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Violence Against Women 2006 12: 1003
DOI: 10.1177/1077801206293328

Violence Against Women
Volume 12 Number 11
November 2006 1003-1018

10.1177/1077801206293328
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Conflict and Control

Gender Symmetry and Asymmetry in Domestic Violence

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Four types of individual partner violence are identified based on the dyadic control context of the violence. In intimate terrorism, the individual is violent and controlling, the partner is not. In violent resistance, the individual is violent but not controlling; the partner is the violent and controlling one. In situational couple violence, although the individual is violent, neither the individual nor the partner is violent and controlling. In mutual violent control, the individual and the partner are violent and controlling. Evidence is presented that situational couple violence dominates in general surveys, intimate terrorism and violent resistance dominate in agency samples, and this is the source of differences across studies with respect to the gender symmetry of partner violence. An argument is made that if we want to understand partner violence, intervene effectively in individual cases, or make useful policy recommendations, we must make these distinctions in our research.

Keywords: *gender symmetry; intimate terrorism; mutual violent control; situational couple violence; violent resistance*

The central argument of this article is that there are four major types of intimate partner violence and that the failure to distinguish among them has left us with a domestic violence literature that, to a large extent, may be uninterpretable. The types of domestic violence (situational couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and mutual violent control) are defined conceptually in terms of the control motives of the violent member(s) of the couple, motives that are identified operationally by patterns of controlling behavior that indicate an attempt to exercise general control over one's partner. With respect to implications for the question of gender symmetry, these types of domestic violence differ dramatically. In heterosexual relationships, intimate terrorism is perpetrated almost exclusively by men, whereas violent resistance is found almost exclusively among women. The other two types are gender symmetric. With respect to the general importance of distinguishing among types of violence, I believe that they have different causes, different patterns of development, different consequences, and that they require different forms of intervention.

Resolving the Gender Symmetry Debate

The long-standing argument in the family literature regarding the gender symmetry of intimate partner violence takes the form of a disagreement about *the* nature of heterosexual intimate partner violence, as if heterosexual partner violence were a single phenomenon. One side of the debate, generally referred to as the feminist perspective (Kurz, 1989), presents compelling empirical evidence that heterosexual intimate partner violence is largely a problem of men assaulting female partners (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). The other side, generally taken in the family violence perspective, presents equally compelling empirical evidence that women are at least as violent as men in such relationships (Straus, 1999). How can they both be right?

In 1995, I published an article that argued that the answer to this question is that: (a) partner violence is not a unitary phenomenon, (b) the two groups of researchers generally use different sampling strategies, (c) the different sampling strategies tap different types of partner violence, and (d) these types differ in their relationship to gender (Johnson, 1995). I argued further that the types probably also differ with respect to their causes, the nature of the violence itself, the development of the violence during the course of a relationship, its consequences, and the type of intervention required. If these arguments are correct, then it follows that we cannot draw any conclusions about the nature of partner violence from studies that do not distinguish among types of partner violence (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Nevertheless, studies continue to be published regularly that treat partner violence as a unitary phenomenon, many of them claiming to provide further evidence on the gender symmetry issue. For example, Archer's (2000) influential meta-analysis of the evidence regarding gender symmetry, in spite of citing my 1995 article, essentially ignored the proposed distinctions among types of violence and concluded that women are slightly more violent than men in heterosexual partnerships.

Here is the basic argument of the 1995 article. With regard to sampling, I argued that general differences in sampling strategies were the major source of the ostensible inconsistencies between the feminist and family violence data. In general, the studies that demonstrated the predominance of male violence used agency data (courts, police agencies, hospitals, and shelters), whereas the studies that showed gender symmetry involved so-called representative samples. I argued that both of these sampling strategies are heavily biased: the former through its use of biased sampling frames (agencies), the latter through refusals. Although the biases of agency sampling frames have generally been taken to be obvious (Straus, 1990b), representative sample surveys have mistakenly been assumed to be unbiased. The final samples of so-called random sample surveys are, of course, not random, due to refusals. I estimated, for example, that the refusal rate in the National Family Violence Surveys was approximately 40% rather than the 18% usually reported (Johnson, 1995). Could there be two qualitatively different forms of partner violence, one gender symmetric and overselected in general surveys, the other committed primarily by men and overselected in agency samples?

