Sara Rose Byczek

EDUCATION

2012. Ph.D., Counseling Psychology (APA-Accredited).
Indiana State University (Terre Haute, IN).
2007. M.S., Clinical Counseling Psychology.
Illinois State University (Bloomington, IL).
2005. B.A., Psychology.
University of Michigan-Dearborn (Dearborn, MI).

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

2011-Current. Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI)
College Counseling Center Therapist
2010-2011. Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI)
Pre-doctoral APA Accredited Internship
2008-2010. St. Mary of the Woods Counseling Center (Terre Haute, IN).
Practicum
2007-2010. Family Service Association (Terre Haute, IN).
Practicum.
2007-2010. Regional Hospital (Terre Haute, IN).
Therapist.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2009-Current. Indiana State University (Terre Haute, IN).
Adjunct Faculty.
2008-2010. Ivy Tech Community College (Terre Haute, IN).
Adjunct Faculty.
2008-2010. Indiana State University (Terre Haute, IN).
Graduate Teaching Assistant.

AWARDS

2010. Merle M. Ohlsen Scholarship, Indiana State University.
2007-2010. Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships, Indiana State University.
2007-2010. Graduate Student Research Award, Indiana State University

WOMEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE: AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Communication Disorders and Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Sara Byczek

December 2012

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Keywords: domestic violence, women offenders, domestic violence measure, women arrested for partner violence

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chair: Christine MacDonald, Ph.D.

Professor of Educational and School Psychology

Indiana State University

Committee Member: Debra Leggett, Ph.D.

Associate Program Chair and Associate Professor of Counselor Education

Argosy University

Committee Member: Jennifer Schriver, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Psychology

Indiana State University

ABSTRACT

Women's use of violence within intimate relationships is an important area of which both researchers and clinicians can benefit from gaining a better understanding. In the current literature on women's use of violence, two main perspectives dominate, including the family violence perspective and the feminist perspective. The main goal of the present study was to gain a better understanding of women's use of violence. Specifically, qualitative methodology was utilized to explore the possibility that typologies may exist within women's use of violence that may help to explain the discrepant findings within the literature. Twelve women completed an online questionnaire that included interview-style questions developed utilizing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, the Conflict Tactics Scale-2, and a measure created by the main researcher called the Contextual Relationship Measure. Key findings included (a) development of four typologies, (b) identification of characteristics associated with women who have used violence in their relationship, and (c) development of a grounded theory on women's use of violence. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed, including (a) issues related to the methodology utilized, (b) issues related to the population being studied, and (c) suggestions on how to build from the current findings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank first and foremost my family; without their continued support and encouragement none of this would be possible. I would like to especially thank my mother whose words of love have always helped me through the most difficult times. Can you believe we actually made it through? I would also like to thank Dr. Debra Leggett. Your guidance, advice, and support have always been way above and beyond anything I could have ever asked for in a mentor. I would also like to extend special thanks to my other committee members, Dr. Christine MacDonald and Dr. Jennifer Schriver, for their support, time, and investment in this process.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a tragedy disrupting American life at both the personal and societal levels. In the United States, more than one million cases of domestic violence are reported to law enforcement each year (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2009). This is most likely a small proportion of the actual rates of this highly underreported crime (United States Department of Justice, 2005). In the state of Michigan alone, there were 100 domestic violence-related deaths in 2007 (Michigan Department of State Police, 2009). It is clear that negative consequences are associated with being a victim of domestic violence. Researchers have revealed that female victims of domestic violence experience increased levels of depression, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of psychological distress (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992). They visit physicians twice as often as patients without a history of abuse and commonly experience chronic pain (Khan, Welch, & Zillmer, 1993). The cost of domestic violence affects everyone, even those who are not targeted individually. Medical care, mental health services, and time away from work due to domestic violence are estimated to have cost over 8.3 billion dollars in 2003 alone (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2009).

It is impossible to know the actual number of individuals who are abused in a relationship, in part due to the lack of reporting of domestic disputes. There are estimates that one in four women will experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime (Tjaden &

Thoennes, 2000). The number of male victims is even more difficult to state. Men may be inhibited from reporting abuse either by other men or women due to the expectations of cultural gender roles of masculinity (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Men are often encouraged to be strong and dominant individuals, which is in conflict with the stereotype of being a victim of domestic violence. In Michigan, 73,545 women and 27,751 men were identified as victims of domestic violence by arresting officers in 2007 (Michigan Department of State Police, 2009).

In the last 25 years, domestic violence activists have heightened the awareness of the general public about the consequences and severity of domestic violence against women; however, a serious debate has evolved between feminist and family violence researchers about the use of violence by women (Kimmel, 2002a). Family violence researchers have suggested that domestic violence rates are equal among men and women and argue that the feminist claim that domestic violence is a male-gendered crime is incorrect (Straus, 2005, 2006). Straus (2006) found that more than 200 published studies have made the argument of gender symmetry in use of violence. Feminist researchers respond to this claim by arguing that the findings of these studies are inaccurate and miss the bigger picture due to the methodologies implemented (Kimmel, 2002a). Specifically, feminist researchers posit that utilizing quantitative methodologies and measurement tools do not provide the context for women's use of violence that is needed to fully understand this behavior. Women's perpetration of domestic violence is an area of research in which many questions are debated. The main arguments focus on issues regarding the definition of domestic violence, how domestic violence is measured, and the effects of pro-arrest/mandated arrest laws. The purpose of the current study was to gain a better understanding of women's use of violence. The goal was to extend previous research by including qualitative interview data that focused on the unique factors associated with women's use of violence.

Definition Disagreement

An issue that highlights the disagreements within the literature on domestic violence is the definition of what constitutes domestic violence. Differing views of what domestic violence is impact research findings because researchers may be measuring different constructs. Terms such as *intimate partner violence*, *domestic violence*, *battery*, and *abuse* are used interchangeably, without recognition of what these terms may mean for the reader or what the researcher is measuring. Clear definitions of the variables being examined may assist in clarifying the differences researchers are finding in rates of women's use of violence. It may be that discrepant findings are due to the fact that qualitatively different behaviors are being measured.

M. P. Johnson (2005) highlighted this issue in a critique of articles in which authors did not clearly define what domestic abuse meant to them. He provided his own definition of Intimate Terrorism that is similar to what feminist scholars define as *battery*: a "pattern of abusive acts motivated by a desire for control over a partner" (p. 1127). M. P. Johnson also differentiated intimate terrorism from situational couple violence, which is characterized by a need to control a specific situation. He made the case that it is not ethically or scientifically appropriate to speak or write of domestic violence without "specifically, loudly and clearly defining the type of violence to which we refer" (M. P. Johnson, 2005, p. 1128). M. P. Johnson (2006) argued that without clear definitions, researchers may be comparing domestic violence findings that are really measuring two or more different constructs.

Other definitions of domestic violence in the literature are very general. For instance, Geffner and Pagelow (1990) described domestic violence as a pattern of victimization in a relationship in which one individual is the aggressor and the other is the victim. This definition could include a wide variety of actions, including but not limited to physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial, or social abuse. This definition also does not stipulate what the relationship between the aggressor and victim must be to constitute domestic violence. By leaving this open, violence between extended family members, friends, or even roommates could be considered acts of domestic violence. Not distinguishing between the types of domestic violence or the relationship between the aggressor and the victim could create a very different picture of prevalence rates.

Other debates on the definition of domestic violence have focused on whether the definition should be based on the act itself, the objective or subjective impact and consequences of the act, the intention of the abuser, or a combination of these factors (Rosenfeld, 1992). This is an important notion to consider in light of the findings that men’s and women’s rates of aggression were similar, but women received significantly more severe injuries than men as a result of these aggressive acts in domestic violence situations (Henning & Feder, 2004). Furthermore, violence perpetrated as a means to control a partner was qualitatively different from violence perpetrated to defend oneself or one’s children.

Some researchers have added coercive control, intimidation, and oppression to their definitions of battering. These researchers highlighted the fact that even though perpetrators often use physical violence to create a system of dominance, they may not always rely on actual physical abuse to achieve this control (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 1996). Through this definition, the argument is clarified that domestic violence should not be thought of as an incident-based crime but as a pattern of behavior in which context is very important. According to this definition, domestic violence is not solely about physical or sexual abuse of another person but is part of a systematic attempt to control and dominate one's intimate partner.

Although no consensus has been reached within the literature about what constitutes domestic violence (Feldman & Ridley, 1995), it is important for researchers to clearly articulate what they are measuring to ensure a more accurate understanding of all uses of violence. Clear definitions of the types of behavior and the participants can assist researchers in understanding how women's use of violence is similar to or different from men's. Disparate definitions of domestic violence may be one of the reasons why different rates of women's use of violence are found within the literature. In the current project, domestic violence was defined as a pattern of coercive and controlling behavior used by an individual to gain power and control over another within a romantic relationship. This pattern of behavior could include physical abuse, verbal and emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, and the use of isolation. This definition recognizes that behavior does not happen in a vacuum; both the context and history of the relationship must be examined because domestic violence is rarely a one-time incident. Definitions such as the one described above share characteristics with feminist researchers' views of domestic violence (Kimmel, 2002a).

Measurements

Most researchers coming from the family violence perspective have utilized the Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS-2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) as the measurement of choice for obtaining statistics on domestic violence (Straka & Montminy, 2008). The CTS-2 was created to measure various behaviors that individuals may use to solve conflicts in relationships. Some of these behaviors could be considered abusive, but some could be considered healthy attempts at reducing relationship conflicts (Straus, 1979). The basic premise is that conflicts within relationships are natural but that some ways of resolving conflict can be unhealthy and abusive. The scale can be used to measure the use of abusive behaviors by both partners. Within the scale there are five subscales, including Use of Negotiation Tactics, Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Injury, and Sexual Coercion (Straus et al., 1996). It is the most utilized measure in research on domestic violence and has sound psychometric properties (Straus, 2004, 2005; Vega & O'Leary, 2007).

Nevertheless, this measure has been criticized for its inability to examine the context of, meaning of, and motivation for violent behaviors (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007). Feminist researchers have stated that the scale takes violent behaviors out of the context in which they occur and compares qualitatively different behaviors regardless of the reason or motivation for the violence or force used; for example, a self-defensive push may be in the same category as an aggressive, restraining push (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). DeKeseredy (2006) argued that family violence researchers who defend the ability of the CTS-2 to uncover the true picture of women's use of violence ignore the difference between offensive and defensive types of violence.

Straus (2006) responded to the critiques of the measure by pointing out that the CTS-2 was not created to examine the motivation, meaning, or context of violence and does not claim to do so. He stated that many researchers support the use of the CTS-2 as an optimal measure of the use of violent behaviors in a relationship. Straus argued that an individual who is interested in knowing the causes of these behaviors should use other measures in conjunction with the CTS-2, stating,

> This criticism is analogous to criticizing a test of reading ability for not identifying the reasons a child reads poorly and for not measuring the harmful effects of reading

> difficulty. These are vital issues, but they must be investigated by using separate measures of those variables along with the reading test. Similarly, the CTS is intended to be used with measures of whatever cause, context, and consequence variables are relevant for the study or the clinical situation, such as measures of the balance of power and feelings of fear and intimidation. (p. 1096)

Thus, Straus (2006) did not deny the importance of measuring other variables when researching domestic violence but did admit the CTS-2 is not designed to address these concerns.

Arrest Issues

Another area where disagreement has been found between feminist and family violence researchers is about the increase in women's arrest rates for domestic violence. Statistics on arrest rates related to domestic violence show that 5-10% of domestic violence-related prosecutions involve a female offender (Hooper, 1996), but these statistics vary greatly depending on the arrest policies (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting [RADAR], 2008). With mandatory arrest laws, all participants in domestic violence, regardless of the pattern of violence actually enacted by each individual, can be arrested (Miller, 2001). Miller (2001) argued that the increase in women being arrested for violence against their partners is an unforeseen consequence of these pro-arrest/mandated arrest policies. For example, after mandatory arrest policies were enacted in the state of California, the number of men arrested for domestic violence increased by 37%, but the number of women arrested more than quadrupled (RADAR, 2008).

Some researchers have claimed that women who are arrested and court mandated for domestic violence treatment are often the primary victims within a relationship (Miller, 2001). It is not uncommon for women "perpetrators" to share stories of victimization and of the use of the criminal justice system as a means for their partners to re-victimize them (e.g., the primary abuser calls the police and claims that defensive wounds are offensive in order to have his or her partner arrested). One quote from qualitative interviews by Seamans, Rubin, and Stabb (2007) illustrated this concept:

> For the longest time, he would more or less hit me. And I just let him do it. . . . I just finally got fed up with it, and I'd bite him, or I'd try to kick him, just to get away. . . . How would I get a charge for assault when everything I did was out of self-defense? (p. 53)

Not only can mandated arrest laws be used as a way for the abuser to control and re-victimize the woman, but they can also decrease the likelihood of the police being called at all (Seamans et al., 2007). Women who are arrested in this context become less trusting of the criminal justice system, feel betrayed by their treatment, and are confused about the label of batterer attached to them (Miller, 2001).

Others have argued that pro-arrest/mandated arrest laws have shown the true use of women's violence against their partners and that fear of not being believed or of being perceived as not conforming to gender roles had previously hindered men from reporting this crime (RADAR, 2008). Researchers who have focused on these "hidden victims" posit that pro-arrest laws have helped to emphasize the mutual nature of domestic violence (Gelles, 1999). These disagreements highlight the need to find out how these women view being arrested for domestic violence and what effect it may have on their self-concept.

Current Study

One solution proposed for the ongoing debate between feminist researchers and family violence researchers is to accept that both camps are correct in regard to women's use of violence but that they are measuring different constructs. M. P. Johnson (1995) has been a prominent advocate for this idea and proposed a typology of the use of violence. M. P. Johnson discussed two qualitatively different types of domestic violence that could be used to explain the different rates found for women's use of violence and labeled these constructs intimate terrorism and situational couple violence. The term intimate terrorism has been used to describe the findings of feminist researchers who tend to sample women from clinical and shelter samples in which women are primarily the victims of domestic violence and men the perpetrators. On the other hand, situational couple violence has been used to explain the asymmetrical gender findings of family violence researchers who typically sample from the general population. It may be that women's use of violence is better understood as situational couple violence or a third typology described by M. P. Johnson as violent resistance which is defined as violence used in a defensive manner.

Typologies, such as M. P. Johnson's (1995), may be an explanation for the disparate findings in the field of domestic violence study. However, these typologies have been developed using information gathered from the CTS-2, which was not designed to investigate the context of violence. A more holistic approach is needed to better understand the complex dynamics of women's use of violence. One such approach is Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological model, which examines constructs from multiple systemic levels of influence including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Applying parts of this model would allow for an examination of not only the individual's current experience of abuse and violence but also the individual's past history of violence and abuse, along with other contextual factors. The use of this model may provide a more holistic framework to understand women’s use of violence because it recognizes the interplay between the personal experiences of an individual as well as the impact of culture and society.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The increase in the number of women arrested for domestic violence against their intimate partners has spawned a heated debate regarding women's use of violence (Minaker & Snider, 2006). Are gender roles changing due to the increased rights of women, causing them to act out more violently? Are these increased arrest rates due to the enforcement of pro-arrest/mandated arrest policies? Do women use violence in the same way as men within intimate relationships? These are just a few of the many questions that are posed by researchers who are attempting to understand this trend (Kimmel, 2002a). Some answers have emerged regarding the effects of pro-arrest/mandated arrest policies, the similarities and differences among women arrested for domestic violence, and conflicting theoretical perspectives and typologies.

To explore gender differences in the use of violence, researchers have compared personality characteristics and histories of men and women arrested for domestic violence. There seems to be little consensus on whether such differences exist. Schroffel (2004) compared women arrested for domestic violence who attended a 52-week mandated group domestic violence program to men in a similar program. The researcher observed three main differences between the groups in terms of their behavior. Women tended to self-disclose early and often, but men rarely talked about themselves and instead focused on negative aspects of the female partner. Women tended not to self-identify as either the victim or perpetrator of abuse, but men tended to identify as the victim. Related to this was the finding that women devalued themselves, but men often devalued their partners. Taken together, a very different picture of men and women arrested for domestic violence is created. Women tended to devalue themselves, unsure if they were the victim of abuse because they were in a class for perpetrators, whereas the men tended to blame their victims for their acts of violence and take little responsibility for their behavior.

