Living in a web of trauma: An ecological examination of violence among African Americans

Chapter · January 2016

1 author:

Carolyn M West
University of Washington Tacoma
39 PUBLICATIONS **796** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

33

Living in a Web of Trauma

An Ecological Examination of Violence among African Americans

Carolyn M. West

University of Washington, Tacoma, WA

We cannot eradicate racism by rejecting the use of racial statistics, but we can perpetuate racism by abstracting statistics from their historical and social context and by treating race as a coherent, homogenous, causal variable.

T. Zuberi, *Thicker than blood*

According to the 2010 US Census Bureau, 42 million people self-identify as Black or African American, either alone or in combination with one or more races[1] (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). This richly diverse, resilient population is overrepresented among victims and perpetrators of nonfatal and fatal community, family, and intimate partner violence. For example, in the National Crime Victimization Survey, the rate of violent victimization for Blacks was 25.1 per 1000 in 2013. Rape, robbery, and physical assaults were perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, and strangers (Truman & Langton, 2014). Moreover, African Americans, whether as individuals or couples, consistently reported higher rates of overall, severe, mutual, and recurrent past year and lifetime intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization and perpetration than their White and Hispanic counterparts in general population, community, and university samples[2] (West, 2012). Although they were 13.6% of the population, African Americans accounted for one-half of the nation's homicide victims in 2005 (Harrell, 2007).

However, Black Americans are not inherently more violent than other ethnic groups. In fact, many of the racial differences disappear, or become less significant, when researchers control for socioeconomic status (West, 2012). The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature to explore reasons why African Americans are overrepresented among victims and perpetrators of interpersonal violence. In the first section, I will define historical trauma and discuss gender differences in prevalence rates of fatal and nonfatal violent criminal victimization and prevalence rates of physical, sexual, and psychological intimate partner violence. In the next section, I will describe the ecological model and discuss risk factors for interpersonal violence at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels. To conclude,

The Wiley Handbook on the Psychology of Violence, First Edition. Edited by Carlos A. Cuevas and Callie Marie Rennison.

I will offer suggestions for intervention and prevention strategies to address risk factors at every level of the ecological model.

Prevalence Rates and Types of Violence

Historical Trauma

During 250 years of slavery, followed by 90 years of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation in the form of Jim Crow laws, and the shameful incompletion of the modern civil rights movement, one thing remained constant in the lives of African Americans: high levels of interpersonal and institutional violence in the form of beatings, rapes and reproductive coercion, and lynchings (for a review see Williams-Washington, 2010). This has contributed to historical trauma, which has been defined as "the collective spiritual, psychological, emotional and cognitive distress perpetuated intergenerationally deriving from multiple denigrating experiences originating with slavery and continuing with pattern forms of racism and discrimination to the present day" (Williams-Washington, 2010, p. 32).

Although exposure to racism, quality of their social support system, and knowledge of these historical events can determine how contemporary African Americans process historical trauma, slavery has left an indelibly mark on the Black psyche and consciousness. This is not to suggest that every destructive act, including the perpetration of interpersonal violence, is the direct result of slavery. Yet, some Blacks have "internalized beliefs and practices that have become self-annihilating. We cannot uncouple such beliefs and practices from the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow" (Robinson, 2012, p. 397). Beyond the psychological consequences of historical trauma, racial discrimination has created structural inequalities, in the form of higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and residential segregation that have increased the probability that Black Americans will experience all forms of violence in their families and communities (West, in press). This reality should be considered when reviewing the research on criminal victimization and intimate partner violence discussed below.

Criminal Victimization

There is an alarmingly high rate of homicides in the African American community (see Table 33.1). According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Blacks accounted for nearly one-half of the 16 000 homicides that occurred in 2005 (Harrell, 2007). It is important that these numbers have a human face. For example, in Chicago, the third largest US city, 82 citizens were shot, five of them by police officers, and 14 people were killed. Most of the victims were in their late teens and twenties, but the victims ranged from a 14-year-old boy to a 66-year-old woman. All of this violence occurred in three days during the July 4, 2014 holiday weekend (Nickeas, 2014).

In addition, there were an estimated 805 000 nonfatal violent crimes involving Blacks Americans. About one-half were categorized as serious violent crime: rape/sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault. In fact, one-third of violent crime against Blacks involved offenders who were armed with weapons (gun or knife). As further evidence of severity, one-third of Black crime victims sustained an injury. On a more positive note, the rate of violent victimization among Blacks has declined between 2012 and 2013 (Truman & Langton, 2014).

Table 33.1 National Studies on Criminal Victimization and Intimate Partner Violence Among African Americans.

