

The gender paradigm in domestic violence research and theory: Part 1—The conflict of theory and data

Donald G. Dutton^{a,*}, Tonia L. Nicholls^b

University of British Columbia

^a*Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, 2513 West Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6T 1Y7*

^b*Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia, 2513 West Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6T 1Y7*

Received 1 November 2004; received in revised form 20 January 2005; accepted 18 February 2005

Available online 10 May 2005

Abstract

Feminist theory of intimate violence is critically reviewed in the light of data from numerous incidence studies reporting levels of violence by female perpetrators higher than those reported for males, particularly in younger age samples. A critical analysis of the methodology of these studies is made with particular reference to the Conflict Tactics Scale developed and utilised by Straus and his colleagues. Results show that the gender disparity in injuries from domestic violence is less than originally portrayed by feminist theory. Studies are also reviewed indicating high levels of unilateral intimate violence by females to both males and females. Males appear to report their own victimization less than females do and to not view female violence against them as a crime. Hence, they differentially under-report being victimized by partners on crime victim surveys. It is concluded that feminist theory is contradicted by these findings and that the call for “qualitative” studies by feminists is really a means of avoiding this conclusion. A case is made for a paradigm having developed amongst family violence activists and researchers that precludes the notion of female violence, trivializes injuries to males and maintains a monolithic view of a complex social problem.

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Keywords: Domestic abuse; Gender; Intimate violence; Paradigm; Feminism

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: dondutton@shaw.ca (D.G. Dutton).

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After a period of lengthy neglect, family violence achieved heightened attention as a serious social problem in the early 1970s (Dutton, 1995; Pleck, 1987). Through a combination of activist effort and research findings showing family violence to be more prevalent than previously believed, governments began to take a more aggressive arrest policy toward the problem. Subsequently, shelter houses for female victims as well as mandatory treatment for male perpetrators became commonplace in North America. Research followed, based in many cases on samples drawn from those shelters (woman-victims) or court-mandated treatment groups (male-perpetrators). As a result of this sample selection and of the prevailing ideology of feminism, the notion evolved that spouse assault was exclusively male perpetrated or that female intimate violence, to the extent that it existed at all, was defensive or inconsequential. Subsequent research showing equivalent rates of serious female violence has been greeted with scepticism, especially by the activist-research community (e.g. Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Jaffe, Lemon, & Poisson, 2003). Data surveys (e.g. Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b; Straus & Gelles, 1992; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) similarly met with criticism, especially by feminist researchers who were committed to the view that intimate violence was the by-product of patriarchy and hence, an exclusively male activity (Bograd, 1988). This initial dogma has persevered despite data to the contrary, to be presented below.

This type of error in social judgment is demonstrated in research studies by social psychologists such as Janis (1982), Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky (1982), and by Lord, Ross, and Lepper (1979) which show “confirmatory bias” (also called “biased assimilation”) and “belief perseverance” occurring when research subjects have a strongly held belief and are exposed to research findings inconsistent with the belief. The subjects reconcile the contradiction and maintain the prior belief by discounting the research methodology. They do

not apply the same rigorous standards to research findings, which confirm their beliefs. Kahneman et al. described the tendency of humans to make premature causal judgments, often based on unconscious biases in human inference. Personal experience is an especially erroneous basis for making social judgment as we tend to give too much weight to single, salient experiences and to subsequently discount contrary data to the “confirmatory bias” we have established. Lord et al. illustrated how contradictory data sets are systemically discounted. Janis further demonstrated how social groups evolve a social reality called “groupthink” where group ideology is protected by and serves to self-sustain through rationalizations for discounting contradictory data. A conjunction of the social psychological phenomena of groupthink and belief perseverance appears to account for the “paradigm” (or “worldview”) and ensuing urban myth surrounding domestic violence often found in academic journals specifically focused on domestic violence.

Lord et al. (1979) and Janis (1982) focused on “lay judgments”, not on academic studies. In fact, the notions of scientific objectivity and falsifiable hypotheses act, at least in principle, against the formation of “groupthink.” However, social scientists frequently become aligned with contemporary notions of social justice and attempt to fit their enterprise to the objectives of achieving social change. In so doing, they increase the risk of straying from objective reporting of data. In domestic violence research, the sense that a greater good for women’s rights and the protection of women should prevail over scientific accuracy has provided this function of directing the search, data reported, interpretations, and applications of the data. In concert with value-laden theories, the focus of attention has been on male violence and simultaneously has deflected study and acceptance of female violence. In effect, a “paradigm” (cf. Kuhn, 1965) has developed in the domestic violence literature in which perpetrators are viewed as exclusively or disproportionately male. Any and all data inconsistent with this view are dismissed, ignored, or attempts are made to explain them away. The function of the gender paradigm originally was to generate social change in a direction that righted an imbalance against women (see Dobash & Dobash, 1978, 1979; Dobash et al., 1992; Patai, 1998; Walker, 1989; Yllo & Bograd, 1988). The result, however, has been to misdirect social and legal policy, to misinform custody assessors, police, and judges, to disregard data sets contradictory to the prevailing theory, and to mislead attempts at therapeutic change for perpetrators (see also Corvo & Johnson, 2003; Dutton, 1994; George, 2003).

1. The radical feminist paradigm

In an earlier paper, Dutton (1994) described feminist theory as being a “paradigm”, roughly translated as a set of guiding assumptions or worldview, commonly shared within a group and serving to ward off recognition of data that are dissonant with the paradigm’s central tenets. This theory views all social relations through the prism of gender relations and holds, in its neo-Marxist view, that men (the bourgeoisie) hold power advantages over women (the proletariat) in patriarchal societies and that all domestic violence is either male physical abuse to maintain that power advantage or female defensive violence, used for self protection.

The feminist paradigm supports the notion that domestic violence is primarily a culturally supported male enterprise and that female violence is always defensive and reactive. When women are instigators, in this view, it is a “pre-emptive strike”, aimed at instigating an inevitable male attack (see [Bograd, 1988](#); [Dobash et al., 1992](#); *inter alia*). In contrast, male violence is not similarly contextualized and is always attributed to a broader social agenda. As a result of this perspective, feminists tend to generalize about violent men, about men in general, and to ignore female pathology. As [Dobash and Dobash \(1979\)](#) put it, “Men who assault their wives are actually living up to cultural prescriptions that are cherished in Western society—aggressiveness, male dominance and female subordination—and they are using physical force as a means to enforce that dominance” (p. 24). [Bograd \(1988\)](#) defined feminist researchers as asking the fundamental question “Why do men beat their wives. . . Feminists seek to understand why men in general use physical force against their partners and what functions this serves in a given historical context” (p.13). In fact, the data demonstrate that while feminists are accurate in portraying abuse in intimate relationships as rampant, the reality is that most often both parties engage in aggression ([Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, & Appelbaum, 2001](#); [Nicholls & Dutton, 2001](#); [Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b](#)). Feminism favors strong arrest policies and “intervention” rather than treatment (since treatment implies that society is less to blame) ([Pence & Paymar, 1993](#)). It is not clear how men are held individually responsible by feminism when patriarchy is to blame, nor how feminists account for differences in male populations in attitudes and acceptance of violence.

Disconfirming research data appear to have had little impact on supporters of this perspective over the past two decades. For instance, speaking to intimate partner homicide, [Serran and Firestone \(2004\)](#) recently asserted we live in “a society where almost every major institute accepts or ignores the problems of gender inequality. . .” and “The law and the patriarchal hierarchy have legitimized wife beating and control, resulting in unequal power relationships between men and women” (p. 12). In fact, considerable evidence suggests that there are strong social prohibitions inhibiting men from aggressing against women (e.g., chivalry; [Arias & Johnson, 1989](#); [Archer, 2000a](#)), legal sanctions against men who transgress (the U.S. Violence Against Women Act of 1994: (VAWA); [Brown, 2004](#)) and fewer social prohibitions inhibiting women from aggressing against men (for reviews see [Brown, 2004](#); [George, 1999](#)). These legal and social policies, well intended though they might be, are based on erroneous information both about the causes and incidence of most intimate violence. They have evolved based on the needs of the small but significant proportion of women who experience chronic “wife battering”; they do little to serve the much larger majority of men, women, and children coping with the more frequently encountered “common couple abuse” ([Johnson, 1995](#); [Stets & Straus, 1992b](#)).

Among the data sets cited by Dutton in 1994 as contradictory to the feminist view were the following: (1) unidirectional “severe” female intimate violence was more common than male unidirectional intimate violence ([Stets & Straus, 1992b](#)); (2) lesbian abuse rates were higher than heterosexual male–female abuse rates ([Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montague, & Reyes, 1991](#)); (3) only a small percentage of males were violent over the life course of a marriage ([Straus et al., 1980](#)); (4) as many females as males were violent ([Straus et al., 1980](#)); (5)

very few males approved of the spouse abuse (Stark & McEvoy, 1970)¹; (6) only 9.6% of males were dominant in their marriage (Coleman & Straus, 1986); and, (7) male violence was not linearly related to cultural indicators of patriarchy across US states (Yllo & Straus, 1990). Each of these data sets, available by 1993, has routinely been ignored by the feminist paradigm.

The initial effect of the feminist paradigm in practice was to focus so exclusively on male intimate violence that female violence was ignored. Corvo and Johnson (2003) outlined the bedrock view of feminist thought “that battering (by males) is NEVER... provoked, hereditary, out of control, accidental, an isolated incident. It is not caused by disease, diminished intellect, alcoholism/addiction, mental illness or any external person or event. It is a means for men to systematically dominate, disempower, control and devalue women. . . it is greater than an individual act, it supports the larger goal of oppression of women” (from *Philosophy: Alternatives to Domestic Violence: //comnet.org/adacss/philosophy.html*).

