

Dear Senate Inquiry - Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is a my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

Children adjust better to parental separation if they have flexible, frequent and supported time with both parents.

Pryor J and Rodgers B (2001) Children in changing families: life after parental separation. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Trinder L, Beek M and Connolly J (2002) Making Contact: how parents and children negotiate and experience contact after divorce. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Arendell T (1996) Coparenting: a review of the literature National center on Fathers and families, Philadelphia. Benjamin M and Irving H H (1989) Shared Parenting: critical review of the research literature Family and Conciliation Courts Review 27(2) 21-35. Australian Institute of Family Studies (2003) Submission of the AIFS to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs Inquiry into Child Custody Arrangements in the Event of family Separation. AIFS, Melbourne.

The loss of a continuing parent-child relationship is the single most critical variable in the adjustment of a child to their parents' separation. Stahl P M, A Review of Joint and Shared Parenting Literature, in Fohlberg J (ed) Joint Custody and Shared Parenting, 1984 Washington DC Bureau of National Affairs, Association of family & Conciliation Courts. Wallerstein J and Kelly J (1980) Surviving the breakup - how children and parents cope with divorce Grant McIntyre. Amato P R (2001) Children of divorce in the 1990s: an update of the Amato and Keith 1991 meta-analysis. Journal of Family Psychology 15 (3) 355-370.

As many as 80% of divorced children live in sole mother custody arrangements and as many as a third of children have little or no contact with their non-resident fathers.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998) Family Characteristics Survey 1997, Catalogue No 4442.0 ABS, Canberra. Office of National Statistics (UK), Population Trends 1987. Bradshaw J, Stimson C, Williams J and Skinner C (1999) Absent Fathers London, Routledge. Trinder L, Beek M and Connolly J (2002) Making Contact: how parents and children negotiate and experience contact after divorce. YPS in association with Joseph Rowntree Foundation, USA.

Fathers who have prolonged difficulty having contact with their children tend to withdraw from their children's lives. Many fathers for a variety of reasons do not continue contact with their children.

Lauman-Billings L and Emery RE (2000) Distress among young adults from divorced families. Journal of Family Psychology, 14 671 - 687. Blankenhorn D (1995) Fatherless America: confronting our most urgent social problem Basic Books, New York.

Disengagement from families is bad for fathers' emotional health.

Kruk E (1993) Divorce and Disengagement: patterns of fatherhood within and beyond marriage. Fernwood Publications, Halifax NS. Greif G (1995) When divorced fathers want no contact with their children: a preliminary analysis Journal of Divorce and Remarriage 23 (1/2) 75-84.

Parents with shared care arrangements are more likely to be satisfied.

Parkinson P and Smyth B (2003) When the Difference is Night and Day: some empirical insights into patterns of parent-child contact after separation. 8th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference.

More contact with a less-seen parent is associated with happier children, so joint parenting arrangements are likely to be better for children than sole-parenting ones.

Oberg B & G, (1985) , Den Delade Familjen, Stockholm. Kelly J (1988), Longer-term adjustment in children of divorce, *Journal of Family Psychology* 2 (2) 119-140. Bauserman R (2002), Child adjustment in joint custody versus sole-custody arrangements: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family Psychology* 2002, Vol 16 No 1, 91-102. Amato P R and Gilbreth J G (1999) Nonresidential fathers and children's well-being: a meta-analysis *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 557-573. Dunn J (2003) Contact and children's perspectives on parental relationships In A Bainham et al (eds) *Children and their families: contact, rights and welfare*. Oxford, Hart Publishing.

Children in "joint custody" rather than sole-mother custody are more satisfied with their arrangements, and are better adjusted.

Kelly J (1988) Longer-term adjustment in children of divorce. *Journal of Family Psychology* 2 (2) 119-140. Bauserman R (2002) Child Adjustment in Joint custody versus sole-custody arrangements : a meta-analytic review *Journal of Family Psychology* 16 (1) 91 - 102. Grotzinger J B Dual household joint custody and adolescent separation-individuation, Dissertation for the Faculty of California Graduate Institute July 2002.

Quantity of time is relevant insofar as it is necessary to support quality. The nature and quality of parenting is crucial.

Funder K (1996) *Remaking families AIFS* : Melbourne. Maccoby E E, Mnookin R H et al 1990 Private ordering revisited: what custodial arrangements are parents negotiating? In D Sugarman and H H Kay (eds) *Divorce Reform at the Crossroads* (pp 37 - 74) Yale University Press. Wallerstein J and Blakeslee S (2003) *What about the Kids?* Hyperion books, New York. Pryor J and Rogers B (2001) *Children in changing families* Blackwell, Oxford. Smyth B, Caruana C and Ferro A (2003) Some when shows and whys of shared care: what separated parents who spend equal time with their children say about shared parenting. Australian Social Policy Conference 2003. Pryor J and Rodgers B (2001) *Children in changing families: life after parental separation*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

High levels of contact with both parents are associated with low levels of conflict. Smyth B, Caruana C & Ferro A (2004) Father-child contact after separation: profiling five different patterns of care. *Family Matters* No 67 Autumn 2004.