To address this question, I identified a number of agency-based studies that used the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Johnson, 1995) to assess the nature of partner violence in agency samples and compared them with general surveys that used the same instrument.[1] My conclusion from this comparison was that the two sampling strategies identified partner violence that differed not only in gender symmetry but also in frequency of per-couple incidents, escalation, severity of injuries, and mutuality. Agency samples identified partner violence that was more frequent, more likely to escalate, more severe, less likely to be mutual, and perpetrated almost entirely by men. This gender-asymmetric pattern resonated for me with feminist analyses of partner violence as one tactic in a general pattern of controlling behaviors used by some men to exercise general control over "their" women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark & Flitcraft, 1996).

The asymmetry of such control contrasted dramatically, it seemed to me, with the family violence perspective's predominantly symmetric image of partner violence as a matter of conflict. I hypothesized that there were two qualitatively different forms and/or patterns of intimate partner violence—one that was part of a general strategy of power and control (intimate terrorism), the other involving violence that was not part of a general pattern of control, probably a product of the escalation of couple conflict into violence (situational couple violence).[2] Furthermore, I argued that, on one hand, couples involved in situational couple violence would be unlikely to become agency clients because such situationally provoked violence would not in most cases call for police intervention, emergency room visits, protection from abuse orders, or divorce. On the other hand, couples involved in intimate terrorism would be unlikely to agree to participate in general surveys because victims fear reprisals from the batterer, and batterers fear exposing themselves to intervention by the police or other agencies. Although these arguments seemed reasonable enough, my 1995 literature review provided no direct evidence of their validity because none of the studies reviewed made such distinctions among types of violence.[3]

Distinguishing Among Types of Heterosexual Intimate Partner Violence

First, I want to discuss one approach to assessing differences in the extent to which an individual's violence toward his or her partner is embedded in a general context of control, then I will move on to the implications of taking into account the behavior of the partner. The basic idea is to look at a variety of nonviolent, controlling behaviors to identify individuals who behave in a manner that indicates a general motive to control. Note that (a) this moves the focus from the nature of any one encounter between the partners to a search for patterns of behavior in the relationship as a whole, and (b) it most certainly is not based in the nature of the violent acts themselves. Some critics

have argued that I am simply making the old distinction between more serious and less serious violence. I disagree. The distinction lies in the degree of control present. I assume that there is considerable variability in the nature of the violent acts involved in controlling and noncontrolling violence, a variability that would lead to considerable overlap between them in terms of the "seriousness" of the violence. Although I do have some hypotheses about average differences among types of violence in terms of the nature of the violent acts involved, the types themselves are defined by the degree of control, not by characteristics of the violence. Thus, if we want to make these distinctions, surveys need to ask questions not just about violence but also about the use of a variety of other control tactics in the relationship.

Before I proceed to illustrate this general measurement strategy with data from Frieze's 1970s Pittsburgh study, however, I need to move the 1995 discussion from the individual to the dyadic level. The initial distinction between *intimate terrorism* and *situational couple violence* was focused too narrowly on the behavior of one violent partner. If one considers the behavior of both people in the relationship, one can identify four basic types of individual violence.[4] First, an individual can be violent and noncontrolling and in a relationship with a partner who is either nonviolent or who is also violent and noncontrolling. This is what I called *situational couple violence*. Second, one can be violent and noncontrolling but in a relationship with a violent and controlling partner. Given that the behavior of the partner suggests an attempt to exert general control, I labeled this type of violence *violent resistance*. Third, one can be violent and controlling and in a relationship with a partner who is either nonviolent or violent and noncontrolling. This is the pattern I have called *intimate terrorism*. Finally, a violent and controlling individual may be paired up with another violent and controlling partner. I have labeled this *mutual violent control*. To make these distinctions, one would have to ask questions regarding a variety of control tactics in addition to violence, ask them with regard to both partners, and do so in a data set that was likely to include representatives of each of the four types.