Dutton (1994) asserted that intimacy and psychopathology rather than gender generated relationship violence. In societies where violence against women is not generally accepted, such as North America, violent men are not living up to a “cultural norm.” That norm may exist in patriarchal societies such as Korea (Kim & Cho, 1992), or Islamic countries (Frenkiel, 1999; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Moin, 1998; as cited in Archer, 2002) but data do not support its existence in North America. Archer (in press) cites a negative correlation between social–structural factors empowering women and frequency of wife assault across 51 countries (called the Gender Development Index). However, in the U.S., Canada, Britain, and New Zealand (nations supplying the bulk of data on spouse assault) gender empowerment for women is the highest of all 51 countries and structural factors have the least impact on wife assault.

It is because of intimacy that lesbian and heterosexual rates of abuse are similarly high; the impact of attachment and related anxieties produce anger and abuse. Dutton (1998, 2002)

¹ The most “patriarchal” sample found to date were Palestinian men (Haj-Yahia, 1998). Even in this sample, 55% agreed that “there is no excuse for a man to beat his wife”. Straus et al. (1980) found a 31% agreement rate in the U.S. to the phrase term “I can think of a situation when it would be appropriate for a husband to slap a wife”. Douglas and Straus (2003), in a cross national study of 17 nations, found average agreement with the statement “I can think of a situation when it would be appropriate for a husband to slap a wife” to be 45% (that is, 45% did not strongly disagree with that statement). It is arguable whether this item constitutes a measure of approval. Some respondents may believe that slapping cures hysteria or can imagine slapping their spouse to protect their children or in self defense. We do not know whether this item measures approval or imagination.

Simon et al. (2001) collected data from a nationally representative sample of 5238 adults. Although the authors concluded, based on a multiple regression that acceptance of interpersonal violence was higher among participants who were male and younger than 35, were non-white, were divorced, separated or had never been married, in fact acceptance rates were low in all samples. Overall about only 9.8% of males (and 7.2% of females) approved of a man hitting a woman even “if she hits him first”. Only 2.1% of men (and 1.4% of females) approved of a man hitting a woman “to keep her in line”. However, with the genders reversed, 33.8% of men approved of a woman hitting a man (if he hits her first), 5% approved of her hitting him (“to keep him in line”). Corresponding figures for female respondents were 27% and 4.4%. The highest acceptance rate for a man hitting a woman “to keep her in line” was 12.9% found in the “Hispanic/Other” category (summed across genders). Apart from reinforcing the finding that the majority of respondents do not approve of intimate violence, the Simon et al. study also underscores the importance of stating the context in the survey question, something that was missing in the Stark and McEvoy study. It also strongly refutes the feminist claim that society accepts violence towards women (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979). An overwhelmingly high percentage of both males and females do not accept violence toward women under any circumstances. To our knowledge, a majority agreeing with the use of physical aggression against a female partner has never been reported.

further elaborated the psychological phenomena that would increase an individual's propensity to experience such anxiety and react with abuse. The "intimacy problem" explanation constitutes an alternative to gender explanations and posits that abusiveness in intimate relationships occurs for both genders and that certain psychological features increase risk for individuals independent of gender. Dutton (1994) cited data from a study on lesbian relationships by Lie et al. (1991) that showed, for women who had been in past relationships with both men and women, abuse rates were higher for all forms of abuse in relationships with women: physical, sexual, emotional. Hence, Dutton argued, intimate violence is not specific to men and cannot be explained on the basis of gender or gender roles.

An alternative would be to view intimate violence as having psychological causes common to both genders. Psychological explanations for intimate violence have come from numerous sources. One good review by Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, Smutzler, and Sandin (1997) cited psychopathology, attachment, anger, arousal, alcohol abuse, skills deficits, head injuries, biochemical correlates, attitudes, feelings of powerlessness, lack of resources, stress, and family of origin sources for male intimate violence. Follingstad, Bradley, Helff, and Laughlin (2002) found anxious attachment and angry temperament predicted dating violence in both sexes. Feminist "intervention" discounts all of these as "excuses" despite empirical support for the relationship of each to marital aggression and the utility of these risk factors for prevention and intervention.

2. The CTS debate: context

Belief perseverance requires some form of disparagement of any disconfirmatory methodology. When female violence was found to exist by the Straus Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) surveys (Straus & Gelles, 1992; Straus et al., 1980) attacks on the instrument of measurement were inevitable. In their comprehensive review of the literature over the last two decades, Dobash et al. (1992) critiqued the CTS as representing "currently fashionable claims" (p. 83, the claims were not referenced) and having problems with interpretation since almost any category on the CTS could contain acts that varied in severity. They picked an example involving a woman playfully kicking at her spouse and pointed out that behavior would be classified as a severe act on the CTS. They did not appear to consider that this could also be true of interpretations of male violence. The CTS, like any broad based instrument, reduces data out of necessity. On the revised version, the CTS2, Straus included injuries to partially offset this critique.

Dobash et al. (1992) criticized all studies using the CTS as misrepresenting intimate violence. One point of criticism is that males and females within-couples do not agree on the amount of violence used. Their implication is that males are under-reporting their use of violence. George (2003) discusses the over-and under-reporting controversy, citing a study by Morse (1995) that showed both sexes tend to over-report minor acts they commit, under-report serious acts they commit, and over-report serious acts they suffer. In surveys using representative community samples the same results are obtained regarding relative frequency of male and female violence, regardless of whether the respondents are male or female

(Kwong, Bartholomew, & Dutton, 1999; Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b), hence, lack of agreement is a non-issue².

The ultimate criterion that Dobash et al. (1992) used for the survey data is that the “meagre case descriptions do not resemble those of battered wives and battering husbands” (p. 80). In other words, the community sample does not resemble the extreme clinical samples upon which they have based their paradigm. From this perspective, the authors dismiss the representative samples and accuse the CTS of “inaccuracies and misrepresentations” based on their own non-representative subjective perception and samples. Kahneman et al. (1982) call this solecism the “representativeness heuristic,” that people hold incorrect personal notions (stereotypes), based on salient personal experiences that underestimate selective bias, baseline incidence of characteristics, etc., and lead to erroneous social judgments. Dobash et al. continue to stereotype men despite data on heterogeneity of male attitudes to women, violence use, and marital power (Coleman & Straus, 1986).

Dobash et al. (1992) complained that no “conceptual framework for understanding why women and men should think and act alike” exists. But in fact such a framework does exist (Dutton, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2002; Eckhardt, Barbour, & Stuart, 1997; Ehrensaft, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2004; Follingstad et al., 2002; Fortunata & Kohn, 2003; Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Zanarini et al., 2003, *inter alia*). This psychological literature clearly demonstrates how intimacy produces emotional states such as anxiety and anger that are abusogenic, especially in persons with Axis II personality disorders. Furthermore, the behavior occurs regardless of gender (see Ehrensaft et al., 2004; Follingstad et al., 2002). Males and females with identity disorder of a borderline variety think and feel differently than normal persons in intimate relationships. The framework is psychological and involves issues such as attachment, trauma reactions, and intimacy issues. Substantial literatures exist on each of these topics (e.g. Cassidy & Shaver, 1999; Dutton, 2002; Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 1996) and their empirical relationship to intimate abusiveness has been established (Dutton, 2002; Ehrensaft et al., 2004; Follingstad et al., 2002).

There have been several large-scale studies including an impressive array of epidemiological data (e.g., Kessler et al., 2001), consistently concluding that female violence rates are as high as, or higher, than male violence rates in intimate relationships. Even when the CTS/

² Dobash et al. (1992) criticize all studies using the CTS as misrepresenting intimate violence. One source of criticism is that males and females, within-couples do not agree on the amount of violence used. The implication is that males are under-reporting their use of violence. Straus and Gelles (1992) break down violence rates on the basis of who did the reporting. The largest discrepancy is for males under 25 to underreport wife violence compared to wives reports of own violence. Husbands' reports of own victimization are only 72% of wives perpetration reports for all assaults. Conversely, husbands' perpetration reports are 79% of wives victimization reports (p. 553). Wives perpetration reports are 208% of husbands' victimization reports. Men grossly underreport both perpetration and victimization by severe violence.

However, whether violence rates are based on male or female reports, Female Only Violence rates are higher than Male Only violence rates (Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b, p. 240). George (2003) discusses the over and under reporting controversy, citing Morse (1995) who showed both sexes tend to underreport serious acts they commit and over report serious acts they suffer. In surveys, using representative community samples, the same results are obtained regarding relative frequency of male and female violence, regardless of whether the respondent is male or female (Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b; Douglas & Straus, 2003), hence, lack of agreement by gender, as posed by Dobash and Dobash, is a non-issue.

CTS2 is not used to measure abuse, men are found to often report victimization and women often report perpetrating abuse (e.g., government surveys reviewed below).

3. The self defense debate: Female intimate violence is defensive

Walker (1984) and Saunders (1988) acknowledged presence of female violence but argued that it was defensive or, in some cases, a pre-emptive strike. Both the Walker and Saunders samples, upon which they based this argument, came from women's shelters or participants who self-selected as battered women and so, by definition, contained women who were physically abused but who may not be representative of community samples of women. Saunders did not comment on this generalization problem but simply commented that as a "feminist researcher" he had an obligation to examine motives in addition to hit counts. He argued that social science must be a "tool for social change". Saunders concluded that female violence is always self defense, even when the woman uses severe violence and the man uses only mild violence. This, he asserted, is because of the woman's smaller size and weight. He focused this analysis on the Straus et al. (1980) data. These data never asked who used violence first so the question of self defense cannot be answered by that data set. Bland and Orn (1986) in a survey conducted in Canada did ask who used violence first. Of the women who reported using violence against their husbands, 73.4% said they used violence first. Stets and Straus (1992a) reported that females said they struck first 52.7% of the time (see below).

