

Domestic Violence

The Intersection of Gender and Control

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Does a chapter on domestic violence even belong in a book on gender violence? After all, for over thirty years there have been reputable social scientists who have been willing to argue that women are as violent in intimate relationships as are men and that domestic violence has nothing to do with gender. Suzanne Steinmetz's controversial paper on "the battered husband syndrome" started this line of argument with the following conclusion: "An examination of empirical data [from a 1975 general survey] on wives' use of physical violence on their husbands suggests that husband-beating constitutes a sizable proportion of marital violence" (Steinmetz 1977-78, 501). A paper published in December 2005 provides a contemporary example (among many) of the same argument: "[Our] considerations suggest the need for a broadening of perspective in the field of domestic violence away from the view that domestic violence is usually a gender issue involving male perpetrators and female victims" (Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder 2005, 1116).

Actually, despite thirty years of sometimes acrimonious debate, the research evidence does clearly indicate that what we typically think of as domestic violence is primarily male-perpetrated and most definitely a gender issue. However, this conclusion is clear only if one breaks out of the standard assumption that intimate partner violence is a unitary phenomenon. Once one makes some basic distinctions among types of intimate partner violence, the confusion that characterizes this literature melts away (Johnson 2005).

The first section of this chapter will demonstrate how attention to distinctions among types of intimate partner violence makes sense of ostensibly contradictory data regarding men's and women's violence in intimate relationships. The second section describes the basic structure of the types of intimate partner violence that most people associate with the term *domestic violence*, violence that is associated with coercive control, that is, one partner's attempt to take general control over the other. The third section presents a theory of domestic violence that is focused on the relationship between gender and coercive control. The fourth section addresses the role of gender in the type of intimate partner violence that does not involve an attempt to take general control over one's partner. The final section of the chapter deals with some of

the intervention and policy implications of what we know about these types of intimate partner violence and their relationship to gender.

Gender and the Perpetration of Different Types of Intimate Partner Violence

How is it that thirty years of social science research on domestic violence has not produced a definitive answer to the question of whether or not men and women are equally involved in intimate partner violence? The reason is that the field has been caught up in a debate about *the* nature of intimate partner violence—as if it were a unitary phenomenon. Those who had reason to believe that intimate partner violence was perpetrated equally by both men and women cited evidence from large-scale survey research that showed rough gender symmetry in intimate partner violence. Those who believed that intimate partner violence was perpetrated almost entirely by men against their female partners cited contrary evidence from studies carried out in hospital emergency rooms, police agencies, divorce courts, and women's shelters. And each group argued that the other's evidence was biased. However, *both* groups can be right if (a) there are multiple forms of intimate partner violence, (b) some of the types are gender-symmetric and some are not, and (c) general surveys are biased in favor of the gender-symmetric types and agency studies are biased in favor of the asymmetric types. There is considerable evidence that this is in fact the case. There are three major types of intimate partner violence, they are not equally represented in the different types of samples studied by social scientists, and they differ dramatically in terms of gender asymmetry.

The most important distinctions among types of intimate partner violence have to do with the role of coercive control as a context for violence. Two of the three major types of intimate partner violence involve general power and control issues. *Intimate terrorism* is an attempt to take general control over one's partner; *violent resistance* is the use of violence in response to such an attempt. *Situational couple violence*, the third type of intimate partner violence, does not involve an attempt to take general control on the part of either partner.¹

Although there were always clues to be found in the domestic violence literature of the 1970s and 1980s that there was more than one type of intimate partner violence (Johnson 1995), researchers have only recently begun to do research specifically focused on these distinctions. In order to make these distinctions, researchers ask questions not only about the violence itself but also about nonviolent control tactics. They then use the answers to those questions to distinguish between violence that is embedded in a general pattern of power and control (intimate terrorism and violent resistance) and violence that is not (situational couple violence). The specific measures used have varied from study to study, but the findings have been quite consistent.

