable for a woman to violate a man's sexual consent than the other way round (Margolin, 1990).

Traditional gender stereotypes of male and female sexual behaviour also explain how perceptions of the "teacher–lover" subtype of child sexual abuse are that the situation is non-serious or even positive for the victim, even when the victim in these situations is below the legal age of consent. In actuality, this type of abuse is not a positive experience and the sexual abuse of an adolescent male by an older female is in every way as negative and damaging as that of other types of sexual abuse (Davies & Rogers, 2004). Yet, even professionals who work with children express attitudes and perceptions that endorse the view of "teacher–lover" abuse being non-serious or positive. For example, Eisenberg, Owens, and Dewey (1987), investigated attitudes towards child victims of incestuous abuse by an adult family

member amongst health professionals (health visitors, nurses, and medical students), and they found that 33% of the sample believed girls would be more seriously affected by incest than boys. Respondents also felt that abuse that did not involve sexual intercourse was less damaging to victims of either sex, and that abuse which involved female perpetrators, such as mother-on-son or sister-on-sister abuse, was less serious than abuse involving a male perpetrator. In another early study on this subject, Broussard and Wagner (1988) manipulated perpetrator gender, victim gender, and victim response (resisting, passive, or encouraging) in a student sample and found that a child aged 15 years who resisted during a sexual assault by an adult was considered less responsible than a child who behaved in a passive or encouraging manner. Interestingly, Broussard and Wagner found that whilst the perpetrator was considered more responsible than the victim in all conditions, less responsibility was attributed to the perpetrator when the child was encouraging, male, and assaulted by a female. Broussard and Wagner showed that child victims were attributed some responsibility where the abuse is seen as non-detrimental (in that the victim was judged as having no negative effects of the abuse), or even seen as a positive or "educational" experience for the victim (where no negative effects of the abuse were perceived). As with the adult studies, male respondents were more blaming than females. In 1993, Wagner, Aucoin, and Johnson replicated Broussard and Wagner's (1988) study. They sampled American psychologists and found them subject to the same attributional biases as students—namely that 15-year-old male victims of female perpetrators were more negatively evaluated than younger children, female victims, or those assaulted by males. Even those who work in occupations involved directly in child protection are not immune to negative attributional biases. Heatherton and Beardsall (1988) found UK child protection workers to consider female sexual perpetration less serious than that of male sexual perpetration, less criminal and the crime less likely to be punished by imprisonment and less worthy of social service involvement. They argued that the idealisation of women as nurturing and not capable of sexually abusing children in a criminal manner. Denov (2001) summarised this attitude as such that female sexual offending is reframed from the sphere of intentional criminality to one that is more in line with cultural views about women—that is, that her behaviour is deemed less criminally severe, and in terms of uncontrollable mental illness, or likely controlled by someone else (such as, a male co-perpetrator). These attitudes are also endorsed by female perpetrators themselves, who are likely to frame the motivation for their abusive behaviour as one of loss of control or mental illness (Beech et al., 2009). These attitudes can mean that victims of female-perpetrated sexual offences are not taken seriously and their perpetrator less likely to be punished (Davies, 2002).

More recent experimental studies have shown that the attributional biases that were in operation in the 1980s and early 1990s have not changed over time. Within US samples (Back & Lips, 1998; Maynard & Wiederman 1997; Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich, & Nysse-Carris 2002), UK samples (Davies & Rogers, 2004; Rogers & Davies, 2007), as well as, an Indian sample (Mellott, Wagner, & Broussard, 1997) all have shown that when the victim is a 15-year-old male and the perpetrator an adult female, the victim is considered more responsible than are younger children, or those assaulted by male perpetrators.

Although children below the age of puberty do not tend to be attributed responsibility for their assault, in one study by Rogers and Davies (2007) even a 10-year-old male victim was attributed negative evaluations when he was assaulted by a woman. Rogers and Davies also found that while men deemed a 10-year-old victim too young to be judged blameworthy, the victim was seen as having a causal role in their assault, despite being 6 years below the legal age of consent in the country the study was conducted (the UK). Although men had as much sympathy with the victim's plight as women did and felt that the police should take the assault very seriously, men still saw the assault as having only a moderately negative impact on the victim's life. Female perpetrators were considered less responsible, less blameworthy (particularly by men), and less guilty than male perpetrators. Thus, even though respondents were just as pro-victim towards victims of female versus male perpetrators, for example, by treating the assault as very severe and attributing victims little causal role in it, they still perceived female perpetrators less negatively than male perpetrators. This is worrying data if the same negative attributional biases are apparent towards real world cases.

In addition to age and gender effects, more recent work is beginning to investigate other variables that may influence perceptions of female sexual offending and the victims of such violence. A follow-up study to Smith et al. (1988) and Davies et al. (2006) showed that in adult cases, the victim's sexual orientation influences perceptions of male victims and female perpetrators of sexual offences. Davies et al. found that in sexual assaults by a female perpetrator, men blamed heterosexual male victims more than they blamed gay male victims. According to Davies et al., men will deride male victims in the belief that men who are attracted to women should always take, rather than resist, any opportunity of sex with a willing woman. Following this line of thought, being a gay male actually reduces negative attributions when the perpetrator is female, because his natural preference is not towards women. Davies et al. (2006) term this finding the *sexual preference effect*. The sexual preference effect appears to be a robust one and has since been replicated in a number of different sexual assault situations. Davies and Boden (in press), for example, replicated this finding in an adult sexual assault situation. Additionally, Davies, Austen, and Rogers (2011) showed the sexual preference effect also occurs with a sexual assault situation involving an adolescent victim, aged 15 years. Investigating the effects of sexual orientation on perceptions of adolescent victims is important as many individuals are aware of their sexuality before they legally reach the age of consent (Troiden, 1993). Davies et al. (2011) found that a sample of UK students blamed a 15-year-old male victim of sexual abuse more and considered the assault less severe, when he was portrayed as being either heterosexual and assaulted by a woman, or gay and assaulted by a man. The sexual preference effect is worthy of further research, utilising more generalisable samples; but still, these findings show how, in real world cases, secondary victimisation might occur towards victims dependant on the interaction of who they are and who is their perpetrator.

The above findings taken as a whole extend the traditional theoretical feminist analysis of rape and sexual assault to show that not only do negative views about gender roles contribute to negative judgements towards female victims of male perpetrators, but they also influence negative evaluations of male victims of female perpetrators. Findings from experimental studies are important on a practical level.

Treatment services need to be aware of the negative attributional biases that the victim might have been subjected to from people to whom they have disclosed, and should be prepared to counter these attributions throughout treatment. Given that even those working in child protection are not immune to negative attributional biases, this needs to be addressed in the training of staff who do work with sexual abuse survivors. It is imperative that treatment services do not assume the same biases as the public regarding female perpetration of sexual offences, yet research suggests that sometimes they do (e.g. Heatherton & Beardsall, 1988). Indeed, Denov (2004) reported that less than half of sexual abuse survivors reporting female-perpetrated sexual assaults experienced positive effects of treatments from those providing the service. The majority experiences from treatment services were negative. Negative experiences from those that victims disclose to, creates a situation of secondary victimisation (Williams, 1984), which compounds the situation. This is simply not adequate and training for individuals treating female perpetrators should encourage workers to consider their own biases that could affect their treatment of female perpetrators, such as the fact that they might consider offences by women to be less severe than those by men (Davies & Rogers, 2004). In addition, findings from experimental research such as this also guide the treatment of perpetrators, with criminal justice and legal services needing to further recognise female sexual perpetration (Denov, 2003). Finally, it is important for those working in treatment services not to be biased by the victim's (perceived) sexuality, even when the victim is below the legal age of consent when dealing with cases where a male victim is abused by a member of the gender that he would normally be attracted to. Those working with victims of sexual abuse need to be aware that the sexual preference effect can induce negative attributional biases towards some victims more than others. Victims of sexual offences, regardless of their gender, age, sexuality, or the gender of their perpetrator, need to be confident that they will receive positive treatment post-assault from those that they disclose to, and it is the duty of those working with such victims to ensure that this occurs for all, not just some.

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Chapter 7
Perceptions of Female Perpetrators

Katherine R. White and Donald G. Dutton

Female Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence: Perceptions and Reality

The gender paradigm is a sociopolitical perspective that views and explains intimate partner violence (IPV) as being committed predominantly by men against women victims (Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Based on notions from functionalist sociology and Marxism (MacKinnon, 1989), this paradigm views male violence as normative, used to reinforce the dominant patriarchal social arrangement and therefore as occurring more frequently. Female violence, in contrast, is viewed as suppressed through the threat of physical retaliation by a male partner. Hence, the gender paradigm focuses on male violence and views female violence merely as an expression of women's emancipation or as an act of self-defense (DeKeseredy, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dragiewicz & Lindgren, 2009). Violence occurring in an intimate relationship is construed as "wife assault" and leads to the focus of analysis "why men, in general, use physical force against their partners and what functions this serves for a given society in a specific historical context" (Bograd, 1988, p. 13). A single act of IPV by a man is described as "violence toward women," in short, a political construct with the instrumental goal of suppressing all women's rights. The act is not against one specific woman but an act against "women" and is based on the woman's status as a woman, not on her individual (i.e., psychological) characteristics. No corresponding term exists for a single act of IPV by a woman, further underscoring the view that IPV is generally viewed as aggression committed by men toward women.

Empirical studies of IPV incidence (Archer, 2000; Follingstad, Brennan, Hause, Polek, & Rutledge, 1991; Stets & Straus, 1989) have challenged the conventional

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Table 7.1 Incidence of intimate partner violence in surveys

		IPV reports[a] (%)	Male[b] (%)	Female[c] (%)	Bilateral (%)
Stets and Straus (1989)	Married	15	15.6	35.6	38.8
National FV Survey (N=5,242)	Cohabiting	35	12	33	45.2
Whitaker et al. (2007)		24	28.7	71.3	49.2
National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent (18–28) Health (N=11,370)					
Williams and Frieze (2005)		18.4	21.6	28.7	49
National Comorbidity Study (N=3,519)					
Caetano et al. (2008)		13	14.6	25.6	59.7
National Survey of Couples (N=1,136)					
Morse (1995)		32.4	16	30	47.4
National Youth Survey 1992 (N=1,340)					

[a]The percentage of IPV reports from the total population examined in the survey. Remaining rates are expressed as percentage of all violent couples in sample
[b]Males engaged in more severe acts of violence (e.g., male minor, female none; male severe, female none; male severe, female minor)
[c]Females engaged in more severe acts of violence (e.g., female minor, male none; female sever, male none; female severe, male minor)

view articulated by the gender paradigm. For example, Follingstad et al. (1991) found that a minority of women reported using IPV for self-defense, suggesting that IPV perpetrated by women may occur more often as an offensive act, rather than in response to male-directed IPV. Furthermore, a large meta-analysis revealed that women used IPV slightly more than men and were injured slightly more (Archer, 2000). Studies that asked about male fearfulness of IPV found men to report considerable fear when female IPV is severe or used instrumentally (Hines & Douglas, 2010; Laroche, 2005; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003). Five independent surveys found that the most common form of IPV was bilateral (39–60% of all IPV—see Table 7.1), matched for level of severity, followed by female violence against non-violent or less violent males (i.e., husband battering, 25–36%), followed by male violence towards non-violent or less violent females (i.e., wife battering, 14–22%; Caetano, Vaeth, & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2008; Morse, 1995; Stets & Straus, 1989; Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman, 2007; Williams & Frieze, 2005). According to women's reports on surveys, about 4% of men commit any act resembling potentially harmful violence in a given year (Stets & Straus, 1989; Whitaker et al., 2007). This incidence statistic is true for female perpetrators as well. Given the clear evidence that women engage in a considerable amount of IPV, it is surprising that IPV continues to be perceived as characterized by male aggression directed toward female victims. Indeed, the data suggest that gender, as a unit of analysis, provides little more analytical *gravitas* than a stereotype. Why then do we adhere to overly broad categories of analysis for IPV? The answer lies in the political centrality associated with IPV by the gender paradigm, a view that any and all male IPV is a political act. Political categories are "central beliefs" and hence, especially resilient to disconfirming data (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky,

1982; Taylor, 2009). We contend that a more accurate picture of IPV is to describe it as bilateral, driven by psychological issues and usually the outcome of a coercion trap in which neither partner wants to back down (Cordova, Jacobson, Gottman, Rushe, & Cox, 1993). Despite these data, the perception persists that female violence is "different" somehow—perhaps less serious. Below we examine the dimensions of this perception.

Female Perpetration of IPV

It is difficult to establish (and replicate) accurate rates of incidents, severity, and frequency of acts of IPV. Rates fluctuate depending on how questions are worded, whether one partner or both are surveyed, and if official reports are utilized (Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, & Fiebert, 2012a, 2012b). For example, measures of acts or behaviors used against a person generate higher estimates than measures requiring the respondent to define acts as "abuse" or "crimes" (Desmarais et al., 2012a, 2012b).

In a meta-analysis including 48 separate studies ($N = 64,487$) examining male and female use of IPV, Archer (2002) reported greater frequency of IPV perpetrated by women as measured by the Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979). Men and women tend to utilize violence with varying degrees of severity. Women were more likely to engage in less serious acts (e.g., "throw something at," "kick, bite, punch,") whereas men were more likely to engage in more serious acts (e.g., "beat up," "choke or strangle"). Although men and women may be more inclined to utilize different acts of violence, the overall pattern illustrates, when examining violence in general, women commit violent acts at least as frequently as men.

Through data collected from random-digit dialed phone interviews of 8,000 men and 8,000 women, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), found that women were more likely to self-report that they had been the victim of physical or sexual assault, or stalking by a partner, over their life time or the past 12 months. Although women reported more prevalent victimization, men also reported being assaulted by their female partners. Of the men who had been physically assaulted, 19.6% reported "fearing bodily injury or death" during the most recent assault.

In a review of 249 articles reporting prevalence and incidence surveys, Desmarais et al. (2012a) found that 18.8% of women and 19.8% of men reported IPV victimization in the past year. Corresponding past year rates of perpetration were reported by 28.7% of women and 22.3% of men (Desmarais et al., 2012b). This finding that women report higher rates of both victimization and perpetration is found consistently in the literature. That being said, both victimization and perpetration rates are more similar than one would expect from a gender analysis.

Perceptions of Female Perpetrators of IPV

Research has examined the contrasting ways in which individuals perceive and respond to IPV perpetrated by a female compared to a male. The data support the notion that intimate violence perpetrated by a female is perceived as less serious compared to the same actions committed by a man. For example, Harris and Cook (1994) used a set of vignettes designed to depict IPV perpetrated by a female toward a male partner, a male toward a female partner, and a male toward a male partner. Overall the 372 participants felt the female perpetrator's actions were less violent compared to the same actions perpetrated by a male against a female (the male to male violence did not differ significantly from the female to male results). They reported a general result comparing the gender of participants, finding that female participants rated the situation as more violent compared to male participants, and were more likely to indicate that they would have called the police. Women also held the batterer as more responsible for the situation and were more likely to indicate that the victim should leave the relationship. Participants also viewed a female perpetrator as less responsible compared to a male perpetrator and saw less need to intervene when the perpetrator was female (i.e., less likely to indicate that they would have called the police had they witnessed the altercation). Participants were less likely to indicate that the female aggressor should be convicted for her actions and were less likely to indicate that the male victim should leave the relationship. Taken together, these findings suggest female-perpetrated violence is viewed as less serious than the same acts committed by a male partner (Harris & Cook, 1994). More recently, Cormier and Woodworth (2008) examined the perceptions of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers utilizing vignettes similar to those reported by Harris and Cook (1994). The police officers (had they witnessed the event while off-duty) responded that they would have been most likely to call the police if they witnessed a situation of male-to-female violence.

Feather (1996) also examined the perceptions of an act of either male- or female-perpetrated physical domestic violence. Measures of violence perception for each vignette included how deserving the perpetrator was of their penalty, the level of perpetrator responsibility, the perceived seriousness of the offense, the perceived harshness of the penalty, level of positive affect regarding the penalty, as well as level of sympathy for the perpetrator. All variables in the vignettes were kept constant (e.g., the level of marital dissatisfaction, level of violence, degree of injury, legal intervention and ramifications for the perpetrator) except for two manipulated variables—the gender of the perpetrator and whether the violent act was spontaneous or the result of careful planning. Participants rated the actions of the wife to be less serious, felt the wife to be less responsible for the situation, and believed the wife to be less deserving of punishment. These findings suggest the perpetration of domestic violence by a female is viewed less negatively compared to the same acts by a male. In addition, participants felt the violence of the wife to be more serious, and the woman to be more deserving of the penalty received, when her aggression was in response to stress, rather than premeditated. Feather speculates that this, as

well as the less negative reactions in response to the wife's violence, may be due to participants feeling more favorably about a wife who they perceive as defending herself against her husband (as the vignettes describe a history of verbal abuse), compared to a husband resorting to violence in the identical act of "self-defense." When the results were analyzed by gender of participant, female participants rated the husband's use of violence as more serious than male participants. There was no statistically significant difference between the scores of male and female participants in the seriousness of the wife's offense. Female participants felt that the wife was less deserving of her punishment compared to male participants, and these results were also statistically significant.

Seelau and Seelau (2005) used vignettes of IPV to examine perceptions of violence in heterosexual and same-sex intimate relationships. Individuals were more likely to recommend that the couple "be left alone," as opposed to "have friends intervene" or "call police/hotline," when the perpetrator was a female (against either a male or female victim) as opposed to a male perpetrator against a female victim. When police interventions were considered, individuals were more likely to recommend greater leniency when the perpetrator was female. Individuals were more likely to recommend a female perpetrator receive a warning (67% female; 49% male), whereas individuals were less likely to recommend that police issue a citation or make an arrest when the perpetrator was female (16% female; 31% male). In contrast, when there was a female victim, women were most likely to indicate that the police or a hotline should be called. Overall, female participants were more likely to indicate that they would have taken "official" action in response to witnessing the situation, women were twice as likely as men to indicate that they would have called the police, whereas men were more likely to indicate that they would try to talk to the couple, or do nothing. Finally, greater leniency was reported toward female perpetrators; a finding that may reflect the perception that a female is less capable of inflicting serious injury compared to their male counterparts. Taken together, these results reflect the view that men are more powerful and are both more capable and more likely to inflict injury.

Taylor and Sorenson (2005) implemented a random-digit dialed survey of 3,679 adults in the Los Angeles area. Respondents were presented with vignettes in which characteristics of the victim, assailant, and incident were experimentally manipulated. The vignette variables (e.g., assailant's motive, type or intensity of abuse, whether alcohol was involved, presence of weapons, presence of children, frequency of abuse) and respondent characteristics were examined. Judgments about women's violence against male intimates were less harsh and took contextual factors more into account. The type of violence and the presence of a weapon played a central role in respondent judgments. Across vignettes, male violence was seen as more likely to be illegal. While some of the abuse types were physical, others were psychological, involving control or humiliation. In scenarios depicting a female assailant and male victim, participants were more likely to state that the couple should attempt to "talk" or what the authors describe as "couple-promoting strategies" and were less inclined to state that the victim should "leave" the relationship

Table 7.2 Attitudes of illegality by gender of victim and perpetrator

	Gender of victim	
Gender of perpetrator	Female	Male
Female	81.0	69.1
Male	82.0	79.0

Adapted from S.B. Sorenson & K.A. Thomas (2009). Views of intimate partner violence in same- and opposite-sex relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 71*, 337–352

with their abuser, what the authors describe as "victim-protective strategies." The authors conclude that this suggests that IPV perpetrated by a female is viewed as less serious and/or poses less threat to the safety of their partner.

More recently, Sorenson and Thomas (2009) examined the views of IPV perpetrated by males and females, against either same-sex or opposite-sex intimate partners. Regarding the statement that the aggression depicted in the vignette should be illegal, the lowest percentage of affirmative responses were attributed to situations in which a female was depicted as aggressing against a male partner (with 69.1% of participants indicating they believed these actions should be illegal). The remaining three subcategories of vignettes had relatively similar affirmative responses, with aggression by a male toward a female receiving the highest rating of illegality, followed by female toward female, and male toward male (Table 7.2).

Hamby and Jackson (2010) found that a sample of university students ranked violence perpetrated by a female partner as less severe than violence which was perpetrated by a male partner. Female perpetrators were also considered less responsible for the incident. Participants perceived the female perpetrators as instilling less "physical fear" in the male victim, as well as less "fear from personality/relationship." Physical fear was measured with items meant to determine whether the perpetrator caused fear due to their size and strength, whereas the personality/relationship fear included items to measure whether participants believed the perpetrator would commit similar acts again, had previously committed similar acts, or would be likely to commit more serious violence against their partner.[1]

Marshall (1992a, 1992b) discovered discrepancies in the perceived amount of physical and mental harm a female and male perpetrator could inflict on their opposite-sex partner. Female participants felt that a male partner would cause more physical and mental harm to his female partner with acts such as slapping or beating her up. It is possible, that physical size and strength disparities between the couple could account for this lack of consistency in perception of harm. However, a similar pattern emerged for acts in which physical strength was not relevant. For example, the act of using a knife or gun against a partner of the opposite gender was considered to cause more physical and emotional harm when it was committed by a male

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[1] The male and female results were analyzed separately.

against a female partner. Female students rated the act of being burnt with something as causing more physical and emotional harm to a woman (i.e., women in general, not the participant specifically), compared to men, who rated this act as less harmful to men in general. This pattern is even more pronounced when the acts examined are sexual in nature. Large disparities existed between the female and male ratings of sexual violence. Female students rated the act of forced sexual intercourse (against a female victim) as far more physically and emotionally harmful compared to men's ratings. This same pattern was expressed for non-student participants and across various sexually violent acts.

Rhatigan, Stewart, and Moore (2011) reported that both men and women ($N=728$) attributed less blame to female perpetrators of IPV. In vignettes where the victim had provoked the perpetrator, participants attributed less blame to the perpetrator (for both males and females). Overall, it was found that male perpetrators were believed to be more responsible and more to blame compared to female perpetrators (regardless of the gender of the participant).