Other researchers who have compared women and men arrested for domestic violence have found similar gender differences (Busch & Rosenberg, 2004; Henning & Feder, 2004; Kernsmith, 2005). For example, women were less likely to have a history of domestic violence offenses and nonviolent crimes than were men, and women tended to report being injured or victimized by their partners at the time of the arrest (Busch & Rosenberg, 2004). The context of the use of violence also appeared to differ by gender (Kernsmith, 2005). Women were more likely to report feeling scared, powerless, and weak and had more emotional justifications for their violence, including threats to their personal liberty. Women tended to use violence more often when they felt disrespected or controlled by their partners. Men reported using violence most often when they felt their partners were nagging them too much, stating that their partners deserved the abuse because their familial authority was questioned (Kernsmith, 2005).

Another gender difference is the way violence against an intimate partner is discussed (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002). Men often mentioned feeling disrespected when they felt their partners were not listening to what they said. The lack of adherence to traditional gender roles was used as a justification for abuse. This discussion of gender role expectations was not heard from women. This interplay between the genders can create a volatile atmosphere in which men act as if they have the right to control their partners, but women are pushing for respect and freedom. Henning and Feder (2004) reported that rates of aggression are similar for men and women, yet women received significantly more severe injuries. In light of this finding, these differences become very important to understand in creating appropriate programs for women arrested for domestic violence. To place all women in the same group may not recognize the different reasons women use violence and the complexity of this issue.

Pro-Arrest/Mandatory Arrest Policies

There has been a nationwide movement toward mandatory arrest policies. These policies partly resulted from the 1970s women's movement, which recognized the lack of police response to domestic violence issues (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). As of 2011, 31 states and the District of Columbia have criminal laws that either are pro-arrest or mandate arrest in the case of domestic violence or violation of a restraining order (American Bar Association, 2011; RADAR, 2008). States that do not have such laws include Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia. The state in which the present research was conducted has a pro-arrest policy towards domestic violence.

Prior to the 1970s, many police officers viewed domestic violence as a private or individual problem that should be resolved within the home rather than by outside law enforcement (Miller, 2001). The enactment of mandatory arrest laws was meant to decrease the effect of police officers' varying personal views on domestic violence and make the response to domestic violence consistent across cases (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). The officers were encouraged to start viewing domestic violence as a public crime, not a personal problem.

At first glance, it would appear that mandatory arrest laws and other policies related to recognizing domestic violence as a public crime have been successful. Although the number of arrests made by responding officers still varies state to state (Eitle, 2005), the overall trend toward arrests for domestic violence offenses has increased. Researchers in the 1970s and 1980s found the arrest rates for domestic violence calls ranged from 3% to 14% (Bayley, 1986; Langley & Levy, 1977), whereas more recent studies have found arrest rates ranging from 30% to 49% (Eitle, 2005; Robinson & Chandek, 2000). Upon closer examination of these arrest rates, a notable trend appears: women are being arrested as domestic violence offenders in an increasing number of cases (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). Another trend influenced by these policies has been the increase in dual arrests, in which both individuals are arrested (Jones & Belknap, 1999). The percentage of women being arrested as the primary offender or in dual arrest situations is estimated to be between 4% to 30% of all domestic violence arrests, with the larger percentage being in areas with pro-arrest or mandated arrest laws (Jones & Belknap, 1999; Stop Abusive and Violent Environments, 2010).

The increase in the number of women arrested for domestic violence can be interpreted in two ways. It may be that women are becoming more violent and pro-arrest/mandatory arrest policies are bringing this issue to light, or it may be that these laws are being used to re-victimize women who are the real victims of domestic violence, or some combination of the two (DeKeseredy, 2006). To understand these two arguments, it is important to look at the way in which domestic violence is conceptualized from the research and clinical perspective versus the legal perspective. Many researchers and clinicians view domestic violence as a pattern of behaviors including physical abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, and the use of power and control (Swan & Snow, 2006). The key word in this definition of domestic violence is *pattern*. By contrast, the legal perspective on domestic violence focuses on *acts* of physical violence in a specific incident (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002) and generally does not examine the dynamics of the relationship in which these acts take place. In this sense, the police could view the self-defense acts of a victim out of context and arrest both parties due to the confusion of the situation. With the current legal definition of domestic violence and the dichotomous perpetrator/victim view taken by the criminal justice system, the primary victim of an ongoing abusive situation could easily become the legally identified perpetrator (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002).

This disparity regarding how to define domestic violence could help to explain the lack of agreement among studies on the rates of women's use of violence. If researchers focus solely on the number of women arrested for domestic violence, the conclusion could be that women are becoming more violent. Yet if researchers focus on clinical populations, including participants from shelters and mental health offices, they may find that domestic violence is still a gendered crime with women predominantly being violent for self-defense.

Women's Use of Violence

As the previous section on pro-arrest/mandated arrest polices demonstrates, there is a lack of understanding about women's use of violence within interpersonal relationships. The research regarding domestic violence appears to be divided into two main areas: the family violence viewpoint and the feminist perspective. The family violence approach is often researched via quantitative methodologies that measure or count the number of violent acts perpetrated in an attempt to better understand domestic violence (Straus, 2006). Researchers from the feminist perspective tend to use qualitative methodologies that focus on the context, meaning, and reasons for the use of violence in relationships (Kimmel, 2002a). In general, researchers from the feminist perspective tend to make use of theories related to patriarchy and men's use of power and control over women (Kimmel, 2002a). Family violence researchers often view domestic violence from the conflict theory perspective, which portrays conflict within relationships as natural and abusive behaviors as unhealthy means of resolving this conflict (Straka & Montminy, 2008). Neither side denies the fact that women use violence, but they tend to disagree on the conceptualization of the use of violence (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). This important area warrants further exploration because different conclusions will be reached depending on how the use of violence is conceptualized.

Family Violence Perspective

Researchers with a family violence perspective view domestic violence as a range of behaviors that are nested within a family constellation. Using this description of domestic violence, abuse between spouses, between parents and children, and between siblings could be included and counted as acts of domestic violence (Miller, 2001). Family violence researchers do not discuss the patriarchal concept of power and control in the same manner as feminist proponents (Miller, 2001). Family violence researchers acknowledge the influence of power over individual human behavior but do not view power as a means of control embedded within a larger culture. Family researchers often criticize feminist researchers for relating power to domestic violence in this manner, asserting that the research becomes a political agenda instead of objective research on domestic violence (Dutton, 2006).

Family violence researchers focus on the individual’s psychology as the reason women use violence (Dutton, 1999, 2007). In a literature review of studies conducted primarily by family violence researchers, Dutton (2007) pointed out these researchers’ main assertion is that domestic violence is symmetrical across genders, with women actually perpetrating more violence than men. Dutton urged researchers to drop their political agendas, to examine the numbers of male victims in their studies, and to research the underlying psychology that may influence both men and women to use violence against their intimate partners.

Researchers coming from the family violence perspective posit that focusing on gender roles, patriarchal power, and privilege distracts from the true number of male victims of domestic violence (Kimmel, 2002b). It is believed that men under-report abuse by their partners. By this reasoning, men fail to report abuse due to their societal gender role and their fear that their masculinity would be called into question. Men may feel they would be ridiculed and questioned by society and the criminal justice systems if they admitted to being a victim of domestic violence (McNeely & Robinson-Simpson, 1987). Family violence researchers believe that many men suffer from “battered husband syndrome” (Steinmetz, 1980, p. 345) but will often deny that abuse is happening due to society’s unwillingness to recognize this experience.

The majority of research coming from the family violence perspective is based on conflict theory. Conflict theorists posit that conflict is an inevitable part of all human interactions and relationships (Adams, 1965). Conflict is not thought of as destructive, but more as a needed interaction for change to occur in relationships. Although conflict can bring about positive changes within relationships, many times conflict can lead to an individual engaging in controlling behaviors with the goal of getting his or her needs met (Straus, 2005).

Conflict theory was originally developed to examine competition between and among social classes for resources (Witt, 2005). Much of the information within this theory arises from work of Karl Marx and C. Wright Mills (Farley, 1982). In conflict theory, self-interest is the basis of all human motivation, and competition for similar interests and resources is the source of conflict. The original theory is based on several assumptions; the main one is that conflict is a basic element of human life and is tied to the human need to survive (Witt, 2005). On a societal level, favor is given to certain powerful and advantaged groups who exercise control over other aspects of society, which creates a system in which the dominant groups are always best served. Due to this, wealth and power are distributed unequally, creating conflict between the dominant group who has the power and other groups who want to obtain it. Conflict is needed for society to change and grow and can be viewed as one of the fundamental goals of both the individual and culture (Farley, 1982). When using this theory to explain domestic violence, conflict theorists focus on three general ideas: (a) family behaviors do not always contribute to the well-being of the family, (b) not all practices within a family are healthy for the individuals, and (c) what is good for one family member is not necessarily good for another (Witt, 2005). Conflict theorists use these ideas to highlight the use of mutual violence within familial relationships, pointing out how conflict within these relationships may lead to abusive behaviors in order to resolve conflicts.

Feminist Perspective

Although there are many different feminist analytical perspectives on women’s use of violence (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007), this review will focus on the similarities found in the literature. Individuals from the feminist perspective on domestic violence suggest that the historical and current status of women needs to be examined before a true understanding of abuse is reached (Kurz, 1993). In other words, the inequalities found in gender relations in Western culture need to be integrated into the understanding of domestic violence. The dynamics not only include the violence that happens in private homes but also the public acceptance of domination of women through multiple coercive methods (Minaker & Snider, 2006). Most feminists agree that women can be violent but believe that women’s use of violence is typically qualitatively different from men's, because men historically have the power and entitlement to control their female partners in Western society (Kimmel, 2002b).

Feminist theorists have stressed the importance of looking at the context, motivation, meaning, results, and consequences of all behavior, including violence (Olesen, 2005). Power and privilege within relationships and within the general culture are examined in efforts to focus on reasons behind actions. Only by looking at these factors can one begin to understand women's use of violence and why domestic violence is still considered a gendered crime.

Feminist researchers (Kimmel, 2002b) often critique one of the most-used measures of domestic violence, the CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996), due to its inability to examine the context, meaning, and motivation of the behaviors it measures. Feminist theorists argue that the scale does not examine the motives for the violence, allowing a woman's defensive use of violence to be equal to a man's actual attack (Kimmel, 2002a). The scale does have items that measure emotional types of violence, recognizing the diversity of actions that are abusive, yet the majority of the scale focuses on physical acts of violence. By focusing only on physical and emotional abuse, the use of control, economic abuse, isolation, and oppression is ignored. Feminist researchers have argued that the full extent of violent behavior cannot be measured without looking at these factors along with the context of violent behaviors and history of violence within the relationship (Melton & Belknap, 2003). Feminist's question whether gain can be achieved by taking violence out of its context and counting single behaviors as is done with research using the CTS-2. Although the CTS-2 is not a measure of the context of violent behaviors, researchers using it may be painting an incomplete picture of domestic violence.

Another key component to the feminist perspective of domestic violence is the interplay between power and control in the context of a society defined by patriarchy (McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni, & Rice, 2007). Domestic violence is not seen as a private problem but a larger societal problem with roots in the very structure of the culture (Yllö, 1993). In a patriarchal society, messages are constantly sent about how men and women are supposed to act and who has the power and privilege (A. Johnson, 2006). Some of these common ideological messages relate to domestic violence, including the ideas that a woman "asks" for the abuse by the way she acts and that women are supposed to be passive in their relationships with men because men are the dominant sex (A. Johnson, 2006). The feminist view of patriarchy was summarized by bell hooks (2004), highlighting its relationship to domestic violence when she stated, "Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females" (p. 20).

Many feminist researchers investigating women's use of violence have pointed to self-defense as the main motivation for this behavior. Women who are violent against their partners are often abused themselves and use violence as a way to stop the violence against them or to escape other attacks (Barnett, Lee, & Thelen, 1997; Dasgupta, 1999; Hamberger, Lohr, Bonge, & Tolin, 1997). It is not uncommon for women to report that they will initiate arguments with their partners just because they are tired of the anxiety of wondering when the abuse will occur (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2009). Examples such as this underscore the complexities of women's use of violence that could not be uncovered by counting actions alone.

Even when women use violence in these defensive strategies, they may be at an increased risk of abuse instead of increasing their safety as they may hope (Bachman & Carmody, 1994; Gelles & Straus, 1988). When women attempt to gain power in their relationships either by initiating violence or defending themselves, they are threatening the already insecure men's attempt to exert control. Women's use of violence, therefore, becomes directly linked to their ongoing victimization within relationships based on their partners' use of coercion, intimidation, abuse, and violence (Dasgupta, 2002).

Feminist theorists do not deny that there are other reasons why women use violence. The Duluth model is an intervention program founded on feminist theory and behavioral psychology for male abusers that features three categories of women's use of violence (Hamlett, 1998). Self-defense to protect oneself or escape a situation is the first category. A second category, protective violence, occurs when a woman with a long history of victimization uses violence to decrease her chances of more victimization. The third category is the use of violence by a woman in an attempt to control her partner. Researchers using these categories support the belief that to understand violence, many factors must be examined, as violence can be used for different reasons with vastly different results (Kimmel, 2002a).

Typologies

One explanation for the discrepant findings regarding women's use of violence may be that women use violence differently than men. Researchers have begun to look at the possibility that typologies can be used to gain a better understanding of violence by recognizing the effect of context, history and motivation on use of violence. Swan and Snow (2002) examined women's violence in the context of their male partners' violence against them. These researchers conducted structured qualitative interviews of 108 women who self-reported use of violence against their partners. From those, they identified three main roles in women's violence within interpersonal relationships: victim, aggressor, and mixed relationship. Developed from these three main roles, different subcategories were created based on use of coercion, emotional abuse, and level of violence.

Other typologies have been proposed. M. P. Johnson (1995) presented similar research regarding the existence of different types of perpetrators and used his typology to explain the differences in research findings on women's domestic violence rates. He described four qualitatively different categories of violence including situational couple violence, violent resistance, intimate terrorism, and mutual violent control (M. P. Johnson, 2006). When situational couple violence occurs, one or both partners can be violent at times, but neither partner attempts to control the other. Violent resistance occurs when a non-controlling individual who can be violent is in a relationship with a violent and controlling partner. Intimate terrorism describes a relationship in which one individual is violent and controlling and the partner is nonviolent. Mutual violent control occurs when two individuals who are violent and controlling are in the same relationship. As can be seen, M. P. Johnson's (2006) typology is similar to Swan and Snow's (2002). Both recognize that violence is embedded in the interactional context of the relationship, which includes more behaviors than just the use of physical violence.

Michalski (2004) argued that situational couple violence is characterized by its "occasional occurrence, relatively low level of injury, and gender symmetry" (p. 655). This type of violence would occur when partners have a high degree of intimacy or relational involvement, lived close to or with each other, were highly dependent on one another, had access to the same resources, and were socially isolated. In contrast, intimate terrorism involves "persistent, intense, unilateral violence flowing in a downward direction (from one with greater resources or power to one with less)" (Michalski, 2004, p. 666). This type of violence would thrive in situations of social isolation where the relationship is unequal, there is an absence of shared decision making, and one partner believes he or she has the right to be violent and coercive.

Michalski (2005) later argued that creating typologies for violence is not enough and that researchers need to take the next step and start creating theories around these types of violence.

Michalski (2005) investigated M. P. Johnson's (1995) concepts of intimate terrorism and situational couple violence further. He attempted to create a model that helped predict these two types of violence by examining age, gender, employment status, number and/or presence of children, race/ethnicity, education, living situation, and home ownership. The model explained 34% of the variance in cases of intimate terrorism but only 14% of the variance in situational couple violence. It would seem these two concepts could be used successfully to distinguish different types of violence and the difference in the context surrounding this violence by recognizing that not all violence is the same.

