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Intimate Partner Violence

Violence against African American women, specifically intimate partner abuse, has a significant impact on their health and well being. Intimate partner femicide and near fatal intimate partner femicide are the major causes of premature death and disabling injuries for African American women.

—Campbell, Sharps, Gary, Campbell, and
Lopez (2002), p. 1

When things were good, they were so good. Like I said, I was always secure with him. He might try to hit me and he might try to kill me, but nobody else was going to do it. Nobody else was going to talk bad to me or hurt me or talk bad about me. That just wasn't going to happen. I was secure in that sense with him. He was going to protect me from everybody else.

—Candy (North Carolina), emphasis added

Objectives

- Examine differences and similarities in intimate partner violence across race and ethnicity.
- Examine the ways in which intimate partner violence is shaped by other social problems, such as unemployment, incarceration, and health.
- Identify some solutions to intimate partner violence in African American families.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an epidemic in the contemporary United States. Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002, with violence between intimate partners accounting for half (49%) of all family violence (Durose et al., 2005). This translates into roughly 1.75 million acts of violence per year (Durose et al., 2005). A national probability survey of 8,000 women and men found that 3% of women who are married or cohabiting experience an assault *each year* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Estimates across the lifespan are, of course, significantly higher, with as many as a *quarter* of all women reporting physical abuse by a male partner during their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Minority women report higher rates of IPV: Twenty percent of minority and poor women reported an incident *in the past year* (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). At the "outer limits" (Browne, 1989) of lethal violence, 31% (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/gender.htm) or 1,272 (http://www .ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/press/ipv01pr.htm) of all female murder victims are murdered by their intimate (or ex-) partners (Rennison, 2003).

In this chapter, we will explore not only the nuances of IPV as it is experienced by African American women and perpetrated by African American men, but we will also examine the ways in which IPV in the African American community is tied up or woven together with the other social problems or ills we discuss in this book: poverty, unemployment, health, and incarceration. We argue that only when we see IPV as bound up with these other issues can we understand its impact on African American civil society.

Definitions

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse that takes place between intimate partners. The focus of the discussion in this book is limited to a discussion of violence among *heterosexual* partners.[1] We choose not to use the term *domestic violence* because we are *not* referring to violence that occurs between other members of the domestic household, such as the abuse of children by parents. In addition, the term *domestic* implies a shared residence. Yet many of the casualties of IPV do not live together, and often when they do live together, the violence began before they moved in together or got married. Finally, we choose the term *intimate partner* rather than *domestic* in order to highlight the nature of the relationship—these are intimate partners who claim to love each other—regardless of their marital status. IPV is present in both marital

and cohabiting relationships. We will not differentiate between this legal status, but rather will focus on the intimate nature of the relationship.

The Problem

Intimate partner violence is an epidemic problem. As we noted above, a series of large-scale, nationally representative studies find consistently over time that as many as 3% of women report an incident of violence at the hands of their intimate partners in the previous 12 months, with as many as a quarter or more of women reporting at least one intimate partner assault in their lifetimes (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003a; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

We should care about IPV because it affects our mothers, sisters, partners, and friends, and because it is our fathers, brothers, partners, and friends who are responsible for this violence—violence that kills 1,500 women per year (http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/press/ipv01pr.htm) and sends millions to local emergency rooms for medical treatment (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003a).

> So, Will's at work one day and I'm, I'm home. Bri's at school. And I was sleeping up in my bedroom, and all of a sudden, my bedroom door came flying in. GW (Stella's ex-boyfriend) had broken through a window downstairs, come in and kicked open my door, and I was in t-shirt and panties and it was winter out, so I was barefooted. And he jumped on top of me and started choking me. Then he yanked me up, and started banging my head against a cement wall. And I managed to get my feet up against his chest and push him backwards, and I ran down the stairs, and got to the front door, but it's one of those, you have to turn the door knob and the thing at the same time. One of those old-fashioned locks. And he got me before I could get it out and he grabbed me around the waist and threw me backwards and I hit the banister to the stairs, which was solid wood, and I slid down. He ripped the phone out of the wall and then he was standing over me with a baseball bat. And I thought, this is it. I'm going to die. (Stella, Minnesota)

Up until very recently, domestic violence, as it has been referred to, was a problem to be dealt with inside the family. Furthermore, domestic violence was essentially legal—men were legally allowed to beat their wives as long as they didn't kill them or the violence didn't get out of hand[2] (Browne, 1987). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, second-wave feminists began to draw attention to the situation of domestic violence and its victims. The writings of these scholars (e.g., Browne, 1987; Kirkwood, 1993) were critical because they brought this common experience of IPV to the attention of the larger

American population. However, as awareness of IPV has grown, our discussions of it have remained narrowly focused on conceptualizing and defining IPV as a "women's" problem. Certainly, IPV is a women's problem. Many women are injured and even killed each year as a result of IPV. And certainly, there are many problems women face as they experience IPV: difficulties in leaving, difficulties in successfully engaging the criminal justice system, and so on. However, it is their male partners who beat them. We will argue in this chapter that we need to redefine and reconceptualize IPV as a "men's" problem and as a problem faced by couples and families in our society.

Although analyses from the data generated using large-scale surveys have allowed researchers to see the relative blindness of IPV to social demarcations of race/ethnicity, social class, or region of the country (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), the current literature on IPV has not adequately addressed the race and class differences in both the experiences and outcomes of IPV. In this chapter, we will focus our attention on the phenomenon of IPV in African American families.[3] First, we begin with a review of the theoretical approaches to understanding IPV.

The Family Violence Approach

The family violence paradigm was developed by researchers Murray Straus and Richard Gelles, who first published their empirical work in the mid-1970s. Their empirical research soon came to be organized under the rubric of the "Family Violence Approach." Their methods primarily consist of conducting telephone interviews with randomly selected men and women in the United States. They developed an instrument, the Conflict Tactics Scale, or CTS (Straus, 1979), that is designed to measure incidents of physical violence in couples. Theoretically, family violence theorists locate domestic violence (their term) in the larger framework of other forms of family violence such as child abuse, sibling abuse, and elder abuse (Gelles, 1974, 1997; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Straus & Gelles, 1995).

Family violence scholars examine these various forms of violence within families and among family members and identify patterns. They note, for example, that the most common factor across all of these various forms of violence is the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim: The perpetrator always has more power than the victim. Parents abuse their children, older siblings abuse younger siblings, male siblings abuse female siblings, adult children abuse aging parents, and husbands abuse wives. This pattern reveals at least two key elements to family violence, whatever form it takes. First, that power provides a license to abuse (powerful people are rarely

held accountable for victimizing less powerful people[4]), and violence is an effective strategy for controlling the behavior of other family members. Moreover, Gelles argues that people in families "hit because they can" (Gelles, 1997). Family members with more physical power or status in the family hit because they are capable of doing so. We would add that because the consequences for violence in families are so mild and are seldom enforced, that family members *hit because they can get away with it* (see Harvey, 2002; Williams et al., 2005).

The Feminist Paradigm

In contrast, feminist scholars note that IPV is better understood as a form of violence against women. Theorists ranging from Susan Brownmiller (Brownmiller, 1975) to Catherine MacKinnon (MacKinnon, 1991) to bell hooks (hooks, 2000) examine the ways in which patriarchy developed and was perpetuated in the contemporary United States.[5] Feminists argue that violence against women, such as sexual assault, battering, and sexual harassment, is an expected outgrowth of the power relations between men and women, just as lynching is an expected outgrowth in systems of racial domination.

Although some women beat their male partners, and although some families live with what can be best characterized as *mutual combat,* a term coined by Gelles and Strauss (1988), or *situational couple violence* (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000), in fact, IPV is a gendered phenomenon. The vast majority of batterers are men, and the vast majority of victims are women. Intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women. For example, in 2001, women accounted for 85% of the victims of intimate partner violence (588,490 total) and men accounted for approximately 15% of the victims (103,220 total) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003b). Furthermore, the outcomes of IPV for women and men are quite different. Even family violence theorists Murray Straus and Richard Gelles note that male violence against women does much more damage than female violence against men; women are much more likely to be injured than men (Straus & Gelles, 1995).

Because feminists argue that IPV is a direct outcome of a social system dominated by patriarchy, one of the challenges is to explain mutual combat or situational couple violence—the times when women initiate the violence or hit back.

This type of violence is harder to explain using the feminist paradigm. However, we also note that it is relatively uncommon, existing in less than 10% of all situations involving IPV (Durose et al., 2005). Thus, it is an exception to the rule.[6] In interviews with women who were arrested for

intimate partner violence, Stuart et al. (2006) report that "self-defense, poor emotional regulation, provocation by partner, and retaliation for past abuse were the most common reasons for violence perpetration" (p. 609).

Although both the family violence paradigm and the feminist paradigm help us to make sense of IPV, both perspectives are limited in several ways. First, neither perspective adequately addresses empirically verifiable differences in IPV across race/ethnicity and class lines.[7] Second, both family theorists and feminist scholars while recognizing differences in the experiences of men and women in terms of IPV continue to focus primarily on the experiences of women.[8] Although clearly identifying IPV as a form of violence against women was critical in moving our understanding of IPV forward, this perspective has become limited in its utility to solve the problem simply because IPV has been ghettoized as a "women's" problem: The almost total attention on women as victims has limited the discussion to things women can do to avoid IPV and escape it when they are confronted by it. Yet because the vast majority of violence is perpetrated by men, until we refocus on the role that men play in IPV, we will continue to flounder in our attempts at ending this serious social problem.

