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Research on Domestic Violence in the 1990s: Making Distinctions

This review of the family literature on domestic violence suggests that two broad themes of the 1990s provide the most promising directions for the future. The first is the importance of distinctions among types or contexts of violence. Some distinctions are central to the theoretical and practical understanding of the nature of partner violence, others provide important contexts for developing more sensitive and comprehensive theories, and others may simply force us to question our tendency to generalize carelessly from one context to another. Second, issues of control, although most visible in the feminist literature that focuses on men using violence to control "their" women, also arise in other contexts, calling for more general analyses of the interplay of violence, power, and control in relationships. In addition to these two general themes, our review covers literature on coping with violence, the effects on victims and their children, and the social effects of partner violence.

She wandered the streets, looking in shop windows.
Nobody knew her here. Nobody knew what he did when
the door was closed. Nobody knew.

(Brant, 1996, pp. 281)

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In everyday speech and even in most social science discourse, "domestic violence" is about men beating women. It is estimated that somewhere in the neighborhood of two million women in the United States are terrorized by husbands or other male partners who use violence as one of the tactics by which they control "their woman." Most of the literature on domestic violence is about men controlling women in intimate relationships through the use of violence. This is not, however, the only form of violence between adult or adolescent partners in close relationships, and our review will therefore cover "partner violence" in a broad range of couple relationships, including the marital, cohabiting, and dating relationships of same-gender and opposite-gender couples.

Our reading of the literature on partner violence has led us to the conclusion that two broad themes of the 1990s provide the most promising directions for the future. The first theme is about the importance of making distinctions. Partner violence cannot be understood without acknowledging important distinctions among types of violence, motives of perpetrators, the social locations of both partners, and the cultural contexts in which violence occurs. We will argue that it is difficult to find a question about partner violence for which these distinctions are not relevant and that our ability to draw firm conclusions and to develop effective policies is broadly handicapped by a failure to make distinctions among types of partner violence.

Control, the second promising theme, is most visible in the feminist literature, which has argued that partner violence is primarily a problem of men using violence to maintain control over "their women," a control to which they feel they are entitled and that is supported by a patriarchal culture. We would agree that "domestic violence" or "battering" as it is generally understood by professionals and by the public is primarily a problem of heterosexual male control of women partners. Nonetheless, battering does happen in gay male couples and in lesbian couples, and some heterosexual women do physically assault their male partners and there are forms of partner violence that are quite different from the systematic violence that we call battering.

THE CENTRALITY OF DISTINCTIONS

Types of Violence Against Partners

One of the clearest illustrations of the importance of making distinctions among types of violence arose in the context of the long-standing debate about "battered husbands," and the alleged gender symmetry of partner violence. Johnson (Johnson, 1995, 2000a) argued that at the relationship level, one can distinguish four major patterns of partner violence, which he called "common couple violence" (CCV), "intimate terrorism" (IT), "violent resistance" (VR), and "mutual violent control" (MVC). The distinctions are based not on behavior in a single incident, but on more general patterns of control exercised across the many encounters that comprise a relationship, patterns that are rooted in the motivations of the perpetrator and his or her partner.

Common couple violence. The first type of partner violence identified by Johnson is that which is not connected to a general pattern of control. It arises in the context of a specific argument in which one or both of the partners lash out physically at the other. In a series of empirical papers, Johnson has demonstrated that CCV (compared to IT) has a lower per-couple frequency, is not as likely to escalate over time, is not as likely to involve severe violence, and is more likely to be mutual (Johnson, 1998, 2000a, 2000b). He also has shown that virtually all of the violence in a general sample is CCV, suggesting that research using such samples may be relevant only to this type of partner violence.

Intimate terrorism. The basic pattern in IT is one of violence as merely one tactic in a general pattern of control. The violence is motivated by a wish to exert general control over one's partner. IT involves more per-couple incidents of violence than does CCV, is more likely to escalate over time, is less likely to be mutual, and is more likely to involve serious injury. Nonetheless, IT is not merely "severe violence," as defined in much of the literature. There is considerable variability of severity in both CCV and IT, with some CCV involving homicides and some IT involving a rather low level of violence (Johnson, 2000a). The distinguishing feature of IT is a pattern of violent and nonviolent behaviors that indicates a general motive to control.

The controlling behaviors of IT often involve emotional abuse (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990). Kirkwood (1993) provided detailed insights into the processes of emotional abuse that can gradually alter women's views of themselves, their relationships, and their place in the world. Chang's (1996) detailed accounts of psychological abuse also illustrate the processes through which women become demoralized and trapped in abusive relationships. Renzetti's work (1992) on battering in lesbian relationships demonstrates that emotional abuse is not the sole prerogative of men.