Understanding these different typologies may help to explain why researchers obtain such divergent views of women's use of violence. It may be that the researchers are measuring different types of violence. Researchers who conclude that women are just as violent as men may be measuring mixed relationships or situational couple violence whereas researchers who find that men are more aggressive than women may be examining a sample of women who fall into the victim typology and men who participate in intimate terrorism. If this is the answer, researchers who remain trapped in the feminist versus family violence debate are missing the bigger picture. Both may be right in that women do use of some types of violence as much as men, but men are more violent than women when examined through the lens of patriarchal culture and beliefs.

There seems to be some support for this distinction between types of violence based on populations sampled. Researchers who find that men and women are equal in their use of violence often make use of national samples and do not look into the context of the abuse or the relationship (Archer, 2002; Straus, 2005). In contrast, researchers who find that 90% or more of victims are women often sample clinical, shelter, or criminal justice populations or a combination of these (Bachman & Coker, 1995). M. P. Johnson (2001) examined data from the 1970s on 274 men and their use of violence and found that in the general sample, 11% could be classified as using intimate terrorism. This percentage increased to 68% in the court sample and 79% in the shelter sample. Graham-Kevan and Archer (2008) had similar findings in their study of 264 British men, with 33% of the sample in the general population meeting the criteria for intimate terrorism compared to 88% in shelter samples. It appears that researchers recognize these different types of violence but have not yet created theories that acknowledge the situation and context of these different types of violence (Michalski, 2005).

Although typologies such as those of Swan and Snow (2002) and M. P. Johnson (1995, 2006) have the potential to assist in understanding the mixed findings of the literature on women's use of violence, they do have some limitations (Michalski, 2005). Simply dividing domestic violence into different types defined by use of violent behavior and degree of coercion is not enough. Researchers need to examine these different typologies to identify the experiences of these groups in order to better understand women's violence (Michalski, 2005).

Contextualizing Domestic Violence: Using an Ecological Model

Throughout the literature on women's use of violence, the interaction of social, historical, institutional, and individual variables becomes evident (Michalski, 2005). To explain such a broad and multifaceted behavior as domestic violence, a theory is needed that encompasses the many influences identified. Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological model may fit this description and have the ability to integrate many of the questions surrounding the current debate on women's use of violence. Bronfenbrenner's model has been used to examine theories on domestic violence previously (Dutton, 1994; Heise, 1998), but it has rarely been explored through empirical research.

The original model proposes five interactive levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem level, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Edleson & Tolman, 1992). The model also recognizes the individual as a system, which includes the personal characteristics of the person. The microsystem is the immediate situation or setting in which a person lives and includes family, workplace, relationships, and education. The mesosystem includes the connections between two or more microsystems, such as family and education. The exosystem includes the structures and systems of the society in which the individual lives but may not play an active role. The macrosystem consists of the larger background, including culture, ethnicity, and gender history (Dasgupta, 2002). Finally, the chronosystem examines the effect the timing of events such as parental death has on the individual's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). For the current research the individual, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem were used in question creation. The chronosystem was not used directly in question creation because the focus of the research is not on the effect of the timing of experience with violence.

In studies on women's use of violence, many factors have been identified that could be examined using the individual and microsystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's model. In addition to self-defense and retaliation, individual constructs such as desiring attention, expressing anger, punishing the abuser, escaping abuse, and reclaiming lost self-respect have been cited (Dasgupta, 1999; Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Hamberger et al., 1997; Kernsmith, 2005; Seamans et al., 2007). Other personal motives found in the literature include saving a loved family member; protecting children, pets, or both; establishing a self-identity; using control tactics; and getting back at a partner for emotional pain and abuse (Dasgupta, 1999; Edleson, 1999; Kernsmith, 2005; Seamans et al., 2007). Personality characteristics of women arrested for domestic violence that have been examined include attachment styles, trauma systems, and personality organization (Goldenson, Geffner, Foster, & Clipson, 2007). Compared to women not arrested, women arrested for violence report less attachment security, more symptoms related to trauma, increased trait anger and impulsivity, and increased risk for psychopathology within their personality structure, including antisocial, borderline, and dependent characteristics (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2003; Shorey, Brasfield, Febres, & Stuart, 2011).

At the microsystem level, it is important to examine the woman's experience with violence and abuse. Women who have been in several abusive relationships have been found to have different perceptions of danger than women who have not been abused (Dasgupta, 1999). Women who have been in abusive relationships tend to view situations as more dangerous than women who have not been abused. It is not uncommon for women who use violence to have a history of victimization (Barnett et al., 1997; Hamberger et al., 1997; Swan, Gambone, Fields, Sullivan, & Snow, 2005). Many times, these women will cite self-defense as their reason for violence toward their partners (Downs, Rindels, & Atkinson, 2007; Seamans et al., 2007). Other researchers have found that women arrested for domestic violence are likely to report being victims of childhood abuse, witnessing violence between their parents, feeling disconnected from their mothers, and leaving their childhood homes before the age of 18 (Seamans et al., 2007; Swan et al., 2005). Using a microsystem level of analysis, it has been shown that women's use of violence can be triggered by past victimization history, by their response to a partner's emotional abuse, by real or perceived threats to their children by the male partner, or a combination of these things (Seamans et al., 2007).

Using an exosystem level of analysis on women's use of violence demonstrates the effects different systems and institutions in society have on women in abusive relationships. The implementation of pro-arrest/mandated arrest policies and the unforeseen consequence of these policies are areas that can be examined in light of this level. The effects of being legally labeled a domestic violence offender are numerous for women. For instance, they often lose access to the resources and assistance offered to domestic violence victims, including (a) shelter services and temporary housing, (b) transportation to a safe place, (c) assistance with obtaining an order of protection, and (d) access to job training programs (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). Losing access to these resources makes the already difficult task of leaving an abusive relationship that much harder. Other effects on women labeled perpetrators include the negative effect on the woman's identity, specifically as a non-criminal who did the right thing by seeking police assistance (Rajah, Frye, & Haviland, 2006). These women are also on the wrong side of the societal view of who is considered "good," as a victim who deserves assistance and resources, and who is "bad," as a perpetrator or undeserving victim who is aggressive and resistant. Women may lose jobs, have their children removed from their homes, or be denied immigration due to arrests on their records (National Clearinghouse for Defense of Battered Women, 2001).

If the criminal justice system does not take into account the context and pattern of abusive behaviors within relationships, women may be less likely to call for assistance the next time they are in abusive situations (Miller, 2001). It is difficult to deny the possible negative consequences of these types of policies. It is common to hear of situations in which the criminal justice system has been used by abusers as another way to demonstrate their control (e.g., an abuser calls the police and claims the victim's use of self-defense was aggressive).

The criminal justice system is not the only system involved with women's use of violence at the exosystem level. Other institutions that may influence a woman's use of violence include (a) the church, (b) health care, (c) education, (d) immigration, and (e) child protective services (Robinson, 2003). Negative interactions with any of these systems may lead women to believe that there is no genuine assistance for them to leave an abusive relationship, leaving them feeling powerless (Stop Abusive and Violent Environments, 2010). This may only cause the abuse to escalate and the woman's use of violence to increase as the relationship continues (Dasgupta, 2002). For example, many abused women come in contact with the health care system when they are seen in emergency rooms due to physical injuries or regularly by their family doctors due to illness (Robinson, 2003). When doctors hesitate to ask about possible abuse, patients perceive that this is not a topic to be discussed in public or one with which a doctor can assist. This conversation becomes even more difficult in emergency room situations where the abusive partner answers all the questions the doctor presents. If doctors do not insist on speaking with victims privately, victims may perceive that no outside services are going to help them become safe. Medical staff must become aware of the numerous screening protocols for domestic violence available and apply these procedures more consistently (Brown et al., 2005; Roush, 2012), as they may be the first contact many abuse victims have with outside agencies.

Culture, specifically the level of patriarchal beliefs and rigid gender roles, is a part of the macrosystem level. At this level of analysis, many feminist theories of domestic violence can be integrated into the model. Feminists propose that men's use of violence against a female partner is influenced by their view of culturally appropriate male gender roles which include establishment of (a) mastery, (b) supremacy, (c) dominance, and (e) authority (Kimmel, 2002b). Lending support to this belief, researchers have found that men who repeatedly use violence against their female partners often report the goal of establishing power and control over their partners (Barnett et al., 1997).

In addition, a relationship between belief in traditional gender roles and use of violence by men has been found (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). However, this relationship becomes complicated depending on which population the researcher examines. It appears that a strong relationship between traditional gender roles and use of violence is found in shelter samples, yet this relationship almost disappears when examining a general sample (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). M. P. Johnson (1995) attempted to explain this finding through a hypothesis that agency samples consisted of more men who perpetrate intimate terrorism, whereas the general samples included more individuals who use situational couple violence. This hypothesis was supported by Holtzworth-Munroe (2000), who found that men who were defined as perpetrators of intimate terrorism had significantly more traditional and negative beliefs about women than men who did not use violence or who perpetrated situational couple violence.

When researchers attempt to explain women's use of violence through the feminist lens, the picture becomes more complicated, as cultural norms for women do not prescribe women's use of violence in any situation, especially against their male partners (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Straus, 1999). The connection between women's use of violence and the greater culture is largely unexamined. The use of the ecological model may help to conceptualize the interactions of the psychology of the individual and the broader cultural influences.

Not all research regarding women's use of violence fits neatly into one level of the ecological model. The ecological model is designed to allow these interactions among the different levels, thereby providing a structure for examining how women's use of violence interacts with the individual, society, history, and culture. For example, Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure, and Snow (2005) investigated precursors and correlates of women's use of violence in areas that crossed the individual, microsystem, and chronosystem levels of the ecological model. They found women's use of violence was predicted by child abuse but that this did not predict symptomatology. Within this same group of women arrested for domestic violence, child abuse and women's experiences of being victimized were predictive of depressive and posttraumatic stress symptoms and indirectly related to depressive symptoms through avoidance coping strategies. Within this example, the interactive nature of women's use of violence becomes clear, with individual characteristics and personal history interacting to predict different outcomes (Sullivan et al., 2005).

An adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) model has also been used to develop a community-based program related to domestic violence work with male perpetrators (Douglas, Bathrick, & Perry, 2008) and in a healing-based program for females arrested for domestic violence (Larance, 2006). However, no empirical research has been completed to examine the effectiveness of either program. This demonstrates a large gap in truly understanding how useful this model could be in understanding domestic violence and developing evidence-based treatment. Research utilizing Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) model in combination to develop typologies such as M. P. Johnson's (2006) could assist with bridging findings between feminist and family violence researchers.

Current Study

The current study addresses the discrepant findings between family violence and feminist researchers on women's use of violence. After reviewing the debate between family violence researchers and feminist researchers and how using typologies could provide a better understanding of women’s use of violence, the current study addressed the following research areas:

1. Are there typologies within the themes that could be used to explain differences among women’s use of violence? Are these patterns similar to the ones M. P. Johnson (2006) found?
2. What are the unique characteristics associated with women’s use of violence in intimate relationships found within these themes?
3. Do the themes found within the data fit under the levels provided by Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) model?

For this study, four levels of the ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) were used as a framework to guide question creation, recognizing that women’s use of violence is too complex to explain by examining individual history or social prescriptions alone. The levels utilized in this study were the individual, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. These levels were chosen based on their applicability to the area of study. The ecological model provided a framework by which the interactions between these factors could be examined and allowed an examination of a wider context of women’s use of violence. It also provided a framework in which both feminist and family violence research findings could be better understood.

In the ecological model, individuals are not viewed as people who engage in bad or good behavior; the moralistic idea of good and bad is avoided. Instead, the model can be used to examine individuals in their relationships with their environments and other individuals and groups that all perform different socializing roles (Douglas et al., 2008). In this sense, the model provided an appropriate guide in question creation that addressed multiple sides of the issues related to women's use of violence. It was the goal of this research to expand the understanding of women's use of violence and examine how viewing violence from an ecological perspective could assist in creating a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Another goal of the current study was to explore whether typologies could provide a framework that helps connect feminist and family violence research. Based on the information gathered from the interview-style questions and the quantitative measures, themes were identified and used to see whether typologies such as those proposed by M. P. Johnson (2006) existed and could explain the different findings of women's use of violence.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The current study used a qualitative design. First, interview-style questions were used to explore each woman's use of violence against her intimate partner. The interview-style questions were based on the levels chosen from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, but the use of this model was not meant to limit the information gathered. Second, quantitative measures including the Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (Straus et al., 1996) and the Contextual Relationship Measure (Leggett & Byczek, 2012) were utilized as a means of adding to the richness of the data. Information found from these interview-style questions and measures were analyzed to identify overall themes and possible typologies related to women's use of violence.

Participants

The current research project was conducted in Kent County, Michigan. Within Kent County, Caucasians made up a little under 90% of the estimated 605,213 individuals who lived there in 2008, with approximately 62% of residents falling between the ages of 25 and 64 (Fed Stats, 2009). In 2004, the number of arrests for domestic violence in Grand Rapids, which is the largest city within the county, included 160 women out of 849 arrests (Kent County Community Coordinated Response Team, 2010). Michigan's state law on domestic violence arrests is classified as pro-arrest. It is not mandatory for an arrest to be made on every domestic violence call, but it is encouraged.

After reviewing the number of women arrested for non-aggravated assault within Kent County (Michigan Incident Crime Reporting, 2012) and reviewing other qualitative research examining levels of theme saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), I chose to try and reach at least 5% of women arrested in one year to participate in the web survey. Approximately 300 women were arrested for non-aggravated assault in Kent County in 2010 (Michigan Incident Crime Reporting, 2012), so at least 15 women would be contacted. When using qualitative methods, researchers are encouraged to examine the data as they are collected in order to be able to find theme saturation. In this study, theme saturation was met after 12 women completed the measures. To reach women arrested for domestic violence, I contacted the Kent County Courts, specifically the Clerk's Office, to obtain a list of names and mailing addresses of women arrested but not yet convicted of domestic violence. The total number of women who were invited to take part in the study was 80. The participants must have been arrested for domestic violence against their intimate partners. To participate, volunteers had to be women in a heterosexual relationship, over 18 years of age, and not a student of Grand Valley State University due to my connection to the university. No additional demographic information was collected from the participants in an attempt to decrease the possibility of identifying individual participants through their responses. Purposive sampling techniques were used to recruit participants from this desired population (Polkinghorne, 2005). In addition, criterion-based sampling was used in order to secure participants who had been arrested for use of violence against an intimate partner (Morrow & Smith, 2000) by only contacting individuals who appeared to have met the criteria.

Instruments

Interview-Style Questions

Twenty interview-style questions and six follow-up questions were developed to inquire about women's use of violence using four levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological model as a guide. The questions were developed based on an extensive literature review of common hypotheses and findings regarding women's use of violence. The questions were reviewed by the dissertation committee for clarification and feedback on wording and structure. The questions also were analyzed to obtain grading level information through Microsoft Word's readability statistics program and were found to have a Flesch Kincaid grade level of 7.9.

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, it was important to protect the participants' identities as much as possible. Based on this consideration, the interview-style questions were not asked in person. Rather, a web survey was utilized, comprising of the interview-style questions, along with the quantitative measures. The information gathered from these written responses was limited because I was unable to clarify an individual's responses or follow up on answers provided.

Conflict Tactics Scale-2

The CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996) is designed to measure empirically the different approaches used to resolve familial conflicts and is the most commonly used measure for domestic violence. The CTS-2 measures acts such as reasoning, verbal and non-verbal behavior, and physical violence in a relationship. It yields five sub-scales: (a) Physical Assault, (b) Injury, (c) Psychological Aggression, (d) Sexual Coercion, and (e) Negotiation. The CTS- 2 was designed to be used either individually or with both members of a couple, with each individual answering questions about his or her own behavior and that of his or her partner. The CTS-2 has been utilized in many different research populations (Straus, 2004). Some examples of populations that have been tested with the CTS-2 include incarcerated female substance abusers (Lucente, Fals-Stewart, Richards, Goscha, 2001), incarcerated women (Jones, Ji, Beck, & Beck, 2002), community-based samples (Yun, 2011), and college-aged students from over 33 universities in over 17 countries (Straus, 2004). Evidence for internal consistency reliability includes alpha coefficients for subscales ranging from .86 to .95 (Strauchler et al., 2004).