Fortnightly amusement-park parenting (the old 80 - 20% formula) contributes little to developing meaningful parent-child relationships.

Laumann-Billings L & Emery RE (2000), Distress among young adults from divorced families, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14:671-687. Ferro A (2004) "Standard" Contact in Parent-Child Contact and Post-Separation Arrangements AIFS Research Report No 9.

[Weekend contact sidelines fathers to an onlooker role with near-total financial responsibility for the child.

Hillery A *The Case for Joint Custody in The Best Parent is Both Parents*, David L Levy (ed) 1993, Hampton Roads Publishing, Norfolk VA . Roman M and Haddad W (1978) *The Case for Joint Custody Psychology Today* Sept, 196-105.

Children need time to do ordinary things with their less-seen parent, not just fun things.

Laumann-Billings L & Emery RE (2000), Distress among young adults from divorced families, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14:671-687. Burgess A & Russell G (2003) in *Supporting Fathers: contributions from the International Fatherhood Summit*, Oxford UK.

Fathers and mothers have different kinds of input to their children, both necessary.

Pruett M K, (2000), *Fatherneed: why father care is as essential as mothercare for your child*, Free Press New York.

Some mothers appear to discourage father time.

Fabricius W V & Hall J A (2000), Young adults perspectives on divorce: living arrangements, Family & Conciliation Courts Review Vol 38, 446-461. Smart C, Neale and Wade A (2001) The changing experience of childhood: families and divorce. Cambridge, Polity Press.

But many studies show that most resident parents want their ex-partners to see the children more, not less.

Hunt J (2003) Researching Contact London: National Council for One-Parent Families.

Divorced parenting is better dealt with away from the adversarial system.

Zaidel S (2004), Taking Divorce out of the Context of Dispute Resolution, Family Court Review, Vol 42, no 4, October, 678-680. Ricci I (1997) Mom's House, Dad's House: making two homes for your children, Simon & Schuster, New York. Luepnitz D A (1982) Child Custody: a study of families after divorce Lexington MA, Lexington Books.

Parents who have more time with their children pay more child support Australian Institute of Family Studies, Research report No 9, 2004, Bruce Smyth (ed). Davis G and Wikely N (2002) National Survey of Child Support Agency Clients - the relationship dimension. Family Law 32 July 522 - 527. Bradshaw J et alJ (1999) Absent Fathers London, Routledge.

Many Australian mothers find sole parenting a tough task and crave some respite from its demands, seeing part-time weekend parenting an easy ride compared to the hard yards mothers have to do.

Australian Institute of Family Studies, Research report No 9, 2004, Bruce Smyth (ed).

The pre-separation relationship between father and child does not necessarily determine the post-separation relationship. Divorce changes relationships between fathers and children in particular. Separation can be the trigger for improved, changed parent-child relations.

Wallerstein J & Kelly J B (1980), Surviving the Breakup: how children and parents cope with divorce, Grant McIntyre. Smyth B, Caruana C and Ferro A (2003) Some whens, hows and whys of shared care: what separated parents who spend equal time with their children say about shared parenting. Paper presented at the Australian Social Policy Conference, July, Sydney.

Overnight contact helps build and strengthen parent-child relationships.

Pruett M K, Ebling R & Isabella G (2004) Critical aspects of parenting Plans for Young Children: injecting data into the debate about overnights, Family Courts Review Vol 42, No 1, January, 35-59. Warshak R (2000) Blanket restrictions: overnight contact between parents and young children Family and Conciliation Courts Review 39 (4) 365 - 371.

Even very young children can benefit from overnight stays with their other parent.

Kelly J B & Lamb M E (2000) Using child development research to make appropriate custody and access decisions for young children, Family and Conciliation Courts Review, 39, 297-311. Lamb M E & Kelly J B (2001), Using the empirical literature to guide the development of parenting plans for young children, Family Court review, Vol 39, No 4, 365-371. Warshak R (2000), Blanket restrictions: overnight contact between parents and young children, Family and Conciliation Courts Review, Vol 38, 422-445.

Thank you for reading my submission

Name: Ash Patil

Postal Address: PTHIRROUL, NSW

Dear Senate Inquiry - Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is a my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

"Assault by a mother/stepmother does the most damage. It is sexual assault camouflaged as maternal care. The abuse often lasts for years and many boys do not understand it as abuse before they are 16-17 years old and experience their first normal relationship with another woman," Førland said.
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More women sex offenders

Far more women commit sexual assault than previously believed, and with offenses against boys having risen the most in recent years.