Violent resistance. We prefer the term "violent resistance" over "self-defense," because "self-defense" has meanings that are defined (and changing) in the law. Given that the issue of VR has been central to the debate about the gender asymmetry of partner violence and that there is considerable discussion of the "battered woman" self-defense plea in the law, research on the general dynamics of VR is surprisingly meager. One might almost think from the literature that the only women who fight back are the ones who kill their partners (Browne, Williams, & Dutton, 1999; Roberts, 1996). Johnson (2000a) reported that VR is perpetrated almost entirely by women, but he presented no detailed analysis of its characteristics. There is some evidence elsewhere regarding the immediate dangers of VR (Bachman & Carmody, 1994), and Jacobson & Gottman (1998, see pages 160–162) viewed VR as one important indicator that a woman will soon leave her abusive partner. It is time that we give more research attention to the incidence and nature of VR in partner violence.

Mutual violent control. Johnson (1999, 2000a) identified a couple pattern in which both husband and wife are controlling and violent, in a situation that could be viewed as two intimate terrorists battling for control. The pattern seems to be rare and we know little about it, but it raises questions again about the importance of distinctions. Until recently the literature on mutual violence was either framed in terms of "self-defense" or "mutual combat," (Saunders, 1988), but the little we do know about VR, MVC, and mutual violence in CCV suggests a need for much more focused research on what it means when both partners in a relationship are violent.

General implications. We have given these distinctions considerable attention because in our review we found our understanding of the literature to be improved by making distinctions among types of violence. For example, the marital violence literature is rife with studies that claim to show that partner violence is gender symmetric, if not perpetrated more often by women than by men, continuing to leave readers of this literature with the impression that men and women are equally abusive. Almost all of these studies, however, use the sort of general heterosexual sample in which aggregated violence only appears to be gender symmetric because it lumps together IT, which is essentially perpetrated by men; CCV, which is perpetrated slightly more often by men than by women; and VR, which is clearly perpetrated more often by women than by men (Johnson, 2000b). Similarly, Macmillan and Gartner (1999) demonstrated the centrality of such distinctions in causal research. They found three qualitatively distinct forms of spousal violence against women, two of which they identified with CCV and IT. When they used these classes as dependent variables in multivariate analyses, the models for CCV and IT were clearly different.

Types of Perpetrators

We see a major convergence in the many attempts to develop typologies of male batterers, suggesting three types: one involved in CCV and two types of perpetrators of IT.

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) referred to these types as "family-only," "generally-violent-antisocial," and "dysphoric-borderline." It appears to us that the family-only type may involve primarily CCV because they were described by the authors as involved in "the least severe

marital violence and . . . the least likely to engage in psychological and sexual abuse" (p. 481). The other types (whom we see as involved in IT) come to their terrorism through two quite different developmental histories and psychological profiles, one type broadly sociopathic and violent, the other deeply emotionally dependent on their relationship with their partner (see also Dutton, 1995).

The types identified by Jacobson and Gottman (1998) in a sample of men that seems to include only intimate terrorists bear a striking similarity to generally-violent-antisocials and dysphoric-borderlines. The sample of couples they studied had identified themselves as involved in violent relationships, and Jacobson and Gottman reported that practically all of the men were emotionally abusive (p. 155) in addition to being violent. The Jacobson and Gottman research is unique in that in addition to being interviewed, observed, and given psychological tests, the couples were monitored physiologically during arguments in the laboratory. One group of men (labeled memorably as "cobras") exhibited a "cold" physiology even in the heat of vicious verbal attacks on their partners, with heart rate and other physiological indicators that suggest a chilling internal calmness. The characteristics of this group and their personal histories resembles those of generally-violent-antisocial batterers. The second group identified by Jacobson and Gottman ("pit bulls") was more physiologically in tune with the emotional displays involved in their verbal attacks on their partner, and in other respects they resembled the dysphoric-borderline type in that they are dependent and needy. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's hypotheses about the development of different types of batterers have received general empirical support in a number of empirical tests (e.g., Hamburger, Lohr, Bonge, & Tolin, 1996; Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman, & Stuart, in press).

Types of perpetrators within types of violence. We believe that major advances in our understanding of the origins of partner violence will come from bringing together and extending the work on types of violence and types of perpetrators. These distinctions have already demonstrated their usefulness in understanding the causes of battery and in developing treatment programs for batterers (Saunders, 1996), and the Jacobson and Gottman (1998) book is an accessible and compelling demonstration of the importance of such distinctions in matters as far ranging as the childhood precur-

sors of partner violence, the developmental course of violent relationships, the process of escaping such relationships, and matters of public policy and intervention strategies. Most of this perpetrator work is focused on male IT, but we believe it might also be useful to attempt to develop typologies of male and female CCV perpetrators as well (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., in press).

Types of Relationships

The 1990s have also seen an explosion in information about violence in different types of partner relationships. There is now a massive literature on dating and courtship violence and a growing literature on violence in cohabiting relationships. Some of this work has focused on same-gender relationships.

Same-sex relationships. Although a recent issue of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services* was devoted to violence within both male and female same-gender relationships (Renzetti & Miley, 1996), we still seem to know more about lesbian battering than we do about violence in gay men's relationships, in part because of the important role of the women's movement in generating research on domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1992) and in part because of Claire Renzetti's (1992) groundbreaking research on lesbian relationships. Her conclusion that psychological abuse was present in all of the violent relationships that she studied, that these abusive partners were extremely threatened by their partner's efforts to establish independent friendships and activities, that jealousy was a major problem, and that power and control were major sources of conflict all suggest to us that her sample tapped into IT. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of women in Renzetti's sample (68%) indicated that their partner's dependency was a source of conflict suggests a similarity to Jacobson and Gottman's "pit bulls" and Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's dysphoric-borderline type. Thus, it may be possible that some variation or elaboration of the models developed with heterosexual couples can provide insight into violence in lesbian couples.