The scale consists of 78 statements that describe different behaviors used in resolving conflict. For example, a statement from the Negotiation subscale is “I showed my partner I cared even though we disagree.” The participants are given several choices of statements to choose from that best describe the frequency of the behavior for them or their partners. They are asked to circle the appropriate number associated with the statements that most accurately indicates their experiences. The possible responses are 1 = once in the past year, 2 = twice in the past year, 3 = three to five times in the past year, 4 = six to 10 times in the past year, 5 = 11 to 20 times in the past year, 6 = more than 20 times in the past year, 7 to indicate the behavior has happened but not in the past year, and 0 if the behavior has never happened.

An example of a question from the Physical Assault subscale is “I pushed or shoved my partner.” The Physical Injury subscale is composed of questions that examine serious physical injury, for example “I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight.” An example question from the Psychological Aggression subscale is “I called my partner fat or ugly.” An example question from the Sexual Coercion subscale is “I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.”

Contextual Relationship Measure

Even though substantial evidence exists that the CTS-2 is statistically sound (Straus, 2004), critics often point to its inability to measure the context, motivation, meaning, or history of the abuse it measures (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1998). Because of this, a new measure was constructed that addresses this limitation called the Contextual Relationship Measure (CRM; Leggett & Byczek, 2012). This measure was developed for and is being used in current research examining the relationship between domestic violence and the Adlerian construct of social interest. No reliability or validity tests have yet been conducted on this measure. The CRM consists of 44 main questions that address the same behaviors assessed in the CTS-2. The measure includes questions about the participants' use of violence and victimization within past and present relationships just like the CTS-2. If participants report violent behaviors, they are asked to provide additional information about their experiences. There is space provided directly following the question in the CRM that allows participants to describe the most recent incident or typical incident of violence in which the abusive behavior took place. This area is specifically different from the CTS-2, which does not inquire about this descriptive information. The goal of this inquiry was to gain more information on the context of the violence being investigated when triangulating the data. According to the readability statistics available through Microsoft Word, the measure reaches the Flesch Kincaid grade level of 7.6. The full measure can be found in Appendix A.

Procedure

First, approval was sought from Indiana State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Approval was granted for the research after full review, followed by an expedited review once revisions were submitted (See Appendix B for IRB approved Informed Consent Form).

Next, volunteers were recruited by contacting the Kent County Courts Clerk's Office. I explained the nature of the study and was provided a list of 80 women (with their mailing addresses) who had been arrested for domestic violence but had not yet been to court. The nature of the relationship between the women arrested and the identified victims was not known, so some women contacted may not have met the additional criteria for participation. These criteria included being in a heterosexual romantic relationship with the identified victim at the time of arrest and not being a student of Grand Valley State University.

All 80 of these women were sent via mail the informed consent form that explained the nature of the study, the time requirement, the inclusion criteria, and the URL for the web survey. This informed consent form was sent to the mailing address provided by the courts. The participants were given contact information for my committee chair and I in case they had any questions about the study or needed assistance in completing it. The informed consent form also explained the monetary incentive offered to the participants. The incentive was a $25 general gift card. The participants were allowed to skip questions, but they could not access the link for the gift card until they reached the end of the web survey. The incentive was offered to compensate for the participants' time commitment, which was estimated at one to three hours, and show appreciation for their participation in the study. The participants received this incentive by providing their addresses and contact information on a link separate from their answers.

When the participants went to the link for the study, the informed consent form was the first information they encountered. This page of the web survey was a forced response answer, meaning if the participant did not agree to consent to the research she was not able to proceed to the rest of the web survey. Questions were divided into three main parts organized by the instrument from which the questions came. The first part of the web survey included three subsections of the interview-style questions that were divided by the area about which the questions were inquiring. For example, the questions related to the impact of culture and different social constructs such as the media, law enforcement, and religion were all placed together into one subsection. The second part of the web survey included the questions from the CTS-2 and the directions. The third part of the web survey included the questions from the CRM and the directions. Participants were able to skip any questions they did not want to respond to and stop the web survey at any time. The last page of the web survey thanked the participants for their participation and time and provided a separate link they were asked to click on to provide the information needed to send their incentives. Nowhere in the web survey was the term *violence* defined, allowing for the participants to use their own personal definitions of the word.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative inquiry can be defined by its focus on individuals within a specific context where their own words and meaning making are used to understand the studied phenomenon (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Qualitative research does not depend on numerical and statistical analysis but on verbal and visual data. The results lie in the power of the participants' own words and the personal analysis by the researcher rather than in formal models or statistical output (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Qualitative inquiry is also defined by the way in which information is collected (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Qualitative researchers study individuals in the context of their lives and do not use preconceived theories to limit the knowledge they obtain from their open methods. Part of this method is the acknowledgment that all research measures are fallible and only provide partial views of the area being studied. This matches the aim of most qualitative inquiries, which are not seeking generalizable claims but are intended to add to understanding of a specific phenomenon being studied in a specific context (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Qualitative methods provide the flexibility to answer types of questions that quantitative methods may not be able to answer, especially questions regarding meaning and context (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Because the aim of the current study was to develop a better understanding of the meaning and context of women's use of violence against their intimate partners, qualitative methods were a better fit than quantitative methods that could miss these important concepts and limit the voices of the individuals who live the experiences.

When using qualitative methods, it is important to establish trust with the participants. This includes open discussion of the study's (a) philosophical underpinnings, (b) research design including participant selection, (c) data analysis and development of questions (Morrow, 2005). Information on the researcher as the individual is also encouraged to be provided (Morrow, 2005). Grounded theory was utilized as a means of organizing and understanding the information that was collected. These concepts are discussed below in more detail.

Paradigms

Paradigms have been defined as "the basic belief systems, both formal and informal, that guide our inquiries both in scholarly research and in everyday life" (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 200). It is important for all researchers to recognize the underlying assumptions, worldviews, and personal experiences that guide their research. Especially in qualitative inquiry, the researcher's beliefs will influence him or her in every step of the study (Morrow & Smith, 2000); therefore, stating the paradigm that guides the research up front can provide the reader with an understanding of the basis of the study.

The theoretical underpinnings of research, including questions regarding epistemology, ontology, and methodology, can be guided by a formal paradigm. The most common paradigms in research include positivistic and postpositivistic (which typically guides the underpinning of quantitative methods), interpretivist/constructivist, and postmodern perspectives including critical theories (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Morrow & Smith, 2000). In the current study, feminist critical theory was used for interpretation.

Critical theories are typically placed under the postmodern paradigm, which is characterized by the study of meaning making of participants within a cultural context where power and oppression are recognized as influencing the individual (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Critical theorists posit that each individual’s reality is self-constructed but acknowledge the existence of oppression and unequal power distribution that affects particular groups within a culture. Feminist critical theorists recognize that in the patriarchal culture of the United States, the constructed reality of each individual is influenced by (a) white privilege, (b) male privilege, (c) heterosexual privilege, and (d) ableness privilege (A. Johnson, 2006). Feminists emphasize the harm that is done to individuals and society as a whole by the existence of these privileges and work to empower groups that are otherwise disempowered within society (Olesen, 2005). Critical theorists view the researcher and the participant as jointly constructing a reality within the context of research. They also recognize the power relationship between researcher and participant and work to minimize the effect of this potentially hierarchical relationship (Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Feminist critical paradigm. The feminist critical paradigm was used in this study because it recognizes the privilege, power, and oppression present within our society and how these constructs interact to create our social reality (A. Johnson, 2006). Utilizing the feminist critical paradigm allows the researcher the freedom to recognize cultural influences on the individual (Morrow & Smith, 2000). This paradigm allowed for a broader, more in-depth understanding of women's use of violence in this study. Although many feminist researchers have written about women's use of violence within patriarchal culture (A.Johnson, 2006; M.P. Johnson, 1995; Kimmel, 2002a; Miller, 2001), none has used Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological model as a method for recognizing multiple factors that may influence these actions.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological model allows the development of questions in which the meaning of individual characteristics, individual history, social systems, and the culture at large can be examined through a critical lens. The goal in using this overarching organizational model was to recognize and explore interactions between the different levels of social realities. This organization places women's use of violence within the specific context in which it takes place and at the same time recognizes individual characteristics. The model is not meant to limit future analysis, but to provide a broad framework for developing inquiry. The interview-style questions that were used in this study can be found in Appendix C.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a research method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). It refers to an approach in which an emerging theory or hypothesis is developed from a data set. This is different from other approaches in which a theory or hypothesis is developed first and then data collection is completed. Taking a grounded theory approach means that data collection and analysis happen simultaneously as a developing theory evolves. The result of grounded theory is the generation of a theory pulled from the factors studied and voices of the participants. Thus, there is a creative feel to grounded theory as the experiences of the participants and researcher influence the final theoretical product.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) discussed criteria for theories developed utilizing a grounded theory approach including fit, understanding, and generality. The concept of fit refers to how well the theory developed fits the raw data collected. One method for testing for fit is having multiple readers examine the raw data and see if similar theoretical conclusions are met. The concept of understanding refers to how coherent the theory is to others involved in the area being studied. The theory's generality refers to how applicable the theory is in different environments and contexts. Therefore, theories or hypotheses developed utilizing grounded theory should be able to explain the phenomenon examined while being relevant to the overall field.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this study, women's use of violence within heterosexual romantic relationships was examined. Eighty women were contacted via mail and asked to participate in a web survey. After data from 12 participants were analyzed, theme saturation appeared to have been met and the link to the web survey was closed. These 12 participants completed the measure in its entirety; one additional participant completed the first two sections of the web survey only. This participant's data were not included in the final analysis. The main goal of the study was to examine whether typologies of women existed that could help explain the discrepant findings among research related to women's use of violence using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a means of question creation. The following three research questions were examined specifically:

1. Are there typologies within the themes that could be used to explain differences among women's use of violence? Are these patterns similar to the ones M. P. Johnson (2006) found?
2. What are the unique characteristics associated with women's use of violence in intimate relationships found within these themes?
3. Do the themes found within the data fit under the levels provided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) model?

Four distinct typologies were found along with unique characteristics associated with women arrested for domestic violence. The first type of woman who participated in this study was the primary victim of violence. She may have been arrested for perpetrating domestic violence, but the qualitative information supplied indicated that she acted in self-defense. This typology is called Self-Defense. The second typology is labeled Primary Perpetrator. These women appeared to be the aggressors in their relationships; however, all the women within this category reported a history of victimization in previous romantic relationships and within their current relationships reported being victims of psychological aggression. The third category is Mutual Violence. These women appeared to perpetrate as much abuse as their partners, primarily psychological aggression. The last typology is labeled Mutual Violence-Male Dominated. These women did report using violence within their romantic relationships, but reported that their male partners used more severe and frequent forms of violence. Finally, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model was examined to see if the addition of the interview-style questions helped to clarify the experiences described by the women.

Research Question 1: The Development of Typologies of Women's Use of Violence

The research design for the study was strongly influenced by grounded theory, which influenced how the data analysis was completed (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The choice of this method was due to its usefulness in creating an understanding of the social process being examined within the culture where it takes place (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Data collection and analysis took place simultaneously, which is a common procedure used in qualitative exploration (Charmaz, 2005). The main goal of grounded theory is creation of a theory that offers a better understanding of the construct being examined (Glaser, 1992). Because a critical feminist lens was used throughout the analysis process, sensitivity was shown to the influence of gender and its influence on the emerging themes. The goal of a critical feminist paradigm is to co-create a story between the researcher and the participant with recognition of the impact of power and privilege on this discourse (Olesen, 2005). Therefore, I was self-reflective throughout the process (Morrow & Smith, 2000) of identifying themes within the participants' experiences.

Grounded theory provides a structure for researchers to break down large amounts of information into manageable themes and categories (Morrow & Smith, 2000). It specifically provides guidelines that have been adapted for qualitative inquiry related to social justice (Charmaz, 2005). In order to analyze the qualitative data, a modified version of the eight-step procedure based on Kirk and Miller's (1986) approach to qualitative data was utilized. Kirk and Miller (1986) recommend transcribing oral interviews word for word, making notation of any vocal reflection or pauses. Due to the use of interview-style written questions, this step was unnecessary. The answers to the interview-style questions were read by the main researcher and another doctoral-level graduate counseling psychology student. Next, the two individuals separately broke the interviews down into individual units of meaning. In the fourth step, the readers separately examined the individual units of information and identified themes the information described. The next recommended step requires each reader independently to perform a series of iterations across questions. An iteration consists of ensuring that each unit matches the specific theme in which it was categorized. If a unit does not fit into a theme, it is placed into another theme or a new theme is created. Once the individual units are placed into themes or categories, the data are examined in their entirety, noting patterns related to women's use of violence that is based on the participants' words and experiences. By examining the participants' responses as whole, the main researcher and the doctoral-level graduate student were able to identify and develop descriptions of the typologies. These steps were followed with the main researcher and the doctoral-level graduate student examining the data and coming to agreement on the themes identified. By utilizing this method, saturation was determined to be met once the researchers did not receive any new information that did not fit into the identified themes for three surveys in a row.

The biggest difference between the method used in this study and that of Kirk and Miller (1986), besides the change to written interview-style questions, was the addition of a step. Kirk and Miller's approach encourages the researcher to break up the data found and use statistical analysis to examine percentages of themes. In this study, the individual units were categorized into themes with the totals noted (Appendix D), but it was not the end result. The individual units of information were also used in combination with the developed themes to assist me in creating a more holistic understanding of women's use of violence. This approach was taken in order to maintain the richness of the participants' responses instead of relying solely upon the statistical analysis. The quantitative measures were scored and categorized to determine whether the information supported the emerging themes from the interview data.

Interview-Style Questions

To address the research question regarding whether typologies exist within the data, it was important first to review the themes found within the interview-style questions. The written interview-style questions were divided among four levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model including the individual, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The participants' individual levels were examined through five main questions with six follow-up questions the participants were asked to answer if appropriate. Four questions addressed their microsystem level with four possible follow-up questions they were asked to answer if appropriate. Bronfenbrenner's exosystem level was investigated through seven questions. Finally, the macrosystem level was explored through four questions. The follow-up questions were asked of all the participants but were not answered by all due to some questions not being applicable based on their previous responses. For example, one main question related to whether the participant had ever accessed mental health services. The next question inquired about what this experience was like for the participant. If the participant had no experience with mental health services, she would skip the follow-up question.

Individual level. Three themes were found for the question that inquired about how the participant would describe her role in her relationship, with two of these themes being related. Four of the 12 participants described their role as the *provider*, making this the most often indicated description. For example, one participant responded, “My role in my relationship was the male. I felt like I wear the pants in the relationship.” The second theme that emerged from this question was the participant as the *aggressor*. Some women simply stated, “I was the aggressor in the incident.” Only two participants replied in this manner, making this the least frequent response. The final theme found within the responses to this question was that of *victim*. For example, one participant stated, “My role had to be in defense to my boyfriend’s attacks.” Three of the 12 participants responded in a similar manner. The remaining three respondents’ answers did not fit into a theme and did not provide insight into the role they took within their relationships. For example, one participant simply stated “the girlfriend” as a response. As the interview-style questions were online, simple one-word answers or answers that did not directly relate to the question were to be expected because there was no interviewer present to clarify the question or the participants’ answers.

The second question inquired about additional violence within the relationship and asked participants to describe a typical incident if this violence did take place. Five out of the 12 participants stated that there was no additional violence within the relationship (i.e., her significant other was not violent toward her). The rest of the participants described incidents of violence being used against them ranging from verbal abuse to being choked by their partners. One respondent stated, “Yes, when I was arrested we were fighting because he hit me.” Another participant described a wider range of violence perpetrated against her, stating,

> Yes, he had done numerous things to me such as threw chairs at me, he got angry and would hit walls next to my head, he broke a beer bottle over my head, etc. The list goes on. It was not a very healthy relationship.

A follow-up question to this inquiry asked about how long the violence had been taking place; responses ranged from “a couple months” to “a couple years,” with most participants reporting violence within their relationships happening for more than one year.

The majority of the participants admitted to also using violence against their partners on multiple occasions. Some of the participants stated they only used violence to defend themselves, with the majority of participants who used violence again describing themselves as being the aggressor in some incidents of violence. Three of the 12 participants reported that the only time they used violence against their partners was the incident for which they were arrested. Examples of responses to this inquiry included “When he pushed me I grabbed an object to defend myself” and “I would physically punch kick and bite. I threw objects and used a knife twice.”