One in three men who visited the Oslo center for sexually abused men say they have been assaulted by a woman, newspaper Fædrelandsvennen reports.

"The statistic for women assaulting boys has risen the most in recent years," said nurse and manager Endre Førland at the Oslo Center.

Førland has compiled statistics at the center since it opened in 1998. Then women were named the assailant in 13 percent of cases, in the past two years this figure has reached 30 percent.

Fædrelandsvennen's report included an interview with a 17-year-old boy who told of being regularly abused by his mother.

Førland said that a barrier remains which prevents both victims and authorities from viewing women as potential sex offenders.

"This also applies to those who work in the health services. So victims of female assailants become invisible in our society. They feel shame and don't dare tell their story to anyone," Førland told the newspaper.

Mothers and stepmothers dominate the assault statistics, with other family members, family friends and neighbors also on the list. Most men were aged 5-14 at the time of the abuse.

"Assault by a mother/stepmother does the most damage. It is sexual assault camouflaged as maternal care. The abuse often lasts for years and many boys do not understand it as abuse before they are 16-17 years old and experience their first normal relationship with another woman," Førland said.

<<http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article1104694.ece>>

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The Age: Will the changes to family law benefit children?

YES: 73%

NO: 27%

Total Votes: 821 Poll date: 08/12/05

<http://theage.com.au/polls/national/form.html>

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Dear Senate Inquiry - Shared Parental Responsibility Bill 2005

This is a my submission to the Senate Inquiry into the provisions of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Bill 2005

This special issue addresses some of the contradictions found in the research literature on intimate partner violence.

Much of this work is concerned with the problems of severely battered women. However, other research indicates that women can be just as violent as their partners. Articles in this issue begin to explore some of the ways that women express intimate partner violence and argue that there is more than one type of partner violence. Motives and other correlates of violence are examined and future research directions are outlined.

Whole document is attached

Thank you for reading my submission

Name: Ash Patil

Postal Address: THIRROUL, NSW

(See attached file: Frieze 2005 - Female violence against intimate partners.pdf)

FEMALE VIOLENCE AGAINST INTIMATE PARTNERS: AN INTRODUCTION

Irene Hanson Frieze
University of Pittsburgh

This special issue addresses some of the contradictions found in the research literature on intimate partner violence. Much of this work is concerned with the problems of severely battered women. However, other research indicates that women can be just as violent as their partners. Articles in this issue begin to explore some of the ways that women express intimate partner violence and argue that there is more than one type of partner violence. Motives and other correlates of violence are examined and future research directions are outlined.

The articles in this issue are introduced here in the context of a review and editorial commentary on the current status of research in the area of intimate abuse. In this review, I highlight the following aspects of the literature on intimate violence: attitudes of researchers about intimate partner violence, patterns in different types of relationships (including same-sex couples) and forms of partner violence (including stalking), correlates and predictors of intimate partner violence, explanations for women's use of violence, and data on reactions to partner violence. In the concluding article in this issue, McHugh and her colleagues (2005) extend this analysis of the current empirical research by providing an alternative perspective on intimate partner violence drawn from postmodern theory.

Assumptions Held by Researchers About Intimate Partner Violence

In the United States there is now widespread understanding of and much sympathy for the battered woman among the general public as well as among researchers (Frieze, 2005; Rothenberg, 2003). Along with this sympathy is the strong disapproval of the man who batters his wife (Felson, 2002). However, there is increasing evidence that the ways in which violence occurs in relationships are not quite so simple. Women, too, can be violent toward their intimate partner. Further, the research indicates that there is more than one type of intimate partner violence (e.g., Johnson & Leone, 2005). This issue explores the nature of female

violence toward intimate partners. Before looking at some of the empirical research data, we first look briefly at the history of researcher attitudes about intimate partner violence.

Much of the research on relationship violence conducted in the 1970s and 1980s was done by feminists who were concerned about the women whom they had personally interviewed or with whom they directly worked who had been severely beaten and injured by their husbands or the men with whom they lived (see Frieze, 2005). Many researchers labeled these women as "battered wives" and focused on the violence done to them by their male partners (Frieze, 2000). Hundreds of studies provided us with a vivid picture of the battered woman, her assailant, and their marriage or other close relationship. Walker's (1979) book, *The Battered Woman*, was the most quoted book on marital violence through the late 1980s (Rothenberg, 2003). This book clearly portrayed battered women as helpless victims of their abusers. This view was the predominant one of marital violence by researchers through the 1970s and 1980s. However, a growing body of work suggested that this view was too narrow. A number of other types of couple violence and other forms of couple aggression have been identified, as discussed below.