Study	*Number of Blacks*	*Methods and design*	*Rates of violence*
		Criminal victimization	
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Truman & Langton, 2014)	475 090 in 2004 598 100 in 2012 430 380 in 2013	Collects information on nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of US households (in 2012: 92 390 households and 162 940 persons interviewed). Face-to-face interviews with subsequent interviews conducted either in person or by phone. In 2012, 3 575 900 were victims.	The rate of violent victimization for blacks declined between 2012 to 2013 (34.2 versus 25.1 per 1000).
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Harrell 2007)	In 2005, estimated 805 000 Black nonfatal violent crime victims and 8000 homicides.	Collects information on nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of US households (in 2012: 92 390 households and 162 940 persons interviewed). Face-to-face interviews with subsequent interviews conducted either in person or by phone.	Between 2001 and 2005, about half of nonfatal violence against blacks was characterized as a serious violent crime (rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault). Black males accounted for about 52% (or 6800) of the nearly 13 000 male homicide victims. Black females made up 35% (or 1200) of the nearly 3500 female homicide victims.
		Intimate partner violence	
Couple surveys 1975 First National Family Violence Survey (NFVS) (Hampton Gelles, & Harrop 1989)	146 Black current married or cohabitating couple households.	Cross-sectional, retrospective data. Face-to-face interviews with national probability sample of 2143 families. One member of the couple interviewed.	As measured CTS[a] Overall Black husband-to-wife past year physical aggression (169 per 1000) was higher than overall Black wife-to-husband past-year physical aggression (153 per 1000). Severe Black husband-to-wife past-year physical aggression (113 per 1000) was higher than severe Black wife-to-husband past-year physical aggression (76 per 1000).

(Continued)

Table 33.1 (Continued)

Study	*Number of Blacks*	*Methods and design*	*Rates of violence*
1985 National Family Violence Resurvey (NFVR) (Hampton Gelles, & Harrop 1989)	576 Black current married or cohabitating couple households.	Cross-sectional, retrospective data. Telephone interviews with national probability sample of 6002 families. One member of the couple interviewed.	As measured by the CTS, overall Black wife-to-husband past-year physical aggression was higher (204 per 1000) than overall husband-to-wife past-year physical aggression (169 per 1000). Severe wife-to-husband past-year physical aggression was higher (108 per 1000) than husband-to-wife past-year physical aggression (64 per 1000) (not significant).
1995 National Longitudinal Couple Survey (NLCS) (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer 2000).	358 Black current married or cohabitating couples.	First wave of longitudinal survey data. Face-to-face interviews conducted separately with each member of 1440 currently married or cohabitating couples in the 1995 National Alcohol Survey.	As measured by the CTS, overall past-year physical aggression: Black FMPV[b] was higher than Black MFPV[c] (30% versus 23%). Among couples who reported violence, overall past-year physical partner violence: Black MPV[d] (61%) was higher than unidirectional FMPV (31%) and unidirectional FMPV (8%).
2000 National Longitudinal Couple Survey (NLCS) (Caetano, Field, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Lipsky 2009).	232 Black married and cohabitating couples who were interviewed in the 1995 NLCS.	Second wave of longitudinal survey data. Face-to-face interviews conducted separately with each member of intact 1025 currently married or cohabitating couples in the 1995 NLCS.	As measured by the CTS-2, minor (15%) and severe (4%) MFPV past-year physical aggression was comparable to minor (16%) and severe (4%) past-year FMPV physical aggression. Minor (53%) and severe (28%) past year MFPV psychological aggression was comparable to minor (51%) and severe (30%) FMPV past-year psychological aggression. Past-year minor MFSA[e] (19%) was higher than past year minor FMSA[f] (13%).

Public health victimization surveys			
National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).	780 Black women and 659 Black men.	Cross-sectional retrospective data. Telephone interviews with nationally represented sample of 8000 US women and 8000 US men.	Lifetime rates: Black women: 26.3% physical assault (items from the CTS) 7.4% rape 4.2% stalking Black men: 10.8% physical assault 0.9% rape 1.1% stalking
National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, Walters, Merrick, Chen, & Stevens, 2011).	Not reported	Cross-sectional retrospective data. Telephone interviews conducted from January–December 2011 with 12727 (6879 women and 5848 men) noninstitutionalized English- and Spanish-speaking US population aged 18 or older.	Lifetime rates: Black women: 41.2% physical violence (items from the CTS) 53.8% psychological aggression 8.8% rape 9.5% stalking Black men: 36.3% physical violence 56.1% psychological aggression Not-reported rape Not-reported stalking
Crime surveys			
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (Truman & Morgan, 2014)	598100 Black victims in 2012	Collects information on nonfatal crimes reported and not reported to police against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of US households (in 2012: 92390 households and 162940 persons interviewed). Face-to-face interviews with subsequent interviews conducted either in person or by phone. In 2012, 3575900 were victims.	Between 2003–2012, the Black intimate partner violence rate was 4.7 per 1000.

