

CHAPTER 19

INTIMATE-PARTNER VIOLENCE

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19.1. INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH the precise extent of intimate-partner violence (IPV) is difficult to estimate, reported prevalence rates in the United States and other countries are alarming, ranging from one-quarter to over one-half of the adult population depending on the data source. These rates and the wide range of social, financial, and physical and mental health consequences of IPV highlight a major public health problem. The economic cost of IPV in the United States alone has been estimated at a staggering \$5.8 billion, taking into account the costs of health care, mental health care, and lost productivity and earnings (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control 2003), which suggests that all of us are affected either directly or indirectly by IPV. Despite decades of research on IPV, unanswered questions and debates about its extent and nature abound in the literature, a literature to which a number of disciplines—including psychology, sociology, criminal justice, law, and public health—have contributed. One long-standing and particularly contentious issue, the debate over gender symmetry, focuses on whether women are as violent in intimate relationships as men. Decades of research on IPV perpetration and victimization among both men and women have informed but not resolved this debate.

This essay begins with a brief overview of the history of research on IPV; it then summarizes more recent work on sex differences in IPV. Estimates of the prevalence and sex distribution of IPV vary considerably depending on how IPV is defined and measured, and so the essay discusses how different data sources affect these estimates. An important development in the literature on IPV is the recognition that it is a heterogeneous phenomenon; the essay summarizes some of this work, noting that better understanding of the different types of IPV may help resolve some of discrepancies in the research on its extent and nature. This essay also discusses research on how gender norms may shape IPV and on IPV among sexual minorities; this is followed by a section on the

distribution of IPV across race, immigration status, and culture. The final section identifies issues and topics that are in need of further exploration over the next decade.

19.2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH INTO IPV

The study of IPV began in the 1970s and focused on women's experiences as victims, in large part because attention to violence in intimate relationships grew out of the second-wave women's movement of the time (Frieze 2005). Early work on partner violence drew on samples of women who were seeking shelter or assistance from the criminal justice system after being violently attacked by their intimate partners. Evidence from these samples showed severe victimization at the hands of their male partners and a pattern in which men were the perpetrators and women were victims (Frieze and Brown 1989).

This portrayal of IPV was soon complicated, however, by findings from community and college student samples (Straus 1977; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1981; Makepeace 1983; Bookwala et al. 1992) that showed women perpetrated violent acts toward their partners, as well as received them. Indeed, in some nationally representative and community samples women reported committing acts of IPV toward their partners at similar if not greater rates than did men (e.g., O'Leary et al. 1989; Straus 1999). Many of these studies were conducted by family and marital dynamics scholars rather than by criminologists, and they relied on measures—such as the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)—that asked respondents about conflicts in their relationships and the ways they solved them, rather than framing questions in terms of crime or violence. The controversial findings about women's involvement in IPV challenged firmly held beliefs that patriarchy and power were essential for understanding IPV and men's violence toward women (Saunders 1988).

Inconsistencies in the evidence about sex differences in IPV prompted calls to examine IPV from a more crime-based perspective. As a consequence, two of the main systems of surveillance of IPV were developed: criminal justice data and victimization surveys of the general population. In the United States, the major sources of criminal justice data are the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), part of the Uniform Crime Reports compiled annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2011). The NIBRS and the SHR are based on reports from police agencies that collect information about the relationship between victims and offenders in violent crimes. Nationwide population surveys in the United States that gather information about IPV include the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS; previously the National Crime Survey), which has been conducted annually by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2011) for over three decades, and the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000).

In contrast to studies framed as examinations of conflicts between partners or within families, studies based on criminal justice and victimization data consistently show higher rates of IPV perpetration by men than by women. For example, according to a 2007 US Bureau of Justice Statistics report based on data from the SHR and NCVS for the years 1976 to 2005, about 83 percent of spousal homicides and 72 percent of homicides of girl/boyfriends were committed by males (Catalano 2007). Similarly, with regard to nonlethal violence against intimate partners, men were the perpetrators in almost 80 percent of the cases reported in the NCVS between 1993 and 2010 (Catalano 2012).