Empirical Data on Marital and Dating Violence

A large number of studies have now indicated that both sexes admit to using violence against their intimate partners. Straus and his colleagues (e.g., Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) presented some of the first indications that not all relationship violence was perpetrated by men toward women and that some women were violent toward their husbands. Such observations were rejected or ignored by most researchers when this research was published. Although many acknowledged during the 1970s and 1980s that battered women could be violent, empirical evidence

Irene Hanson Frieze, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to: Irene Hanson Frieze, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. E-mail: frieze@pitt.edu

of female violence was generally interpreted (by myself as well as other feminist researchers) as battered women fighting back against an abusive batterer (e.g., Frieze & Browne, 1989; or Saunders, 2002, for more recent arguments about battered women fighting back).

Over time there were increasing amounts of research and clinical evidence that women could be violent as well, at least in some situations. Some of this evidence came from continuing studies of married couples. For example, in a recent analysis of a nationally representative sample, Anderson (2002) found that 10% of all couples reported some type of mutual violence in the last year. Looking at the patterns of violence in more detail, it was noted that, in 7% of the couples, both were violent. For 2% of the couples, only the woman was violent, and for 1%, only the man was violent. This study shows the same general pattern of more women reporting engaging in violent acts toward their partner than men seen in Straus and colleagues (1980). Many other studies of couples living together show similar patterns (see a meta-analysis by Archer, 2000).

We (Williams & Frieze, in press) have found similar data, again using a nationally representative sample of 3,505 men and women in stable couple relationships. Overall, 18% of the sample reported some violence in their relationship. To address questions raised about mutuality and symmetry of the violence, the violence group was subdivided into mutual and one-sided violence relationships. About 4% of the sample reported that both they and their partner used severe violence and 5% reported mutual low-level violence. More men than women reported being the targets of one-sided violence, and more women than men reported being the violent one in the couple. Recently, other researchers have similarly documented multiple patterns of mutual violence in heterosexual couples (e.g., Weston, Temple, & Marshall, in press).

Although Straus and his colleagues (1980) characterize their research as family violence, other evidence for females committing violent acts toward a male partner came from studies of dating couples. A review of many different studies of dating violence in U.S. and Canadian adolescents finds that over one-third of high school students engage in one or more acts of physical aggression toward a dating partner in any given year (Wolfe, Scott, Reitzel-Jaffe, & Wekerle, 2001). Thus, hitting, slapping, pushing, or using some other act of aggression toward a dating partner is relatively common in adolescents and college students in the United States (e.g., Graves, Sechrist, White, & Paradise, 2005). However, many of these acts do not result in any type of injury. Even though researchers classify all of these acts as violence, many of them involve low impact acts such as slapping or shoving (Frieze, 2005). Archer's (2000) review and meta-analysis of females receiving more injuries than males across a wide range of couple ages and types of relationships further argues that females receive more injuries in these relationships than males, although some males are also injured.

Violence in Same-Sex Relationships

Another source of data that challenged earlier conclusions and theories about couple violence was data from same-sex couples in which one or both partners used violence toward their partner (Letellier, 1994; McHugh, Frieze, & Browne, 1993; Renzetti, 1992). Much of the violence in gay and lesbian couples was mutual (Letellier, 1994), although some was one-sided (Renzetti, 1992).

Because long-term same-sex relationships are much less common than heterosexual partnerships, and because of an unwillingness to identify gender orientation, there is less data available about these relationships. McClennen, Summers, and Daley (2002) estimate that there is violence in 25 to 50% of lesbian couples. Other studies of lesbian couples show similar percentages. Balsam and Szymanski (2005) recruited study participants from public Gay Pride events. In their sample of 272 lesbian and bisexual women, 40% reported being physically violent toward a female partner, while 44% said they had been the victim of violence from a female partner. Balsam and Szymanski examined the ways in which special sources of stress relate to violence in lesbian couples. Such data with same-sex couples again raise questions about assumptions that men are the violent sex and women are the victims of male violence. All of these data make it clear that we need to separate the issue of partner violence from our stereotypes about battered women and abusive men.

Types of Intimate Partner Violence

As this brief review has indicated, the widely accepted ideas of researchers regarding marital violence (battered women with abusive male partners) cannot explain the relatively high levels of female violence in close relationships. As it was commonly understood, wife battering tends to be one-sided, with the husband much more violent than the wife. Research reported in this issue and elsewhere (e.g., McHugh & Frieze, in press) indicates that this pattern is not the only pattern of marital violence, nor even the most typical. Another form of relationship violence that has been identified involves mutual and often low-level violence from both parties. In general, one of the best predictors of physical aggression toward one partner is the level of physical aggression used by the other partner, which implies a high level of mutuality in couple violence (Archer, 2000).