(Continued)

Table 33.1 (Continued)

Study	*Number of Blacks*	*Methods and design*	*Rates of violence*
Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) (Violence Policy Center 2014)	Race was identified in 1688 homicides (468 Black females).	Provide detailed information on criminal homicides reported to the police. These homicides consist of murders; non-negligent killings also called non-negligent manslaughter; and justifiable homicides. Homicides in which females murdered by males in a single victim / single offender incident.	Black females were murdered by males at a rate of 2.46 per 100 000.

Notes:
[a]CTS = Conflict Tactics Scale;
[b]FMPV = female-to-male partner violence;
[c]MFPV = male-to-female partner violence;
[d]MPV = mutual partner violence;
[e]MFSA = male-to-female sexual assault;
[f]FMSA = female-to-male sexual assault.

Intimate Partner Violence

African Americans experience family violence that is committed by immediate family members, including parents, children, siblings, and other relatives (Truman & Morgan, 2014). However, the focus of this chapter is violence that is committed by intimate partners, broadly defined as married, cohabitating, or common-law spouses; boyfriends/girlfriends, dating partners, and ongoing sexual partners. A comprehensive definition includes *physical aggression*, ranging from less injurious violence, such as slapping or shoving, to more lethal forms of violence, including beatings and assaults with weapons. *Rape* can take the form of completed or attempted alcohol- or drug-facilitated or forced anal, oral, or digital penetration. Other forms of *sexual violence* include *reproductive coercion* (e.g., pressuring a woman to become pregnant), *sexual coercion* (nonphysically pressured unwanted penetration), and *unwanted sexual contact* (e.g., kissing or fondling). *Psychological aggression* includes *expressive aggression*, in the form of name calling, insulting, or humiliating an intimate partner and *coercive control*, which includes behaviors that are intended to monitor, control, or threaten an intimate partner. Finally, *stalking* encompasses receiving unwanted communication via email or through social media; being watched or followed at home, work, or school (Black et al., 2011).

Before discussing the research in Table 33.1, I will pause to mention several methodological limitations of these national studies (for a review see Mechanic & Pole, 2013). First, few scholars have investigated ethnic differences in rates of violence among Blacks (US-born African Americans versus immigrant and second-generation Caribbeans). The practice of "ethnic lumping" has obscured important ethnic differences in prevalence rates and risk factors (e.g. Lacey, West, Matusko and Jackson, in press). Second, most researchers have used the original Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2) to measure overall, minor, and severe physical aggression (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). Finally, it is difficult to make comparisons across studies because researchers have used different methodologies: interviews conducted face-to-face versus telephone interviews (Hampton, Gelles, & Harrop, 1989). With these caveats in mind, I will explore Black gender differences in IPV in national couple surveys, public health victimization surveys, and crime surveys.

Couple Surveys In couple surveys either the wife, husband, or both were interviewed either face-to-face or by telephone. In the 1975 National Family Violence Survey (NFVS) both overall and severe Black husband-to-wife past-year physical aggression was higher than overall and severe Black wife-to-husband physical aggression. A decade later, the 1985 National Family Violence Resurvey (NFVR) discovered that Black wives used more overall and severe violence against their husbands than husbands used against their wives. These changes could be attributed to changes in respondents' willingness to report violence, actual changes in gender patterns of IPV, or methodological differences between the studies (Hampton, Gelles, & Harrop, 1989).

Ideally, both IPV victimization and perpetration should be measured in couples over time. This was accomplished in the National Longitudinal Couples Survey (NLCS) by interviewing both members of the couple in 1995 and 2000. Almost one-quarter of Black couples reported minor or moderate violence, much of it took the form of pushing, slapping, and hitting with an object. Mutual, also referred to

as bidirectional violence, was the most frequently reported pattern of relationship violence. That is, 61% of couples reported that both partners had used physical aggression. One-third of Black couples who reported bidirectional partner violence described it as severe, defined as beat up, choked, raped or threatened with a weapon. Five years later, 17% of Black couples continued to engage in mutual violence and 11% of these couples progressed into severe IPV (Caetano, Raimisetty-Mikler, & Field, 2005). These relationships may be better characterized as *bidirectional asymmetrical violence*[3] (Temple, Weston, & Marshall, 2005). Alternatively stated, mutuality of violence does not mean that women's and men's violent acts are equivalent. When motives, frequency, and severity of violence are considered the physical and mental health consequences associated with IPV are often greater for women (West, 2007).