I was able to find one such data set, Irene Frieze's data from interviews with 274 married and formerly-married women living in southwestern Pennsylvania in the late 1970s (Frieze, 1983; Frieze & Browne, 1989; Frieze & McHugh, 1992). Her mixed sampling design seemed likely to represent the major types of violence—it included women selected from shelters and courts (an agency sample) and a matched sample of women who lived in the same neighborhoods (a general survey sample).

It might be useful to know some of the general characteristics of the sample, keeping in mind that these will be determined to a large extent by the biases of the initial court and shelter populations because the "general" sample was matched by neighborhood and is, therefore, likely to be similar in general demographics. The sample was predominantly White (86% White, 14% Black) and working class (56% had a high school education or less; only 21% had finished college). About one third of the women worked full-time, one sixth part-time, and about one half were full-time homemakers. Median age at the time of the interview was 32 years; however,

ages ranged from 18 to 83 years. Median age at marriage was 21 years but ranged from 15 to 59 years. As this is clearly not a representative sample, it would not be useful to make any general statements about the prevalence of violence; of course, all of the women in the court and shelter samples had experienced violence from their partners, as had 34% of the general sample. Only one third of the women in the court and shelter samples were still with their husband, compared with about three fourths of those in the general sample.

From the lengthy interview protocols, I identified a number of items tapping control tactics that did not involve violence toward one's partner. Seven measures were created to tap control tactics analogous to those identified by Pence and Paymar (1993): threats, economic control, use of privilege and punishment, using children, isolation, emotional abuse, and sexual control.

Threats

Each measure of threats (one for husbands, the other for wives) is the mean of two items with 5-point response formats ranging from *no, never* (1) to *often* (5). The first item is: "Has your husband (Have you) ever gotten angry and *threatened* [emphasis in survey instrument] to use physical force with you (him)?" The second item was: "Is he (Are you) ever violent in other ways (such as throwing objects)?" For wives' reports of their husband's behavior, the mean of this variable is 2.72 (between "once" and "two or three times"), the standard deviation 1.51, and the range from 1.00 to 5.00. Cronbach's alpha for the two-item scale is .74. For wives' reports of their own behavior, the mean is 1.99 ("once"), the standard deviation 1.05, the range is from 1.00 to 5.00, and alpha is .46.

Economic Control

Economic control is the average of two dichotomized items. The first asks, "Who decides how the family money will be spent in terms of major expenses?" It was dichotomized with a high score indicating that either "husband (wife) makes entire decision" or "husband (wife) has deciding vote." The second item asked for an open-ended response to, "How much money do you (does your husband) have to spend during an average week without accounting to anyone?" The dichotomization cut-point was chosen to make this second item more an indicator of control than of disposable income: A response of US$10 or less indicated high control, one of more than $10 indicated low control. For husbands' economic control, the two-item scale has a mean of 1.36, a standard deviation of .39, ranges from 1.00 to 2.00, and has an alpha of .46. For wives, the mean is 1.20, the standard deviation .27, the range from 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha is .12.

Use of Privilege and Punishment

This scale is the mean of six items, each of which indicates that the target person uses one of the following tactics to get his or her spouse to do what he or she wants.[5] The six items were: (a) "suggests that you should do something because he knows best or because he feels he is an expert at a particular thing," (b) "stops having sex with you," (c) "threatens to leave you," (d) "emotionally withdraws," (e) "suggest[s] that you should do something because other people do," and (f) "restricts your freedom." The response format for all items addresses frequency, ranging from *never* (1) to *rarely* (3) to *always* (5). For husbands, the scale has a mean of 2.03 ("rarely"), a standard deviation of .81, ranges from 1.00 to 4.83, and has an alpha of .76. For wives, the mean is 1.92 ("rarely"), the standard deviation .62, the range is from 1.00 to 4.19, and alpha is .65.