Seven respondents out of the 12 reported seeking mental health services with varying results. One participant stated that counseling services helped her to control her anger and use of violence. The majority of the participants stated that they were still involved with mental health services at the time of the survey. Two of the participants stated that the mental health services they received were not helpful; one participant stated, “I went there for anger management classes and such, it was absolutely useless.”

Microsystem. The microsystem is described as the immediate situation or setting in which a person lives and includes family, workplace, relationships, and education. Therefore the questions in this area focused on the participants’ past experiences, specifically within romantic relationships, and the participants’ family history. The first two questions related to this level of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model inquired about the participants’ past experience with violence, both as the perpetrator of violence and victim of violence. None of the participants reported using violence in past relationships other than the one for which they were arrested. Three of the 12 participants reported being victims of violence in past romantic relationships, and all of these reported physical violence of varying severity. One respondent’s description of a past relationship demonstrates a progression of violence: “He made me stop being friends with any of my friends that were not his friends. Then I wasn’t allowed to talk to my family, and then he started hitting me.”

The next questions inquired about the participants’ families of origin. Nine out of the 12 participants reported that disagreements were not resolved using healthy methods, with seven out of 12 stating that they had witnessed violence between their parents. Only one participant reported that her parents resolved conflict by “talking it out” in a healthy manner. The remaining participants reported that they never saw any conflict resolved in their family (e.g., “My parents that are still married never argued in front of me. I think that because of that I was never sure how to handle confrontation.”) Additionally, only four participants reported having good relationships with their families growing up; the majority of participants reported that they had unhealthy relationships with their families. Some participants felt that their families sheltered them and did not provide them with any learning experiences about how relationships worked. Four of the participants reported being victims of violence when they were children. Finally, four of the respondents reported that their relationships with their families never got better, although three of the participants stated that as they got older, they were able to resolve some of their past family issues and have decent relationships with their parents. The majority of the participants reported having good relationships with their families now.

Exosystem. The exosystem examines the structures and systems of society in which the participant lives but may not play an active role. Therefore the questions in this section focused on the criminal justice system, religious organizations, health care systems, and mental health organizations. The first three questions about the exosystem level inquired about the participant's view of the criminal justice system and being labeled a perpetrator of domestic violence by this system. The majority of the participants, not surprisingly, reported feeling very bad or angry about being labeled an offender, with many stating a wish that the courts had understood that their actions were in self-defense. This question was asked in order to examine if being labeled an offender of a violent act fit with the participant's view of what happened in the incident for which she was arrested. One participant answered that she felt "horrible because I feel like I was arrested for defending myself, and he should have went too." Only three participants stated that their involvement with the criminal justice system would not change their likelihood of contacting the police in the future, with the remainder stating that they would be hesitant now to do so.

None of the participants reported seeking out medical assistance related to violence within their relationships. A larger sample size may help in further investigation on how the healthcare system treats these women and if any negative actions are experienced as a result of being labeled as offenders by the criminal justice system. Three individuals sought support from religious communities; all of them reported a calming and helpful effect from these groups. Two individuals sought support from a domestic violence shelter/hotline and reported that they received support and assistance through the support offered.

Macrosystem. The macrosystem can be described as the larger background of the participant including culture, ethnicity, and gender. The first set of questions developed using the macrosystem as a guideline inquired about gender roles and how these beliefs about men's and women's roles may have developed. Half of the women described a woman's role as being an equal to a man. One participant stated,

> I believe that women are just like men to an extent. I feel that we need to rely on ourselves and not a man and to be moms and wifes someday. I was raised where I knew what was right but didn't always see that from my family.

The other participants seemed to believe in more traditional gender roles, such as, "A woman's role is to make sure everything is flowing correctly, and family is together through thick and thin." Eight of these women described the man's role within a relationship in terms of more traditional masculine roles, focusing on the male role of provider. One participant stated, "A man's role is to make sure bills are paid and there's food on the table." The other participants described the man's role as equal to a woman. When asked where they received these messages about gender roles, the participants gave a variety of responses. Most of these focused on family, but also church/religion and society as a whole.

When asked about their thoughts on what their partners believed about women's roles, eight of the respondents described a more traditional role in which the woman stays at home and tends to the home and family. Two participants believed their partners thought that men's and women’s roles should be equal. The remaining participant reported that her partner believed that the woman’s role should be the provider, which traditionally would be seen as a more masculine role. When asked about what they believed their partners thought about a man’s role in a relationship, eight of the respondents described a more traditional provider role (i.e., a man who works and provides for his family financially, but not necessarily emotionally). For example, one respondent stated, “Hard worker but works too much to see his kids.” One participant focused on a man’s role being more flexible, with the belief that a man should do whatever the woman in the relationship wants. Ten of the participants believed their partners received these messages about gender roles from family, two believed it was from the media, two believed it was from religion, and one participant stated that she did not know.

The final questions examined the role of power and control within these relationships and also the effect culture has on the use of violence within relationships. Four of the participants reported that the men with whom they were in relationships when they were arrested attempted to get power and control over them. Two participants believed their partners wanted to be controlled by them. Three participants reported that they and their partners wanted power and control over each other and one participant stated that both she and her partner wanted respect, not power and control. The question about culture received a wide array of responses, but the overall consensus was that the culture in which we live does have an impact on the use of violence within relationships, specifically the acceptance of violence in relationships. One participant stated, “I believe that some cultures are more accepting of violence from men towards women,” whereas another participant pointed to the pervasive fear women feel that led them to use violence: “I believe women are scared and there only thoughts are to protect themselves somehow.”

Conflict Tactics Scale-2 and the Contextual Relationship Measure

The CTS-2 scores were calculated next to see what patterns emerged from the subscales regarding the participant's use of violence and her partner's reported use of violence. As can be seen in Appendix E, the CTS-2 is composed of five subscales including (a) Physical Assault, (b) Injury, (c) Psychological Aggression, (d) Sexual Coercion, and (e) Negotiation. Each subscale has a different maximum possible score and indicates whether there is a history of this type of conflict tactic. For the Negotiation subscale, the possible range is 0-150, with a higher score indicating more use of negotiation skills. The Psychological Aggression subscale has a possible range of 0-200, with a higher score indicating more use of psychological violence. The Physical Assault subscale has a range of 0-300, with a higher score indicating more use of physical aggression. The Injury subscale has a range of 0-150, with higher scores indicating more injuries the individual has received. The Sexual Coercion subscale has a range of 0-175, with higher scores indicating more use of sexually coercive actions. Descriptive statistics were computed for the subscales of the CTS-2. Tables 1 and 2 present means and standard deviations for participants' scores, and those for a sample of incarcerated women (Jones et al., 2002) for comparison purposes.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for CTS-2 Scores for Women Arrested for Domestic Violence Compared to a Sample of Incarcerated Women

	Current Sample		Incarcerated Sample	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Negotiation	81.9	46.7	71.9	46.2
Psychological	48.7	28.4	47.6	45.1
Physical	10.8	11.4	30.8	47.0
Injury	1.9	2.2	15.9	17.8
Sexual Abuse	8.3	10.9	10.9	17.9

Note. Statistics for the incarcerated sample were obtained from published research by Jones et al., 2002.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for CTS-2 Scores for Women Arrested for Domestic Violence Ratings of Their Partners Compared to a Sample of Incarcerated Women's Ratings of Their Partners

	Current Sample		Incarcerated Sample	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Negotiation	59.7	34.3	56.8	43.2
Psychological	48.2	31.2	62.9	58.0
Physical	11.3	12.9	78.4	91.3
Injury	2.8	3.4	41.1	50.5
Sexual Abuse	12.2	18.3	31.5	38.1

Note. Statistics for the incarcerated sample were obtained from published research by Jones et al., 2002.

Once the CTS-2 subscale scores were calculated, the information gathered from the CRM was integrated. Specifically, the information gathered from the open response sections of the measure was connected with the responses from the CTS-2. This information provided examples of the incidents in which the participants used violence against their partners and their partners used violence against them and provided context that was lacking from the CTS-2 scores alone. For example, on the CRM, if the participant reported that she engaged in pushing her partner during an argument to get her partner who was slapping her off of her and this is the only time she had done so, the participant's higher Physical Assault score on the CTS-2 would be better explained as self-defense. Therefore, this information provided a more accurate understanding of the amount of violence the participant used and experienced due to the ability to know the context of the action. The doctoral-level graduate student and I made note of these changes as we examined the information on the individual women holistically while identifying into which typology the woman may fit. By utilizing this process, four distinct typologies emerged: Self-Defense, Primary Perpetrator, Mutual Violence, and Mutual Violence-Male Dominated.

Description of the Typologies

The two most frequent typologies found in the current study were Self-Defense and Mutual Violence, each having four participants. The four women placed in the Self-Defense category tended to use violence against their partners in only defense against their partners' abuse. They tended to have no history of using violence against their current partners other than the incidents for which they were arrested. They all had a history of being victims of abuse within past romantic relationships. Their partners were reported to have higher scores in physical and psychological aggression per the participants' self-reports. The majority of women in this category reported a family history of violence that they witnessed, as well as continued distant relationships from their families. Two out of the four women reported being victims of childhood violence.

Women in the Mutual Violence category engaged in violence toward their partners as frequently as their partners were violent against them. Four of the 12 participants were placed into this typology. The reported use of physical violence was low for both partners within these relationships, but the reported use of psychological aggression was high. The women in this category tended to have a history of being victims of abuse within romantic relationships, with some witnessing abuse within their families of origin. The participants' partners tended to have histories of being physically abusive to a more severe degree than the current use of violence within their relationships. Overall, it would seem that the women in this category were previous victims of violence and now are more reactive within their current relationships, possibly out of fear of being abused again.

The third category was labeled Mutual Violence-Male Dominated. Two out of the 12 women fit the description of this category. These women did engage in violence toward their partners, but their partners’ use of violence was more frequent and severe. Their use of violence focused more on psychological violence or minor use of physical violence, such as pushing their partners, but the men used more severe forms of violence such as slapping the participants. Within the relationships, there were histories of more severe physical violence used by the men against the participants. Both individuals in the couple had low scores in regard to use of healthy negotiation tactics as reported by the participants.

The last category was labeled Primary Perpetrator and included two women. Women in this category tended to be the more dominant and violent individual within their romantic relationships. They were reportedly more likely than their partners to be moderately psychologically aggressive and slightly physically aggressive. All women within this category had a history of being victims of abuse within previous romantic relationships. They also had slightly lower scores in negotiation compared to the women in other typologies. They described themselves as “wearing the pants” in their relationships and felt pressure from their partners to take the lead within their relationships. They discussed feelings of frustration and insecurities as reasons that led to their use of violence against their partners. The means for each typology by subscale can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of CTS-2 Scores by Typology of Women and Their Partners' Use of Violence

	Self Defense		Mutual Violence		Primary Perpetrator		Mutual Violence-Male Dominated	
	Participant	Partner	Participant	Partner	Participant	Partner	Participant	Partner
	M *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*	*M* *(SD)*
Neg	71.0 (58.8)	39.5 (24.7)	113.8 (17.5)	77.8 (19.8)	84.0 (65.1)	89.0 (58.0)	38.0 (9.7)	34.5 (24.5)
Psyc	36.8 (23.5)	43.0 (23.5)	61.8 (19.7)	78.3 (27.0)	78.5 (24.8)	29.0 (5.7)	16.5 (17.7)	17.5 (21.9)
PA	3.8 (6.2)	14.8 (20.1)	15.0 (13.2)	10.5 (7.4)	48.5 (9.2)	5.0 (0.0)	6.5 (9.2)	12.5 (17.7)
Inj	0.3 (0.5)	2.5 (4.4)	3.0 (2.6)	3.8 (3.5)	3.0 (2.8)	4.5 (2.1)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
SC	4.8 (5.7)	13.5 (24.5)	13.5 (13.4)	22.8 (16.9)	2.5 (3.5)	0.5 (0.7)	12.5 (17.7)	0.0 (0.0)

Note. Neg = Negotiation; Psyc = Psychological Aggression; PA = Physical Assault; Inj = Injury; SC = Sexual Coercion.

Similar categories were found by M. P. Johnson (2006). His category of Violent Resistance is similar to the current typology labeled Self-Defense. Violent Resistance was described as a relationship in which one non-controlling partner, who can be violent, is in a relationship with a violent and controlling partner. M. P. Johnson's category of Intimate Terrorism is similar to the Primary Perpetrator typology found in the current study. This type of relationship was described as including a partner who is violent and controlling and a nonviolent partner. M. P. Johnson described Situational Couple Violence as a situation in which both partners are violent at times but neither attempts to control the other. This may be similar to the Mutual Violence category found in the present study, in which both partners tended to engage in high levels of psychological aggression and little physical aggression. M. P. Johnson's final category was labeled Mutual Violence, described as a relationship in which both partners are violent and controlling. This type of relationship was not found within the present sample. The category of Mutual Violence-Male Dominated was seen in the present sample but described a qualitatively different category than that found by M. P. Johnson.

Research Question 2: Unique Characteristics of Women Arrested for Domestic Violence

The unique characteristics associated with women's use of violence identified through this project come from the qualitative information gathered through the interview-style questions and the open-ended responses to the CRM. Different patterns were found to be associated with the different typologies found. Therefore, when describing women who use violence against their romantic partners, it is not useful to make general, global statements. The identification of typologies could provide a way to describe differences among a large population so future research on women arrested for domestic violence can be more accurate and applicable.

Women who were categorized in the Self-Defense typology typically used physical violence in situations in which they were being physically attacked. For example, one participant explained how she left bruises on her partner while defending herself from his attack. Overall, these women's use of violence was reportedly less severe than that of their male counterparts. Even when utilizing psychological aggression, the majority of the statements they made towards their partner were in defense. One participant admitted to calling her partner "stupid" but explained that she had done so in response to feeling hurt by his name-calling. She hoped that he would think his name calling didn't hurt her and would therefore stop. These women also had a prior history of being victims of domestic violence. They believed in equal gender roles within romantic relationships. They felt let down by the criminal justice system by the handling of their arrests and felt misidentified as perpetrators of violence.

The participants who were placed in the Mutual Violence category used physical aggression as much as their male partners, with both parties seldom using physical violence and using psychological aggression more commonly. These women did have histories of being victims of violence in former romantic relationships. Witnessing family of origin violence was quite common as well. Individuals within this category reported relationships with partners who had histories of physical aggression.

The women labeled as Primary Perpetrators utilized more physical and psychological aggression towards their partners. They used negotiation skills less often than other women arrested for domestic violence. The women in this category reported that their current partners were not physically violent towards them. All the women in this category reported significant histories of being victims of domestic violence in former relationships. These women took responsibility for their actions that led to arrest and admitted to being the aggressors within their relationships. They saw gender roles as equal but had the belief that their current partners looked to them to play the more masculine dominant role, which included being the provider.

Women placed in the Mutual Violence-Male Dominated typology utilized less severe forms of violence at similar rates as their partners, but their partners utilized more severe forms of violence in a higher rate. The characteristics associated with the women in the Mutual Violence-Male Dominated category may be better explained by time spent in the relationship. The two women placed in this category had not been in their present relationships as long as women in the other categories. It may be that these women would later be classified as being victims of violence (rather than equal users of violence) because it appeared their use of violence was self-defensive for the most part. Rarely, if ever, did they report being violent without being prompted by some insult or attack by their partners.

Research Question 3: The Impact of the Interview-Style Questions:
An Investigation of Bronfenbrenner's Model

The last research question in this study was whether Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological systems model provided an appropriate framework in which women's use of violence could be understood. In order to explore this question, the information gathered from the interview-style questions needed to be examined to determine whether the areas in which Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model provided clarification of how the participants used violence, which behaviors were associated with this violence, and which experiences were related. When originally inspecting the data, the information gathered from the interview-style questions was examined first followed by the scores from the CTS-2 subscales and the qualitative information gathered from the CRM. To test what impact the interview-style questions developed utilizing Bronfenbrenner's model had, the order of analyzing the data was changed. The doctoral-level graduate student and I first calculated the subscale scores of the CTS-2 and separately examined the participants' scores placing them in the typology thought to describe them. Next, the qualitative information gathered from the CRM was added and inspected by the doctoral-level graduate student and I with each separately placing the participants in the typology they thought best. The main researcher and the doctoral-level graduate student then compared each other's categorizations and were found to have 100% agreement in what typology we best felt matched the individual participants. Finally, the typology placement utilizing only the CTS-2 and CRM was compared with the classifications found once the information from the interview-style questions was integrated. As can be seen in Table 4, several women who originally fit one description ended up being better suited for a different category once the information from interview-style questions were added. The additional information provided by the interview-style questions created a more holistic view of women's use of violence and could assist in explaining why different conclusions are found throughout the literature.