Some of the most striking differences between lesbian battery and heterosexual battery have to do with links to the external environment of the relationship. Threats of "outing" women to family members or employers are common forms of psychological abuse and are of course unique to

same-gender couples; battered lesbians are evidently less likely to be supported by friends, who often refuse to believe that a lesbian can be an abuser; and social service workers are often un-supportive as well, assuming that only men batter their partners (Renzetti, 1992).

Although the women's movement has made efforts to educate service providers and the public about lesbian battering (Elliot, 1990), specialized services are rare and research is still quite limited. We still know little about the varieties of partner violence in same-gender relationships (for example, the extent of CCV or IT). The inability to collect information from random samples means that we know almost nothing about incidence. These gaps in our knowledge are troubling not only because they leave policy makers and service providers somewhat on their own, but also because research on partner violence in diverse types of relationships could be an important source of insights into the inadequacies of our "general" theories. Both Merrill and Renzetti (Merrill, 1996; Renzetti, 1992) have pointed out aspects of partner violence in same-gender relationships that seem to fly in the face of theories developed in a heterosexual context. This may be an arena in which much can be gained in terms of the testing and revision of general theory.

Dating and courtship. Research on partner violence in heterosexual dating and courtship relationships began early in the 1980s and has continued throughout the 1990s (Lloyd & Emery, 2000). Although we appear to know a good deal about what was initially a most surprising incidence of partner violence in dating relationships, this literature is as plagued by lack of distinctions as is the marital violence literature. Frequent statements in the literature that there is as much violence in these relationships as there is in marriage imply that there is as much IT, but because the data are drawn from general social surveys, they probably include only CCV.

Rather than review this extensive literature here, we would simply like to point out that it has been a rich source of theoretical insight regarding partner violence. A great many of the multivariate analyses of the correlates of violence have been done in this context (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992; Foo & Margolin, 1995; Riggs & O'Leary, 1996; Riggs, O'Leary, & Breslin, 1990; Tontodonato & Crew, 1992; Wyatt, 1994). Stets's theoretical work on the centrality of control issues grew from her work on dating violence (Stets &

Pirog-Good, 1990), and Lloyd & Emery's (Lloyd & Emery, 2000) recent book develops a general theoretical framework for understanding physical violence in dating relationships that could be used to address partner violence in all types of relationships.

Cohabitation. Serious discussion of the extent of partner violence in cohabiting relationships can be traced to Stets and Straus's (1990) puzzling finding that cohabiting couples reported more violence than did either married or dating couples, even with controls for age, education, and occupation. Recent studies in New Zealand and Canada also report a higher rate of violence in cohabiting relationships, compared with dating (Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, & Silva, 1998), and marriage (Johnson, 1996). Although in the United States, the National Violence Against Women Survey appears to present data on cohabitation (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999, pp. 27–29), the data actually refer to lifetime victimization of respondents who have a history of cohabitation and do not allow for easy interpretation. One possible complication in this cohabitation literature is the confounding of age, length of relationship, and marital status. In Canada, Johnson (1996, pp. 166–168) found that the difference between married and cohabiting unions held only for couples who had been together for 3 years or less.

Stets and Straus (1990) introduced three possible explanations of marital status differences: social isolation, autonomy–control, and investment. Although Stets (1991) claimed to demonstrate that social isolation “explains” the effect, the only measure of social isolation that works in her analysis is “ties to spouse,” as measured by the respondents' report of the chances that they will separate. We think it makes more sense to see this as a measure of commitment to the relationship, suggesting only that low commitment is either a consequence or a cause of partner violence in cohabiting relationships. Gaertner and Foshee's (1999) data support this interpretation, showing a negative relationship between commitment and violence in dating relationships. They also reported data relevant to the investment explanation, finding that both duration of relationship and reported investment are *positively* related to violence, the opposite of what Stets and Straus predicted.

Stets and Straus's data actually show that the pattern of more violence occurring in cohabitation than in marriage does not hold for couples in which only the man was violent (p. 240). Perhaps

the pattern is relevant only to CCV. Macmillan and Gartner (1999) reported that marriage is negatively related to CCV, but positively to IT. Perhaps marriage, although not a license to hit, is for some people a license to terrorize. Once again, we see an area in which distinctions among types of violence would help to clarify matters.

Demographics, Social Location, and Identity

Gender. The most longstanding and acrimonious debate in the family literature involves the issue of gender symmetry of partner violence (Archer, 2000; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Kurz, 1989, 1993; Straus, 1990a, 1993). Although papers continue to appear regularly that claim to demonstrate that women are as violent as men in intimate relationships of one kind or another, or in one country or another, a careful assessment of the literature and a look at the few studies that do distinguish among types of violence both indicate that IT is almost entirely a male pattern (97% male in Johnson, 2000a). The evidence seems to indicate that VR is primarily perpetrated by women (Browne, Williams, et al., 1999; Cascardi & Vivian, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Johnson, 2000a; Ogle, Maier-Katkin, & Bernard, 1995; Saunders, 1988). CCV appears to be roughly gender symmetric (56% male perpetrators in Johnson, 2000a; see also Milardo, 1998).

