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A Personal Social History of a Typology of Intimate Partner Violence

This article is a personal social narrative of the development of my control-based typology of intimate partner violence (IPV). The influence of friends and colleagues in all aspects of this process was so central and so pervasive that it just did not make sense to me to make this a story only about myself. After I tell the social story of the development of the first version and then later versions of my thinking about types of IPV, I leave the personal realm and lay out the implications of the typology for the question of the relationship between gender and intimate partner violence. Finally, I briefly tie the gender question to the general issues of inequality that have driven me throughout my career.

“He began formulating a theory. For Bosch, this was one of the most important components of homicide investigation. Take the facts and shake them down into hypothesis. The key was not to become beholden to any one theory. Theories changed and you had to change with them.”

I certainly did not expect to start this article with a quote from a police procedural, but shortly after I was invited to write it, while puzzling over how to frame this personal history of the development of my typology of intimate partner violence (IPV), I happened to be reading Michael Connelly’s (1995) *The Last Coyote*. This passage brought to mind one of the more

gratifying moments in my professional life. At an NCFR panel session on theory-building some years ago, April Few (now Few-Demo) singled me out of the audience to say how much she admired my willingness to change my theory over the course of its development. Her comment not only made my day but also has stuck with me ever since. So, I decided to frame this history of the theory in terms of the personal events that shaped my constantly changing understanding of the types of intimate partner violence (please refer to the Appendix for an explication of the “final” version of the typology).

THEORY DEVELOPMENT: PERSONAL AND POLITICAL

Science is a supremely social undertaking, explicitly so in terms of the norms of publication that subject all of our work to the scrutiny of fellow scientists, but also in the impact of sometimes very personal connections and events.

In 1988, the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) at Penn State hired Kathleen Barry. She was well known for her research and activism regarding trafficking in women (Barry, 1984) and was working on books about the prostitution of sexuality and Susan B. Anthony (Barry, 1988, 1995). I must say, it was hard to see how she fit into HDFS, but there she was, and as fellow feminists we became good friends. A few years later, she asked me if I would be interested in joining her and a group of other feminist scholars she was putting together to go to Vietnam. The mission was to work with Vietnamese scholars and

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the socialist government's Women's Bureau on behalf of the women of Vietnam. My answer was an enthusiastic yes.

As we began to plan our agenda, I had a decision to make. Each of us would write a paper with an eye to policy development on behalf of women. Should I continue my work on commitment to relationships (Johnson, 1991), or should I find some other way to serve the women of Vietnam? I decided to change course and focus on what I thought was the most basic expression of misogyny—violence against women. Another member of the group, my good friend Lynne Goodstein, planned to focus on sexual violence, so I took on IPV. It was a shift, given my background, and I committed myself to spending the next year (1992) upgrading my teaching knowledge of the topic to the command of the literature that would be required for research and policy development.

The women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s had produced a massive change in our understanding of domestic violence. As women came together in consciousness-raising groups, they found that their personal experiences of sexual assault and partner violence were not theirs alone. "The personal is political" became a major theme of the movement. One of the many consequences of this renewed understanding of the role of the sex/gender system in private life was the founding of the first U.S. women's shelter in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1971, followed by a wave of grassroots efforts to support survivors of domestic violence all over the country (Schechter, 1982). This was accompanied by publications rooted in the stories of the women who came to those shelters, documenting the power and control dynamic that seemed to motivate batterers. At the same time, Murray Straus and his colleagues' National Family Violence Surveys gave us the sad data on how extensive partner violence was in American family life (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).

These social movements and academic changes in perspective had influenced my thinking as well. I have been a feminist all of my adult life, and by 1991 I had been teaching sociology and women's studies at Penn State for almost 20 years. My course units on IPV were rooted in the standard feminist understanding that domestic violence was about the patriarchal control of women. That understanding, in the form of the Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993), had also been at the

core of my 1980s training as a volunteer at the local women's shelter. However, as I read more deeply in the domestic violence research literature, I became more and more troubled by "the great gender debate" that dominated the discussion. In the late 1970s, Suzanne Steinmetz (1977–1978), using data from the first National Family Violence Survey, published an article arguing that there were as many battered husbands as there were battered wives. This marked the start of a pointed and often rancorous debate between what came to be known as "the feminist theorists" and the "family violence theorists."

As I read this literature, I was struck by the fact that both sides were able to marshal what seemed to me to be legitimate data supporting their positions. The family violence camp cited survey data that showed gender symmetry in the perpetration rates of partner violence, whereas the feminist researchers cited data from police, courts, hospitals, and shelters that showed predominantly male perpetration. The standard feminist understanding of this seeming contradiction was that the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) used in survey research was a deeply flawed measure of partner violence. I noticed, however, that there were data from shelters that used the CTS but still showed clear gender asymmetry. It occurred to me that the differences might have more to do with sampling issues than with measurement issues. Thanks are due here to the wonderful folks at the University of Michigan (especially Leslie Kish) who had taught me all about sampling.

I went back to the literature, dug out every empirical paper that used the CTS, and did a systematic comparison of the findings in studies using random sample surveys with the findings using agency samples. I discovered that they differed quite dramatically, not only in terms of gender but also in terms of frequency of violent incidents, severity of those incidents, escalation and de-escalation, and mutuality. At that point it just seemed like common sense to me. It looked like there were two very different types of IPV, one picked up in the general surveys, the other in intervention settings.