These findings, however, should be interpreted according to the measures on which they are based and the framing of the research. For example, the NCVS is introduced to respondents as a survey about crime victimization; yet many individuals may not consider certain acts as crimes, and therefore their reports of IPV may underestimate rates and misrepresent the sex distribution of victims and offenders (Frieze 2005). Furthermore, data from police agencies reporting to the NIBRS include only a fraction of the population and of crime statistics (20 percent of the US population and 16 percent of crime statistics; Lipsky and Caetano 2009) and cannot capture violence that is not reported to the police (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). At the same time, other sources of data, such as studies of community- and college-based samples, also have their limitations and have been widely critiqued, for example, for including behaviors—such as slapping or pushing—that are relatively minor and that many respondents may not characterize as violence. Consequently, debates about the prevalence of and gender symmetry in IPV continue, and almost any claims about which gender perpetrates IPV more often can be supported by some data, which is why some scholars have argued that the debate over gender symmetry cannot be resolved empirically and may distract from more important issues regarding IPV (Winstok 2011).

19.3. CURRENT RESEARCH

In an effort to resolve debates over women's and men's relative involvement in IPV, a number of scholars over the past two decades have conducted large-scale reviews of the field or proposed and tested new ideas that could help explain discrepant findings about gender symmetry in IPV (for a recent example, see Langhinrichsen-Rohling 2010). The next sections of this essay are organized around some of the major themes and findings from this work.

19.3.1. Large-Scale Literature Reviews and Critiques

In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Archer (2000) reviewed eighty-two published and unpublished studies conducted through 1997, most of which used the CTS (Straus 1979; Straus et al. 1996) to assess men's and women's use of violence in their intimate

relationships. Archer found that women reported using a wider variety of violent acts and using violence more frequently in their relationships than men. More recently, Straus (2009) reviewed more than 200 studies and evidence from twelve national surveys conducted over three decades on IPV perpetration rates. Prevalence rates of perpetration in these surveys ranged from 1.3 percent for men and 0.9 percent for women (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000) to 27 percent for men and 34 percent for women (Moffitt and Caspi 1999). Most of these surveys reported perpetration rates of approximately 10 to 12 percent for both men and women. Clearly the studies reviewed by these authors differ substantially in the level of IPV they report; nevertheless, they are similar in finding relatively small differences between the sexes in their perpetration of IPV.

Not surprisingly, the science that finds women engage in relatively high levels of violence toward men has been met with skepticism and debate. Researchers and advocates in the area of violence against women have been reluctant to accept the claim that women use violence against their intimate partners, except in the context of self-defense, and the idea that men are frequently victims of IPV. As a consequence, some have written responses to Archer's meta-analysis critiquing the conclusion that women engage in IPV as much or more than men. For example, White and colleagues (2000) argue that Archer posed a false dichotomy between feminist and family conflict theories of IPV and relied on measures of violence—such as the CTS—that do not distinguish between the aggressor and the party who fights back. For them, the critical point is that partner violence is not gender neutral, given that society is socially structured by gender; therefore IPV is inherently gendered in its meaning and consequences, as well as its motives. Gender cannot be removed from the experience, even if women report engaging in certain “violent” behaviors at the level of or more frequently than men.

White and colleagues' (2000) concerns are shared by many others, particularly with regard to how violence and aggression in intimate relationships are conceptualized and measured in many studies. As a measure of IPV, the CTS has been criticized for failing to capture the context and motives for violence (Frieze 2008). If women more often perpetrate violence toward men in the context of self-defense—a finding common to a number of studies (Makepeace 1986; Hamberger 1997; Harned 2001; Swan and Snow 2003; Caldwell et al. 2009)—then the CTS may overstate women's use of IPV (Bair-Merritt et al. 2010). Critics point out that simple count measures of specific violent acts also fail to consider sex differences in the consequences of these acts; they also note that women report greater injury and negative psychosocial outcomes as a consequence of violence from their partners than do men (Anderson 2002; Katz, Juffel, and Coblenz 2002; Kimmel 2002; Williams and Frieze 2005).