Studies in both the United States and England have shown that the intimate partner violence in general surveys is heavily biased in favor of situational couple violence, whereas the intimate partner violence in agency samples is biased in favor of male intimate terrorism and female violent resistance (Graham-Kevan and Archer 2003a, 2003b; Johnson 2001). For example, using data from a 1970s Pittsburgh survey, Johnson

(2001) found that situational couple violence constituted 89 percent of the male violence in the general survey sample, 29 percent in a court sample, and only 19 percent in the shelter sample. Why is this? The bias in general surveys comes from two sources: (a) the reality that situational couple violence is much more common than intimate terrorism and violent resistance, and (b) the biasing effect of the fact that as many as 40 percent of individuals approached in general surveys refuse to participate (Johnson 1995). Potential respondents who are terrorizing their partners are unlikely to agree to participate in a survey about family life for fear they will be exposed. Their violently resisting partners are unlikely to agree out of fear of being "punished" by their intimate terrorist partner for participating in such a survey. Thus, general surveys include very little intimate terrorism or violent resistance. In contrast with general surveys, agency samples are biased because intimate terrorism is more likely than situational couple violence to involve the sort of frequent and severe violence that comes to the attention of shelters, hospitals, the courts, and the police. Thus, agency samples include mostly cases of intimate terrorism and violent resistance.

Data from these studies also clearly demonstrate a strong relationship between gender and the different types of intimate partner violence. For example, in the Pittsburgh study intimate terrorism is almost entirely male-perpetrated (97%), and violent resistance is therefore female-perpetrated (96%), whereas situational couple violence is roughly gender-symmetric (56% male, 44% female).

When one puts together these findings regarding gender, type of intimate partner violence, and sample biases, the history of dissension regarding the gender symmetry of intimate partner violence is explained. Family-violence theorists who have argued that domestic violence is gender-symmetric have relied largely on general surveys, which are biased heavily in favor of situational couple violence, and they have found rough gender symmetry in their research, leading them to the false conclusion that domestic violence is not about gender. Feminist researchers, in contrast, have relied largely on agency samples that are heavily biased in favor of intimate terrorism (and violent resistance), showing a heavily gendered pattern, with men as the primary perpetrators of intimate terrorism and women sometimes resisting with violence. I would argue that intimate terrorism is what most people mean when they use the term "domestic violence," and it is indeed primarily perpetrated by men against their female partners.

Domestic Violence (Intimate Terrorism) as Gendered Violence

In intimate terrorism, violence is one control tactic in an array of tactics that are deployed in an attempt to take general control over one's partner. The control sought in intimate terrorism is general and long-term. Although each particular act of intimate violence may appear to have any number of short-term, specific goals, it is embedded in a larger pattern of power and control that permeates the relationship. It is this type of intimate partner violence that comes to mind for most people when they hear the term "domestic violence," and it is this type that receives the most media attention, in movies