I've long had an inclination to think in terms of typologies, writing about types of reference groups in graduate school and developing a typology of relationship commitment in my earlier published work, and this subject seemed ripe for such thinking. The gender debate was rooted in the assumption that there is only one type of

IPV, the feminists arguing that it is male perpetrated, and the family violence camp arguing that men and women are equally culpable. But why must we assume that there is only one type of IPV? As a social psychologist, and a symbolic interactionist at that, my thinking went immediately to the different interpersonal processes that might lead to intimate partner violence.

The paper I wrote and first presented in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (Johnson, 1993b) was based on this realization. In it, I identified two types of IPV: patriarchal terrorism and ordinary couple violence—terminology that I would have to revise more than once, but concepts that have remained at the heart of the typology. I was later to regret the choice of the term *patriarchal* for the pattern of power and control that lay behind one type of IPV. My feminist perspective temporarily blinded me to the possibility that there might be multiple, not specifically patriarchal, sources of a desire to control one's partner. And I would come to regret even more the decision to use the somewhat tongue-in-cheek term *ordinary* for the interpersonal dynamic of conflict that becomes an argument that escalates to verbal and ultimately to physical aggression.

When I returned to the United States in 1993, I began to present this framework to colleagues at my university and at professional meetings. Two things happened, one involving the reactions of feminists to the term *ordinary*, and the other the counsel of two of my closest friends.

The strong reactions to *ordinary* came to a head in 1994 at meetings in Groningen, The Netherlands, where I had a heated exchange with an Irish feminist who accused me of minimizing and excusing the behavior of men with my terminology.¹ At the reception later in the day, my good friend Bob Milardo, who knew her from other meetings, took me over to her to try to encourage her to see me as a fellow feminist with shared basic values. She was still so angry that she refused to speak to me. Her reaction affected me deeply. Over the following few months I gave the issue serious thought and decided to start using the term *common couple violence* to

describe the pattern of escalating conflict not rooted in a pattern of power and control.

Meanwhile, I had been presenting these ideas in various settings, including at the 1993 National Council on Family Relations meetings in Baltimore (Johnson, 1993a). I was rooming, as usual, with my feminist friends Stephen Marks and Bob Milardo, and they, as usual, had come to my session to support me. Back in the room that night we were processing the day, and they suggested that I spruce up the paper and submit it to *Journal of Marriage and the Family (JMF)*. That seemed ridiculous to me. In my view the paper was simple common sense. They asked if anyone else had ever said it in print, *it* being that there was more than one type of IPV. I said I'd never seen it but someone must have. They did a full-court press on me, and then over the next few months critiqued drafts until the paper was ready for submission.

The argument still seemed like common sense to me, and it was an odd paper, with a bit of literature review to it, some quirky statistical manipulations, and a lot of theoretical speculation. Much to my surprise, Marilyn Coleman, the editor of *JMF*, soon sent me a revise-and-resubmit that changed my life. The article was published in May 1995 (Johnson, 1995), and later that year Linda Thompson and Alexis Walker (two more feminist friends of mine) published an article in which they labeled this a "paradigm shift" in thinking about IPV (Thompson & Walker, 1995).

The idea still seemed straightforward to me, but I realized it was time to try to get beyond the theory to data. My thinking about the data that were needed was transformed by thoughtful commentary from my friend and colleague Marylee Taylor, a social psychologist. After reading the 1995 article she asked me a series of probing questions about women who use violence in their intimate relationships. I realized that my narrow-minded focus on men's violence had led me away from the dyadic analysis that was needed.

Ultimately, the typology arose from an unusual mix of the individual and the dyadic. The *individual's* violence is understood in terms of its place in a *dyadic* context of power and control. I added two new categories to the typology. "Violent resistance" was defined as noncontrolling violence exerted in response to intimate terrorism, and "mutual violent control" was defined as controlling violence that was

¹Beware of changing terminology as we move forward. Over time I changed terminology in important ways, with *ordinary couple violence* becoming *common couple violence*, and ultimately *situational couple violence*. In addition, *patriarchal terrorism* became *intimate terrorism* and in some settings *coercive controlling violence*.

enacted in a relationship with a similarly violent controlling partner.

A test of the theory would require quite unusual data, data on both violence and control for both partners in a relationship. As if that were not unusual enough, we would need data from a sample that was likely to include both intimate terrorism and situational couple violence. Where on earth would I find that?

These were the early days of the Internet, a resource I had discovered a few years earlier when it was called BITNET, and I thought I'd give it a try. I was part of a network of relationship researchers, and I sent out a call for data that would fit my needs, expecting nothing. Much to my surprise, I was contacted by Irene Frieze, a psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh. In the 1970s (the 1970s!), she had interviewed women in the Pittsburgh area about their experiences of IPV (Frieze, 1983). Way ahead of her time, she had included questions about both violence and nonviolent control, and she had asked these women about both their partner's behavior and their own. And, although she had started with a sample of women who had contacted a shelter or who had filed for a protection-from-abuse order, she had done a very sociological thing (remember she is a psychologist), going on to interview randomly selected women who lived on the same blocks as the women in her original sample. This study had everything I needed—data on both violence and control, for both partners, from a sample that would include both intimate terrorism (the shelter and court samples) and situational couple violence (the neighborhood match). I asked if I could work with her on her data, and she simply sent me the files and the original paper codebooks (it was the old days). She gave me permission to use the data as I wished and refused my offer of coauthorship, but she deserves to be recognized as a pioneer in the study of IPV.

At this point students become central to the story. From the late 1990s until I stopped writing empirical pieces, undergraduate and graduate students kept me moving forward. Valerie Conklin, a wonderful undergraduate, did much of the early work of transforming Irene Frieze's 1970s files and codebooks into late 1990s SPSS data sets. Sociology graduate students Lynette Hoelter and Karen Matuszak put the final touches on the data and helped me with the early analyses.