A similar pattern of gender disparity is apparent not only for physical abuse, in which case the relative size and strength of the perpetrator and victim may affect the degree of injuries sustained, but also for psychological abuse. As Follingstad, DeHart, and Green (2004) examined, a sample of psychologists were found to rate identical acts of psychological abuse as more severe when the perpetrator was male. This pattern demonstrates just how prevalent and ingrained these gender paradigmatic beliefs are within our society, if professionals stooped in critically analyzing human behavior may be susceptible to such biases in perceptions of psychological abuse.

Evolving Attitudes Toward IPV Perpetration

In order to examine the cultural acceptability of IPV, Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore (1997) analyzed data from four separate studies, which took place across a 26-year period (1968 $N=1{,}176$, 1985 $N=6{,}002$, 1992 $N=1{,}970$, 1994 $N=524$). In each study, participants were asked whether they would approve of an individual slapping their opposite-sex spouse in the face. Overall 26.4% of men and 18.4% of women approve of a wife slapping her husband, and 16.1% of men and 11.6% of women approve of a husband slapping his wife. A similar discrepancy was found by Simon et al. (2001), in a nationally representative sample of 5,238 individuals. A greater percentage of men and women indicating that it would be acceptable for a woman to hit her husband or boyfriend if he was to hit her first, compared to the number who believed it would be acceptable for a man to hit his wife or girlfriend in a similar situation (see Table 7.3). Although far fewer individuals felt that it would be acceptable for anyone to hit their partner to "keep her/him in line," a greater number indicated it would be acceptable for a woman to utilize violence with this motive.

Table 7.3 Attitudes toward use of intimate partner violence

	Percentage agreeing with statement	
	Men	Women
Ok for a man to hit his wife/girlfriend		
If she hits him first	9.8	7.2
To keep her in line	2.0	1.4
Ok for a woman to hit her husband/boyfriend		
If he hits her first	33.8	26.7
To keep him in line	5.0	4.4

Adapted from T.R. Simon, M. Anderson, M.P. Thompson, A.E. Crosby, G. Shelley, & J.J. Sacks (2001). "Attitudinal acceptance of intimate partner violence among U.S. adults." *Violence and Victims, 16*(2), 115–126

The data indicate that both men and women are more approving of the use of female violence against a male partner, and that men are more approving of the use of violence within an intimate partnership in general. When the data from these studies are examined across time another pattern emerges. The approval of male-perpetrated violence had decreased between 1968 and 1994 (20% in 1968, 13% in 1985, 12% in 1992, and 10% in 1994), whereas the approval of female-perpetrated violence had remained approximately consistent at 22% over this period. Straus et al. (1997) suggest that this pattern may be due in part to the efforts to condemn male-perpetrated violence against their female partners during this time period (e.g., by woman's advocacy groups and service providers), and the lack of similar efforts in support of male victims.

Perceptions vs. Actual Motives for Female Perpetration

Motives for IPV correspond to a range of perceived levels of legitimacy, with self-defense seen as a more appropriate motive for utilizing violence against an intimate partner. Henning, Jones, and Holdford (2005) examined the justification of the use of violence against one's partner for 1,267 men and 159 women who had been convicted of IPV against an opposite-sex partner. Both women and men utilized minimization and denial of the events which lead to their conviction, and also attributed a greater degree of blame to their partner. Men and women displayed approximately equal amounts of socially desirable responding measured by the Crowne–Marlowe (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) and the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI-III: Miller & Lazowski, 1999). Women were more likely to report that they had acted completely in self-defense in the incident resulting in their arrest and conviction (65.4% women; 50% men). Slightly more women than men also stated that their partner had "started things and I just tried to stop him/her" (61% women; 57.1% men). Overall, the majority of individuals (regardless of gender) indicated that they had acted in self-defense.

Kernsmith (2005) studied 125 individuals (53% males) enrolled in a batterer intervention counseling program. Among this population, no significant difference in the reported use of violence in self-defense between the women and men was observed. Women were more likely than men to report using violence to "get back at" or to "punish" their partner (for hurting them emotionally) compared to men nearly. Kernsmith also reported that of those individuals who had reported that their partner never or rarely initiated violence (was the first to hit) 30% self-reported using violence in self-defense at least a portion of the time. This may suggest that women feel that they are using violence in "self-defense" in response to prior emotional victimization, rather than defending themselves against immediate physical danger.

Female-Perpetrated IPV and the Criminal Justice System

The differential response by professionals within the criminal justice system provides a measurable example of how differently IPV is viewed depending on the gender of the perpetrator and victim.

Within the legal system, police are much less inclined to recommend charges against women compared to men in cases of IPV. Brown (2004) states, "gender is often *the most significant factor* in predicting how the law-enforcement system responds to incidents of partner violence" (p. 107). In reviewing 2 years of records obtained by the Edmonton Police Service for nearly 3,000 observations of IPV, police were less likely to recommend charges against a female perpetrator of IPV, and of the charges recommended, prosecutors were less likely to pursue charges against female offenders compared to male offenders (Brown, 2004).

When the violent party inflicted injury on their partner, women were significantly less likely to be arrested compared to men (see Table 7.4). The greatest discrepancies arose in situations where neither partner sustained injuries, in the 999 cases meeting this criterion, only 3.8% of female partners were charged, compared to 61.0% of the male partners. In situations where only the female partner was charged, 6.2% of the time her male partner had suffered a major injury and 9% of the time her partner required medical attention. Whereas, when only the male partner was

Table 7.4 Rate of charges laid by level of injury sustained by victim

	Female charged (%)	Male charged (%)
Injury sustained only by victim[a]	60.2	91.1
Injury sustained by both partners	34.4	71.0
No injuries sustained	3.8	61.0

[a]In cases were only the opposite-sex partner had sustained injuries—i.e., for a female who had been charged to be indicated in this subcategory, only her male partner had sustained injuries during the case in question

Table 7.5 Rate of injury in cases of one partner charged

	Female partner charged (%)	Male partner charged (%)
Partner sustained major injury	6.2	4.4
Partner required medical attention	9.0	5.5

Table 7.6 Percentage of individuals prosecuted—by level of injury to partner

	Female prosecuted[a] (%)	Male prosecuted[a] (%)
"High-level" injury	12.0	4.8
"Medium-level" injury	25.3	16.8
No injury	21.3	36.8

[a] Of 100% of females and males prosecuted, a partial break down of the types of injury level they were being prosecuted

charged, in 4.4% of the cases his female partner sustained major injury, and in 5.5% of these incidents the female partner required medical attention (see Table 7.5).

These findings support the hypothesis that either female offenders (although numerically less common) are more violent (inflicting injuries to their partners with greater frequency) or that police are more hesitant to charge female offenders in situations where their partner was not injured and did not require medical attention. Women who were charged were also more than twice as likely to have used a weapon against their partner. This fact may indicate that female violence without the use of a weapon is not taken as seriously as male violence. Brown (2004) also examined files from the Edmonton Crown Prosecutor's Office concerning the legal action taken toward 713 charges related to incidents of IPV. This review revealed that a higher level of injury to a victim was necessary for women to be prosecuted (see Table 7.6).

Significant discrepancies were also found in the percentages of female and male offenders who were taken into custody after charges had been laid against them. Male suspects were placed in custody at a higher rate than females. Gender was the only variable that was a statistically significant predictor of severity of outcome to plea-bargaining (Brown, 2004). In short, from the police decision to arrest, through decisions regarding sentencing, men were treated more severely by the criminal justice system.

In contrast, a study examining all subcategories of domestic assault, Buzawa and Hotaling (2006) found that females were arrested at a higher rate compared to males when police were called to a family violence incident. When the authors examined 320 incidences of domestic violence, a term which they used to describe any category of assault within the family context (e.g., violence between intimate partners, past or present, married, cohabiting, or dating, as well as parent to child, or child to parent, either minor or adult, assault amongst siblings, and assaults between any

other family members), they discovered that females were in fact 2½ times more likely to be arrested compared to males, when they were labeled as a suspect. Because all types of violent perpetration was integrated within the arrest data, rates of spouse abuse cannot be analyzed separately. This fact makes it impossible to isolate the rates of arrest for female perpetrator of IPV compared to males in this sample. In a study by Capaldi et al. (2009), it was found that couples, where the man was arrested for IPV, were characterized by mutual IPV and that the female in the couple had higher non-official levels of physical and psychological aggression. Although women were more likely to be injured, 76% of the injuries were fairly minor, such as cuts and bruises, while only 4% of female victims required medical attention.

Newby (2011) examined the legal proceedings for 73 domestic homicides in California (14 female and 59 male offenders) to determine the use of "weapons enhancements" to charges of murder or voluntary manslaughter of an intimate partner. In this sample, almost all women but only approximately half of men (92%; 53%) had used a gun or knife to kill their partner. The men in this sample were much more likely to have utilized "personal weapons" (e.g., their own body), to kill their partner. The finding that women are more likely to utilize weapons in acts of partner violence may be attributed to the fact that a female partner may be at a physical disadvantage (e.g., either smaller in size or lacking the physical strength of her male partner) and utilized a weapon in order to overcome this disadvantage. However, Newby suggests that the use of a weapon other than that of one's own physical strength may signify the offender's intent to cause harm to their partner, which may result in more serious charges being laid as well as the possibility of an additional weapon enhancement which may increase the amount of time incarcerated. In this sample, in each case where a firearm was used, the perpetrator received a weapons enhancement. Newby suggests that this type of "enhancement" disproportionately affects women, due to the increased likelihood a women will utilize a weapon (particularly a gun) when killing their partner.

In another study examining rates of arrest by gender of perpetrator and relationship to victim, Henning and Renauer (2005) compared the likelihood of arrest for female perpetrators of IPV against a male partner, male perpetrators of IPV against a female partner, and female perpetrators of violence against either a male or female who was not their partner, or against a female intimate partner. After controlling for other variables, such as prior arrests, females arrested for violence against a male intimate partner were less likely to be prosecuted compared to males arrested for violence against a female partner. The authors also reported that females who had been arrested for violence against a male intimate partner were less likely to be prosecuted compared to a female arrested for violence against either a non-intimate partner (male or female) or a female intimate partner.

Of the 5,461 cases of IPV that Henning and Renauer examined, 576 cases were women who were either arrested for misdemeanor or felony domestic offense against a male intimate partner. Of the 576 women arrested for violence against a

male intimate partner 46.5% of those cases were dropped by prosecutors. This is compared to the 85.1% of men who were prosecuted for violence against a female intimate partner. Women who had been arrested were also much more likely to have been dually arrested with their male partner (32.6% of women, compared to 7.3% of men). The authors speculate that this could be due to the pressure that responding police officers feel to arrest males for domestic altercations. However, they also state that this discrepancy could be due to actual differences in rates and types of violence between men and women (e.g., men could commit unilateral violence at a higher rate than women).

In a study examining effects of gender on sentencing, Daly and Bordt (1995) selected 50 studies reporting whether gender had an effect on sentencing in federal cases (not exclusively IPV). A "sex effect" which favored females (i.e., less time) was present in 52% of the samples examined, and in 21% of the samples gender did not appear to influence sentencing. In 27% of the samples mixed results for sex effect were found. It is possible that some of the gender discrepancy in sentencing for IPV cases could be explained by this general pattern of female-favored sentencing in court cases.

Russell (in press) reviewed publications examining the use and effectiveness of protective orders (POs) and found gender disparities in the frequency of POs issued. Protective orders were more likely to be issued to females against their male partners, than to males against their female partners (Basile, 2005). Female plaintiffs were granted POs significantly more often than male plaintiffs, and were much more likely to be granted custody of any children compared to male plaintiffs. None of the men in this sample were granted long-term custody. Together with the data reported above, the disparity in how the court responds to male and female plaintiffs becomes strikingly clear. It would appear that male victimization is not taken as seriously, as men are less likely to receive court-ordered protection from their partner.

Perceptions of Female Spousal Homicide

A study examining the "newsworthiness," as measured by the number of news articles written, of homicides in Newark, New Jersey, found that domestic homicides (compared to homicides with other motives) were likely to be reported at a greater frequency (Gruenewald, Pizarro, & Chermak, 2009). The authors suggest that this could be due to the fact that homicides against an intimate partner or family member are considered to deviate from cultural norms to a greater degree, compared to homicides related to gang and drug involvement or robberies. The relationship between perpetrator and victim gender and the relative news coverage received by a specific homicide was examined; however, the relative media coverage for male- and female-perpetrated spousal homicides was not reported. In general, female-perpetrated homicides (against either a male or female) received only average amounts of media coverage.

In another study examining the role of perpetrator and victim characteristics, and how these characteristics affected the newsworthiness of murder, Lundman (2003) found that male-perpetrated murders typically received a higher degree of media coverage. Overall, 61% of female-perpetrated murders of men received some news coverage, compared to 78% of male-perpetrated murders of women. The male-perpetrated murders were also nearly twice as often featured on the front page of the newspaper (21%; 12% of cases), which indicates a greater degree of "newsworthiness." The reported cases were not exclusively spousal homicides, and it is therefore possible that a different pattern would emerge if only spousal homicides were analyzed.

Perceptions of Female Child Abuse Perpetration

Child abuse is typically viewed as being predominantly male perpetrated, just as IPV is typically viewed as being committed by males against their female partners, due to the gender paradigm. For example, Jaffe, Lemon, and Poisson (2003) and Bancroft and Silverman (2002) write professional books for custody assessments based on the assumption that only the male/father is a risk for child abuse. The data do not support this view.

In an examination of the records of 135,573 investigations of child maltreatment by Health Canada, Trocmé et al. (2001) found that biological mothers were the most common perpetrator in cases of physical abuse (47% of cases), neglect (86%), and emotional maltreatment (61%), with substantiation rates ranging from 31% to 52%. Sexual abuse was more likely to have been perpetrated by an "other relative" (28%) or the biological father (15%). This pattern of female perpetration was also found in an American sample, with 57.9% of the perpetrators of child abuse being female, in a sample of investigations in the US National Survey on Child Maltreatment (Gaudiosi, 2006). Not only were children more likely to suffer physical abuse from their mother, McDonald, Jouriles, Ramliseety-Mikler, Caetano, and Green (2006) found that 26.1% of children in the USA lived in households where female-to-male IPV occurred, whereas 20.4% lived in households were male-to-female IPV took place. These findings greatly deviate from the presumption that child abuse is usually or always perpetrated by men and represents another example of the diminution of incidence of female violence.

Conclusion

A review of the literature reveals quite clearly that female-perpetrated violence is viewed as less threatening to the victim, and as less able to cause harm. Identical acts committed by a woman are viewed as less of a problem within the relationship (and society). Men are viewed as better able to cope with abusive behavior by their

partner, without involving outside services (e.g., police intervention). Violent actions by a woman are less often considered illegal, and if a woman does become involved with the criminal justice system, she typically receives more lenient treatment. These discrepancies are more apparent when a woman has acted in a way that does not deviate from what is considered typically feminine and conforming to gender roles (i.e., she acted in "self-defense"). This fits within the gender paradigm view of IPV.

It is clear that female-perpetrated IPV is neither viewed with the same degree of seriousness nor imbued with the same degree of concern or urgency. It appears that the general public, psychologists, police officers, and judges all share this view both when asked to reason about hypothetical individuals in controlled laboratory experiments and in a thorough review of past cases in the criminal justice system. Researchers advancing the gender paradigm refer to themselves as "feminist research-ers" (e.g., Dekeseredy, 2011), but treating female violence as though it cannot be the equivalent of male violence is ultimately condescending to women. Women's equal-ity means equal capacity for violence as well. It is time that the research evidence factored in to what are, at present, mere stereotypes about gender and violence.

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Chapter 8
Lifting the Veil: Foundations for a Gender-Inclusive Paradigm of Intimate Partner Violence

Fred Buttell and Emily Starr

"There is always an easy solution to every human problem— neat, plausible, and wrong" (Mencken, "The divine afflatus", 1917).

Introduction

In 2008, Larissa Schuster was convicted of the kidnapping, torture, and first-degree murder of her estranged husband, Timothy Schuster. On the night of June 9, 2003, Schuster and an accomplice lured her estranged husband from his home, shot him with a stun gun, smothered his face in a chloroform-soaked towel, and submerged the still-breathing man headfirst into a 55-gallon barrel of hydrochloric acid. A few days later, police would find his body half dissolved in a storage unit. The case elicited instantaneous public fascination and extensive media coverage, culminating in a provocative and sensationalist trial that highlighted not only the horrific details of Timothy Schuster's slaying but also the systematic psychological and physical brutalization he endured throughout the final months of his life. Evidence indicated that Larissa Schuster methodically stalked her ex-husband, routinely threatened him, berated him, burglarized his home, destroyed his property, and, as reported by her manicurist, took delight in her own abusiveness, crowing that bearing witness to his destruction was "better than sex." In the weeks before his death, Timothy Schuster, in fear of his life, obtained a gun and a concealed weapon permit, items which were later found in his bedside table (The People v. Larissa Schuster, 2011).

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Although female-perpetrated homicides account for only 7% of the total murder rate, female-perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV) is far more ubiquitous. Despite the frequency of female-initiated IPV, the phenomenon remains shrouded beneath prevailing gender paradigms that influence not only legal practices but also extra-legal outreach programs that systemically conceptualize domestic violence along a male/perpetrator→female/victim binary (Buttell, Wong, & Powers, 2011; Carney, Buttell, & Dutton, 2006; Dutton, 2007; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Public reaction to the morbid details of Timothy Schuster's abuse and death highlight that female-perpetrated violence is still largely considered an enigma, fodder for sensationalist headlines and true crime specials, and relegated to the realm of extraordinary deviation from feminine norms. Rather than equating Timothy Schuster's systematic torture to the prevalence of female IPV and to the lack of social programs and legal avenues for men to seek reprieve, the case is presented as an obscure example of femininity manifested in its most heinous and monstrous silhouette. So pervasive is the gender paradigm that scholarly contributions toward understanding and deconstructing female-initiated violence are sparse, relative to male batterers. This narrow focus has further obscured the prevalence of female perpetrators and male victims as well as jeopardized the successful treatment of women sentenced to batterer intervention programs (BIPs), as they are currently attending programs designed for male perpetrators that are largely organized around feminist dogmas (Buttell et al., 2011, Carney et al., 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Ehrensaft, 2008).

This chapter has two discrete sections. The first section will outline the contemporary IPV debate that is deeply cleaved between the gender and the family violence paradigms. This argument has been divisive and has drastically limited our understanding of female-initiated violence in intimate relationships. The second section will summarize the literature on what motivates women to be violent in their intimate relationships. We will provide both theoretical and empirical evidence that substantiates the family violence paradigm, while stressing the deleterious implications of the gender paradigm on scholarly research and policy formation. Conceptualizing IPV as a symptom of broad psychosocial factors, rather than the inevitable and static consequence of patriarchy and gender structure, allows for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to domestic violence, and enhances the ability of researchers to inform policies that are sensitive to the range of perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse. Within this chapter, we propose that the gender paradigm is theoretically anti-feminist, perpetuating hierarchally ordered constructions of gendered differences and is widely debunked through recent empirical findings that independently conclude that IPV is not purely the consequence of gender and patriarchy, but through a confluence of multifarious psychosocial factors that are only in the nascent stages of being understood. The rigid intellectual embrace and political application of the gender paradigm to inform regional and national domestic violence and batterer intervention policies not only shrouds the demographic range of perpetrators and victims but neglects to provide the sufficient tools necessary to help apprehend and ameliorate the problem.

Opposing Trenches

The gender paradigm of IPV argues that domestic violence is a result of patriarchal social systems where men are exclusively the batterers and females are exclusively the victims of male dominance and privilege. This Neo-Marxian model posits the masculine (bourgeoisie) as occupying the upper rungs of privilege, authority, and power over the feminine (proletariat). Thus, domestic violence is the physical manifestation of his social dominance as it is forcibly imposed on her submissive feminine body. Conversely, female violence is initiated reactively, purely as a form of self-defense. As argued by Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, and Daly (1992), "Violence against wives…is often persistent and severe, occurs in the context of continuous intimidation and coercion, and is inextricably linked to attempts to dominate and control women" (p. 71). Where adherents of the gender paradigm may acknowledge female participation in IPV, they are largely concerned with the specificities of social context and differences in physicality, arguing that sexual symmetry in domestic violence is a myth created and perpetuated by family violence researchers' methodological failure to address the structural components of patriarchy. In addition, gender paradigm scholars argue that family violence research lumps disparate forms of abuse and injury into the same broad category of "domestic violence" (Dobash et al., 1992; Winstok, 2011).

Family violence scholars endorse a definition of violence that lacks gendered connotations—one that is hinged on the maxim that violence, aggression, and exploitation in its variant forms is dangerous, destructive, and consequential, regardless of the method of violence or the gender of its wielder. Family violence scholars do not dismiss gender as a factor in IPV. Rather, they dismiss the utilization of gender as the sole nadir of policy formation and scholarly inquiry. Family violence scholars privy a paradigm that acknowledges IPV to be the result of more than one demographic characteristic and endorse the construction of studies and policies that seek to appreciate, acknowledge, and assist both male and female victims (Carney et al., 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Certainly, one of the most salient differences between the gender paradigm and the family violence paradigm is that, for the former, male offensive actions are unilaterally considered violent while every aggressive action perpetrated by women is committed in self-defense. Family violence theorists reject the masculine→feminine binary as rooted within intrinsic fact and regard gender as one potential determinant within a broad of array of psychosocial factors contributing to IPV (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Winstok, 2011). In other words, for family violence scholars, the existence of patriarchal mechanisms of stratification and subordination are not the issue in dispute. Rather, the debate centers on the nature of the relationship *between* patriarchy and IPV. This politically laden paradigmatic rupture is the source of heated contestation; gender scholars fiercely guard the boundaries of their epistemological and political dominance while family violence scholars vie for a foothold to amend the ways in which domestic violence is conceptualized, policed, and mollified within the general population.