Using Children

There are three items in this data set that get at a spouse's use of the children to get his or her way with his or her partner. Two of them involve responses to the question, "When your husband is angry with you, how does he show it?" The two relevant response options were "Directs his anger to the children or pets" and "Uses physical violence with the children." The third item is, "Does he ever try to get what he wants by doing any of the following to you? How often?" One of the actions listed is, "uses physical force against the kids to get what he wants from you," with the five response options ranging from *never* to *always*. This item was dichotomized between *never* and *rarely*, and the three items were averaged. For wives' reports of their husband's behavior, the mean was 1.19, the standard deviation .30, the range from 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha equal to .68. For wives' reports of their own behavior, the mean was 1.12, standard deviation .21, the range from 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha equal to .41.

Isolation

The measure of isolation is the mean of two items with 5-point response formats ranging from *never* to *always.* The items are: "Does your husband know where you are when you are not together?" and "Are there places you might like to go but don't because you feel your husband wouldn't want you to—How often does this happen?" For wives' reports of their husband's behavior, the mean of this measure is 3.32 (between *sometimes* and *usually*), the standard deviation is .77, the observed range is from 1.00 to 5.00, and alpha is equal to .09. For wives' reports of their own behavior, the mean is 2.64 (between *rarely* and *sometimes*), the standard deviation is .84, the range from 1.00 to 5.00, and alpha equals .06.

Emotional Abuse

The three-item emotional abuse scale includes one item that gets at active abuse (sex is sometimes unpleasant because "He compares you unfavorably to other women"), and two "passive abuse" items that indicate that he never or rarely praises, and never or rarely is "nice to you in other ways (smiling, concerned with how you are feeling, calling you affectionate names, etc.)." All three items are dichotomies. For husbands, the mean is 1.25, the standard deviation is .33, the scale ranges from 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha is .57. For wives, the mean is 1.08, the standard deviation is .21, the range is from 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha is .48.

Sexual Control

There are two items in the sexual control scale, tapping whether sex is ever unpleasant because "he forces me to have sex when I don't want to," or "he makes you do things you don't want to do." Both items are dichotomies. For husbands, the mean is 1.22, the standard deviation .36, the range is 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha is .70. For wives, the mean is 1.02, the standard deviation .01, the range is 1.00 to 2.00, and alpha is .35.

Types of Intimate Partner Violence

Each of these measures was standardized and entered into a cluster analysis. The clustering algorithm was Ward's method, an agglomerative approach that selects each new case to add to a cluster based on its effect on the overall homogeneity of the cluster, and which therefore tends to produce tightly defined clusters, rather than strings (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984, pp. 43-45). Euclidean distance was the measure of dissimilarity. The index of dissimilarity for one cluster through 15-cluster solutions was examined.

The results indicated a two-cluster solution as optimal, and the pattern was quite simple, with one cluster exhibiting a high average on all seven of the control tactics, the other being relatively low on all seven. The results of the cluster analysis were then used to distinguish controlling from noncontrolling violence at the individual level, that is, for each husband and wife. Finally, data regarding both partners were used to distinguish among types of individual violence, as defined above.

Table 1 presents data only on violent individuals, that is, those who had been violent in their relationship at least once (67% of the husbands and 54% of the wives). The question tapping violence was: "Has he (Have you) ever actually slapped or pushed you (him) or used other physical force with you (him)?" The table places individual violence within its dyadic control context, distinguishing among four types of individual violent behavior.[6] The first row, "intimate terrorism," refers to relationships in which only one of the spouses is violent and controlling. The other spouse is either nonviolent or has used violence but is not controlling. In this data set, that violent and controlling spouse

Table 1
Individual Violent Behavior by Gender (Violent Individuals Only, as Reported by Wives, Percentages)