Thanks to Professor Clyde Coombs at the University of Michigan, I was familiar with

cluster analysis, a data-analytic technique that can identify clusters of individuals who have similar profiles on a set of variables. This seemed to be just what I needed to distinguish violence embedded in a pattern of power and control from that which was not. The analyses clearly identified a cluster of violent men and women (mostly men) who were engaged in a general pattern of coercive, controlling behavior. There was also a cluster of violent men and women who were not controlling.

The numbers turned out to be astounding. In sociology, we often find ourselves developing theory to explain statistically significant but very small differences. Here we were seeing huge differences. For example, intimate terrorism was 95% male perpetrated; for situational couple violence, only 45%. In Frieze's data, men's intimate terrorism involved an average of 18 violent incidents; men's situational couple violence only three. Because 76% of men's intimate terrorism escalated, 76% involved incidents of severe violence. In comparison, only 28% of men's situational couple violence escalated, and 28% involved severe violence (Johnson, 1999). The data also to a large extent confirmed my reasoning that intimate terrorism and violent resistance would not appear in survey data, because intimate terrorists would not want to implicate themselves and their victims would fear the consequences should their intimate terrorist partner find that they had been answering questions about their family life.

There was nothing subtle about it. These and other data made it clear that what were ostensibly the same individual acts of violence could represent completely different phenomena. Other aspects of the data, however, forced me to nuance some of my thinking. In the 1995 article I had argued unsubtly that general samples would have no intimate terrorism, agency samples no situational couple violence. Frieze's data did confirm that there was little intimate terrorism in her general sample, but I was surprised to find that there was considerable situational couple violence in her shelter and court samples, and that they in turn differed from each other in amount of situational couple violence. As is so often the case, data call for revisions of theory (Merton, 1948). My work in the shelter movement had focused me so narrowly on intimate terrorism that it hadn't occurred to me that cases of severe situational couple violence would also lead women

to seek help from shelters, the courts, and other agencies.

Ultimately, this shift in thinking led me to gather data from yet another source: practitioners. As I began doing trainings for practitioners in various settings, I simply asked them (at the end of the first half of the training) what percentage of their client base exhibited each of the types of IPV. The combination of those results with findings from empirical studies led me to the following (rather informal) estimates of the percentage of intimate terrorism among male IPV perpetrators in different settings: shelters, 85%; protection orders, 70%; probation and parole, 65%; IPV treatment programs, 60%; general samples of previous relationships, 60%; child custody hearings, 30%; general samples of current relationships, 15%; and military family advocacy programs, 10%. These differences have huge implications for intervention strategies in various settings.

But I get ahead of myself. The late 1990s initiated a period in which I had the joy of working with graduate students whose major focus was IPV. My collaborations with Janel Leone, Alison Cares, Niveditha Menon, and Bela Nawaz (all committed feminists, talented social scientists, and wonderful human beings) produced a series of empirical papers and theses that confirmed the importance of distinguishing among types of IPV.

Janel first did a paper for one of my graduate seminars that established that there are major differences in the consequences of various types for the victims (Johnson & Leone, 2000, 2005), then she did a master's thesis in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (Leone, 2000) that pursued the same question among low-income women (Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2004). In her doctoral dissertation (Leone, 2003) she did important work on differences in help-seeking behavior (Leone, Johnson, & Cohan, 2007), work that she has continued to do (Leone, Lape, & Xu, 2014).

For another graduate seminar, Alison (a student in criminology) did an empirical piece on the so-called intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence, which we later presented at meetings and that I used in my book (Cares, 2009; Johnson & Cares, 2004). Nivi used survey data in her master's thesis in the Department of Sociology (Menon, 2003) and then a complicated mixed-method study in her doctoral dissertation (Menon, 2008) that established the

utility of the typology in her home country of India (Menon, 2008; Menon & Johnson, 2007). Bela (a sociology graduate student at the University of Karachi) wrote new control items that were specific to Pakistan and used cluster analysis to identify not only intimate terrorism and situational couple violence but also a third major type of male violence that is closely tied to the joint-family system that is so pervasive in her country (Nawaz, 2014).

But I get ahead of myself again. In 1998, Bob Milardo, then editor of *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, had just asked me to write the 1990s decade-review of the literature on IPV when I found myself in a tent with a woman I'd never met before; her name was Kathleen. My friend and colleague in the Women's Studies Department Lynne Goodstein had invited me to her 50th birthday celebration, a canoe trip through the canyons of Utah's Gunnison River with eight of her dearest feminist friends (seven women and me). As Kathleen and I settled into our first night in our tiny backpacking tent, we chatted about who and what we were. It turned out that we both did work on IPV, she in criminology, I in family studies. I soon realized that I was talking to Kathleen Ferraro, a woman whose work I greatly admired (Ferraro, 1983, 1988), and she at some point came to realize that I was Michael Johnson. After a few days of outdoor friendship and collegial sharing (and capsized canoes and cactus spines), I told her about the decade review and asked her if she would like to coauthor it. Our feminist perspectives were quite similar, but we knew very different literatures. I was sure I could learn a lot from her and that we would work well together. Indeed we did.

The way we worked was by exchanging drafts with criticisms and comments, sent back and forth between Pennsylvania and Arizona via the nascent Internet, and in the process of working out our differences we decided to abandon the term *patriarchal terrorism*. The roots of that decision came from two other scholars: Claire Renzetti and Amy Holtzworth-Munroe. Kathleen and I spent considerable energy debating the extent to which *patriarchal* was appropriate for describing the clear cases of violent coercive control that Renzetti (1992) had identified in her interviews with 100 violent lesbian couples. Holtzworth-Munroe's differentiation among types of male IPV perpetrators sealed the deal (Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, & Stuart, 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994).