Most studies define gender symmetry in terms of the percent of men and women who have perpetrated at least one act of violence in their relationship. To call this gender symmetry, however, is to ignore different male and female frequencies of violence and the different physical consequences of male-to-female and female-to-male violence. As for the former, Johnson (1999) showed that in 31% of the relationships involving “mutual” CCV, the husbands were clearly more frequently violent than were their wives, compared with 8% in which the wives were more frequently violent. With regard to injury, the more serious physical consequences of male-to-female violence are well-established (Brush, 1990; Sorenson, Upchurch, & Shen, 1996; Straus, 1990a, 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999).

A number of studies have focused on the possibility that the causes of violence are not the same for men and women. Foo and Margolin (1995) reported in a dating context that a set of standard predictor variables explains 41% of the variance in male-to-female violence, but only 16%

for female-to-male violence (see also Anderson, 1997).

Although work on the gender symmetry issue is of interest in itself, it has also provided an important site for both methodological developments and theoretical insights into the nature of partner violence. Methodologically, the debate has prompted a number of developments, including a new version of the CTS (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), a major reconsideration of the interview context of assessments of violence (Straus, 1999; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999), and discussions of couple-data issues (Szinovacz & Egley, 1995). The debate has also generated attention to the sampling issues involved in various research designs (Johnson, 2000b; Straus, 1990a).

With regard to theory, the debate has prompted Straus to consider some of the social roots of women's violence toward their male partners (Straus, 1999). He discussed factors such as women's assumption that their violence is harmless (Fiebert & Gonzalez, 1997) and that under some conditions slapping a man is an appropriately "feminine" behavior. Johnson (1995) also provided a rudimentary list of gendered causal factors in partner violence, and he argued that some combinations of them might produce CCV, whereas others produce IT. Other theoretical work of the decade that has arisen from a focus on gender includes theory focused on the broader social context (Dobash & Dobash, 1992, 1998; Straus, 1999), social construction of gender models (Anderson, 1997; Dobash & Dobash, 1998), and evolutionary models (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Wilson & Daly, 1996, 1998). Of course, gender also is centrally implicated in the literature on gay and lesbian relationships in ways that may prompt further theoretical development as we are forced to ask ourselves which aspects of the gendering of partner violence are a function of male-female differences and which are more related to the specifically gendered nature of heterosexual relationships (Renzetti & Miley, 1996; West, 1998).

Race and ethnicity in North America. Most of the earliest race and ethnicity scholarship did not give serious attention to ethnic differences in experiences of abuse or responses to it, focusing instead primarily on Black-White differences in incidence (Crenshaw, 1994). That literature has continued into the 1990s with survey research regularly indicating higher levels of partner violence among Blacks than among Whites (Anderson, 1997; Ca-

zenave & Straus, 1990; Greenfield & Rand, 1998; Sorenson, 1996; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999). Recent work has broadened ethnic comparisons to cover other groups, however. For example, only 13% of Asian and Pacific Islander women in the 1995-1996 National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, pp. 22-26) reported having been physically assaulted by an intimate partner. For White women, the figure is 21%, for African Americans 26%, for American Indian and Alaska Natives 31%, and for Mixed Race 27%.

There are two important questions we have to ask about these differences. First, what kind of violence are we talking about? These surveys do not make distinctions among the various types of violence discussed above. We do not know if higher incidence of violence reported in these surveys necessarily means more IT. It is more likely to be CCV. We cannot develop good theories about race differences until we make such distinctions. Second, we have to ask about the extent to which "race" differences have less to do with race and ethnicity than they do with socioeconomic status, as has been shown in National Family Violence Survey data (Cazenave & Straus, 1990). Lockheart's (1991) more recent survey of 307 African American and European American women, drawn equally from high-, middle-, and low-income brackets, found no significant racial differences in rates of violence.

Beyond questions of incidence, there is now a growing literature that focuses on more institutional and cultural matters. Are the dominant social institutions addressing domestic violence effectively in various cultural and ethnic contexts? Are the services women need available in their communities? Are kin, friends, and community willing to face issues of domestic violence and to work to eliminate it? Are the psychological and social consequences the same in different groups? For example, Eng (1995) noted that acknowledgment of battering is highly shameful for many immigrant Asian women who are socialized to believe that marital failure is always the fault of a wife (see also Song, 1996). Gondolf, Fisher, & McFerron (1991) examined 5,708 Texas shelter residents and found no significant differences in the amounts of violence experienced by White, African American, and Hispanic women but did find that Hispanic women were relatively disadvantaged economically and tended to endure battering for a longer time than White and African American women. Crenshaw (1994) was one of the first scholars to identify gaps in domestic vi-

olence services for women of color and insensitivity to issues of race and ethnicity in developing policy agendas such as mandatory arrest. Such issues are beginning to be addressed for a number of major ethnic and racial groups in North America, including American Indian people (Bachman, 1992; Fairchild, Fairchild, & Stoner, 1998; McEachern, Winkle, & Steiner, 1998; Norton & Manson, 1995; Tom-Orme, 1995; Waller, Risley-Curtis, Murphy, Medill, & Moore, 1998), Asian and Pacific Island people (Abraham, 1995; Ho, 1990; Song, 1996; Yick & Agbayani-Siewert, 1997), Latino groups (Perilla, Bakerman, & Norris, 1994), and African Americans (Dennis, Key, Kirk, & Smith, 1995; Marsh, 1993; Richie, 1996).