	Husbands	Wives	*n*
Intimate terrorism	97	3	97
Violent resistance	4	96	77
Situational couple violence	56	44	146
Mutual violent control	50	50	10

is the husband in 94 of the 97 cases. The second row refers to cases in which the focal spouse is violent but not controlling, and his or her partner is violent and controlling. I call it *violent resistance*, and it is almost entirely a woman's type of violence in this sample of heterosexual relationships. Of course, that is because in these marriages almost all of the intimate terrorism is perpetrated by men, and in some cases the wives do respond with violence, although rarely are they also controlling (see mutual violent control below). In the third row, we have "situational couple violence," individual non-controlling violence in a dyadic context in which neither of the spouses is violent and controlling. It is close to gender symmetric, at least by the crude criterion of prevalence. (Data on the frequency and consequences of men's and women's situational couple violence, not shown, indicate that by other criteria men are more violent than women even within situational couple violence.) The last row, "mutual violent control," refers to controlling violence in a relationship in which both spouses are violent and controlling. There were only five such couples (10 individuals) in this data set, and among heterosexual couples such violence is by definition gender symmetric.

Now, let's take a quick look at the characteristics of the violent acts involved in men's intimate terrorism and situational couple violence, to see if they fall in line with what I found in my 1995 literature review. The violence in men's intimate terrorism was quite frequent; the median number of incidents in these marriages is 18.[7] Violence was much less frequent in men's situational couple violence with a median of three violent events. Intimate terrorism was reported to escalate in 76% of the cases, situational couple violence in only 28%.[8] In terms of injuries, the violence of intimate terrorism was sometimes severe in 76% of the cases, compared with 28% of the cases of situational couple violence.[9] In men's intimate terrorism, wives rarely respond with violence; the median of the ratio of number of times the wife had been violent to the number of times the husband had been violent is .17. In men's situational couple violence, the median ratio was .40. These data do not leave much doubt that intimate terrorism and situational couple violence are not the same phenomenon.[10]

Finally, let me nail down my sampling argument, that general survey samples tap primarily situational couple violence, whereas agency samples give access primarily to intimate terrorism. Again, looking only at male violence, Table 2 shows that the general

Table 2
Who is Finding Whom? (Violent Husbands Only, as Reported by Wives, Percentages)

	Survey Sample (n = 37)	Court Sample (n = 34)	Shelter Sample (n = 43)
Mutual violent control	0	3	0
Intimate terrorism	11	68	79
Violent resistance	0	0	2
Situational couple violence	89	29	19

Note: For simplicity, Table 2 presents data only on husbands. For wives, the general survey sample is dominated by situational couple violence, and the court and shelter samples are dominated by violent resistance.

sample typical of family violence research includes almost nothing but situational couple violence, with only 11% of the violence being intimate terrorism. In stark contrast, the court and shelter samples that are typical of feminist research get at violence that is predominantly intimate terrorism.

What kind of mistakes can this generate? The article on the "battered husband syndrome" that initiated the gender symmetry debate (Steinmetz, 1977) is an excellent example of the danger of thinking that a general sample provides information about what we conventionally mean by "domestic violence," that is, intimate terrorism. Steinmetz told anecdotes about true husband battering, involving violent women who are intimate terrorists in the sense described above. However, she then cited general survey data, which we now know represent primarily situational couple violence, to make her case that such battering is as frequent a problem as is wife battering. The data she presented, in fact, have nothing to do with husband battering. Serious as husband battering may be in each particular case, as a general phenomenon it is dramatically less frequent than wife battering.

Similarly, one can err by assuming that the patterns observed in agency samples describe all partner violence. It is common for shelter workers to argue in educational programs that violence always escalates, that if he hit you once he'll do it again, and that it will get worse. Such a pattern is, as shown above, much more true of intimate terrorism than of situational couple violence, and of course intimate terrorism is what we generally see in our shelter work. However, most couples who experience violence, including those in our audiences, are involved in situational couple violence.[11] For those audience members, we are providing an inaccurate picture of the likely course of their relationships.

