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Tod W. Burke, Michael L. Jordan and Stephen S. Owen

Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice 2002 18: 231
DOI: 10.1177/1043986202018003003

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TOD W. BURKE
Radford University

MICHAEL L. JORDAN
Lamar University

STEPHEN S. OWEN
Radford University

This research examines the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence in the United States and Venezuela. Data were collected through a survey administered using snowball and convenience sampling. Approximately two thirds of the sample in both countries reported experiencing some form of domestic violence, although substantially fewer had received information about or knew of resources supporting victims of same-sex domestic violence. In addition, respondents were surveyed about attitudes toward law enforcement and courts. Venezuelan respondents viewed law enforcement significantly more negatively than United States respondents, but there were not significant differences regarding perceptions of courts. Conclusions and practical implications are offered.

A common claim among authors of research about same-sex domestic violence (in gay and lesbian relationships) is that the topic has largely been neglected (Burke, 1998; Burke, Owen, & Jordan, 2001; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Turell, 2000). Although previous research has focused on isolated studies within the United States, with the exception of Burke et al. (2001), international comparisons have been nonexistent. Furthermore, the

All three authors contributed equally to this work. Listed authorship is alphabetical with agreement to rearrange authorship order on future collaborations. Data-collection assistance was provided by Reynaldo Hidalgo L. of the Escuela de Criminologia, Universidad de los Andes, Merida, Venezuela and by Radford University, Department of Criminal Justice, graduate assistant Jason M. Rexrode. At the time this research was conducted and the manuscript was written, all three authors were affiliated with Radford University.

Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, Vol. 18 No. 3, August 2002 231-257

relationship between the gay and lesbian community and the criminal justice system has not been carefully examined. This research builds on Burke et al.'s (2001) lead in conducting a cross-national examination of same-sex domestic violence and includes important variables about the relationship between the gay community and each nation's respective legal system as part of the analysis. This research compares same-sex domestic violence and gay and lesbian perceptions of criminal justice system legitimacy in the United States and Venezuela.

Although research has established that same-sex domestic violence exists in the United States, no scientific study has examined the problem in cross-national context. Research was facilitated by one of the coauthors of this article who has extensive knowledge of Venezuela, as a former resident and researcher of Venezuelan criminal justice. It was for this reason that Venezuela was selected for comparison. In spite of the cultural and political differences between Venezuela and the United States, same-sex domestic violence still occurs in both countries. Yet, there is little data on the ways in which same-sex domestic violence transcends national boundaries.

Cross-national study of virtually any topic is valuable because important insights (cultural, political, and social) can be gleaned, often with practical implications. Furthermore, cross-national study allows for additional theory building and hypothesis testing. Examination of the relationship between the gay and lesbian community and law enforcement is important for advancing knowledge about same-sex domestic violence and may prove useful for intervention and prevention strategies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defining Same-Sex Domestic Violence

There are a variety of definitions of domestic violence (Farley, 1985; Island & Letellier, 1991; Walber, 1988). This article will rely on the following definition offered by Burke (1998):

> Gay domestic violence will be defined as a means to control others through power, including physical and psychological threats (verbal and nonverbal) or injury (to the victim or to others), isolation, economic deprivation, heterosexist control, sexual assaults, vandalism (destruction of property), or any combination of methods. (p. 164)

Under this broad definition, a variety of activities may constitute domestic violence. Physical harm and threats of physical harm are commonly understood components of domestic violence, but it can also include verbal harass-

ment and insults, failure to provide medications, property damage, threats of outing (see below), prohibiting contact with family and friends, and coerced sexual activity (Burke, 1998).

Same-Sex Domestic Violence in the United States

Prevalence

Kelly and Warshafsky (1987) reported that about 47% of gays and lesbians have been victims of violent domestic relationships. Letellier (1994) cited a variety of studies that indicate that about "30% of all gay men and lesbians in intimate relationships are victims of domestic abuse" (p. 16). Taken as a whole, same-sex domestic violence is comparable in prevalence to heterosexual domestic violence (Koss, 1990).

A variety of studies indicate that between 25% to 50% of lesbians are victims of domestic abuse (Brand & Kidd, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Lockhart, White, Causby, & Issac, 1994). These results are consistent with previous studies of gay male domestic violence (Bologna, Waterman, & Dawson, 1987; Gardner, 1988; Harms, 1995; Turell, 2000; Waldner-Haugrud, Gratch & Magruder, 1997; Wood, 1987). Some studies indicate that between 42% and 79% of men in same-sex relationships experience physical domestic violence (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Waldner-Haugard & Gratch, 1997).

Turell (2000) reported the results of a survey that provides data about an extremely broad range of physical and nonphysical abuses that same-sex partners inflict on each other. Results strongly suggest that there is little to no difference between the varieties of abuses that same-sex partners, compared to heterosexual partners, impose on each other. However, there is a significant difference between the legal protections of gays and lesbians and heterosexuals regarding domestic violence (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 1998).

Unequal Protection

Inequality in legal protection from domestic violence may explain why so many incidents of same-sex domestic violence go unreported to criminal justice authorities (Burke, 1998; Burke et al., 2001; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Currently in the United States, 7 states (see Table 1) explicitly exclude gays and lesbians from applying for domestic violence protection orders. For many victims of domestic violence, these orders provide the only legal protection. Furthermore, 3 states have statutes that may compel gays and lesbians to admit to illegal sexual behavior (i.e., sodomy) to qualify for protection

orders. Thirty-seven states have enacted legislation with gender-neutral language. However, some of these states have enacted legislation leaving courts little choice but to accept a heterosexual petition for protection orders, whereas the decision to accept a gay or lesbian citizen's petition for protection is left to the discretion of the court. Only 4 states have legislation explicitly addressing (either through language or court interpretation) gay and lesbian couples and providing them equal protection (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 1998).