As this literature grows, it will be important to attend to two general questions. First, can we identify social forces that shape experiences similarly across subsets of "minority" groups, such as similarities produced by common experiences of exclusion and domination, or the experience of recent immigration (Cervantes & Cervantes, 1993; Root, 1996; Sorenson, 1996)? Second, what are the unique ways in which each particular racial and ethnic context shapes domestic violence, its consequences, and community responses to it? Even within "standard" racial and ethnic categories, there are important distinctions that cannot be ignored. In one illustration of the importance of making such distinctions, Sorenson and Telles (1991, pp. 3) reported no difference between non-Hispanic Whites and Mexican Americans in their sample until immigration status was taken into account: "Mexican Americans born in the US reported rates 2.4 times higher than those born in Mexico." This finding can serve to remind us not only of the importance of differences among specific groups in North America, but also of matters of cultural roots and immigrant status that have global implications (Kane, 1999).

Global complexities. We can only begin to address the global complexity of partner violence in this review, involving as it does issues of cultural differences, economic and social structure, effects of conflict and warfare, and the position of immigrant and refugee populations. To begin, we can simply draw attention to a number of overviews of the international scope of partner violence (Heise, 1996; Heise, Raikes, Watts, & Zwi, 1994; Human Rights Watch, 1995; Klein, 1998; Levinson, 1989; Sewall, Vasan, & Schuler, 1996; United Nations, 1989). In addition, scholarly work in English on domestic violence in specific other coun-

tries is beginning to become available (Alexander, 1993; Dawud-Noursi, Lamb, & Sternberg, 1998; Fawcett, Heise, Isita-Espejel, & Pick, 1999; Glantz, Halperin, & Hunt, 1998; Gondolf & Sheshtakou, 1997; Grandin & Lupri, 1997; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Handwerker, 1998; Kalu, 1993; Ofei-Aboagye, 1994; Schuler, Hashemi, Riley, & Akhter, 1996; Stewart, 1996; Tang, 1994). Finally, we would like to address briefly a few specific international issues.

First, in a global context domestic violence has now been defined as a human rights issue (Richters, 1994). Second, there appears to be considerable variability in the incidence of partner violence in various countries (Heise, 1994). Of course, we do not know what type of violence these statistics reference. Furthermore, as we consider these clues to the social and cultural roots of partner violence, it will be important to monitor our interpretations for ethnocentrism. For example, Bhattacharjee (1997) questions the assumption of Western White feminism that Southeast Asian women are more subservient to husbands.

Third, a literature is developing that explores the effects of war, internal conflict, and terrorism on matters related to partner violence. McWilliams (1998) framed the issue as one of "societies under stress," using the case of Northern Ireland as her major example. Community resources are diverted to the conflict, a higher priority is placed on keeping families together, public agencies may be controlled by the "enemy," calls for ingroup solidarity militate against making internal conflicts such as domestic violence public, and "warrior" images reinforce patriarchal ideology. As we read McWilliams' chapter, we were intrigued by the possibility that many of these same processes might be relevant to racial and ethnic minorities in the United States who are under siege, albeit a "siege" that generally falls short of the open intergroup violence that applies in the cases McWilliams discusses.

In countries recovering from war, pronatalist policies may limit access to contraceptive devices or reduce women's ability to procure employment that might allow them to escape an abusive situation. Additionally, people suffering from the continuing effects of occupation, such as the majority of indigenous groups worldwide, have high rates of interpersonal and domestic violence related to the destruction of culture and oppressive economic and social conditions (McWilliams, 1998, p. 123-124). Scholarship on the effects of colonization, decolonization, war, and development on

rates and forms of partner violence is in its infancy. Filling this gap is an important task for the next decade of research.

Finally, immigrant and refugee status (sometimes a result of flight from the kind of societal stress discussed above) creates special difficulties for women trying to escape abusive relationships. Immigrant women experiencing violence in their homes often are restricted by language barriers, fear of deportation, lack of transportation, fear of loss of child custody, and cultural taboos (Hogeland & Rosen, 1990).

Summary

Some distinctions are central to the theoretical and practical understanding of the nature of partner violence (e.g., types of violence and perpetrators), others provide important contexts for developing more sensitive and comprehensive theories (e.g., types of relationships or gender differences), and others may simply force us to question our tendency to generalize carelessly from one context to another. Such distinctions were a major theme of the domestic violence literature of the 1990s, and they must continue to be so into the next decade.