Dramatic as these sampling biases are, Table 2 also shows that neither type of male violence is found exclusively in one type of sample, implying that it is possible to study the differences between these two types of violence in a variety of research settings. First, the 11% of men's violence that is intimate terrorism in the general sample indicates that, with large enough samples, it may be possible to study situational couple

violence and intimate terrorism with survey data. To do that, of course, we need to include questions that will allow us to distinguish one from the other. Second, because women do bring cases of situational couple violence to the courts (29%) and to shelters (19%), researchers in those contexts would be able to study the effects of various intervention strategies on the two types of violence. Again, however, it won't happen unless we gather information that will allow us to make these distinctions.

Implications for Measurement

The evidence I have just presented regarding the dramatic differences between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence (in terms of gender, per-couple frequency of incidents, escalation, severity of injury, and reciprocity) should serve as a warning that until further notice we have to assume that the answers to all of our important questions about domestic violence may be different for the different forms of violence. How do we collect and analyze data to allow us to make the necessary distinctions?

The general strategy for making such distinctions involves two steps. First, and most critically, we must gather information on a variety of control tactics for both members of the couple. Not all surveys do this. It was fortunate that Irene Frieze had the foresight to collect such data in the 1970s. I have been using a number of other data sets to try to operationalize these distinctions and have had to dance around major shortcomings. The recent National Violence Against Women Survey (Johnson & Leone, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000) asks a number of control tactics questions about the attacker but gathers no information about the behavior of the respondent. Susan Lloyd's (Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2001; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999) data from a poor neighborhood in Chicago have the same shortcoming. The National Family Violence surveys (Straus & Gelles, 1990) ask about the behavior of both partners but do not assess a variety of control tactics. We need to insist that every study of partner violence asks questions about the control tactics and the violence used by both partners.

However, what questions to ask? Whatever the drawbacks of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) may be (Dobash et al., 1992), they have made the considerable contribution of having provided a standard approach to assessing violence. As yet, there appears to be no standard approach to the assessment of control, although a number of scholars have developed scales that are reasonable candidates, including Marshall (1996) on psychological abuse, Stets (1993) on control, Tolman (1989) on psychological maltreatment, Pence and Paymar (1993) on power and control, Straus and his colleagues' (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1999; Straus & Mouradian, 1999) revised Conflict Tactics Scales and Personal and Relationships Profile, and, most recently, Cook and Goodman (this issue) in their Coercion and Conflict in Abuse Experiences Scale. It would be very helpful if some consensus could be developed on a standard set of control measures.[12]

When we have the data, we face the task of using it to create a typology of controlling and noncontrolling violence. In my early work, I approached this problem through the use of cluster analysis; one could similarly use latent class analysis for dichotomous items. Cluster analysis and latent class analysis identify clusters of individuals who have similar profiles of responses to a set of items, and they provide statistical criteria for choosing the optimal number of groups (clusters or classes) for describing a particular data set. The problem is that they do not provide clear-cut criteria for distinguishing the members of one group from those in others, and there is therefore no straightforward way of comparing the results of cluster analyses from different samples. Thus, in more recent work, I have simply created a control scale and dichotomized it to identify high- and low-control individuals. I have found that in the three secondary data sets with which I have been working there are fairly strong relationships between the cluster solutions and a simple scale score created out of the same control items. This approach has the advantage of providing clear criteria for placement into the four types of violence, so that comparisons can be made across studies. In a series of analyses of available data sets, my colleagues and I have shown that the violence types are related as expected to characteristics of the actual violence (frequency, escalation, severity, and mutuality) and to various physical and psychological effects on the victim (posttraumatic stress symptoms, general health, injury, interference with work) and on the relationship (Johnson, 1999; Johnson, Conklin, & Menon, 2002; Johnson & Leone, 2005; Leone, Johnson, & Cohan, 2003; Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2004).