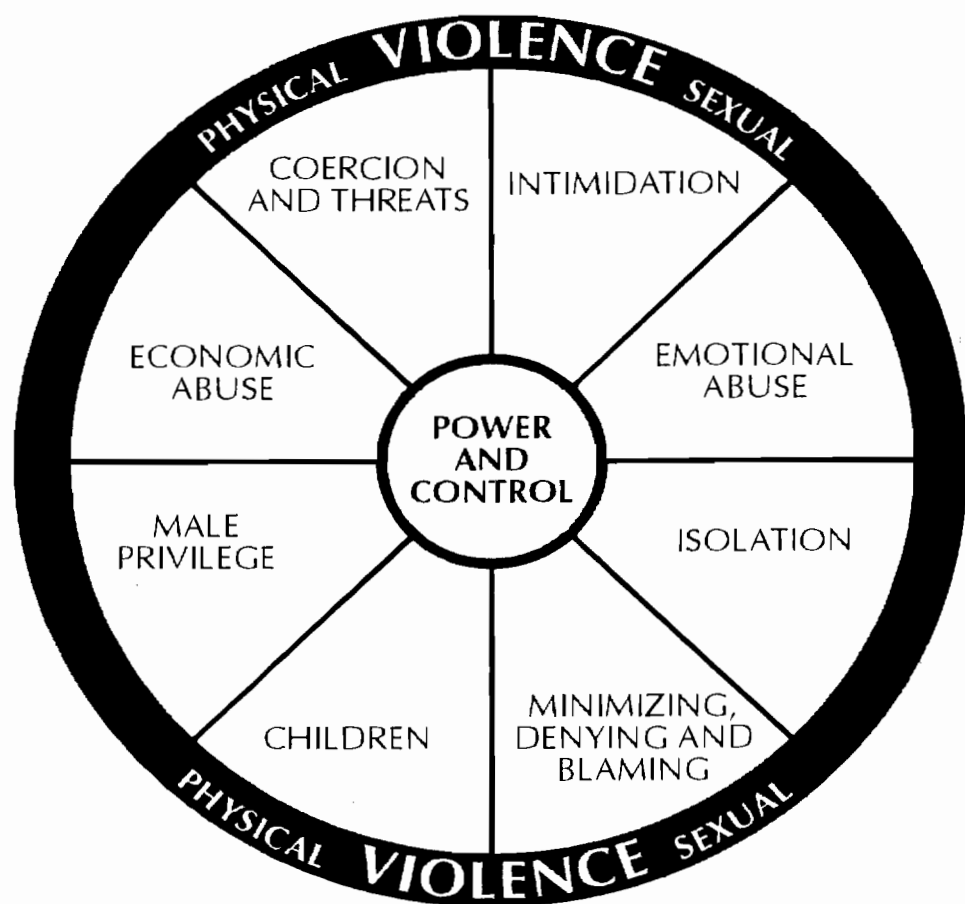


Figure 1. Domestic violence/intimate terrorism (adapted from Pence and Paymar 1993).

such as *Sleeping with the Enemy* and *Enough*, in television talk shows and documentaries that deal with intimate partner violence, and in newspaper and magazine articles that address the problem of domestic violence.

Figure 1 is a widely used graphical representation of such partner violence deployed in the service of general control (Pence and Paymar 1993). A brief tour of the wheel, starting with economic abuse and moving through the other forms of control, might help capture what Catherine Kirkwood calls a "web" of abuse (Kirkwood 1993).

It is not unusual for an intimate terrorist to deprive his² partner of control over economic resources. He controls all the money. She is allowed neither a bank account nor credit cards. If she works for wages, she has to turn over her paychecks to him. He keeps all the cash, and she has to ask him for money when she needs to buy groceries or clothes for herself or their children. He may require a precise accounting of every penny, demanding to see the grocery bill and making sure she returns every bit of the change.

This economic abuse may be justified through the next form of control, male privilege: "I am the man of the house, the head of the household, the king in my castle." Of course, this use of male privilege can cover everything. As the man of the house, his

word is law. He doesn't have to explain. She is to do his bidding without question. And don't talk back. All of this holds even more rigidly in public, where he is not to be humiliated by back-talk from "his woman."

How does he use the children to support his control? First of all, they too know he is the boss. He makes it clear that he controls not only them but their mother as well. He may use them to back him up, to make her humiliation more complete by forcing them into the room to assist him as he confronts her, demanding their verbal support and generally requiring their collaboration with his actions. He may even have convinced them that he should be in charge, that he does know what is best (father knows best), and that she is incompetent, lazy, or immoral. In addition, he may use her attachment to the children as a means of control, by threatening to take them away from her or hurt them if she isn't a "good wife and mother." Of course, being a good wife and mother means doing as he says.

Then there is isolation. He keeps her away from everyone else. He makes himself her only source of information, of affection, of money, of everything. In a rural setting he might be able to literally isolate her, moving to a house trailer in the woods, with one car that he controls, no phone, keeping her there alone. In an urban setting, or if he needs her to go out to work, he can isolate her less literally, by driving away her friends and relatives and intimidating the people at work, so that she has no one to talk to about what's happening to her.

When she's completely isolated, and what he tells her about herself is all she ever hears about herself, he can tell her over and over again that she's worthless—humiliating her, demeaning her, emotionally abusing her. She's ugly, stupid, a slut, a lousy wife, an incompetent mother. She only manages to survive because he takes care of her. She'd be helpless without him. And who else is there to tell her otherwise? Maybe he can even convince her that she can't live without him.