Race, Class, and Gender Approach to Studying IPV

In our analyses, we consider the ways in which IPV is experienced and dealt with differently by African American men *and* women, the poor, and to a lesser extent, the affluent. To the degree that there are sufficient data, this analysis examines the various ways that these systems—racism, sexism, and classism—intersect and become mutually reinforcing. For example, how do white, affluent men experience threats to their masculinity? In what types of IPV do they engage? How are they dealt with by the police? How are these experiences different from the experiences of African American men, who may, for example, experience different threats to their masculinity and are certainly treated differently in a criminal justice system that can only be characterized as racially unjust? (See Chapter 9 for further discussion on this topic.)

This attention to race, class, *and* gender is rather unique in the literature on IPV. Those who attempt to include the stories of a racially and ethnically diverse sample often fail to include variance by social class.[9] But perhaps the biggest flaw in previous research is that seldom do studies of IPV involve the experiences of both men and women, batterers and battered in the same study.[10] The approach of this chapter is also unique in that it is not limited to a discussion of IPV per se. The stories of men and women living with IPV will be presented and analyzed, but they will be woven together with the

issues covered in other chapters: poverty, employment, HIV/AIDS, and incarceration.

IPV, a gendered phenomenon, and all of its causes and outcomes, must be located within the larger system of patriarchy. Patriarchy prescribes a certain set of gender relations as well as imposes limits and constraints upon educational attainment, labor force participation, and economic freedom for women. Patriarchy results in restricted constructions of motherhood and fatherhood and constrains women's reproductive lives. For example, women continue to be socialized to believe that it is better to have a man who beats you than no man at all (Doyle, 1999; Rich, 1980).

Women continue to earn 75 cents on the male dollar, leaving them economically disadvantaged (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Until we address these fundamental, root causes, such as economic dependency, for staying in a battering relationship, battered women will continue to leave unsuccessfully or not leave at all. Only when we understand the ways in which patriarchy creates unequal gender outcomes can we begin to consider social reconfigurations that will eliminate (or at least reduce) the violence plaguing so many of our families.

But IPV is not simply structured by a system of patriarchy. It is also structured by a system of racial superiority and by the intersections of these two systems. We will argue later in the chapter that one of the triggers for men who batter is a feeling that their masculinity is threatened. One of the patterns that emerged from these interviews is that when men feel emasculated, often they will try to reassert their masculinity through violence. One of the outcomes of patriarchy is the requirement that men be the breadwinner in their families. But one of the outcomes of racial superiority is that this is a difficult, if not impossible, task for a large number of African American men, as we will discuss at length in Chapter 7. Thus, we will use the lens of race, class, and gender theory to analyze the differences that exist across race, class, and gender demarcations. Not until we understand better the nuances of IPV (or any phenomenon) as it is structured by interactions of systems of domination (racism, sexism, classism, and so forth) will we be able to work toward building a society free of violence and oppression.

The Dirty Little Secret: IPV in the African American Community

Although family violence is not something new to the American family (Gordon, 1988), what makes this a unique contribution is that we pay attention to African Americans. We're paying attention to a topic that doesn't get

aired in the sociological literature, but it also doesn't get aired in the African American community either. Why?

As we noted at the beginning of this book, after the Moynihan report of the mid-1960s, focusing one's research on the problems facing the African American community was professional suicide (Moynihan, 1965). This type of research ran the risk of purporting to pathologize African Americans.[11]

Among African Americans, the subject is taboo as well. Although researchers are often focused on the fluctuations and seeming contradictions among different forms of oppression within communities, often members of these communities either are not aware of the issue of IPV or choose to remain silent. Black feminist theorists (Hill-Collins, 2004; hooks, 2000, 2004; King, 1988) have pointed out, for example, the ways in which sexism and gender oppression are rendered invisible in the African American community. For women, discussions of gender are often dwarfed by discussions of race. Furthermore, African American women often fear that discussions of gender oppression contribute to negative images of African American men. The consequences of this invisibility have been deadly for African American women.

> Currently, one of the most pressing issues for contemporary Black sexual politics concerns violence against black women at the hands of Black men. . . . Much of this violence occurs within the context of Black heterosexual love relationships, Black family life, and within African American social institutions. Such violence takes many forms, including verbally berating Black women, hitting them, ridiculing their appearance, grabbing their body parts, pressuring them to have sex, beating them, and murdering them. (Hill-Collins, 2004, pp. 225–226)

> Black communities must begin facing up to the lethal consequences of our own sexism. The time is over for expecting black women to be silent about the sexual violence and personal suppression they experience in ostensible fidelity to our common cause. (Hill, 2005, p. 171)

Intimate partner violence in the African American community is both serious and controversial. Yet as both Hill and Hill-Collins note above, it is time to begin open discussions of the violence that African American women experience at the hands of African American men who proclaim to love them. And although patriarchy in the African American community is tied up in ideologies of racial superiority, we need to examine the intersections of race and gender, but we also need to deconstruct them and examine gender oppression as it exists singularly in the African American community.

African American Women as Victims/ Survivors of IPV: Statistics/Rates

Most, if not all, researchers who pay attention to rates of IPV across racial and ethnic lines note that IPV knows no boundaries: "Domestic violence is statistically consistent across racial and ethnic boundaries" (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1995, p. 1). And yet, when we analyzed the data from the Violence and Threats of Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), we found that although the overall rates for experiencing IPV were the same for all women regardless of their race or ethnicity, African American women are more likely to report certain forms of IPV. Furthermore, the types of violence that African American women are more likely to experience are the more severe, the more near-lethal forms of IPV (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1).

One of the strengths of quantitative survey data like those reported above is that the data allow researchers to assess the prevalence of various types of violence among all Americans. One of the weaknesses, however, is that the numbers and statistics often do not provide the kind of detail that helps us

Table 5.1   Rates of IPV by Race (in percentages)

Types of Physical Violence	White	African American
Partner throws something at woman that could hurt her	10.1	9.3
Partner pushes, grabs, or shoves*	22.2	27.3
Partner pulls woman's hair	10.8	10.8
Partner slaps woman*	19.9	25.2
Partner kicks or bites woman*	6.2	8.6
Partner chokes or drowns woman	6.5	7.9
Partner hits woman with an object	6.8	7.9
Partner beats up woman*	9.8	14.7
Partner threatens woman with a gun*	4.9	7.7
Partner threatens woman with a knife	4.2	5.7
Partner uses a gun on woman	2.0	2.8
Partner uses a knife on woman*	2.2	3.8

*Indicates physical violence that is significantly *lower* among African American women than middle-class and poor women. All other forms of physical violence are *not* significantly different by household income (social class). χ^2 and *p* values < .10. (Analyses were performed using the data collected as part of the Violence and Threats of Violence Against Women survey, a national probability sample of men and women. Descriptions and data can be found at:http://www.icpsr .umich.edu/cgi-bin/SDA)
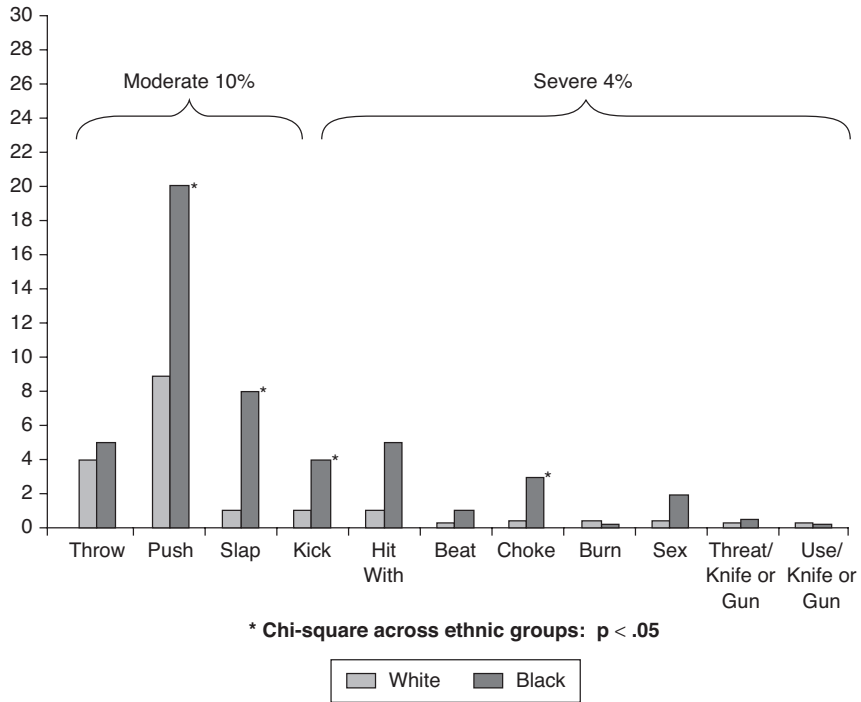
Figure 5.1   Types of Male to Female Partner Violence (in percentages)
SOURCE: Tjaden and Thoennes (2000).

to understand the process and outcome of the violence. For example, when we talk about the fact that African American women experience more severe, near- lethal forms of violence, it often helps to hear the stories that illustrate what constitutes such violence. When we began these interviews, we knew the statistics on violence and we knew that some of the women we would meet and interview would tell us of the horrors of IPV. We were both struck by how commonplace these stories were. Stella's story, which appears early in this chapter, of being hit with a baseball bat was typical of the violence described by the women we interviewed. Lara describes the night she was beaten up and hit in the head with a ball-peen hammer.