Public Health Victimization Surveys Two victimization studies used a public health perspective to assess the physical and mental health consequences of IPV. In the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), Black women reported higher lifetime rates of physical assault, rape, and stalking than their male counterparts (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). More recently, the National Intimate Partner Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), which assessed a broad range of IPV, discovered comparable rates of physical and psychological aggression between Black women and men (Black et al., 2011).

Crime Surveys According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the Black intimate partner violence rate was 4.7 per 1000 between 2003 and 2012 (Truman & Morgan, 2014). In 2012, Black females also were murdered at the rate of 2.4 per 100 000 (Violence Policy Center, 2014). Regarding gender differences, Black males were more likely to be victimized by strangers; whereas, Black females were more frequently attacked or murdered by intimate partners (Harrell, 2007; Violence Policy Center, 2014).

To conclude, African Americans experienced high rates of fatal and nonfatal violence in their communities, families, and intimate relationships. Exposure to interpersonal violence has been associated with more and severe physical and mental health problems. For example, slightly more than one-half (58%) of Blacks crime victims experienced socio-emotional problems, which have been defined as the experience of moderate to severe distress, problems at work or school, problems in relationships with family or friends, or a combination of the three (Langton & Truman, 2014).

Ecological Model: Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors increase the probability that a person will become the victim or perpetrator of violence; whereas, protective factors buffer individuals against these risks. The premise of the ecological model is that no single factor can explain why some people or groups are at higher risk for interpersonal violence, while others are protected from it. More specifically, this model views interpersonal violence as the outcome of a complex interaction among many factors at four levels. For example, at the *individual level* we consider how a person's sociodemographic characteristics, formative history,

such as exposure to child abuse, and substance use increase their risk of interpersonal violence. The *relationship level* considers interactions between the person and their partner, family members, and peers. Whereas, the community level considers the environment in which the person lives; for example, exposure to neighborhood crime. Finally, the ecological model includes larger societal factors, such as norms, policies, and inequalities, which can create an environment where violence can flourish (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2009).

The purpose of this section is to discuss risk factors at every level of the ecological model: individual level (age, gender, income, alcohol use/abuse, childhood victimization, normative approval of violence, and impulsivity); relationship level (relationship conflict, quality of peer and social networks); community level (neighborhood poverty and violence); and societal level (discrimination) (see Table 33.2). Throughout, I will weave information about how historical trauma and structural inequalities, such as poverty and discrimination, influence risk factors at each of these levels (for a review see West, in press).

Individual Level

Age Victimization occurs most frequently among younger people. For example, Blacks age 24 and younger had higher rates of violent victimization than Blacks who were age 25 or older (Harrell, 2007). Regarding IPV, when compared to couples who were 40 years or older, the rates of severe violence were more than three times greater among Black couples under age 30 (Hampton & Gelles, 1994).

Gender When compared to male-perpetrated IPV, female-perpetrated minor and moderate physical aggression was more common among African American couples in the 1985 NFVR (Hampton, Gelles, & Harrop, 1989) and the 1995 NCLS (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). Interestingly, some Black women did not deny their use of violence. In fact, they were more willing to identify themselves as perpetrators than Black men were willing to identify themselves as victims (Caetano, Schafer, Field, & Nelson, 2002). However, since Black women's use of physical violence often occurs in context of their victimization, it should not be concluded that they are primary aggressors (see West, 2007 for a review). Furthermore, Black women also experienced high rates of severe gender-based violence. More specifically, when compared to Black men or women of other ethnic groups, African American women reported higher rates of nonfatal strangulation (Glass, Laughon, Campbell, Block, Hanson, Sharps, & Taliaferro, 2008), domestic violence (femicide) (Violence Policy Center, 2014), rape/sexual assault, and stalking (Black et al., 2011).

Income In 2013, the poverty rate among Black Americans was 27.2%, which represents 11 million people (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). Annual household income had the greatest relative influence on the probably of partner violence, with lower incomes being associated with higher rates of IPV. Specifically, Black couples who reported either MFPV or FMPV had significantly lower mean annual incomes than nonviolent couples (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002). Relatedly, households with unemployed Black husbands reported the highest rates of husband-to-wife abuse (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). In fact, Black women were more likely to be murdered by unemployed partners (Campbell, Webster, Koziol-McLain, Block, Campbell, & Curry, 2003).

Table 33.2 Summary of risk factors associated with violence among African Americans by ecological level.