The problem of unequal legal protection for gays and lesbians may also be explained because "many criminal justice personnel suffer from homophobia. . . . At times, police officers have harassed members of the gay community" (Jackson, 1998, p. 192; also see Berrill, 1992; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Gays and lesbians often are "justifiably afraid to disclose the nature of the relationship because the police have a long history of harassing gay people" (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000, p. 7; also see Berrill, 1992). Problems sometimes arise due to practical concerns. For instance, the victim may be arrested, transported in the same vehicle, and detained in the same jail cell as the attacker (Berrill, 1992). Renzetti (1992) reported that the vast majority of lesbian respondents considered the police to be unhelpful in their efforts to seek protection from domestic violence.

In addition to legal discrimination, scholars, who often serve as the springboard for effecting change in public policy as a result of their research, also have, by design or accidental oversight, neglected gay and lesbian issues. "Researchers have themselves fallen victim to the misconception that domestic violence is an exclusively heterosexual phenomenon" (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000, p. 2; also see Hamberger, 1994; Merrill, 1996). Merrill and Wolfe (2000) asserted that some scholars, particularly those promoting feminist theories, may intentionally avoid the study and acknowledgment of lesbian domestic violence because popular feminist models "[fail] to account for lesbian battering" (p. 2).

Legal or scholarly ignorance of same-sex domestic violence may explain why there are so few public or private victim assistance services. "Even with documentation, the antifamily violence movement largely ignores service provision to victims of same-sex relationship violence" (Turell, 2000, p. 281). Unlike heterosexual women (Bowker, 1987; B. Hamilton & Coates, 1993; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000), lesbians report that battered women's shelters are rarely helpful (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Renzetti, 1992). Lesbians report that they most often perceive shelter services "to be for heterosexual women only and lesbians experience overt and covert homophobia from staff and other residents" (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000, p. 6). Likewise, gay men (as well as het-

TABLE 1
Legal Protection for Same-Sex Domestic Violence

States Excluding Gays and Lesbians From Applying for Domestic Violence Protection Orders	*States With Statutes That May Compel Gays and Lesbians to Admit Illegal Sexual Behavior to Qualify for Protection Orders*	*States With Legislation Written With Gender-Neutral Language*	*States Allowing Gays and Lesbians to Be Equally Eligible for Protection Orders*
Arizona	Florida	Alabama	Hawaii
Delaware	Maryland	Alaska	Illinois
Louisiana	Mississippi	Arkansas	Kentucky
Montana		California	Ohio
New York		Colorado	
South Carolina		Connecticut	
Virginia		District of Columbia	
		Georgia	
		Idaho	
		Indiana	
		Iowa	
		Kansas	
		Maine	
		Massachusetts	
		Michigan	
		Minnesota	
		Missouri	
		Nebraska	
		Nevada	
		New Hampshire	
		New Jersey	
		New Mexico	
		North Carolina	
		North Dakota	
		Oklahoma	
		Oregon	
		Pennsylvania	
		Rhode Island	
		South Dakota	
		Tennessee	
		Texas	
		Utah	
		Vermont	
		Washington	
		West Virginia	
		Wisconsin	
		Wyoming	

SOURCE: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (1998).

erosexual men), do not usually have access to formal or informal protection from domestic abuse because females have traditionally been viewed as the sole victims (Burke, 1998; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Turell, 2000). Battered women's service providers rarely serve gay males who are victims of domestic abuse (Short, 1996). There are very few providers of service to battered gay men. In fact, nearly all of the few antiviolence service organizations for gays and lesbians concentrate almost entirely on victimization of hate crimes, which are very different from domestic violence (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000).

Homophobia also explains why gays and lesbians are not equally protected from domestic violence. "Homophobia is a fear of homosexuals" (Burke, 1998, p. 165). In the United States, historically, homophobia has been displayed by the criminal justice system in at least two ways. First, although the number is decreasing, some states have retained laws prohibiting homosexual sex (i.e., sodomy), which has the effect of stigmatizing the gay and lesbian population (Leslie, 2000). Second, police practices of the past sometimes demonstrated antigay bias, such as the celebrated riot at New York City's Stonewall Inn (Clendinen & Nagourney, 1999) and in the Philadelphia Police Department of the 1950s to 1970s (Bailey, 1999). However, legitimized homophobia is dissipating, as 34 states have either legislatively repealed or judicially invalidated their sodomy laws (Fradella, 2002 [this issue]; "Sodomy laws," 2001), and some police departments are actively recruiting from the gay and lesbian population (Blair, 1999). Vermont has gone so far as to sanction civil unions for same-sex couples (*Baker v. Vermont*, 2000). Homophobia in society at large (beyond government) also has an affect on same-sex domestic violence. Negative societal attitudes toward homosexuality may compound the already low domestic violence reporting rate, which is estimated to be 50% (Karmen, 2001). Aggressors in same-sex domestic violence often use the threat of "outing" the person that they are abusing (Lundy, 1993), meaning that they threaten to reveal the individual's sexual orientation to friends, family, coworkers, or others. In addition to physical violence, outing is used by the batterer to emotionally control the victim (Burke, 1998; Byrne, 1996). The threat of being outed is effective because victims fear being socially ostracized by their family, friends, work colleagues, and society in general (Burke, 1998). However, data collected by the Gallup Poll revealed that American society is expressing a greater tolerance for homosexuality (Newport, 2001). Therefore, as attitudes become more positive and tolerance increases, outing becomes less threatening.

In summary, the law, researchers, support groups, and society in general do not provide the same protections to gay and lesbian victims of domestic violence as they provide to heterosexual victims. This occurs despite evidence that indicates that domestic violence is at least as prevalent among same-sex

couples as it is among heterosexual couples. As a result, like the rest of society, "the gay and lesbian community ignores the violence" (Turell, 2000, p. 281), often "with deadly consequences" (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000, p. 2; also see Ridgeway, 1994).