> He thought I had went somewhere. When he came here, I wasn't here, so I guess he thought I was out somewhere else. And he came in and we argued, and then, the pushing started. He grabbed me and hit me with a hammer . . . right here. And like across my head, whatever. . . . They [her kids] heard it. They didn't see it, but they heard it 'cause they were in the room. It was terrifying. So I went in the other room, locked myself in there, called the police and

whatever, and they came. By that time, he was gone. And they came, and I was just hysterical, I mean, bleeding everywhere, and the kids screaming and hollering. And it was just a terrible night. It really was. And I went to the emergency room and I had to get maybe twelve or thirteen stitches, cause they were in different spots. I had like six up here, I had maybe three over here, and like maybe half on my ear. It was like hanging down, ripped off, so a plastic surgeon had to come in and sew it back up. I called her [a friend] and she came to my house and picked them [her kids] up. (Lara, Minnesota)

Lara's experience being beaten and hit in the head with a ball-peen hammer stands as a clear illustration of what constitutes near-lethal violence. As important as describing the violence is understanding the factors that contribute to IPV, in this case with special attention on the factors that are specific to African American families.

Women and Economic Dependency

One of the key issues involved with IPV in all families is women's economic dependency on men. As we noted in Chapter 3, and we will discuss at length in Chapter 8, Rich argues that one of the strongest compulsions for women to marry (or cohabit) is the fact that their economic standing is almost always enhanced by the economic contributions of their male partners (Rich, 1980, 1995). This dependency on men as breadwinners creates a sort of glue that prevents women from leaving their abusive partners. Because African Americans suffer from wage discrimination and low wages associated with a labor market that is characterized by race and sex segregation, they are significantly more vulnerable to economic hardship when they leave marriage and cohabiting relationships. For example, we know that when they are on their own, heading families, 70% of African American women are poor. Poverty data confirm that in African American families with two adults present, the rate of poverty drops to 28%. Although this figure is still well above that for whites, it does reflect the fact that, overall, African American women are better off financially when they are in committed relationships with men. (For a review of these data, see Table 8.5.) Thus, the ties to remaining in the relationship are strong.

As with so many issues that we have discussed in this book, the strength of the pull to stay with an abusive partner is also shaped by other forces, especially social class. For example, as we discussed in Chapter 3, African American women are more likely to be in the paid labor market in comparison with their white counterparts (Hattery, 2001b; Hill-Collins, 1994). As a result, middle- and upper middle-class African American women may have fewer economic reasons to remain with an abusive partner than white

women of the same social class who are less likely to be employed, and who may face a precipitous decline in economic well-being if they leave an abusive partner.

Finally, we note that there are several cases of African American women married to affluent, high-profile men who, when the men's battering is disclosed, usually through a phone call to the police, refuse to cooperate in the prosecution of their husbands and also refuse to leave, despite high levels of violence. An example that illustrates this point is the case of Felicia Moon, the wife of professional football player Warren Moon. Felicia Moon was so badly beaten up by her husband one night that she called the police, who arrested Mr. Moon for misdemeanor battering.[12] At the trial, the prosecutor produced photographs that demonstrated that Mr. Moon had beaten his wife into an unrecognizable state, yet Mrs. Moon stood by her man and in her testimony blamed his violent outburst on herself. As a result, Mr. Moon was not convicted and the couple remained together. Why? We would argue because in the balance, Mrs. Moon, like many wives of powerful, influential, affluent men, had a lot to lose, mainly money. Although Mrs. Moon could most likely have accessed the assets to exit, she chose not to.

On one hand, African American women may be better positioned to leave an abusive relationship because they are more likely to be employed. However, for all of the reasons we will discuss in Chapter 8 and those mentioned above, when African American women do leave, they are more likely to find themselves homeless and unable to meet the daily needs of their children. Many African American women initially rely on welfare, but because of the strict time restrictions, which we will discuss further in Chapter 8, welfare is not a long-term solution. Therefore, this situation can create additional pressure to find a new partner, especially one who is employed, and thus restore some form of economic stability to their lives and the lives of their children.

Our interviews revealed a common and dangerous cycle for low-income African American women. Before leaving, many of these women had been in the working class or lower middle class. But as the data on family form, poverty, and race confirm (see Chapters 3 and 8), these women often found that after they left, they were plunged into poverty, unable to pay the rent, feed their children, and provide or pay for child care while they worked. As a result, many of the women we interviewed began a frantic search for a new partner. Because they felt such pressure to establish a sexual relationship with another man (e.g., Rich's notion of compulsory heterosexuality) (Rich, 1980), this search often resulted in a cycle of abusive relationships. Like a ping pong ball, these women reported that in an attempt to survive, they often found that they had simply traded one violent relationship for another.

This form of economic dependency, which is brutal and sometimes lethal, is more common in the experiences of African American women precisely because they have less education and fewer economic opportunities, they work for lower wages, and they often have more children to support (see the discussions in Chapters 4 and 7). Thus, African American women are partic- ularly vulnerable to this type of dependency, one that leads to selling or trad- ing one's sexuality in exchange for having one's basic (financial) needs met.

The stories we heard in the shelter serve to illustrate. Many of the women we met talked of moving out of the shelter (in North Carolina) and into an apartment with a man they had met at the mall only a few days or weeks before. Andi's story, although perhaps extreme in that it involves moving several hundred miles, is typical of the stories we heard from the women we interviewed.

Yeah, I got my older son, I got all my stuff and we went to Chicago. Um, with me working for the moving company, I knew this guy who drove a truck, and so he was up there and he had to go back to Chicago, so he took us to Chicago. I stayed in a hotel for about a week and then went to a shelter. I stayed in the shelter, but, mind you, I'm a hot girl, so, I don't know, but I stayed in the shel- ter for, like, three days, and then met this guy one day when I was outside of the shelter. And I do not know what was going through my mind, but I liked him; he was like, "Why don't you come to Minnesota with me." So I came to Minnesota. I'd been in Chicago for a week and a half. [AH: And how quickly did you move to Minnesota?] The next day after I met him. It was like, no, I didn't, it was like one of those stupid you're risking your life moves, but I was like, *"Hey, what do I have to lose right now? I have absolutely nothing."* So, he was, he had already came up here to Minnesota 'cause his brother got mur- dered and they couldn't stay in Chicago because the people who killed his brother were actually trying to kill him. So he were up here and he was sup- posed to be in Chicago picking up this girl who says she was pregnant by him but she said she didn't want to go, so he brought me back up here instead and told his family that I was her. I was living with him and his family, with him and his mom, and his grandma and younger brothers and sisters. I thought it was, I thought it was weird. Really, really weird. But, I mean, we talked to each other every day and we started getting involved with each other and every- thing. [AH: Were you sleeping with him?] Eventually, yeah. Yeah. The reason it's weird to me that we started getting closer, he started getting real close to my kids and my kids started getting close to him. So I kept working and he finally got a job. And he was working at [Simoniz] at first, 'cause he had never had a real job and he had always been hustling down in Chicago—that was the life out there. So he got his job at Simoniz in Apollo Air, and so we decided we wanted to get an apartment of our own. So we got an apartment of our own. Everything seemed pretty good for a minute. It was all right, I mean, but it was

> a two-bedroom apartment and everything. He got a job at Target, so that was
> a better job so we were living on our own, we got furniture and stuff 'cause we
> work hard to get furniture and everything, make sure the kids are okay, had
> day care set up; all that was good, but then one night he flipped out because
> he found out I had smoked a blunt, which I shouldn't have but it was a temp-
> tation. He found out I had smoked a blunt and that I had been around some
> guys. So he flipped out and we got into this fight and everything. . . . Well, first
> he had just grabbed me, and like, slammed me into the wall; and me, I'm not
> gonna just stand there, so, like, I try to shove him off me. And I grabbed his
> shirt up, like, roped it up, like that, and then I kept telling him "get off me,"
> and stuff and . . . slinging me around and stuff and he ended up hitting my face
> against the wall. (Andi, Minnesota)

What Andi's story illustrates is the cycle into which many of the battered women we interviewed fell. They often felt that their options were to live alone and be poor or take a chance to improve their economic conditions by moving in with a man. Although this may seem obvious and something that all women face, for many of the battered women we interviewed, leaving a violent relationship had plunged them into such severe poverty that they were homeless. In addition, moving out often meant that they lost their jobs because they either failed to come to work during the transition or they couldn't continue to go to work *and* care for their children. It is common in low-income families for parents to split shifts so that one parent watches the children while the other works, thus eliminating or significantly reducing child care costs (Hattery, 2001a, 2001b). Leaving the abusive partner often meant leaving behind the only child care that was available and "afford-able." Therefore, the pressures these women felt to find a new relationship were significant and pressing. Most of the women we interviewed reported that after leaving an abusive partner, they often established a new relation-ship within weeks, often with someone they barely knew or with someone they knew had a reputation for violence, and more often than not, this rela-tionship turned violent as well.

Early Experiences With Sex, Sexual Abuse, and Risk for IPV

Early sexual activity is one theme that runs consistently through all the interviews we did with battered women. So is the theme of prostitution. We refer the reader back to these discussions in Chapter 4. Our concern in this chapter is the link between early and abusive experiences with sex and risk for IPV.

Rape and sexual assault constitute a similarly common experience for girls and women in the United States, with studies conducted across a decade yielding stable estimates of 22%–25% of women experiencing some sort of nonconsensual sexual activity in their lifetimes (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Hattery & Kane, 1995; Koss, 1985; Koss et al., 1994; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Warshaw, 1988).

The majority of victims of rape and sexual abuse are victimized before they turn 18 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), and most are victimized by someone they know (Durose et al., 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). For example, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that sexual assault and rape victims are three times more likely to be raped by a boyfriend than by a stranger (Durose et al., 2005).