Table 4

Typology Categorization Based on the CTS-2 and CRM Alone vs. the CTS-2, CRM, and the Interview-Style Questions

	CTS-2 and CRM	All Measures
Participant 1	Primary Perpetrator	Primary Perpetrator
Participant 2	Mutual Violence	Mutual Violence
Participant 3	Mutual Violence	Self-Defense
Participant 4	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated	Self-Defense
Participant 5	Mutual Violence	Mutual Violence
Participant 6	Mutual Violence	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated
Participant 7	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated
Participant 8	Mutual Violence	Mutual Violence
Participant 9	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated	Self-Defense
Participant 10	Mutual Violence-Male Dominated	Self-Defense
Participant 11	Primary Perpetrator	Primary Perpetrator
Participant 12	Mutual Violence	Mutual Violence

Emerging Theory of Women's Use of Violence

Grounded theory was utilized as an overall framework in creating and guiding the current research project. Although grounded theory is typically used when conducting qualitative research, it can also be utilized when examining quantitative data, as in the present study. The main goal of grounded theory is to create a theory that is grounded in the data collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers are often discouraged from reading literature on the phenomenon they are examining before they collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2012). This is a difference of note between the classic use of the grounded theory method and the current project. Although I read relevant literature beforehand, the identification of patterns within the data that were then used in creating an overall theory still was guided by grounded theory guidelines. In addition, the data set was examined by an outside researcher who did not have expertise in the area of women's use of violence, and she identified the same patterns that I discovered.

The main premise of the hypotheses developed from the data set is that typologies can be used in understanding the discrepant findings of researchers in the field of women's use of violence in romantic relationships, specifically how often women use violence and in what manner. Four main typologies were found by utilizing methods set forth in grounded theory. By utilizing typologies such as the ones identified in the present study, researchers would be able to identify the population of women they are examining more accurately. Typologies could explain why family violence researchers tend to find that women use as much violence as men (they may be sampling women from the Mutual Violence or Mutual Violence-Male Dominated typologies), but feminist researchers tend to find that men are more violent than women (they may be sampling women from the Self-Defense typology or a typology of victim only).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to gain a better understanding of women's use of violence within heterosexual romantic relationships. Although much research has been completed on women's use of domestic violence, there is controversy about the reasons why there seems to be an increase in the number of women being arrested and charged with domestic violence in recent years. Two main theories emerged from the literature: the family violence perspective and the feminist perspective.

Family violence researchers have stated that women's violence is on the rise due to changing gender roles and greater acceptance of violence in general. The theory is that women have always been violent, but stricter arrest laws have brought this phenomenon to the awareness of the greater public (Straus, 2006). Feminists have posited that the increase in the number of women being arrested for domestic violence is a result of harsher arrest laws in which police officers are forced to make arrests on the scene without taking the context of the violence into consideration (Miller, 2001). Feminist theory also rests on the assumption that the method in which domestic violent behavior is measured creates an inaccurate picture of women's use of violence. This theory posits that much of the violence women engage in is in self-defense, but because the measures being used (most often the CTS-2) do not include contextual variables, higher rates of domestic violence are being found (Kimmel, 2002b).

In the present study, a new emerging theory was developed regarding women's use of violence that can help explain the discrepant findings in the field as a whole. The main premise of this third emerging theory is that different typologies exist that explain women's use of violence in romantic relationships. Family violence and feminist researchers may both be right, but they may be examining different types of women. This discussion begins with a summary of the results of the present research, followed by a more detailed examination of these findings and how they relate to the previous literature, a comparison of typologies of men and women arrested for domestic violence, a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research, and finally a description of the implications of the research.

Summary of Results

Overall, the current study provided evidence for the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological systems model as a framework to better understand women's use of violence in romantic relationships. The interview questions provided context to the violence the women described on both the CTS-2 and the CRM. Through these questions, characteristics were found that assisted with the development of four typologies of women arrested for domestic violence: (a) Self-Defense, (b) Primary Perpetrator, (c) Mutual Violence, and (d) Mutual Violence-Male Dominated.

These four typologies can be used to explain the discrepancies found in the research on this area and connect the findings of family violence and feminist researchers. It may be that family violence researchers are sampling women who would be best described as being part of the Mutual Violence or Mutual Violence-Male Dominated typologies, where feminist researchers may sample women who would be described as part of the Self-Defense typology or are primary victims of abuse. In a review of literature by Archer (2002), it was noted the feminist researchers tend to study women involved in shelter services and the criminal justice system whereas family researchers tend to sample women from the general population. Different typologies of women and their use of violence are likely to be found depending on the population being sampled. For example, feminist researchers sampling from shelter services may be more likely to find women who either do not perpetrate any violence or only have used violence in self-defense. To gain further evidence for the usefulness of typologies in bridging the discrepant findings, future research would need to investigate whether these proposed typologies are found more or less frequently depending on the population from which the sample is gathered.

Typology Hypothesis

Issues to Consider

The current study examined a very specific population of women arrested for domestic violence: women who had been arrested for domestic violence but had not yet been through the court process. Although four distinct typologies were found within the present sample, the limitations of the sample examined and the low scores on the CTS-2 compared to the possible range of scores for each subscale could impact the typologies identified. More typologies may exist within the larger population of women arrested for domestic violence. It is likely that there are women who perpetrate violence against their romantic partners in more severe ways, which would increase their CTS-2 scores. There also may be typologies where mutual violence is present but the woman perpetrates more severe forms of violence more often. Sampling different populations of women (e.g., general population, criminal justice, treatment centers, and shelter services) may help in identifying the full possible range of typologies.

Previous researchers investigating men’s use of violence within romantic relationships have found that the population in which the sample is being drawn can make a difference in the amount and severity of violence found (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2008; M. P. Johnson, 2001). Men who reported being involved in victim services and/or the legal system related to their use of violence tended to utilize more violent types of behavior more often than men that were sampled from the general population. No research has yet compared women involved in victim services and/or the legal system related to their use of violent behavior to women from the general population.

As noted previously, most researchers coming from the family violence perspective sample the general population, whereas individuals from the feminist perspective tend to sample individuals receiving services from victim services and the legal system. This is an area that would benefit from further examination based on the present findings. The women in the current sample have relatively low scores on the CTS-2 and reported few forms of severe violence. If women's use of violence was the same as men's use of violence, it would be expected that the current sample, gathered from the legal system, would report more use of violence and more severe forms of violence. This was not supported, which could mean the severity and frequency of violence used by women involved in the legal system is very different from their male counterparts. Indeed, previous research comparing men and women enrolled in mandated education classes for being arrested for violence against their partners found several differences between the groups, including women reporting more severe injuries and men more often blaming their partners for the abuse these men perpetrated (Schroffel, 2004). However, it is important to consider that men are typically stronger than women, so more severe injuries would be expected. Future research with larger samples from a wider range of women arrested for domestic violence would be needed to explore further this hypothesis.

Another concept that could possibly explain why the sample gathered from the legal system was found to use little violence overall and less severe forms of violence is that of social desirability. Social desirability is defined as the tendency of individuals to present an overly positive image of themselves. Social desirability has been found to have a significant impact on the findings of research studies, specifically research that inquires about socially unaccepted behaviors (Van de Mortel, 2008). In his meta-review of studies that used measures in attempts to control for social desirability, Van de Mortel (2008) found several studies related to domestic violence offenders (Babcock, Costa, Green, & Eckhardt, 2004; Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005; Mahalik, Aldarondo, Gilbert‐Gokhale, & Shore, 2005). Overall, it appears individuals who engage in domestic violent behaviors do tend to score high on social desirability, which may affect the way they report their own use of violence. This means that low scores on socially undesirable behaviors such as violence may not be accurate representations of the actual violent behaviors perpetrated by the individual. It is important, though, to note that only one of these studies included women who were arrested for using violence against their partners (Henning, et al., 2005) yet these researchers did find that women had similar scores to men on social desirability, with both genders having higher scores than the norm scores. Future research on women arrested for domestic violence may benefit from utilizing social desirability measures.

Characteristics of Women Arrested for Domestic Violence

When examining the differences between the typologies found in the present research, several differences among the experiences of these women are noteworthy and helpful in understanding the reasons why women may use violence in their romantic relationships. One of these areas is the woman's history of being a victim of violence. All the women who participated in the present study reported a history of victimization by a former partner. This past victimization may help to explain why they used violence in their present relationships. For example, women who were placed in the Primary Perpetrator typology reported the most severe and frequent past victimization, which may have prompted these women to get involved in relationships where they felt dominant. In fact, these women reported believing in equal gender roles but feeling that their partners wanted them to play the more traditional masculine role of provider. The histories of these women may have influenced their beliefs about what being dominant means since often, for them, being dominant meant being violent.

Previous research related to women's use of violence provides support for the current findings related to the impact of past victimization. Kernsmith (2005) found that women tended to use violence more often when they felt disrespected or controlled by their partners or out of retaliation for the emotional and physical pain they felt from their partners. Seamans et al. (2007) also found evidence that past history of victimization within romantic relationships seems to be present in the histories of many women who perpetrate violence against their partner. Many of the women in this study discussed using violence as a response to their partners' emotional abuse or in self-defense of a perceived threat from their partners.

Another area based on the current study that is important to examine in creating a theory of why women use violence in their romantic relationships is family histories of violence. Women who were placed in the Mutual Violence typology reported family histories of witnessing violence, with the majority of them reporting being victims of family violence. These women may have learned by watching their families that violence within a relationship is normative. Although the participants described their family lives in negative terms, violence as a means of problem solving may be all that they know. These women also reported being in relationships with partners who had more significant histories of using physical forms of violence against partners than the women in the other categories. Women who grow up witnessing violence may seek out men who act in similar fashion to their families. Other researchers have found evidence that women arrested for domestic violence are likely to report family histories of violence and being victims of childhood abuse (Seamans et al., 2007; Swan et al., 2005).

When comparing women in the Self-Defense typology to women in the Mutual Violence-Male Dominated typology, there were many similarities. Women in both these typologies tended to use violence for self-defense and used less severe forms of violence compared to their partners. Both groups felt that gender roles should be equal. The main difference was the length of time the violence had been happening within their relationships. The women in the Mutual Violence-Male Dominated typology had been in their relationships for a lesser amount of time than the women in the Self-Defense typology. It may be that the amount of time in an abusive relationship impacts the women's responses to violence from their partners. It could be that over time, women stop fighting back as often and, after an extended period of time, only act out violently in self-defense. Women in the Self-Defense typology described using psychological or physical violence only to defend themselves, saw their defensive behavior as unacceptable, and felt guilty about their actions. The women in this category, who seemed to be more victims than perpetrators of violence, also felt the most let down by the criminal justice system. Future research would benefit from examining these findings further, as historically violence has been found to increase over time in relationships where men are violent towards their female partners (Walker, 2009).

Overall, the present research suggests that (a) length of time in an abusive relationship, (b) history and severity of victimization by a former partner, (c) family history of violence, (d) gender role beliefs, and (e) current use of psychological and physical violence are important factors in understanding women's use of violence in romantic relationships. Without examination of these areas, women may be mislabeled and not provided education and services that meet their specific needs.

Typologies of Men and Women Arrested for Domestic Violence

As previously discussed, the present research provides evidence for several important areas that may be related to women's use of violence, including length of time in an abusive relationship, history and severity of victimization by a former partner, family history of violence, gender role beliefs, and current psychological and physical violence. Other researchers who have examined violence within romantic relationships have found similar factors to be important (Emery, 2011; Jacobson & Gottman, 2007; M. P. Johnson, 2006; Swan & Snow, 2002). The current typologies have already been compared to M. P. Johnson's (2006) typology of violence within relationships, with many similarities found. Similarities also exist with other prominent theories of relationship violence and provide support for the validity of examining women's use of violence utilizing typologies and the need for further research.

Jacobson and Gottman (2007) examined men who use violence within romantic relationships and described two main types of men. The first type of man they described was labeled the Pitbull. This type of man who engages in violence against his partner has shown the most benefit from education and counseling services that focus on emotion management and healthy relationship skills. This type of man tends to become angry quickly and strike out at his partner but express remorse afterward. He tends to be involved in dependent relationships with strong feelings of insecurity. These feelings of insecurity and dependence are thought to be what powers the man's anger, causing him to strive for power and control over his partner. The other type of male perpetrator of violence described by Jacobson and Gottman was called a Cobra. A Cobra typically has been a victim of physical or sexual violence, often as a child. It seems this type of man accepts violence as a part of life and as an acceptable manner for resolving conflict. This type of man seems to actually find a certain sense of comfort in abusing his partner, with physiological measurements of heart rates decreasing during violent arguments. A Cobra is less likely to benefit from treatment and typically continues utilizing violence throughout his life.

It is important to note that Jacobson and Gottman (2007) focused their research on men who perpetrate violence rather than on women. Past experience with violence may lead to different current behaviors depending on gender. For example, the current research identified history of childhood victimization and witnessing family violence as common in women in the Mutual Violence typology. This typology describes a relationship in which both partners engage in some forms of mild abuse against each other. This is very different than the description of a Cobra (man) who seems to have accepted violence as an acceptable and justifiable act.

Emery (2011) examined use of violence in relationships by examining contextual variables and the impact of changes that happen over time in relationships. Through four main questions used to classify and explore acts of violence within relationships, the author identified several types of violent acts including anarchic acts, acts of violent conflict, acts of insurrection, acts of retaliation, acts of inconsistent control, and acts of consistent control. By examining these patterns of violence, along with the type of violent acts perpetrated, Emery described five different types of domestic violence. He labeled these different types of domestic violence the following: Anarchic type, Violent Conflict, Tolerant Dictatorship, Despotic Dictatorship, and Totalitarian Dictatorship.

Anarchic domestic violence was described as mutual violence that occurs within relationships that is motivated by the meeting of a need. Emery (2011) described relationships in which drug abuse is prevalent as commonly having this type of domestic violence present due to drug addicts' difficulty at abiding by norms set within their relationships. The author also believed this stress of unconventional relationship norms and abidance to them are compounded by the lack of resources typically found in relationships in which drugs are present. Emery hypothesized that this type of domestic violence would be perpetrated equally by men and women.

Violent Conflict domestic violence was described as occurring in a relationship in which power is typically shared by both partners but becomes a struggle in which one partner may attempt to control the other. These power struggles tend to be related to everyday activities, and over time one partner may accrue more power and control over the other. Overall, though, the use of physical force is equal between the partners and tends to involve less severe forms of violence. Both this type of violence and Anarchic domestic violence could be compared to M. P. Johnson's (2006) Situational Couple Violence and the Mutual Violence typology developed from the current data. All of these typologies describe mutual violence with variable relation to attempts at controlling the other partner. They also do not tend to be relationships in which severe forms of physical violence occurs.

Tolerant Dictatorship is typically found in relationships in which the man has strong adherence to masculine gender roles, specifically patriarchal beliefs in regard to the roles men and women play in romantic relationships. This type of violence is typically perpetrated by women who are attempting to exert power over their significant others due to feeling a lack of overall power within the relationships. This type of violence may be similar to the Primary

Perpetrator typology found in the current research. These women may be utilizing forms of physical violence against their non-physically violent partners in reaction to the loss of power and lack of equality within the relationships.

Despotic Dictatorship typically is found in relationships where the man has significant power and control over the female partner. The perpetrator of this type of violence is motivated by a high need for control and internal feelings of low self-esteem and insecurity. A sense of failure in other arenas of the perpetrator's life is often found. For example, the use of more severe forms of violence within a relationship may increase if the perpetrator is having problems at his place of employment. Individuals who utilize this type of violence were often picked on by others when younger and bullied as adolescents. Although failure in the public area of the perpetrator's life can increase the severity and amount of violence, overall there is little predictability as to when the perpetrator may act out violently.