In their challenge to the gender paradigm, Dutton and Nicholls (2005) note that the gender paradigm-as-policy hinges on strong individuated arrest policies and intervention programs, rendering discrete men responsible for the effects of structural patriarchy while simultaneously failing to account for the majority of men who do not abuse their partners and who would unilaterally condemn physical, psychological, or sexual exploitation. This theoretical inconsistency exposes the underlying problems with the gender paradigm as an all-encompassing explanation for IPV. If male-initiated violence is the inevitable effect of patriarchy, male offenders are essentially blameless—in the abstract ozone of theoretical thought, they are merely sexed bodies performing their part in a predetermined script. Paradoxically, in BIPs, male offenders are held legally accountable for the natural consequence of their structural privilege. Concomitantly, if domestic violence is the inexorable outcome of social structure, it would follow that *all* men should be violent and *all* women in heterosexual relationships should be imprisoned within the talons of domestic terror. Pushed to its natural theoretical conclusion, the gender paradigm would dictate that all male homosexual relationships should be violent while all lesbian relationships should be nonviolent. Recent research has consistently debunked these assumptions, and has concluded that gay and lesbian relationships have similar IPV rates as heterosexual couples (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2009; Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, Winstead, & Viggiano, 2004; Messinger, 2011). Furthermore, a nationally representative survey on same-sex and opposite-sex adolescent relationships indicates that women in same-sex relationships report *higher* levels of IPV than men in same-sex relationships (Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin, & Kupper, 2004). These findings further call into question the rigid canons of the gender paradigm.

Sexual symmetry in IPV states that women and men aggress at comparable rates and are similarly victimized. Empirical data employed by family violence scholars repeatedly demonstrates that women are equally, if not more likely, than their male partners to initiate IPV (for an overview see Carney et al., 2006; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Gender scholars reject these findings on three fronts by arguing that violence in general is innately gendered, that the injuries sustained by women are more extreme and thus not symmetrical to those of men, and that the research methods employed by family violence scholars are not sensitive to gender differences, thus obscuring the nature of the problem (Dobash et al., 1992). Family violence scholars counter these claims by challenging the paradigmatic compass that guides gender scholars' critiques. Not only do family violence scholars reject the foundational assumption that violence is inherently gendered, they argue that the vast majority of male-to-female domestic violence cases do not involve serious injury. The majority of male IPV arrests are misdemeanors (e.g., Buttell & Carney, 2008) and yet, culturally and legally, we would balk at the assumption that non-injurious male-initiated aggression is insignificant. Routinely, however, female-initiated non-injurious aggression toward men is trivialized and relegated to the dustbin of legal and scholastic insignificance.

Perhaps the most onerous problem with the gender paradigm is its theoretical dependence on the hierarchical binary between masculinity and femininity to legitimize its tenets. In relying on a gendered dyadic opposition, gender scholars reinforce

the discursive construction of difference that buttresses the inevitability of patriarchy, even as it strives to undermine its deleterious effects. Simply put, by depending on patriarchy to explain IPV, gender scholars not only rely on but support its inevitability. The construction of males and females as occupying disparate poles of "intrinsic" characteristics perpetuates the maintenance of *difference* as a logic informing the legal and extra-legal divide between masculine and feminine bodies. If the outcome of feminism is the abolishment of stratification and discrimination, it would seem decidedly *anti-feminist* to deny women an inclination toward the traditionally male-coded realm of aggression based purely upon their gender categorization. Under the gender paradigm, women who fail to conform to victim-status are barred from the resources and tools to help them learn how to understand, control, and negotiate their aggression. Similarly, relegating men to the austere confines of violent aggressor denies male IPV victims cultural and legal visibility and legitimacy, generating a unique gender-based system of stratification and discrimination.

Our cultural cognitive dissonance between femininity and aggression has been repeatedly exposed and challenged. A felicitous example can be found in the 2004 expose of the Abu Ghraib military prison. Graphic photographic evidence of the systematic sexual terrorization of the prisoners shocked and outraged the world. The impact of the dehumanization and brutalization of the male inmates was amplified by the presence and active participation of female military personnel, most infamously Lynndie England, and under the command of Col. Janis Karpiniski. In an editorial for the *Los Angeles Times* feminist scholar Barbara Ehrenreich (2004) reflects on her horror:

> What we have learned from Abu Ghraib, once and for all, is that a uterus is not a substitute for a conscience. This doesn't mean gender equality isn't worth fighting for for its own sake. It is. If we believe in democracy, then we believe in a woman's right to do and achieve whatever men can do and achieve, even the bad things.

Ehrenreich's missive proves particularly salient in the case of domestic violence. The assumption that women are predisposed to certain behaviors by virtue of their sex is not only ill-informed but underscores the gender paradigm's allocation of deviance based upon a gender binary that refuses to acknowledge female propensity for violence. Gender equity cannot be predicated on an appeal to binary oppositions, but on the acknowledgement that women and men are equally capable of articulating the entire range of human emotion and action, from the most virtuous to the most depraved.

This is not to discount the mitigating effect of social context; it is merely to argue against a totalitarian rubric of innate male and female qualities—the same sort of classification technique that has been deployed for centuries to justify female inferiority and subordination. If gender is a social construction, then we must be sensitive to the ways in which it continues to be constructed. Gender paradigm scholars' reliance on a particular discursive construction of masculine and feminine difference reinforces an arbitrary divide that creates the very gender differences that they themselves name. By laying claim to IPV as an effect of patriarchy, men and women are separately and mutually exclusively contained within its rigid embrace. Deviants to the gender model are consigned to the paradigmatic blind spots, sucked into the

vacuum of invisibility. On the other hand, an institutionalized recognition of the female propensity for abusiveness liberates male victims from the margins of incomprehensibility and can inform the creation and maintenance of tools and resources necessary to address violent and abusive behavior in all its manifestations rather than those that fit neatly into a paradigmatic construct.

Politics as Policy

Not only does the gender paradigm subsume theoretical problems and inconsistencies, it has been repeatedly challenged by quantitative studies of female domestic offenders whose ranks in the criminal justice system are swelling. Female offenders are the fastest growing segment of the criminal justice system with increased incarceration rates that are double that of men (Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Mullings, Hartley, & Marquet, 2004). As a result of anti-domestic violence grassroots feminist campaigns in the late 1980s, the Law Enforcement Protection legislation (also referred to as, "warrantless arrest") was enacted in most states and affords police responding to domestic violence calls to forego filing a formal victim complaint and arrest and press charges themselves (Buttell et al., 2011). An unintended consequence has been a significant increase in the number of women being arrested and prosecuted for IPV. Depending on the jurisdiction, it is estimated that between 50% and 75% of all 911 calls involve reports of domestic violence. In some jurisdictions, roughly 25% of those calls are in response to a female perpetrator (Buttell, Powers, & Wong, 2012).

The women's movements in the 1960s and 1970s paved the road for contemporary domestic violence policies and interventions. The development of battered women's shelters in the 1970s brought increased public and political attention to the issue of domestic violence and, by the 1990s, had segued into a perpetrator-centric criminal justice paradigm characterized by mandatory arrest policies and increased prosecution. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which allocated $1.6 billion to the prosecution of domestic offenders and brought together the criminal justice system, the social services system, and the private non-profit organizations, to address the issue of violence against women. Although the VAWA affords gender neutral relief to IPV victims, the feminized title perpetuates the socio-cultural construction of women as the principal and iconic population of victims in need of governmental assistance and support. Part of the government initiative to curtail domestic abuse involves mandatory participation in BIPs that are orchestrated around a gender paradigm psycho-educational treatment approach originated by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP). The Duluth model is based upon consciousness-raising, stressing the structural effects of patriarchal societal learning, and unraveling the impetus to domestic assault, based upon control and dominance over one's spouse (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The Duluth model informs contemporary BIP policies throughout the USA, despite the fact that female

offenders are increasingly populating the ranks of those mandated into treatment programs. The general lack of consideration for psychosocial predilections toward spousal aggression, paired with the growing body of empirical work that suggests female-initiated IPV is frequent and pervasive, casts doubt upon the gender-oriented paradigmatic roots of treatment policies.

The sovereignty of the gender paradigm in domestic offender policy formation has resounding implications for male victims and female perpetrators. Not only are BIPs informed by a patriarchal model for domestic violence, shelters for victims of IPV almost exclusively cater to women. Despite the governing maxims of the gender paradigm, female domestic offenders and male victims *do* exist and should have access to the same avenues of legal and extra-legal support and resources. In addition, shrouding this phenomenon disallows researchers to develop a theoretical model for IPV based upon a nuanced understanding of the ways in which female and male-initiated IPV are similarly constituted. As reviewed in the next section, preliminary research suggests that the motivations for IPV are comparable between male and female offenders (e.g., Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Straus, 2011). Sequestering men and women into the opposite poles of an aggression continuum based upon a paradigmatic construct does not make the gender constructions inherently *true*. Rather, this discursive intellectual exercise merely addresses the problem that they themselves name. As noted by Dutton (2007), "Ironically, the situation of [battered] men is identical to that of abused women during the Age of Denial" (p. 68). The continued perpetuation of female domestic offender's and male victim's invisibility is that avenues toward victim protection and offender treatment remain obscure and conceptualizations of domestic violence as a gender issue remain unchallenged. If the feminist agenda is to achieve equality, it must appreciate that women are capable of the same range of *negative* traditionally male-coded qualities. Similarly, to deny men the right to victimhood is a form of gender discrimination that is as dehumanizing and marginalizing as the blind eye turned toward female IPV victims throughout much of American history.

Finally, the US Department of Health and Human Services reports that mothers within the domestic sphere were almost twice as likely to abuse their children than fathers in both 2009 (mother only = 37.7%, father only = 18.6%; Child Maltreatment, 2009) and 2010 (mother only = 37.9%, father only 19.1%; Child Maltreatment, 2010). These numbers have been relatively static since 2000 and further challenge the gender paradigm that constructs females as non-aggressors. (These numbers have been relatively static since 2000 and further challenge the gender paradigm that constructs violence and aggression as innately and exclusively masculine characteristics.) Importantly, preliminary research indicates that early exposures to child abuse and/or domestic violence are more significant predictors of future IPV than gender alone. As stated in Godbout, Dutton, Lussier, and Sabourin (2009), "Among numerous individual, relational, and societal factors proposed as determinants of IPV, one of the most consistent predictors is early exposure to violence" (p. 366). Furthermore, these findings are replicated in studies on both women and men. In his review of the previous literature, Dutton (2000) found that witnessing parental

violence disrupts the formation of secure attachment styles, manifesting in heightened aggression and violence in both women and men. Not only does the gender paradigm fail to account for the prevalence of female child abusers, it overlooks the connection between psychosocial determinants that foster subsequent propensity for aggression in men *and* women, thus potentially exacerbating and perpetuating the intergenerational cycle of family violence.

In both theory and policy, the previous outline of the gender and family violence paradigms informs the following section on the empirical findings that substantiate the family violence paradigm. It is our contention that the gender paradigm is not only intellectually flawed but has also been routinely debunked through research endeavors that are not bound to its foundational tenets. Gender scholars rebuke the empirical findings of the family violence scholars by claiming, in the words of Dobash et al. (1992), "[Analyzing] the claims regarding violence against husbands provides an excellent example of how a particular approach to construct formation and measurement has led to misrepresentation of the phenomena under investigation" (p. 72). We would contend that gender scholars are misled in their critique. Investigations into what motivates women to be violent in their intimate relationships are in the nascent stages and are not hinged on a preexisting dogma, but are *exploratory*, seeking to unearth what has been buried under the weighty domain of the gender paradigm. Rather than approach domestic violence from a static and rooted theoretical assumption, family violence research is better understood as an intellectual movement in *search* of a paradigm (Winstok, 2011). Family violence scholars are not asking questions based upon a predetermined model, but are asking questions that exist entirely outside of the male/aggressor→female/victim binary. Thus, the conclusions they draw are fundamentally different. Statistics on the prevalence of female aggression are not the consequence of politically motivated research designs; rather, they are the manifestation of questions that simply have not been previously asked in the gender paradigm. We hope that by expanding our understanding of domestic abuse as a psychosocial phenomenon rather than a distinctly gendered one will contribute to the formation of a paradigm that moves beyond the theoretical limitations of gendered IPV explanations and intervention strategies.

Women's Motivations for Violence

As the preceding discussion illustrates, it is difficult to know, with any degree of certainty, what motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships. This situation is caused by the fundamentally different lenses that both the feminists and family violence researchers use to view the same data. It seems that in any given sample, the feminists will interpret female-initiated violence data as being defensive or retaliatory and the family violence scholars will interpret it as being

just like the male data, or at least very similar to the male data. Given that both sides feel their view is the correct one, this situation seems unlikely to change. It certainly has not had much movement from either side in the last 40 years. Perhaps the best way to think of this disagreement is to compare it to the opposing sides in the abortion issue. Both sides are equally motivated, feel their position captures the moral high ground, and see no way to compromise, as compromise in this context would mean selling out on principle.

Does this mean that there is no way to view the data holistically? Is it impossible to arrive at some meaningful information regarding women and their motivations for violence in intimate relationships? Our answer to that question is no. We think it can be done. What we will do in the remainder of this section is provide information on what we think motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships. An important qualifier before proceeding further: the position we take in the remainder of this section is one of objective reporter. This may seem unrealistic, but our goal is to present a balanced view of the issue. Certainly, we are not perspective free and our subjective lens will play a part in our report. However, we have strived to rise above the rhetorical debate and view the situation dispassionately. With that goal in mind, we should start by disclosing that we have been both researching and providing counseling services to male and female batters since 1994. Over that time period, we have worked with thousands of men and women arrested, prosecuted, and convicted of domestic violence offenses. All of these men and women were referred to community-based BIPs by the courts, which is how we came into contact with them. We have authored scores of peer-reviewed articles that investigate virtually every aspect of service provision to this population and range from demographic descriptions to large sample program evaluations, for both men and women. Taken as a whole, this experience has led us to believe that there is variation in the motivations for violence among batterers, both male and female. It is unwise and simply untrue to think that there is one developmental pathway that leads women to use violence in their intimate relationships, just as it is untrue to think the same of male batterers. What follows is our perception of what motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships.

Perhaps the sole point of agreement between the feminist scholars and the family violence scholars is that women engage in violence in their intimate relationships. Where they begin to disagree is on the "why" of the violence. In other words, they disagree about what motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships. As we have mentioned previously, we do not think there is any one answer to that question. We think there are at least two different subgroups within the female sample and that motivations for violence vary between these subgroups. We define these two different groups of women in BIPs as follows: (1) those that occupy dual status as victim offender and (2) those that are exclusively or primarily the aggressor in their intimate relationship. Within this second group, there are subgroups of women who can be distinguished from one another in their motivations for initiating domestic violence against their intimate partners.

Women Who Use Violence in a Defensive Manner

In our view, women who use violence in their intimate relationships, but are motivated to do so because they feel threatened or are simply protecting themselves, make up roughly a quarter of women in BIPs (i.e., 25%). By all accounts, women regularly use violence in their intimate relationships. Archer's (2000) oft cited meta-analysis and scores of other researchers since then have documented this social phenomenon (e.g., Straus, 2011). Our position here is not to contextualize female-initiated violence or rationalize it away as something less serious than male violence. Rather, our point here is to simply say that our experience suggests that some women perpetrators in BIPs occupy the dual status of victim and offender. In this group, some are simply responding to violence with violence and some are just protecting themselves. Placing an exact, or even approximate, number on these women is difficult, since even seminal typology study by Babcock, Miller, and Siard (2003) only attempted to distinguish between Generally Violent (GV) and Partner Only (PO) and did not try to distinguish women who were primarily victims from women who were primarily offenders. While they discovered that many of the GV women were violent in many contexts other than the family, it is not clear in their typology why some women who were also victims became GV, while some only became PO. Perhaps more telling, both groups self-reported very high rates of victimization as children (e.g., 70% of the GV women and 59% of the PO women reported being sexually abused as children). As described in more detail later, it appears that childhood exposure to abuse and trauma is a more important predictor of adult violence than gender.

A simple example here will highlight the distinction we are trying to make. In one of our groups many years ago, a woman's husband told her he was tired of having her around. He said she made his life miserable and said very explicitly to her that he was planning on shooting her when he returned home that day from work. Based on their 20 years of marriage, she took the threat seriously. The woman waited until he returned home and dropped a barbecue grill on his head as he was coming up the outdoor stairs. The man was seriously injured and she was arrested for perpetrating domestic violence. On that particular occasion, the woman was clearly the primary aggressor. In fact, on that night, she was the only aggressor. However, what gets lost in that snapshot of their relational history was the fact that she was regularly the recipient of abuse from her husband. The night of her arrest was the first time she had initiated violence in their relationship, and she was motivated by a fear of what might happen if she did not act peremptorily. This example highlights an important point about women initiating violence in their intimate relationships. Namely, that there is some percentage of women in BIPs who have historically been victims in their intimate relationships but make a shift toward initiating the violence. In some cases, it is an attempt to preempt violence or to retaliate for past offenses. In other cases, it is simply because they have reached their capacity for abuse and decide they will no longer tolerate it.

Women Who Use Violence to Control or Retaliate Against Their Partner

Returning again to the Babcock et al. (2003) study is a helpful place to begin because it makes this issue very accessible. In their study, they attempted to distinguish between two types of women in a BIP. One type were women who were Generally Violent (GO) and used violence instrumentally (i.e., to control their partner, or to elicit a reaction out of him). They attempted to distinguish these women from those they termed Partner Only (PO) (i.e., women who used violence in self-defense, out of fear, or in response to their partner's verbal abuse). In both cases, these women regularly initiated violence in their intimate relationships, but their motivations for doing so were somewhat different. In both groups of women, only 28% said they used violence in self-defense, and there were no differences between the two groups in reporting self-defense as a motive in either open-ended questions, or on the instrument they used. The most telling aspect of this situation is the fact that 72% of the women did not report self-defense as a motivation for violence, even when presented with a chance to reduce the perceived negative consequences of their choice of violence.

If we assume that roughly 25% of the women in BIPs are there because they are using violence in a defensive manner, which implies that they are also victims of domestic violence, that would mean that 75% of the women in BIPs are the primary aggressors in their intimate relationships. Our percentages are higher than those of other researchers who found that as many as 37% (e.g., Hamberger, 1997) of women arrested for domestic violence claimed self-defense. However, the 75/25 distribution is consistent with our own experience with women in BIPs. Further evidence for our distribution of percentages can be seen in the injury rates suffered by male and female victims of IPV. Archer's (2000) meta-analysis suggests that 65% of domestic violence injuries are sustained by women and 35% are sustained by men. More recently, Straus (2011) suggests the injury rate was 63% for women and 48% for men. In both cases, the idea is to differentiate between initiating an aggressive incident in the relationship and having that incident lead to an injury. Previous research has repeatedly demonstrated that men and women initiate IPV at comparable rates, with many studies reporting that female partners are *more* likely to initiate domestic assaults (DeMaris, 1992; Dutton, Kwong, & Bartholomew, 1999; Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005; Morse, 1995; Straus, 1993). While men cause more injuries to their intimate partners than women, women account for a significant percentage of the violence including incidences of causing injury.

Social Learning Models of Aggression

Among the more important explanations for explaining the intergenerational nature of domestic violence is the social learning model. In brief, it suggests that since many of the homes where domestic violence occurs have child witnesses, these

children are exposed to a "role model" who uses violence to resolve relational conflict. The numbers of children exposed to domestic violence are quite high. Recent research suggests that between 7% and 23% of children in general population surveys experienced exposure to domestic violence, 36–39% of children in identified domestic violence cases have witnessed the violence occurring between the adults in their home, and 45–46% of primary caregivers in child maltreatment investigations have experienced domestic violence (Cross, Mathews, Tonmyr, Scott, & Ouimet, 2012). Consequently, when these children grow up and begin to have intimate relationships of their own, the primary method they have been exposed to for resolving relationship conflict is violence. This model has been used for years, in collaboration with patriarchy, to both explain why men grow up to be violent and why women grow up to be victims of violence in their intimate relationships. Interestingly, in the gender paradigm, this perspective was never used to explain why some women would become aggressors, only victims. It seems clear to us that this model can also be used to explain women's use of violence in their intimate relationships. If we set aside the gender bias suggesting women are incapable of violence, then it seems pretty straightforward to assume that the social learning model affects female children in the same way as male children. If the dominant method for resolving relational conflict in the home is domestic violence and the woman is the primary perpetrator/aggressor, it seems clear that her behavior will imprint on her female children in the same way a man's aggressive behavior influences his male children. The application of social learning as an explanatory model is as helpful with women as perpetrators as it is with men as perpetrators, because it suggests a gender neutral way in which both male and female children are socialized into violence perpetration in their intimate relationships.

Women's Motivations for Violence Are Similar to Men's

If we set aside preconceived ideas about women as perpetrators of domestic violence and look at the data objectively, what emerges is a motivational picture that is very similar to ideas about men. To be clear, we are not talking about the 25% of women in BIPs who are both victim and offender. Rather, we are addressing the motivations for violence of the 75% of women in BIPs who are the primary aggressor in the intimate relationship. In every available review of the literature on women's motivation for violence, they conclude that the motivations women give for their use of violence against their partner are strikingly similar to those of men. For example, as Straus (2011) concludes in his review of the literature on the gender symmetry debate, both women and men are primarily motivated to use violence with their intimate partner by frustration and anger at something their partner did, or by something that they thought they did. In another similarity to men, many studies investigating the motivational aspects of female domestic violence arrestees, suggest that many of them are attempting to control or coerce their partner into doing something they want them to do, or stopping something they want them to

stop. To further illustrate this point, we can consider a study by Swan and Snow (2003) which found that 38% of the women in their sample had threatened their partners with violence to motivate them to do something they wanted them to do. Similarly, in the Start et al. (2006) study, 22% of their sample endorsed the statement "to get control over your partner" as a motivation for violence, 22% endorsed "to get your partner to do something or stop doing something" and 17% endorsed "to make your partner agree with you." Another motivation for violence, frequently cited by women arrested for domestic violence, is that they report a significant amount of violence that is motivated out of jealously (e.g., Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992; Start, Moore, Gordon, Ramsey, & Kahler, 2006).