Stets and Straus (1992a, 1992b) combined the 1985 US National Family Violence Resurvey ($N=5005$) with a sample of 526 dating couples to generate a large and representative sample of male–female relationships, in which they reported the incidence of intimate violence by gender. Their data table on relationship form and gender is reproduced below (see Table 1). Using a subset of 825 respondents who reported experiencing at least one or more assaults, Stets and Straus found that in half (49%) of the incidents the couples reported reciprocal violence, in a quarter (23%) of the cases the couples reported that the husband alone was violent, and 1/4 (28%) reported the wife alone was violent. Men ($n=297$)

Table 1
Gender differences in intimate violence in three types of relationships

	Physical violence type II								<i>N</i>
	M—minor F—none (%)	M—none F—minor (%)	Both minor (%)	M—severe F—none (%)	M—none F—severe (%)	M—severe F—minor (%)	M—minor F—severe (%)	Both severe (%)	
Dating	9.6	26.9	21.2	.1	12.5	4.8	13.5	10.6	104
Cohabit	3.5	13.4	23.2	7.3	13.4	1.2	6.1	22.0	82
Married	7.5	18.9	28.3	5.7	9.6	2.4	7.1	10.5	736

Violent couples: percent in physical violence type II by marital status.

$\chi^2=33.9$, $p<.01$, $df=14$.

Note: Compare Female Severe–Male None, and Male Severe–Female None columns. From Stets and Straus (1992b). Used with permission.

reported striking the first blow in 43.7% of cases and that their partner struck the first blow in 44.1% of the cases. The women ($n=428$) reported striking the first blow in 52.7% of the cases and that their partner struck first in 42.6% of the cases. Stets and Straus concluded that not only do women engage in a comparable amount of violence, they are “at least as likely” to instigate violence. The results also indicated that women were more likely to hit back (24.4%) than men (15%) in response to violent provocation by a partner (Straus & Gelles, 1992, Table 9.1). This latter result is difficult to explain from the feminist assertion that women are more afraid of male violence than the reverse. In all, these data do not support the argument that female violence is solely defensive.

The Stets and Straus (1992b) data contained another finding that is problematic for the self-defense and pre-emptive strike arguments; many women reported using severe violence against non-violent men (compare the Female-Severe/Male-None and Male-Severe/ Female-None columns in Table 1 above).

A comparison of the Female—Severe/Male—None (severe violence defined by the CTS) pattern with its reverse (Male—Severe/Female—None) reveals that the unilateral Female-only pattern is about three times more prevalent ($M=11.8\%$) than the Male-only ($M=4.3\%$) pattern across all types of relationships. This is true whether males or females are reporting the data (p. 240)¹. Such predominance of the more severe violence pattern by females is also true for Female—Severe/Male—Minor vs. Male—Severe/ Female—Minor patterns. Despite these data on female violence, where little or no male violence occurred, Saunders (1988), Dobash et al. (1992) and Tutty (1999) have all continued to report that female violence is exclusively self-defensive.

Stets and Straus (1992b) described their data as “surprising” but pointed out that similar results had been reported in previous studies. The “surprising” pattern they alluded to is that men had higher violence rates outside intimate relationships but not in intimate relationships (see also Straus & Gelles, 1992). The pattern is more pronounced in younger couples. Furthermore, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998), in a survey of young adults, found that 62.3% of women said their violence perpetration was never in self defense, only 6.9% said it was always in self defense.

Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, and Sebastian (1991) asked victims about their perceptions of their assaulters’ motivations and asked the perpetrators to report their own motivations. In the total sample of 495 undergraduate subjects in South Carolina, 115 respondents (23%; 16% of the men and 28% of the women) reported they have been victimized by a partner using physical force. Women reported being victimized and perpetrating physical aggression twice as often as men. The authors found that there was no significant difference in the percentage of men (17.7%) and women (18.6%) who endorsed using aggression in self-defense. Furthermore, a greater percentage of women than men reported using aggression to feel more powerful (3.4% vs. 0), to get control over the other person (22.0% vs. 8.3%), or to punish the person for wrong behavior (16.9% vs. 12.5%). The two most commonly endorsed motives by victims (i.e., their perceptions of their assaulter’s motives) were not knowing how to express themselves verbally and self defense; these were endorsed at similar rates by male victims (32.7% and 4.1%, respectively) and female victims (28.2% and 4.8%, respectively). Feminist views on men’s abuse of women hold

that the male motive is control, however, this study found that few men endorsed that motive. The authors noted, while it is possible men under-endorsed this motive they admitted to many other socially undesirable motivations.

Fiebert and Gonzalez (1997) surveyed a sample of 968 California college age women regarding their initiation of physical assaults on their male partners. Twenty-nine percent of the women ($n=285$), revealed that they had initiated assaults during the past five years. Women in their 20s were more likely to aggress than women aged 30 years and older. In terms of reasons, women reported aggressing because they did not believe that their male victims would be injured or would retaliate. Women also claimed that they assaulted their male partners because they wished to engage their attention, particularly emotionally. The above studies, taken as a whole are inconsistent with the feminist view of female violence being solely self-defensive. Women report using violence against male partners repeatedly, using it against non-violent male partners, and using it for reasons other than self-defense.

4. Government incidence surveys

The U.S. National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) often is cited as strong evidence refuting data indicating similar rates of aggression committed by men and women. Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) reported that, “women experience significantly more partner violence than men do” (p. 2). The report indicates that of 8000 men and 8000 women 22.1% of women and just 7.4% of men reported any physical assault by an intimate partner across the lifetime; 1.3% of women and 0.9% of men reported a physical assault by a partner in the previous 12 months. This study provided essential information about violence against women in the US, however, because it was presented to respondents as a study of victimization of women, it contained “filters” or demand characteristics that would make men less likely to report their own victimization (see Archer, 2000a,b; Straus, 1999).

Statistics Canada (2000) attempted to overcome the under-detection of family violence in earlier crime victim surveys by specifically asking questions about family violence victimization of a sample of about 26,000 people over the age of 15 in an annual random digit telephone survey called the General Social Survey (GSS). Statistics Canada’s rationale is given in a 1999 report: “Because the GSS asks a sample of the population about their personal crime experiences, it captures information on crimes that have been reported to the police as well as those that have gone unreported” (p. 4). What this rationale overlooks is that the focus of all government action relevant to abuse in intimate relationships has been of defining wife assault as a crime, and downplaying violence against men, even to the point of police reluctance to arrest (Brown, 2004; Buzawa, Austin, Bannon, & Jackson, 1992). When this police reluctance is coupled with men’s reluctance to acknowledge victimization, it becomes questionable whether men would view female assaults against them as crimes.

Brown (2004) reported that data from the 1999 GSS survey showed men were less willing to respond to the survey than were women (p. 7). The response rate for this survey was 81.3% (p. 10). The survey used CTS items, although not in a “conflict” context but in a crime

victimization context. It found that 33% of women and 51% of men reported being “kicked, bit or hit” “by a current or previous spouse in the previous 5 years” (Note, the survey reports 44% of women and “56% of men in its “Highlights”, p.5, but reports the 33% and 51% figures in its data table, p. 12). For the item “hit with something”, the results were women 23%, men 26%. For “beat” it was 25% women, 10% men, for “choked” it was 20% of women, 4% of men, for “used or threatened to use a knife or gun” it was 13% and 7% (Table 2.1, p.12). The overall victimization rates were 8% for women and 7% for men (p. 5). Brown has shown numerous data errors and anomalies in the Canadian GSS survey data and pointed out that, for reasons unknown, Statistics Canada never provided raw data totals but instead projected estimates to the entire Canadian population.

In the U.K., a recent survey of 22,000 people was done by the Home Office (Walby & Allen, 2004), which asked if respondents had been a victim of domestic violence in the prior year (2.8% said yes in a self report, .6% said yes in a face-to-face interview). Of victims subjected to more than four incidents, 89% were women and 11% were men. As a result of the “most serious incident”, 20% of women suffered moderate injuries such as severe bruising) and 6% suffered severe injuries (such as broken bones). Male injuries were not reported. Of those surveyed, 64% did not think what had happened to them was a crime (this dropped to 33% if they had been subjected to multiple attacks). Men were less likely to have told anyone about the victimization than were women, 31% of women had not told anyone.

In Washington State, 3381 persons were surveyed as part of an ongoing Risk Factor Surveillance System survey (Bensley, Macdonald, Van Eenwyk, Simmons, & Ruggles, 2000). Using items from the CTS, the authors found that 23.6% of women and 16.4% of men reported lifetime experiences with intimate partner violence; 21.6% of women and 7.5% of men reported injuries. These injuries could be classified as minor (sprain, bruise, small cut) or severe (broken bone, knocked unconscious). Women reported minor injuries 18.8% of the time, men reported them 6.2%, women reported severe injuries 7.4%, and men reported them 1.7%.

Hence, four large sample government victim surveys in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. have found women to be more victimized, to use violence less, and to be injured more than men. In the Canadian survey, which presented as a study of “perception of crime”, the differences were less than in the other two national surveys which were presented as surveys of “victims of crime”. The Washington State survey asked whether the respondent had experienced intimate partner violence. In contrast to these findings, many independent, peer reviewed studies have found women to use violence to about the same extent as men, even serious violence, to be somewhat more likely to be injured than men, and to be arrested less often than men. Furthermore, men are less likely to define themselves as victims, less likely to view an assault by a woman as a crime, and less likely to report victimization than women (Straus & Gelles, 1992). Straus and Gelles (1992) broke down violence rates on the basis of who did the reporting, men or women. The largest discrepancy is for males under 25 years who under-report female perpetrated violence compared to wives’ reports of their own violence. Husbands’ reports of their own victimization are only 72% of wives’ reports for all assaults. Conversely, husbands’ perpetration reports are 79% of wives’ victimization reports (p. 553). If we assume that wives’ perpetration reports may themselves be an under representation, then men’s victimization reports are a gross under representation.