If she resists, he can intimidate her. Show her what might happen if she doesn't behave. Scream at her. Swear at her. Let her see his rage. Smash things. Or maybe a little cold viciousness will make his point. Kick her cat. Hang her dog. That ought to make her think twice before she decides not to do as he says. Or threaten her. Threaten to hit her or to beat her or to pull her hair out or to burn her. Or tell her he'll kill her, and maybe the kids too.

Pull all these means of control together, or even a few of them, and the abuser entraps and enslaves his partner in a web of control. If she manages to thwart one means of control, there are others at his disposal. Wherever she turns, there is another way he can control her. She is ensnared by multiple strands. She can't seem to escape—she is trapped. But with the addition of physical violence there is more to power and control than entrapment. There is terror.

For this reason the diagram does not include the violence as just another means of control, another spoke in the wheel. The violence is depicted, rather, as the rim of the wheel, holding all the spokes together. When violence is added to such a pattern of power and control, the abuse becomes much more than the sum of its parts. The ostensibly nonviolent tactics that accompany that violence take on a new, powerful, and frightening meaning—controlling the victim not only through their own specific constraints but also through their association with the knowledge that her partner will do

anything to maintain control of the relationship, even attack her physically. Most obviously, the threats and intimidation are clearly more than idle threats if he has beaten her before. But even his "request" to see the grocery receipts becomes a "warning" if he has put her into the hospital this year. His calling her a stupid slut may feel like the beginning of a vicious physical attack. As battered women often report, "All he had to do was look at me that way, and I'd jump." What is for most of us the safest place in our world—home—is for her a place of constant fear.

Violent resistance. What is a woman to do when she finds herself terrorized in her own home? At some point, most women in such relationships do fight back physically. For some, this is an instinctive reaction to being attacked, and it happens at the first blow—almost without thought. For others, it doesn't happen until it seems he is going to continue to assault her repeatedly if she doesn't do something to stop him. For most women, the size difference between them and their male partner ensures that violent resistance won't help, and may make things worse, so they turn to other means of coping. For a few, eventually it seems that the only way out is to kill their partner.

Violence in the face of intimate terrorism may arise from any of a variety of motives. She may (at least at first) believe that she can defend herself, that her violent resistance will keep him from attacking her further. That may mean that she thinks she can stop him right now, in the midst of an attack, or it may mean that she thinks that if she fights back often enough he will eventually decide to stop attacking her physically. Even if she doesn't think she can stop him, she may feel that he shouldn't be allowed to attack her without being hurt himself. This desire to hurt him in return even if it won't stop him can be a form of communication ("What you're doing isn't right, and I'm going to fight back as hard as I can"), or it may be a form of retaliation or payback, along the lines of "He's not going to do that without paying some price for it." In a few cases, she may be after serious retaliation, attacking him when he is least expecting it and doing her best to do serious damage, even killing him. But there is sometimes another motive for such premeditated attacks—escape. Sometimes, after years of abuse and entrapment, a victim of intimate terrorism may feel that the only way she can escape from this horror is to kill her tormenter (Walker 1989).

It is clear that most women who are faced with intimate terrorism do escape from it. For example, Campbell's research finds that within two and a half years, two-thirds of women facing intimate terrorism are no longer in violent relationships (J. Campbell et al. 1998). The evidence also indicates, however, that escaping safely from such relationships can take time. Intimate terrorists entrap their partners using the same tactics they use to control them. If a woman has been so psychologically abused that she believes that her partner really can take her children away from her, how can she leave and abandon them to him? If a woman has no access to money or a job, how can she feed and clothe herself and her children when they escape? If she is monitored relentlessly and isolated from others, how can she get away and where can she go? If her partner has threatened to kill her and the children if she tries to leave, how can she leave safely?

What women in such situations typically do is gradually gather the resources they need to escape safely, sometimes doing this on their own, more often seeking help from others. They hide away small amounts of money until they have enough to get a small start, and they start working or going to school to develop a viable source of income,

and they make plans with friends or a shelter to hide them during the period immediately after their escape, and they involve the police and courts for protection, and they join support groups to help them with their transition to independence and the emotional trauma produced by the psychological abuse, and on and on. The process is not a simple one. Catherine Kirkwood (1993) describes it as a "spiral" in which women leave multiple times, only to return, but each time garnering information and resources that will eventually allow them to leave for good. The process is complicated not only by the intimate terrorist's commitment to keeping her but also by the gender structure of institutions that may make it more difficult to leave than it would be in a more equitable society.