This pattern of mutual violence has been labeled as "common couple violence" because it is believed to be even more common than wife battering (Johnson, 1995). This pattern has been documented in married, cohabiting, and dating heterosexual couples, as well as in lesbian couples (Frieze, 2005; Russo, 2003). Such relationships often include psychological aggression or hostility as well as physical violence (e.g., Jenkins & Aubé, 2002). Recently, Johnson and Leone (2005) have relabeled common couple violence "situational couple violence" to better indicate that this type of violence is not related to desires to control the partner

and that it may be related to factors in the relationship or in the everyday lives of the violent individuals. As discussed below, many of these factors relating to partner violence are addressed in the articles in this issue.

It is interesting to speculate about why the evidence of female violence has been rejected for so long. One reason may be that there are clear examples of severely battered women seeking help in shelters. These victims of intimate terrorism (the label suggested by Johnson [Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Leone, 2005] for one-sided partner violence involving high levels of perpetrator control) suffer from a variety of severe emotional reactions to their victimization (Koss, Bailey, Yuan, Herrera, & Lichter, 2003). With this reality, it may be difficult to recognize that there are other forms of intimate partner violence.

Assumptions about men being violent and women being nonviolent can be seen in other areas of violence research, as well as in the article by Richardson (2005). Richardson discusses her research, which questions the basic assumption of male aggressiveness and female passivity among researchers interested in laboratory research on aggression against strangers. Richardson's findings were unexpected, and she, too, initially rejected evidence of female violence. In a series of studies primarily using college students, Richardson found that even in situations involving aggression toward strangers, women did respond to aggressive provocation and they were especially likely to use indirect forms of aggression in these studies. Overall, there were fewer gender differences in aggression levels between men and women in situations involving interactions with romantic partners whereas gender differences were larger, with males more aggressive, in situations involving strangers.

Stalking

Conceptions of what constitutes interpersonal violence and abuse have expanded over the past decade. In addition to the limited number of physically aggressive acts included on the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), researchers have begun to investigate verbal aggression, psychological abuse, and sexual coercion as elements of intimate abuse. Many of the articles in this issue explore various types of partner aggression (see Frieze, 2005, for a fuller discussion of types of partner aggression).

An aspect of interpersonal aggression that has received increasing attention in the last few years from a very different set of researchers, is the study of stalking behavior (Frieze & Davis, 2002). Stalking was first identified as something that strangers did to celebrities, and laws were quickly passed to try to stop this type of behavior. However, further research on the behaviors defined as stalking indicated that the large majority of these behaviors occurred among people who were at least acquainted, if not already in a relationship. Stalking can occur when someone is interested in starting a relationship with someone, or during

the period that the relationship is ending. Surveillance and other forms of stalking such as unwanted approach behavior and verbal and physical threats are perpetrated by both men and women (Davis & Frieze, 2000; Frieze & Davis, 2002; Sinclair & Frieze, in press). Surveillance of a partner by the violent partner during an ongoing relationship is also quite common. The most violent forms of stalking are generally acted out by the abusive partner, especially when these violent relationships are breaking up (Mechanic, Weaver, & Resick, 2000).

Although research on stalking either during the initial courtship stage or during breakup has not substantiated a relationship between initial courtship stalking, relationship violence, and later breakup stalking, this relationship has not been directly tested in previous research. Williams and Frieze (2005) use a retrospective longitudinal design to show that it is indeed the case that these behaviors are linked. College students reported in this study that certain types of initial stalking-related behaviors did sometimes occur prior to a relationship developing and that violence did often occur in these relationships. They further found that the prerelationship stalking behaviors were often the same stalking behaviors that are found during breakup. This pattern was seen in reported violence in women as well as men. This work suggests that researchers should consider stalking-related behaviors as one of many types of partner aggression in future research.

Predictors of Relationship Violence

Many of the articles in this issue examine some of the predictors and correlates of partner violence, focusing on female violence, but sometimes looking at both partners. As discussed below, much of the earlier research was based on the assumption that men are the ones who are violent toward women. Findings from these studies have been replicated in studies of mutual couple violence and of female violence. In this issue, we examine situational predictors, age of the participants, and experiences of early victimization as correlates of violence perpetration. We also look at some of the motives for female violence.

Situational predictors of partner violence. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, many of the factors that have been identified as predictors for the type of aggression we have labeled as wife battering or intimate terrorism also apply to other patterns of intimate partner violence. Both stress and alcohol use are associated with couple violence (Anderson, 2002; Jasinski, 2001; Perala, Bakeman, & Norris, 1994). Following up on this idea that stress is associated with partner violence, Balsam and Szymanski (2005) used a sample of lesbians and operationalized stress as internalized homophobia and as experiences of heterosexual discrimination. In their sample of lesbians, internalized homophobia was found to relate to relationship quality and to relationship violence, as predicted. Discrimination

experiences were also correlated with higher levels of violence but not with relationship quality.