Although her two types of intimate terrorists did have more misogynistic attitudes than non-violent men, it was clear that there were other motives (general sociopathy and emotional dependency) that could drive their need for control. We decided that a term that begged the question of patriarchal motivations (patriarchal terrorism) should be changed to one that allowed for the possibility but did not assume it, and we started to use the term *intimate terrorism* instead (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

At this point I began to work on a book about types of IPV. As soon as I had two chapters and an outline I sent a short proposal to Sage, which had published quite a number of books on domestic violence, including a series edited by Claire Renzetti. The proposal presented the book as about the typology and as empirically based but written fairly nonacademically for a general audience of practitioners, students, and scholars. Sage was not interested, but Renzetti got in touch with me to suggest that I submit the proposal to Northeastern University Press, where she was editing a series on gender, crime, and the law. Northeastern liked the proposal and gave me a contract.

That was good news, but I made very little progress while teaching full-time and doing all the other professorial stuff, so in 2005, at the age of 62, I retired from Penn State to focus on the book. During this time period I was fortunate to have discussions with Evan Stark, whose work (Stark, 2007) led me to add a section on coercive control that did not include physical violence. Discussions with Stark also helped me to clarify my own concerns about treating mutual violent control as a major type of IPV. It shows up only in very small numbers, and I am now convinced that most of what little we do see is a function of the somewhat arbitrary dichotomization involved in operationalizing the typology. I am convinced that there is very little true mutual violent control. Through the National Institute of Justice, I had also learned of Mary Ann Dutton and Lisa Goodman's work in progress (Dutton & Goodman, 2005), which strongly influenced my discussion of coercive control.

I finished the book in 9 months, but it was much shorter (109 pages of printed text) than the contract suggested it should be. Northeastern sent it to Evan Stark, who provided a thorough and thoughtful review of the manuscript, suggesting that I triple its length (Stark's spectacular *Coercive Control* is 401 pages of text, and the

rumor is that the original manuscript was much longer). I chose not to expand, instead doing a little revising, and Northeastern published it in 2008 pretty much as it was (Johnson, 2008).

During the writing of the book and shortly thereafter, a number of things began to bring me to the attention of those practitioner groups mentioned earlier. First, to go quite a ways back, a feminist researcher on whose doctoral committee I had served (Janine Zweig, Department of Human Development and Family Studies) was working at the Urban Institute and brought my work to the attention of Leora Rozen at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). Rozen organized a 2000 NIJ conference on gender symmetry that featured my work (Johnson, 2000), and then arranged NIJ funding for projects that would explore its implications. This was where I met Evan Stark.

Next, in 2001 my friend Renate Klein arranged for me to visit the University of Maine to give the Schonberger Lecture. Renate is both an academic and a feminist activist, and through her connections with the shelter movement she arranged to have me speak to the Maine Coalition Against Domestic Violence. You may remember that feminist activists do have some concerns about my emphasis on situational couple violence, and I was told that the Maine Coalition, being the most radical state coalition in the country, would probably tear me to pieces. That didn't happen, as a number of the shelter staff at that presentation reacted by thanking me for giving them a vocabulary and a framework for dealing with the situational couple violence that they knew they encountered regularly in their work. This was the first of a great many fruitful encounters with practitioners over the following 15 years.

Third, the decade review article in *JMF* got a lot of attention. Fourth, Theodora Ooms of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) saw a data presentation I did at NCFR and asked me to participate in three workshops that CLASP was organizing to bring together groups that approached IPV from very different perspectives. The 2006 workshop brought together domestic violence advocates and responsible fatherhood advocates. The 2007 workshop brought together domestic violence advocates and folks who worked in the family and juvenile courts, and produced a publication in a practice-oriented journal (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). The 2009 workshop put

together domestic violence advocates and healthy relationship advocates and produced papers available through the Healthy Marriage Resource Center (Johnson, 2009). And the book appeared in 2008.

Around 2003 I had begun to be asked to work directly with practitioners (batterer intervention programs, shelter staff, military and civilian social workers, divorce lawyers and mediators, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement, healthy marriage educators, family counselors, and government agencies) on the policy and practice implications of differentiating among types of IPV. This expanded into a very fulfilling part-time retirement job, consulting and doing workshops and trainings with the inspiring people who deal with intimate partner violence daily.

I've pointed out how these encounters with practitioners informed my understanding of the mix of IPV types in different settings. They also led me to the firm conclusion that even *common couple violence* was too normalizing and might be taken to imply low risk, although my writing had always been clear that it could be chronic and even homicidal. I shifted to *situational couple violence* to describe this pattern of conflict (not control) that escalates to violence. Furthermore, the work with judges, prosecutors, and other officers of the court convinced me that *intimate terrorism* was too inflammatory for the courtroom setting, and I began to use the term *coercive controlling violence* where I thought it was appropriate.

The most important influence of these practitioners is that they helped me to think through the practice and policy implications of making these distinctions. The distinctions have major implications for survivor support, batterer intervention programs, family counseling, law enforcement, child custody, and primary prevention efforts. Although I have never published most of these thoughts, they became the heart of my trainings, and slides for them are available at my website (<http://www.personal.psu.edu/mpj>).