Follow-up work on the reliability and validity of the CTS partially supports both the skepticism about the instrument as well as claims of gender symmetry in IPV perpetration. In a study that recruited both partners to report on the violence in their relationship, Moffitt and colleagues (1997) find that victims tended to report more abuse than perpetrators regardless of gender; however, partner agreement on individual items was generally very low. When items were aggregated into internally consistent scales, reliability increased (Moffitt et al. 1997). In more recent research, Simpson and Christenson

(2005) find low levels of agreement between partners who used the revised version of the CTS to report IPV; moreover, both men's and women's reports of their partners' violent behaviors were greater than their partners' reports of perpetration. Thus perpetrator reports may be less reliable than victim reports. But to the extent that women perpetrate violence, this unreliability may be gender symmetric.

The claim that the CTS fails to capture sex differences in the context and motives for IPV—particularly sex differences in the use of self-defense—also has been challenged by some research. A number of studies find that many of the risk factors for IPV perpetration, such as alcohol abuse, antisocial behavior, personality disorders, and having witnessed abuse as a child, are the same for women and men (Kalmuss 1984; Stith et al. 2000; Dutton, Nicholls, and Spidel 2004). Indeed, one of the strongest predictors of IPV perpetration and victimization for both women and men is childhood exposure to IPV (Kalmuss 1984; Stith et al. 2000). In a study of nearly 500 college students, Follingstad and colleagues (1991) find gender similarities in the most commonly reported motives, indicating that both men and women were violent due to uncertainty with how to express themselves and for self-protection (self-defense). Moreover, emergent sex differences were not the sort that critics of the CTS expected; women reported using violence to retaliate for emotional hurt and to get control, while men reported motives that included retaliation for being hit first and jealousy. Flynn and Graham (2010) provide a review and conceptual model of explanations for IPV among male and female victims and perpetrators and how patterns differ by the type of sample studied (e.g., general population versus specific violence samples).

Some of the literature on IPV has been criticized not just on the basis that it assumes there are fundamental sex differences in the etiology of IPV but also because it assumes there are fundamental differences between the etiology of IPV and other types of violence (see Felson this volume). For example, Felson and Lane (2010) compare the predictions of a “gender perspective” that treats IPV as distinctly different from other violence because of its gendered nature and a “violence perspective” that views IPV as similar to other forms of violence. Analyzing data on male and female inmates who had committed assault or homicide, they find that IPV and other types of violence are similar in their motives and correlates (e.g., substance use, prior abuse, and prior criminal record) and that these patterns do not differ by sex. They also report that violent offending and violent victimization are strongly linked both among those who engaged in IPV and among those who engaged in other types of violence. Felson and Lane see these results as evidence for the violence perspective.

19.3.2. Explaining Discrepancies in Estimates of Females' and Males' Involvement by Exploring Types of IPV

Some researchers have sought to explain discrepancies in the findings about women's and men's involvement in IPV by conceptualizing IPV as composed of a heterogeneous group of behaviors. Perhaps the most well-known work in this area is by Johnson (1995,

2008), who hypothesizes that partner violence can be categorized into different types on the basis of its severity and the level of mutuality between partners. In Johnson's typology, "intimate terrorism" is a type of violence that is severe, one-sided, and typically male to female. It often involves coercive control tactics (Stark 2007) and escalates over time. By contrast, "common couple violence" is among the least severe (in part because it is much less coercive), is the most mutual between partners, and does not escalate over time. A third type, "violent resistance," is engaged in primarily by victims (typically women) of intimate terrorism in response to their partners' efforts to control them; and a fourth but relatively rare type—"mutual violent control"—is, as its name implies, engaged in by both partners and of mild to moderate severity.¹