In an examination of another situational factor, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2005) explored the relationships between violent behavior in men and women and how the members of the couple relate to each other. One hypothesis was that women who were afraid of their male partners would be the most violent, but this hypothesis was not supported. However, there was evidence that violence from one partner was met with violence from the other. As others have found, violence tended to be mutual in this study. This research examined specific violent acts and found that men and women used the same types of violent actions against one another.

These factors are further explored in another article in this issue. Graves and colleagues (2005) used longitudinal data to look at the relationship between being a victim of violence and using violence oneself. Complex patterns were found. One interpretation offered by the researchers was that those who experience high levels of violence from a partner initially fight back but then give up their violence. Graves and her colleagues suggest that this reduced level of violence resulted from finding that violence has no positive outcomes. Another explanation offered was that the college women in this study tended to end their relationships with the violent partner. For those women who did not experience violence or experienced only a very low level of violence from their partners, there was no reduction over time in their own violence.

Levels of partner violence vary by the age of the couple. As mentioned earlier, some of the early evidence for females committing violent acts toward a male partner came from studies of dating couples in colleges and high schools. Studies of dating violence generally reveal higher frequencies of physical aggression, especially in adolescents, than found in long-term relationships of older couples. For example, in a study of nearly 500 New York high school students, Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, and O'Leary (2001) found that 46% of these high school students reported experiencing physical aggression from a current or former dating partner. Although these young women were more likely to report being the victim of partner violence than the young men in the sample, women also reported using more overall physical aggression than men reported using. There were also race differences. African Americans had the highest rates of reported victimization, followed by Hispanics, and then by Caucasians. In a study extending some of these ideas about adolescent female violence, Milan, Lewis, Ethier, Kershaw, and Ickovics (2005) found that over half of a sample of adolescent women from low-income, urban communities were involved in violent relationships in the past year.

Although the overall rates are generally lower than those found for high school students, the majority of studies of dating violence in college students indicate that women engage in more violent acts than men (Archer, 2000). For

example, we (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992) found that among psychology students at our university, 58% of the women said they had been physically aggressive toward their dating partner at least once while 55% of the men said they had been physically aggressive. We also asked about partner violence. Forty-two percent of the women said their male dating partner had been physically aggressive toward them while 48% of the men claimed their female partners had been violent. If one attempts to match these reports from men and women (who were not dating one another), one can see that the percentages do not coincide. Women report more overall violence both as perpetrators and as victims in heterosexual relationships. Other studies have reported similar data of women being more likely to report violence overall (e.g., Hamby, in press; Sinclair & Frieze, in press).

In a large longitudinal study of 1,580 undergraduate women students from two incoming freshman classes, Graves and colleagues (2005) directly address changes in violence levels in a group of women over time. They found that 51% reported using some form of physical aggression against their partners during adolescence, but these percentages dropped to 35% in their freshman year. During their time at the university, violence against their partners continued to drop to a low of 26% in the fourth year. Their [often different] partners were also less violent as the women became older. This trend was especially true for the more violent relationships.

Other research supports the conclusion that intimate violence is highest in youth and decreases over time. Bookwala, Sobin, and Zdaniuk (in press) examined violence and other conflict strategies in a cross-sectional and longitudinal study of a representative sample of older adults. They concluded that couples mellow with age. Younger couples were more likely than older couples to use violence and other maladaptive conflict resolution strategies. All of these studies suggest that more attention needs to be directed toward developmental and cohort effects on the expression of violence in interpersonal relationships.

Early experiences with violence victimization. Having witnessed parental aggression has been found to be associated with partner violence in more than one study (e.g., Bookwala et al., 1992; White & Humphrey, 1994). This relationship may be especially strong for women. In a direct test of the role of victimization as a child on women's later partner violence, Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure, and Snow (2005) found that in a sample of primarily African American women recruited from the community, those who had been abused were significantly more likely to be violent with a partner.

Motives for partner violence. Once we accept the idea that women can be violent toward an intimate partner or that it is not uncommon for women to initiate acts of low-level physical violence toward their partners and for some

women to use high levels of violence, we then ask why women do this. Many of the articles in this issue address this question. These articles add to our basic understanding of the causes of partner violence. Much of the literature is now based largely on analyses of motives for male violence, but many of the same factors may be operating in females.

It has often been suggested that the use of violence can be a way of attempting to control the partner. Controlling behavior is associated with intimate terrorism and has been identified as one of the defining characteristics of the battering male partner (Frieze & McHugh, 1992; Johnson & Leone, 2005). Empirical evidence to support this relationship between control and partner violence can be seen in the fact that those who have high desires to control the partner are more likely to be physically aggressive (Follingstad, Bradley, Helff, & Laughlin, 2002; Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, & Burke, 1999). More recent research suggests that these desires for control can be expressed as violence in women as well as men.