CONTROL

A second major theme of the 1990s has been control. Whatever the immediate precipitator of violence may be, it generally gives the perpetrator some measure of control, but once again we see distinctions among types of violence as central. The control may be specific, focused narrowly on winning a particular argument or having one's way in some narrowly defined matter (CCV). In other cases the control may be broad, involving the establishment or maintenance of general control over one's partner (IT, MVC). Sometimes the control issue is one of wresting some modicum of control from a generally abusive partner (VR). We believe that the most progress will be made in our understanding of domestic violence by assuming that the origins and dynamics of the different kinds of control motives are not the same.

In our review of this literature, we want to make a somewhat arbitrary distinction. Some writers have come to their focus on control issues through an analysis of the patriarchal roots of wife beating (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Although this is our own primary orientation, we believe that a full understanding of partner violence must go beyond this

feminist analysis to ask questions about the role of control in the generation of violence that may have little to do either with patriarchal traditions and structures or with individual patriarchal motives.

The Gender Context

Johnson's (1995) discussion of IT as violence embedded in a general pattern of control tactics draws heavily on the work of the Duluth shelter activists Pence and Paymar (1993). The "power and control wheel" that is the heart of the Duluth educational model for intervention with batterers is drawn directly from the accounts of women who have come to shelters for help. Kirkwood's (1993) study of women who left abusive relationships also relied heavily on an analysis of the dynamics of control. Dobash and Dobash's (1992); analysis of the dynamics of wife beating was likewise formed by the perspectives of battered women, in this case women whom they interviewed in their early research in Scotland, but they also drew heavily on a more sociological and historical analysis of the patriarchal form of the family and other institutions. They now are beginning to explore control issues from the perspective of the violent men themselves (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Their arguments regarding the importance of context refer not only to the relationship context in which a particular man may feel he has the right to control "his woman," but also the more general context in which relations between men and women are formed and in which other institutions react to men's violence against their female partners.

Whereas Dobash and Dobash, as well as other feminists, tend to move the analysis up from the relationship to the broader societal context of wife beating, Jacobson and Gottman (1998) moved down to the individual level, asking questions about the childhood roots of the personalities of the two types of perpetrators whom they identified among their sample of men who batter their partners. Similarly, other psychologists who focus on wife beating but do not rely heavily on a feminist analysis search for the developmental roots of men's violent behavior toward their female partners (Dutton, 1995; Dutton & Starzomski, 1993; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., in press; Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997).

Prospects for a More General Analysis of Control

The problem with the analyses of control discussed above is that they are so focused on male

IT that they probably provide little insight into CCV or VR, and they seem to have little relevance for any type of partner violence in same-gender relationships. We need a more general approach to issues of violence and control that can encompass IT in heterosexual relationships but also go beyond it.

Beginning with a study that focused on the connection between relationship control and violence, Jan Stets and her colleagues have developed two lines of analysis of the role of control in intimate relationships (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990). One line of work focuses on a "compensatory model" in which it is assumed that individuals act to maintain a reasonable level of control in their lives, becoming more controlling of their partner when their level of control is threatened either within the relationship itself (Stets, 1993, 1995b) or in other areas of their life (Stets, 1995a). In a slightly different approach, paying more attention to individual differences, the concepts of "control identity" and "mastery identity" were explored in terms of their relationships to gender, gender identity, and controlling behavior in intimate relationships (Stets, 1995c; Stets & Burke, 1994, 1996).

If this literature could be brought back to its initial connection with violence, and perhaps informed more by feminist analyses of the gendering of control issues in relationships, it might provide a context for major theory development. We expect that the most fruitful approaches will bring together a variety of levels of analysis from the societal through the interpersonal to the individual (for example, see Lloyd & Emery, 2000).

SOME OTHER CONTINUING THEMES

Coping With Partner Violence

Most of the literature on coping with violence is focused on IT. In the 1990s, the dominant view shifted from seeing women in abusive relationships as victims to defining them as "survivors," focusing on the decisions women make to escape, to end the violence, or to cope with it in some other manner (Ferraro, 1997). Campbell and her colleagues (Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, & Belknap, 1994; Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1998) argued that the women they studied over a 2½-year period showed great resourcefulness in their resistance to the pattern of violent control in which they were enmeshed. Strategies included (a) active problem solving, (b) responding to iden-

tifiable pivotal events, and (c) negotiating first with oneself and then directly or indirectly with the male partner. By the end of the 2½ years, three fourths of the battered women were no longer in a violent relationship, 43% having left and 32% having successfully negotiated an end to the violence. This is yet another area in which distinctions among types of violence and types of relationship are likely to be useful. Strategies of negotiation and barriers to leaving are likely to differ rather dramatically for IT and CCV and across dating, cohabiting, same-gender and cross-gender relationships.

Leaving. The coping strategy that has received the most attention is "leaving," all-too-often addressed from a misguided sense of puzzlement that women do not leave abusive relationships. We still see papers and sections of literature reviews and textbooks headed "Why do they stay?" Well, the truth is, they don't stay (Campbell et al., 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, & Sandin, 1997, pp. 194–95). We need to watch our language; there is no good reason why a study in which two thirds of the women have left the violent relationship is subtitled, "How and why women stay" instead of "How and why women leave" (Herbert, Silver, & Ellard, 1991).