The final step in the development of the typology starts with a graduate student who reached out to me for help from halfway around the world. In August 2012 Bela Nawaz e-mailed to ask a few questions about my typology, which she wanted to apply to IPV in her native Pakistan. At first she simply asked me to look over a draft of her interview schedule to make sure she was asking the questions needed to

operationalize my typology. Ultimately, she told me that there was no one on her faculty who could really help her through this research project, and I became in effect (though not officially) her dissertation adviser. I was excited about Bela's research because Niveditha Menon's (2008) qualitative work in India had suggested that although my typology applied to some IPV, there were also differences rooted in a type of patriarchal family system that was rare in the United States (Kandiyoti, 1988). In the United States the dominant family form is nuclear, and intimate terrorists generally carry out their intimidation on their own. In countries where the dominant family form is joint, women who marry move into their husband's family's household and are subordinate to the men and older women who live there. Some of the IPV in India appeared to involve the collaboration of multiple family members in controlling wives, and Pakistan was another setting in which we might see the same dynamic.

Bela did amazing work, and when the data analyses began, we discovered that her cluster analysis identified not only situational couple violence and intimate terrorism but also a third type of IPV. The control pattern for this type looked much like intimate terrorism, except for a lower level of jealousy and isolation, somewhat lower levels of violence, and high levels of threats that were rooted in the joint family system, such as threats to send the woman back to her family or to take a new wife. Upon further analysis, we found that this type of IPV was much more likely in joint than in nuclear households, and that it was associated with violence from other family members as well. We added this type to the typology and called it familial intimate terrorism (Nawaz, 2014).

One final story, about an event that immediately preceded my agreement to write this article. In late 2015 Murray Straus and Zeev Winstock invited me to submit a proposal for a very short paper for a special issue of *Journal of Family Violence*, "Current Controversies Over Gender Differences in Perpetration of Physical Partner Violence." Although I had already decided that it was time for me to stop writing, this offer drew me out of retirement. I welcomed the opportunity to summarize the research that I thought provided a definitive answer to the gender question and to present a brief critique of the anti-feminist backlash. And it seemed a sure thing. After all, my framework had become a

major theme in the IPV research and practitioner literatures. Much to my surprise, in January 2016, Straus and Winstock rejected my proposal on the grounds that “the main ideas in the proposed article have already been presented in numerous publications and cannot be regarded as new ideas that can bridge the gaps between the perceptions of the parties in the controversy.” I considered writing the proposed article and simply putting it on my website. Then, as luck would have it, Libby Blume, the editor of *JFTR*, called and asked me if I would consider writing an “original voices” article about the development of the typology. So, here at the end, let me return to the gender question.

ZOMBIES: THE GENDER DEBATE JUST WON'T DIE

After I address the major mistakes that continue to fuel the gender debate, I will offer what I take to be a definitive understanding of the relationship between gender and IPV. Evidence for much of what I am about to say can be found at my website (<http://www.personal.psu.edu/mpj>), including a bibliography of empirical pieces that make distinctions among the types.

The first “mistake” is the most egregious and is driven by ideology. There is a small but vocal group of naysayers (outspokenly anti-feminist) who continue to argue that women are as violent as men in intimate relationships. Their current strategy is to publish articles that have the veneer of objective literature reviews but are riddled with ideologically motivated misrepresentations and errors of logic. I don't have the space here to address their many misrepresentations, but a 2010 conference organized by Zvi Eisikovits and Zeev Winstock in Haifa gave me the opportunity to respond at length to one of these travesties of ideologically driven social science. The conference papers (including mine) were revised and published in a special issue of *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (Johnson, 2011).

The second mistake is probably the most common: neglecting (either through ignorance, laziness, or ideological bias) to make distinctions among types of IPV. When no distinctions are made, the inherent biases of sample selection slant the results in the direction of whatever type of IPV is most represented in the sampling frame and by the sampling plan. In general, that means that survey results are presented by some scholars as if they apply to all domestic violence,

when in fact they are relevant to only situational couple violence, and that agency results that confirm the centrality of the power and control dynamic are taken by other scholars to apply to all violent couples, when in fact they are relevant only to intimate terrorism and violent resistance.

The third mistake is using cluster analysis to attempt to distinguish between situational couple violence and intimate terrorism in a sample that does not include both types of IPV. This happens most often with general survey samples of current relationships. Such a data analysis strategy creates a so-called intimate terrorist cluster that is actually situational couple violence that involves somewhat higher-than-average control. I made this mistake myself when Janel Leone and I used a cluster analysis to distinguish between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence using data on married women's partners from the National Violence Against Women Survey (Johnson & Leone, 2005). We should have recognized that data on current partners would include little or no intimate terrorism. We later corrected our error by reanalyzing the data but also including past partners. Because our sample then included many cases of intimate terrorism, the new cluster analysis found a much higher cutoff for coercive control. We found, as hypothesized, that there was little or no intimate terrorism in the current partner data but quite a bit among the male ex-partners (Johnson, Leone, & Xu, 2014). The important methodological import of this is that we can, indeed, use survey data to study intimate terrorism if we include questions about previous partners.

If you avoid these mistakes, and review the literature that does make distinctions, plus the general survey literature that applies primarily to situational couple violence and the agency literature that can tell us more about intimate terrorism and violent resistance, you come to a number of broad conclusions about the role of gender in IPV.