Johnson's typology offers a provocative explanation for the discrepancies that have existed in the literature, including the idea that these differing types of violence are disproportionately represented in particular samples. That is, intimate terrorism should appear more frequently in samples from shelters or criminal justice agencies, whereas common couple violence should predominate in community samples and nationally representative studies. Several studies support Johnson's typology. For example, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003) examine Johnson's four types of IPV in four British samples: women within a shelter and their partners, male and female students, men in domestic violence treatment programs and their partners, and male prisoners and their partners. This work extends earlier tests of the typology by including measures of coercive control and examining escalation as a distinguishing characteristic of some types (i.e., intimate terrorism versus others). This is important because many nationally representative studies do not have data on coercive control tactics or escalation (e.g., Williams and Frieze 2005).

Graham-Kevan and Archer's (2003) results show that intimate terrorism is indeed characterized by greater severity, coercive control, escalation of violence over time, and more males as perpetrators, whereas common couple violence is less severe, nonescalating, and gender symmetrical. As expected, intimate terrorism is less common, comprising only 11 percent of the violence. Importantly, a sex difference in perpetration, whereby males predominate as perpetrators and females as victims, occurs largely in the shelter sample. Also consistent with Johnson's typology, women more often reported the use of violent resistance (self-defense). In other work, Simmons, Lehman, and Collier-Tenison (2008) report that male partners of women in shelters engaged in more physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse, as well as more intimidation, minimization/denial, threats, blaming, and isolation than the male partners of women in a program for IPV offenders; these findings provide further support for the hypothesis that sampling strategy influences the assessment of IPV.

The studies reviewed above provide support for claims that women more than men experience severe violence at the hands of their intimate partners, a pattern that reinforces the need for providing women resources, such as shelters, that can protect them from IPV. At the same time, the research also supports claims that men experience violence from their female partners who are not simply acting in self-defense, which highlights the importance of developing appropriate responses to women's violence

(Williams and Frieze 2005; Frieze 2008). Failure to recognize men's victimization would be tantamount to having ignored women's victimization prior to the advent of shelters and resources for abused women (Graham-Kevan 2007). Furthermore, both male and female victims of IPV experience distress and lowered relationship satisfaction as a consequence of their victimization (Williams and Frieze 2005),² further highlighting the necessity of providing services to both male and female victims of IPV.

19.3.3. Research on Gender Norms, Sexual Orientation, and IPV

Social norms and expectations about appropriate behaviors, ideals, attitudes, and modes of communication for men and women further shape sex differences in some types of IPV. Most research on the perpetration of IPV focuses on men, so we know more about their motivations for and understandings of their acts of aggression. Beginning with the earliest, feminist-informed research on IPV, scholars have analyzed male gender roles and their association with IPV. Broadly speaking, this research finds that men who endorse a traditional masculine ideology are more likely to engage in partner violence (Santana et al. 2006). However, male gender roles, like female gender roles, are multifaceted, and it is important to determine which dimensions of these roles are related to partner violence.

The expectation that males will physically and intellectually dominate females may be much weaker now than in the past, but it is still embraced by many males and some females. Research finds that males sometimes react with violence toward others, including their partners, when these expectations are threatened (Eisler 1995). For example, Moore and colleagues (2008) studied a sample of more than 300 men mandated to attend violence-intervention programs. They report that men who experienced stress about appearing physically fit were at increased risk of engaging in the sexual coercion of their partners and those who experienced stress about appearing intellectually inferior to their partners were at increased risk of being physically violent toward them.