One theoretical approach that seems promising draws upon commitment theory. Rusbult and Martz (1995) make use of Rusbult's investment model to investigate the effects of commitment, rewards, costs, alternatives, and investments on whether women in abusive relationships stay or leave within the time frame of the study. We believe, however, that the best work on staying and leaving will have to treat leaving as a process. Choice & Lamke (1997) did that to some extent, identifying two stages of leaving in which women ask themselves first "Will I be better off?" and second "Can I do it?" But there is other work that focuses in more detail on the process of leaving.

Kirkwood's (1993) marvelous book takes us into both the process by which abusive men entrap their partners and the process by which those women engineer their escape. Her two metaphors of a "web" of entrapment and of a "spiral" of escape capture the details of the process simply and vividly. These men use a wide range of tactics of control not only to control the intact relationship, but also to ensure as best they can that their partner will never be able to leave them. Johnson's (1998) analysis of the shelter movement addressed

this process in terms of the abuser's manipulation of personal, moral, and structural commitments to the relationship in order to entrap his partner. He argued that the major strategies of the battered women's movement (temporary safe housing, support groups, empowerment counseling, networking with social support services, legal advocacy, coordinated community response) empower women to neutralize those commitments. Kirkwood also acknowledged the role of shelter advocates in helping the women she studied as they went through a process of leaving and returning, each time gaining more psychological and social resources, each time coming closer to escaping for good, metaphorically spiraling outward until they escaped from the web.

Psychological and Behavioral Consequences of Partner Violence

As we approach the end of this article, we come upon a huge research literature dealing with the psychological consequences of partner violence for the adults involved and for their children. Once again, however, we have to note the difficulties created by not taking care to distinguish among types of violence. Although some of the studies in this literature make use of samples in which the violence is clearly IT, others analyze survey data in which the measurement of violence does not attend to differences that may have critical implications in terms of consequences. A slap in the face sometime in the last 12 months is likely to have little impact on self-esteem and may not even be witnessed by the children. A systematic pattern of assault and psychological abuse is another story.

The victims. Nevertheless, the literature confirms that IT and perhaps other forms of partner violence *against women* have negative effects in terms of injuries and longer-term physical and psychological health (Giles-Sims, 1998; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997, pp. 184–189; Johnson & Leone, 2000). The psychological effects include posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and lowered self-esteem.

There is another interesting line of research that focuses not on psychological health, but on women's attributions regarding the causes of the violence they are experiencing. Holtzworth-Munroe and her colleagues (Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobson, Fehrenbach, & Fruzzetti, 1992) argue, on the basis of a literature review, that the evidence

shows women do not generally blame themselves for their partner's violence (see also Cantos, Neidig, & O'Leary, 1993). Nonetheless, the fact that issues of victim self-blame are raised often in the more qualitative literature suggests that research on attributions as moderating variables, affecting the consequences of violence, might be useful (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Fincham, Bradbury, Arias, Byrne, & Karney, 1997).

Studies that have compared physical and psychological consequences for men and women find more serious consequences for women (Browne, Williams, et al., 1999; Brush, 1990; Dobash et al., 1992; Grandin, Lupri, & Brinkerhoff, 1998; Sorenson et al., 1996; Straus, 1999; Vivian & Langhinrichson-Rohling, 1994). Of course, the danger in these comparisons is that they may be comparing apples and oranges because most of them deal with survey data in which no distinctions among types of violence are made. It is unlikely that many of the men in such surveys are experiencing IT, whereas a significant number of the female victims of violence are (Johnson, 2000a). Qualitative and anecdotal evidence suggest that the consequences of terroristic violence may be as severe for men as they are for women (Cook, 1997; Island & Letellier, 1991; Letellier, 1996).

The children. There is also a substantial literature regarding the effects of partner violence on children who witness it (Kolbo, Blakely, & Engleman, 1996; Wolak & Finkelhor, 1998). Behavioral effects include aggression and delinquency, among others. Psychological effects include anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. There is even evidence of long-term effects, with college-age women who remember violence between their parents having lower self-esteem, greater depression, and lower levels of social competence (Henning, Leitenberg, Coffey, Bennett, & Jankowski, 1997; Silvern, Karyl, Waelde, Hodges, & Starek, 1995). Again, however, we have to point out that although some of these studies deal with populations in which the nature of the parental violence is relatively clear, in most cases the measures do not allow the necessary distinctions. The reported effects are generally small, but we do not know if exposure to IT might in fact have powerful effects that are muted by their aggregation with the effects of CCV.

Intergenerational nontransmission of violence. One particular type of long-term effect on children has been studied enough to merit its own section.