Risk factors	*Research findings*
	Individual level
Age	• Blacks age 24 and under had higher rates of violent victimization than Blacks age 25 or older (Harrell, 2007). • Rates of severe violence were more than three times greater among Black couples under age 30 (Hampton & Gelles, 1994).
Gender	• Black men at greater risk for stranger and community violence (Truman and Langton, 2014). • Black women are at greater risk for intimate partner violence (Harrell, 2007).
Income	• Black couples with household incomes between $30 000 and $40 000 were more likely to report MFPV than those with household incomes greater than $40 000 (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 1999). • Black couples who reported MFPV ($22 838) had lower mean annual incomes than those couples who did not report MFPV ($32 685) (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002). • Black couples who reported lower mean annual incomes than couples who did not report FMPV ($33 541) (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer 2002). • Households with unemployed Black husbands reported the highest rates of husband-to-wife abuse (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). • Lower income Black families had higher rates of wife-beating than upper income Black families (144 versus 58 per 1000) (Hampton & Gelles, 1994).
Alcohol use/abuse	• Mean male and female alcohol consumption was significantly higher for Black couples who reported partner violence compared to those not reporting partner abuse (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 1999). • Black couples with male alcohol problems are at a sevenfold risk for MFPV compared to those without male alcohol problems (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer 1999). • Black couples reporting female alcohol problems have a fivefold risk for MFPV compared to those without female alcohol problems (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer 1999). • Black women in the heaviest drinking category were twice as likely to report FMPV than abstainers and infrequent drinkers (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer 2000).
Childhood victimization	• Black couples in which the female reported childhood violence victimization were more likely to report MFPV than couples in which the female did not report victimization (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer 1999). • Blacks who were hit as a teen by their mother or observed parental violence had higher rates of husband-to-wife violence (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). • Blacks who were hit as a teen by either parent were twice as likely to be in households with severe partner violence (Hampton & Gelles, 1994).

Table 33.2 (Continued)

Risk factors	*Research findings*
Normative approval of violence	• Black couples in which male endorsed approving attitudes of marital violence reported a fivefold and twofold risk of MFPV and FMPV, respectively (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer 2000). • Association between attitudes supporting IPV and IPV perpetration (Raiford, Seth, Braxton, & DiClemente 2013).
Impulsivity	• Acting on the spur of the moment and making hasty decision risk for both Black MFPV and FMPV (Field & Caetano, 2003).
	Relationship level
Relationship conflict	• High ineffective couple conflict resolution skills associated with IPV perpetration (Raiford, Seth, Braxton, & DiClemente, 2013).
Peer and social networks	• Black couples who had been in the community less than two years reported twice the rate of minor violence (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). • Longer residence in the neighborhood and presence of children and non-nuclear family members associated with lower levels of spouse slapping (Cazenave & Straus, 1979). • Perpetration of IPV was associated with gang involvement (Reed, Silverman, Welles, Santana, Missmer, & Raj, 2009).
	Community level
Neighborhood poverty	• The risk for MFPV was threefold higher among Black couples who lived in impoverished neighborhoods compared to those not living in poor areas (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). • The risk for FMPV was twofold higher among Black couples who lived in impoverished neighborhoods compared to those not living in poor areas (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000).
Neighborhood violence	• Community violence was correlated with emotional dating victimization among young Black urban women (Stueve & O'Donnell, 2008). • Perception that violence occurs in one's neighborhood associated with IPV perpetration among urban Black men (Reed, Silverman, Welles, Santana, Missmer, & Raj, 2009).
	Societal level
Discrimination	• Black men who reported higher levels of discrimination reported more IPV perpetration (Reed, Silverman, Ickovies, Gupta, Welles, Santana, & Raj, 2010). • Exposure to discrimination was associated with higher levels of IPV victimization and perpetration (Stueve and O'Donnell, 2008).

Alcohol Use and Abuse Approximately one-quarter of Black violent crime victims perceived their perpetrator to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (Harrell, 2007). Furthermore, when faced with extreme, persistent, economic and social inequalities, individuals are more likely to use and abuse drugs or alcohol. There is substantial evidence that alcohol-related dependence indicators (e.g., withdrawal symptoms and alcohol tolerance), alcohol-related social problems (e.g., job loss, legal problems), and greater mean male and female alcohol consumption were especially

strong predictors of IPV among African American couples, independent of who in the couple reports the problem (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 1999). Moreover, the risk of MFPV increased, particularly among Black couples who had alcohol problems, as the density of alcohol outlets in their community increased (McKinney, Caetano, Harris, & Ebama, 2009).

Exposure to Childhood Victimization According to the 2012 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), a federally sponsored effort that collects and analyzes annual data on child abuse and neglect, 140 079 Black children were identified as victims of physical abuse or neglect (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). In both scholarly research (Robinson, 2012) and memoirs (Patton, 2007) strict obedience training and physical violence during slavery has been linked to high rates of child abuse in contemporary Black families.

This behavior has been sanctioned by biblical teaching, such as spare the rod and spoil the child, and has been characterized as an act of love by Black parents who seek to protect their children. However, this harsh parenting style can hinder children's ability to establish healthy adult relationships. To illustrate, Black children who experienced serious childhood or adolescent victimization in the form of beatings and threats with weapons were more likely to engage in both male- and female-perpetrated intimate partner abuse (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). In addition, observing parental violence has been associated with future husband-to-wife battering among Black couples (Hampton & Gelles, 1994).