Jewkes (2002) consolidates the ideas of other researchers into a concise explanation of how threats to gender norms may engender partner violence. This explanation proposes that the male gender role is formed around experiences of power and is manifested in the expectation that men will be financially and professionally successful. However, opportunities for such success are denied to many men because of their class, race, or other characteristics. Some of these men distort these masculine ideals to emphasize misogyny and criminal activity. Partner violence and violence in general become normative behaviors used to establish control physically when it cannot be established financially or through education and career. Thus partner violence is a consequence of both meeting certain expectations of the male gender role and failing to meet others.

Another aspect of the male gender role that may contribute to IPV is the acceptance of violence as a way to solve disputes. When this norm is endorsed, men may find it appropriate, under certain circumstances, to use violence to get what they want from

their partners, a pattern Totten (2003) documents in interviews with thirty marginalized male teenagers. Twenty-eight of these young men endorsed both patriarchal beliefs (e.g., a male has a right to decide whether the woman can work outside the home) and the use of violence against girlfriends (e.g., it is okay to slap her if she is crying hysterically). Endorsing violence as a means to solve disputes is part of a larger construct dubbed “hypermasculinity.” Mosher and Sirkin (1984) describe a hypermasculine male as one who strictly adheres to principles that dictate a man should be sexually callous, find violence to be manly, and find danger to be exciting. Recently research connects this particularly noxious form of masculinity to IPV. For example, Guerrero (2009) reports that, after accounting for frequency of alcohol use, education, social support, and income, hypermasculinity is a significant predictor of men’s violence toward their intimate partners. Furthermore, Medeiros and Straus (2006) find that higher scores on measures of dominance and approval of violence are associated with both men’s and women’s use of serious violence against their intimate partners.

As the study by Medeiros and Straus (2006) suggests, associating particular attitudes and beliefs with masculinity (or femininity) is likely to simplify a much more complex picture. Expectations about gender-appropriate behaviors or attitudes vary a good deal across individuals, situations, groups, and social contexts. For many men, masculinity does not imply endorsing violence—or at least certain forms of violence—as a means to solve conflicts. As Felson and Feld (2009) report in their analysis of data from a nationally representative sample, men were as likely as women to condemn violence against women and to see it as more deserving of police intervention than other types of violence. Their findings suggest that there is a general cultural prohibition against men hitting women and that “violence against women occurs, in spite of, not because of social norms” (Felson and Feld 2009, p. 485).

Research on IPV among sexual and gender minorities could provide further insight into how gender expectations and norms shape IPV. In one of the few studies to examine this issue, Oringher and Samuelson (2011, p. 72) report that gay men who scored higher on measures of conformity to masculine norms of aggressivity and suppression of emotional vulnerability were more likely to have abused their partners, a pattern consistent with “the link between masculinity and the perpetration of violence found in heterosexual men.” Studies of IPV among sexual and gender minorities have been difficult to conduct for a number of reasons, not least of which is the difficulty in collecting a representative samples (e.g., Burke and Follingstad 1999; Owen and Burke 2004). Indeed, in a systematic review of the literature on same-sex IPV published from 1995 to 2006, Murray and Mobley (2009) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the research, noting the lack of representative sampling procedures is the most common limitation.

Messinger (2011) addresses this problem in an analysis of nationally representative data from the NVAWS that compares the prevalence of IPV victimization of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (LGB) with heterosexuals. This article broke new ground with its representation of sexual minorities and its staggering conclusion that those who identified their sexual orientation as LGB were twice as likely as heterosexual individuals to report IPV victimization. Those who identified as bisexual reported the highest rates of

victimization, most of which was perpetrated by an opposite-sex partner. The data from the NVAWS are limited in that they include only self-reports of victimization, not of perpetration, but other research has gathered data on the perpetration of IPV by sexual and gender minorities (e.g., Balsam and Szymanski 2005; Carvalho et al. 2011). A key issue in need of further study is the extent to which the discrimination and oppression experienced by sexual minorities affects their risks of IPV (West 2012). Carvalho and colleagues (2011) report that expectations of prejudice and discrimination are positively related to both IPV perpetration and victimization, a finding consistent with other research suggesting that stress related to minority sexual orientation increases risk for IPV (Balsam and Szymanski 2005).