Wives' own perpetration reports are 208% of husbands' victimization reports. These data suggest men grossly underreport both perpetration and victimization by severe violence.

Similar to most crime surveys, the government surveys reviewed above may have implicitly included demand characteristics because of their emphasis on “personal safety”, “violence”, and “criminal victimization”. In government surveys, the sex of the interviewer often is not specified, although it could influence reporting. Moreover, Archer (2000b) noted the NVAWS was presented to respondents as “a survey of violence toward women, thus giving the message that men’s victimization was not a concern” (p. 698). The NVAWS, Home Office, and the Statistics Canada government surveys described above either presented the surveys as a “crime victim survey”, a perceptions-of-crime survey (Canada), or worse, rely on police data which are then cited as evidence for greater violence incidence against women (e.g., Malloy, McCloskey, Grigsby, & Gardner, 2003; Statistics Canada, 1999, 2003, 2004). The reporting biases of the original Uniform Crime Reports are repeated, despite the methodological improvements Straus and colleagues made in developing and using the CTS and collecting data about conflict resolution tactics from representative samples (see Dutton, 1995, p. 10; Straus, 1999; Straus & Gelles, 1992). These methodological biases limit the reporting of intimate violence rates by both women and men, but even more so by men (Brown, 2004, p. 10; Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 4; Straus & Gelles, 1992). In the conflict surveys by Straus and his colleagues, annual assault rates are reported that are about 16 times higher than in the NVAWS (Straus, 1999). It was for this reason that Straus avoided the crime victim label of the earlier Uniform Crime Reports studies that routinely found extremely low reported rates of domestic violence. Personal safety or crime contexts in interviews typically elicit responses only from those who were injured. The annual assault rate on the NVAWS was 1.1%, close to the weighted average for injuries to men and women. Mihalic and Elliott (1997) found that phrasing questions about partner assaults in the context of criminal assaults reduced reporting of serious partner assaults by 83%, compared to questions phrased as being about relationships.

In fact, the CTS/CTS2, which Dobash et al. (1992) malign, is a far more sensitive measure of intimate violence than any government survey predicated on crime victimization. Straus (1999) has demonstrated that the CTS generates a violence report rate about 16 times greater than crime survey questions (see Table 2).

Table 2
Comparison of sensitivity of the CTS with crime victim surveys

	Family conflict studies	National crime survey	National crime victim survey	Police call data	NVAW study ¹
Annual assault rate	16% (10–35%) ²	0.2%	0.9%	0.2% ³	1.1%
Fraction of family	→	1/80th	1/18th	1/80th	1/15th
Conflict rate injury rate	1–3%	75%	52%	unknown	76%
Male rate (top)	12.2%	0.4%	0.76%	90% male ⁵	1.3
Female rate	12.4% ⁴	0.03%	0.11%		0.9
Male to female ratio	1:1	13:1	7:1	9:1	1.4:1

Note: From Straus (1999). Used with permission.

5. Male underreporting

Brown (2004) found huge discrepancies in arrest and prosecution of spousal assault as a function of gender. Women were four times more likely to report partner violence to police (81% vs. 19%). Stets and Straus (1992a) found women were 10 times more likely to call police in response to partner assault. Brown also found women were more likely to have the police arrest when reporting (75% vs. 60%) than were men reporting an assault by a woman. The higher arrest of men occurs despite injuries to male victims. When men are injured, female perpetrators are arrested only 60.2% of the time, compared to 91.1% of cases involving in the reverse situation (Brown, 2004, p. 34). A combination of men's unwillingness to report and the police being unwilling to arrest female perpetrators means only 2% of female perpetrators are arrested (Brown, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2003, p.4). When no one was injured, men were 16 times more likely to be charged than women (Brown, 2004, p. 35); this was not because male injuries were always less serious. Buzawa et al. (1992), in a study of the police arrest policy in Detroit, found that "male victims reported three times the rate of serious injury as their female counterparts, 38% compared to 14%" (p. 263). Hence, government surveys of intimate violence estimates based on crime report data (police arrest, etc.) underestimate male victimization. For this reason, the Straus studies using the CTS, which introduce questions of conflict rather than crime victimization, obtain a fuller estimate of actual violence (Straus & Gelles, 1992, see Footnote 1; Straus, 1999, see Table 2 above).

6. Data on gender differences

In recent years many independent, peer-reviewed studies of gender differences have been published. In general, these studies were not presented as "crime victim" studies and in many cases assessed intimate violence as part of another research focus. For instance, George (1999) reported on female perpetrated assaults (in any context or relationship) in the United Kingdom from a nationally representative sample of 1455 (718 males and 737 females) adults (>15 years old). Using a single question derived from the CTS (Straus, 1979) "During the past five years, which, if any, of the following have you experienced or suffered that you consider to have been an assault on you personally from one or more women aged 10 years or older" (A) threw a heavy or dangerous object directly at you; (B) pushed shoved, grabbed, or tripped you; (C) slapped you; etc. Men reported greater victimization and more severe assaults than did women. Specifically, 14% of men compared to 7% of women reported being assaulted by women. The highest risk group was single men. The majority (55%) of assaults on men were perpetrated by spouses, partners, or former partners.

Using a modified version of the CTS in a clinic sample of 97 couples seeking marital therapy, Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Vivian (1994) found that 61% of the husbands and 64% of the wives were classified as aggressive, 25% of the husbands and 11% of the wives were identified as mildly aggressive, and 36% of husbands and 53% of wives were classified as severely aggressive. Sixty-eight percent of couples were in agreement with regard to

husbands' overall levels of aggression and 69% of couples were in agreement on wives' overall levels of aggression. Aggression levels were identified as "nonviolent, mildly violent, or severely violent." Where there was disagreement, 65% of husbands were under-reporting aggression and 35% of husbands were over-reporting aggression; while 57% of wives were under-reporting aggression and 43% of wives were over-reporting aggression.

Kennedy and Dutton (1989) had collected data on intimate violence incidence in Alberta, Canada, reporting only the male data. A decade later, two female colleagues pushed for the publication of all the data (Kwong et al., 1999). Women reported receiving lower levels of violence than they perpetrated for overall, minor, and severe violence. Four other surveys in Canada that reported both male to female and female to male violence also found higher rates of female perpetrated violence (Bland & Orn, 1986; Brinkerhoff & Lupri, 1988; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Grandin & Lupri, 1997). Similarly, in a U.S. sample, O'Leary et al. (1989) found that, of 272 couples planning on marrying, more women than men had been physically violent towards their partners (44% vs. 31%).

Sommer, Barnes, and Murphy (1992) surveyed a random sample ($N=1257$) of residents of a Canadian city between ages 18 and 65. Thirty-nine percent of female participants in the survey reported "participation in some form of spouse abuse" and 16.2% reported severe violence perpetration. The risk factors for female participation were being young, having high scores on the Eysenck psychoticism scale, neuroticism index, and MacAndrews alcoholism scale. In other words, psychological disturbance and alcohol abuse predicted female violence.

Ridley and Feldman (2003) examined 153 volunteer females from a community sample (community public health clinic) in a study of conflict and communication. These women reported the following physical abuse frequencies directed at their male partners: kicking (20.2%), choking/strangling (9.1%), physically attacked the sexual parts of his body (7.1%), used a knife or gun against him (7.8%). Those who reported these acts, reported using them repeatedly (i.e., 40 incidents of kicking (per perpetrator who reported using this action), 6.5 incidents of "physical attacks to the sexual parts", 4.25 acts of choking per perpetrator, etc.). In other words, community sample women who used violence used it repeatedly.

A survey of 596 men and 616 women in Vancouver by Kwong and Bartholomew (1998) found equal rates (1% difference, males higher) for male and female perpetrated violence (when women reported) and higher rates (9% difference, females higher) of female perpetrated (when males reported). Women who were victimized were about twice as likely to report severe injuries (14% vs. 7%) and to feel physical pain the next day (38% vs. 18%) than men who were victimized. These "effect" data were for the percentage of victims who experienced injury or pain. When calculated as percentage of the entire population, the results were 2.5% of men and 4% of women had severe injuries, 6.5% of men and 11% of women experienced physical pain. Hence, the method of reporting the proportion can increase gender differences (when calculated as effect per victim) or decrease them (when reported as population proportions).

Basile (2004) compared the nature (i.e., type) and severity of abuse alleged in same- and opposite-gender litigants applying for abuse prevention orders. He concluded that despite widespread belief that intimate abuse involves an abusive male and a victimized female, male ($n=69$) and female ($n=288$) plaintiffs alleged very nearly identical behaviors by male

($n=298$) and female ($n=83$) defendants. The only statistically significant difference was that male defendants (5%) were more likely than female defendants (0) to be accused of forced sex ($p=.047$).