A Gender Theory of Domestic Violence (Intimate Terrorism)

Let me begin with a reminder that the foregoing discussion indicates that in heterosexual relationships the strongest correlate of type of intimate partner violence is gender. In heterosexual relationships intimate terrorism is perpetrated almost entirely by men and, of course, the violent resistance to it is from their female partners. The gendering of situational couple violence is less clear and will be addressed in the next section.

To a sociologist, the tremendous gender imbalance in the perpetration of intimate terrorism suggests important social structural causes that go beyond simple differences between men and women. For over two decades now, feminist sociologists have argued that gender must be understood as an institution, not merely an individual characteristic. Although some gender theorists have couched this argument in terms of rejecting gender as an individual characteristic in favor of focusing at the situational or institutional level of analysis (e.g., Ferree 1990), I prefer a version of gender theory that incorporates gender at all levels of social organization, from the individual level of sex differences in identities and attitudes, and even physical differences, through the situational enforcement of gender in social interaction to the gender structure of organizational and societal contexts (Ferree, Lorber, and Hess 2000; Risman 2004). The application of gender theory to intimate terrorism that follows will start with individual sex differences and work up to the gender structure of the economy, the family, and the criminal justice system.

Why is intimate terrorism in heterosexual relationships (and violent resistance to it) so clearly a matter of men abusing women? First, gender affects the use of violence to control one's partner in heterosexual relationships simply because of average sex differences in size and strength. The use of violence as one tactic in an attempt to exercise general control over one's partner requires more than the willingness to do violence. It requires a credible threat of a damaging violent response to noncompliance. Such a threat is, of course, more credible coming from a man than a woman simply because of the size difference in most heterosexual couples. Furthermore, still at the level of individual differences but focusing on gender socialization rather than physical differences, individual attitudes toward violence and experience with violence make such threats more likely and more credible from a man than from a woman. Put simply, the exercise

of violence is more likely to be a part of boys' and men's experience than girls' and women's—in sports, fantasy play, and real-life conflict.

Second, individual misogyny and gender traditionalism are clearly implicated in intimate terrorism. Although critics of feminist theory often claim that there is no relationship between attitudes toward women and domestic violence (Felson 2002, 106), the research that has addressed this question in fact clearly supports the position that individual men's attitudes toward women affect the likelihood that they will be involved in intimate terrorism. One example is Holtzworth-Munroe's work, which shows that both of her two groups of intimate terrorists are more hostile toward women than are either nonviolent men or men involved in situational couple violence (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe et al. 2000). More generally, Sugarman and Frankel (1996) conducted a thorough review of the research on this question, using a statistical technique that allowed them to combine the findings of all the studies that had been published up to that time. Whereas Holtzworth-Munroe demonstrated an effect of *hostility* toward women, Sugarman and Frankel focused on the effects of men's attitudes toward the role of women in social life and found that traditional men were more likely to be involved in attacks on their partners than were nontraditional men. The details of the Sugarman and Frankel review provide further support for the important role of attitudes toward women in intimate terrorism. They found that men's attitudes toward women were much more strongly related to violence in studies using samples that were dominated by intimate terrorism than in studies that were dominated by situational couple violence. Of course, this is exactly what a feminist theory of domestic violence would predict. It is intimate terrorism that involves the attempt to control one's partner, an undertaking supported by traditional or hostile attitudes toward women.

Third, at the level of social interaction rather than individual attitudes, our cultures of masculinity and femininity ensure that whatever the level of violence, its meaning will differ greatly depending on the gender of the perpetrator (Straus 1999). When a woman slaps her husband in the heat of an argument, it is unlikely to be interpreted by him as a serious attempt to do him physical harm. In fact, it is likely to be seen as a quaint form of feminine communication. Women's violence is taken less seriously, is less likely to produce fear, and is therefore less likely either to be intended as a control tactic or to be successful as one (Swan and Snow 2002).