Relationship Level

Gender Ratio Imbalance High rates of homicide (Harrell, 2007) and mass incarceration have removed large number of Black men and boys from the community. As a result, there are more single Black women and fewer marriageable Black men. In response to this gender ratio imbalance, some Black women stay with abusive partners to avoid loneliness. Other Black women stay in abusive relationships because they feel a cultural or religious mandate to emotionally support men who are "endangered" by structural challenges: "He's just upset because he doesn't have a job and he's doing drugs and that's very stressful on him ... Soon as he cleans himself up and get a job, everything will be fine" (Potter, 2008, p. 108).

Gender Role Conflict In addition, poverty can contribute to conflicts around gender roles norms. Black women have historically made substantial contributions to the economic wellbeing of their households. Consequently, they may be less likely to tolerate IPV without retaliating or engaging in defensive violence, thereby increasing rates of mutual violence (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Field, 2005). In contrast, many Black men have been unable to fulfill their traditional gender role of family provider, primarily due to discrimination in the labor market. As a result, "interpersonal conflicts arise between black males and black females because many black males are aware of their role failures and are inclined to counterattack any perceived challenge to their manhood with violence" (Hampton & Gelles, 1994: 115). Lack of conflict resolution skills, coupled with easy access to guns, can facilitate, escalate, and amplify anger, conflicts and arguments. The result can be higher rates

of both IPV and femicide (Raiford, Seth, Braxton ,& DiClemente, 2013; Violence Policy Center, 2012).

Community Level

Neighborhood Poverty Approximately one-half of the Black couples in the NCLS resided in impoverished neighborhoods. Compared to Black couples who lived in more middle-class communities, those who lived in economically distressed communities were at a threefold risk for MFPV and twofold increase for FMPV (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). Thus, it appears that individual economic distress, in the form of low household income, and residence in poor neighborhoods worked in tandem to increase the risk of inflicting and sustaining IPV.

Community Violence Exposure to community violence in any role (witness, victim, or perpetrator) has been associated with higher rates of intimate partner abuse. For example, community violence was correlated with emotional dating victimization among young Black urban women (Stueve & O'Donnell, 2008). Black men were more likely to batter their girlfriends if they had been involved in street violence, had a history of gang involvement, or perceived that there was a "great deal" of violence in their neighborhood (Reed, Silverman, Welles, Santana, Missmer, & Raj, 2009). Taken together, social disorganization theory provides a foundation for understanding the complex association between residence in disadvantaged neighborhoods and higher rates of interpersonal violence (see Pinchevsky & Wright, 2012 for a review).

Societal

Experience with Discrimination Empirical research is limited in this area. However, among low-income Black women (Stueve & O'Donnell, 2008) and Black men (Reed, Silverman, Ickovics, Gupta, Welles, Santana, & Raj, 2010), IPV perpetration and victimization have been linked to microaggressions in the form of perceived racial discrimination in their community (e.g., being unfairly stopped and frisked by police or followed by store clerks, called insulting names or physically attacked because of skin color or race).

To conclude, it is difficult to detangle the individual, relationship, community, and societal level correlates and risk factors associate with violence among African Americans because the pathways between economic marginalization and higher rates of partner violence is complex. According to social structural theory "those from lower SES strata may have had greater exposure to childhood violence, have higher rates of depression, experience more alcohol-related problems, have poorer coping mechanisms, and more commonly endorse the use of physical aggression as a tactic in marital disputes" (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002).

Prevention/Prevention Strategies

Intervention and prevention strategies need to be implemented to address risk factors at every level of the ecological model. For example,

Individual Level

Income Inequalities In 2013, the poverty rate among Black Americans was 27.2%. (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). More educational opportunities, in conjunction with job training and the availability of living wage jobs, could lift more African Americans out of poverty, which ultimately may reduce the rates of all forms of violence (Raiford, Seth, Braxton, & DiClemente, 2013).

Alcohol Use and Abuse Alcohol and drug treatment should be widely available. In addition to addressing substance abuse, treatment programs should provide assistance to deal with alcohol-related social problems (e.g., job loss, legal problems) (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). Policy makers may wish to consider the potential benefits of limiting alcohol outlet density in communities of color and economically distressed areas (McKinney, Caetano, Harris, & Ebama, 2009).

Childhood Victimization Exposure to family violence and childhood abuse either as a witness, observer, or victim has consistently been linked to adult IPV (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer, 2000). It is recommended that Black parents move beyond unhealthy, child rearing practices that are rooted in slavery. Rather they should utilize a wide range of alternatives to corporal punishment (Patton, 2007, see www.spare-thekids.com).