Gay and Lesbian Issues in Venezuela

Inequality in domestic violence protection is not unique to the United States. Inequality for same-sex domestic partners is also found in Venezuela. The Venezuelan Penal Code of 1999 does not codify homosexuality as illegal. However, case law does exist that liberally permits codified law to be interpreted that homosexuality is illegal in Venezuela (Burke et al., 2001). President Hugo Chavez of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urged the National Constitutional Assembly of 1999 (NCA) to explicitly protect sexual orientation, similar to other minority groups. Unfortunately, sexual orientation was not included in the new National Constitution of The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999. Perhaps the NCA chose not to protect sexual orientation because most Venezuelans are Catholic and view homosexuality as a sin (Burke et al., 2001). Because homosexuality is negatively viewed, Venezuelan police often ignore gay and lesbian victims (Gabaldon, 1989).

"To date, Venezuelan scholars, the media and the legal system have ignored the social and legal plight of gays and lesbians" (Burke et al., 2001, p. 4). As indicated by the literature review in the previous section of this article, scholars and practitioners in the United States have also ignored the topic of same-sex domestic violence. The present study, however, begins to fill this void by presenting the results of a pilot study of same-sex domestic violence and attitudes toward the police and courts in both the United States and Venezuela.

HYPOTHESES

This research will address two broad hypotheses. First, it is predicted same-sex domestic violence is equally likely in the United States and Venezuela. Second, it is predicted that gays and lesbians in Venezuela (compared to the United States) are less likely to have confidence in law enforcement and the courts. Discussion of these hypotheses will include an elaboration on these general themes.

Previous research indicates that same-sex domestic violence is a major concern for the gay and lesbian community. It is anticipated that a majority of the respondents will have experienced some form of domestic violence (using the broad definition provided above). In addition, levels of domestic violence will be high for both Venezuela and the United States, leading to the

expectation of no significant differences between countries regarding amount of violence. It is expected that same-sex domestic violence will be more prevalent among younger male couples. Finally, given that tolerance of homosexuality is more pronounced in the United States than Venezuela, U.S. respondents will be more likely to have received information or know of resources dealing with same-sex domestic violence.

Venezuela appears to be markedly less open to homosexuality than the United States. Accordingly, it is likely that the gay and lesbian population in Venezuela, regardless of victimization, will express less confidence in the police and courts than U.S. respondents. Furthermore, respondents in the United States will less likely report that the police are biased compared to Venezuelan respondents.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was designed to collect data about the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence and the attitudes of gays and lesbians toward the police and courts. The survey consisted of 45 questions measuring the following: demographics (race, gender, age); frequencies of victimization (using the definition of domestic violence provided earlier); attitudes toward domestic violence (i.e., whether respondents perceive domestic violence as "real" crime); and perceived biases and confidence in police and courts. Items included both open and closed (Likert-type scale and yes-no responses) question formats. The survey instrument was translated from English to Spanish and checked for reliability by multiple bilingual reviewers.

Data Collection

Self-report survey data were collected in both the United States and Venezuela. In the United States, data were collected through snowball sampling, a process by which a respondent is asked "to identify others like him or her who might be willing to participate in a study" (Maxfield & Babbie, 1995, p. 208). A Web page was established to allow respondents to access, complete, and submit the survey anonymously. The Web page was not advertised. The initial respondents, all friends of the researchers and/or members of organizations to which the authors belong, were asked to forward the survey to others. In addition, some respondents may have randomly discovered the Web page on their own and responded to the survey.

TABLE 2
Sample Descriptive Statistics From Overall Sample

Variable	*U.S. Sample*	*Venezuelan Sample*	*Total Sample*
Sample size	*N* = 35	*N* = 39	*N* = 74
Race: Black	2	0	2
Race: Hispanic	2	12	0
Race: Native American	1	0	0
Race: White	28	9	37
Race: Other	2	12	14
Gender: Male	24	32	56
Gender: Female	11	2	13
Gender: Other	0	4	4
Age: Range	18 to 59	18 to 49	18 to 59
Age: Mean	34	27	30
Age: Median	31	25	28

In Venezuela, data were collected through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Maxfield and Babbie (1995) defined convenience sampling as "relying on available subjects" (p. 208) who are convenient to the researcher. Venezuelan survey respondents were initially approached at a nightclub frequented by gays and lesbians. A nightclub was selected to maximize response rate for a survey administration in one area. In addition, there is a lack of formal organizations through which the Venezuelan gay and lesbian population may be reached. Asking the initial respondents at the nightclub to complete the survey resulted in a snowball effect in which the initial respondents then informed their friends about the research. These friends, in turn, subsequently contacted the researchers to volunteer to complete the survey.

Sample Demographics

A total of 72 individuals responded to the survey (*N* = 72), 35 from the United States and 37 from Venezuela. Descriptive statistics for the overall sample, as well as the United States and Venezuelan subsamples, are presented in Table 2. The results indicate that the U.S. sample is older and more racially homogenous than the Venezuelan sample. The age differences between Venezuelan and U.S. respondents may be due to the youthful population that often frequents the nightclub selected for data collection. Differences may also be explained as a product of sampling strategies selected for each sample. In the United States, the snowball sample was initiated with a group of White males, older than the average Venezuelan respondents. It is

likely that the U.S. respondents then forwarded the survey to others within the same demographic group.

Limitations

First, the results of this research should be considered carefully in light of its nonrandom sampling. Only respondents willing to self-identify as gay or lesbian completed the survey used in this study. Random sampling of the gay and lesbian population is not possible (Turell, 2000) due to the fact that participants had to self-identify and report being gay or lesbian (Burke et al., 2001; Turell, 2000). Unlike other types of research in which random samples can be drawn (i.e., from an enumerated sampling frame), "there is no 'master list' of gay individuals" (Burke et al., 2001, p. 4). Accordingly, the nonrandom sample in this study may not speak to the experiences of all gays and lesbians.