Whatever specific approach we choose, I believe it is critical that we reassess conclusions that have been drawn from a literature that has failed to make these critical distinctions. We have to be wary of findings that treat situational couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and mutual violent control as a single phenomenon. Situational couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and mutual violent control simply cannot have the same causes, developmental trajectory, consequences, or prognosis for effective intervention. If we want to understand partner violence, to intervene effectively in individual cases, or to make useful policy recommendations, we must make these distinctions in our research.

Postscript

Since the original version of this article was presented in 2000 (Johnson, 2000) at a National Institute of Justice workshop, considerable progress has been made in research on different types of intimate partner violence. Janel Leone and I, using the National Violence Against Women data, have shown that victims of intimate terrorism are attacked more frequently and experience violence that is less likely to stop. They are more likely to be injured, to exhibit more of the symptoms of posttraumatic stress syndrome, to use painkillers (perhaps also tranquilizers), and to miss work.

They have left their husbands more often and, when they do leave, are more likely to acquire their own residence (Johnson & Leone, 2005). Using data from a study of a poor neighborhood in Chicago, my colleagues and I found that victims of intimate terrorism reported poorer general health, a greater likelihood of visiting a doctor, more psychological distress, and a greater likelihood of receiving government assistance (Leone et al., 2004). Leone's dissertation (Leone et al., 2003), using data from the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study, demonstrated that victims of intimate terrorism were more likely than victims of situational couple violence to seek formal help (e.g., police, medical, counseling), and that this association was mediated by other factors, including violence severity, injuries, and perceived social support. They were not more likely to seek help from family or friends. Alison Cares and I (Johnson & Cares, 2004), using Frieze's Pittsburgh data, have shown that childhood experiences of family violence are strongly related to adult perpetration of intimate terrorism, but not to situational couple violence.

Amy Holtzworth-Munroe and her colleagues (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000, 2002; Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman, & Stuart, 2003; Holtzworth-Munroe, Rehman, & Herron, 2000) have continued their line of research that uses cluster analysis to distinguish among types of perpetrators. They generally found three clusters, one corresponding to situational couple violence (which they label *family only*), and two others that appear to correspond to two types of intimate terrorists (*borderline/dysphoric* and *generally violent/antisocial*). The clusters differ, among other things, in terms of the personality of the perpetrators, the pattern of violence, the perpetrators' attitudes toward women, and the general level of control exercised in their relationships (with the high control scores of borderline/dysphoric and generally violent/antisocial perpetrators supporting my assumption that these men are involved in intimate terrorism, whereas the family-only perpetrators are more likely involved in situational couple violence).

Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003a, 2003b) collected data on violence and control from British samples of women residing at Women's Aid refuges and their partners, male and female students, men attending male treatment programs for domestic violence and their partners, and male prisoners and their partners. Their cluster analyses confirm the distinction between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence and show support for my findings regarding differences in the frequency and severity of violence.

In spite of this progress, the gender symmetry debate continues, ignoring these demonstrations that there are different types of intimate partner violence and that data that do not distinguish among them are problematic at best. Papers continue to be published using general survey data to demonstrate that men and women are equally violent, and implying through their generalizations about *violence* or *domestic violence* or *intimate partner violence* that men and women are equally likely to be involved in intimate terrorism (e.g., Capaldi & Owen, 2001; Moffitt, Robins, & Caspi, 2001; Straus & Ramirez, 2002). Even recent reviews of the literature that debunk the myth of gender symmetry continue to focus on measurement issues as the major

source of contradictory findings (Kimmel, 2002; Saunders, 2002). Frustrating as this is to me, all I can do is assume that we are in the midst of a gradual recognition that domestic violence is not a unitary phenomenon, and that we are close to a tipping point at which we will see a dramatic decline in the number of published studies that simply compare violent with nonviolent relationships without making distinctions among types of violence. The evidence is accumulating that I was right when I argued in the early 1990s that "If we want to understand partner violence, to intervene effectively in individual cases, or to make useful policy recommendations, we must make these distinctions in our research" (Johnson, 1993, n.p.).