Two things about this summary are important to identify: first, the reasons offered up for violence by identifiably violent women are very diverse and there is not one monolithic reason that covers every instance of female-initiated violence. Further, women and men may have multiple reasons for using violence on a particular occasion. In this way, some of the stated reasons are additive (e.g., jealous and frustrated). Second, the motivations for violence ascribed to women are very similar to those of men and include such mundane relational issues as jealousy, anger, and control. Other factors that contribute to domestic violence perpetration for men, like alcohol use (e.g., Foran & O'Leary, 2008), are virtually unexplored among women offenders, though some recent research suggests that it may be almost 60% (Buttell et al., 2012).

Although we have only highlighted some of the salient research here, taken as whole, all of the available research suggests that women and men are very similar in their motivations for violence. In both cases, regardless of gender, people who use violence against their partner are trying to control them, demonstrate their frustration, are jealous, or have some elements of a personality disorder. In fact, in her comprehensive review of the literature on the psychology of women's partner violence, Graham-Kevan (2009) concludes that, for both men and women, "those who use aggression as adults are extremely likely to have a long history of oppositional and aggressive behavior beginning very early in life" (p. 591). In her view, the pathways to using violence as a conflict resolution tactic in adult relationships are rooted in childhood experiences for both men and women.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review is to outline the ongoing scholastic disconnect between the perception of female-initiated violence, as relatively rare and non-serious, and the empirical data that repeatedly demonstrates that female-initiated IPV is a common and complex phenomenon whose source and explanation cannot be squeezed into the prevailing gender paradigm's theories. The ongoing cultural, academic, and legal subscription to the male/aggressor→female/victim binary has resulted in the marginalization of male victims and a continued lack of understanding of the impetus, circumstances, and treatment routes for female perpetrators. Even though

empirical data from the last three decades has regularly concluded that females use violence in their intimate relationships at comparable rates as men, widespread adherence to the gender paradigm has essentially rendered these findings invisible by contextualizing the results, critiquing the varied research instruments, and explaining away the significance through unequivocal theoretical abstractions about the nature of gender and violence in the Western world. Consequently, we know very little about what motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships, certainly relative to male batterers.

The implications of this faith-based endorsement are clear: because we know so little about what motivates women to use violence in their intimate relationships, we know very little about how to effectively treat women domestic violence offenders. Currently, we treat them in programs designed for male offenders (for a nice discussion of this issue, see Carney et al., 2006). Equally important, we have very little information on male victims of domestic violence and have virtually no services for them. The result is that domestic violence is predicated on a glaring cultural and legal double standard. When the VAWA was passed in 1994, the National Organization of Women released the following statement: "We have made violence against women a crime, now let's make it a shame. Let's make it as socially unacceptable as it is illegal." Within 5 years, the late, world-renowned singer Whitney Houston admitted to members of the Associated Press, "Contrary to belief, I do the hitting, [Bobby Brown] doesn't. He has never put his hands on me. We are crazy for one another…When we're fighting, it's like that's love for us. We're fighting for our love." One can imagine if the confession were reversed—if Brown had admitted to beating Houston as a testament to the strength of their love—the public outcry would be palpable. However, Houston's statement flew well below the radar. Her confession was dismissed as symptomatic of the one-time diva's public spiral into drug addled infamy. Where the National Organization of Women's mission to prosecute and shame male domestic offenders has proved a successful socio-political campaign, the female offender and male victim are neither addressed nor protected under its arc. This is not because they do not exist; rather, it is because in popular understandings of domestic violence as a gender issue, their existence merely goes unseen, or is dismissed as rare exceptions to the norm.

Within this chapter, we have argued that the gender paradigm is theoretically flawed and has been challenged by a range of empirical studies. We do not dismiss gender as an important aspect of IPV. Rather, we argue that the ranks of IPV perpetrators and victims are a complex and nuanced population who defy mutually exclusive categories. In order to better understand the motivations for intimate violence and to provide the necessary services to victims and perpetrators, it is essential that we do not rely on faith-based theories. We have proposed that social learning theories of aggression provide a more fertile landscape for contextualizing the psychosocial determinants of domestic violence. Concomitantly, the utility of social learning theories to help understand male- and female-initiated IPV have been born out through previous research. We believe that in order to better understand and ameliorate domestic violence, it is imperative that scholars and policy-makers move beyond simplistic models of male/female gender difference and embrace theories

that more accurately and comprehensively address the issue. Wedging social ills into simple, neat categories is not itself a solution. After years of experience and research, we believe that a courtship with the complex mosaic of psychosocial geneses beyond compartmentalized black and white cubbies will provide scholars and policy-makers with the tools to best address IPV as a human issue and not a gendered one.

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Chapter 9
Gender Matters in Intimate Partner Violence

Kathleen J. Ferraro

Introduction

Since the initiation of social science research on intimate partner violence (IPV) in the 1970s, scholars have debated the relevance of gender to our understanding of this phenomenon. Often described as the "gender symmetry" debate, the controversy involves both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Some scholars who rely on survey data have found *sex* parity in the rates of violent acts perpetrated by men and women against their intimate partners (Archer, 2000, 2002). Those who compare rates of violence by men and women are examining the self-reported sex categories and actions of respondents, not gender, the socially constructed enactment of femininity and masculinity (Kimmel, 2002). Richard Felson has argued that sex parity in reports of IPV perpetration support a "violence perspective" on IPV over a "gender perspective" (Felson & Lane, 2010). That is, Felson and others believe that IPV is best understood as a form of violence rather than a manifestation of gendered power relationships. Felson is joined by a group of psychologists and sociologists who find the evidence of women's use of violence in general social surveys a convincing rationale for rejecting gender as a key component in explanations of IPV (see also Archer, 2002; Dutton, 2006; Hines & Douglas, 2010; Mills, 2003). Other scholars, following the New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory approach, have adopted a "family violence" perspective that focuses on tensions within families as a system rather than gender per se. Straus (1976, 1977) has been a leader in this approach but was one of the first to identify male dominance and sexual inequality as primary causes of woman battering in his earliest writings in

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the 1970s. More recently, Straus has shifted his position to argue against explanations focusing primarily on male dominance and for gender symmetry and "bidirectionality" in IPV (Straus, 2008, 2011). Felson's "violence perspective" argues that IPV is simply one form of interpersonal violence; Straus's "family violence" perspective argues that IPV is a product of multiple causes but the most significant involves systemic problems within families. Adherents of both the "violence" and "family violence" perspectives argue that patriarchy and male dominance have received too much attention and that IPV is gender symmetrical.

Feminist scholars have long argued that IPV is principally an outcome of patriarchy and one of the mechanisms that maintains gender inequality (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Ferraro, 2006; Hanmer, 1996; Johnson, 2008; Stark, 2007). Their critique of the gender symmetry argument relies on four major issues: methodology, situational and structural context, motivations for violence, and the consequences for victims (see Johnson, 2010; Stark, 2010).The social survey data on which the gender symmetry debate relies uses an instrument that measures discrete instances of violent behavior. Researchers abstract violent actions from the context, meaning and historical development of intimate relationships (Dobash, Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). The survey data on which they rely tends to equate a onetime slap in the context of a specific argument with a slap that is repeated each time a partner questions the authority of the other. Feminist scholars argue that the overwhelming data from police, shelters, courts, ethnographic and interview studies demonstrate that women are far more likely to suffer as victims of IPV than are men (Dasgupta, 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 2004). In addition, some large-scale, federally funded general social surveys—in particular, the National Violence Against Women Survey (funded by NIJ and CDC) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (funded by the DOJ)—show much higher rates of IPV victimization of women than of men.

Other large-scale social surveys report similar rates of IPV victimization, but much higher rates of injury and negative social and psychological consequences for women. The Canadian General Social Survey (GSS) of 1999, for example, reported that 70 out of every 1,000 women and 61 of every 1,000 men experienced violence from their intimate partners in the previous 5 years (LaRoche, 2005). More recently, the Centers for Disease Control's *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* reported that 35.6% of women and 28.5% of men in the USA experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011, p. 2). The *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* also reports that women and men both experience almost identical levels of "psychological aggression" from an intimate partner over their lifetime; 48.4% of women and 48.8% of men (Black et al., 2011, p. 45). Yet both of these surveys identified a much higher rate of injury and other negative impacts, such as interruption of daily routines, of IPV for women victims than for men. In the CDC survey, 80.8% of female victims reported any impact, and 22.1% required medical care; 34.7% of male victims reported any impact, and 5.5% required medical care. In the Canadian GSS, LaRoche (2005) notes that although "the percentages of all male and female victims suffering physical consequences in intimate terrorism were comparable, it

must be emphasized that the number of female victims was significantly higher in virtually every category"(p. 12).

Johnson (2008) has demonstrated that part of the gender symmetry controversy stems from the fact that IPV is not one homogeneous phenomenon but rather varies depending on a person's motivation for using violence. Randomly conducted surveys tend to measure violent acts outside of a context of ongoing coercive control, what he terms "situational couple violence." Interview-based studies, often using agency samples, more often uncover a pattern of coercively controlling behaviors designed to subjugate an intimate partner, what he terms "intimate partner terrorism." He suggests that those who find gender symmetry are looking at "situational couple violence" and those who find asymmetry are looking at "intimate partner terrorism" (Johnson, 2008, p. 3).

Stark (2007) echoes this argument and suggests the categories of fights, partner assaults, and coercive control, although he emphasizes that there may be little or no physical violence in situations of coercive control. But adherents of the gender symmetry position have reacted to Johnson's and Stark's typologies with data indicating women are as or more likely to use controlling behaviors and instill fear in their victims than are men (Dutton, 2006; Felson & Lane, 2010; Graham-Kevan, 2007; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010).

The debate on gender symmetry in IPV remains as intractable as ever. One's position depends largely on their perceptions of the data and nonevidence-based factors, such as ideological loyalties and personal experience. In this chapter, I argue that (1) gender matters at the individual psyche, micro-everyday, institutional, structural, and cultural levels of peoples' lives; (2) gender symmetry arguments have been captured by individualistic and binary models of gender that conflate sex and gender, ignore theoretical analyses of both gender and violence and neglect the importance of intersectionality; and (3) symmetry arguments fail to incorporate sustained analyses of forms of IPV that are uniquely gendered. I include in this category rape and sexual coercion, reproductive control, and violence during pregnancy, as well as behaviors that are highly correlated with lethal outcomes, such as strangulation. I illustrate my argument about the importance of intersectionality with a brief case profile of a battered man. I also review narratives from women and men who have been subjected to coercive control and IPV and US national level data reflecting the ongoing significance of gender in people's lives. I conclude with recommendations for research and policy that takes seriously the gendered nature of IPV.

The Continuing Significance of Gender and Sexism

As a group, women's status in the USA has improved remarkably over the past 35 years during which the Battered Women's Movement has existed. Women can now be found in nearly every profession, marital rape is no longer *formally* condoned in law, and the overall wage gap in median year round earnings has decreased. Women's participation in electoral politics, their presence in higher education, and the representations

of women in popular culture all reflect an improvement in the status of women between 1960 and 2012. Just as some argue that we are in a post-racial society, some analysts argue that we are now in a "post-feminist" era in which gender no longer restricts the opportunities and resources available to women or men. Yet we know that gender continues to play a significant role in how people experience the world.

Sociologists have documented gender differences from early childhood, including parental reactions to children (Kane, 2006), childhood sports (Messner, 2000), and toys (Kimmel, 2002). As adults, gender continues to affect our health (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000; Schulz & Mullings, 2005), our careers (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2010; Padavic & Reskin, 2002), our relationships (Muraco, 2012; Rubin, 1984), and our income (Hayes, 2011; Hays, 2003), among other aspects of our lives and identities. The voluminous scholarship on gender leaves little doubt that gender has continuing significance. We are both advantaged and disadvantaged by our gendered realities, so my insistence on the significance of gender does not equate with an assumption of women's oppression. Some gender symmetry proponents have portrayed feminist domestic violence scholars as male bashing, woman valorizing proponents of "victim feminism." But appreciation of the continuing significance of gender does not depend on an antagonistic or unidimensional account of gender relations. At the same time, aggregate data comparing women and men as groups reflect ongoing barriers to gender equality in the USA.

Certainly, income is a major index of social equality. Women's average annual median wage rose to 77% of comparable male income by 2011. While this is a significant gain over the 54% of 1960, a gain that is the difference between poverty and making it, at the current rate of improvement it will be 2056 before women reach wage parity with men (Hayes, 2011).

However, annual wage data by gender, like data on IPV, perpetuates the gender binary and disguises the differences in economic opportunities that are imposed by race, ethnicity, immigration status, health, sexuality, and motherhood. The range of factors that influence income complicates our understanding of the continuing significance of gender on one's life chances. For example, women with children, on average, earn less money than women without children. It is known as the motherhood penalty. On the other hand, men with children, on average, earn more money than men without children—the fatherhood bonus (Budig & Hodges, 2010; Glauber, 2007). Scholars have demonstrated that the motherhood penalty varies by race, income, relationship status, and number of children (Glauber, 2007).

The gender wage gap in median annual income is much more significant when race is also considered; Black and Hispanic men earn significantly less than White men, but within each racial or ethnic category, women earn less than men. But the median annual income seriously distorts the impact of gender on long-term wealth. Rose and Hartmann (2004) examined the 15 peak earning years for men and women, and found by that measure women earned only 38% of male earnings. This translates into long-term financial insecurity, especially for women with no other earning adult in their families and older women who have not amassed a significant retirement. They explain this differential by the sex segregated labor market, with women and men still holding different jobs, men more often in high earning occupations,

and women's continuing role in domestic labor, especially child care. Although fathers are more involved in raising children than in the early 1970s, women are still far more likely to reduce workforce participation or professional advancement during their prime earning years, which coincide with their prime reproductive years. Because the USA is the last industrialized Western nation without a national childcare system, families must struggle with child care and usually the person with the lowest income is the one who stays home or works part-time. These gendered care decisions have long-term consequences for women's and men's earning capacity.

The ongoing economic disparities between women and men, as groups, suggest that gender still matters in terms of income and survival. Economic insecurity plays a key role in how individuals respond to IPV. We cannot deduce individual decision making from aggregate level data, but we know that people who depend on their abusive partner for income are more compromised in their choices to terminate an abusive relationship. As long as women face disadvantages in the labor market, their experiences of IPV cannot be considered "symmetrical" to those of men.

At the cultural level, we have also made great strides, but there are still vast differences in cultural representations of women and men and in those who control the technologies of representation. According to the Women's Media Center, women are underrepresented in all aspects of the U.S. media industry. In 2010–2011, for example, women held less than 20% of the creator, writer, director positions in television entertainment, decreasing their participation from the previous 2 years (Yi & Dearfield, 2012). The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the group that awards the Oscars, is composed of 77% men and 94% whites. Men make up 90% of the five branches of the Academy (Mohr, 2012). Women and men are represented differently in popular media, with women characters hypersexualized (Yi & Dearfield, 2012).

Obviously, we cannot employ aggregate data on gender disparities to make assumptions about the status of any given woman or man in a specific relationship. What the wage gap and the gendered media suggest is the continuing significance of gender in people's lives. Those who advocate "gender symmetry" in IPV often overlook the ways that gender is woven into the fabric of contemporary life with very real consequences for the ways men and women view themselves, interact, and gain access to resources.

Intersectionality

The Battered Women's Movement emerged in the USA in the early 1970s as an outgrowth of second wave feminism. Feminists of this era were working to address basic human and civil rights that discriminated against women as a group. Second wave activists often portrayed "women" in a homogeneous manner in opposition to similarly homogeneous "men" in an effort to demonstrate and remedy the egregious violations of equal rights existing in that era. Activists identified the laws and policies that normalized and condoned husbands' violence against wives as a particularly

debilitating and even life-threatening form of sexual inequality (Martin, 1979; Schechter, 1982). The Battered Women's Movement has been one of the most successful aspects of second wave feminism, creating new laws, new services, new language and new consciousness about IPV. At the same time, many have criticized the Movement for adopting a universalistic view of women's experiences and ignoring the intersecting influences of race, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and physical ability (Richie, 2000, 2012; Smith, 2005; Sokoloff, 2005).

Queer theorists have also challenged the rigid gender binary that characterized much of the early Battered Women's Movement and remains embedded in the gender symmetry debate. For queer theorists, as well as many social constructionists, there is no pre-linguistic biological reality that sets clear boundaries around and categorically opposes "men" and "women." Rather, we socially and linguistically generate these categories that help constitute and perpetuate a gender regime. This regime is upheld by social science experts who insist on binary gender categorizations and frame data in terms of gender difference. Queer theorists work to reveal the processes that maintain the illusion of "real" gender differences and to unravel theoretical and empirical implications of a social world freed of the binary illusion. Both the violence and feminist proponents in the gender symmetry debate cement the gender binary by treating gender as an unproblematic social fact (see also Anderson, 2005).

Scholars who focus on intersectionality and queer visions of gender have helped to illuminate the limitations of the gender symmetry debate. For example, Andrea Smith, in her work on violence and colonization of American Indian people in North America, has identified historical sources of trauma that underline the inadequacies of male versus female comparisons (Smith, 2003). Smith articulates the logic of racism that is woven into contemporary relations. According to this logic, American Indian people, both female and male, are disposable and despicable and thus legitimately subject to rape and bodily violation. She frames her analysis within a critique of the "white-dominated-anti-violence movement" and Susan Brownmiller's famous statement that "rape is nothing more or less than a conscious process by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (Smith, 2003, p. 70). Such universalistic pronouncements disguise the multiple layers of oppression that structure the experiences of people of color. From the perspective of the history of colonization, simple comparisons of male and female use of IPV obscure the real, ongoing differences among people that shape their experiences of violence. These differences do not mitigate the need to address the high levels of IPV in communities that have suffered the impact of colonization, but rather demand a more nuanced understanding of the nature of partner violence.

Crenshaw (1993) was among the first scholars to develop an intersectional analysis of IPV). Crenshaw explained how African-American women had unique experiences of IPV due to the simultaneous, intersecting influence of gender, race, and class. She distinguished intersectionality from an additive model that dissects people's lives into separate categories. Crenshaw reviewed the history of rape law and court cases that defined Black women as inherently unchaste and untrustworthy in contrast to chaste, reliable white victims. She argued that Black women have a

different, less coherently oppositional relationship to Black men than White women have to White men. From the model of intersectionality developed by Crenshaw, a comparison of male and female perpetrated IPV is misleading and distorted if it excludes intersectional realities. The policy implications of this will be discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics on intimate partner homicides (IPH) provide a stark illustration of the importance of race in gender comparisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012).Women are much more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than are men. Approximately one third of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner while about 3% of male murder victims die as a result of IPH (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012) However, rates of IPH of Black women have declined much more than those for White women. Between 1976 and 2005, the number of Black women killed by an intimate partner declined by 52%; the corresponding decline for White women was 6%. Black women, particularly "girlfriends," are still much more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than are White women. IPH is the leading cause of death for Black women ages 18–45. Intimate partner homicides have declined significantly since 1976, but not evenly across gender and racial groups. Black men had a rate of IPH 20 times higher in 1976; the number of White men killed by an intimate partner dropped by 61%. According to official government data, both males and females of all races were less likely to die at the hands of an intimate partner in 2005 than in 1976 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012).

More recent data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey also highlight the significance of race and ethnicity. Black et al. (2011, p. 40) report that 19.6% of Asian or Pacific Islander women experience rape, violence, and/or stalking by their intimate partner over their lifetimes. The rates are 34.6% for White, non-Hispanic women, 43.7% for Black, non-Hispanic women, 37.1% for Hispanic women, 46% for American Indian or Alaska Native women, and 53.8% for women who identify as multiracial. The corresponding rates for men are not reported for Asian or Pacific Islanders due to low rates. The lifetime prevalence rates of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner for other racial/ethnic groups of men are 26.6% for Hispanic; 28.2% for white, non-Hispanic; 38.6% for Black, non-Hispanic; 45.3% for American Indian or Alaska Native; and 39.3% for men who identify as multiracial. For rape victimization, the differences are more dramatic. One out of 59 White, non-Hispanic men experienced rape at one point in their lives (1.7%), while one in three women (33.5%) who identified as multiracial, non-Hispanic reported experiencing rape (Black et al., 2011, p. 3).

But these quantitative data are far from an intersectional analysis of IPV and homicide. They reflect the type of additive model that Crenshaw argued against. They do not tell us anything about why the rates are so disparate and what has caused homicide rates to decline more significantly for one group of women and not another. Nor do they explain why male deaths from IPH have declined so much more rapidly than female deaths. Women's and men's lived experiences of IPV do not surface in data that are limited to victimization and perpetration rates, gender and race.

At the phenomenological level, many factors contribute to aggressive behavior. Although males have a much higher rate of physical violence generally—both as victims and as perpetrators—rates of behavior do not reveal the lived experience of IPV. That experience, like all social experience, is filtered through the web of individual, institutional, structural, and cultural dimensions of one's life. We cannot assume that these dimensions are determined by gender or that it is possible to extricate the role of gender from other aspects of one's social location. We know, however, that gender remains an influential aspect of identity that also has implications for social life. People's gendered lives are also shaped by other aspects of their identities but, in Joan Scott's terms, gender remains a "meaningful category of analysis" (Scott, 1986).

Narrative Analyses of IPV

Many scholars have described the lived experience of IPV through detailed narratives collected from women (Chang, 1996; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Ferraro, 2006; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Lemert, 1994; Pagelow, 1981; Raphael, 2000; Richie, 2000; Stark, 2007; Villalon, 2010; Walker, 1979; Websdale, 1998). Most of the women interviewed were seeking help from shelters or other domestic violence programs. Thus, the nature of their experiences with partner violence was consistent with intimate partner terrorism rather than situational couple violence. These narratives have shaped our understanding of the microdynamics of IPV perpetrated by men against women (Pence & Paymar, 1993). We know about coercive control, extreme possessiveness, pathological jealousy, surveillance, degradation, minimization and justification of abuse, destruction of property, pet abuse, threats, isolation from friends and family, sexual coercion and rape, abuse of children, rigid rules for behavior and demeanor, name calling, and various forms of physical violence from the narratives women have offered over many years. We know about the extent of the problem of IPV from survey data, but our knowledge of the dynamics of IPV has been constituted by thousands of these narratives collected since the 1970s.