The U.S. National Comorbidity Survey (NCS; Kessler et al., 2001) was a nationally representative household survey completed between September 1990 and March 1992 to assess mental illness. The NCS involved face-to-face interviews with 8098 people between the ages of 15 and 54. A probability subsample was then generated to assess the social consequences of mental disorders. Of that sample, 3537 participants ($n=1738$ men 1799 women) were co-habiting or married and completed the CTS (Straus, 1979). Kessler et al. reported there was no significant gender difference in the prevalence of minor physical victimization reported by the women (17.4%) and the men (18.4%). Similarly, the percentage of both men (17.7% vs. 18.4%) and women (15.4% vs. 17.4%) who reported committing minor domestic violence is lower than the proportion of women and men reporting victimization. The reported prevalence of severe victimization also did not differ significantly by gender (Kessler et al., 2001; 6.5% of female respondents and 5.5% of male respondents). Men reported significantly less severe violence perpetration (2.7%) than women reporting severe violence victimization (6.5%).

Kessler et al. (2001) also examined reciprocal aggression (i.e., couple aggression in which both partners perpetrate aggressive acts and also are victimized by their partner). Consistent with prior studies (for a review, see Nicholls & Dutton, 2001) reciprocity was the norm. Similar percentages of women (10.5%, $SD=1.2$) and men (11.7%, $SD=1.2$) reported both partners engaged in the same amount of minor violence. Of the participants reporting reciprocal minor aggression, “70.7% of the women who reported minor violence victimization and exactly the same percent of comparable men (70.7%) said that they reciprocated minor violence” (Kessler et al., 2001, p. 492). The vast majority of women (85.4%) and men (90.0%) reporting reciprocal minor violence described the frequency by each partner as the same. With those who reported committing severe aggression, each gender was more likely to report their partner as reciprocating than was the partner likely to report this. Most participants, both men (96%) and women (80.4%), who reported reciprocal severe aggression, stated the abuse frequency was the same for both partners. Kessler et al. replicated Stets and Straus’ (1992b) findings on this issue of reciprocity.

Studying a birth cohort of 980 individuals, Ehrensaft et al. (2004) found 9% to be in “clinically abusive relationships”, defined as those that required intervention by any professional (e.g., hospital, police, lawyers). As we shall see below, more such help exists for women, so the results may be skewed. However, the authors found comparable rates of violence, with 68% of women and 60% of men self reporting injury. Both male and female perpetrators evidenced signs of personality disturbance. The authors noted, for instance, the women had “aggressive personalities and/or adolescent conduct disorder” (p. 267). As the authors put it, “these findings counter the assumption that if clinical abuse was ascertained in epidemiological samples, it would be primarily man-to-woman, explained by patriarchy rather than psychopathology” (p. 258).

Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, and O’Leary (2001) sampled $N=476$ high school students (266 males and 209 females) from a large, metropolitan area on Long Island. Using a

modified CTS, of students with past or current romantic relationships ($n=401$) 45.6% reported at least one incident of physical aggression by their current or former partners and just 9% reported exclusive victimization (i.e., had been physically victimized but had not perpetrated physical aggression). Using a measure the authors developed, Watson and colleagues also studied gender differences in responding to aggression by a dating partner. Female students were significantly more likely than male students to report an aggressive response. Specifically, girls (42%) were significantly more likely to fight back than boys (26%). Male students (24%) were more likely than female students (6%) to do nothing in response to abuse by a partner. There was a trend for female students (28%) to be more likely to report breaking up with an abusive partner than male students (21%).

Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, Fagan, and Silva (1997) followed a birth cohort of 1037 subjects in Dunedin, New Zealand. As Magdol et al. put it, “Early studies of partner violence assumed that men’s perpetration rates exceeded those of women, in part because these studies relied almost exclusively on clinical samples of women who sought assistance or of men in court-mandated counselling programs.” (p. 69). At age 21, 425 women and 436 men who were in intimate relationships from the Magdol et al. cohort answered CTS questions about their own violence and their partners’ use of violence. Both minor and severe physical violence rates were again higher for women whether self or partner reported. The female severe physical violence rate was more than triple that of males (18.6% vs. 5.7%). Stranger violence was also measured and was again more prevalent by women than men (36% vs. 25%).

This preponderance of female stranger aggression was replicated in the United States National Youth Survey (Elliott, Huizinga, & Morse, 1985; Morse, 1995), a longitudinal study of self reported problem behavior involving a national probability sample of 1725 respondents. The study was begun in 1976 and involved nine waves of data over 17 years. Respondents were interviewed annually using structured, face-to-face, confidential interviews. Violence was measured using the eight-item subscale from the CTS; injury was also assessed. For the years 1983, 1986, 1989, and 1992, female to male violence and severe violence was about double the rate of male to female violence and severe violence. To demonstrate, in 1992 female to male severe violence was reported by 13.8% of respondents, male to female was reported by 5.7% (Morse, 1995, Table 1, p. 255). At this stage respondents were 27–33 years old. There was little or no change in the ratio of female to male vs. male to female violence over the years, with slightly over twice as much female initiated as male initiated violence. On the intimate violence scale, females were higher than males on the following acts: kick/bit/hit with fist, hit with object, threaten with knife or gun, and use knife or gun. (On the latter identical victimization rates were reported, higher perpetration rates were reported by women). Men were higher than women on the following acts: beat up, and choke/strangle.

Katz, Washington-Kuffel, and Coblenz (2002) studied intimate violence in two samples of undergraduates at a US university. In the first study ($N=184$ women, 103 men) participants had been in exclusive heterosexual dating relationships of at least three months duration ($M=1$ year, $SD=6$ months). Dating abuse, assessed with the CTS (Straus, 1979), was common, with 47% ($n=133$) of the sample reporting a current relationship in which their partner had used physical aggression against them. Men sustained higher levels of moderate

violence than women. Severe violence was rare for both women ($n=6$) and men ($n=4$). The frequency data also evidence few gender differences, 55% of the women had nonabusive partners, 18% had partners who had been abusive once, and 26% ($n=48$) had repeatedly abusive partners. Similarly, about 50% of the men had nonabusive partners, 13% had partners who had been abusive once, and 38% had repeatedly abusive partners.

A structural equation model was developed by Follingstad et al. (2002) developed to predict dating violence in a sample of 412 college students roughly equally divided by gender. Their model did not include gender (because gender was not predictive of use of aggression). Instead they found that psychological factors in both genders predicted aggression: anxious attachment and angry temperament influenced the need to control one's partner which in turn predicted use of aggression. This finding, that psychological factors rather than gender was most predictive of intimate partner violence (IPV), was also obtained by Ehrensaft, Cohen, and Johnson (in press) in a longitudinal study of a large ($n=543$) community sample. In their study stability of personality disorder symptoms were most predictive of IPV for both sexes.

Callahan, Tolman, and Saunders (2003) studied dating violence in a sample of 190 high school students (53% boys, 47% girls). Dating violence was evaluated by severity, frequency, and injury. For girls, increasing dating violence was related to PTSD and dissociation. Contrary to the radical feminist assertion that abuse by females against males is unlikely to result in significant harm, increasing levels of dating violence was associated with anxiety, depression, and PTSD in boys, even controlling for demographic, family violence, and social desirability items.

In a recent study of college students' use of abuse, Hines and Saudino (2003) used the CTS2 with 481 college students (302 females, 179 males) in romantic relationships during the previous six months. Twenty-nine percent of males and 35% of females reported perpetrating physical aggression, 12.5% of the males and 4.5% of the females reported receiving severe physical aggression, and 14% of females reported that they were the sole perpetrator of aggression. There were no significant gender differences in perpetration of either psychological aggression or severe physical aggression. Further, 8.4% of males and 5% of females reported sustaining an injury. The study was designed to counter criticisms of the original CTS, that its physical aggression scale was too limited and that it did not include psychological aggression. With these criticisms answered, females were still more aggressive than males. Since reporting was anonymous, response tendencies were minimized.

The largest and most comprehensive of all dating violence studies was a recent cross cultural study of partner violence in a sample of 6,900 university students from 17 nations by Douglas and Straus (2003). They found adolescent girls were more likely to assault male partners than adolescent boys were to assault female partners by an average of 115%, regardless of whether overall assault or severe assault rates were considered. Severe assault was much more likely to be female-perpetrated in Scotland (552% of male rate), Singapore (457%), and New Zealand (296%). In this study, male perpetrated injury rates were 8.1% (serious injury 2.6%), female perpetrated injury rates were 6.1% (serious injury 1.2%).

There are now over 159 family conflict studies demonstrating relatively consistently that there is a rough gender equivalency of conflict, abuse, and violence in intimate

relationships in North America (Straus, 1999; also see Archer, 2000a; Fiebert, 1997, 2004; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). In sum, across these studies, with a composite sample size of 109,000 and varying demographic compositions, intimate violence is more likely perpetrated by female than male youths. While dating and marital relationships are different both are intimate relationships where intimacy problems play out. The literature reviewed above demonstrates this abuse results in injuries in an important minority of young men and women and further supports the original findings of Stets and Straus (1992a, 1992b). These findings clearly run counter to the common assertion that female aggression in intimate relationships is uncommon and inconsequential. They also lead us to query, first, if the rate of intimate abuse is at risk of increasing rather than decreasing with the next generation; and, second, to note that large social changes have been made in other relevant areas (e.g., smoking, drinking and driving, bullying). It might be the case that similar strategies, aimed at least in part at youth, through school education and public information campaigns, for instance, might be an effective strategy for reducing the prevalence of this serious public health issue.

7. Effects more severe for women

Radical feminists assert women's aggression against male partners is less likely than male aggression against female partners to result in serious physical or psychological harm. The Archer (2000a) study revealed a much smaller effect size for injuries (1/6 of a SD) and hospitalization (1/11 of a SD) by gender than had been claimed by prior feminist theory (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Other studies also have supported this finding. Felson (1996) found evidence that size and strength are important in explaining gender differences in violence generally. Men were much more likely than women to injure their adversaries, and women were more likely to be injured, at least in incidents where the offender was unarmed. The effects of the genders of the two antagonists were additive. Gender differences were reduced when physical size and strength were controlled. In addition, physical power was unrelated to whether the respondent was injured in incidents involving guns or knives. These results suggest that physical differences between men and women are important in explaining gender differences in injury.