19.3.4. Research on the Social Context for IPV: Race, Immigration, and Culture

Evidence that “minority stress”—that is, experiences of discrimination and the social disadvantages that accompany it—may contribute to IPV among sexual minorities is potentially relevant to racial differences in IPV. In the United States, black males and females have considerably higher rates of IPV perpetration and victimization than white males and females. Rates for Hispanic males and females fall in between those for whites and blacks (Sorenson, Upchurch, and Shen 1996; Caetano et al. 2000; Weston, Temple, and Marshall 2005). The social and economic disadvantages facing these racial minority groups in the United States are important contributors to their elevated risks of IPV (Caetano, Schafer, and Cunradi 2002; West 2004; Weston, Temple, and Marshall 2005). Asian Americans, in contrast, report rates of IPV that are lower than those for whites and other racial minorities, a pattern that some scholars (West 2005) attribute to cultural norms that emphasize family harmony. However, it is important to note that these racial differences in IPV mirror those for violent crime generally.

Immigrant status may also influence the risks of IPV, although it appears to be related to IPV in complex ways (Frieze and Chen 2010; Trager and Kubrin this volume). The stress of moving to a different country may increase stressors associated with IPV, particularly for women who are dependent on their husbands economically or were sponsored by them. These women may feel that they are unable to leave abusive relationships. In addition, they may not be familiar with resources available to abused women or those resources may not be geared toward their distinctive needs. Moreover, immigrant women may be more tolerant of their husbands’ IPV if they come from countries where IPV is not as strongly condemned as it is in their receiving countries. Evidence of this comes from studies of samples of immigrants to the United States—one of South Asian women (Ahmad et al. 2004) and one of Pakistani women (Khalid and Frieze 2004)—that find that these women had more accepting attitudes about IPV than did nonimmigrant women.

Cultural variation in attitudes toward IPV is important not only for understanding the risks that immigrants may face but also for understanding variation in rates of IPV

around the world. Both the United Nations (2006) and the World Health Organization (2005) have compiled data from dozens of countries on violence against women in general and IPV in particular. Findings from these studies reveal that the lifetime prevalence of either physical or sexual abuse by partners is as high as 71 percent for women in some countries. Women in less developed countries report higher rates of controlling behaviors by their partners as well as more frequent and severe IPV than women in more developed countries. These and other cross-national studies indicate that women's risk of IPV victimization increases in countries where they have less structural and social power, while their likelihood of perpetrating IPV against male partners decreases (Archer 2006; Johnson, Öllus, and Nevala 2008). For example, Kaya and Cook's (2010) analysis of data from forty developed and less developed countries finds that past-year physical violence by male partners is more prevalent in countries where women have lower rates of participation in education and in the labor force and higher fertility rates; these factors also have stronger effects on women's risks of IPV than do the existence of formal rights for women. These findings reinforce the importance of policies, such as those suggested by the United Nations (2006, pp. 104–6), that challenge sociocultural attitudes that tolerate men's violence toward their female partners, restrict women's access to education, or deny women control of their bodies and their sexuality.

19.4. CONCLUSION: NEW AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This review of research on and debates about IPV over the past few decades has touched on a number of themes. This section offers some suggestions about the topics and issues that research on IPV should examine in the next decade if these debates are to be resolved and our understanding of IPV advanced.