Although the first survey data suggesting sexual symmetry in the perpetration of IPV was published in 1980 (Straus, 1980), narrative accounts of men's experiences as victims of IPV have been slow to accumulate. One of the first studies to address male victims was limited to men in same-sex relationships (Island & Letellier, 1991). Island and Letellier's work described the similarities between gay men's experiences of domestic violence and those of women. But it told us little about men's experiences of women's violence in relationships. In 1997, investigative journalist Philip Cook published his book on battered men, arguing that he cut through political rhetoric to reveal that husband abuse was at least as serious a problem as wife abuse. Cook interviewed thirty men who described abuse by their wives. In response to Cook's request to "tell me about the time you were most seriously hurt," a respondent described his wife's drunkenness and her assault on him when he tried to prevent her from leaving their home with their baby:

I got the baby away from her, and she ran up from behind and bit me on the shoulder and once on the chest. I could have dropped the baby because of what she was doing.

Did you go to the hospital?

No, I didn't. The bites were pretty deep, though; I still have scars that don't look like they are ever going away. It really did hurt a lot. I did have [my lawyer] take pictures (Cook, 1997, pp. 41–42).

While obviously a painful experience, this most serious injury, which did not require medical intervention, is a far cry from the most serious incidents described in women's narratives. Cook's interviewees also described instances of slapping, throwing objects, intentional sleep deprivation, and weapon use. Men also described "groin attacks" that were principally threats, but Cook quotes one man who claimed he was commonly kicked in the testicles multiple times by his wife. Interestingly, this man described how he attempted to control his wife when she attacked him: "I would wrestle her to the ground, pin her arms around her, and wrap my legs around her, and tell her to calm down, calm down" (1997, pp. 40–41). Although Cook's intention was to present men's accounts to illustrate the comparability between men's and women's abuse, and he wrote that he only selected portions of interview data, both the abuse described and men's ability to resist it vary dramatically from the accounts of women victims.

Migliaccio (2002) provides a narrative analysis of the accounts of twelve heterosexual men abused by their partners. His sample includes two men from a divorce and custody group, two men referred by group members, seven men who responded to an internet posting, three by e-mail and four by phone, and the story of a man who posted his experiences on the Internet prior to committing suicide (Migliaccio, 2002, p. 32). All but one of the men indicated that they were larger and stronger than their wives and capable of defending themselves, but they refrained from using that strength to restrain their wives or to retaliate. Men said that they acquiesced to their wives' abuse because if they attempted to resist, the violence escalated or led to later attacks. Two men said that they feared for their lives. Men also indicated that they believed it was always wrong for a man to hit a woman. However, half of the men reported that they had hit their wives, but always in self-defense (Migliaccio, 2002, pp. 34–35).

The men in Migliaccio's study described some of the same nonviolent aspects of abuse found in the Duluth model's power and control wheel. They felt they deserved the abuse because of their wives' denigration and justifications for their violence. They were isolated from friends and family who disapproved of their wives' abuse. Men's sense of responsibility for their own abuse and disengagement from supportive networks contributed to their acceptance of the abuse. Men described rationalizations of the abuse similar to those reported by battered women (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983). About half of the men reported suicidal ideation and half indicated that their wives' suicidal threats were one reason they remained in their relationships.

Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson provides lengthy analyses of a single case of a man, pseudonymously called NH, who maintained a diary describing his abuse during the

last 2 years of a 20-year marriage (Allen-Collinson, 2009, 2011). She does not report how she located NH to study, but describes her methodology as including five face-to-face interviews and analysis of the diary. NH also described patterns of abuse, acceptance, and rationalization that are similar to those described by women victims of abuse. According to his account, NH's wife scratched, "poked and thumped," hit with a guitar, threatened with a knife, and put both her hands in his mouth and stretched it. She deliberately deprived him of sleep, broke or threw out meaningful possessions, and denigrated him as a parent, a husband, and a person. NH describes his wife's minimization of her abuse and his own accommodation to persistent abuse that began on their first date.

Women's Narratives of Their Own Violence

Pence and Paymar (1993) found that of the 100 women arrested and sentenced to their batterers' education groups over 10 years (3.5% of the court-mandated participants), seven could be classified as serious batterers whose husbands were afraid for their lives. They argued that this small minority of women were similar to male batterers, but did not provide narratives from the women.

Miller (2005) spent 6 months recording weekly treatment sessions for women arrested for domestic violence. Based on the transcripts of these recordings, Miller identified three major themes in women's accounts of their IPV: generalized violent behavior (5% of women), frustration response behavior (30%), and defensive behavior (65%). Within the groups, women were encouraged to talk about and take responsibility for their violence and to learn ways to avoid violence in the future. Women in the generalized violent behavior group, only five women, used violence both within the home and outside of it. They differed from male batterers in that they did not use violence as a strategy of control and did not, in fact, exert control over their partners. Instead, their violence was an expression of anger. The rest of the women were responding to physical and/or emotional abuse either in the immediate context or prior abuse. Thus, none of the 95 women arrested and sentenced to a treatment group were intimate terrorists who used violence as one strategy for exerting power and control over a partner.

Flinck and Paavilainen (2010) interviewed 24 women identified through helping agencies, personal contacts, and key persons identified by other participants. Flinck and Paavilainen catalogued three major themes in the women's narratives: rejection of violence, justification of violence, and awakening and moving on (2010, p. 310). Most women rationalized and minimized their use of violence in their relationships. Unfortunately, these authors did not clarify whether "violence" was verbal or physical or how many of their respondents were truly acting in self-defense.

Dobash and Dobash (2004) interviewed 95 couples about violence in their relationship. This study is one of very few that included interviews with both members of a violent couple. The authors note the limitation of their sample, however, since all of the men had been convicted of a domestic violence offense. Dobash and Dobash report that the men were much more reluctant to describe their violent

conduct than were women and significantly underreported the severity and frequency of their assaults. They also found that most men were not afraid of or harmed by their wives' violence and instead viewed it as amusing or admirable. For example, one respondent, when asked how he felt about his wife's violence, said "It did me good. I was quite pleased she did it because I knew she was starting to stand up for herself" (Dobash & Dobash, 2004, p. 341).

This reaction to women's violence mirrors data from my own research. For example, one of the women I interviewed described how her partner enjoyed her violence:

> I blacked his eye one time, 'cuz I tried to defend myself by kickin' him, 'cuz he was sorta' attackin' me and I was on the passenger side, and I knew I couldn't fight him off, and I started kickin' him and I had bruises all up and down my leg and I gave him a black eye, and he thought that felt so good, I mean, that felt good to him, and he was really like proud o' me for standin' up for myself (Ferraro, 2006, p. 69).

Although there are more narratives by women of their own violence than there are narratives by men of their violent victimization by intimate partners, the available data is quite limited. It is puzzling that there are so few qualitative analyses of men's accounts of victimization given the ongoing insistence that IPV is a gender symmetrical phenomenon.

Sexual Coercion

Men and women differ significantly on one particular aspect of IPV. Sexual coercion and sexual humiliation are much more likely to be perpetrated by men against female partners. Scholars who advocate the violence approach and report gender symmetry do not discuss findings on sexual abuse and assault. The general social surveys that have included questions about sexual abuse in relationships, however, report that a high proportion of relationships characterized by intimate terrorism include sexually abusive behaviors by males against females. The National Violence Against Women Survey found that over their lifetimes, 7.7% of women and 0.3% of men had been raped by an intimate partner; in the year prior to the survey, 0.2% of women were raped by an intimate partner and fewer than five men reported rape in the previous year. Although the survey measured IPV among same-sex partners, it does specify the sex of the person who raped an intimate partner. Women who reported multiple incidents of rape by an intimate partner indicated an average of 3.8 incidents of rape by that partner each year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey found that nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have been raped at some time in their lives. (Black et al., 2011, p. 18). The vast majority of rape perpetrators for both women and men were male, 92.5% and 93.3%, respectively (Black et al., 2011, p. 24).Approximately one in ten women were raped by an intimate partner in their lifetime; the number of men reporting rape by an intimate partner was too small to provide a reliable estimate (Black et al., 2011, p. 40).

Men can be raped by women and experience sexual humiliation, coercion and pain at the hands of female abusers. However, all of the available data indicate that

sexual coercion and abuse within intimate relationships is overwhelming perpetrated by males. This form of IPV is also present in at least 20% of all relationships characterized by IPV. It thus should be considered in any discussion of gender symmetry.

In-depth qualitative studies of women who have experienced IPV provide more graphic evidence of the ways sexual coercion is gendered. My interviews with battered women charged with criminal offenses reveal experiences of brutality and routine sexual abuse (Ferraro, 2006). Many interviewees describe forced sodomy, some describe violent rape and sexual humiliation, and most refer to their inability to deny sex to abusive partners regardless of the disgust that develops after repeated abuse. Other qualitative studies have documented high levels of sexual violence in abusive marriages (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1987; Russell, 1990). Some researchers have raised the issue of shame and embarrassment as a reason for the lack of men's accounts of sexual violence by women. However, shame and embarrassment also inhibit women from reporting and discussing this form of abuse. In my interviews with battered women charged with crimes, I always wait until late in the interview to ask about sexual abuse and women find this aspect of their abuse the most difficult to discuss. We have many detailed narratives of women's experiences of IPV and the corresponding research for male victims does not exist. As researchers explore this topic, it will be important to investigate the ways that sexuality is deployed by women who abuse their intimate partners.

Reproductive Control and Abuse During Pregnancy

Forced pregnancies, abuse-related miscarriages, and violence during pregnancy are uniquely female experiences. Researchers have documented the correlation between IPV and unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages, repeat abortions, and poor pregnancy outcomes (Campbell, Woods, Couaf, & Parker, 2000; Moore, Frohwirth, & Miller, 2010). Those who argue that IPV is gender symmetrical have acknowledged average weight and size differences between female and male bodies, but have not addressed the ways in which the female reproductive system is linked to distinct differences in the gendered nature of IPV. Women who are trapped in violent relationships may want to limit their number of children, both for self-protection and protection of existing and future children. Men's denial or sabotage of contraception is a technique of control that limits women's options. Women may also suffer miscarriages as a direct consequence of physical abuse, a fact recognized by many states in statutes increasing criminal penalties for abuse during pregnancy.

Strangulation

In the last decade, attempted strangulation has been identified as a serious form of IPV and a predictor of lethal violence. It is a particularly terrifying form of physical violence that can produce unconsciousness within seconds and death within minutes.

Attempted strangulation may also result in life-threatening internal injuries that may not be immediately noticeable. Women experiencing attempted strangulation report feeling that their partners might kill them. One study of women in IPV relationships found that 68% experienced strangulation (Wilbur et al., 2001). The National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Survey found that 9.7% of women and 1.1% of men experienced "choking or suffocating" from an intimate partner over their lifetime. While it is possible for women to attempt to strangle a male partner, typical size and strength differences limit rates of women's use of this form of violence. A San Diego study of 300 attempted domestic violence strangulation cases found that 99% involved female victims of males. Only two cases involved female to male assaults (Strack, McClane, & Hawley, 2001, p. 305). This terrifying form of abuse is another example of the difference between men's and women's experiences of IPV.

A Male Victim of Intimate Terrorism

When we consider the intersecting influences of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and nation, it is clear that it is possible for a man to suffer the kinds of abuse we designate as intimate terrorism. Emory (pseudonym) was only 18 and had been arrested for attempted murder of his live-in girlfriend. Both were American Indian, living on the reservation, and they had two children. Emory's mother had died of alcoholism when he was thirteen and his father was also an alcoholic who could not care for him. His father signed legal guardianship to a 34-year-old woman, Vicky (pseudonym). Vicky had been sneaking into the house to have sex with Emory and rather than attempt to keep her away or prosecute her for sexual assault, his father simply relinquished his son to her. When Emory was 15, Vicky gave birth to their first child, and had a second child within 2 years. Emory was still attending high school and was a winning member of the wrestling team. He was very small, about 115 pounds, and she was large, about 165 pounds. Vicky was extremely jealous and possessive, constantly accusing Emory of cheating on her. She resented his participation in school and sports and demanded that he account for every minute of his time away from her. She beat him and threatened him and he stayed with her to protect his two children and due to his ongoing emotional attachment to her. On the night that he shot her, causing a minor injury, she had bitten his finger to the bone. Emory took a plea to aggravated assault and received a mitigated sentence due to his history of abuse by her and his otherwise stellar record. His teachers and wrestling coach wrote letters attesting to his character and to their knowledge of his abuse. I believe Emory was a victim of intimate terrorism. It was an unusual case because Emory was socially and legally subordinate to his female partner. He did not possess patriarchal privilege, or social privilege, but was trying his best to survive in a very hostile world. His case illustrates the ways that our presumptions about gender can be inverted due to racial, ethnic, cultural, health, and age differences among others. We cannot always assume that men hold a dominant social position vis-à-vis their female partners, despite structural patterns of gender inequality.

Research and Policy Implications

We have limited information about men's lived experience of IPV in adult heterosexual relationships. Survey data have provided results that prove that females are physically and psychologically abusive to their male intimate partners. Yet agency data from multiple sources reinforce our knowledge that IPV is highly gendered and that women are much more likely to suffer the negative physical and emotional consequences of IPV. We need much more narrative data to understand the unique experiences of men, the nature of their abuse, the factors that limit their options, and the services they require.

Too much of our research lacks consideration of intersectionality and the multiple dimensions of people's lives that shape their experiences of IPV. This failure has been particularly troublesome for socially marginalized and disadvantaged groups among whom the concept of "male privilege" is not equivalent to the privilege enjoyed by upper middle class, white, heterosexual, able bodied men. As Richie (2012) notes, mainstream scholarship on violence against women is discordant with the lives of many Black women and has both contributed to their ongoing personal and social oppression and neglected the requirement for social justice that must accompany effective remedies to all violence, not only IPV, against Black women. Her argument could be usefully applied to the full spectrum of violence against all people.

Scholars on both sides of the "gender symmetry" debate rely on outdated data and assumptions about masculinity and femininity that are unsupported by current and reliable research. Do men enact masculinity through violence toward women? Does the general public endorse men's right to establish dominance in their households through violence? Do women establish femininity through domestic labor and marriage? Are men too embarrassed to report IPV? These assumptions are often referenced in scholarship on IPV with citations to studies from the 1970s and 1980s. We require current data reflecting the dramatic changes in the economy, family, and gender relations, as well as the importance of intersectionality, in order to develop adequate theories and empirical studies of IPV.

From a policy perspective, none of the evidence of sexual symmetry suggests shifting to a gender neutral model of service provision for IPV. The programs that serve battered women occasionally receive requests for help from men, who they refer to counselors and occasionally the hotel voucher program that provides hotel rooms to victims of IPV. They are not, however, overwhelmed with requests for services from men. Minaker and Snider (2006) report that shelters for male victims of IPV were opened in Vancouver, British Columbia and in Britain but closed due to lack of clients. Even programs that are nominally designed to serve male victims report their clients are overwhelmingly women and children (Minaker & Snider, 2006, p. 761). It may be that male victims have unique and unmet needs, but we require evidence of those needs, just as evidence of demand was required to establish programs for women. Those programs continue to serve thousands of women each year, and to turn away thousands more due to inadequate funding (NNEDV, 2012).

Gender matters in our lives and in our experiences of IPV. Arguments about which sex engages in more violent acts distract us from the important work of generating the research, services, and policies that will end violence between intimate partners.

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Chapter 10
The Partner Abuse State of Knowledge Project: Implications for Law Enforcement Responses to Domestic Violence

John Hamel and Brenda L. Russell

Introduction

From the very beginning, the study of partner abuse, also known as *domestic violence*, *intimate partner violence*, or simply *partner violence* or *partner abuse*, has been fraught with spirited, often contentious scholarly debate. A common argument has centered around prevalence rates and methodology: While comparable prevalence rates across gender were found in the National Family Violence studies of the late 1970s and 1980s (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 2006/1980), other researchers found much higher rates of violence by men in crime surveys (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1979–2003; U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). However, although many advocacy organizations continue to cite crime surveys (Hines, in press), results of the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) and, other large national surveys and dating studies (Archer, 2000) have led to a general consensus among researchers that overall rates of violence among intimate partners are comparable across gender.

There is also widespread agreement that partner violence (PV) cannot be understood on the basis of physical abuse prevalence rates alone and must take into account verbal and emotional abuse, sexual abuse and stalking, the intent to dominate and the use of controlling behaviors, the overall context in which abuse is manifested, and its impact on victims. As advocates for battered women began pointing out years ago, failure to understand the nature and context of abuse

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compromises sound intervention and policy decisions, and puts victims at risk (Hansen & Harway, 1995; Pagelow, 1981; Yllo, 1988).

Research Trends

With the emergence of data on context, researchers have drawn disparate and sometimes contradictory conclusions and have settled into two broad "camps": those who view the data as evidence of gender symmetry (sometimes referred to as "family conflict" researchers; Dutton, 2011; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Straus, 1993, 1999, 2008) and argue for the importance of systemic factors in partner violence (Bartholomew & Cobb, 2010; Hamel, 2008; Hamel & Nicholls, 2007; Stith, McCollum, Amanor-Boadu, & Smith, 2012); and those who view the same data as further evidence that partner violence is highly asymmetrical, who describe themselves as "feminist" researchers.[1]

Before we explore the most up-to-date research on partner abuse, from the *Partner Abuse State of Knowledge Project* (PASK), we will focus on what self-described feminist authors have written, because prevailing attitudes on PV intervention, including criminal justice responses, are based largely on feminist ideology, a paradigm that has permeated attitudes among mental health professionals (Hamel, Desmarais, & Nicholls, 2007), attorneys (Dutton, Corvo, & Hamel, 2009), and family court mediators, evaluators, and judges (Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; Hamel, Desmarais, Nicholls, Malley-Morrison, & Aaronson, 2009); and evidenced by current laws regulating batterer intervention programs (Maiuro & Eberle, 2008) and decision-making among judges who issue orders of protection (Muller, Nicholls, Desmarais, & Hamel, 2009; Shernock & Rusell, 2012).

Feminist views have evolved over the years and are by no means monolithic. Certainly, many advocates continue to frame PV as a crime perpetrated by men upon women and object to scholarly research that would "degender the naming and framing of woman abuse" (Dekeseredy, 2011, p. 298). Advocacy web sites promulgate false and misleading statistics, including the oft-cited claim that "85% of domestic violence victims are women," despite the fact that it is based on less reliable and less representative crime surveys; or the claim that "every 15 seconds a woman is battered," even though this number includes minor and noninjury forms of physical aggression (e.g., being pushed) that may have happened only once and not part of a pattern of power and control behavior (Hines, in press). However other feminists, while not especially eager to correct these errors, have acknowledged that

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[1] This term has little to do with any individual researcher's commitment to gender equality, their allegiance to one political party or another, or how they vote; rather, it indicates a particular orientation toward partner violence (PV) research in which the role of gender is considered primary over all others (Winstok, in press).

"not every act of domestic violence, violence that is perpetrated within the home, is battering" (Pence & Dasgupta, 2006, p. 4).

Defining Battering

Still, it is a central tenet of feminist theory and research that only men engage in the type of violence known alternatively as battering, intimate terrorism or Controlling Coercive Violence (CCV) (Dalton, Drozd, & Wong, 2006; Pence & Dasgupta, 2006). In the remaining pages of this article, we will use the term "battering" for the sake of simplicity, and because this is still the more popular term. In the criminal justice system, individuals convicted of a minor, one-time incident of PV are called "batterers," and the programs they are mandated to complete are known as "batterer intervention programs." There are thus important clinical implications for what research tells us about battering, and implications for arrest and prosecution policies—including, as we will see, how law enforcement officers interpret and enforce *dominant aggressor* guidelines when responding to domestic violence calls.

Battering is generally defined as a pattern of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that is neither reactive nor part of a mutually escalating dynamic, but a means by which one person seeks to dominate another. Understanding the nature of battering requires an exploration of risk factors, motivation, prevalence rates of controlling behaviors, and its impact on victims. Contemporary feminist scholars argue that in each of these areas the research evidence supports a gendered view of partner abuse.

Over the past 25 years, numerous risk factors have been identified empirically to correlate with PV perpetration (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Medeiros & Straus, 2007). However, while some feminist researchers acknowledge the importance of childhood socialization, substance abuse and personality, their focus is squarely on cultural factors:

> Violence used by men against women who are their intimate partner has its historic roots in centuries of institutionally sanctioned dominance of one gender of the other in key spheres of heterosexual relationships such as economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and emotional. This use of global and methodical violence by men to rule over women in intimate relationships is called 'battering.' While it is not unusual for a woman to use violence in her intimate relationship it is exceptional for her to achieve the kind of dominance over her male partner that characterizes battering. Social conditions, which do not condone women's use of violence, patterns of socialization, as well as the typical physical disparities between the male and female of the species, make the woman 'batterer' an anomaly (Pence & Dasgupta, 2006, pp. 6–7).

In this line of thinking, the primary motive for men's intimate violence against women is to control; and because the control motive is linked to patriarchy and patriarchy benefits men, women's violence is presumed to be driven by other motives, primarily self-defense and resistance to such control (Dragiewicz, 2008; Kimmel, 2002). While women do sometimes initiate physical assaults against their male partners, they are presumed to do so more for expressive rather than instrumental

reasons, an anger-based reaction in a mutually escalating conflict (Hamberger, Lohr, Bonge, & Tolin, 1997; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan, & Snow, 2008).

The assumption that women are rarely controlling extends beyond motives for physical violence, to the kinds of nonphysical forms of abuse that are central to the concept of battering. Here, as in other areas of feminist scholarship, there are a variety of viewpoints. While some deny that women employ the kinds of control tactics depicted in the so-called Power and Control Wheel (verbal and emotional abuse isolating the partner, intimidation, economic abuse, emotional abuse, legal abuse, using children, etc.), others acknowledge that women do sometimes use these tactics in an attempt to dominate and control (e.g., Frieze, 2004; Johnson, 2011). In recent years, some feminist authors have begun citing research finding comparable rates of control tactics across gender, although they have been reluctant to embrace these findings and include them in their theories (Swan et al., 2008).