Second, as Table 2 illustrates, the sample is disproportionately male. For this reason, it is difficult to draw accurate conclusions about the experiences of lesbians versus gay men. Third, the U.S. sample was primarily White and the Venezuelan sample was primarily Hispanic/Latino. As indicated in Table 2, a number of Venezuelan respondents listed their race as "Other." The survey instrument failed to list "Latino" as a response option for race, so many Venezuelan respondents selected "Other" to indicate their race. For this reason, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the experiences of lesbian and gay men of color.

In addition to sampling issues, cross-national research often requires modifications and replication studies to arrive at reliable and valid results (Jordan, 1996). Survey instruments often need to be adjusted to ensure that the data are comparable between two nations with different languages, cultures, religions, economies, and societies. Particular attention was devoted to the translation of the instrument to ensure that there were no conceptual and interpretative differences between the English and Spanish versions of the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics (including frequency, average, and range) will be presented for the sample. In addition, Table 3 indicates how the hypotheses will be tested by listing dependent and independent variables and statistical tests used for each analysis that will be reported in this article.

TABLE 3
Hypotheses and Statistical Tests Used for Each Analysis

Hypothesis	*Independent Variable*	*Dependent Variable*	*Statistical Test*
Hypothesis 1: Prevalence of domestic violence			
1a. There will be no significant differences between countries regarding prevalence of same-sex domestic violence.	Country	Eight forms of domestic violence	χ^2
1b. A majority of respondents in both countries will have experienced some form of domestic violence.	Country	Summation score from domestic violence scale	χ^2
1c. Respondents who experience one type of domestic violence will be likely to also experience other forms of domestic violence.	Eight forms of domestic violence	Eight forms of domestic violence	Pairwise correlation with Sidak method
1d. Regardless of country, young males will be more likely to be victims of same-sex domestic violence.	Country, age, gender	Summation score from domestic violence scale	Regression
1e. Respondents from the United States will more likely have received information about or know of resources regarding same-sex domestic violence.	Country	Estimated frequency of same-sex domestic violence, receipt of information, knowledge of resources	χ^2
Hypothesis 2: Attitudes toward law enforcement and courts			
2a. U.S. respondents will more positively view law enforcement than Venezuelan respondents.	Country	Trust of police, confidence in police, perception of police bias	χ^2
2b. U.S. respondents will more positively view the courts than Venezuelan respondents.	Country	Confidence in courts	χ^2
2c. Respondents who negatively view the courts will also negatively view law enforcement, and negative perceptions of law enforcement will be consistent across respondents.	Variables about courts and law enforcement	Variables about courts and law enforcement	Pairwise correlation with Sidak method

Hypothesis 1: Prevalence of Domestic Violence

In this study, "domestic violence" was operationalized using an eight-item questionnaire. Each item corresponds to an act of domestic violence. Respondents indicated how often they had experienced each item, choosing from "never" (coded 1), "1-2 times" (coded 2), "3-4 times" (coded 3), or "5 times or more" (coded 4). Table 4 presents the frequency with which each act was experienced. Using the Pearson chi-square technique, significant differences between countries are indicated.

Table 4 reveals that the two most common forms of domestic violence were verbal harassment and prohibiting social contacts (40.28%). The least common form was withholding medication or other necessary items (2.78%).

Although many respondents (71.43% United States, 67.57% Venezuela) reported that they had never been hit or physically assaulted, when assaults did occur, the frequency is significantly different between countries ($p < .03$). Approximately 27% of Venezuelan respondents reported being hit once or twice compared to nearly 6% of U.S. respondents. However, almost 23% of U.S. respondents reported being assaulted three times or more compared to approximately 5% of the Venezuelan sample. This finding could be related to age differences between countries. This proposition would require further comparative research between the two countries.

The frequency of same-sex domestic violence is more dramatically indicated when the number of respondents who experienced at least one form of domestic violence was considered. Under the coding method described above, a respondent who had experienced no incidents of domestic violence would receive a summation score of 8 for the scale. Conversely, a respondent who had experienced each form of domestic violence five times or more would receive a score of 40. When scores were tabulated for all respondents, the range was 8 to 26. Statistics reveal that 68.49% of the sample had experienced some form of domestic violence. This number is slightly higher for Venezuela than the United States (72.97% and 62.86%, respectively), but the difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.94$, $p < .06$, *ns*). As the above results indicate, many gays and lesbians experience a variety of forms of domestic violence. Table 5 shows the result of a pairwise correlation testing for statistical significance with the Sidak method of "adjusting significance levels to account for multiple comparisons" (L. Hamilton, 1998, p. 142), thereby increasing the reliability of *p* values. Each of the eight forms of domestic violence was correlated with the others and, as the correlation matrix reveals, the various forms of domestic violence frequently occur in tandem. For instance, respondents who reported being threatened were statis-