Although women of any age can be raped, the majority of females (54%) who report being raped were raped before they reached the age of 18. Slightly more than a fifth (21.6%) were raped in childhood (before age 12), with the slight majority (32.4%) being raped in adolescence (ages 12–17) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Compared with adult women, girls who are sexually assaulted during childhood and adolescence are more likely to be raped by someone they know (85.7%) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Women who were victims of child abuse are not significantly more likely to grow up to be battered in adulthood (46% compared to 53.3%); however, women who were victims of child abuse are *twice as likely* to experience IPV as women who were not physically assaulted in childhood (46.7% compared to 19.8%) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

In terms of sexual abuse, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) also show a link between childhood and adulthood: Women who were raped as minors are twice as likely to be raped in adulthood (18.3% compared to 8.7%), although as with child abuse, most women who are raped in childhood are not raped in adulthood (18.3% compared to 81.2%).

Finally, scholars have established the coexistence of rape and physical assault of women by their intimate partners (Browne, 1987; Russell, 1990; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Seven percent of women report being sexually assaulted by their intimate partners, 22% report being physically assaulted by their intimate partners, and 25% report one or both of these events (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

In summary, we have good estimates of both sexual and physical abuse in both childhood and adulthood, and we understand something about the increased risk that victims of both physical and sexual abuse in childhood have *for the same type of violence* in adulthood. However, there is little empirical research on the relationship between sexual abuse in childhood or

adolescence and physical abuse in adulthood that allows us to consider the probability that female victims of childhood or adolescent sexual abuse are disproportionately likely to experience IPV in their adult relationships.

Because African American women are significantly more likely than their white counterparts to report being raped or sexually abused in childhood or adolescence (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), we suggest that these experiences leave them more vulnerable than their white counterparts to IPV in their adult relationships.[13]

The Pathway From Sexual Abuse in Childhood to IPV in Adulthood

> Many of the women in this study [of battered women] were raped, either as children or as young adults. Without a doubt these were traumatic experiences and they shaped or at least influenced much of the rest of their lives, particularly the ways in which they think about their own bodies and their self worth. (Lawless, 2001, p. 106)

For the women who had been sexually abused in childhood and adolescence, much of how they learned to relate to men was through the experience of sex. Thus, when they began to receive sexual attention, even though negative, from men who could be described as potential romantic partners, they often didn't define these experiences as abusive, even though in many cases they were. Recall that Veta was a 15-year-old having a sexually intimate relationship (by which she got pregnant) with a 45-year-old man. The stories from our interviews reinforce the findings of Browne (1987), who says that, often, caustic relationships seem at first to meet our definitions of passion and romance, of being in love. These women knew that sex with their stepfathers or mother's boyfriends or men in the liquor houses was wrong; that's why they were so ashamed to talk about it. However, in their early teens, when they entered sexual relationships with boyfriends, they defined this sexual attention as romantic and signifying love regardless of age differences or matters of consent. For the women who were sexually abused by men they also cared about (older boyfriends, stepfathers, and so on), they experienced both love and hurt in the same relationship, and this connection got cemented for them as one that was "normal." This is a key part of the problem. Women who are sexually abused in childhood and adolescence by men they care about conflate love and pain. From this, they learn a potent lesson: that those who love us can/will also hurt us, often deeply.

Valerie was molested by her stepfather from the time she was 12 until she was 15, when her mother signed permission for Valerie to marry a man in

his early twenties. So, at 15, Valerie married for the first time a man who would ultimately batter her. For many women, "getting pregnant and married was practically the only avenue for their escape" (Lawless, 2001, p. 114)—or so it seemed!

> Well, I was excited [to get married]. I was excited. But then, you know, when the anger, when he'd lose his temper really easy, you know, maybe bust a hole in the wall or something. And then he was abusive to me but still, you know, that's the way it had been. So I still didn't have an example to go by to say, well this is not the way it's supposed to be. (Valerie, North Carolina)

The lack of positive models for a romantic, intimate relationship may, in fact, be one mechanism by which intergenerational transmission is occurring, although we would never suggest that this is the only mechanism or process at work. This finding reinforces an important finding in the literature that shows how a lack of positive relationship models leaves women unprepared to recognize the warning signs of a violent relationship (Browne, 1987; Lawless, 2001; Pipher, 1994). Lawless sums it up nicely:

> Nearly all the women in this study tell how they left home at a very young age; looking for an escape from the terror in their own homes. . . . Men would flatter them in order to gain their trust. The men . . . would treat them like "queens," notice them, look at them, and listen to their stories about their lives. The pull of that promise would suck them in every time. . . . They wake up, stunned, in abusive relationships with men who beat them, rape them, silence them exactly as their mothers, fathers, uncles, and brothers had done all the years of their lives. (Lawless, 2001, p. 116)

Lawless identifies very clearly the trap that pulls these women in, although it is hard to recognize. In the beginning, it is romance, even love—the love they are so longing for—but ultimately, they find that they have arrived yet again at the reckless world of degradation—violent beatings, rape, choking or worse, being sent to hospitals where they recover from near death—at the very hands of their newfound mates.

In sum, we have examined some of the factors, namely, economic dependency and sexual abuse, that leave women vulnerable to IPV. Both of these factors are significant because they affect African American women disproportionately, and they may account for part of the explanation for the higher rates of IPV that African American women experience relative to their white counterparts. We turn now to a discussion of the other side of the equation: African American men who batter.

Men and Masculinity

Just as early experiences with physical and sexual abuse put women at risk for IPV, there is a similar process at work for men. Men who were victims of physical child abuse are also twice as likely to batter in adulthood (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), but the strongest predictor of becoming a batterer for men *is growing up in a household in which there is IPV* (your father/ stepfather beats your mother) (Ehrensaft et al., 2003).

Yet overall, men who abuse their partners are not necessarily different from the typical American man. Rather, they are men who have been extremely well socialized into masculine roles and who are overly insecure and sensitive to threats to their masculinity.

What image do you envision when you think of a man who beats up his woman? Is he a factory worker who comes home, puts on a "wife beater,"[14] drinks a beer, and socks his wife in the mouth when the meat-loaf she cooked for dinner isn't ready on time? The truth is, there is no description of a batterer. Men who batter are of all races/ethnicities, all ages, all levels of education, and all different occupations, and they live in all different regions of the country. We argue that if anything distinguishes batterers from men who don't batter, it is two things: Men who batter are well-socialized into hypermasculinity, and triggers to battering can be best understood primarily as threats to batterers' masculinity. In this section, we will explore constructions of masculinity and their specific iteration in the African American community.

What does it mean to be a man in our society? Masculinity is a set of characteristics that we often associate with men. From an early age, most children raised in the United States will ascribe qualities such as strength, power, height, and money to boys and men.[15] Kimmel (1995) traces the origins of the fusion of these masculine traits with being male. The sheer correlation between these qualities and being a man in this country illustrates the path through which masculinity has come to be associated exclusively with being male. Despite differences by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, and a variety of other factors that suggest there are really several "masculinities" (Kimmel, 1995), the image by which most men judge themselves and are judged can be boiled down to a few qualities or statuses as suggested by Goffman (cited in Kimmel, 1995):

> In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, *white,* urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. . . . Any male who fails to qualify in any one of

these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior. (p. 5)

Certain well-known men in our culture would be readily identifiable as "men's men," or "manly men." Most of the exemplars, or "ideal types," as Weber would call them, come from the realms of sports, entertainment, politics, and occasionally from the world of big business. What do these men have in common? They are successful, affluent, "strong," good looking, and mostly white, and according to popular discourse, they have multiple female sex partners.

African American Masculinity: The Cool Pose

Therborn (1980) argues that marginalized groups often develop alternative ideologies that are more in line with their lived realities. The most cited attempt at understanding African American male masculinity and the issues surrounding it comes from Majors and Bilson (1992), who argue that "Cool Pose" is an attempt to make the African American male visible.

Cool Pose is a ritualized form of masculinity that entails behaviors, scripts, physical posturing, impression management, and carefully crafted performances that deliver a single, critical message: pride, strength, and control. . . . It cases the worry and pain of blocked opportunities. Being cool is an ego booster for black males comparable to the kind white males more easily find through attending good schools, landing prestigious jobs and bringing home decent wages. (pp. 4–5)

If we correctly understand the path that Majors and Bilson (1992) take, they also argue that African American men are on a disturbing roller coaster ride through black male pathology. It is here that one finds not only failure in school but also extreme violence and criminality, drug use and abuse, and an illogical connection to parenting but without being a parent—absentee fatherhood of many children with many different mothers (Smith & Hattery, 2006). Majors and Bilson conclude that African American men construct their masculinity behind masks, worn to survive not only their second-class status but also their environment.

Therborn (1980) contends, as do others (see Hattery, 2001b), and we agree, that the behavior of members of marginalized groups is shaped both by these alternative ideologies, but also by the hegemonic ideology. Furthermore, the construction of black masculinity is shaped not only by the lived realities of African American men, but also in response to the constructions of masculinity more generally (read: "white" masculinity) and in

response to institutionalized racism (see the description of Billy Black in Duneier, 1992).

Discourses of Masculinity

Regular men, masculine men, have access to images of the ideal man by watching ESPN, CNN, or most other cable television shows. For example, we saw the CEO of Tyco, Dennis Kozlowski, spend a million of his company's dollars on a birthday party for his wife. In the video images, what we saw was a successful American businessman flanked by beautiful women.