First, by far the most common violence between intimate partners (situational couple violence) is a product of conflicts that become arguments that escalate to violence from one or both of the partners. This type of violence is perpetrated about equally by men and women. These statements worry many feminist activists, including me, because acknowledging that this is the most common type of IPV can potentially provide a line of defense for abusers, as in “We just get into fights and she's as guilty as I

am.” There are two responses to that concern. First, and probably most important, is that practitioners (including those in the criminal justice system) decide on a case-by-case basis whether they are dealing with situational couple violence or intimate terrorism. That has always been the case, as abusers have always tried to argue, “It’s as much or more her fault as it is mine.” Second, beyond this case-by-case aspect of the system, any argument that the research shows that situational couple violence is the most common type of IPV can be countered with the fact that the research also shows that most of the cases that come to the attention of agencies are cases of intimate terrorism.

What happens generally in the home (and in survey research) is not what we see generally in courts, emergency rooms, and shelters. Most situational couple violence never comes to the attention of these agencies because for about half of situational couple violence, the violence involves only one incident, the couple is horrified by what has happened, and they handle the problem themselves. For much of the other half, although the violence is more frequent, it doesn’t rise to a level that leads to a cry for help, or injuries that require medical attention, or the intervention of law enforcement. Here gender plays a significant role, because men’s situational couple violence is much more likely than women’s to injure, to terrify, and to destroy the relationship. Thus, some portion of situational couple violence does come to the attention of agencies because some violence, even that which is not motivated by a need to control, is dangerous and frightening enough to lead the partner to seek help or a divorce, neighbors to call the police, or emergency-room personnel to identify a serious problem. The numbers from agencies such as the police, courts, hospitals, and shelters all show that in heterosexual relationships men are the primary perpetrators. This is because such agencies see primarily intimate terrorism and only the most severe cases of situational couple violence.

Now we come to intimate terrorism and violent resistance, with roots both in the patriarchal family traditions of our society and in the psychological makeup of perpetrators—and sustained by a network of gendered social institutions. Although intimate terrorism is far less common than situational couple violence, it affects millions of women in the United States alone, and its consequences are devastating. In

heterosexual relationships this coercive controlling violence is perpetrated primarily (though not exclusively) by men. This does not surprise anyone who has ever given the issue serious, unbiased thought. Intimate terrorism is about the use of violence and the threat of violence, in combination with other control tactics, to terrorize one’s partner. In a heterosexual relationship, it is primarily men who are able and willing to do this. Our family system is rooted in the European form of patriarchy in which a man is “king in his castle.” Intimate terrorists are more patriarchal (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996) and more likely to be misogynistic (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000) than either nonviolent men or men involved in situational couple violence. And of course the male partner is likely to be bigger and stronger than “his woman.”

What about violent resistance? In about two-thirds of cases of heterosexual intimate terrorism, the woman victim responds at some point with violence of her own. In most cases, she soon turns to other tactics to reduce the violence or escape the relationship. Compliance is often the first tactic, hoping to mitigate the violence until she can disentangle herself from the web of constraints with which he controls her. But these women are resourceful and most of them do eventually escape (Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1998; Ferraro, 1997; Kirkwood, 1993)

Evident as these connections with gender are in the United States, the embeddedness of intimate terrorism in other patriarchal systems is even more obvious (Kandiyoti, 1988). Long ago, David Levinson’s (1989) work demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between the patriarchal structure of a society and rates of intimate partner violence. And, as noted already, our own recent work shows that in joint family systems, in addition to the individual intimate terrorism that we find in Western societies, there is a form of familial intimate terrorism that involves the complicity of multiple members of the family in controlling women through a combination of violent and nonviolent tactics (Nawaz, 2014).

So, heterosexual intimate partner violence really is about gender.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Shortly after I finished drafting this article, I found myself in a quite-heated conversation with

a dear friend. That conversation placed all of this discussion in a much-bigger picture, the same big picture that got me into sociology many years ago: the caste system that lies at the heart of the great inequalities that still plague our society. My friend, Diane, an educated White lesbian, argued that things are worse than they ever were, for women, people of color, and LGBT people. In response, my partner and I cited all the progress from 1970 to 2016: zero women's shelters then versus 1,500 now, increases in the number of women and people of color in positions of power, gay marriage rights, the Violence Against Women Act, and so on. Diane kept coming back to the fact that we (White, middle-class, heterosexuals) couldn't understand how it felt to be afraid whenever you left your house, knowing that if two women walked hand in hand in public, they had to anticipate the possibility of a physical assault. We kept saying, "That's true, but how can you possibly think that things are worse now that they were 30 years ago?" and she kept saying, "How can you not see how horrible things are?" Our argument ended in a very emotional stalemate that called for hugs all around the next morning.

My friend is an anthropologist, and she had used the term *caste* frequently during our argument, and the next day it finally clicked for me, as it should have the night before. Perhaps my 1960s sensibilities and need to feel I was doing good in the world narrowed my vision. I was seeing the progress, without fully acknowledging the root problem still at the heart of our culture—caste. White people are situated as superior to people of color, straight people superior to LGBT people, men superior to women. Although all of our institutions contribute to the maintenance of this caste system, its most basic expression is violence.

Perhaps coincidentally, waiting for me at the local library when I got home from my visit with Diane was Ta-Nehisi Coates's (2015) *Between the World and Me*. He makes essentially the same point in his "letter" to his 15-year-old son. As a member of a lower caste, you are never free from fear of violence, violence that is a core part of our society. African American children are schooled by their parents on how to interact with the police to avoid being shot. We teach our daughters the many tactics they must master to reduce the risk of rape. Women, LGBT people, and people of color are regularly beaten, raped, and murdered because of who they are.

In addition to the many microaggressions that they suffer daily, people of "lower caste" must literally fear for their lives.