Relationship Level

Relationship Conflict Behavior change requires that men and women learn skills for effective communication, conflict resolution, and anger management through modeling, role playing, and rehearsal of skills (Raiford, Jerris, Seth, Braxton, & DiClemente, 2013).

Peer and Social Networks Greater family-kin-neighborhood social embeddeness in the form of residential stability and presence of family members served as a buffer and protective factor against interpersonal violence (Cazenave & Straus, 1979). Fostering relationships with a positive formal and informal network should be encouraged, while violent peer groups, such as gangs should be avoided (Reed, Silverman, Welles, Santana, Missmer, & Raj, 2009).

Community Level

Neighborhood Poverty and Crime There needs to be economic development that target disadvantaged communities. This means providing resources: affordable housing and child care, mental and physical health care services, opportunities for economic advancement, and nondiscriminatory police practices (see West, in press).

To conclude, the intervention and prevention strategies, whether at the individual, relationship, community or societal level will have rippling effects across all systems and will ameliorate the risk factors facing African Americans, thus enhancing ability to avoid interpersonal violence. Ultimately, there needs to be sweeping societal changes that address the deeply entrenched structural inequalities that have created the environment that has caused interpersonal violence in African American communities.

Notes

1 The terms "African American" and "Black" will be used interchangeably.
2 More specifically, African Americans consistently reported higher rates of interpersonal violence than their White, Hispanic, and Asian American counterparts, but lower rates of victimization and perpetration than American Indians and multiracial individuals (Black et al., 2011).
3 To illustrate, Janay Palmer and her fiancée, now husband, Ray Rice, a running back for the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, was described as having "little more than a very minor physical altercation." However, in later video footage he could be seen dragging her limp body from an Atlantic City casino elevator after he had allegedly knocked her unconscious (Boylorn, 2014). Although both partners used violence, at least in this case, the woman sustained more serious injuries.

References

Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., ... Stevens, M. R. (2011). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 summary report.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Boylorn, R. (2014). *The blame game: Black women, shame and victim blaming* [Web log post] August 1, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/2014/08/01/the-blame-game-black-women-shame-and-victim-blaming/ (accessed August 7, 2015).

Caetano, R., Cunradi, C. B., Clark, C. L., & Schafer, J. (2000). Intimate partner violence and drinking patterns among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the US. *Journal of Substance Abuse, 11*(2), 123–138.

Caetano, R., Ramisetty-Mikler, S., & Field, C. A. (2005). Unidirectional and bidirectional intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic Couples in the United States. *Violence and Victims, 20*(4), 393–404.

Caetano, R., Schafer, J., Field, C., & Nelson, S. M. (2002). Agreement on reports of intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(12), 1308–1322.

Campbell, J., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., & Curry, M. A. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health, 93*(7), 1089–1097.

Cazenave, N. A., & Straus, M. A. (1979). Race, class, network embeddedness and family violence: A search for potent support systems. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 10*(3), 281–300.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). *The socialecological model: A framework for prevention.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/SEM_Framewrk-a.pdf (accessed August 29, 2015).

Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., Clark, C. L., & Schafer, J. (1999). Alcohol-related problems and intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the US. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 23*(9), 1492–1501.

Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., Clark, C. L., & Schafer, J. (2000). Neighborhood poverty as a predictor of intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States: A multilevel analysis. *Annals of Epidemiology, 10*(5), 297–308.

Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., & Schafer, J. (2002). Socioeconomic predictors of intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence, 17*(4), 377–389.

DeNavas-Walt, C., & Proctor, B. D. (2014). *Income and poverty in the United States: 2013.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Glass, N., Laughon, K, Campbell, J., Block, C. R., Hanson, G., Sharps, P. W., & Taliaferro, E. (2008). Non-fatal strangulation is an important risk factor for homicide of women. *The Journal of Emergency Medicine, 35,* 329–335.

Hampton, R. L., & Gelles, R. J. (1994). Violence toward Black women in a nationally representative sample of Black families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 25*(1), 105–119.

Hampton, R. L., Gelles, R. J., & Harrop, J. W. (1989). Is violence in Black families increasing? A comparison of 1975 and 1985 national survey rates. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51,* 969–980.

Harrell, E. (2007). *Black victims of violent crime.* Retrieved from http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/bvvc.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Lacey, K. K., West, C. M., Matusko, N., & Jackson, J. S. (in press). Prevalence and factors associated with severe intimate partner violence among US Black women: A comparison of African American and Caribbean Blacks. *Violence Against Women.*

Langton, L., & Truman, J. (2014). *Socio-emotional impact of violent crime.* Retrieved from http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/sivc.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

McKinney, C. M., Caetano, R., Harris, T. R., & Ebama, M. S. (2009). Alcohol availability and intimate partner violence among US couples. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 33*(1), 169–176.