TABLE 4
Prevalence of Domestic Violence: U.S. Sample, Venezuelan Sample, Totals

Form of Domestic Violence	*Frequency*	*U.S. Sample*	*Venezuelan Sample*	*Total Sample*
Threatened with physical harm	Never	25	27	52
		(71.43)	(72.97)	(72.22)
χ^2 between country = 1.2553	1 to 2 times	5	6	11
$p < .968$, *ns*		(14.29)	(16.22)	(15.28)
	3 to 4 times	1	1	2
		(2.86)	(2.70)	(2.78)
	5-plus times	4	3	7
		(11.43)	(8.11)	(9.72)
Been hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically harmed	Never	25	25	50
		(71.43)	(67.57)	(69.44)
χ^2 between country = 8.9514	1 to 2 times	2	10	12
$p < .030$, significant		(5.71)	(27.03)	(16.67)
	3 to 4 times	3	1	4
		(8.57)	(2.70)	(5.56)
	5-plus times	5	1	6
		(14.29)	(2.70)	(8.33)
Been humiliated, degraded, insulted, or otherwise verbally harassed	Never	20	23	43
χ^2 between country = 1.3746		(57.14)	(62.16)	(59.72)
$p < .712$, *ns*	1 to 2 times	6	7	13
		(17.14)	(18.92)	(18.06)
	3 to 4 times	3	4	7
		(8.57)	(10.81)	(9.72)
	5-plus times	6	3	9
		(17.14)	(8.11)	(12.50)
Had medication or necessary items withheld	Never	35	35	70
		(100)	(94.59)	(97.22)
χ^2 between country = 1.9459	1 to 2 times	0	2	2
$p < .163$, *ns*		(.00)	(5.41)	(2.78)
Been prohibited from seeing family and friends	Never	24	19	43
		(68.57)	(51.35)	(59.72)
χ^2 between country = 4.6008	1 to 2 times	7	7	14
$p < .203$, *ns*		(20.00)	(18.92)	(19.44)
	3 to 4 times	1	6	7
		(2.86)	(16.22)	(9.72)
	5-plus times	3	5	8
		(8.57)	(13.51)	(11.11)

(continued)

TABLE 4 Continued

Form of Domestic Violence	*Frequency*	*U.S. Sample*	*Venezuelan Sample*	*Total Sample*
Threatened to have sexual orientation revealed	Never	30 (85.71)	32 (86.49)	62 (86.11)
χ^2 between country = .4855	1 to 2 times	4 (11.43)	3 (8.11)	7 (9.72)
$p < .784$, *ns*	3 to 4 times	0 (.00)	0 (.00)	0 (.00)
	5-plus times	1 (2.86)	2 (5.41)	3 (4.17)
Had property vandalized or destroyed	Never	27 (77.14)	29 (78.38)	56 (77.78)
χ^2 between country = 1.1596				
$p < .763$, *ns*	1 to 2 times	3 (8.57)	4 (10.81)	7 (9.72)
	3 to 4 times	1 (2.86)	2 (5.41)	3 (4.17)
	5-plus times	4 (11.43)	2 (5.41)	6 (8.33)
Been pressured into sexual activities	Never	26 (74.29)	32 (86.49)	58 (80.56)
χ^2 between country = 5.5694	1 to 2 times	3 (8.57)	3 (8.11)	6 (8.33)
$p < .234$, *ns*	3 to 4 times	3 (8.57)	1 (2.70)	4 (5.56)
	5-plus times	0 (.00)	1 (2.70)	1 (1.39)

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicate percentage of total sample.

tically likely to experience all other forms of domestic violence with the exception of having medication or other items withheld. This general pattern—showing that experiencing one form of domestic violence is a significant predictor of receiving other forms—holds true for all types, except withholding items (perhaps because so few respondents reported having items withheld in the first place).

It appears as though there are few significant differences in domestic violence victimization by country. Regression analysis was used to model the effect of country, gender, and age on same-sex domestic violence. Results of the regression are presented in Table 6. Diagnostic tests (also presented in Table 6) were completed to assess model reliability. A Pearson's correlation matrix was constructed to test for multicollinearity, but no independent vari-

TABLE 5
Correlations Between Forms of Same-Sex Domestic Violence

	Threat	*Hit*	*Verbal*	*Withld*	*Social*	*Out*	*Vandal*	*Pressex*
Threat	1.0000							
Hit	.7558***	1.0000						
	$p < .0000$							
Verbal	.5371***	.5283***	1.0000					
	$p < .0000$	$p < .0000$						
Withhld	.1801 *ns*	–.0062 *ns*	–.0402 *ns*	1.0000				
	$p < .9779$	$p < 1.0000$	$p < 1.0000$					
Social	.5685***	.4449**	.4186**	.2088 *ns*	1.0000			
	$p < .0000$	$p < .0022$	$p < .0064$	$p < .8913$				
Out	.4769***	.2630 *ns*	.4200**	.3326 *ns*	.2150 *ns*	1.0000		
	$p < .0006$	$p < .5015$	$p < .0060$	$p < .1071$	$p < .8600$			
Vandal	.6802***	.6044***	.6276***	.1966 *ns*	.5723***	.4440**	1.0000	
	$p < .0000$	$p < .0000$	$p < .0000$	$p < .9399$	$p < .0000$	$p < .0023$		
Pressex	.4489**	.4202**	.3233 *ns*	–.0715 *ns*	.3606*	.0753 *ns*	.2466 *ns*	1.0000
	$p < .0019$	$p < .0060$	$p < .1375$	$p < 1.0000$	$p < .0472$	$p < 1.0000$	$p < .6360$	

NOTE: This table reports pairwise correlations between the eight forms of domestic violence with significance tests using the Sidak method. Threat = been threatened with physical harm. Hit = been hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically harmed. Verbal = been humiliated, degraded, insulted, or verbally harassed. Withld = had medication or other necessary items withheld. Social = been prohibited from seeing family and friends. Out = been threatened with having sexual orientation revealed. Vandal = had property vandalized or destroyed. Pressex = been pressured into sexual activity.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

TABLE 6
Results of Regression Analysis

Source	SS	df	MS
Model	184.666284	3	61.5554161
Residual	1394.56905	64	21.7901413
Total	1579.23529	67	23.570676

Observations = 68
F (3, 64) = 2.82
Probability > F = .0456
R^2 = .1169
Adjusted R^2 = .0755
Root *MSE* = 4.668

Total	*Coefficient*	SE	t	p > t	*95% Confidence Interval*	
Country	.3981259	.646224	.616	.540	–.892855	1.689107
Gender	4.196428	1.559905	2.690	.009	1.080159	7.312697
Age	–.0292275	.0603891	–.484	.630	–.1498687	.0914137
Constant	–25.80711	55.71409	–.463	.645	–137.1088	85.49458