As a liberal, the progress we have made makes me hopeful and sometimes a bit too Pollyannaish. It is true that we no longer have legal slavery in this country, and women do have the vote. Many people of color are in positions of power, LGBT people have rights we couldn't have imagined even 5 years ago, and on and on. But as a radical, I sometimes despair that the core axes of privilege and disadvantage, and the tragic violence that is their most basic expression, seem as intransigent as ever.²

THE FUTURE: WITH CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

This history of my typology of intimate partner violence is one of change and growth. The many scholars and friends cited here have all contributed to its evolution, both through academic work and, in many cases, personal interactions. Through it all, those scholars, friends, and practitioners have inspired me to continue to work toward a better future. As we move toward that future, allow me to end with a quote from Coates's (2015) letter to his teenage son: "You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body . . . I would not have you descend into your own dream. I would have you be a conscious citizen of this terrible and beautiful world."

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²Horrible confirmation never stops piling up in the news. As I write (in June 2016), 49 people are murdered and 53 wounded in an Orlando gay nightclub, 13 people are killed and 42 others shot over Father's Day weekend in Chicago (they were mostly Black), and a Vanderbilt college student is convicted of encouraging and photographing his buddies as he and they gang-rape an unconscious woman.

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APPENDIX: TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

The typology that I describe involves five types. Two of the major types of IPV (intimate terrorism and violent resistance) are rooted in the dynamics of control and resistance that have been the focus of feminist theorists. They account for the bulk of the violence in the agency samples with which feminist theorists most commonly work. The third major type, situational couple violence, is rooted in the dynamics of family conflict that have been the focus of family violence theorists. Situational couple violence accounts for the bulk of the violence in the general survey samples with which family violence theorists most commonly work. A fourth type (mutual violent control) is quite rare at best. The fifth type (familial intimate terrorism) is a recent addition to the typology that has been identified in the joint family systems that are common in many non-Western cultures.

INTIMATE TERRORISM

In intimate terrorism (sometimes called coercive controlling violence, previously labeled as patriarchal terrorism) the perpetrator uses violence in the service of general control over his or her partner; the partner does not. The “control” that is the defining feature of intimate terrorism is more than the specific, short-term control that is often the goal of violence in other contexts. The mugger wants to control you only briefly to take

your valuables and move on, hopefully never to see you again. In contrast, the control sought in intimate terrorism is general and long term. Although each particular act of intimate violence may appear to have any number of short-term, specific goals, it is embedded in a larger pattern of power and control that permeates the relationship. This is the kind of violence that comes to mind when most people hear the term *domestic violence*.

A brief description of some such means of control might help to capture what Catherine Kirkwood (1993) calls a “web” of abuse. It is not unusual for an intimate terrorist to deprive his partner of control over economic resources.³ He controls all the money. She is allowed no bank account and no credit cards. If she works for wages, she has to turn over her paychecks to him. He keeps all the cash, and she has to ask him for money when she needs to buy groceries or clothes for herself or their children. He may require a precise accounting of every penny, demanding to see the grocery bill and making sure she returns every bit of the change.

This economic abuse may be justified through male privilege: “I am the man of the house, the head of the household, the king in my castle.” Of course, this use of male privilege can cover everything. As the man of the house, his word is law. He doesn’t have to explain. She doesn’t disagree with him. She is to do his bidding without question. And don’t talk back. All of this holds even more rigidly in public, where he is not to be humiliated by back talk from “his woman.”

How does he use the children to support his control? First of all, they too know that he is the boss. He makes it clear that he controls not only them but their mother as well. He may use them to back him up, to make her humiliation more complete by forcing them into the room to assist him as he confronts her, asking them if he isn’t right, and making them support his control of her. He may even have convinced them that he should be in charge, that he does know what is best (father knows best), and that she

is incompetent or lazy or immoral. In addition, he may use her attachment to the children as a means of control, by threatening to take them away from her or hurt them if she isn’t a “good wife and mother.” Of course, being a good wife and mother means doing as he says.

Then there’s isolation. He keeps her away from everyone else. He makes himself her only source of information, of support, of money, of everything. In a rural setting he might be able to literally isolate her, moving to a house trailer in the woods, with one car that he controls, no phone, keeping her there alone. In an urban setting, or if he needs her to go out to work, he can isolate her less literally, by driving away her friends and relatives and intimidating the people at work so that she has no one to talk to about what’s happening to her.

When she’s completely isolated, and what he tells her about herself is all she ever hears about herself, he can tell her over and over again that she’s worthless—humiliating her, demeaning her, emotionally abusing her. She’s ugly, stupid, a slut, a lousy wife, an incompetent mother. She manages to survive only because he takes care of her. She’d be helpless without him. And who else is there to tell her otherwise? Maybe he can even convince her that she can’t live without him.

If she resists, he can intimidate her. Show her what might happen if she doesn’t behave. Scream at her. Swear at her. Let her see his rage. Smash things. Or maybe a little cold viciousness will make his point. Kick her cat. Hang her dog. That ought to make her think twice before she decides not to do as he says. Or threaten her. Threaten to hit her, or beat her, or pull her hair out, or burn her. Or tell her he’ll kill her, and maybe the kids too.

Pull all these means of control together, or even a few of them, and the abuser entraps and enslaves his partner in a web of control. If she manages to thwart one means of control, there are others at his disposal. Wherever she turns, there is another way he can control her. Sometimes she is ensnared by multiple strands. She can’t seem to escape—she is trapped. But with the addition of violence there is more to power and control than entrapment. There is terror.