Felson and Cares (in press) re-analysed the NVAW data (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) and compared patterns of intimate violence with stranger violence. They found that violence between people who were living together or related was much more frequent than violence in other relationships or contexts. Assaults were much more frequent when they involved spouses, co-habiting partners, and family members than when they involved strangers or other known offenders. They also found that men were more likely than women to produce minor injuries, but they were not particularly likely to produce severe injuries. Women were found to be more likely than men to suffer minor injuries, but men were more likely to suffer serious injuries. The authors concluded, "we also observe evidence that contradicts the idea that violence by male partners tends to be more serious. First, the injuries to female partners tend to be less serious than the injuries to male partners. Second, violence

by male partners is just as likely to be victim-precipitated as violence by female partners. . . . However, prior research also suggests that the frequency of men's violence against their partners is low relative to the frequency of verbal conflict among partners (Felson, Ackerman, & Yeon, 2003). Some factors are apparently inhibiting men, who are generally much more violent than women, from using violence against their female partners. The results in this study show that those men who do engage in violence against their spouse and those women who engage in violence against their family members are more likely than other offenders to do so with high frequency" (p. 11–12). It is surprising that these results were obtained in what was essentially presented to respondents as a study of violence against women (see Straus, 1999, above).

Coker, Davis, and Arias (2002) also reanalyzed data from the NVAW survey ($N=6790$ women and 7122 men) to assess associations between physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and current and long term physical and psychological effects in men and women. Results indicated that psychological and physical abuse were associated with much the same outcomes and had similar effects for both men and women. The authors cautioned that it is possible male victims were also perpetrators and their mental health status resulted from inflicting abuse rather than from being victimized; this same hypothesis was not presented for women.

An emergency clinic in Philadelphia found that 12.6% of all male patients over a thirteen-week period ($N=866$) were victims of domestic violence. These patients reported having been kicked, bitten, punched, or choked by female intimate partners in 47% of cases and 37% reported a weapon being used against them (Mechem, Shofer, Reinhard, Hornig, & Datner, 1999). The authors reported that the numbers would have been higher except they had to stop counting after midnight and screened out "major trauma" cases, which could have upped the percent injured by female partners.

Research conducted at an emergency clinic study in Ohio (Vasquez & Falcone, 1997) revealed that 72% of men admitted because of spousal violence had been stabbed. The most frequent cause of admission for women victims was assault (53%). The authors reported that burns obtained in intimate violence were as frequent for male victims as female victims. As this study demonstrates, community samples, unless they require subjects to self-report as crime victims, show a different and more equivalent pattern of violence by gender than that alleged by the radical feminist perspective.

The argument is sometimes made that men use threats more frequently than women but Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman (1996) found that women reported using somewhat more psychological aggression than did men. The "threatened to hit or throw something at partner" item correlated .52 with this scale, of which it is a part. Also, Giordano, Millhonin, Cernkovich, Pugh, and Rudolph (1999) in a study of 721 young adults found that women were more likely than men to threaten to use a knife or gun.

Feminist authors also allege that females are universally more vulnerable to abuse by men than men are to abuse by women, this perspective also has found mixed support. Several studies indicate male victims are as likely (e.g., Hines & Saudino, 2003) or significantly more likely (e.g., George, 1999) than female victims to experience assaults involving the use of weapons (e.g., Brown, 2004; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990, 1996). George separated kicking and

punching in his nationally representative sample and recommended that disaggregating these variables might be an important methodological improvement. Given women's lesser upper body strength in comparison to males it is conceivable they are more likely to use their legs during an altercation (see Basile, 2004). Pimlatt-Kubiak and Cortina (2003) carried out a large scale ($N=16,000$) study of gender differences in traumatic reactions to intimate violence, stalking, and emotional abuse. Arguing that earlier studies had focused too specifically on PTSD, the authors broadened their assessment of trauma reactions and found eight distinct profiles of exposure experience, gender, and mental and physical health. No meaningful interactive effects of gender and interpersonal aggression were found once lifetime exposure to aggressive events was adequately taken into account. The authors concluded that their findings argued against theories of greater female vulnerability to pathological outcomes.

Regardless of the variations in the studies, two conclusions seem reasonable: (1) women are injured more than men, and (2) men are injured too, and are not immune to being seriously injured. Simply because the injury rates are lower, men should not be denied protection.

In the best studies, with the largest and most representative samples (i.e. community or epidemiological), presented without a "crime victim" filter on the data (Archer, 2000a; Douglas & Straus, 2003; Ehrensaft et al., 2004; Magdol et al., 1997; Morse, 1995 inter alia) female violence rates are higher than male rates. Also, in the largest study done on effects of abuse, no gender differences were found (Pimlatt-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003). Since these data are contradictory to feminist theory, they have been suppressed, ignored, or explained away.

8. Back to the context of violence

The catch-all but vague attack on the CTS has been its "failure to examine context" (see Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Propper, 1997; inter alia). In fact, some studies cited above did ask both male and female perpetrators their motives for violence, thus supplying some "context". These studies (e.g., Bland & Orn, 1986; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Follingstad et al., 1991) clearly showed that self-defense was a minor motive for female violence. Similarly, the notion that abuse stems from "power and control" by males is contradicted by the Stets (1991) study that showed no gender difference in the amount of control exhibited in dating relationships.

Cascardi and Vivian (1995) evaluated the context of the worst incidents reported by 62 couples in marital treatment who reported at least one incident of marital aggression. The authors found "in most cases, marital aggression appears to reflect an outgrowth of conflict between both partners" (p. 265) (see also Jacobson et al., 1994). Work and financial stress was the most frequently reported background (context) stressor. Only 5% of aggressive wives attributed their aggression to self-defense, while 50% attributed it to their own anger or wish to coerce. Hence, context does not really support feminist self-defense views of female aggression. Female violence is somehow always reactive when the data show otherwise.

9. Greater fear by female victims

As for the “greater fear” argument, there are three problems. The first is that males are taught by sex role conditioning not to admit fear (Fasteau, 1974; Goldberg, 1979; *inter alia*). Malloy et al. (2003) cited a sample of only ten men in the Dasgupta study to make the argument that women are more fearful of male perpetrated abuse than men are of female perpetrated abuse. They also rely on a Cantos, Neidig, and O’Leary study (1994), which was a sample drawn from a men’s treatment group and hence, not representative of community samples. Brown (2004) found that women had different perceptions of danger than men (even among those who had self-selected for dangerous occupations) and estimated that women were twice as likely to fear death from a partner as men adjusted for objective probability of being killed (p. 12, fn.15). Hence, women may over react to objective threat, men probably under react. The research support for greater female fear came from Jacobson et al. (1994) finding that “only husband violence produces fear in the partner” (p. 986). This finding was based on reactions of women in 60 abusive couples who interacted in a research lab. However, Dutton and his colleagues (Dutton, Webb, & Ryan, 1994; Strachan & Dutton, 1992) found that women reported greater fear to exposure to any family conflict video. Women use a fear scale in a more extreme fashion than do men. The fear reported had no possible connection to personal danger in the Dutton studies. Furthermore, in the Jacobson et al study, women demonstrated higher levels of belligerence than did the men. Finally “according to the wives themselves, almost half would have qualified for our DV group if wife violence had been the criterion” (p. 983). Yet this study and several others stemming from this laboratory focused exclusively on types of abusive husbands.

The second problem is that fear is a consequence of violence; hence the notion of greater female fear, even if accepted at face value, cannot explain the high rates of female initiated violence. The feminist view is that all male violence is designed to generate fear to enable coercion. The data (e.g. DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Follingstad et al., 1991) suggest a motivational profile for use of violence by either gender is far more complex. The question for feminists remains given that research indicates high levels of female violence, much of it against non-violent males and hence not in self-defense; how is that violence any different from male violence? How can male violence still be depicted as being in pursuit of power and control when female violence is also frequent and, according to the women themselves, not defensive? The answer, of course, is that feminists still view males as having power, whereas, Coleman and Straus (1986) showed male dominant couples were only 9.4% of U.S. families. In addition, the new generation of men and women may not have grown up with nor hold to feminist stereotypes of male dominance and this generation is the most female violent in the studies presented. The radical feminist stereotypes and theory have not adjusted with the times.