We saw America rally around Kobe Bryant as he endured a public rape charge (Katz, 2006). Many American men (and women) just wanted Kobe to be allowed to play in the NBA championship, reasoning that NBA players as "players" are legendary: witness Wilt Chamberlain and Magic Johnson (Smith & Hattery, 2006). Wilt Chamberlain bragged throughout his career that he had sex with at least 10,000 women, and Magic Johnson contracted HIV as a result of having unprotected sex with countless women he did not know. The public shunned him because of HIV but embraced his masculinity (as did his wife, Cookie, who stood by him). James Worthy (also a former Los Angeles Laker basketball player) got caught with a prostitute who was, in reality, an undercover cop. Kobe Bryant was, ultimately, just one more example of the sexual exploits of successful American men, especially those who are athletes.

Images of "regular" African American men also come across the television and radio wavelengths on a daily basis. The primary images we see of African American men are those of criminals and thugs (Glassner, 2000). The important point here is that a specific construction of masculinity is being transmitted to the young men (and women) who are watching. Men are supposed to be tough, strong, unfeeling, and most importantly, a "player" (hooks, 2004; Satcher, 2004).

No matter how many things are different about these men (e.g., Dennis Kozlowski and Kobe Bryant), such as their race, occupation, or education, they all share at least two traits: financial success and sexual prowess. Kimmel and Messner have argued that these two traits have come to signify manhood in contemporary America (Kimmel, 1995, 2005; Messner, 2002). And the key issues that both batterers and battered women identify as triggers to battering are men's successes in breadwinning and the bedroom—the two Bs.

Breadwinning

The first "B" is breadwinning. Breadwinning has long been defined by both popular discourse and sociological theory as one of the key roles that men in our society must play.

Structural-functionalists such as Parsons and Bales (1955) argued that men and women have evolved both biologically and socially toward distinct spheres of specialization. Based on this perspective, men and women are believed to be *biologically* suited for different tasks. As a result, men have come to dominate the instrumental sphere, whereas women have taken over the expressive sphere (Hattery, 2001b). The instrumental role, according to Parsons and Bales (1955), refers to the activities associated with providing for the basic needs of the family. In contrast, the expressive role refers to meeting the emotional needs of family members.

For example, in the traditional American family, the man is the breadwinner. He provides the economic support for the family, usually in the form of a paycheck. The woman, in contrast, nurtures and takes care of the children and comforts the man by providing a loving, quiet home, good food, and clean clothes in order to rejuvenate him before he heads back off into the stressful world of work.

Parsons and Bales (1955) construct a logical argument that traces our current division of labor from our existence in subsistence economies of the first tens of thousands of years of human existence:

> In our opinion the fundamental explanation for the allocation of the roles between the biological sexes lies in the fact that the bearing and early nursing of children establishes a strong and presumptive primacy of the relation of mother to the small child and this in turn establishes a presumption that *the man who is exempted from these biological functions should specialize in the alternative [occupational] direction.* (p. 23, emphasis added)

Parsons and Bales (1955) argue, for example, that a man's apparent greater ease at being away from his children for 40-plus hours per week, and even traveling away from home as part of his job, have evolved out of the time in human history when men went on long, extended hunting trips in search of meat. These hunting excursions encouraged a more detached masculine character (Hattery, 2001b). The important point here is that Parsons and Bales built an argument that the division of labor was *natural* and biological. Thus, it is the way things should be.

Breadwinning in the Current Economic Climate

Kimmel (1995) argues that one outcome of the contemporary political, economic, and social climate replete with declining real wages for men (Padavic & Reskin, 2002) and soaring unemployment (as high as 50% for African American men in places like New York City) is that establishing a

masculine identity vis-à-vis success in the labor market is tenuous at best and leaves men feeling threatened by the possibility that they are not masculine enough.

> At the grandest social level and the most intimate realms of personal life, for individuals and institutions, American men have been haunted by fears that they are not powerful, strong, rich, or successful enough. . . . [As a result] . . . American men try to *control themselves;* they project their fears on to *others;* and when feeling too pressured, they attempt to *escape*. (Kimmel, 1995, p. 9, emphasis added)

Kimmel (1995) argues that this history of using economic success to establish a masculine identity—an experience that leaves men feeling threatened—created a landscape for the development of ideologies of masculinity that persist today. In many ways, he argues, as women gain more and more ground on men in the labor market, things have, in fact, gotten worse.

> American men feel themselves beleaguered and besieged, working harder and harder for fewer and fewer personal and social rewards. As they are struggling in order to define themselves as "real" men by economic success and having the right kind of woman, they see the rules changing. Suddenly they are competing *against* women for jobs they once held a monopoly on. They are working side by side with women who have no interest in dating them. Furthermore, they believe that the rules of sexual conquest have changed; men no longer have free sexual access. (Kimmel, 1995, p. 299)

Kimmel's point is clear: It isn't so important what advances women have actually made, nor is it important if they actually pose a threat to men. What matters is if men *perceive* these threats to be real, especially as they threaten their manhood and masculinity. Kimmel (1995) argues convincingly that this is, in fact, the social landscape of the contemporary United States.

Given Kimmel's argument that in this economic, political, and social landscape masculinity is already at risk, it seems that threats to a man's masculinity from his intimate partner—especially those related to the two Bs (breadwinning and the bedroom), the organizing principles of intimate partner relations—will be particularly powerful and, according to Kimmel (1995), would leave men feeling particularly vulnerable.

If this is true, and a man's reaction to feeling humiliated is "invariably violent," or if—in a less extreme interpretation—as Michael Kimmel notes, men's reaction to vulnerability is to *control,* then it seems that battering is a logical and probable outcome of threats to men's power.

The breadwinner role is perhaps the most significant identity for the typical American man. Most of the men whom we interviewed indicated that their identity as a provider was central. They identified this as their main contribution to their intimate relationships and to their households.

As central as this role of breadwinner is, being successful in this role is especially difficult for African American men (see our extended discussion in Chapter 7). Historically, African American men have suffered severe unemployment and wage penalties in the U.S. economy. Recent estimates of African American male unemployment, for example, hover in the 50% range in New York City, the symbolic center of capitalism (Villarosa, 2004). Thus, African American men will, because of structured inequality and differential access to the opportunity structure–especially education—find it inevitably more difficult to be successful breadwinners in comparison to their white counterparts.

In addition to inequality in the opportunity structure, African American men also face at least two other barriers to successful breadwinning: poor health and incarceration. In our discussion in Chapter 6, we will highlight the stories of Ronny and Demetrius. Both of these young men (at the time of the interview, Ronny was 27 and Demetrius was 20) were facing such serious health issues, including HIV, that neither is capable of working and neither expects to work again in his lifetime. Because HIV/AIDS now constitutes the sixth leading cause of death for African American men, and because HIV/AIDS is a disease that involves a long period of decline, more and more African American men will find it difficult to meet the first requirement of masculinity: breadwinning.

The second major obstacle in meeting the requirements of the breadwinning role is a direct consequence of incarceration. Our discussion in Chapter 9 will detail the impact of incarceration on African American men's employability. With one quarter to one third of all African American men being incarcerated for a period of time, mostly when they are young (18–35), it is fair to say that incarceration is a major and significant life event for African American men. It prevents them from ever making a living in the legitimate economy.

We note here that incarceration may be replacing other markers (such as breadwinning) of masculinity for African American men. This is logical for several reasons: (a) It is so common, (b) it is often related to making money in the illegitimate economy, and (c) going to prison is the mark of a "tough guy." However, we argue that regardless of the commonality of the incarceration experience for African American men, the power of hegemonic constructions of masculinity continue to create a standard—breadwinner—against which all men (and their female partners) judge their success.

Furthermore, our respondents confirm the importance of breadwinning to healthy intimate relationships.

We turn now to a discussion of the triggers to IPV that the men we interviewed identified. It is important to note here that we do not think that these triggers are justifications for battering. There are no excuses for striking one's intimate partner. Rather, these are the rationalizations that the men themselves identified and articulated as they described incidents of IPV in their own lives. In our analysis, we found that several key themes organized these rationalizations. Therefore, these themes organize our discussion.

Women as Nags, Spendthrifts, and Lazy, and Men's Failure to Provide

Threats to this provider or breadwinner role came in several different forms: men's own failure as providers, not being able to keep up with the demands of their wives or girlfriends, and frustration with wives and girlfriends who wanted to be "kept" when this was an unrealistic expectation given their financial circumstances. In other words, there were two distinct forms of failure in the breadwinner role. One form of failure was experienced as a problem with themselves: They could not get or keep good jobs. The other form of failure was experienced as external and was interpreted by the men we interviewed as a problem not with them, but with their wives and girlfriends. Because they described this situation as one of wives and girlfriends who nagged or spent too much money or who weren't willing to work to contribute financially to the household, they essentially blamed the women for threatening their masculinity, and thus their battering was, to some degree, in *their* eyes, justified.

Women as Nags

The majority of men we interviewed indicated that their wives and girlfriends failed to recognize their efforts in the provider role. Put in their terms, these men felt "nagged." These men reported that their wives and/or girlfriends nagged them about not earning enough money, about not being able to provide the standard of living they believed they deserved, and about not being able to allow them to keep up with their girlfriends and co-workers.

Eddie is an African American man in his late 30s who lives in North Carolina. In addition to owning his own painting company, he is a professional boxer. He has been involved in several violent relationships with ex-girlfriends as well as with his wife. When we asked Eddie to talk about conflict in his marriage, he indicated that they frequently argued about money.