Reasons for using physical aggression against the partner mentioned by both sexes were an inability to express oneself verbally or a desire to feel more powerful, to get control over the other person, to prove one's love, and to get attention (Harned, 2001). Ronfeldt, Kimerling, and Arias (1998) also noted this association and found that those college students who were unsatisfied with the amount of power they had in their relationship were the most likely to use violence. Needs for control are also associated with greater psychological abuse of the partner (Dye & Davis, 2003).

Other research on dating relationships of college students indicates that those in mutually violent relationships rated themselves as more concerned about personal freedom than students in nonviolent relationships (Hockenberry & Billingham, 1993). Perhaps it is couples who are concerned about their own independence who are more likely to get into arguments and to have these arguments escalate to violence. This thinking is supported by Thompson's (1991) study of dating couples, which was also based on a college sample. Thompson found that men and women higher in self-rated masculinity were more likely to be involved in a violent relationship. The masculinity scale includes attributes such as independent (and aggressive).

Graham-Kevan and Archer (2005) provide additional data on need for control as a factor in the perpetration of violence. They found evidence that female violence was associated with the need to control the partner. This type of motivation has been discussed in battering men and is part of the earlier view of highly violent men who batter their wives. The Graham-Kevan and Archer work suggests that desires to control are associated with both women and men who are violent in intimate relationships.

Responses to Partner Violence

Many studies that have asked people about violence in their relationships have also asked about various emotional states,

terminations of relationships, and other behaviors interpreted as reactions to the violence. Because all of these data have been collected at one point in time, it is not clear what the directions of causality have been (see Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, & Appelbaum, 2001). Much of the research has focused on the reactions of women to violence received from their male partner (e.g., Koss et al., 2003). However, men have also reported being recipients of partner violence (e.g., Williams & Frieze, in press). Here we examine two types of reactions, emotional reactions and leaving the relationship.

Emotional reactions. Having a violent partner is associated with a variety of reactions often associated with stress or symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In a random sample of high school girls in the state of Massachusetts, Silverman, Raj, Mucci, and Hathaway (2001) found that those girls reporting they had been hurt physically by a dating partner were more likely to use cocaine, have early sexual intercourse, and become pregnant. These associations could be the result of stress over the violence, or they may have meant the girls were more likely to be in a situation in which their partner was abusive. However, there were also clear indications of high levels of distress from the violence. This distress was indicated by attempts at suicide and use of laxatives or vomiting to control weight.

Similar findings can be found in a study by Milan and colleagues (2005). In this study, a group of low-income urban young women with and without children were compared. The young women who had no children were more likely to end a relationship in which they were violent. Their male partners were often violent in these relationships as well. However, when there were children, violence in the women was associated with depression. There is certainly evidence that, overall, even low-level mutual violence has negative emotional implications for many people. Both female and male victims of partner violence are more likely to use alcohol or drugs (Anderson, 2002), perhaps as a form of coping. Anderson argues that previous studies showing alcohol as a causal factor in battering may not have considered the fact that violence is often reciprocated and that alcohol abuse may be a response to being attacked by the partner rather than a causal factor. Sullivan and her colleagues (2005) have also investigated this issue and found that being victimized by partner violence is predictive of depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms. They suggest that earlier studies showing that women who were more violent were also more depressed may have found such data because they failed to control for being a victim of partner violence as well as being violent themselves. Sullivan and colleagues control for this factor in their analysis.

Harned's (2001) study of college student dating violence explored some of the psychological reactions to violence from a dating partner. Negative reactions were found in both female and male victims, who reported increased anxiety and posttraumatic stress symptoms after being assaulted. Psychological abuse resulted in more negative

reactions than physical abuse, a finding consistent with Lawrence and Bradbury (2001). Other studies of married couples also show that psychological abuse often precedes physical abuse and that the psychological abuse is as damaging as the physical abuse, especially in relationships in which the violence is not severe (Dutton, Goodman, & Bennett, 1999; Marshall, 1999; O'Leary, 1999).

Finally, there may be differences in the reactions of women and men to partner violence. Williams and Frieze (in press), examining a national sample of couples, found that women were more likely to show negative emotional reactions to partner violence than men, regardless of the level of violence. Other data, too, suggest that men are not as concerned about partner violence as women (Frieze, 2005).

Leaving the relationship. One might assume that a common reaction to partner violence would be to leave the abusing partner. This situation does not always happen, however. Violence alone, if low-level, has not been found to lead to relationship dissolution or even to lowered relationship satisfaction. Rather than the violence itself, it was the communication of negative emotions, such as contempt, sadness, and anxiety in a problem-solving discussion that related to relationship breakups in one study that addressed this issue (Lawrence & Bradbury, 2001). Because psychological abuse and negative feelings about the partner often accompany violence, it is difficult to separate the effects of these factors in understanding reactions to violence.