Mechanic, M. B., & Pole, N. (2013). Methodological considerations in conducting ethnocultural sensitive research on intimate partner abuse and its multidimensional consequences. *Sex Roles, 69,* 205–225.

Nickeas, P. (2014). Fourth of July weekend toll: 82 shot, 14 of them fatally, in Chicago. *Chicago Tribune,* July 7. Retrieved from http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-07-07/news/chi-fourth-of-july-toll-82-shot-14-of-them-fatally-in-chicago-20140707_1_south-chicago-east-garfield-park-west-englewood (accessed August 7, 2015).

Patton, S. (2007). *That mean old yesterday.* New York, NY: Atria Books.

Pinchevsky, G. M., & Wright, E. M. (2012). The impact of neighborhood on intimate partner violence and victimization. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 13*(2), 112–132.

Potter, H. (2008). *Battle cries: Black women and intimate partner abuse.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Raiford, J. L., Seth, P., Braxton, N. D., & DiClemente R. J. (2013). Interpersonal- and community-level predictors of intimate partner violence perpetration among African American men. *Journal of Urban Health, 90*(4), 784–795.

Reed, E., Silverman, J. G., Ickovics, J. R., Gupta, J., Welles, S. L., Santana, M. C., & Raj, A. (2010). Experiences of racial discrimination and relation to violence perpetration and gang involvement among a sample of urban African American men. *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health, 12,* 319–326.

Reed, E., Silverman, J. G., Welles, S. L., Santana, M. C., Missmer, S. A., & Raj, A. (2009). Association between perceptions and involvement in neighborhood violence and intimate partner violence perpetration among urban, African American men. *Journal of Community Health, 34,* 328–335.

Robinson, R. (2012). Dark secrets: Obedience training, rigid physical violence, Black parenting, and reassessing the origins of instability in the Black family through a re-reading of Fox Butterfield's *All God's children. Howard Law Journal, 55*(3), 393–454.

Schafer, J., Caetano, R., & Cunradi, C. B. (2004). A path model of risk factors for intimate partner violence among couples in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19,* 127–142.

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2): Development and preliminary psychometric data. *Journal of Family Issues, 17*(3), 283–316.

Stueve, A., & O'Donnell, L. (2008). Urban young women's experiences of discrimination and community violence and intimate partner violence. *Journal of Urban Health, 85*(3), 386–401.

Temple, J. R., Weston, R., & Marshall, L. L. (2005). Physical and mental health outcomes of women in nonviolent, unilaterally violent, and mutually violent relationships. *Violence and Victims, 20*(3), 335–359.

Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey.* Retrieved from https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Truman, J. L., & Langton, L. (2014). *Criminal victimization, 2013.* Retrieved from http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv13.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Truman, J. L., & Morgan, R. E. (2014). *Nonfatal domestic violence, 2003–2012.* Retrieved from http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2013). Child maltreatment 2012. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment (accessed August 7, 2015).

Violence Policy Center. (2012). *When men murder women: An analysis of 2010 homicide data.* Washington DC. http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

West, C. M. (2007). "Sorry, we have to take you in:" Black battered women arrested for intimate partner violence. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma, 15*(3/4), 95–121.

West, C. M. (2012). Partner abuse in ethnic minority and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender populations. *Partner Abuse, 3*(3), 336–357.

West, C. M. (in press). Hidden in plain sight: Structural inequalities and (in)visible violence in the lives of African American women. In L. Wilton & E. Short (Eds.), *Talking about structural inequalities in everyday life: New politics of race in groups, organizations, and social systems.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Williams-Washington, K. N. (2010). Historical trauma. In Robert L. Hampton, Thomas P. Gullotta, & Raymond L. Crowel (Eds.), *Handbook of African American health* (pp. 31–49). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

The Wiley Handbook on the Psychology of Violence

Edited by

Carlos A. Cuevas and Callie Marie Rennison

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2016

Registered Office
John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK
The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Wiley handbook on the psychology of violence / edited by Carlos A. Cuevas and Callie Marie Rennison.
pages cm
Includes index.
ISBN 978-1-118-30315-3 (cloth) 1. Violent crimes. 2. Victims of violent crimes. 3. Violence–Psychological aspects. I. Cuevas, Carlos A., editor. II. Rennison, Callie Marie, editor.
HV6493.W55 2016
303.601'9–dc23
2015028488

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: © Daniela White Images / Flickr Open / Getty

Set in 10/12pt Galliard by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India
Printed and bound in Malaysia by Vivar Printing Sdn Bhd

1 2016