Finally, men have rarely had their fear of female violence assessed. A study by Hines, Brown, and Dunning (2003) examined calls from men to the national (U.S) domestic violence hotline for men (established in 2000: www.noexcuse4abuse.org). As the authors pointed out, it would be unlikely for male perpetrators or co-perpetrators to use this line. When the line first was opened it received one call a day. When it was advertised in state telephone

directories, it began to receive 250 calls a day. Given that 2.6 million men are victims of severe violence (Straus & Gelles, 1992), this usage increase is to be expected. All but a few callers experienced physical abuse from their female partners (only 4% were gay), and a substantial minority feared their partners' violence and were stalked. Over 90% experienced controlling behaviors, and several men reported frustrating experiences with the domestic violence system, 52.4% of males who were currently in an abusive relationship indicated that they were fearful that their female partners would cause a serious injury if she found out that they had called the helpline and that "According to qualitative accounts, several physical attacks were reported to have occurred to the groin area". Callers reported forms of violence that are not measured in surveys such as having their partner try to drive over them with a car. Twenty-nine percent reported being stalked by their female partners. Callers' reports indicated that their female abusers had a history of trauma, alcohol/drug problems, mental illness, and homicidal and suicidal ideations. The authors concluded that the "system in place to prevent IPV (interpersonal violence) re-victimizes these men and hence, no help is available for half the population" (p. 21). Violent actions reportedly experienced by these men are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Types of female violence reported by callers to a domestic abuse hotline for men

	% Who experienced it (<i>n</i>)
<i>Type of physical aggression (n = 158 men who were asked this series of questions)</i>	
Slapped/Hit	43.7% (69)
Pushed	41.8% (66)
Kicked	39.2% (62)
Grabbed	31.0% (49)
Punched	24.7% (39)
Choked	22.2% (35)
Spit on	9.5% (15)
Stabbed	1.9% (3)
Scratched	1.3% (2)
<i>Type of controlling behaviors (n = 155 men who were asked this series of questions)</i>	
Does your partner try to control you?	94.8% (147)
<i>Of those who were controlled, how were they controlled?</i>	
Through coercion and threats	77.6% (114)
Through emotional abuse	74.1% (109)
Through intimidation	63.3% (93)
Through blaming, minimizing, and denying	59.9% (88)
Through manipulating the system	50.3% (74)
Through isolation	41.5% (61)
Through economic abuse	38.1% (56)
Through the children (<i>n</i> =107)	64.5% (69)

Note: The types of controlling behaviors were coded according to the Power and Control Wheel of the Duluth Model. Table 2 from Hines et al. (2003). Used with permission.

It should be noted that the figures in this table are not representative of national samples any more than figures from battered women's shelters are representative of women in the general population. The point is that the feminist paradigm has kept psychopathology out of the explanations for domestic violence and has largely precluded asking about male fears.

10. The Archer study

The most comprehensive study on gender differences in intimate violence was conducted by Archer (2000a). This meta-analytic study examined combined results from 82 independent studies (including the National Violence Against Women Survey) where data were available for comparing gender rates of abuse perpetration. Based on combined data across studies (a combined data sample of 64,487), women were slightly more likely than men to use physical abuse (defined using the CTS) against an intimate partner (effect size or $d' = -.05$). This was true whether or not outliers were removed or whether studies with a ceiling n of 800 were considered to offset swamping of the outcome by studies with huge samples. Samples from shelters were unrepresentative of community samples, since, by definition they were male violent-female victim samples. This was not true of community samples. As with the dating samples reported above, the younger the sample, the higher the level of female violence relative to male violence.

Medical treatment for injuries across studies revealed an effect size of $+ .08$, with women being slightly more likely than men to seek treatment (Archer, 2000a). Neither the use of violence nor medical treatment resulted in a large effect size. An effect size of $d' = .08$ is less than 1/10 of a standard deviation difference between genders. Archer's main results (Archer, 2000a, Table 3) are re-produced below in Table 4. Given the methodology employed by Archer, his work has to be considered the "gold standard" of studies in gender usage of violence.

Archer cites the norms regarding use of violence, the so-called "acceptance norm" repeatedly cited by Dobash and Dobash (1978) (which is contradicted by the evidence)¹ and the contrary norm against physical aggression to women. Studies by Stark and McEvoy (1970) and others (Simon et al., 2001; Straus et al., 1980) have consistently found norms against wife assault. As Dutton (1994) and Dutton and Hemphill (1992) pointed out, court mandated male batterers typically underreport violence, indicating guilt or shame about their violence not an "acceptance of violence" norm. A subsequent analysis of these data (Archer, 2002) in which violence was disaggregated into discrete acts, found that women were more likely than men to slap, bite, kick, punch, or hit with an object. Men were more likely to beat up or choke and strangle, although "a substantial minority of endorsements of "beat up" and "choke or strangle" involved women perpetrators (p. 339). Gender differences ranged from "very small to medium". Samples selected for marital problems showed large effects in the male perpetrator direction, student samples showed effects more in the female direction than community samples. Patterns of findings did not differ based on whether perpetrator or victims were reporting. Archer concluded that "concern

Table 4
Sex differences in partner aggression

Study	<i>d</i>	CI	<i>p</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>Q_w</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i> men	<i>N</i> women
<i>Composite</i>								
All studies	-.05	-.07/-.04	<.0001	82	183.1	<.0001	30,434	34,053
Outliers removed ^a	-.05	-.07/-.04	<.0001	75	99.0	.05	29,251	32,605
All studies, with ceiling <i>N</i> =800 ^b	-.07	-.09/-.05	<.0001	82	157.4	<.0001	12,708	14,715
<i>Self</i>								
All studies	-.12	-.14/-.10	<.0001	81	278.4	<.0001	24,635	28,358
Outliers removed ^c	-.14	-.17/-.12	<.0001	67	88.9	.06	18,079	21,511
All studies with ceiling <i>N</i> =800 ^b	-.16	-.18/-.13	<.0001	81	206.0	<.0001	12,793	16,344
<i>Partner</i>								
All studies	-.016	-.03/-.00	.05	75	311.3	<.0001	27,396	30,574
Outliers removed ^d	-.09	-.11/-.07	<.0001	61	78.2	.11	12,450	14,712
All studies with ceiling <i>N</i> =800 ^b	-.04	-.07/-.02	<.0001	75	217.6	<.0001	11,910	14,595
<i>Injury</i>								
All studies ^e	.15	.12/.18	<.0001	17	107.1	<.0001	7011	7531
Outliers removed ^f	.08	.04/.11	<.0001	13	19.3	.08	5487	5787
All studies with ceiling <i>N</i> =800 ^b	.17	.12/.22	<.0001	17	88.7	<.0001	2984	3349
<i>Medical treatment</i>								
All studies	.08	.04/.12	<.0001	14	64.8	<.0001	4936	6323
Outliers removed ^g	.05	.01/.09	<.01	10	16.7	.05	4204	5528
All studies with ceiling <i>N</i> =800 ^b	.11	.05/.16	<.0001	14	62.2	<.0001	2440	2925

Meta-analyses of studies summarized to show sex differences in physical aggression, for composite, self-, and partner reports, in injuries, and in injuries requiring medical treatment.

Note: Table 3 from Archer (2000a). Used with permission.

with the (female) victims in such cases is certainly not misplaced but regarding them as the only victims of partner violence is too narrow a view of the problem according to the present findings” (Archer 2002, p. 340).

11. Escalation

The feminist cannon that male violence will escalate if unchecked appears to have no empirical support. Feld and Straus (1990) found data that argued against escalation by conducting one year follow ups of 420 respondents of the 1985 survey. The evidence supported de-escalation more than escalation. Johnson (1995) reanalysed previous data and found that, among husbands who had perpetrated no acts of minor or severe violence in year one (the year prior to the 1985 interview), only 2.6% had moved to severe violence in year two. Among those that committed at least one act of minor violence, only 5.8% had moved to severe violence, among those who had committed severe violence in year 1, 30.4% had

repeated severe violence in year two and 69.6% had de-escalated. Johnson concluded that the data favoured de-escalation more than escalation.

12. Patriarchal terrorism

The argument is sometimes made that males terrorize women in a fashion that is not found with female perpetrators. The Stets and Straus data notwithstanding, the argument could be made that those males who do use Severe Abuse against non-violent or minimally violent women generate a state of terror and domination that is not equally reflected by female perpetrators.

In a highly cited article, [Johnson \(1995\)](#) argued for a distinction between “common couple violence” and “patriarchal terrorism.” Why the ensuing misconceived debate ever took place is a mystery. Johnson discussed the issue of patriarchal terrorism mainly to show that evidence for it from community samples was scant. The notion of patriarchal terrorism seems based on shelter samples that are non-representative but are nevertheless viable data sources. The question becomes whether the patriarchal terrorism profile has become a stereotype that is not representative, even of intimately violent men. The debate completely overlooked the Stets and Straus data from [Table 1](#) which show female severe violence towards non-violent or minimally violent males to be more prevalent than “patriarchal terrorism”. The Stets and Straus data presented first in 1989 and again in 1992 clearly showed that a female severe/male minor pattern was about 12%, and female severe/male none was 11.8%, three times as common as “patriarchal terrorism” (male severe/female minor or none). Hence, while a debate ensued about whether “common couple violence” existed, unilateral female was overlooked. This, we would argue, is another effect of a paradigm; it misdirects attention (see [Kuhn, 1965](#)).

According to the Stets and Straus data, the subgroup that could be called patriarchal terrorists represents a minority of severely intimately violent men (about 33%) based solely on violence patterns (male predominant-Male Severe/Female None or Minor divided by the Mutually Severe pattern of male violence). According to the Straus surveys, 2/3 of all severely violent men would repeat this potentially terroristic pattern, so 7.7% of all men who are severely violent in a given year (2/3 of 11.3%—[Straus & Gelles, 1992](#)) would be potential intimate terrorists (would use severe violence repeatedly). For a general population, that would be less than 3% of all men ([Straus & Gelles, 1992](#): p. 118: $7.7\% \times 33\%$ male predominant violence rate for men (compared to mutually violent and female predominantly violent couples). [Dutton \(submitted for publication\)](#) found only about 20% of men in a court-mandated treatment sample met criteria for terrorism (defined as severe male violence, plus threats and sexual violence reported by the wife). Those that met criteria had significantly higher likelihood of having a personality disorder than those who did not. Of men convicted of wife assault, about 1/5 would qualify as terrorists. It is a sub group (terrorists/non-terrorists—20%) of a subgroup (men convicted/arrested—10%—[Dutton, 1987](#)) of a subgroup (men who use severe violence against their spouse—8% ([Straus & Gelles, 1992](#)). In other words, about one in 200 men arrested of partner abuse would qualify for the patriarchal

terrorist label. However, this “stereotype” of male violence is commonplace (see Pagelow, 1992; Walker, 1984, 1989; Yllo, 1988).