Fourth, general social norms regarding intimate heterosexual partnerships, although certainly in the midst of considerable historical change, are heavily gendered and rooted in a patriarchal heterosexual model that validates men's power (Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1992; Yllö and Bograd 1988). These norms affect the internal functioning of all relationships, regardless of the individual attitudes of the partners, because couples' social networks are often involved in shaping the internal workings of personal relationships (Klein and Milardo 2000). When those networks support a male-dominant style of marriage or a view of marriage as a commitment "for better or worse," they can contribute to the entrapment of women in abusive relationships.

Finally, the gendering of the broader social context within which the relationship is embedded affects the resources the partners can draw on to shape the relationship and to cope with or escape from the violence. For example, the gender gap in wages can create an economic dependency that enhances men's control over women and con-

tributes to women's entrapment in abusive relationships. The societal assignment of caregiving responsibilities primarily to women further contributes to this economic dependency, placing women in a subordinate position within the family and creating a context in which institutions such as the church that could be a source of support for abused women instead encourage them to stay in abusive relationships—for the sake of the children or for the sake of the marriage. Then there is the criminal justice system, heavily dominated by men and involving a culture of masculinity that has not always been responsive to the problems of women experiencing intimate terrorism, which was often treated as if it were situational couple violence (Buzawa 2003). On a more positive note, there have been major changes in all of these systems as a result of the women's movement in general and the battered women's movement in particular (Dobash and Dobash 1992). These changes are probably a major source of the recent dramatic decline in nonfatal intimate partner violence against women and fatal intimate partner violence against men in the United States (Rennison 2003).³

What about Situational Couple Violence?

It is not surprising that the institution of gender, in which male domination is a central element, is implicated in the structure of intimate terrorism, which is about coercive control. In contrast, situational couple violence, which is the most common type of partner violence, does not involve an attempt on the part of one partner to gain general control over the other, and by some criteria it appears to be more gender-symmetric. The violence is situationally provoked, as the tensions or emotions of a particular encounter lead one or both of the partners to resort to violence. Intimate relationships inevitably involve conflicts, and in some relationships one or more of those conflicts turns into an argument that escalates into violence. The violence may be minor and singular, with one encounter at some point in the relationship escalating to the level that someone pushes or slaps the other, is immediately remorseful, apologizes, and never does it again. Or the violence could be a chronic problem, with one or both partners frequently resorting to violence, minor or severe, even homicidal. In general, there is considerable variability in the nature of situational couple violence, a variability that has not yet been explored adequately enough to allow us to make confident statements about its causes.

Nevertheless, some researchers *have* made confident statements about one aspect of situational couple violence—its gender symmetry, a symmetry that in my view is mythical. The myth of gender symmetry in situational couple violence has been supported by the widespread use of a particularly meaningless measure of symmetry—incidence. Respondents in a survey are presented with a list of violent behaviors ranging from a push or a slap to an attack with a weapon. They are then asked to report how often they have committed each violent act against their partner (or their partner against them) in the previous twelve months. "Incidence of partner violence" is then defined as the percentage of a group (e.g., men or women) who have committed the act (or some set of the acts, often identified as mild or severe violent acts) at least once in the previous twelve months. The much-touted gender symmetry of situational couple

violence is gender symmetry only in this narrow sense. For example, in the 1975 National Survey of Family Violence that initiated the gender-symmetry debate, 13 percent of women and 11 percent of men had committed at least one of the acts listed in the Conflict Tactics Scales (Steinmetz 1977–78). However, by any sensible measure of the nature of the violence, such as the specific acts engaged in, the injuries produced, the frequency of the violence, or the production of fear in one's partner, intimate partner violence (even situational couple violence) is not gender-symmetric (Archer 2000; Brush 1990; Hamberger and Guse 2002; Johnson 1999; Morse 1995; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000).

Thus, although situational couple violence may not be as gendered as intimate terrorism and violent resistance, many of the gender factors discussed earlier are implicated in the patterning of situational couple violence. For example, in situational couple violence the likelihood of injury or fear is influenced by size differences. A slap from a woman is still perceived as an entirely different act than is one from a man. Most important, our cultures of masculinity and femininity contribute to the couple communication problems that are often associated with situational couple violence (Johnson 2006).