In the terminology of this new feminism, violent and abusive women are described as "partner aggressive" rather than "batterers" (Leisring, Dowd, & Rosenbaum, 2005). In Michael Johnson's well-known typology, "partner aggressive" women engage in "common couple" or "situational" violence, at rates equal to their male counterparts (Johnson, 2006, 2008), and the author acknowledges that this is by far the most prevalent kind of violence (Johnson, 2011). His typology has helped to clarify some of the issues around sampling (e.g., large national samples mostly identify situational violence, shelter and legal samples find higher levels of battering or CCV; see Straus, 1999 for an in-depth discussion). Unfortunately, his categories are not nearly as discrete as commonly believed (Simpson, Doss, Wheeler, & Christensen, 2007; Winstok, 2012) and his terminology suspect (e.g., the claim that "true CCV" cannot be found in large representative sample surveys; Dekeseredy, 2011), calling into question their usefulness and suggesting the need for more accurate definitions and a more nuanced theory.

Whatever their motives, it is universally acknowledged that women are typically smaller and physically weaker than their male partners and cannot defend themselves as readily nor inflict the same level of physical and emotional damage (e.g., depression, PTSD). Furthermore, because of this size and strength differential, women victims are more afraid of further violence than are men victims (Hamberger, 2005; Pence & Dasgupta, 2006), and this is presumed to alter relationship dynamics in favor of the man.

Overview of Current Research on Context: The PASK

The claims made by feminist researchers, like any other conclusions made from social science research, must be subjected to rigorous empirical scrutiny if they are to be accepted as the basis from which sound and effective laws and policies are to be built. Again, even among feminists opinions vary. We therefore seek to answer two broad questions. First, does the research evidence support the traditional feminist viewpoint about partner abuse—that it is perpetrated by men at much higher

rates than women, and that women's violence is usually in self-defense? And second, does the research at least support some contemporary views, in which women are acknowledged to engage in rates of physical violence at rates equal to men with bi-directional, mutually escalating violence the norm but "true battering" something that women rarely engage in?

The following research, focused on battering and the broader context of partner abuse, has been largely drawn from the Partner Abuse State of Knowledge Project (PASK), a 2300-page review of the domestic violence research literature in 17 topics areas, written by 40 scholars from 20 universities and research institutions in the USA, Canada, and Israel. The 17 PASK manuscripts appear in special issues of the peer-reviewed journal *Partner Abuse*, published between April 2012 and January 2013, and include summaries of approximately 2,000 peer-reviewed studies from the past two decades, making it the most comprehensive, up-to-date and reliable domestic violence database in the world.

Prevalence Rates of Physical Abuse and Extent of Bi-Directionality

Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, and Fiebert (2012a) conducted a large-scale review of the domestic violence literature to determine prevalence rates of physical partner violence in industrialized English-speaking countries. In their first review, on victimization, the authors examined 750 studies published between 2000 and 2012 and analyzed the results of the 249 studies that met their inclusion criteria. As with all of the PASK manuscripts, Desmarais et al. included studies from several types of sample populations. Their victimization review included large population studies; community samples; samples of middle school, high school and university students; clinical samples and some from cases in the criminal justice system. Across all samples, 23% of females and 19.3% of males reported to have been assaulted by a partner at least once in their lifetime. Victimization rates were higher for males among high school students, as well as for rates reported for the previous year. In their second review (Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, & Fiebert, 2012b), the authors examined rates of PV perpetration in 111 studies. Overall, 25.3% of the respondents were found to have physically assaulted an intimate partner, with women reporting somewhat higher rates than men (28.3% vs. 21.6%).

Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Misra, Selwyn, and Rohling (2012) examined 320 studies published after 1990, and focused on the 49 most methodologically-sound. Across all samples, 57.9% of the partner violence reported was bi-directional and 42.1% unidirectional. Of the unidirectional violence, 13.8% was male to female (MFPV) and 28.3% was female to male (FMPV), and among student samples MFPV rates were 31.9%. Within military and male treatment samples, only 39% of IPV was bi-directional; 43.4% was MFPV and 17.3% FMPV. Among respondents reporting IPV in nonmilitary legal or female-oriented, clinical or treatment seeking samples, MFPV was reported at similar rates to FMPV (13.3–14.4%), but rates of bi-directional PV were 72.3%, highest among all sample types. The authors also

found the extent of bi-laterality to be comparable between heterosexual and LGBT populations and between white and ethnic minority groups, except for African-Americans, among which rates of bilateral abuse were found to comprise about 62% of the total. The authors concluded:

> Clearly, bi-directional violence is a very common IPV pattern. It is, in fact, the most common pattern in most types of samples considered in the current review…The substantial rate of bi-directional violence found across all types of samples should necessitate that treatment providers in all settings acknowledge that many violent relationships, regardless of how they are identified, include acts of perpetration from both partners. Failure to assess and address this reality is likely to result in less effective interventions and a reduced understanding of how each partner in the relationship is experiencing the IPV; it may also interfere with the development of clinical rapport with all participants in treatment. This suggestion is augmented by findings from a recent study that showed that use of a bi-directional violence screening in contrast to a basic or healthy relationship screening, elicited more reports of recent victimization (p. 220).

Risk Factors: The Role of Patriarchy

The claim that patriarchal ideology and social structures are the principal or only risk factor for the perpetration of partner abuse may seem reasonable. In the most democratic Western countries, where women enjoy higher levels of political, economic, and social power relative to the rest of the world, men represent the great majority of political and industry leaders, and women continue to struggle for such basic rights as equal pay for equal work. On any given day, one need only read the newspaper or watch a television newscast to be reminded that most incidents of physical assaults are perpetrated by men.

A scholarly review of the literature by Archer (2004) confirmed that in a variety of settings men engage in higher levels of verbal and physical aggression than women. Thus, is it far-fetched to suggest that men, who are on the whole larger and stronger than women, more aggressive generally, and who dominate economically and politically, would benefit from these advantages and be the primary perpetrators of violence in the home? Another review by Archer (2006) on partner violence worldwide found that women's victimization at the hands of their husbands does indeed correlate with a nation's sexist beliefs and attitudes approving of wife-beating, and by low scores on the Gender Empowerment Index (GEM), which takes into account the proportion of women in administrative, managerial, professional, and technical posts; their total share of income earned; and the extent to which they are represented in national legislatures (United Nations Development Programme, 1997).

Clearly, a correlation between patriarchy and male-perpetrated PV exists, but this correlation is practically nonexistent in industrialized Western countries. In the 1990s, Sugarman and Frankel (1996) conducted a meta-analytic review of 29 studies examining patriarchal attitudes as possible risk factors for partner abuse in the USA:

Overall, the present findings give partial support for the ideological component of patriarchy theory when assessed at the individual level. While assaultive males are more accepting of the use of violence against their wives, evidence linking this violence to issues of 'traditional' gender attitudes or gender schema is limited. Essentially, the only component of patriarchy ideology that consistently predicts wife assault is the man's attitude toward violence, p. 31.

There is also no support in the empirical literature for the feminist claim that society is less accepting of partner violence perpetrated by women than by men. In fact, national and community surveys have found far greater public approval for FMPV (Simon et al., 2001; Straus, Kaufman-Kantor, & Moore, 1997). In a community survey in southern California, Sorenson and Taylor (2005) presented respondents scenarios of domestic violence situations. Across vignettes, the respondents judged assaults against women more harshly, given the same set of circumstances, and were significantly more likely to take contextual factors into account when presented with scenarios involving female perpetrators.

In light of such findings, comparable rates of PV within the home begin to make sense. The very same societal role expectations that stem from patriarchy and encourage men to assert themselves *outside* of the home encourage women to assert themselves *within* the home, traditionally their domain (Straus, 1999). The Archer review of domestic violence worldwide, previously cited, also found that in even the most patriarchal countries partner violence is perpetrated at high rates by wives upon their husbands. For instance, 37–50% of husbands in New Guinea are physically assaulted by their wives, for reasons having less to do with self-defense than sexual jealousy and anger over husbands not fulfilling their expected roles. In Jordan, 29.5% of students sampled at a university reported to having seen their father assault their mother, and 21.6% to having seen their mother assault their father. Similar findings have been identified by Lambert, Esquivel-Santovena and Hamel (in press) in their PASK manuscript on domestic violence worldwide, including reports by Straus (2008) from his International Dating Violence Survey (IDVS). Notably, the IDVS found that among dating university students in both highly patriarchal and less patriarchal countries PV rates are equal across gender, and that in the nearly all of the countries surveyed abusive women were as likely as men to seek dominance over their partner.

None of this is to suggest that patriarchal attitudes are not relevant to domestic violence in the USA. Clearly, many men harbor sexist, patriarchal beliefs, and some act out on these beliefs in abusive ways against their partners. However, it is also the case that there is no *necessary* connection between patriarchal societal structures and how couples resolve their conflict within the home. The feminist focus on societal power notwithstanding, there exist other forms of power, such as the individual power that one wields by virtue of having a stronger personality, or the relationship power that comes from being less dependent on one's partner than the other way around:

Even a senator who has power does not necessarily have power over his wife. If he is smitten, she has power over him. In general, the economic power of the average man and woman in society and the fact that our political leaders are male are not likely to be significant

factors in violent spousal conflicts. From this perspective, dyadic power has a much stronger effects on how spouses treat each other than structural power (Felson, 2002, p. 61).

According to Dutton (1994), who has spent a lifetime conducting research on abusive men, male-perpetrated PV is driven by personality, developmental factors and current stressors, and sexist attitudes are typically a justification for rather than a cause of the violence.

Risk Factors: Findings from PASK

At 297 manuscript pages, the PASK manuscript by Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, and Kim (2012) is the most comprehensive literature review on risk factors ever conducted. The authors looked at 877 peer-reviewed studies, of which 228 were analyzed and summarized into the online tables, with 170 derived from adult samples and 58 derived from samples of adolescents. The majority of the studies meeting the inclusion criteria were published after 1996. Based upon the previous research, the authors initially categorized possible risk factors according to: (a) contextual characteristics such as demographic, community, and school context factors; (b) developmental characteristics/behaviors including family-of-origin exposure to abuse, peer associations, psychological/behavioral factors (e.g., conduct problems, hostility, personality disorders, depression, substance abuse) and cognitive factors (e.g., hostile, pro-violent beliefs); and (c) relationship influences and interactional patterns. Studies were also grouped according to design—longitudinal versus cross-sectional (61% of the adult studies and 55% of the adolescent studies were cross sectional).

Consistent with the Sugarman and Frankel (1996) review, no significant correlations were found between PV and patriarchal beliefs per se; however, both hostile attitudes (by men toward women) and beliefs supportive of or justifying abuse (by either men or women) were low to moderate proximal predictors of PV. Among possible demographic risk factors, those predictive of partner violence included younger age, low income/unemployment, and minority group membership. No clear risk factors emerged at the level of neighborhood/community or school context. There were low to moderate correlations between childhood-of-origin exposure and PV. Among dating populations, factors found to protect against previous abuse were good parental involvement during adolescence, encouragement of non-violent behavior, and supportive peers; whereas negative peer involvement were predictive of teen dating violence. Similarly, the most methodologically sound longitudinal studies found conduct disorder in childhood and antisocial personality to be correlated highly with PV in adulthood, as did the presence of negative emotionality (anger, poor impulse control, jealousy) for both males and females. There were only weak associations between PV and other personality disorders and depression, although the effects for the latter were stronger for women. There were also a weak overall association between alcohol and PV, but a stronger association for drug use. Interestingly, alcohol use was more strongly associated with female-perpetrated than male-perpetrated PV.

Finally, there was a significant effect for dyadic factors, with low relationship satisfaction and especially high conflict predictive of PV. In light of (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al.'s, 2012) findings that in most domestically violent relationships the violence is mutual, the importance of dyadic factors cannot be overstated. The authors conclude: "Regardless of any differences in frequency and/or severity of engagement in IPV by girls/women and boys/men, overall there are more similarities than differences in risk factors" (p. 266).

Motivation

In a sweeping review of the literature, Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Adrianne McCullars, and Tiffany Misra (2012) examined studies in which respondents self-reported their reasons for perpetrating violence upon their partners. Of the 73 studies that met authors' inclusion criteria, 12 focused on power and control motivation, and of these, 8 reported statistics measuring significance in gender effects. Three found power and control to be a more motivating factor for men than for women, and one found this factor to be more motivating for women. In three studies, no significant differences were found across gender, and one reported mixed findings. However, effect sizes were small, and as the authors concluded: "There are few, if any, indications that there is a strong effect such that power and control is much more of a motive for men's as opposed to women's violence".

The authors found several studies that examined both self-defense and retaliation for previous abuse, but these did not clearly distinguish between the two motives. There were ten studies that focused specifically on self-defense as a motive, in which statistical tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between male and female respondents. Five of these indicated that women are more likely than men to report self-defense, one found the motive to be more significant for men, and no significant differences were found across gender in the remaining four.

Thus, more studies found significance in the female direction. However, it should be pointed out that overall rates of self-defense are actually quite low, for both men and women. In non-perpetrator samples, men report rates of self-defense from 0% to 21%, and women report rates between 5% and 35%. Ironically, the rates exceed 50% only among adjudicated perpetrators, who report rates of 50% (men) and 65.4% (women).

That these findings are difficult to interpret is not surprising, given that they are based upon self-reports:

> Individually, particular motives may be more acceptable to report than others; however, the acceptability of reporting specific motives may also vary by gender. For example, it might be particularly difficult for highly masculine males to admit to perpetrating violence in self-defense, as this admission implies vulnerability. Conversely, it may be more culturally sanctioned for women to admit to perpetrating violence as a result of jealousy related to their partner's infidelity than to admit to committing violence as a power and control strategy. A better understanding of gender socialization processes related to admission of motive would be helpful (p.).

Impact on Victims

For PASK manuscript #9 (Lawrence, Orengo-Aguavo, Langer, & Brock, 2012) of the University of Iowa examined the empirical research on the consequences of partner abuse on partners, including several previous literature reviews. Overall, they found that victims of psychological and physical abuse experience more physical injuries, poorer health outcomes, higher rates of psychological disorders, and poorer cognitive functioning compared to non-victims. These findings were consistent regardless of the nature of the sample (e.g., large population surveys vs. university dating samples), and with some exceptions and to varying degrees were generally greater for female victims compared to male victims.

Consistent and strong correlations were found between physical victimization and poorer physical health outcomes among samples of female victims, who are more at risk to suffer from chronic illnesses and to visit emergency rooms, and to be seen by physicians compared to women who were not victimized. Physical assaults negatively impact female victims' psychological well-being, increases the probability of depression, anxiety, PTSD and substance abuse; and victimized women are more likely to seek mental health counseling and take psychotropic medications. In addition, physically victimized women are more likely to miss work, have fewer social and emotional support networks, be less involved in their communities, and experience more negative life events. They are also less likely to be able to take care of their children and perform household duties.

There has been a paucity of research on the impact of physical victimization on male victims, and the studies that have been conducted have mostly focused on sex differences in injury rates. In cases of severe aggression (e.g., punching, kicking, using an object or weapon), rates of injury are considerably higher among female victims than male victims, and those injuries are more likely to be life-threatening and require a visit to an emergency room or hospital. However, when mild-to-moderate aggression is perpetrated (e.g., shoving, pushing, slapping), men and women tend to report similar rates of injury.

The authors also found a host of deleterious consequences for psychological abuse victimization. Psychological victimization is strongly associated with symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation, anxiety, self-reported fear and increased perceived stress, insomnia, and poor self-esteem. It is at least as strongly related as physical victimization to depression, PTSD, and alcohol use as is physical victimization, and effects of psychological victimization remain even after accounting for the effects of physical victimization. Psychological abuse also correlates in victimized women with risky sexual and health behaviors (e.g., greater likelihood of smoking,) along with poor occupational and social functioning.

Research on the psychological consequences of abuse on male victims has been very limited. Some studies have found no gender differences in the impact of psychological abuse on partners. For example, Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, and Ro (2009) administered the CTS2 in conjunction with the Multidimensional Measure Emotional Abuse Scale to 103 young Midwestern couples at different points during their early

years of marriage. Although there were no significant effects for physical abuse, psychological victimization predicted anxiety and depression equally for males and females. Other studies have yielded contradictory or mixed results.

Rates of Nonphysical Abuse and Control

Having examined the data on risk factors, motivation and the impact of PV on victims, we now turn to the last of the four areas central to a definition of battering—the prevalence of nonphysical abuse and control. Once again, we draw primarily from one of the PASK manuscripts, researched and authored by Carney and Barner (2012). The longest of the PASK manuscripts (330 pages), it analyzed 204 studies published since 1990, and focused on three broad types of nonphysical abuse: emotional abuse and control, stalking, and sexual coercion.

The research team organized findings around Johnson's construct of CCV, except that they limit their definition of CCV to nonphysical means of abuse and control, including sexual coercion and stalking, and define *battering* as a combination of CCV and physical violence. In this model, the authors take into account the *clinical* aspects of emotional abuse and control (internalized propensity for violence) as well as *relational* aspects (dysfunction in couples interactions). Fully 80% of all respondents—across national, community, university, clinical and legal samples—reported to have engaged in emotional abuse, categorized as either expressive (in response to a provocation) or coercive (intended to monitor, control and/or threaten). Overall, 40% of women and 32% of men reported expressive abuse; 41% of women and 43% of men reported coercive abuse.

In contrast, rates of sexual coercion and stalking were not nearly as prevalent nor gender-symmetrical. According to national samples, 0.2% of men and 4.5% of women have been forced to have sexual intercourse by a partner, and 4.1–8% of women and 0.5–2% of men report at least one incident of stalking during their lifetime. Gender differences are much less for sexual coercion when the definition is broadened to include taking advantage of someone while they are intoxicated or the use of emotional pressure and blackmail (e.g., insinuating the victim must be a homosexual if he doesn't agree to have sex). Lesser gender differences can also be found for stalking when all types of obsessive pursuit behaviors are considered, rather than confined to physical stalking.

Finally, rates of CCV and physical violence are higher in the direction of MFPV in studies examining the combination of physical assaults with sexual abuse and/or stalking, but similar across gender when the CCV measured consists of emotional abuse and control tactics.

To better understand the relationship between emotional abuse/control and physical violence, we now turn to two large, well-conducted population surveys. The National Violence Against Women Survey, originally conducted and analyzed by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), has been reanalyzed by other scholars since, among them Felson and Outlaw who (2007) looked at the NVAWS data of 15,000 currently

married or formerly married adults and focused on the coercive aspects of CCV, defined as: "Prevents you from knowing about or having access to family income even when you ask"; "prevents you from working outside the home"; "insists on knowing who you are with at all times"; "insists on changing residences even when you don't want or need to"; and "tries to limit your contact with family and friends." Among the key findings was that men were as coercive as women, and the relationship between use of coercive CCV and physical violence exists equally for both males and females. "Both husbands and wives who are controlling," the author concluded, "are more likely to produce injury and engage in repeated violence. Similar effects are observed for jealousy, although not all are statistically significant. The seriousness of the violence is apparently associated with motive, although the relationship does not depend on gender" (p. 404).

Having gained access to the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) of over 25,000 respondents across Canada, Laroche (2005) examined their victimization by a current or previous partner within the previous 5 years. The GSS survey had inquired about both physical assaults as well as both types of CCV behaviors: "Puts you down or calls you names to make you feel bad," "is jealous and doesn't want you to talk to other men/women," "demands to know who you are with and where you are at all times," "limits your contact with family or friends," "harms or threatens to harm someone close to you," "damages or destroys your possessions or property," and "prevents you from knowing about or having access to the family income, even if you ask." According to Laroche's analysis, which used Johnson's own categories, 3% of the women and 2% of the men experienced high levels of physical abuse and CCV, sustained physical injuries, expressed fear of their partner and made use of police and other services, and could therefore be categorized as victims of intimate terrorism.

Conclusions

Partner abuse is gender symmetrical in the prevalence of physical abuse and most types of emotional abuse and control, in the risk factors associated with its occurrence, and in its impact on children and the family system. Some emerging research also suggests that abuse is symmetrical in the impact that emotional abuse has on partners. It is asymmetrical, with women representing the greater share of victims, in the prevalence of physical stalking and sexual coercion and the impact of physical assaults, including injuries and the extent to which victims fear continued violence.

Research from self-reported motives for partner violence has been mixed. Some studies find no gender differences in reported rates of self-defense, while some find somewhat higher rates for women. Findings on control as a motive for physical aggression are also mixed, with some studies indicating comparable rates and others finding higher rates reported by men. However, the reader may want to take note of Carney and Barner's findings of gender symmetry in the perpetration of most types

emotionally abusive and controlling behaviors. While sexual coercion and stalking are serious crimes and correlate highly with physical assaults, they are not nearly as prevalent as most types of nonphysical abuse and control. Also worth noting is that absolute rates of self-defense are fairly low for women (and men).

Who should be considered a batterer depends to some extent on how the concept is defined and measured, and which aspects of PV are considered most important. If one considers the impact of physical violence to be the most important factor, then PV is asymmetrical and men would comprise the majority of batterers. However, when defined by the other relevant factors, PV is primarily symmetrical and there are a comparable number of batterers across gender. The most up-to-date research literature provides only limited support for feminist views about domestic violence. Still, *battering* remains an elusive concept. In his celebrated book, *Coercive control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, the feminist author Evan Stark writes:

> I do not downplay women's own use of violence either in fights or to hurt or control men or same-sex partners…Women of all ages assault male partners in large numbers and for the many of the same reasons and with much the same consequences as men. However, there is no counterpart in men's lives to women's entrapment by men in personal life due to coercive control (Stark, 2007, pp. 5–6).