As a result of the gender paradigm, the debate over Johnson’s (1995) study involved comparing a group that constitutes about 3% of intimate violence per year with another that constitutes 38.8% of violence in married couples and 45% of violence in co-habiting couples (Stets & Straus, 1992a, 1992b p.234). The remaining (female only) violent group (about 12%) never entered the debate.

It is questionable whether interventions for this terrorist group should be of the same quality as interventions for others who use violence in an intimate context. The two groups would differ in dangerousness, dynamics of violence, the presence of personality disorder, and therapy of choice. They are extreme and non-representative. Instead, we should improve our ability to detect and intervene more effectively with real patriarchal terrorists, develop triage assessments to separate them from other arrested men, and respond in a less politically driven and more psychologically sophisticated fashion to the continuum of violence patterns.

13. Feminist belief perseverance

Feminist core beliefs about domestic violence include the following: that most men are violent, that women’s violence is in self-defense, that male violence escalates, and that women are by far, the most injured. The data reviewed above reveal something very different; that both genders use violence, women use it against non-violent men, more violence de-escalates than escalates, and both groups are injured, with women somewhat more likely to experience negative outcomes. The “belief perseverance” processes used against new data sets to maintain the feminist paradigm include the following: first, to deny female violence while generalizing male violence patterns from the “patriarchal terrorist” group to all batterers and in some cases, all men (disconfirmed by the Straus surveys). Then, to attack the Straus surveys for ignoring the “context of violence: suggesting that females were using violence defensively (disconfirmed by Stets and Straus and other studies cited above,) or that females were substantially more injured (disconfirmed by Archer). When all of these conceptual shields failed, the final step was to attack quantitative research in general (e.g. Bowman, 1992; Yllo, 1988).

14. Paradigm perpetuation

The defensive argument comes in by way of unsupportable interpretation of data. Arias, Dankwort, Douglas, Dutton, and Stein (2002) completely misreported the Stets and Straus data. Arias et al., quoting Stets and Straus (1992a) as a source, claimed “women were seven to fourteen times more likely to report that intimate partners had beaten them up, choked them, threatened them with weapons, or attempted to drown them” (p. 157). Of course, Stets and Straus say no such thing. There is no action by action analysis reported (such as choking or drowning) and they conclude that male and female violence rates are identical. Jacobson et

al. (1994) ignored the violent women in their sample³ Malloy et al. (2003) explain the Dunedin data of Magdol et al. as “victimized women were ten times more likely to perpetrate than non-victimized women and male perpetrators were 19 times more likely to be victimized than nonperpetrator males” (p. 41). The male perpetrators though were “more deviant”, so it is implied that they started the violence and the fact that female violence is more frequent is ignored. Malloy et al. cited a study by Dagupta (1999) wherein women who were court-ordered for assault were asked about their own motives for violence. The eight motives offered by the researcher are all self-serving and blame the male. Moreover, the sample size is only $N=32$. Nevertheless, Malloy et al. accept the answers of this forensic population as veridical and compare them to male “patterns of coercion” (the basis for “male coercion” is the Duluth Model of Pence & Paymar, 1993).

The Pence and Paymar (1993) “model” is a gender-political intervention model not empirical evidence, yet, Malloy et al. (2003) offer it as empirical evidence. This is how a paradigm perpetuates itself. At the end of their “review of existing research” Malloy et al. cited single results from particular studies, which support their position. For instance, they noted that in a study of 721 young adults Giordano et al. (1999) found that men were more likely to “beat up a partner with their hands.” Malloy and colleagues failed to report Giordano et al. also found that women were more likely to hit or throw something at a partner, hit a partner with an object, or threaten to use a knife or gun. Similarly, Malloy et al. cited Morse (1995) to support the claim that men were more likely to repeatedly beat up their partner during a year; Douglas and Straus (2003) found the opposite. Eventually, in this welter of contradictory findings, Malloy et al. fall back on the last ditch arguments of the feminist position; women are more troubled by intimate victimization and the “context” of violence is not adequately studied.

The statement by Dobash et al. (1992) that the research studies did not conform to their clinical experience is another example of what Lord et al. (1979) found in their studies of flawed social cognition called “belief perseverance.” What is the point of scientific investigation if non-confirmation is a given? Also typical of groupthink processes has been the tendency to label any dissenters as reactionary regarding women’s rights (e.g., Faludi, 1981; Worcester, 2002). Worcester (2002) described the “antifeminist backlash”, which she equates with the “anti-domestic violence movement”, as picking up on “conflict tactics”-type studies (her quotations) and hints at “limitations and dangers of a gender-neutral approach to antiviolenace work”. In other words, anyone who believes female violence might exist is antifeminist and anti-domestic violence movement. The notion of backlash reduces all dissent to reactionary anxiety driven fear of loss of power by the outgroup (males/dissenters) while maintaining the illusion of moral perfection of in the ingroup, a necessary condition for groupthink (Janis, 1982).

This projection onto the “outgroup” (all dissenters) becomes a technique of stifling dissenting views about the interpretation of intimate violence data. Such a position, of

³ Arias subsequently acknowledged this finding was from the NVAWS; however, no qualifiers were given in the original paper about differential gender reporting in that survey.

course, becomes epistemologically equivalent to religious belief, not requiring empirical confirmation, and guaranteed to persevere. It is really an epistemological cop-out; an unwillingness to admit that feminist theory cannot account for an accumulating set of empirical studies.

15. Conclusion

The findings reported above cannot all be dismissed as byproducts of a measurement issue. Even government “victimization” surveys in which men underreport, still find sizeable numbers of male victims. Conflict studies, which are more sensitive, produce roughly equal perpetration rates by gender. A question remains from the review of these studies: why do government surveys consistently find that women use less violence and are more injured while independent studies find that women use more violence and are only slightly more likely to be injured? It may be that this difference is just the differential “crime victim” filter problem discussed above. It may also be that government agencies, more than independent researchers, pattern and interpret their research in a way more allied with feminist defined causes.

One detects a tendency to dismiss male victimization in reports where the female victimization rate is higher. It raises the question as to why this comparison is so often made. If group B is victimized less than Group A, it is nevertheless being victimized and the social mandate should be to reduce victimization of all citizens, not just certain groups. We would not accept this argument for any other pair of groups. Although women may be injured at a higher rate, men are injured as well. The inevitable conclusion is that feminist theory on intimate violence is flawed. It cannot accept the reality of female violence. While male violence is viewed as never justified, female violence is viewed as always justified. The data do not support this double standard. Women commit intimate violence frequently and do not do so only in self-defense. A more reasonable interpretation of the data from these numerous studies would be that people (not just men) use violence in intimate relationships and use whatever form they have learned will be effective. Men, having greater upper body strength use direct physical violence more than women. Women use weapons more often than men to generate an advantage (see also Morse, 1995).

The negative effects of disregarding male victimization by intimate violence include a re-enactment of the age of denial displayed to female victimization in the early 1970s. Feminists complained rightly about that denial then; they should be moved from a sense of justice to do the same now. Secondly, the risk to children from female child abuse is seriously underestimated in the literature (but not in the data). From the perspective of child safety, this needs more attention. Thirdly, feminists are interfering with the delivery of effective treatment intervention through state laws or policy that holds up the gender based but ineffective Duluth Model as the “intervention” model of choice. This disadvantages women partnered with men in treatment by precluding the availability of more effective psychologically based treatment. As Ehrensaft et al. (2004) put it “studies suggest that this single-sex approach is not empirically supported, because both partners’ behaviors contribute to the risk of clinically significant partner abuse,

and both partners should be treated. Women's partner abuse cannot be explained exclusively as self-defense against men's partner abuse, because a woman's pre-relationship history of aggression towards others predicts her abuse toward her partner, over and above controls for reports of his abuse towards her" (p. 268).

A dangerous "in-group-outgroup" form of siege mentality has enveloped feminist activists and those researchers who share their dogma. It is based on a perceived threat that somehow, services for women will disappear if male victimization is recognised or that those who raise issues about female violence or intervention are somehow against progressive goals for women's equality. That is not the case. We neither wish, nor believe, that protection for women would be diminished by the above suggestions; simply that more effective intervention and treatment could be implemented if a more humanistic, complex, and community mental health model were implemented. Clearly, shelter houses full of battered women demonstrate the need for their continued existence. Moreover, outside of North American and Northern Europe, gender inequality is still the norm (Archer, *in press*). However, within those countries that have been most "progressive" about women's equality, female violence has increased as male violence has decreased (Archer, *in press*). There is not one solution for every domestically violent situation; some require incarceration of a "terrorist" perpetrator, others can be dealt with through court-mandated treatment, still others may benefit from couples therapy. However, feminist inspired "intervention" standards that preclude therapists in many states from doing effective therapy with male batterers are one outcome of this paradigm. The failure to recognize female threat to husbands, female partners, or children is another (Straus et al., 1980 found 10% higher rates of child abuse reported by mothers than by fathers).

The "one size fits all" policy driven by a simplistic notion that intimate violence is a recapitulation of class war does not most effectively deal with this serious problem or represent the variety of spousal violence patterns revealed by research. At some point, one has to ask whether feminists are more interested in diminishing violence within a population or promoting a political ideology. If they are interested in diminishing violence, it should be diminished for all members of a population and by the most effective and utilitarian means possible. This would mean an intervention/treatment approach based on other successful approaches from criminology and psychology.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kim Bartholomew, Ken Corvo, Richard Felson, Eugen Lupri, John Archer, and Ferrel Christiansen for critical comments on this paper.

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