Testing for Multicollinearity: Correlation Matrix

	Country	*Gender*	*Age*
Country	1.0000		
Gender	.3751	1.0000	
Age	.3780	.2226	1.0000

NOTE: In this analysis, the dependent variable was the summated score of the eight-item domestic violence questionnaire. The independent variables were country (dummy variable, Venezuela = 1), gender (dummy variable, male = 1), and age. Ramsey RESET test for omitted variables: Null hypothesis = model has no omitted variables. F (3, 61) = .09, Probability > F =.9640 *ns*. Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity: Null hypothesis = constant variance. $\chi^2(1) = 10.30$, Probability > χ^2 = .0013.

ables were strongly related to each other. The Ramsey RESET test was used to determine whether "further polynomial terms would improve the model" (Hamilton, 1998, p. 168). The test does not allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis, stating that there are no omitted variables ($p < .9640$). To this point, the model appears to be well specified. The Cook-Weisberg test did suggest a heteroscedastic model ($p < .0013$), but given the other strengths of the model, the researchers have chosen to follow Mankiw's (1990) assertion that "heteroscedasticity has never been a reason to throw out an otherwise good model" (p. 1648). Of the three independent variables, only gender was statistically significant ($p < .009$; adjusted $R^2 = .0755$). Males were more likely to be victimized by same-sex domestic violence. This is consistent

with Stalans and Lurigio (1995): "The family violence perspective (which originated from the social learning theory) reveals that men learn from childhood experiences, the media, and social norms that violence is an acceptable means to resolve disputes" (Burke, 1998, p. 169).

Given the earlier results addressing the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence, it is not surprising that country was an insignificant predictor. It is apparent that domestic violence is not constrained by national borders. However, it is surprising that age was found to be insignificant. It would be reasonable to expect that older respondents had experienced more acts of domestic violence simply as a result of broader life experiences. In other words, older respondents would be expected to have had more opportunities for victimization than younger respondents with less relationship experience. However, it is also possible that the older the respondent, the less likely he or she would be to turn to violence to solve problems, ostensibly due to maturity.

The fact that age proved insignificant is troubling, for it could mean that same-sex domestic violence is equally likely among younger and older partners. That is, that domestic violence could occur across the lifespan. This is consistent with Island and Letellier's (1991) assertion that "violence among abusers is progressive, therefore becoming more intense and frequent" (cited in Burke, 1998, p. 168). However, the insignificance of age could also be an artifact of question design. The survey instrument measured only the total number of victimizations, without a specified time period and without any follow-up questions relating to occurrence. This confounds the results because it is impossible to determine when the violence actually occurred. Whether it occurred progressively, increasing in incidents over the lifespan, or whether it occurred primarily in youthful encounters (as in the case of one respondent, who wrote, "This abuse occurred . . . when I was 20 and just coming out") cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Clarifying this issue will remain as a goal for future research.

It is hypothesized that, as a function of the level of societal tolerance toward homosexuality in general, U.S. respondents would be more likely to receive information about or know of resources dealing with same-sex domestic violence. To gauge the understanding of same-sex domestic violence, respondents were asked to judge whether it occurred more or less frequently than heterosexual domestic violence. As discussed in the literature review, the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence is comparable to heterosexual domestic violence. Results were assessed using the Pearson chi-square test. The test indicated statistically significant results ($\chi^2 = 10.75$, $p < .03$) between countries. Venezuelan respondents more often thought that same-sex domestic violence was more common than heterosexual domestic violence. Conversely, more than half of the U.S. respondents (correctly) replied that same-sex and heterosexual domestic violence were equally prev-

alent, although a substantial number (approximately 37%) replied that same-sex domestic violence was less likely.

These findings could be explained by cultural differences in the interpretation of domestic violence, generally. In the United States, domestic violence has been a highly publicized topic of discussion on which much media and scholarly attention has been focused. However, it has often been portrayed as a heterosexual issue. It is therefore not surprising that U.S. respondents are aware of domestic violence generally, and perhaps may be likely to perceive it as a problem of "wife beating" within the straight community. This is illustrated by one respondent's comment: "I feel that I am pretty well-informed about domestic violence in general and I am certainly aware that it occurs in same-sex situations, though I must admit that I don't know how common it is."

In Venezuela, this result could be explained by the nature of the gay and lesbian community. As will be demonstrated below, Venezuelans do not view law enforcement favorably. This means that, when an act of same-sex domestic violence does occur in Venezuela, it is not likely to be reported to law enforcement. Perhaps the gay and lesbian community is forced to turn inward, rather than seeking assistance from government agencies, when faced with difficulties such as domestic violence. This isolation could lead members of the gay and lesbian community to assume that same-sex domestic violence is a prevalent and pervasive problem.

The issue of awareness is further illuminated by responses to the question "Have you ever received information about same-sex domestic violence?" Chi-square results indicate no significant difference between countries in the answer to this question ($\chi^2 = .00$, $p < .995$ *ns*). Although more than one third of the respondents in both the United States and Venezuela received information concerning same-sex domestic violence (34.29% and 34.21%, respectively), the majority reported not receiving such information. One Venezuelan respondent indicated that an organization, "la sociedad 'Wills Wilde' " was the primary source of information pertaining to same-sex domestic violence. However, U.S. respondents indicated a variety of sources from which they had received information, including research for a "senior project in college," newspaper articles, television, and even from "[a] friend who had been a victim."