Small stuff, you know. She's always complaining about that I don't treat her like a wife, because I don't buy her what she wants, things like I can't afford, she always throw up in my face like what her friend's husband, what kind of car he bought her and what kind of gifts he bought her. Of course he can buy her a brand new car when he the assistant chief executive at Wachovia. And uh, she a RN, got a master's degree at Wake Forest, you know, and she complain about, oh and he just bought this $160,000 house and you know you married me and you supposed to do this for me and my children, well what you, what you gonna do for yourself, and she always just nick nagging at me. (Eddie, North Carolina)

From Eddie's perspective, not only is this nagging unwarranted, he sees himself as a good provider who is doing the best he can,[16] but his wife is not contributing financially to the household.

My wife hasn't worked, man, right now she don't even work. She, we don't get no kind of assistance, we don't get no kind of assistance, I make the money. She just get a little small child support check from their father, that's it. (Eddie, North Carolina)

Eddie and his wife have had numerous arguments about her spending habits, the fact that she doesn't work, and her perception that he is not an adequate provider. These arguments often involve yelling and sometimes physical violence that is not limited to pushing and shoving.[17]

Failure as a Provider

Many of the men and women[18] we interviewed identified unemployment or underemployment as significant sources of conflict in their relationships. We illustrate with the case of Chris and Wanda. During the course of their 5-year relationship, Chris has repeatedly been incarcerated. He is unemployable because of his felony record and his stints in jail and prison. During his periods of incarceration, Wanda makes friends with other men who continue to call her and come by to visit her after Chris is released back into the free world. On a typical evening or weekend when he is out, other men call and drop by the house to see Wanda. This is a major trigger for Chris. He is jealous. When he tries to physically assert what he sees as "his right to his woman," Wanda reminds Chris that he is not the breadwinner in the household and therefore has no claim to enforce the rules. We include here a condensed version of Wanda's rant. The full quote is contained in Chapter 3.

My house. I'm paying all the bills. I'm talking about rent, gas, light, phone, cable, everything. Everything. Everything. I even buy his deodorant, okay? (Wanda, Minnesota)

This accusation of failure as a provider is interpreted by Chris as a threat to his masculinity. In an attempt to reassert his masculinity, the argument escalates and often becomes physical.

> This nigga got the biggest knife, it is in the house laying on the counter. So I looked at him, so I eased right? I eased back to the back door and I seen him walk toward the front door. I comes up in the house and I grabbed the knife. And I take the knife and I puts it behind my back in my panties right here, like this right, put my t-shirt over it. I say, do it make any sense for you to act like a fool like you do? Calling that lady house, acting a fool. I said, Chris, it don't make no sense. I said, you know what you need to do? You need to get your shit, get together and get your shit out of here, I said, 'cause you got exactly two hours. If your shit ain't gone, you ain't got a place to go, far as I'm concerned, its garbage. I'm not putting up with your shit no more. I'm just through. Oh, you just talking that shit, goddamn, 'cause you been over there drinking all night with Angela. She fooling your head full of bullshit. I said, no, you got my head full of bullshit. I said, I'm tired now. So, but no, he ain't listen. You is my wife till death till we die. So now that's when you start. That don't mean till death do you die like we done took no marriage vows. Till death do you die—either you're going to be woman or one of us going to be dead. You see what I'm saying. That's how I interpret it. Okay, so now wait a minute. So then, should I kill this mother-fucker? (Wanda, Minnesota)

This imbalance of economic power was a key justification for Chris beating his girlfriend (they were not legally married). He recognized Wanda's economic control as a threat to his masculinity, his sense of himself as a man. In short, Chris beat Wanda and threatened her with the knife when he felt his masculine identity, as defined by his (lack of) economic power in the household, was being threatened.

The Bedroom

The second "B" is the bedroom. The bedroom really encompasses several issues, from men's ability to satisfy their partners (sexual prowess) to men's success in the proverbial bedroom, often defined as the number of sex partners he is able to have (over his lifetime or, in the case of many of the high-profile athletes we mentioned previously, over a 24-hour period!), often through sexual conquest (see Sanday, 1990; Smith & Hattery, 2006).

As old as America, and perhaps most of the world, is the sexual double standard for men and for women. This double standard prescribes that men should or can have more sexual experiences and more sexual partners than women. The evidence for this is overwhelming and far reaching. Consider

everything from the fact that polygyny (having more than one wife) was the dominant marriage form throughout history and across the globe (see the Human Relations Area Files at http://www.yale.edu/hraf/) and continues to exist in parts of Asia and Africa (Murdock, 1954/1983; Sanday, 1981). Typically, the only rule concerning multiple wives in these cultures is that the man must be able to provide economically for them. (The reader will recall our discussion of various family forms in Chapter 3.)

In the United States, despite a 30-year trend in a lower age at first intercourse and the declining percentage of newlyweds who are virgins at the time of marriage, American boys become sexually active a year or more earlier than their female peers, who are more than twice as likely to be virgins on their wedding day (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994). Furthermore, compare the language we use to describe men who have multiple sex partners to the language we use to describe women who do the same. We don't have to make a list here to demonstrate that virtually all the words for men are positive (player, stud, sugardaddy) and all of the terms for women are negative (loose, whore, slut).

When taken together—the sexual double standard, a history of polygyny, and the acceptance and praise awarded men who engage in sexual conquest—it is clear that sexual prowess is an important part of masculinity in the contemporary United States, if not in the world more broadly. Given the importance of sexual prowess in constructions of hegemonic masculinity, men were reluctant to discuss their failures in this area, although they were happy to share their successes in the bedroom! However, wives and girlfriends were not so close-lipped on this issue. In some cases, wives and girlfriends admitted to us that they were dissatisfied with their sex lives, and they often talked about how they expressed this dissatisfaction to the men in their lives.

Wanda: [Chris] don't appreciate nothing. Don't appreciate nothing, you know. They're living free, eating good, got a nice, I mean, a real nice hot water running in the shower in the bathtub. I mean, you know what I'm saying? But you know, a woman get tired. A woman get tired and then and I tried my best to figure out, why do we keep taking these men back?

AH: He isn't rubbing your feet anymore, is he?

Wanda: No! I put my foot up like this here, hmmph. Like they stink or something. Uh-oh, okay. So now you know, you're slacking up on everything, even the sex too now. Like sex, like it's a reward or something. NO way. And you know I'm a scuppy. I'm a

> freak, you know, I like my groove on when I want it. And you're
> going to tell me no? Oh, hell no. It's time for you to go 'cause
> I don't need you. 'Cause I got, I can go over here to Lovin' Fun
> [a lingerie store], I can buy anything, any toy I need and make
> love to myself 'cause I don't need you. And suck my own titty
> and everything. I'm just going to be frank. And so, all hell break-
> ing . . . I am so serious! Ya'll laugh, but I'm so serious.

Although few men admitted to having problems in their sex lives, Eddie,
the boxer, had this to say:

> We don't have a healthy sex life, because you have damage in the relationship,
> it takes the desire away from me. I sometimes come home and she touches me.
> Oh you can't hug, I say, I don't want to hug. Why, you got somebody. What
> she don't understand, she had damaged me so much. There's so much that's
> been said and done until I just, sometimes I don't even want to be bothered or
> talked to, I just want to come home, take a little shower, put on my stuff, and
> go to the gym. I don't want to talk, because maybe that morning before I left,
> she done told me you can just take your stuff with you. She been said some-
> thing so damaging when I come home from work, she can just lovey dovey
> with me, like nothing never happened or said, and it just be so damaging to
> me. (Eddie, North Carolina)

Chris also talked about Wanda's complaints about their sex life. He iden-
tifies it as a major cause of the fights and physical violence in their relation-
ship. In this case, however, he claims it is she who becomes violent.

> But, I got in here the first time, the mess with me and her. We was in the base-
> ment and she wanted more sex or whatever, and she was drinking her E&J
> [brandy]. She definitely, when she drink her NJ, that's when she gets physical.
> (Chris, Minnesota)

Jealousy

Scholars and practitioners have long identified jealousy as a major factor
in couple arguments and in IPV (see Browne, 1987). Jealousy is an impor-
tant trigger for IPV because it signals two key breakdowns in masculinity:
ownership and sexual satisfaction. As noted at the beginning of this chapter,
the crux of gender relations has been men's ownership of women. This is
codified in both legal and religious codes. Violence toward women dates
back centuries. "Throughout Euro-American history, wife beating enjoyed
legal status as an accepted institution in western society" (Weitzman, 2001,

p. 41). When John Adams was attending the Continental Congress in 1776, his wife, Abigail, wrote to her husband, whom she addressed as "Dearest Friend," a letter that would become famous: "In the new code of laws, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more favorable than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of husbands" (Crompton & Kessner, 2003, p. 14). But John Adams and other well-meaning men were no more able to free the women than they were the slaves. When the founders of our country signed the Declaration of Independence, their own wives were still, in every legal sense, *their* property. Upon marriage, a woman forfeited the few rights she had, and her husband owned her just as he owned his horse.[19] As a result of this legal tradition of ownership of women by their husbands, Straus calls the marriage license a "hitting license" (Straus & Gelles, 1995).

It has long been taken for granted that access to sexual relations was a right of marriage. Men were entitled to have sex with their wives whenever and however they wanted it. This norm was so strong that it prevented women from accusing their husbands of rape. Marital rape was defined as a nonentity, an impossibility. Based on this belief that men own their female partners, if a woman engages in *any* interaction with another man (it need not be sexual), her husband or partner may interpret this as a threat. Just as we are justified in shooting a prowler who attempts to enter our homes, men feel justified in reacting violently if they think another man is about to "steal" his woman. It's interesting to note here that his rage is usually executed against his female partner—the possession—rather than the other man—the intruder. This is much like someone setting his or her house on fire when a prowler approaches rather than shooting the prowler to prevent his or her entry into the home.