In this quote, Stark seemingly contradicts himself—at first conceding that women use violence "to hurt or control men," but then argues that only women are "entrapped by men in personal life due to coercive control." The contradiction is only apparent, however, and Stark's line of thinking becomes clearer when one considers the examples presented in his book, in which "coercive control" is akin to hostage-taking or the dominance that a pimp has over a prostitute. Stark focuses much of his attention on the concept of entrapment, arguing that women are unable to resist men's control because of their greater size and strength and their fear of physical harm, and because of social conventions (patriarchy) that pressure women to remain in the home. Patriarchal explanations account for only a small part of the variance in partner aggression across gender; however, as Dutton (2006) notes in his book, *Rethinking Domestic Violence*, the most extreme cases of intimate partner terrorism, involving repeated rapes and severe physical assaults, rarely involve a female perpetrator. Clearly, while both male and female batterers seek to control their partners, male batterers can more readily enforce their control with physical violence.

Until further research is conducted in this area, it would perhaps be wise to not view "battering" as a unitary phenomenon. One possible solution would be to reconfigure Johnson's typology and current notions of battering, and posit three types. One, which we may call *common battering* (Hamel, 2005), resembles common couple/situational violence but includes a control motive and is roughly gender symmetrical. The others, drawing from Lawrence et al.'s findings on the differential gender effects of emotional versus physical abuse, and for which we may use Johnson's original term, *intimate terrorism*, would include *physical terrorism* (extreme violence and control, predominantly male-perpetrated) and *emotional terrorism* (dominance established primarily with emotional abuse and control, can be male or female-perpetrated). The example below depicts a case of female intimate partner terrorism:

Throughout his 8-month relationship with Laura, Bill's life has been hell. Laura is highly critical of Bill, and will force him to stay up until 3 a.m., browbeating him with complaints. As a result of not sleeping and Laura's harassing calls to his workplace, Bill was fired from his job. Now she refers to him as a "loser" and "a worthless piece of shit." When he shows disinterest in sexual relations, she ridicules him, questioning the size of his penis, and calls him a "faggot." During her rages, she bites, kicks, punches, slaps and throws objects at Bill. Altercations have led to serious injuries, and she once scratched his face so ferociously that he had to get stitches. When Bill attempted to call the police, Laura threatened to fabricate spousal abuse charges, claim self-defense, and have Bill arrested, boasting that, "they'll believe me because I'm a woman" (Hamel, 2005, p. 17).

Gender Stereotypes and the Criminal Justice System

As we attempt to process the incident noted above, it may appear odd that Bill is the victim of not just partner violence but, by most definitions of the term, *battering*. After all, aren't men strong, dominant, and able to protect themselves? While it is clear that Laura is the aggressor in this case, many people will have difficulty believing that her actions were not the result of self-defense, and will assume that Bill may just be a cad who is deserving of the punishment meted out by Laura. It is clear that perceptions of blame and who is deserving of protection are inherently tied to our shared cultural history and gendered stereotypes.

The stereotype of a woman is that of a passive and nurturing individual while men are viewed as dominant and threatening (Seelau & Seelau, 2005), making it difficult to believe that women are just as physically aggressive as men. The gendered traits often attributed to males (dominant, etc.) are also related to the role of abuser (Gerber, 1991). Therefore, it is no surprise that violence initiated by a woman may be perceived as self-defense (Simon et al., 2001) if it is even identified at all. As mentioned earlier, research suggests that society tends not to regard the problem as domestic violence when women abuse men (Adams & Freeman, 2002; Gelles, 1999; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005; Straus, 1993, 1994, 2005; Straus et al., 1997). Studies examining opposite-sex and same-sex relationships have found that in general, participants tend to lean toward aiding or protecting female victims of PV more than male victims (Harris & Cook, 1994; Seelau & Seelau, 2005). According to several studies, abuse directed toward heterosexual females is considered more serious (Seelau & Seelau, 2003; Russell, Ragatz, & Kraus, 2009, 2010), and harsher sentences are imposed on men who abuse women (Poorman, Seelau, & Seelau, 2003; Ragatz & Russell, 2010; Russell et al., 2009).

PASK authors (Shernock & Rusell, 2012) found evidence in the criminal justice system that supports the notion that female violence is more acceptable than male violence. The authors examined 90 scholarly articles addressing arrest, prosecution, and jury decision-making. Their results found that overall, the majority of studies on arrest and prosecution showed a tendency for male suspects to be arrested more than females, even when controlling for extent of physical injuries, and for men to be treated more harshly than women at each level of the criminal justice system

(Henning & Feder, 2005; Renauer & Henning, 2005). For instance, researchers (Henning & Feder, 2005) examining over 4,000 defendants revealed that being a female led to more lenient sanctions throughout the adjudicative process, and gender differences were maintained even when legal and extralegal variables were controlled. Renauer and Henning (2005) also found that not only female defendants were treated more leniently in arrests for PV when assaulting a male, but women who assaulted a male were also treated more leniently than women arrested for domestic offenses involving other types of relationships (i.e., familial and homosexual).

Similar findings have been found among national studies. For instance, Felson and Pare's (2007) investigation of survey data from the National Survey of Violence Against Women (and Men) found men were more likely to be arrested than women and police were unlikely to arrest women who assault male partners. State level data also tends to support the notion that men are arrested more often than women (Buzawa & Hotaling, 2000; Hamilton & Worthen, 2011). Buzawa and Hotaling's analysis of three towns in Massachusetts found that when a female was the perpetrator and a male was the victim, the female was five times less likely to be arrested than the male. While some studies found no gender differences in rates of arrest in IPV incidents (Eitle, 2005), there is more evidence to suggest rates of arrest are not symmetrical (Felson & Pare, 2007; Pattavina, Hirschel, Buzawa, Faggiani, & Bentley, 2007).

Finally, additional research assessing police officer's perceptions of arrest using vignettes to depict intimate partner violence revealed a tendency of police officers to find males more responsible (Cormier & Woodoworth, 2008), more antagonizing and hostile (Finn & Bettis, 2006) and less likely to arrest female assailants compared to male assailants (Finn & Stalans, 1997) in PV situations.

Changing Policies: Mandatory Arrest

Until only a few decades ago, domestic violence was not regarded as a serious crime in the USA. Driven by political pressure for legal reform from women's rights groups and battered women's advocates in the 1970s (Morley & Mullender, 1992), a series of costly legal cases (*Bruno v. Codd*, 1977; *Scott v. Hart,* 1976; *Thurman v. City of Torrington*, 1984) and research examining the deterrent effects of arrest (Sherman & Berk, 1984) led to modifications in domestic violence laws. There was increased political pressure for legal reform calling for changes in the criminal justice system including mandatory arrest policies to ensure equal protection under the law (Belknap, 1995; Stark, 1996), and police agencies around the country began to change the way they responded to domestic violence.

Modifications in existing laws helped officers to address these concerns and allowed them to respond more appropriately to the crime of domestic violence, including the granting to police officers the power to arrest for a misdemeanor that did not occur in their presence. Mandatory arrest laws, together with the enactment

of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1996, helped to enforce a more vigorous response from law enforcement (Hamel, 2011). Mandatory arrest laws dictate that law enforcement officers must make an arrest for all domestic violence incidents, regardless of how minor, without any evidence of who committed (initiated) the offense (Davis, 2008). If officers respond to a domestic incident and discover the abuse was minor, mutual, and no one is injured, they may make a dual arrest. In addition, states eliminated the choice to prosecute the abuser by enacting "no-drop" policies. Not surprisingly the number of dual arrests increased male arrest by 36% (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002) and the U.S. Department of Justice (Wells & DeLeon-Granados, 2002) reported the number of arrests for females in California to have increased by 446%.

The number of convictions subsequently rose 131% for men but increased over 1,000% for women. This led to many unintended effects including a clogging of PV cases in the criminal justice system (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002) as well as victim reluctance to report further assaults due to having had their input negated by no-drop policies (Hotaling & Buzawa, 2003). In addition, advocates for battered women became alarmed about the increase in female arrests, and the failure of police to investigate the context of the incident, ultimately leaving the charging decision to the prosecutor's office. In an effort to reduce the number of female and dual arrests and eliminate some of the unintended effects of mandatory arrest laws, many states have since adopted primary aggressor guidelines (Miller, 2001), directing police officers to arrest the primary (dominant or predominant) aggressor in the domestic incident.

Training Police Officers and the Difficulty in Identifying Primary Aggressors

The implementation of the primary (predominant or dominant) aggressor guidelines was designed to curb the arrest of female victims by taking into account the "relationship behind the assault" (DeLeon-Granados, Wells, & Binsbacher, 2006). As of 2000, 23 states had revised such laws.

Hamel (2011) conducted an in-depth content analysis of the California POST manual (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, 2010), which is required training at all police academies in California. He examined the guidelines in the training manual used to identify the primary aggressor and explored the extent to which the manual was gender inclusive. California defines dominant aggressor as the most "significant" aggressor (not as the first aggressor), which is in direct contrast with how police respond to other crimes (Davis, 2008). The manual offers 15 criteria for officers to consider: age, weight, height; criminal history; domestic violence history; strength-special skills; use of weapons; offensive and defensive injuries; use of alcohol and drugs; who called 911; who is in fear; presence of power and control; detail of statement; demeanor of parties and corroborating evidence. Hamel's (2011) analysis of the various criteria indicated that they were

vaguely defined and that no instructions were given on determining the relative importance of each, leaving officers struggling to identify the primary aggressor. For instance, the manual does not instruct the officer how to know "who is in fear" or how to recognize or even define "presence of power and control"; nor does it instruct officers that someone "who called 911" can also manipulate the system, and that "age, weight, and height of the parties" and use of martial arts training only matter if an individual actually uses them.

In addition, Hamel (2011) examined both the California and Maine training manuals to examine gender neutrality in the examples used to assist officers in identifying the primary aggressor. He found gendered language and examples in both manuals suggesting males were in every case deemed the primary aggressors. For instance, of the numerous examples provided in the California manual, not one depicted unilateral abuse by a female on a male, yet there were 34 examples of a male perpetrator and female victim, one example of abuse in a lesbian couple, and one example of mutual abuse. He found that the POST manual for Maine likewise focused on female victims, with seven out of eight training examples dictating that the male should be arrested as the primary aggressor. While gender-neutral language was used, gender bias against heterosexual men was apparent. Based on this preliminary investigation we felt it is important to further expand upon Hamel's (2011) analysis by proceeding to examine other state law enforcement training programs in reference to the identification of the primary aggressor.

The National Study

In an effort to further investigate how states define the primary aggressor and examine the criteria they use to assist in the identification of this phenomenon, we conducted an analysis of training manuals from 16 of the 23 states that have dominant aggressor laws (we were unable to obtain manuals in six states and eliminated one state due to extremely limited information). We then explored the extent to which gendered language was used in definitions, criteria, and training examples provided to assist officers in identifying the primary aggressor.

The study was based on an archival analysis of law enforcement officer training materials on domestic violence. The authors first developed a coding sheet based upon the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) train-the-trainer manual on domestic violence. A great deal of information in the manuals were coded, but for the sake of brevity in this chapter we focus primarily on the use of the term "battering"; reliance on theory and empirical research; definitions and criteria for primary aggressors; and sample statements and scenarios/vignettes and role plays used as training examples, and provide only a brief overview of the methodology used. Two independent coders who were blind to the hypothesis were trained to assess information in the manuals. Inter-rater reliability was computed among both coders for each state. The overall inter-rater reliability for all states was 0.95.

Coders took note of whether scholarly or peer-reviewed research was cited in the explanation of abuse throughout the manuals. They also identified whether the manuals referenced theories of abuse and noted which theories were used. If a Power and Control Wheel was used in the manual, coders were asked to identify whether the wheel was gender neutral, or depicted a heterosexual couple or same-sex couple.

The criteria used to identify the primary (dominant) aggressor were examined for each state. Training examples specifically referring to identifying the "primary aggressor" (scenarios, test questions, statements, etc.) used in training throughout the manuals were evaluated for context. For many of the training scenarios evaluated, the manuals provided information pertaining to who should be identified as the primary aggressor. Coding categories were therefore created to include the frequency of examples that represented heterosexual male only violence, heterosexual female violence only, bidirectional violence (which included examples of self-defense), and mutual violence among heterosexual couples and homosexual couples in which no primary aggressor was identified. Scenarios included in the primary aggressor section were not used in the frequency analysis of other sample statements and scenarios used in training noted below.

Lastly, coders evaluated all other sample statements and scenarios (vignettes as exercises, role play, investigation exercises, interviewing witnesses, examples of forms or reference to explanations of videos referring to abuse) used in training or testing. In each category, coders were asked to identify the relationship of the disputants (a female heterosexual being abused by a male; a male heterosexual being abused by a female; a male being abused by a male; a female being abused by a female; or an unknown relationship among disputants).

Reference to Battering and Use of Theory and Scholarly Research in Training Manuals

Seven states or 44% of manuals (GA, ME, MD, MO, NV, WA, WI) noted that they would use the term "battered woman" or "women who are battered" throughout their manual because women comprise the majority of victims of domestic violence.

A total of eight states included a power and control wheel in their materials (CA, FL, IA, ME, RI, SD, WA, WI). Seven of those states (87.5%) included a power and control wheel that represented heterosexual relationships (CA, FL, IA, ME, SD, WA, WI), all of which assumed the batterer to be male. Rhode Island was the only state to include a gender neutral power and control wheel. There was no evidence of a Power and Control Wheel for heterosexual female abusers, lesbians, gays, or transsexuals. Eight (50%) states (CA, IA, ME, MD, OH, RI, UT, WI) included information about Lenore Walker's cycle of violence. Only two states (CA, IA) addressed conflict theory. We then examined the use of empirical research or references to scholarly peer-reviewed research within the manuals. While most manuals included some state or national statistics on abuse rates, homicides, and theory, only

one state included three scholarly references (out of 31 resources) and another state included one reference of Seligman's research on learned helplessness.

Criteria Used to Identify the Primary (Dominant) Aggressor

Of the 16 states examined, 50% ($n = 8$) included definitions of "primary or dominant aggressor" and criteria used to identify the primary aggressor were provided by 14 states. Table 10.1 displays the most frequently cited criteria mentioned by all states in descending order of frequency, beginning with history of violence or domestic violence ($n = 14$ states). Eleven states addressed the degree of severity of injury and nine states emphasized identifying who is in fear of physical harm. Ten states suggested taking heed of offensive versus defensive wounds and seven states mentioned size and strength of physical attributes and threats of harm. Three states addressed the importance of witness statements and identifying a context of power and control. Three states addressed the need to protect victims, and some states noted additional criteria.

Training Examples Depicting Primary Aggressors

Table 10.2 categorizes 17 training examples from five states (CA, FL, ME, MO, RI) used to demonstrate how to identify the primary aggressor. There were four examples of unilateral violence, two of which portray a female as the dominant aggressor (one clear female dominant aggressor in FL and one from MO where it was clear the female threatened and aggressed, but no primary aggressor was identified—the unknown category); and there were two clear examples of male heterosexual violent dominant aggressors. Of the 12 cases of bilateral violence, one illustration identified the female (RI) as the dominant aggressor and nine identified the male as the dominant aggressor. There were two examples in which no primary aggressor was identified, and one same-sex example.

All Other Training Materials

When we examine training materials regarding sample statements, examples, role plays and scenarios used for training purposes throughout the manuals we find a total of 80 example/statements/role plays from four states (CA, MO, NV, RI). Of the 80 examples provided, two states (CA, RI) provided the majority of training examples (90%). Within those samples, a total of 53 (67.5%) portrayed a male aggressor and female victim. Six scenarios (or 7.5%) included a female aggressor and male victim, four scenarios (5%) showed a male aggressor and male victim and

Table 10.1 Criteria of predominant aggressor

	Criteria	States using criteria
1	History of violence or domestic violence	CA, GA, FL, ME, MD, MO, MT, NH, OH, RI, SD, UT, WI, WA
2	Degree or severity of injury	CA, GA, FL, ME, MO, MT, NH, RI, SD, UT, WI
3	Evaluating offensive or defensive wounds/whether one party acted in self-defense	CA, FL, GA, ME, MD, MT, SD, UT, WA, WI
4	Who is in fear, afraid, or terrorized of physical harm	CA, MD, MO, MT, NH, OH, SD, WA, WI
5	Assessing relative size and strength/physical attributes	CA, FL, GA, MD, MT, NH, WA
6	Threats of harm	MO, MT, SD, WA, WI
7	Evaluating witness statements	FL, RI, WI
8	Behaviors of power and control within the relationship	CA, ME, MD
9	Intent is to protect victims	MO, SD, WA
10	Other (use of alcohol or drugs; demeanor of parties)	CA, GA, WA
11	Evaluating verbal and nonverbal communication	FL, WA
12	Exhibits violent behavior	OH
13	Pattern of abuse evident	OH
14	Amount of force appropriate/reasonable	ME
15	Likelihood of future harm	ME
16	Use of weapons	CA

Note: Criteria are presented in descending order of frequency based on data above ($n = 13$)

five scenarios (6%) portrayed a female aggressor and female victim. The offender/victim relationship among the disputants was unknown in 14% ($n = 11$) of examples. Table 10.3 breaks down the number of scenarios by state and shows that 80% of training examples evaluated in CA depicted a male aggressor and female victim. Missouri had six examples, of which four (66.6%) portrayed male against female abuse. Rhode Island appeared to have a more even distribution of scenarios, wherein of the 33 scenarios, 54% ($n = 18$) illustrated male aggressors and female victims, 12% ($n = 4$) illustrated female aggressors and male victims, 12% ($n = 4$) were female aggressors with female victims and 12% ($n = 4$) represented male aggressors with male victims and three (9%, $n = 3$) portrayed unknown disputants.

Discussion

The national study of law enforcement training programs in 16 states with dominant aggressor statutes supports Hamel's (2011) preliminary findings from California. The manuals contain almost no empirical research, let alone up-to-date,

Table 10.2 Number of dominant aggressor scenarios by state and type of violence

State	Female only violent/ threatened violence (heterosexual)			Male only violent/ threatened violence (heterosexual)			Bilateral violent (heterosexual)			Same sex violent bilateral	Total by state
	Female dom ag	Male dom ag	Unknown	Male dom ag	Female dom ag	Unknown	Female dom ag	Male dom ag	Unknown		
CA				1				3	1		5
FL	1										1
ME			1					5		1	7
MO								1			1
RI				1			1		1		3
Total	1		1	2			1	9	2	1	17

Table 10.3 Number of additional Scenarios by state and type of violence

State	Total scenarios	M/F	F/M	M/M	F/F	Unknown disputant
CA	39	31 (80%)	0	0	1	7
MO	6	4 (66%)	1	0	0	1
NV	2	1 (50%)	1	0	0	0
RI	33	18 (54%)	4	4	4	3
Total	80	54	6	4	5	11

Note: *M/F* male aggressor/female victim, *F/M* female aggressor/male victim, *MM* male aggressor/male victim, *FF* female aggressor/female victim

Table 10.4 CADV websites for 17 states with dominant aggressor laws

Gender neutral definitions/focus of DV No statistics	Gender neutral definitions/focus of DV Incorrect/misleading statistics or limited to female victims	Gender neutral definitions/focus of DV Correct statistics	Gendered definitions/focus of DV No statistics	Gendered definitions/focus of DV Incorrect/misleading statistics or limited to female victims	Gendered definitions/focus of DV Correct statistics
Georgia Iowa Maine Montana Washington 5/17=29%	California Colorado Florida Maryland Nevada New Hampshire Utah Ohio Rhode Island 9/17=53%		Missouri South Dakota Wisconsin 3/17=18%		

scholarly, peer-reviewed studies, and aside from a few brief mentions of conflict theory, most of the manuals frame domestic violence in the traditional feminist paradigm, as represented in the Duluth Power and Control Wheel. Indeed, seven out of eight states that had a Power and Control Wheel (87.5%) identified batterers strictly as males, thereby rendering this instrument useless for officers when investigating a female abuser against a male, a female against a female, or a male against a male. For instance, tactics depicted on the wheel such as "Using Male Privilege" would not be applicable in female primary aggressor or same-sex couple situations. Overall, there is a complete lack of information on female abusers, male victims, or same sex couples, and when referring specifically to battering behavior, 44% of the manuals identified women as victims. Some of the states, Wisconsin for example, had a disclaimer of sorts stating that males were not always abusers and females were not always victims, and that abuse and violence does occur between same sex couples, but these disclaimers were never mentioned again.

Furthermore, the manual failed to suggest how an officer should handle an investigation in one of those situations, and neither did the manuals in any other state, with serious implications for the validity and reliability of these states' training programs.

The manuals provided 17 examples of how officers should identify the dominant aggressor. Among the examples involving unilateral violence, one depicted a female dominant aggressor and two depicted a male dominant aggressor. Of the 12 examples of bilateral violence, the man was deemed the dominant aggressor and targeted for arrest in 75% of the situations, and only one example involved same-sex partners. Overall, women were the dominant aggressors in only 12.5% of scenarios involving heterosexual couples. Among the other examples, 67.5% depicted a male aggressing against a female victim, 7.5% depicted a woman aggressing against a man, and 11% depicted same-sex violence. There is barely any attention given to same-sex couples, a significant shortcoming given the similar rates of gay and lesbian domestic violence when compared to heterosexual couples (Renzetti & Miley, 1996). The lack of information on same-sex domestic violence not only make it difficult for officers to understand this phenomenon, but also discourages victims from reporting or coming forward. The result is an underreporting of same-sex partner violence, with misleadingly low numbers that can only serve to keep attention away from this problem.

The preponderance of references and training examples identifying women as victims and men as perpetrators in no way correspond to actual rates of PV in the population. Most arrests are of the misdemeanor type, and as advocates for battered women have conceded, "not every act of domestic violence…is battering" (Pence & Dasgupta, 2006, p. 4). Yet even when more serious cases are considered—those that would meet the definition of battering and of relevance to the most widely used dominant aggressor criteria—the manuals seriously overstate PV as a gender crime. As Table 10.1 indicates, the most common criterion is "History of violence of domestic violence," and while men perpetrate most violence outside the home, rates of PV are the same across gender and previous PV history ought to be the primary consideration. "Degree or severity of injury," the second most popular criterion is only relevant when one or both parties are injured, and a study of 4,388 cases in both mandatory and discretionary arrest states indicates that 57% of arrests do *not* involve physical injuries (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2009.) Furthermore, rates of minor injuries, the most prevalent kind, are similar for men and women. With respect to the third most common criterion, "Whether one party acted in self-defense," rates may differ across gender but not by very much, if at all. The empirical evidence would suggest that "Who is in fear," the fourth most common criterion, applies more to female than male victims. If this were the only criterion used, the high number of male arrests would be justified. However, it is only one among many, and as discussed previously, difficult to assess. In some states, including California, one key criterion is "Behaviors of power and control within the relationship." By most definitions of the term, "power and control" behaviors are perpetrated at comparable rates across gender; and again, difficult, if not impossible, for police officers to assess at the scene of a crime.