Differences between countries were noted when respondents were asked if they were aware of community resources that were available to help victims of same-sex domestic violence. Venezuelans were significantly less likely ($\chi^2 = 10.33$, $p < .001$) to report knowledge of such resources. The only Venezuelan respondent who provided further details again identified "la sociedad 'Wills Wilde' " as a resource. However, U.S. respondents provided comments to suggest that the biases held by service providers (described in the literature review) may be dissipating. One respondent commented, "I know of

two centers for help with domestic violence in my area and neither discriminates as to heterosexual vs. homosexual partners." Another wrote, "there's a woman's center at a local college that offers workshops on the topic, also a men's resource center, and plenty of gay-friendly therapists around (I live in a good area in that respect)." This comment suggests the possibility that the "gay ghetto" in the United States, where gay residents and businesses are concentrated (Levine, 1979; Murray, 1979), may be more likely to contain resources for same-sex domestic violence. Although gay ghetto resources may advantage those individuals who live in such areas, there are considerable numbers of gays and lesbians who live outside of these communities.

It is apparent that same-sex domestic violence is a prevalent problem. It is also clear that work remains to be done in fostering awareness and creating resources to serve both victims and batterers, particularly in Venezuela.

Hypothesis 2: Attitudes Toward Police and Courts

As the literature review suggests, homosexuality in general is more expressly tolerated in the United States than Venezuela. This leads to the prediction that respondents from the United States will be more likely to view the police and courts favorably than respondents from Venezuela. A series of chi-square analyses were conducted on attitudinal questions to test this hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 7.

Respondents were asked three questions about law enforcement. Results were consistent across the three questions. First, respondents were asked whether distrust of law enforcement would prevent them from reporting an incident of same-sex domestic violence to the police (Table 7, part 7a). Venezuelans were statistically more likely ($p < .005$) to indicate that distrust would prevent them from reporting an incident. However, U.S. respondents were not overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the police. Roughly equal proportions of Venezuelan and U.S. respondents indicated that distrust of law enforcement would not prevent them from reporting an incident (29.73% and 28.57%, respectively). U.S. respondents were most likely to respond to this question with "maybe." Although Venezuelans overwhelmingly expressed a distrust of law enforcement, U.S. respondents were hesitant to express strong feelings of trust that the police would properly respond to their situation.

When given the statement "I have confidence in my local police department," U.S. respondents were significantly more likely to agree ($p < .000$) than Venezuelan respondents (Table 7, part 7b). No Venezuelan respondents provided comments about their experiences with law enforcement, but one U.S. respondent did: "The police were great, it's just that they didn't press me for answers and thus didn't know the whole story . . . so they weren't as helpful as they could have been." This is simultaneously a positive and negative

TABLE 7
Attitudes Toward Law Enforcement and Courts

Reply	*United States*	*Venezuela*	*Total*
7a. Would distrust of law enforcement prevent you from reporting an instance of same-sex domestic violence?			
Yes	9 (25.71)	21 (56.76)	30 (41.67)
No	10 (28.57)	11 (29.73)	21 (29.17)
Maybe	16 (45.71)	5 (13.51)	21 (29.17)
Pearson $\chi^2 = 10.5621$, $p < .005$			
7b. I have confidence in my local police department.			
Strongly agree	2 (5.71)	2 (5.41)	4 (5.56)
Moderately agree	15 (42.86)	2 (5.41)	17 (23.61)
Neither agree nor disagree	10 (28.57)	2 (5.41)	12 (16.67)
Moderately disagree	4 (11.43)	4 (10.81)	8 (11.11)
Strongly disagree	4 (11.43)	27 (72.97)	31 (43.06)
Pearson $\chi^2 = 32.3084$, $p < .000$			
7c. My local police department is biased against homosexuality.			
Strongly agree	2 (5.71)	22 (59.46)	24 (33.33)
Moderately agree	7 (20.00)	3 (8.11)	10 (13.89)
Neither agree nor disagree	16 (45.71)	5 (13.51)	21 (29.17)
Moderately disagree	9 (25.71)	2 (5.41)	11 (15.28)
Strongly disagree	1 (2.86)	5 (13.51)	6 (8.33)
Pearson $\chi^2 = 31.1182$, $p < .000$			
7d. Would lack of confidence in the courts prevent you from reporting an instance of same-sex domestic violence?			
Yes	14 (40.00)	22 (61.11)	36 (50.70)
No	11 (31.43)	7 (19.44)	18 (25.35)
Maybe	10 (28.57)	7 (19.44)	17 (23.94)
Pearson $\chi^2 = 3.1826$, $p < .204$ *ns*			

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicate percentage of total sample.

comment. Although the respondent was obviously not unhappy with the police response, there was more the police could have done. It is essential for law enforcement be trained to, first, recognize that same-sex incidents of assault can be domestic violence (which in some jurisdictions could necessitate a change in the legal definition of partner abuse), and second, approach same-sex domestic violence with the same investigative tools that are used in disputes between heterosexual couples.

When given the statement "My local police department is biased against homosexuality," Venezuelans were significantly more likely ($p < .000$) to agree than U.S. respondents (Table 7, part 7c). Again, however, the plurality of U.S. respondents did not disagree with the statement, but rather selected "neither agree nor disagree." These three questions indicate that U.S. respondents are more likely than Venezuelan respondents to express support for the police. However, this finding must be tempered by the sample's disproportionate inclusion of White males. It is possible that gay and lesbian respondents of color would differ in their perceptions of their treatment by law enforcement, owing not only to sexual orientation but also to historically poor relationships between police and minorities, generally.

There were no statistically significant differences ($p < .204$ *ns*) between countries regarding perceptions of the courts (Table 7, part 7d). Respondents were asked whether a lack of confidence in the courts would prevent them from reporting an incident of same-sex domestic violence. Although the differences were not significant, the patterns do provide support for the hypothesis. Overall, approximately 50% of respondents indicated that distrust of the courts would prevent them from reporting an incident. However, this proportion was larger for Venezuelans than for U.S. respondents (61.11% and 40.00%, respectively).