Jealousy can also be interpreted as a threat to masculinity in that it signals a failure on the part of a man to satisfy his partner's sexual needs. This is strikingly similar to the threat men feel when they are unable to meet the requirements of the breadwinner role. Jealousy is such a powerful threat to masculinity and to the relationship itself that it is perhaps the most common justification men give for IPV. In fact, all or most of the men worried and/or believed that their female partners were sleeping ("talking") with other men.[20]

Sheri's boyfriend beat her up on at least six occasions. The first time he beat her up, she was pregnant and he kicked her in the stomach. The last time he beat her up, he knocked her head into a towel rack and she ended up in the hospital for a week. These episodes were always prompted by a fit of jealousy. Ricco was so jealous that he wouldn't leave Sheri alone at night, even following her around the *inside* of the house.

Basically, he would be controlling. I would get up at night and go to the bath-room, he'd follow behind me. He called, he'd come home, stare at the sheets and smell them, trying to see if anybody else been there. (Sheri, North Carolina)

Cindy described a similar situation with her boyfriend (she was 17 and he was in his late 20s). They had been to McDonald's—Cindy's first trip ever—for pancakes. After they had pancakes, he took Cindy into the woods and had sex with her against her will. Then, in a fit of jealousy, he beat her up.

He, umm, beat me . . . he just got my nose and was like, beating me in my back, you know what I'm saying. It wasn't . . . I don't think . . . I don't even know that I was bruised 'cause I didn't want him to see. But see, he would be . . . he never checked my panties. But he checked other ones' panties. But I was in love with him. (Cindy, North Carolina)

Eddie recounts the night that he caught his former girlfriend with another man, and probably engaging in an act of prostitution. He admitted to beat-ing her that night to the point that she was unrecognizable. If the description isn't shocking enough, it is important to recall that Eddie is a professional boxer; a few weeks before our interview with him, he fought a man in a sanctioned boxing match, and later that day, the other boxer died. Eddie's fists are, indeed, lethal weapons.

She was playing that role, you know, so what had happened was, come to find out she had got a hotel room at the Inn on Burke Street, and what had hap-pened was, I used to hang out on the street called 14th Street, you ever heard of that? I used to hang out on 14th Street a lot, and I seen her coming up and down 14th Street, that's a drug area, buying drugs. But I would call her and she would keep going in the car.

So later on that Saturday night, because I couldn't catch up with her that Friday, later on that Saturday night she was coming up 14th Street and I seen her and her cousin was out there, and we was out there smoking rocks, 'cause we used to just behind trees and hit the pipe. That's how terribly it had gotten, you know, so I told him I would pay him if he would stop her when he saw her coming, when he catch her coming up the street. So he agreed, for a fee, for a small fee [laughter], so she fell for it. I gave him a rock. I gave him a rock. He took and stopped her, and when she stopped, I snuck up behind the car and jumped in the car and gave him the rock and told him to go ahead on and I told her to pull it off, and she was like, no, no get out of my car, and I was like if you don't pull off I will break your face, you know, I told her that. So she got scared and she pulled off.

I didn't know that she had this room at the Inn on Burke Street, so I had scared her so bad when we was in the car, say where'd you been, when I got in the car I smacked her. You know I smacked her when I got into the car, and

she said well I been at the hotel, and that slipped out of her, and I said, what
hotel you been in? She was like I got a room at the Inn on Burke Street because
I wanted to be by myself, and now listen. Just before he called her, she was rid-
ing up the street with a guy on the passenger side. She didn't know that I was
out there and I seen her, and when she came back down the street she had
dropped him off and she was coming back down the street by herself when he
called her. You see what I'm saying? So therefore I said, why did you let him
out, who did you just let out. Blasé, blasé, and I knew who the fellow was and
he got high.

   When we got back to the room, you see, 'cause I got high with him before,
I knew that he used to smoke those rocks inside the cigars, so we, she took me
to her room, she had cigar butts in the ashtray, and I know she didn't smoke
them like that, but I know he did, the one that she had just dropped off. Then
I seen her underwear by the shower and her bra, as if she had took a shower
and just slipped on something to come out to drop him back off, so when I got
in there and seen that I lost my mind, man, and I beat her so badly, man. I beat
her so bad until they couldn't hardly recognize her, man. Her eyes were
swollen, her mouth was busted, I had chipped her tooth, but I didn't know that
I had beat her that bad, because I had been up on 4 days straight, I had been
on a mission, man, and you know I was like out of my misery you know, and
so I went to sleep and when I went to sleep she snuck out of the room and went
and called the cops, and they was flashing pictures, they were flashing pictures,
and when I woke up they was shooting snapshots of me.

In summary, we have argued that hegemonic masculinity is essentialized
by two core concepts: breadwinning and the bedroom, the two Bs. Because
masculinity is defined by such a narrow range of behaviors, with the great-
est weight resting on these two aspects (breadwinning and sexual prowess),
many men construct most or all of their gendered identity (as masculine
men) around their success (or failure) at these two roles.[21]

At an individual level, this may not seem so extraordinary. Men must
simply get a job, work hard, make money, and satisfy their female partner.
However, examining this from a structural or sociological perspective, we
see that success and/or failure in this arena is not entirely up to individual
effort. Especially with regard to successful breadwinning, individual perfor-
mance is heavily structured by external forces such as the economy, returns
on human capital, race discrimination, health status (the ability to work),
and a history of incarceration.

As we will discuss at length in Chapter 7, because of a long history of
underemployment and unemployment for African American men and ready
employment (as domestics) for African American women, along with a
history of sharing the provider role that dates back to slavery (see Hattery,
2001b; Hill-Collins, 1994), most African American men *expected* their wives
and girlfriends to work outside of the home and contribute financially to the

household, as noted by Eddie. For African American men, then, the frustra-tion or trigger arises from a situation in which their female partners refuse to work yet desire a standard of living that the men cannot deliver on their own. Thus, the precise mechanism by which failure in the breadwinner role triggers violence among men is mitigated or shaped by race. For African American men, who have faced chronic wage discrimination and underem-ployment, the issue is centered on the situation in which their female part-ners refuse to contribute financially and expect their men to be able to adequately act as sole providers.[22]

Similarly, sexual prowess is a major component of masculinity, especially for African American men. Many scholars, including Patterson (1999), note that African American men have the lowest marriage rates of all men in the contemporary United States (see our discussion in Chapter 3). Popular cul-ture paints a picture of African American men as "players," on a sexual conquest for multiple female partners. Yet they too are especially threatened when they believe that their wives or girlfriends are being unfaithful. Ironically, in the case of African American men, the majority admitted freely that they had another woman on the side,[23] but they expected absolute devo-tion and faithfulness from their female partners, whom they admitted they suspected of cheating. This suspicion was the primary cause of a great deal of violence in their relationships. As with so many things, interviews with women confirmed this high level of jealousy to which African American women were subjected by their male partners, yet the vast majority of them confirmed that they were not having affairs, but that they were aware that their jealous male partners were!

Race, Class, and Gender Paradigm

As we and other scholars have noted, IPV knows no boundaries of race or ethnicity. Yet data from national-scale studies reveal that African Americans are more likely to be living in violent relationships than are other Americans. As we think across the data presented in this and the previous chapters, we argue that the reason why African Americans experience more violence in their intimate relationships is primarily because they are, in general, more at risk for violence.

Poverty

One of the key risk factors for IPV for women is poverty. Poverty is related to overall stress in families. As if the risk for IPV among poor women isn't

enough, poverty exacerbates the problems of IPV because it creates serious bar-
riers to leaving abusive relationships (see especially Brush, 2001; Brush, Raphael,
& Tolman, 2003; Renzetti, 2001). Because African American women are dis-
proportionately likely to be poor, they are at increased risk for IPV and will find
it more difficult to leave relationships that become abusive.

Unemployment/Underemployment

As we will discuss in Chapter 7, African American men also face eco-
nomic stresses, most often as a result of the consequences of unemployment
and underemployment. The reasons for this are many. African American
men face discrimination in hiring and wages, and they struggle for access to
educational institutions that will offer them access to professional jobs, or
access to unions that control the jobs that provide a middle-class standard of
living. As a result, they have a very difficult time being successful in the role
of breadwinner, a role that was constructed to match the experiences of
white, middle-class men.

Incarceration

As we will discuss at length in Chapter 9, nearly a third of African
American men will spend a portion of their lives incarcerated. Although
there are many negative side effects to incarceration, with regard to IPV
we have identified two significant risks: the consequent unemployment
that follows incarceration, and the jealousies that arise while a man is
incarcerated.

We argued here that constructions of masculinity for all American men
revolve around two key issues: breadwinning and sexual prowess. We also
argued that notions of masculinity are shaped by race. In the end, however,
many African American men will fail to conform to the most central piece
of hegemonic masculinity—breadwinning—as a direct result of structural
forces that shape the lives and life chances of African American men.

Thus, in order to understand the increased rates of IPV in the African
American community, one must understand the ways in which forces such
as health, poverty, employment, and incarceration interact to put women at
greater risk for victimization and men at greater risk for perpetration.[24, 25]

Who, after all, can deny the endless and unspeakable power of so many des-
perate white schemes as American slavery, Jim Crow, the lynch mob, urban
dispossession, and, most recently, the prison industrial complex to unman
[read: dehumanize] the African-American male? (Wallace, 2002, p. 5)

Solutions

- Develop more inclusive constructions of masculinity that are not tied exclusively to breadwinning and sexual prowess. For example, develop constructions of masculinity that recognize being a good father, being a loving partner, and so on as part of being a "real" man.
- Design intervention and prevention programs that include practical advice for dealing with the triggers to IPV, including employment support programs, support for men who are re-entering the free world after a period of incarceration, and so forth.