Notes

1. Much of the gender debate in the literature has centered on the inadequacies of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) as a means to assess intimate partner violence (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Straus, 1990a). Comparing studies that all used the CTS eliminated this potential source of bias.

2. The terminology I have used has changed somewhat over the years, although the definitions have remained the same. The 1995 article referred to *patriarchal terrorism* and *common couple violence*. I soon abandoned the former term because it begged the question of men's and women's relative involvement in this form of controlling violence. It also implied that all such intimate terrorism was somehow rooted in patriarchal structures, traditions, or attitudes. I still believe that most intimate terrorism is perpetrated by men in heterosexual relationships and that in such cases the violence is indeed rooted in patriarchal traditions. However, it is clear that there are women intimate terrorists in heterosexual and same-sex relationships (for descriptions of intimate terrorism in lesbian relationships, see Renzetti, 1992). Furthermore, it is not clear that all intimate terrorism, even men's, is rooted in patriarchal ideas or structures. I later abandoned *common couple violence* in favor of *situational couple violence* because the former terminology implied to some readers that I felt that such violence was acceptable. I also prefer the new terminology because it more clearly identifies the roots of this violence in the situated escalation of conflict.

3. Although change has been slow to come, there are now a number of studies published or in progress that do make such distinctions (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003a, 2003b; Johnson, Conklin, & Menon, 2002; Johnson & Leone, 2005; Leone, Johnson, & Cohan, 2003; Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2004). I will comment further on these at the end of this article.

4. This typology is somewhat unusual in that it uses dyadic information to create a typology of individual behavior.

5. At this point I will stop reporting alternative forms of the question, unless it seems necessary for clarity.

6. There has been some confusion regarding the role of frequency or severity of violence in the construction of this typology. Because this is a typology of violent behavior, all members of the four types have been violent toward their partner. However, the distinctions among the types are based entirely on control context, not frequency or severity of violence.

7. The interview question was, "Can you estimate how many times, in total, he was violent with you?"

8. The question was, "Did he become more violent over time?"

9. Severity of violence was assessed in a section of the interview dealing with "the time your husband was the most violent with you (him)." The question was, "How badly were you hurt?" It was an open-ended question with probes, coded into the following categories: (a) force, no hurt; (b) no physical injury; (c) simple injury; (d) severe, no trauma; (e) severe, some trauma; and (f) permanent injury.

10. Once again, I want to be clear that there is no tautology involved here. The types are defined in terms of control context, not the frequency or nature of the violence. The hypothesized differences in characteristics of the violence are derived from theory. It is assumed that attempts by husbands to exert

general control over their wives will be met by considerable resistance in the United States, a cultural context in which marriage is seen by most women as an egalitarian partnership. Thus, the intimate terrorist will in some cases turn to violence repeatedly and escalate its severity to gain control. Furthermore, given the size and strength differences between men and women, a woman faced with a partner who is determined to gain the upper hand by whatever means will not in the long run be likely to continue to resist physically but will turn to other tactics to gain control of her life (Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1998).

11. If my arguments regarding the biases of various types of sampling strategies are correct, it is almost impossible to develop precise estimates of the incidence of the various types of violence. I come to the conclusion that most partner violence is situational couple violence in the following way, based on figures in my 1995 article. First, accepting my evidence that almost all of the partner violence in general surveys is situational couple violence, we can use the figures from the National Family Violence Surveys to estimate the incidence of situational couple violence. Second, extrapolating from agency data in two states that keep excellent shelter statistics, we can develop an estimate of the incidence of intimate terrorism. Those figures, which may be found in the 1995 article, suggest that there is probably 3 times as much situational couple violence as intimate terrorism, which would mean that 75% of women experiencing violence from their male partners are experiencing situational couple violence.

12. Mary Ann Dutton and Lisa Goodman are currently involved in a very promising attempt to do just that. Their scale development tactics are rooted in a theory of coercive control (personal communication, May, 2002).

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