One response to violence from one's partner is to end the relationship, and certainly some young women do so (e.g., Milan et al., 2005). Watson and colleagues (2001) found that many high school students reacted to the violence from their dating partners by breaking up or threatening to do so. (In this study, which included participants of both sexes, ending the relationship or threatening to do so in response to the violence was more common in girls.) However, it appears that many young adults do not break up because of violence, although the violence may be upsetting to them. In another study that combined college women with women recruited from a shelter for battered women, Hendy, Eggen, Gustitus, McLeod, and Ng (2003) found that for those women who were considering leaving their violent partner, fear of harm was an important predictor, while fears of loneliness were associated with wanting to stay in the relationship.

Ending a marriage or long-term partnership, especially one involving children, is much more difficult than breaking up with a dating partner. DeMaris (2000) did look at predictors of breakups in a national sample of married and cohabiting couples. He found that when the man was violent, this factor was associated with less satisfaction with the relationship in the woman, and it was this dissatisfaction that was predictive of terminating the relationship. Women's use of violence was not associated with relationship dissatisfaction nor with terminating the relationship.

In a test of a model of relationship breakup derived from social psychology, the investment model (e.g., Rusbult &

Martz, 1995), Rhatigan, Moore, and Stuart (2005) used a sample of women who had been found to be violent toward their partner to predict decisions about staying or leaving the relationship. The investment model predicted that relationship satisfaction, not having good relationship alternatives, and having invested a good deal in the relationship would be related to relationship commitment and the desire to remain. Results indicated that the model was supported. Even in these violent women, the receipt of higher levels of violence from their partners was not necessarily associated with terminating the relationship.

Other reactions. Not all reactions involve upset or termination of the relationship. When high school students were asked about what they did in reaction to a physical attack from a dating partner (Watson et al., 2001), about one third did not endorse any of the possibilities on the checklist. This list included many of the types of reactions discussed above. The fact that none of these reactions was endorsed may indicate that many of the students did not consider the attack to be a problem. Among those who did respond, the most common reaction was fighting back or making some other type of aggressive response. This reaction was especially likely for Caucasian and Hispanic girls and African American boys. These same groups were also most likely to seek some type of informal help by talking to someone, most commonly the partner or a friend. Girls often listed crying as another response. Such reactions imply that these incidents were upsetting for many of the students but not for all of them.

Implications

What can we conclude about intimate partner violence? First, violence is not necessarily something that only men do to women. Both sexes do engage in physical aggression against their partners, with women even more likely to do so than men. Gender differences appear to decline and overall levels of physical aggression are lower as people get older. A small percentage of intimate partner violence is quite violent, and men are even more likely to engage in the highly violent actions that lead to injuries, but some women also do so. Future research needs to recognize that there is more than one type of intimate partner violence and to better clarify the patterns of violence and the motives for and consequences of men's and women's use of intimate partner violence.

As we have seen, there are many types of violent relationships. Such relationships all differ from those relationships that have no physical aggression. Research is needed to better understand how violence changes a relationship and how nonviolent couples differ from violent ones. Research is beginning to provide some information about these situations. Marcus and Swett (2002) point out that as relationships become more intimate, there is more open expression of emotion. In violent couples, there is certainly

more expression of anger and other negative emotions (e.g., Boyle & Vivian, 1996). Perhaps it is the expression of positive emotions that protects some couples from violence. These positive emotions may include empathy, which acts to counter the expression of aggression, and the expression of warmth and affection. A study of dating undergraduate students that tested these ideas found that being willing to listen to and understand the partner and expressing positive feelings were both predictive of nonviolent as compared to violent relationships. Disclosing one's feelings did not differentiate the two groups (Marcus & Swett, 2002).

In another study of men recruited from a clinic for treatment of criminal violence (often against the spouse) and from an employment center, Hanson, Cadsky, Harris, and Lalonde (1997) classified their sample into a nonviolent group, a moderately abusive group, and a severely abusive group. On measures such as having criminal convictions for violence, being generally hostile, being involved in violent behavior toward others besides the spouse, and abuse of alcohol and drugs, significant differences were found between the three groups, such that the nonviolent men were lowest, the moderately violent intermediate, and the severely violent the highest. Such data suggest that the degree of aggressiveness may be a continuum for men and that intimate terrorists may simply be the most extremely violent group. Research is needed to see if similar patterns will be found for women who vary in their levels of partner violence.

It is hoped that the articles in this issue will help researchers to understand better the nature of intimate partner violence and to look at the findings of studies of violent relationships from new perspectives. It is important for researchers to recognize the empirical data and to gain more understanding of why some women and men engage in low-level violence. We also need to understand better those women and men who are extremely violent.

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