Finally, Totalitarian Dictatorship violence is characterized by an extreme need to control every detail of a romantic partner's life. This extreme need for power and control fosters a sense of justification for use of violence by the perpetrator. Individuals who engage in this pattern of violence tend to have very rigid beliefs about gender roles and a very strong need for order and control. These individuals, who are typically male, tend to use severe physical and psychological abuse to terrorize their partners. Neither this type of violence nor Despotic Dictatorship violence were found in the current research. It may be that due to the connection between strict traditional gender roles and the typically male perpetrator's motivation and justification for his violence, a female counterpart may not be found.

Overall, comparisons of the typologies developed for men and women arrested for domestic violence may highlight some similarities between genders but also highlights the importance of separate studies. Both Jacobson and Gottman (2007) and Emery (2011) discussed the influence of gender expectations on the behaviors of men who use violence. Although gender role expectations and beliefs do seem to differ among the typologies of women found in the current research, the influence of these expectations differs. As expected according to traditional gender roles, none of the current participants discussed a desire to dominate their partners and only women in the Primary Perpetrator typology mentioned pressure to adhere to a more stereotypical masculine role and the desire to have power and control over their partners. Further research may assist with understanding the relationship between gender roles and women's use of violence more clearly.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The current project was limited in several ways, particularly in regard to the participants and overall methods. In reference to the participants, general limitations included the number of participants, the timing in which the participants were invited to complete the study, the lack of demographic information collected, and self-selection. General limitations of the methods included the decision to collect responses on-line, the inability to follow up participants' responses and to verify who was answering the questions, the order the measures were presented, and the possible minimization of the participants' self-reported use of violence. The following paragraphs will discuss these limitations and provide suggestions for how these variables could be minimized in future research.

Participants

First, although theme saturation was met after 12 participants had completed the web survey, having additional participants might have provided a different picture of what the typologies looked like. For example, other research investigating women's use of violence within romantic relationships described women using violence in different ways than found in the current study (M. P. Johnson, 1995; Swan & Snow, 2002). Both of the studies found more typologies of women who use violence and had larger sample sizes. The samples were also gathered from various locations, which may provide a more accurate description of the various types of women who utilize violence. Future researchers could easily address this issue by contacting more women using similar methods or through mass advertisement.

Second, the participants in the current study had been arrested for domestic violence but had not yet been to court. This means that the women who agreed to participate may not have been found guilty of domestic violence, so some of the questions regarding the impact of being labeled a perpetrator of domestic violence may not yet be applicable to the participants. In future research, sampling women who were convicted of the charge of domestic violence may provide more insight into the effect of this label on their feelings about self. Changing the population sampled will also provide more information regarding the reactions of women to their interactions with social systems such as (a) police, (b) courts, (c) medical facilities, (d) religious organizations, and (e) treatment resources. In previous research examining women who have been arrested for domestic violence, it has been found that their interactions with these social systems at times have been negative due to their being labeled a *violent offender* (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). Again, since the current sample had not yet been to court and found guilty or not guilty at the time they were sent the invitation to participate, they may have limited interactions with some of these social systems in general and no interactions with any of these social systems after being labeled by the criminal justice system as guilty of domestic violence. Thus, the current findings can be only applied as a framework for women who have been arrested for domestic violence, not for those found guilty of domestic violence. It is important to note however, that data collection lasted for two months, so some of the participants may have had their court dates by the time they decided to complete the web survey. The experience of being found guilty of domestic violence may significantly impact the participant and change some of her behaviors. One example of a possible change in behavior is these women being less likely to call law enforcement when they are being victimized (Seamans et al., 2007), which could lead to dangerous outcomes. Therefore, future researchers may look to incorporating more quantitative methods to study a broader range of women arrested for domestic violence in order to find more generalizable conclusions.

A third limitation related to the participants was the lack of demographic information collected on the participants. Due to the need to protect the identities of the participants, demographic information was not collected, so assumptions about the participants cannot be made in regard to the impact of age, race/ethnicity, or social class on use of violence. Although no specific national statistics are published related to the impact of demographics of women arrested for domestic violence related to age, race/ethnicity, or social class, there is evidence that these variables could be important to examine.

In regard to age, national statistics have been published describing age groups that are more at risk for being a victim of domestic violence. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) reported that individuals within the age range of 25-54, specifically individuals between the ages of 25-30, were most at risk of being a victim of domestic violence. The majority of individuals arrested for domestic violence were over the age of 30. What these statistics do not show is whether the gender of the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence impacted the average age. Research was also not conducted to investigate whether a relationship existed between the age of the perpetrator or victim and the severity of violence.

In reference to race/ethnicity, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) reported that White women are more likely to be arrested for violent crimes compared to African American women. Overall though, women of color make up more than two thirds of women confined to jails or prisons related to violence crimes (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). Historical mistrust of the criminal justice system may also make it less likely for women of color to contact the police when needed (Wright, 2000). Also, varying gender roles within different racial/ethnic groups may increase the prevalence of mutual partner violence found. For example, in one study by Moss, Pitula, Campbell, and Halstead (1997), African American women were found to be more likely to engage in mutual violence than their Caucasian counterparts. One of the reasons discussed by these women for their use of violence was related to their feeling that if their partner could engage in violence towards them, they had the right to do the same to their partner. This feeling of egalitarian behaviors within relationships was not found in the Caucasian sample. The impact of race on a woman's experience with the criminal justice system appears to be an area in need of further investigation.

Another variable for which evidence exists supporting further examination of its impact on women's use of violence is social class. Many domestic violence researchers have examined the overall impact of social economic status on rates of domestic violence (Browne & Bassuk, 1997; Vogel & Marshall, 2001). The typical conclusion is that the lower the social economic status, the higher the risk for and rates of domestic violence (Vogel & Marshall, 2001). This finding lends support for the need of future researchers to examine the possibility that social class standing may influence women's use of violence. No previous research has been completed that specifically examines the connection between social class and typologies of women who use violence.

Finally, the limitations associated with the participants self-selecting to participate in the web survey are important to note. Although 80 women were invited to participate in the study, theme saturation was met after 12 completed the study. There may be specific characteristics that are different with the women who chose to respond to the request to participate versus the general population of arrestees. Due to a monetary incentive being offered, women with less income may have been more likely to respond faster to the invitation. Women without internet access at home may have been less likely to respond. Having women who only had access to the internet may limit the diversity of the sample, which may potentially limit the ability to identify all possible typologies. Also, women who wanted to tell their stories may have other factors that make them different from other women arrested for domestic violence. For example, it may be that the women who responded to the study were less violent than women who did not respond and therefore were more likely to feel comfortable answering questions about their arrests. The limitations associated with self-selection could be minimized in future studies by increasing the sample size in an attempt to obtain more variety of respondents and therefore also help to make the findings more generalizable.

Methods

Several limitations of the methods were also identified. I collected information utilizing a web survey in order to help limit the possibility of identifying the participants and as a result was unable to control who actually answered the web survey. For instance, an individual could have received the invitation to participate in the study and decided to pass the link to the web survey along to other women she knew to take the web survey because there was a monetary incentive. These women may or may not have met the criteria to be part of the study, yet their answers were included in the results. I attempted to control for this by examining the participants' responses individually to see if any answers stuck out as odd or inappropriate for the web survey. Although there were no obvious instances within the current sample, the possibility still exists.

One limitation of having the qualitative survey (interview-style questions) online was the lack of ability to follow up on the participants' responses. In qualitative methods, the interviews tend to be semi-structured in order to allow for follow-up responses for clarification purposes. For instance, one participant described her role in the relationship she was arrested for as "great but stressful." If the questions had been asked in person, the interviewer would have had the opportunity to clarify what the participant meant by this response. Furthermore, an in-person interviewer would have been available to clarify any questions the participant may have had about the questions. Finally, individuals may have provided more descriptive responses to the questions if they were being asked in person instead of being asked to type out their responses online. Many of the answers to the questions were short and non-descriptive, which may have been in response to the methods by which the questions were asked. On average, individuals are able to talk with more ease and more quickly than they can type out responses. In addition, the web survey as a whole consisted of over 300 questions. The length of the web survey may have negatively influenced the length of the participants' responses. All these limitations could be addressed in future research by asking the questions in person instead of online. This type of project would have to address confidentiality concerns but might provide richer information about why women use violence in their romantic relationships.

A third general limitation of the study was the order in which the measures were presented. The participants first were presented the interview-style questions, followed by the CTS-2 and last the CRM. All the participants were presented the questions in the same order.

The CRM was originally developed to provide additional information that could not be gained from the use of the CTS-2, yet in the current study, the CRM did not provide enough additional information to influence the typology of the participants. This lack of additional information gathered from the CRM may be due to the CRM being placed as the last section of the survey. The participants may have felt they had already provided this information elsewhere in the web survey and therefore did not elaborate in the area provided for open-ended responses. The participants might also have been tired by the time they came to the CRM and therefore provided less information. Future researchers should counterbalance the order of presentation of the different sections in order to examine more accurately the possible impact of the CRM on typology development.

A final general limitation of the study is a limitation discussed in most research related to domestic violence. In the literature on men arrested for domestic violence, minimization of violent behaviors is often discussed (Heckert & Gondolf, 2004). Due to the tendency to minimize socially undesirable behaviors, men arrested for domestic violence tend to deny their actions or make light of the violence they have perpetrated. So, it may be that women are more likely to deny their actions or make light of the violence they have perpetrated. Minimization may have been an issue within the present study as well. However, researchers comparing men and women arrested for domestic violence have found that female offenders tend to take more responsibility for their actions (Schroffel, 2004). So, it may be that women may be more likely to report their behavior accurately. Minimization may not be as much of an issue when examining women, yet Schroffel’s (2004) research does not clarify different typologies of women. It may be that women within the Primary Perpetrator or Mutual Violence typologies act more like abusive men and minimize their actions. Some evidence exists to support this hypothesis (Scott & Straus, 2007). In a study by Scott and Straus (2007) examining a sample from the general population, men and women tended to minimize their abusive actions and engage in partner blame at similar rates. The authors posited that in relationships with mutual low violence, blame and minimization may be equal, whereas relationships in which the man tends to be more violent than the woman, the blame and minimization may be more one-sided. Future researchers need to explore whether different typologies of women act differently in accordance with amount of minimization.

Implications

The main contribution of the present study is the beginning of the development of a typology of women arrested for domestic violence against their romantic partners utilizing questions developed from Bronfenbrenner's (1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) ecological systems model. Discrepant results have been found in the research on women's use of domestic violence, with some researchers finding evidence for use of violence being gender symmetrical and others finding evidence that relationship violence is male dominated. The findings of typologies illustrate the need to examine women's use of domestic violence not as an all-encompassing concept but as a behavior that is used for various reasons in various contexts. This finding also highlights the need to identify better and describe the sample that researchers investigating women arrested for domestic violence are examining. Researchers may be sampling different types of women, and utilizing a model such as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model may help to identify more accurately these differences. The detailed description needed to research this population properly is not often seen in the literature (M. P. Johnson, 2005). If descriptions of the typologies being studied do not become the norm instead of the exception, women could be labeled as perpetrators of domestic violence inaccurately, which could have significant impacts on the individual and this population as a whole.

A woman inaccurately labeled as a perpetrator based on current measurements and viewpoints on domestic violence that only examine the behavior, rather than the context of the action, could be placed in treatment program’s designed to assist violent perpetrators when in reality she was acting in self-defense. Inaccurate labeling may negatively affect individuals’ views of themselves, the mental health treatments they receive, and the criminal justice system itself (Crager, Cousin, & Hardy, 2001). For example, in the current study, the vast majority of women who were not in the Primary Perpetrator typology reported feeling hesitant about contacting the police in the future. This may be due to feeling they were unjustly labeled as offenders when they were engaging in self-defense. These women also may have limited access to victim services, as some agencies do not provide services to women with violent arrest records. This demonstrates not only the need for researchers and clinicians to begin to view women’s use of violence in its context but also the need for the legal system to change its approach to understanding women’s use of violence. By recognizing the need for further development of research and instruments that can recognize typologies, misclassifications and inaccurate referrals can be decreased.

On a broader systemic level, the need to research accurately women’s use of violence is far-reaching. Funding for victim service programs including emergency shelters, mental health treatment, legal assistance, and medical care could be affected by the research conducted in this field. If funders believe that women in general engage in as much domestic violence as men, less funding could be allocated to women’s victim services, which are already struggling financially to keep their doors open (Mary Kay, 2010). Already, the majority of domestic violence shelters nationally are reporting significant increases in requests for services at the same time as significant decreases in federal financial assistance (Mary Kay, 2010). Without having these programs available, victims of domestic violence may be less likely to leave their abusive partners due to lack of housing, financial means, and support.

One other broad systemic area that could be influenced by recognizing the typologies of women who utilize violence is policies regarding domestic violence arrests. Changes to laws and policies related to domestic violence could be developed utilizing a model that recognizes these typologies. Current laws and policies on making arrests for domestic violence vary by state (RADAR, 2008). Pro-arrest and mandated arrest policies were originally developed to help encourage law enforcement to take the stance that domestic violence is a social problem, not a private matter (Miller, 2001). Although these policies do indeed send this message, one unforeseen consequence is the increase of primary victims of domestic violence being arrested and charged as perpetrators of violence. Ideally, a balance between pro-arrest policies and continued education of police officers and court officials could be implemented to recognize better the various typologies of women who may be involved in domestic violence incidents. By having pro-arrest policies, law officials will still be given the message that domestic violence is indeed a social problem, but they will also be encouraged to investigate the incident in more detail instead of being forced to arrest at least one party. Further education on the different reasons why men and women use domestic violence may assist officers in feeling more prepared to make decisions on appropriate charges, arrests, and subsequent referrals for treatment.

In order to decrease the use of violence in relationships, whether perpetrated by a man or woman, evidence-based treatments need to be developed. The typologies found in the present research could assist clinicians and researchers in the development of assessment tools and more appropriate treatment programs. Currently, women who are mandated to domestic violence treatment receive the same curriculum as men arrested for domestic violence. The most popular treatment program is based on the Duluth Model, which integrates concepts identified by female victims of domestic violence including use of power and control, gender roles, and male dominance (Paymar & Barnes, 2007). This model does not appear to be sufficient for women arrested for domestic violence because it does not address the unique needs of the different types of women arrested for domestic violence. The focus on patriarchal beliefs and gender roles would not be helpful for a woman who was arrested for an act of self-defense and actually is the primary victim of abuse.

Programs that focus on past and current victimization issues, family history, coping skills, mental health concerns, gender roles, safety planning, and healthy communication skills may be better suited for the experiences of some women arrested for domestic violence based on the current research findings. These variables could be adapted to focus on what is needed to assist in developing safer and healthier relationships regardless of what typology may best describe them. For example, a woman who may be classified as a Primary Perpetrator may benefit from treatment that focuses on development of healthy coping skills and processing of past and present victimization issues. Indeed this program may be more appropriate compared to the Duluth Model that was developed based on the assumption that men perpetrate violence due partly to the cultural expectations placed on masculinity. Developing assessments utilizing the information gathered on the different factors associated with the varying typologies could be the first step in creating evidence-based treatment for these women and, therefore, in decreasing violence within relationships.

Because no assessments currently exist that specifically address the different typologies of women arrested for domestic violence, the interview-style questions used in the present study could be utilized to assist mental health clinicians who work with women arrested for domestic violence. Once the typology is identified, treatment planning could be guided by the specific needs of the woman instead of the assumption that all violence within a relationship is the same. The specific questions could easily be integrated into a clinical interview and would provide the clinician with more contextual information than other assessment tools currently used to measure domestic violence.

Previous research has demonstrated the need for development of gender-specific evidence-based treatment for perpetrators of domestic violence (Hamberger & Potente, 1994; Henning & Feder, 2004; Henning et al., 2003). The current research adds to this research that has identified unique characteristics of women arrested for relationship violence and could be used to create a treatment model that addresses these needs. Further, recognition of the existence of typologies could assist in developing multiple treatment modalities with recognition that not all women engage in violence for similar reasons and, therefore, not all would benefit from the same treatment and education. The findings of the present research can be utilized by researchers and clinicians alike. The recognition that different typologies exist can help bridge the gap between family violence and feminist researchers in order to create a more complete picture of why women use violence within their romantic relationships. Clinicians can begin to develop treatment protocols that better reflect the needs of women mandated to treatment in the hopes of decreasing domestic violence.