Although it is not unusual for scholars to take the position that "violence in the family of origin is probably the mostly widely accepted risk marker for the occurrence of partner violence (Kantor & Jasinski, 1998, p.16), we are struck by the weakness of the relationship in the studies we reviewed. In this as in other areas of socialization research, the widespread use of the metaphor of "transmission" introduces a gross distortion of the reality of family-of-origin effects on the adult lives of children. Nevertheless, scholars have moved on to assessment of the mechanisms by which "transmission" takes place, in many cases with data that effectively show no "transmission" to begin with. For example, Simons, Lin, & Gordon (1998) presented structural equation models of the process by which parental behavior affects dating violence of their children, failing to draw our attention to the fact that the largest zero-order correlation they find is .12, representing roughly 1% of the variance in dating violence. Then there is a study of marriage and marriage-like relationships (Lackey & Williams, 1995) that takes intergenerational transmission for granted and restricts its major analyses to investigating the conditions under which men whose parents were violent do not become violent themselves. Buried in their appendix is the correlation that represents the intergenerational effect in their data ($r = .10$), once again an explained variance of 1%. Foshee, Bauman, and Linder (1999) similarly tested models of intervening variables for effects the largest of which represent 2% of the variance in dating violence.

The important point here is not just that the effects are small. Social scientists indeed often do make much of such small effects in other areas as well. Our concern is that the metaphor of transmission, and the use of terms such as "cycle of violence," imply that partner violence is inexorably passed on from generation to generation. We want to drive home our concern here with widely cited data that may represent the strongest intergenerational effect ever reported in this literature. Analyzing data from the first National Family Violence Survey, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1988, p.101) reported that "the sons of the most violent parents have a rate of wife-beating 1,000 percent greater than that of the sons of nonviolent parents . . ." What we deleted with our ellipses is the actual rate of 20%, meaning that even among this group of men whose parents were two standard deviations above average in level of partner violence, 80% of the adult sons had not even

once in the last 12 months committed any acts of severe violence toward their partners as defined by the CTS. What about the 20% who *were* violent? We must return to our old refrain that we have no way of knowing which type of violence these men (or their parents) perpetrated.

Social Consequences of Partner Violence

During the 1990s, scholarship began to focus on the interconnections of partner violence, poverty, welfare, and homelessness. This work became particularly relevant with the passage of so-called welfare reform in 1996, which included the possibility for states to exempt battered women from some of its most restrictive mandates (Kurz, 1998). Research focusing specifically on low-income women has uncovered an extraordinarily high level of interpersonal violence, which interferes with social and economic success. Zorza (1991) found that at least half of homeless women were forced from residences because of violence from their intimate partners. Browne and Bassuk (1997) interviewed 220 homeless and 216 housed low-income women in Massachusetts about childhood abuse and adult intimate violence. Nearly one third of respondents reported that their current or most recent partner had perpetrated severe physical violence against them. Browne and her colleagues (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999) also reported that "Controlling for a variety of factors, women who experienced physical aggression/violence by male partners during a 12-month period had only one third the odds of maintaining employment for at least 30 hrs per week for 6 months or more during the subsequent year as did women without these experiences." Other examinations of the effects of battering on women's employment (Brandwein, 1998; Lloyd, 1999) have reported that abusive men deliberately undermine women's employment by depriving them of transportation, harassing them at work, turning off alarm clocks, beating them before job interviews, and disappearing when they promised to provide child care. Some abusers simply prohibit their partners from working. Battering also indirectly undermines employment by (a) causing repeated absences; (b) impairing women's physical health, mental agility and concentration; and (3) lowering self-esteem and aspirations. Thus, although surveys and crime statistics indicate higher levels of partner violence among low-income couples and in lower income neighborhoods (Anderson, 1997; Lupri, Grandin, & Brinkerhoff, 1994;

Miles-Doan, 1998; Straus, 1990b), for many women violence may be the *precipitating* factor for poverty, and it is surely a barrier to raising income and employment status.

CONCLUSION

The 1990s were a time of tremendous growth in the literature on partner violence, including considerable growth in attention to the need to make distinctions among various types of violence. Unfortunately, our major conclusion from this review of the decade is that in spite of increasing evidence of the importance of distinctions, almost all of our general theoretical and empirical work is severely handicapped by the failure to attend to these distinctions. The modeling of the causes and consequences of partner violence will never be powerful as long as we aggregate behaviors as disparate as a “feminine” slap in the face, a terrorizing pattern of beatings accompanied by humiliating psychological abuse, an argument that escalates into a mutual shoving match, or a homicide committed by a person who feels there is no other way to save her own life.

Even more troubling, however, is the possibility that the aggregation of such disparate phenomena can produce serious errors, as it did in the gender symmetry debate. Everything from lists of risk factors, to inferences about causal processes from multivariate analyses, to statements about differences in incidence across groups or across time—all of it—is called into question. Going back through this review, one can hardly find a section in which we did not feel the need to question generalization across types of violence. We need to return to our research, make distinctions among types of violence, and find out which of our pronouncements apply to which forms of violence.

We hope that the beginning of this century will see work on partner violence that is more careful to make important distinctions among types of violence and to develop theories that take into account the different causes, dynamics, and consequences of the different forms of violence. Equally important is the presentation of our knowledge to each other and to the general public in terms that clearly reflect those differences, so that public opinion and policy development can make *appropriate* use of what we learn.

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