Most important, as we will argue in the final chapter, is that the real solutions to IPV require radical and substantive transformation of institutions such as the labor market, the system of incarceration, the housing market, and the institution of education. African American women will remain at higher risk for IPV as long as they remain poor and unable to earn a living wage that provides support for them and their children. African American men will be at increased risk for engaging in IPV as long as they face discrimination in the labor market, as long as they, too, cannot earn a living wage, and as long as we lock them up at the rate that we do. Thus, we suggest that one consequence of improving the education, health, and employment of African American men and women will be a decline in rates of IPV.

We do note, however, that because IPV is also fundamentally rooted in patriarchy, improving the life chances of African Americans will not eradicate IPV entirely. Rather, African American men and women must create open dialogue about the gender oppression that continues to exist in African American families. When we see a coupling of both a reduction in gender oppression and improvements in economic and educational opportunities, we can expect a decline in the violence that is destroying African American families from the inside out.

Notes

1. We do recognize the serious problem of IPV within homosexual relations and refer the reader to Renzetti (2001).

2. In an examination of Palestinian women from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Haj-Yahia (2000) found that even among fundamentalists, this seemingly universal truth holds for these women subjected by their mates to annual incidences of psychological, sexual, and economic abuse as well as physical violence. Battering, then, has been researched and argued by scholars to be legal, especially in legally constructed unions such as civil and religious marriage, in many countries,

including the United States, well into the 20th century (Browne, 1987; Leone, 2004; Weitzman, 2001). This finding correlates well with the early text by Engels (1884/1972), where he argues that women all over the world who enter into marriage become the property of their mates. Although originally contested, this "husband's right" (Murdock, 1954/1983) was confirmed by family scholars using the then-unique database of the Human Relations Area Files, located at Yale University.

3. We remind the reader that the data on IPV in African American families that are used in this chapter come from our interviews with 40 African American men and women who were living with IPV. We included a discussion of methodological issues in Chapter 1.

4. For example, data indicate that blacks who kill whites receive significantly longer sentences than when whites kill blacks or when blacks kill other blacks: Thus, the value of the black life is less than the white life (*Furman v. Georgia,* 408 U.S. 238; 92 S. Ct. 2726; 33 L. Ed. 2d 346; 1972 U.S. Lexis 169). Similarly, when women kill men, their sentences are significantly longer than when women kill other women (which is rare) or when men kill women. Again, these decisions and policies assign a value to a human life.

5. Some illustrations of the existence of patriarchy include the fact that until 1985, women could not charge their husbands with marital rape. Women continue to suffer wage discrimination, earning only 73 cents to the male dollar, and this wage discrimination persists when every conceivable factor is controlled (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Women have limited economic power, serving as CEO of only two of the Fortune 500 companies. Women have limited political power, holding only 12%–15% of the seats in the U.S. Congress in 2005. Although they are allowed to enter the military, women are still banned from certain combat assignments, the very assignments that are required to enter the upper echelons of the military. In the United States, we've never had a female president. In addition, women have almost no power in religious institutions, especially in Catholicism and Islam.

6. *The exception to the rule:* Feminists have typically turned to interviews with battered women, and less frequently, their male partners, in order to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon. Most of these studies (see Browne, 1987; Lawless, 2001) demonstrate two things. First, some couples really do engage in mutual combat or situational couple violence. They beat each other up. More common, however, is the finding that when women become physically violent with their male partners, it is most often out of either self-defense or in defense of their children (Browne, 1987; Lawless, 2001). Once these self-defense incidents of violence are removed, the level of female violence drops and becomes even rarer (Durose et al., 2005; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). We illustrate our point with the example of Valerie. We first encountered Valerie when she was in the batterers' intervention program, Time Out. When we arrived to interview her, we were curious to finally meet a woman who battered. As it turned out, Valerie's boyfriend had charged her with assault after she bit him. She bit him while he was driving and pummeling her at the same time. She was simply engaging in self-defense.

Um, he threw some water on me, ice and stuff. And um, he took my hand and I'm still having problems with it and, and bent it, like doubled it almost. He was driving and banging my head against the dashboard. [She gestures.] Well, so, when he did, I, uh, bit him. Bit down on him, but he jerked his arm, but when he did, of course, it broke the skin. And of course he charged me with assault. But anyway, and I've never had to go through anything like that, so that's still devastating. But anyway, you know it was just a constant battle. Always a battle. So finally, finally got here but it was, it was throwing things out the windows and you know he wasn't going to get out because he was going to charge me for this if I left him and all this stuff, power thing. (Valerie, North Carolina)

Clearly, Valerie's situation can only be described as self-defense, yet she was court-ordered to attend a batterer's intervention program.

7.   In order to address this shortcoming, the primary theoretical framework employed in this discussion of IPV will be the race, class, and gender paradigm.

8.   Feminist scholars are to be credited for identifying IPV as a form of violence against women, a gendered phenomenon.

9.   A common problem that plagues much of the research on IPV is that most investigations have ignored its occurrence among the affluent. IPV is far more hidden in affluent families, who have more access to resources that result in their underrepresentation in social service agencies that are used to recruit subjects. For example, affluent women rarely use the battered women's shelter, and affluent men can afford legal representation that limits their required participation in court-ordered intervention programs. Similarly, the small financial incentive that is offered to subjects for interview is less attractive to affluent potential subjects. This study will not be able to deal adequately with IPV in affluent families, but there are a few affluent subjects in the sample, and their experiences will be analyzed with special attention to social class.

10.   This sample, although small, is racially/ethnically diverse, but this is less the case when it comes to socioeconomic diversity. However, the inclusion of both men and women is perhaps the greatest contribution of this book.

11.   We note that this same phenomenon is somewhat true of research that focuses on the social problems facing the poor, although less often is the researcher accused of pathologizing the poor.

12.   For a fuller discussion of the Moon case, see Benedict and Yaeger (1998), pp. 130–133, and for a fuller analysis of IPV in intercollegiate and professional sports, see Smith (2006).

13.   Because our sample is limited to women who have been battered, we are unable to use experiences with sexual abuse in childhood to predict the likelihood of being battered in adulthood. What we do in this section is examine the experiences of a group of battered women who were also victims of severe sexual abuse in their childhood or adolescence and illuminate the ways in which this early childhood sexual abuse led to poor partnering decisions and limited agency in ending IPV when it did occur.

14.   The origin of the term "wife beater," which refers to a white tank top, is from the stereotype that the shirts are worn predominantly by men who beat their wives. In the 1951 film *A Streetcar Named Desire,* the character Stanley Kowalski (played by Marlon Brando), who is frequently seen wearing tank tops, violently rapes his sister-in-law, Blanche. In the 1980 movie *Raging Bull,* the main character, a boxer, is commonly seen wearing tank tops around the house, including in one scene where he beats his wife.

15.   Emily Kane (2006) documents, using qualitative interviews, the mechanism by which parents teach their children "gender."

16.   Not only does Eddie own his own company, but he has accomplished this without a high school diploma and with a criminal record.

17.   We assert that even a push or a shove from a professional boxer can cause injury to a woman much smaller than he is.

18.   In this case, the women were talking about their perceptions of their male partners.

19.   This is ritualized in a tradition that continues into the third millennium. At a typical American wedding, the father of the bride walks her down the aisle and "gives her away." This ritual symbolizes the transfer of the woman from the ownership of her father to the ownership of her husband.

20.   An article in the *New York Times* on genital cutting summarizes nicely the motive behind this practice, one that remains widespread in Africa and the Middle East: to keep women faithful (Herbert, 2006).

21.   It is important to note here that femininity is also rather narrowly defined, primarily by one's ability to keep a good house and raise children. We will discuss constructions of femininity in the next chapter.

22.   For a discussion of the triggers for white and Hispanic men, see Hattery and Smith (in press).

23.   See the lyrics of the most popular rap music songs, as they clearly note that the male must have women on the side.

24.   We do not mean to excuse the individual choices that men of any race make when they engage in any form of abuse, be it physical, emotional, or psychological. We have developed a framework that explains a pattern that is bigger than differences in individual choice. Also, we do not believe that a tendency to be more violent with one's partner is biological. Therefore, our focus is on structural factors.

25.   Nowhere is this more clearly evident than in our own evaluation of Time Out, the batterer intervention program that is administered by Family Services, Inc., Forsyth County, North Carolina. At the end of each of our interviews with the men in North Carolina, all of whom were participating in the Time Out program, we asked about the utility of the program. Occasionally, we got an honest answer, but most often, we believe we were told what these men thought we wanted to hear— that they were learning a lot and that the Time Out program was affecting their behavior. However, as part of our arrangement with Family Services, we agreed to conduct an evaluation of the Time Out program. What we found was that the program was effective for white men who participated—it is important to note that only 49% of all men sentenced to Time Out ever attended a single session (Harvey,

2002)—but it was significantly less effective for African American men (who were more likely to attend than their white counterparts). For whites who participated in Time Out, there was a 50% reduction in recidivism (measured as a criminal charge of battering), whereas for African American men, there was only a 20% reduction in recidivism (although we note that African American men had lower overall recidivism rates than whites). Thus, we conclude that any programs for dealing with IPV, be they programs designed to help women escape violent homes or programs designed to prevent and interrupt IPV, must be designed to be sensitive to the ways in which both race and social class shape experiences with IPV and the available options for dealing with it (Williams et al., 2005).