Policy and Intervention

Different problems require different solutions. The fact that there is more than one type of intimate partner violence means that to some extent we must tailor our policies and intervention strategies to the specific characteristics of each of the types. Although situational couple violence is much more common than intimate terrorism—surveys indicate that one out of every eight married couples in the United States experiences some form of situational couple violence each year—most of our policies and interventions are designed to address intimate terrorism rather than situational couple violence. This focus on intimate terrorism has developed for a number of reasons: (a) the women's movement has been extremely effective in educating both the public and the criminal justice system about the nature of intimate terrorism, (b) intimate terrorism is more likely to come to the attention of agencies because it so often involves chronic and/or severe violence and because victims of intimate terrorism are more likely than victims of situational couple violence to need help in order to cope with the violence or to escape from it, and (c) the significant percentage of partner homicides that are a product of intimate terrorism emphasize the need for effective intervention in such situations.

Although conservative men's groups have decried this dominant focus on intimate terrorism because it ignores the violence of women (which they do not acknowledge is almost always either violent resistance or situational couple violence), the safest approach to intervention is to start with the assumption that every case of intimate partner violence involves intimate terrorism. The reason for this is that interventions for situational couple violence (such as couples counseling) are likely to put a victim of

intimate terrorism at considerable risk. If we were to do as one recent article suggested and recommend counseling that would help couples to "work together to harmonize their relationships" (Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder 2005), we would be asking women who are terrorized by their partners to go into a counseling situation that calls for honesty, encouraging victims to tell the truth to a partner who in many cases has beaten them severely in response to criticism and who might well murder them in response to their attempt to "harmonize" (Johnson 2005).

Thus, our understanding of the differences among these types of intimate partner violence suggests that the best strategy in individual cases is to assume intimate terrorism and to work closely with the victim only (not the couple) until it is absolutely clear that the violence is situational couple violence. In the shelter movement, which for the most part works on a feminist empowerment model, this means working with the victim on coping with the violence within the relationship, providing safe temporary shelter, involving the courts through arrest or protection from abuse orders, developing a safety plan for the immediate future, and—if the victim so wishes—developing the strategies and resources needed to escape from the relationship safely.

How can we as a society work to reduce the incidence of intimate partner violence? First, we need to send the message that violence against intimate partners will not be tolerated. Arrest and prosecution would send that message both to the general public and to the individuals who are arrested. Second, the educational programs about relationship violence that have been developed in the battered women's movement and presented in many school districts around the country could become a regular part of our school curricula, teaching children and adolescents about equality and respect in our personal relationships. Finally, we can work to increase support for programs in hospitals, shelters, and the courts that screen for intimate partner violence and help its victims either to stop the violence or to escape from it safely.

NOTES

1. There is a fourth type, *mutual violent control*, that involves two intimate terrorists vying for control of their relationship. This type appears in very small numbers in some samples and there is some debate about whether it is a true type or an artifact of the constraints of imperfect operationalization.

2. I am going to use gendered pronouns here because the vast majority of intimate terrorists are men terrorizing female partners. That does not mean that women are *never* intimate terrorists. There are a small number of women who do terrorize their male partners (Steinmetz 1977–78), and there are also women in same-sex relationships who terrorize their female partners (Renzetti and Miley 1996).

3. It is important to note that this discussion of gender is relevant only to heterosexual relationships. In same-sex relationships, some aspects of gender may still be important (e.g., gender differences in attitudes toward and experience with violence might produce more violence in gay men's relationships than in lesbian relationships), others will be largely irrelevant (e.g., gay and lesbian relationship norms are more egalitarian, and sex differences in size and strength will be less likely to be significant), and some will play themselves out in quite different ways (e.g.,

reactions of the criminal justice system may be affected by officers' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians). Although we know considerably less about same-sex relationships than we do about heterosexual relationships, there is a growing literature that is important not only in its own right but also because it sheds light on some of the inadequacies of theories rooted in research on heterosexual relationships (Renzetti 1992, 2002; Renzetti and Miley 1996).