When violence is added to such a pattern of power and control, the abuse becomes much more than the sum of its parts. The ostensibly nonviolent tactics that accompany that violence take on a new, powerful, and

³I use gendered pronouns here because the vast majority of intimate terrorists are men terrorizing female partners. That does not mean that women are *never* intimate terrorists. There are a small number of women who do terrorize their male partners (Steinmetz, 1977–1978), and there are also women in same-sex relationships who terrorize their female partners (Renzetti & Miley, 1996).

frightening meaning—controlling the victim not only through the specific constraints of the tactics themselves, but also through their association with the general knowledge that he will do anything to maintain control of the relationship, even attack her physically. Most obviously, the threats and intimidation are clearly more than idle threats if he has beaten her before. But even his “request” to see the grocery receipts becomes a “warning” if he has put her into the hospital this year. His calling her a stupid slut may feel like the beginning of a vicious physical attack. As battered women often report, “All he had to do was look at me that way, and I’d jump.” What is for most of us the safest place in our world—home—is for her a place of constant fear.

VIOLENT RESISTANCE

In violent resistance, the victim of intimate terrorism responds with noncontrolling violence of her own. What is a woman to do when she finds herself terrorized in her own home? At some point, most women in such relationships do fight back physically. For some, this is an instinctive reaction to being attacked, and it happens at the first blow—almost without thought. For others, it doesn’t happen until it seems he is going to continue to assault her if she doesn’t do something to stop him. For most women, the size difference between them and their male partner ensures that violent resistance won’t help, and may make things worse, so they turn to other means of coping. For a few, eventually it seems that the only way out is to kill their partner.

Violence in the face of intimate terrorism may arise from any of a variety of motives. She may (at least at first) believe that she can defend herself, that her violent resistance will keep him from attacking her further. That may mean that she thinks she can stop him right then, in the midst of an attack, or it may mean that she thinks that if she fights back often enough he will eventually decide to stop attacking her physically. Even if she doesn’t think she can stop him, she may feel that he shouldn’t be allowed to attack her without getting hurt some himself. This desire to hurt him in return even if it won’t stop him can be a form of communication (“What you’re doing isn’t right and I’m going to fight back as hard as I can”), or it may be a form of retaliation or payback, along the lines of “He’s not going to do that without paying

some price for it.” In a few cases, she may be after serious retaliation, attacking him when he is least expecting it and doing her best to do serious damage, even killing him. But there is another, more frequent motive for such premeditated attacks—escape. Sometimes, after years of abuse and entrapment, a victim of intimate terrorism may feel that the only way she can escape from this horror is to kill her tormenter.

SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE

Situational couple violence (previously labeled as ordinary couple violence or common couple violence) is when one or more conflicts in the relationship become arguments that in turn escalate to verbal aggression and ultimately to physical aggression on the part of one or both of the partners. It is by far the most common type of partner violence and does not involve any attempt on the part of either partner to gain general control over the relationship. The violence is situationally provoked, as the tensions or emotions of a particular encounter lead someone to react with violence. Intimate relationships inevitably involve conflicts, and in some relationships one or more of those conflicts may escalate to violence. The violence may be minor and singular, with one argument at some point in the relationship escalating to the level that someone pushes or slaps the other, is immediately remorseful, apologizes, and never does it again. Or it could be a chronic problem, with one or both partners frequently resorting to violence, minor or severe.

The motives for such violence vary. A physical reaction might feel like the only way one’s extreme anger or frustration can be expressed. It may well be intended to do serious injury as an expression of anger. It may primarily be an attempt to get the attention of a partner who doesn’t seem to be listening. Or there could be a control motive involved, albeit not one that is part of a general pattern of coercive control. One partner may simply find that the argument is not going well for him or her and decide that one way to win this is to get physical.

The “causes” of situational couple violence differ from couple to couple. First, there are the contextual factors that are the basis of the conflicts that provide the possibility for arguments that might escalate. These include, among others, financial difficulties; racism, sexism, and/or homophobia; substance abuse; and

chronic infidelity. Second, there are factors that contribute to the escalation to violence. These include, among other possibilities, couple communication problems, substance abuse, anger management difficulties, and poor impulse control.

MUTUAL VIOLENT CONTROL

In mutual violent control, both partners use violence and other tactics to attempt to take general control over the relationship. This type appears only rarely in quantitative studies of types of IPV. I believe that it is a false type and that in-depth studies of such couples would uncover a dynamic of intimate terrorism to which the victim responds with violent resistance.

FAMILIAL INTIMATE TERRORISM

Although familial intimate terrorism is coercive, controlling violence, the control pattern involves less jealousy and isolation, and more use of control tactics related to the joint family system that is common in many non-Western cultures.

This type has been identified in at least two studies of cultures in which the joint family is common (Menon, 2008; Nawaz, 2014). In the quantitative study in Pakistan, this type of IPV showed a somewhat lower level of violence than

intimate terrorism. In addition to the violence and other control tactics perpetrated by the husband, in many cases other family members are also involved in violence against the wife. It is seen primarily among couples who have not opted for a neo-local household but have adopted the more traditional path of moving in with the husband's extended family.

SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

I am in the unfortunate position of having to confine my discussion of types of IPV primarily to heterosexual relationships because there is so little same-sex IPV research that makes distinctions among types. We do know that IPV does happen in both male and female same-sex relationships, perhaps in about the same numbers as in heterosexual relationships. We also know that some of that violence is in the form of intimate terrorism (Leventhal & Lundy, 1999; Renzetti, 1992; Renzetti & Miley, 1996), but we do not know how much. Theory and common sense would suggest that there would be much less intimate terrorism in same-sex relationships than in heterosexual relationships. In general, same-sex relationships don't have the patriarchal traditions, they are not as likely to have the size and strength differences, and they don't generally have the entrapment of economic dependency.