Dobash and Dobash (2004) argue that questions about the prevalence of IPV and about sex differences in its perpetration and victimization will be answered only when researchers agree on what counts as IPV. This is the most fundamental issue that needs to be addressed in future research. Studies of IPV will be most informative if they use common definitions and methodologies (Lipsky and Caetano 2009). Frieze (2005) questions whether the majority of behaviors captured by some measures of IPV are appropriately classified as violence. While there have been efforts to develop guidelines for the measurement and terminology used in studies of IPV (Saltzman et al. 2000), these may still classify some behaviors (e.g., one push or shove) as abuse or IPV that should perhaps not be so classified. In these cases, having information about the situational context for and respondents' construction of the meaning of particular acts is important (Lindhorst and Tajima 2008). In particular, a definition of IPV should be able to distinguish between partner violence and partner aggression.

The recognition that IPV is heterogeneous and encompasses distinctly different types of behavior with different causes and consequences has been an important advance in research on IPV. A next step in this line of work would be to consider the practical implications of distinguishing among types of IPV. For example, given that intimate terrorism involves more frequent and serious violence and has more severe psychological consequences compared to common couple violence (Johnson and Leone 2005), should this matter for the nature of the criminal justice response to any particular act of IPV? Should treatment programs for people who engage in IPV be designed with these different types in mind? While efforts to develop typologies of IPV have been important theoretically and for helping make sense of discrepant findings about sex differences in IPV, more work on the translation of these typologies is needed.

Since research on IPV began, a major focus has been on differences between men and women—that is, sex differences—in perpetration, victimization, motivations, consequences, and so forth. This is understandable given the relative ease of measuring sex differences. However, this may obscure aspects of gender that are equally critical for understanding IPV. This essay has discussed research suggesting that gender expectations and norms play a role in IPV. One area that could be examined in more depth is how these expectations may affect not just the occurrence of IPV but also how victims respond to it. For example, men may see victimization at the hands of female partners as a failure on their part to meet expectations about masculinity. They may also feel they should “take it like a man” if their female partners assault them. These sorts of expectations about what it means to be masculine may discourage them from reporting their victimization either to researchers or to the police. On the other hand, if as Felson and Feld (2009) document, there is a general cultural prohibition against male violence against women, males may underreport their use of IPV. Indeed, Emery (2010) and others have found evidence that men underreport perpetration more than do women. All of this suggests that violence—and not just IPV—may be shaped by gender in ways that research needs to examine more fully.

Much of the research reviewed in this essay examines IPV in general population samples in the Western world, particularly the United States. As a consequence, many of the findings and debates in the field have not been adequately informed by research in other countries or among subgroups of the population where IPV may differ in important respects. For example, debates over gender symmetry in IPV or mutual violence have not recognized that these aspects of IPV may have very different meanings in non-Western countries, as Reed and colleagues (2010) point out. We need additional investigations of how the consequences of IPV may be exacerbated in countries where women’s status is lower and where gender relations are more inequitable. Similarly, within the West, some subgroups of the population deserve more attention from IPV researchers (Frieze and Chen 2010). Although we know more now than in the past about how IPV varies across different racial, ethnic, or sexual minority groups, we still know too little about how the intersection of these and other characteristics—such as age and social class—may affect the experience and consequences of IPV (West 2004).

Research of the sort just described could also assist with the development of more integrated theories of IPV. Bell and Nagle (2008) have begun this endeavor by integrating several theories of IPV etiology into a comprehensive model. Theoretical models that span levels of analysis—from the individual to the societal—and that draw on insights from different disciplines are particularly needed. Such models may also suggest novel ideas about strategies for preventing and responding to IPV. Given the tremendous costs of IPV to individuals, relationships, and societies, greater understanding of the various types of IPV, who engages in them, and in what contexts will mean a better quality of life for everyone in society.

NOTES

1. Johnson's typology has changed over time, in part in response to empirical tests; earlier versions included four groups, later versions only three.
2. For those who were solely victims of IPV, females had significantly higher levels of distress and dissatisfaction than males, although males experienced elevated levels of both. For those involved in mutually violent relationships, men and women did not differ in the distress they experienced as a consequence of their victimization (Williams and Frieze 2005).

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