A pairwise correlation, tested for significance with results controlled using the Sidak method, is presented in Table 8. This table indicates a very strong ($p < .0005$) relationship between expressing distrust in police and a lack of confidence in courts as reasons for not reporting same-sex domestic violence. Relationships also exist between distrust of police as a reason for nonreporting and lack of confidence in police ($p < .0162$) and between lack of confidence in police and perceptions of police bias ($p < .0008$). This provides evidence for consistency of opinion between respondents. Those who view the police and courts negatively do so across a variety of measures, lending reliability to the findings.

The results of these attitudinal questions answered by the gay and lesbian population provides evidence that agencies of justice are accorded much less legitimacy in Venezuela than in the United States. However, the lack of support in the United States highlights the continuing need for the criminal jus-

TABLE 8
Correlations Between Attitudes Toward Police and Courts

	Distrust	*Courts*	*Confpd*	*Biaspd*
Distrust	1.0000			
Courts	.4467***	1.0000		
	$p < .0005$			
Confpd	–.3460*	–.2982 *ns*	1.0000	
	$p < .0162$	$p < .0639$		
Biaspd	.2856 *ns*	.0810 *ns*	–.4310***	1.0000
	$p < .0828$	$p < .9841$	$p < .0008$	

NOTE: Negative relationships are in the predicted direction. This table reports pairwise correlations between the four attitudinal questions about law enforcement and the courts with significance tests using the Sidak method. Distrust = would not report due to lack of trust in law enforcement. Courts = would not report due to a lack of confidence in the courts. Confpd = confidence in local police department. Biaspd = local police department biased against homosexuality.
*$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.

tice system to be cognizant of and address concerns from the gay and lesbian community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analyses presented support the hypotheses that same-sex domestic violence is prevalent in cross-cultural contexts and that the Venezuelan gay and lesbian population is less likely to favorably view law enforcement than U.S. respondents. These findings carry four significant practical implications.

First, same-sex domestic violence is a serious problem that merits further attention from both scholars and practitioners. Although a minority of respondents report actually being hit, a majority report being victimized by some sort of domestic violence. The prevalence of domestic violence in the heterosexual population has been well researched, and it is essential for researchers, police officers, service providers, and members of the gay and lesbian community to be cognizant of this social problem as it exists among same-sex couples.

Second, all forms of domestic violence must be taken seriously, from verbal humiliation to physical battery. Some readers may be tempted to rank order the eight types of domestic violence addressed in the survey as "really bad" versus "not so bad." However, although experiencing nonviolent abuse, such as verbal humiliation, may not result in the physical injury that battery causes, both are still unhealthy and dangerous aspects of relationships. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that experiencing one form of violence is

predictive of experiencing others. This is a lesson that police officers who respond to domestic disputes must heed, as well as counselors and service providers who work with the victims—and offenders—in same-sex domestic violence cases.

Third, it is important for more information about the seemingly prevalent problem of same-sex domestic violence to be disseminated to the gay and lesbian population. Although approximately two thirds of the sample reported abuse, a minority had received information about same-sex domestic violence. The number who knew of resources was also a minority, particularly in Venezuela. These findings lead to the conclusion that gay and lesbian organizations must do more to disseminate information about this problem and lobby for the establishment of programs to meet the needs of victims and offenders alike. This is particularly true in Venezuela, but efforts there are more likely to be constrained by negative public opinion.

Finally, it appears as though Venezuelan law enforcement has little legitimacy in the eyes of Venezuelan gays and lesbians. Although the situation in the United States is promising, gays and lesbians remain skeptical of law enforcement. This presents challenges to law enforcement to erase barriers and prejudices between police agencies and the gay and lesbian community. This can be accomplished by a variety of means, including sensitivity training, academy and inservice training pertaining to same-sex domestic violence, establishing liaison officers to gay community groups, and actively recruiting from gay and lesbian populations.

In conclusion, this research has established that same-sex domestic violence is a serious cross-national issue that society must address. There are numerous avenues for future research that must be pursued to create a greater understanding of this issue, as well as to generate meaningful policy dialogue. Cross-national research should continue across a variety of nations. Researchers should continue to gather data through a variety of techniques in hopes of triangulating (Cook, 1985) on the true dimensions of the problem. Research about the gay and lesbian population will always be constrained by nonprobability sampling, but there is clearly the need for large-scale national and international studies further exploring the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence and exploring the proper responses to it. In a diverse society, it is essential that the needs of the gay and lesbian population not be ignored. Ultimately, however, to further the social and legal needs of the gay and lesbian population, gays and lesbians will need to become more effective policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 1995). The gay and lesbian population will need to form social and policy networks (Smith, 1993) to create a political spectacle that defines gay and lesbian domestic violence as a problem (Edelman, 1988) that merits placement on local, state, and national political and legislative agendas. Once on political and legislative agendas, proper

issue structuring can result in a punctuation in public and legal policy (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) that protects gays and lesbians from the ravages of domestic violence.

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Tod W. Burke is an associate professor and graduate coordinator for the Department of Criminal Justice at Radford University, Radford, VA. He has published numerous articles in academic and professional journals and texts. His research interests include same-sex domestic violence, critical incident stress, criminal profiling, occupational violence, and issues relating to criminal investigation and forensic science. He is a former Maryland police officer.

Michael L. Jordan is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Lamar University in Texas. His Ph.D. and M.A. are in political science, he holds a M.P.A., and his B.A. is in criminal justice. His primary research and teaching focus is just about any topic involving international study. He is dedicated to helping his students to become globally aware and to assist as many scholars as possible to pursue international research agendas. To this end, he invites all scholars interested in cross-national research and teaching on virtually any topic to seek his advice, experience, and collaboration.

Stephen S. Owen holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Missouri–St. Louis and is a faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice at Radford University. His research interests include criminal justice policy, domestic violence, hate crime, institutional corrections, and community and crime. His current research focuses on gay and lesbian domestic violence, stress among correctional supervisors, and violence against college faculty.