The manuals reflect the most traditional gendered views of partner violence, views that have long been empirically discredited—more recently by feminist scholars themselves. Yet they continue to be promulgated by national and statewide advocacy organizations (Hines, in press), the very organizations that inform current policies on the criminal justice response to PV. If one looks specifically at the coalitions against domestic violence websites for the 17 states with dominant aggressor laws (NCADV, 2012) one finds that five have gender-neutral definitions of DV and no statistics; three have gendered definitions and no statistics; and nine (53%) have gender neutral definitions and incorrect/misleading statistics. Of the states that offered statistics, 0% offer correct statistics (see Table 10.4).

Unlike other violent crimes, partner violence typically occurs behind closed doors among individuals who are emotionally and economically bonded and often cannot easily escape an abusive environment. For these reasons, and because law enforcement officers were previously loathe to involve themselves in what they considered a private matter, the vigorous law enforcement response is a significant improvement over policies from previous decades. Criminal law as a whole acknowledges the importance of motive, mental status and effects of violence, so dominant aggressor guidelines that consider the relationship context may very well have some place in the law enforcement response to the very private crime of domestic violence. Clearly, there is a need to protect traumatized victims who are fighting back against ongoing abuse.

However, given that these guidelines are nearly impossible to correctly implement, and given that these laws are gender biased and based in feminist political ideology rather than sound social science data, it is not surprising that men are arrested at grossly disproportionate rates. Under the directive of mandatory arrest laws to arrest "somebody" but unequipped to determine with any level of precision whether one party is more dominant, police officers fall back on gender stereotypes and the training they have undergone, and proceed to arrest the man, perhaps seizing upon one of the few guideline that can be readily interpreted—"assessing relative size and strength" (see Table 10.1)—to justify their decision. Under these circumstances, the actual perpetrator will often escape arrest, and will be free to continue abusing their family members.

Beyond issues of gender bias, dominant aggressor guidelines are based on the false presumption that in most or all relationships there is one clearly dominant aggressor, a "batterer" versus someone who is either a victim or merely "aggressive," whereas findings from the empirical research literature suggest that most PV is mutual with no clearly "dominant" party. Unfortunately, dominant aggressor laws have resulted in a decrease in mutual arrests. Undoubtedly, arresting both parties may present prosecutors with some legal and practical problems (e.g., mutually arrested couples may refuse to testify against one another; what to do with the children if both parents are in jail). However, in the interest of both justice and advancing evidence-based and effective arrest policies the burden should be on legal system to find appropriate solutions.

Men cannot be assumed to be the default primary aggressors. We believe that in order for law enforcement to offer equal protection to all victims, and avoid possible litigation, officers must be provided with the most current research on PV. This

would necessitate changes in policy wherein law enforcement training acknowledges the contentious ongoing debate among scholars, is gender and same-sex inclusive, and based upon solid, empirically sound criteria. One option, suggested elsewhere, would have police officers issue a citation in cases of mutual violence where the dominant aggressor is not clearly apparent. In the interest of safety, police would have the discretion to separate the parties and/or issue a mutual but temporary order of protection. A final determination regarding criminal charges would be made by the district attorney after each party had individually been subjected to a thorough assessment, conducted by a knowledgeable mental health professional. Until such changes are made, law enforcement officers are placed in a precarious situation, having to make arrest decisions based on training made from an uninformed gendered perspective which may only tell half of the story. This is not fair to police, nor to defendants who may be falsely arrested, and hinders our effort to reduce domestic violence in our communities.

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Chapter 11
Examining the Impact of Familial Paternalism on the Sentencing Decision: Gender Leniency or Legitimate Judicial Consideration?

Mari B. Pierce

In the USA there are more than 1 million women under the supervision of the criminal justice system at any given time (Glaze & Bonzcar, 2009). Nationally, the rate of incarcerated women is at an all-time high (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2012; West, Sabol, & Greenman, 2010). According to U.S. Department of Justice, the number of women in prison has grown 48% since 1995, a rate nearly twice that of men in prison (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004). The War on Drugs and increased sanctions for drug-related offenses is largely believed to be responsible for this increasing growth (Chesney-Lind, 1995; Durham, 1994). Even with these significant increases women defendants remain much less likely to receive sentences of incarceration than male defendants (Albonetti, 1997; Bernstein, Cardascia, & Ross, 1979; Bickle & Peterson, 1991; Croyle, 1983; Daly, 1987b, 1989; Kruttschnitt & Green, 1984; Kruttschnitt & McCarthy, 1985; Spohn & Beichner, 2000; Spohn, Welch, & Gruhl, 1985; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006; Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Streifel, 1993; Steffensmeier, Kramer, & Ulmer, 1995; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998; Zingraff & Thomson, 1984). Considering the evidence showing that women are often sentenced less harshly than men, research continues to examine the cause of gender disparities in judicial sentencing decisions.

Research contends that the causes of the gender disparity may not actually be due to gender leniency but rather judicial considerations of the risks and costs of punishing female versus male defendants due to the different gender roles. These gender roles may actually attribute to the disparity of sentencing decisions between males and females because females are more commonly considered the sole care-taker and provider of emotional support for their children, whereas the male is more often the economic support of their children. Therefore, differences in sentencing

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may actually be due to the greater level of informal control females have in their lives due to their roles that can reduce the risk they pose to society and increase the costs associated with their incarceration.

Hagan, Simpson, and Gillis (1979) developed a theory of informal control based on Black's (1976) theory of law to explain gender differences in adolescent delinquency. This theory suggests that individuals with more informal control require less formal controls. The opposite is also true meaning that those with less informal control require more formal control. Kruttschnitt (1982) and Kruttschnitt and Green (1984) extended Hagan et al.'s (1979) theory to explain gender differences in adult crime. They suggest that women's role in the family tends to subject them to more informal control than men. Informal control of women often consists of economic dependence (either dependence on the state, their spouse or child support) and role of mother. Kruttschnitt (1982) and Kruttschnitt and Green (1984) argue that motherhood exerts more social control over females than fatherhood exerts over men. As women defendants are more likely than male defendants to be a primary parental caregiver of children (Daly, 1989) the risk of females reoffending is often viewed by judges as less than that of fathers and men and women without family responsibilities.

Daly (1987a) recognized that while informal social control was a component of gender disparity in sentences, informal social control alone was not adequate at explaining the variance in sentences between male and female offenders. In an attempt to try and further explain the disparity in sentences between male and females Daly (1987a) interviewed judges and found that judges not only spoke about informal controls but also about the potential severe consequences of incarcerating offenders with children. Judges tended to express concern with the "innocent victims" who were punished by incarceration of a parent who was a significant provider to the children. This implied that judges did not want to punish the children of defendants who were a primary caregiver to the children (Daly, 1987a). Since females are more likely to provide crucial familial responsibilities they are sentenced less harshly than their male counterparts. When judges are making these sentencing decisions they are taking into consideration the social and emotional costs of incarcerating the caregiver.

Familial Paternalism Theory

Daly (1987a) found that simply being a parent did not qualify for leniency but rather that judges wanted specifics about the role the defendants played in the lives of their children. Judges indicated that it was not enough for defendants to simply have children, but they also had to be performing as a parent with parental responsibilities. Daly's (1987a) examination found that judges tended to be making decisions based on suitability of the parental roles. Fathers with families were expected to be providing economical support to his family while mothers were expected to be the major caretaker of the children. In single-parent homes it was expected that the mothers rather than fathers were caring for their children (Daly, 1987a). Based on these findings,

Daly (1987a) introduced familial paternalism as a more comprehensive explanation of the gender disparity in sentencing decisions. Familial paternalism theory integrated Kruttschnitt (1982) and Kruttschnitt and Green (1984)'s social control theory with a social cost perspective to explain gender disparity in the sentencing decision.

Familial paternalism suggests that sentencing disparities that appear to be gender based were not based on gender but rather the different familial responsibilities of men and women offenders. In the US culture, the mother is typically seen as the most influential parent in a child's life and arguably the mother–child relationship is the most important (Bowlby, 1952). Traditionally, fathers have been seen as the financial providers who make available the means for the mothers to supply the support and necessities for their children. Because women are more likely to be the central caretaker, their removal from the family is seen as more disruptive than removal of the father. The emotional roles that mothers are more likely to provide are more difficult for society to replace than the economic role that fathers are more likely to supply. Therefore, women's removal from their families tend to result in a higher social cost: the sentencing leniency often afforded to women offenders is less about their gender and more about reducing societal costs.

Daly (1987b) examined 2,004 New York City criminal court decisions over a 4 month period (1974–1975). Data was collected from pretrial service reports, state criminal files and court dockets in order to assess gender differences in the sentencing decision. Four familial categories were examined: single defendants with no dependents, single defendants with dependents, married defendants with no dependents, and married defendants with dependents. When including family structures within the analysis of sentencing disparities, Daly found that male and female defendants without families (single defendant with no dependents) did not show significant sentencing disparities. Both men and women (both married and unmarried) with dependents were more likely than married defendants without children to receive the most lenient sentence. Daly further found that single men with dependents were less likely to be incarcerated then men without dependents. Daly suggests that these men may have been shown the same level of leniency as women parents because they performed the role of primary caretaker. Therefore, familial paternalism theory further suggests that defendants with family responsibilities (rather women or men) will be sentenced more leniently than defendants without family responsibilities. Judges view these offenders as deserving of leniency out of consideration for the negative consequences to the children and increasing societal costs if the offender is incarcerated. In addition, ties to the family will place informal control over these defendants and reduce their risk of reoffending (Daly, 1987a).

Support for Familial Paternalism

Daly (1989) further assessed familial paternalism by examining the influence of family status and gender on sentencing decisions in both Seattle, Washington and New York City, New York. In the Seattle study, using a dataset consisting of 500 defendants (20% female), from a King County felony court, Daly sought to examine

two hypotheses: familied defendants will be treated more leniently than nonfamilied defendants and familied women will be treated more leniently than familied men. Family ties was measured by whether the defendants cared for or supported children, lived with parents or siblings, had close contact with relatives, or were married and lived with a spouse. The family variables were categorized in four family statuses: single without family ties; single with family ties; separated and economically or emotionally offer support to others; married with family ties (includes those with or without children); separated and no family ties. Daly's (1989) analysis revealed that women defendants were twice as likely as male defendants to have family ties. In addition, evidence was found that men with various familial ties were more likely than women to receive sentences of incarceration. In the New York study, Daly (1989) measured family status as single without dependents, single with dependents, married without dependents, and married with dependents. Married women with and without dependents received shorter sentences than single women without dependents and men with dependents were treated more leniently than men without dependents. Consistent with Daly's (1987a) earlier findings it appears that judges responded to familial and childcare responsibilities and not gender when making sentencing decisions. This study further found that men and women defendants without family ties did not show significant disparities in the sentencing decision.

Familial paternalism theory predicts women will be granted greater leniency for their family roles. This leniency stems from women's higher propensity to have dependent children (Daly, 1989), the greater social control women's roles place on them, and the greater social cost associated with their removal from the family. Consistent with this perspective, several quantitative and qualitative studies have found that defendants with family ties are less likely to be incarcerated. It can thus be argued that judicial familial paternalism largely results in gender disparities within the sentencing decision.

Eaton's (1983) judicial interviews and courtroom observations in London, England also provide evidence that judges consider family responsibilities when sentencing defendants. Although prior to the formation of familial paternalism, Eaton found that magistrates took into consideration the impact of sentencing on the defendants' family responsibilities. In fact, Eaton found the majority of observed cases argued for sentencing leniency based on family responsibilities of the offender. Similar to Daly's (1987b, 1989) findings, women and men defendants without family responsibilities did not show disparate treatment in sentencing. Consistent with informal social control perspective, Eaton found that the presence of children or marriage symbolized stability and increased social controls and subsequently decreased the odds of an offender committing another offense. In a related vein, Mann (1984) found during courtroom observations, that when making sentencing decisions, judges commonly questioned women, but not men offenders, about their family status and who cared for their children. Judges further inquired about women's ability to pay fines and the effect that those fines would have on the welfare of their children. Similarly, Crew (1991) found that having children reduced women's sentences.

Bickle and Peterson (1991) examined the impact of family status on sentencing decisions for male (*N*=390) and female (*N*=124) defendants convicted of forgery in eight federal courts (1973–1987). The variables of interest were collected from presentence investigation reports of the Federal Probation Department and records from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. Family status was measured by whether defendants had dependents that relied on them for economic and emotional support, and the degree of support the defendant supplied. Bickle and Peterson (1991) also considered the defendants' means of financial support (whether the defendant was able to provide for themselves and their family or received some sort of economic assistance) and the defendants' living arrangements (live with spouse, children or other relatives, live alone, or will be incarcerated for another offense) as a measure of informal control. Overall, when other relevant variables were controlled, females were less likely to be sentenced to prison than men.

Spohn and Beichner (2000, p. 155) tested the hypothesis "that female and male offenders will face similar odds of incarceration once crime seriousness, prior criminal record, and other legally relevant factors are taken into consideration" by examining 7,070 felony sentencing decisions in Chicago, Illinois, Miami, Florida and Kansas City, Missouri. Through reading each court file, they found that women with dependent children were less likely to be incarcerated than women without children. Koons-Witt (2002) also found a significant relationship between gender and having dependent children within Missouri. Women with dependent children were significantly less likely to go to prison then women without children or than men (with or without children).

Freiburger (2010) used factorial surveys to assess familial paternalism on judges' sentencing decisions. Vignettes were sent to Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas judges with defendant genders and familial roles randomly assigned. Familial roles varied from defendants with no children, defendants with children but did not offer any financial or emotional support, defendants with children who did offer financial support but not emotional support, defendants with children who offered emotional but not financial support and defendants with children who offered both emotional and financial support. Freiburger (2010) tested six hypotheses and found that female defendants were less likely to be incarcerated then men. She further found that defendants with children offering emotional support (either with or without financial support) received a reduced likelihood of being incarcerated. Interestingly, she found that parents who provide the sole economic and financial support role had the greatest decrease in likelihood of incarceration than any other familial role, indicating that single parents who perform sole caregiver duties are granted the most leniencies. Freiburger (2010) also found that offering financial support alone did not reduce the likelihood of incarceration further emphasizing the belief that replacing an economic provider is much easier than replacing a emotional provider (Daly, 1987a).

Freiburger (2011) further assessed the influence of gender and informal social controls on the sentencing of drug and property offenders in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Informal social controls and social costs were measured by employment status, living with a partner, caretaker (has children, does not live with or care

for child, does not live with or visit child, visits child, lives with child) and financial role variables (has children, does not provide any financial support, lives with child and works, pays child support). Freiburger (2011) found that those who had children that lived with the defendant had a 48% reduced odds of incarceration than defendants without children. Further analysis found that females living with a child had an 81% decreased odds of being incarcerated over those who did not have children where men living with a child did not have significantly lesser odds of incarceration than those without children.

Pierce and Freiburger (2011) examined whether having children influenced the sentencing of a defendant who has been charged with criminal child neglect. This study expanded on familial paternalism in order to assess whether leniency is granted to those who commit crimes against children, in particular crimes against their own children. The data for this study was collected within a county's District Attorney's office, with all defendants charged with forms of criminal child neglect in 2009. The results of this study show that a majority of those convicted were married with children and that being a parent decreased the odds of incarceration. This finding supports familial paternalism, which suggests that defendants with children receive leniency in the sentencing process; however, this finding opposes Daly's suggestion that some crimes indicate to the judge that the defendant is a bad parent and should not be granted leniency for his or her familial responsibilities. However, the finding in this study may be due to the type of crime analyzed. Leniency may still be granted as parents who neglect their children are often seen as victims of the economy and not malicious individuals (Brown, 1987). The courts may, therefore, remain heavily influenced by the social costs of the defendant's incarceration and want to provide defendants, who are parents, an opportunity to avert these costs.

Not all identified studies assessing familial paternalism found a statistical significant relationship between family status and sentence outcome. The failure to find a statistically significant relationship may indicate the magnitude of certain types of offenders on the decision to grant familial leniency. These findings may indicate the importance of being viewed not only as a parent but being viewed by the court as a "good" parent. In essence, if judges view the crime of a particular offender as a violation of parental roles the more likely they would be to hand out a sentence of incarceration.

Familial Paternalism: Not Just a Parent but a Good Parent

In an analysis of the sentencing of white-collar offenders, Wheeler, Weisburd, and Bode (1982) failed to find statistically significant relationship between number of dependents and incarceration rates for women or men. The failure to find a statistically significant relationship may be due to their focus on only white-collar offenses. Mothers convicted of white-collar crimes would have been in the work force and may not have been performing their motherly duties in a traditional manner. Therefore, judges may not have viewed them as "good" mothers.

Zingraff and Thomson (1984) found that females convicted of child abandonment received sentences that were significantly longer than the sentences of their male counterparts. Zingraff and Thomson suggest this difference may be explained by paternalism and the evil women hypothesis. Because this crime violates the traditional female role, judges view these women as deserving of harsher punishment. However, it is possible that this can also be explained by familial paternalism theory. Judges could certainly view these offenders as "bad" mothers. As Daly (1987a) found, only those parents who performed their parental responsibilities would be granted leniency. Judges, bothered with women's failure to perform their motherhood responsibilities, may hand out an even harsher punishment to these defendants. Women who have children and then abandon them have pushed their responsibilities of motherhood onto the state. As the state is already caring for the children a sentence of incarceration for the mother would not present any greater social cost than was already being paid by the state. In addition, by abandoning their children, these women have removed any inform social controls due to having dependent children.

Lack of familial leniency for defendants with children is most apparent when examining sentencing decisions of drug offenders. Familial leniencies that have been found in defendants with parental responsibilities are not being found when similar type defendants are convicted for drug offenses. Harsher sentencing policies for drug possession and drug delivery have resulted in more women entering the criminal justice system in recent years. Mumola's (2000) Bureau of Justice Studies report found that of parents confined in state correctional facilities, drug offenses was the number one offense for which mothers were incarcerated and the second most common offense among incarcerated fathers. The high rate of parents in prison for drug offenses may indicate that drug offenders, in particular mothers with children, are not provided the same leniencies. This suggests support for Daly's (1989) contention that parents who are perceived as "bad" parents are not being viewed as having the same informal control that can reduce the risk they pose to society and increase the costs associated with their incarceration.

Spohn (1999) examined the effect of gender and the presence of dependents on the sentencing of convicted felony drug offenders in Cook County, Illinois throughout 1993. The results found that women received greater leniencies than men; however, preferential treatment of women were only granted to women without dependents. Analysis of defendants with children revealed no gender difference. It may be possible that women and men convicted of drug offenses were viewed by judges and court officials as "bad" parents and were equally likely to be sentenced to prison. Harper, Harper, and Stockdale (2000) also failed to find a statically significant effect for having children in their analysis of the sentences of defendants trafficking drugs through an airport in England. Again, the offense of drug trafficking may affect judge's view of the defendant as a "good" parent.

Farrell's (2004) quantitative examination of federal sentencing guidelines found that male and female drug offenders with dependents were equally likely to be granted an upward departure. Freiburger (2011) found that for defendants with

children, convicted of drug offenses, did not receive a significant reduction in the odds of incarceration compared to defendants without children convicted of drug offenses. These results may further support that those convicted of drug offenses may receive an automatic label as a "bad" parent and this label delineates any potential court leniency.

Conclusion

Research examining judicial leniency of women has found evidence to indicate that gender disparity is due to the influence of family role variables (e.g., Kruttschnitt, 1982; Kruttschnitt & Green, 1984; Kruttschnitt & McCarthy, 1985). These findings led to Daly's (1987a) development of familial paternalism theory. According to the theory of familial paternalism, judicial leniency is largely due to the increased level of social costs and social control that the female's role in the family places on her not simply her gender. This theory has received support in both qualitative and quantitative studies.

Through the various studies, it has become evident that the gender effect found in judicial decisions often masks the real reasons for the disparity. Sentencing guidelines have been implemented to reduce discretion in the court process. These sentencing guidelines have been designed to eliminate disparity caused by a variety of factors, including gender. However, decisions to limit judicial discretion seem to have been based on misconceptions regarding the true cause of gender disparity. This is illustrated by the findings found in several studies that gender disparity can be reduced by including familial variables (Bickle & Peterson, 1991; Daly, 1987b, 1989; Freiburger, 2007, 2010, 2011; Kruttschnitt & Green, 1984; Kruttschnitt & McCarthy, 1985; Pierce & Freiburger, 2011). Therefore, the belief that unvarying sentences can equate fairness is restrictive and may be misleading. In fact, policy that creates a uniform system of justice may not be in the best interest of society.

Specifying undeviating sentences to all defendants would initially appear to achieve systemic fairness. However, when concern is not given to defendants who hold familial responsibilities, the family is also punished. Therefore, the punishment of defendants with familial responsibilities will have a much greater overall impact than the punishment of defendants without familial responsibilities. "This makes fairness a very complex issue, as fairness that is applied at the global level could potentially fail at achieving fairness at an individual level" (Freiburger, 2007, p. 217).

Judicial discretion, rather than uniform sentences, could actually benefit society by saving society the emotional and fiscal costs associated with removing individuals who are essential to the family unit. Policy makers must determine if societal consequences, in addition to individual consequences, should be used to determine sentencing decisions. While it may be easy to take a stand against imbalanced treatment in the sentencing decision based on extralegal variables, such as gender, it is much more difficult to oppose disparate treatment that may be in the best interest of society. Society must determine if reducing society's social costs (e.g., reducing

recidivism rates and collateral damages to children) is worth differential treatment. If reducing society's social costs are considered a justifiable sentencing consideration then judges should consider these factors; however, this would require changes to many state's sentencing guidelines.

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