Overall, the main goal of the current study was to gain a better understanding of women arrested for domestic violence. Two main conclusions can be made based on the information gathered. First, women arrested for domestic violence engage in violent behavior for different reasons and in different ways. Second, future research would be benefitted by recognition of the existence of typologies in order for treatment and education to be tailored to fit the experiences of these women.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP MEASURE

Directions: Please answer the following questions and the necessary follow-up questions.

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner**(s):

1. Told you that you cannot talk to friends or family members he/she doesn't approve of? Yes No If YES, please answer 1a and 1b and 1c.

1a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

1b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

1c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what did you want to talk about, who did you want to talk to, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

2. Told your partner he/she cannot talk to friends or family without your approval? Yes No If YES, please answer 2a and 2b

2a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

2b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what did he/she want to talk about, who did he/she want to talk to, his/her reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

3. Not allowed you to know about the family finances? Yes No
If YES, please answer 3a and 3b and 3c

3a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

3b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

3c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did he/she prevent you from knowing, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

4. Not allowed your partner to know about the family finances? Yes No
If YES, please answer 4a and 4b.

4a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

4b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what did you prevent him/her from knowing, /her reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

5. Insulted you or called you bad names? Yes No
If YES, please answer 5a and 5b and 5c.

5a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

5b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

5c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

6. Insulted your partner or called them bad names? Yes No
If YES, please answer 6a and 6b.

6a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

6b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

7. Verbally threatened you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 7a and 7b and 7c.

7a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

7b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner   Former Partner   Both current and former partner

7c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

8. Verbally threatened your partner?   Yes   No
If YES, please answer 8a and 8b

8a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

8b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, his/her reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

9. Thrown objects at you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 9a and 9b and 9c.

9a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

9b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

9c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

10. Thrown objects at your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 10a and 10b.

10a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

10b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, his/her reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

11. Pushed and/or shoved you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 11a and 11b and 11c.

11a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

11b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

11c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

12. Pushed and/or shoved your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 12a and 12b.

12a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

12b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, his/her reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

13. Twisted or grabbed you by the arm? Yes No
If YES, please answer 13a and 13b and 13c.

13a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

13b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

13c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

14. Twisted or grabbed your partner's arm? Yes No
If YES, please answer 14a and 14b.

14a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

14b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, his/her reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

15. Tried to stop you from physically getting away from them? Yes No
If YES, please answer 15a and 15b and 15c.

15a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

15b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

15c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, how did he/she try to stop you, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

16. Tried to stop your partner from physically trying to get away from you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 16a and 16b

16a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

16b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, how did you try to stop them, his/her reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

17. Broken an object when arguing? Yes No
If YES, please answer 17a and 17b and 17c.

17a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

17b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

17c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

18. Broken an object when arguing with your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 18a and 18b.

18a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

18b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, his/her reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

19. Told you that your opinions and/or feelings were stupid? Yes No
If YES, please answer 19a and 19b and 19c.

19a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

19b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

19c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what was the topic you were talking about, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

20. Told your partner their feelings and/or opinions were stupid? Yes No
If YES, please answer 20a and 20b.

20a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

20b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what was the topic you were talking about, their reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

21. Kicked you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 21a and 21b and 21c.

21a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

21b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

21c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

22. Kicked your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 22a and 22b.

22a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

22b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

23. Slapped you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 23a and 23b and 23c.

23a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

23b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

23c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

24. Slapped your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 24a and 24b.

24a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

24b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

25. Left bruises and or cuts on you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 25a and 25b and 25c.

25a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

25b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

25c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

26. Left bruises or cuts on your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 26a and 26b.

26a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

26b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

27. Hit you with a closed fist and/or punched you Yes or No
If YES, please answer 1a and 1b and 1c.

1a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

1b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

27c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

28. Hit your partner with a closed fist and/or punched them? Yes No
If YES, please answer 28a and 28b.

28a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

28b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

29. Grabbed you around the neck and/or strangled you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 29a and 29b and 29c.

29a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

29b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

29c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

30. Grabbed your partner around the neck and/or strangled your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 30a and 30b.

30a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

30b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, your partner’s reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

31. Used guilt or threats of cheating to convince you to perform sexual acts? Yes No
If YES, please answer 31a and 31b and 31c.

31a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

31b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner   Former Partner   Both current and former partner

31c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what was the situation, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

32. Used guilt or threats of cheating to convince your partner to perform sexual acts? Yes No
If YES, please answer 32a and 32b.

32a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

32b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what was the situation, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

33. Disciplined children in a way that made you uncomfortable? Yes No
If YES, please answer 33a and 33b and 33c.

33a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

33b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

33c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what type of discipline was used, what did the child do, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

34. Disciplined children in a way that made your partner uncomfortable? Yes No
If YES, please answer 34a and 34b.

34a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

34b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what type of discipline was used, what did the child do, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

35. Forced you into a sexual activity you did not want to do? Yes No
If YES, please answer 35a and 35b and 35c.

35a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

35b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

35c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the situation arise, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

36. Forced your partner to do a sexual activity he/she did not want to do? Yes No
If YES, please answer 36a and 36b.

36a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

36b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did situation arise, their reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

37. Used a weapon against you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 37a and 37b and 37c.

37a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

37b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

37c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

38. Used a weapon against your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 38a and 38b.

38a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

38b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

39. Caused an injury that required medical care? Yes No
If YES, please answer 39a and 39b and 39c

39a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

39b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

39c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

40. Caused an injury that required medical care? Yes No
If YES, please answer 40a and 40b.

40a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

40b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, their reaction, etc.).

In your current and/or former relationships, **has your partner(s):**

41. Burned you? Yes No
If YES, please answer 41a and 41b and 41c.

41a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

41b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

41c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

42. Burned your partner? Yes No
If YES, please answer 42a and 42b

42a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

42b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (how did the disagreement begin, over what, was the behavior in self-defense, your partner's reaction, etc.).

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43. Restricted your access to money? Yes No
If YES, please answer 5a and 5b and 5c.

43a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

43b. Please circle who was the perpetrator of this action.

Current Partner Former Partner Both current and former partner

5c. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what type of purchase was involved, what were the justifications used, your reaction, etc.).

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In your current and/or former relationships, have **you**

44. Restricted your partner’s access to money? Yes No
If YES, please answer 6a and 6b.

44a. How often has this action taken place?

a. 1-5 times
b. 6-10 times
c. more than 10 times

44b. Please describe the most recent incident or a typical incident (what type of purchase was involved, what were the justifications used, their reaction, etc.).

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

WOMEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE: AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL

You are asked to be a subject in a research study conducted by Sara Byczek, Dr. Christine MacDonald, and Dr. Debra Leggett from the Department of Communication Disorders and, Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology at Indiana State University. This study is being undertaken as part of Sara Byczek's doctoral thesis. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. Please read the letter below and contact me if you have any questions before deciding to take the survey.

You have been asked to participate in this study because you have been arrested for domestic violence against your partner. By agreeing to answer the questions, it is not in any way an admission of guilt for this charge. The goal of the current study is to better understand women's use of violence in romantic relationships. About 12 women will be asked to volunteer to answer the questions. To be eligible to volunteer, the relationship you were in which you were arrested for must have been a heterosexual relationship. You also must be over 18 years of age.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study should help us better understand women's use of violence in relationships.

- **PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

The link at the bottom of this form contains the website where the questions about your relationship will be asked. You may skip any questions which you do not feel comfortable answering. The amount of time needed to complete the questions will range depending on your own history. It may take anywhere from 1 to 3 hours. The last page of the online questions will ask for an address to which your 25 dollar incentive will be sentself. Your name will not be asked, only an address.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are risks in participating in this study. You will be asked to answer questions about sensitive experiences from your past and present relationships. If you get upset while answering the questions, you are free to stop at any time. I have included a list of phone numbers you can call to seek counseling. I will not have your name so it will not be connected to your answers. If you feel that answering any question might incriminate you in any way, do not answer that question. If a judge subpoenas me, I will provide any information required.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are no direct benefits to you for being part of this study, but there may be benefits for society at large. Currently our understanding of domestic violence is based on studies of men; this study will help us see if that understanding fits women's use of violence in relationships.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

As an incentive, after you are finished with the questions, if you wish, I will send you a gift card for $25.00. If you do not answer all questions, you may still receive the gift card.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

There are no names attached to the information you provide except for contact information for the gift card, if you wish. On the last page of the survey, you will be directed to a separate link asking for your name and address. This is done in order to separate your name from the answers you provide. Only the researchers will have access to the information collected.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal will not cause consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Sara Byczek at 313-585-0532 or sbyczek@indstate.edu. You may also contact Dr. Debra Leggett with questions at debra.leggett@indstate.edu or Dr. Christine MacDonald at Chris.MacDonald@indstate.edu.

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or e-mail the IRB at irb@indstate.edu. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with ISU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

- Here is the website for the study if you wish to participate : https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RGM3HX3

IRB REFERENCE #: 12-068
Approval April 7th

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW-STYLE QUESTIONS

Individual-Level Questions

1. How would you describe your role in the relationship you were in when you were arrested?
2. Has your partner been violent toward you before or used threats of violence?
   a. Please describe incidents of violence within this relationship.
   b. How long has this violence been happening?
3. Have you used violence or threats of violence against your partner in the past?
   a. Please describe incidents in which you used violence.
4. Have you ever sought counseling for any mental health concerns? If so, please describe the context and experience.

Microsystem Questions

1. Have you been in a romantic relationship before the one during which you were arrested in which you used violence or threats of violence?
   a. If so tell me about these relationships
2. Have you been in a romantic relationship before the one during which you were arrested in which violence was used against you?
   a. If so tell me about these relationships
3. How were disagreements resolved in your family when you were growing up?
   a. Was violence used in your family?

   b. As a child, were you a victim of violence?

4. How would you describe your relationship with your family when you were growing up?
5. How would you describe your relationship with your family presently?

Exosystem Questions

1. What is your personal reaction to being labeled a perpetrator of domestic violence by the criminal justice system?
2. Do you feel that your involvement with the criminal justice system will change your likelihood of contacting the police in the future?
3. What is your personal reaction to the criminal justice system's handling of your case? (look for re-victimization issues)
4. How has being arrested for domestic violence affected your relationships with others (including your partner), your work, your self-identity, and your life in general?
5. Have you ever had interactions with the medical field related to violence within romantic relationships? If so, please describe the helpfulness of these agencies.
6. Have you ever talked about your relationship to an individual associated with a religious organization? If so, please describe the helpfulness of these agencies.
7. Have you ever sought out services from social service agencies such as domestic violence hotlines or shelter services? If so, please describe your experience.

Macrosystem Questions

1. What are your personal beliefs of what a woman's role is? A man's role? Where do you think you got these beliefs? (assess for family's history and cultural messages)

2. What do you feel your partner's beliefs are about a woman's role? A man's role? Where do you think he got these beliefs from? (assess for male's family history including abuse and victimization)
3. Do you feel that you and/or your partner want control or power over each other? Explain.
4. How do you believe that the culture in which you live affects use of violence in romantic relationships?

APPENDIX D: THEMES FOUND FROM INTERVIEW-STYLE QUESTIONS REGARDING WOMEN'S USE OF VIOLENCE

How would you describe your role in the relationship you were in when you were arrested?	Provider (4)	Aggressor (2)	Victim (3)
Has your partner been violent toward you before or used threats of violence?	Yes he has been violent (7)	No he has not been violent (5)	
How long has this violence been happening?	Less than a year (2)	Over a year (7)	
Have you used violence or threats of violence against your partner in the past?	Yes (7)	No (5)	
Please describe incidents in which you used violence	Aggressor (5)	Self Defense (2)	Never used violence again (3)
Have you ever sought counseling for any mental health concerns	Yes (7)	No (5)	
If so, please describe the context and experience.	Helped to stop violence (1)	Still Struggle with mental health concerns (4)	Did not have a good experience (2)
Have you been in a romantic relationship before the one during which you were arrested in which you used violence or threats of violence?	Yes (0)	No (12)	

Have you been in a romantic relationship before the one during which you were arrested in which violence was used against you?	Yes (3)	No (9)	
If so, tell me about these relationships?	Physical and emotional abuse (2)	Physical, emotional and sexual abuse (1)	
How were disagreements resolved in your family when you were growing up?	Unhealthy means (9)	Healthy means (1)	Did not witness disagreements resolved (2)
Was violence used in your family?	Yes (7)	No (5)	
As a child, were you a victim of violence?	Yes (4)	No (8)	
How would you describe your relationship with your family when you were growing up?	Negative (6)	Positive (4)	Sheltered parenting (2)
How would you describe your relationship with your family presently?	Better than before (3)	Negative (3)	Good (6)
What is your personal reaction to being labeled a perpetrator of domestic violence by the criminal justice system?	Feel bad (7)	Feel bad and not heard (4)	
Do you feel that your involvement with the criminal justice system will change your likelihood of contacting the police in the future?	Yes (8)	No (3)	
Have you ever had interactions with the medical field related to violence within romantic relationships?	Yes (0)	No (12)	
Have you ever talked about your relationship to an individual associated with a religious organization?	Yes (3)	No (9)	
If so, please describe the helpfulness of these agencies.	Calming/positive (3)		

Have you ever sought out service agencies such as a domestic violence hotline, or shelter services?	Yes (2)	No (10)	
If so, please describe your experience.	Positive, received help (2)		
What are your personal beliefs of what a woman's role	Equal to men (6)	Traditional feminine role (4)	Open to anything (1)
A man's role?	Equal to women (4)	Traditional masculine role (6)	Open to anything (1)
Where do you think you got these beliefs?	Family (7)	Church (3)	Society (3)
What do you feel your partner's beliefs are about a woman's role?	Traditional feminine role (8)	Traditional masculine role (1)	Equal (2)
A man's role?	Traditional masculine role (8)	Flexible to what the woman wants (1)	Equal (2)
Where do you think he got these beliefs from?	Family (10)	Media (2)	Church (2)
Do you feel that you and/or your partner want control or power over each other?	Partner does (4)	Participant does (2)	Both do (3)
How do you believe that the culture in which you live affects use of violence in romantic relationships?	Culture does impact (8)	Not sure (3)	

APPENDIX E: WOMEN ARRESTED FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THEIR PARTNERS' SCORES ON THE CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE-2 SUB-SCALES

	Negotiation	Psychological Aggression	Physical Assault	Injury	Sexual Coercion	Past History*
Participant 1	38	61	16	1	5	Inj
Participant 1 Partner	48	25	5	3	1	Psych
Participant 2	123	37	1	0	25	Psych, PA, Inj, SC
Participant 2 Partner	98	54	2	0	25	Psych, Neg, PA, Inj, SC
Participant 3	77	25	2	0	0	PA and Inj
Participant 3 Partner	26	45	1	1	4	Psych, PA, Inj, SC
Participant 4	44	38	13	1	15	PA
Participant 4 Partner	48	35	44	9	0	Psych
Participant 5	133	82	20	2	0	PA
Participant 5 Partner	91	105	11	2	0	PA and SC
Participant 6	45	29	0	0	0	Neg, Psych, PA

Participant 6 Partner	52	33	0	0	0	Neg, Psych, PA
Participant 7	31	4	13	0	25	Neg, Psych, PA, Inj
Participant 7 Partner	17	2	25	0	0	Neg, Psych, PA
Participant 8	94	72	31	4	4	Inj
Participant 8 Partner	65	98	20	5	41	Psych, PA
Participant 9	150	69	0	0	0	Psych, PA
Participant 9 Partner	70	74	2	0	50	Neg, PA, Inj
Participant 10	13	15	0	4	0	
Participant 10 Partner	14	18	12	0	0	Inj
Participant 11	130	96	29	5	0	
Participant 11 Partner	130	33	5	6	0	
Participant 12	105	56	8	6	25	
Participant 12 Partner	57	56	9	8	25	

Note. Neg = Negotiation; Psyc = Psychological Aggression; PA = Physical Assault; Inj= Injury; SC = Sexual Coercion.