

NARCISSISM AND TYPE OF VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS FOR PERPETRATORS
OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A Dissertation

by

LEE SCOTT RINKER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2009

Major Subject: Counseling Psychology

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Michael Duffy
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	Antonio Cepeda-Benito
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ABSTRACT

Narcissism and Type of Violent Relationships for Perpetrators
of Intimate Partner Violence. (May 2009)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Michael Duffy

The study proposed to distinguish differences in perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence (i.e., Common Couple Violence and Patriarchal Terrorism) due to the mediating effect of their presentations of narcissism (covert and overt). Distinguishing perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence by their narcissistic presentations should assist clinicians in batterer treatment programs to create specific lessons/interventions for perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence based on their narcissistic quality.

The study of a cross-section of men in a Batterer Intervention Program included measures on self-perception, views of partner, and history of violent, aggressive, controlling, and psychologically abusive interactions with their partner. Structural Equation Modeling with Analysis of Moment Structures was used to determine the structure and function of narcissism and interpersonal violence.

Intimate Partner Violence was distinguishable as Common Couple Violence or Patriarchal Terrorism, but the results were not sufficiently conclusive to warrant an absolute classification system. Overt Narcissism was somewhat useful in distinguishing

Patriarchal Terrorism from Common Couple Violence by mediating the effects of violent behaviors, controlling behaviors, and psychological abuse when mediated by type of narcissism. That information is useful for clinicians interested in creating targeted interventions to participants in Batterer Intervention Programs to reduce Intimate Partner Violence and violent recidivism. Specifically, Common Couple Violence was described by the number of times the participant physically injured the partner over the past year, the total number of conflict tactics used, and whether their partner needed medical attention following physical injury. Patriarchal Terrorism was described by psychological abuse and controlling behaviors.

Overt Narcissism increased Patriarchal Terrorism, whereas, Covert Narcissism did not assist in distinguishing Common Couple Violence from Patriarchal Terrorism. The mediating effect that Covert Narcissism had on violent behaviors, controlling behaviors, and psychological abuse was weak. Overt Narcissism is a more useful construct when identifying potential Patriarchal Terrorists, while Covert Narcissism was not found to provide additional detail to either Patriarchal Terrorism or Common Couple Violence. Knowing the differing and similar impacts of those constructs can potentially grant greater clinical effectiveness with perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my sister, Jennifer Rebecca Rinker. I want to give her something that is all her own.

PREVIEW

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I am indebted to my mother, Elizabeth Smith-Rinker for passing to me her values, helping me determine my own, and helping me feel valued. It has served me well. I love my dad, Donnie Lee Rinker. He has been the most significant person in my life and he has given me opportunities to feel alive. Thank you. To my sister who taught me the importance of saying “Thank you” and “I’m sorry”, no matter if it is in English or Pig-Latin. Thank you and ankthey ouyey. I also love my Grandparents (Elsie I. Cave-Rinker-Crowson, Foy Lee Rinker, Cloise Crowson, Arling D. Smith, and Edith Jennings-Smith) more than they can imagine.

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NOMENCLATURE

AIC	Akaike Information Criterion
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASPD	Antisocial Personality Disorder
BIP's	Batterer Intervention Program
BPD	Borderline Personality Disorder
CBS	Controlling Behaviors Scale
CCV	Common Couple Violence
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Critical Ratios
CT Scale	Conflict Tactics Scale
HNS	Hypersensitivity Narcissism Scale
HoeltN	Hoelter's N
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MCMII-II	Millon Clinical Multi-axial Inventory - II
MCSD	Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale
MDD	Major Depressive Disorder
MMPI	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
NPD	Narcissistic Personality Disorder

NPI	Narcissism Personality Inventory
Patterror	Patriarchal Terrorism
PD	Personality Disorder
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
TLI	Tucker Lewis Index

PREVIEW

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: NARCISSISM AND TYPE OF VIOLENT

RELATIONSHIPS FOR PERPETRATORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Research into Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) has increased over the past 20 years, but gaps in the etiology of IPV still remain (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999). One of the basic questions is why some men are violent in relationships while others are not (Dutton, Bodnarchuk, Kropp, Hart, & Ogloff, 2005). One reason for gaps in the causes of IPV may be that studies into the personality characteristics of perpetrators of IPV do not account for different levels of IPV, and research into different levels of IPV has not yet included information on personality characteristics of perpetrators of IPV. Combining research into personality characteristics with types of IPV relationship may help answer the question of why are some men violent and others are not. Paul Johnson suggests that future IPV research should consider the levels of *and* underlying motivations for violence against intimates (Johnson, 1995).

The research proposed in this paper intends to identify the underlying motivations of variations in IPV from the perspective that personality helps distinguish and motivate violence against a partner. The intent of this research is: a) to test a theory that IPV can be divided into groupings where the perpetrators of IPV are distinguishable by severity of violence/aggression and control within the relationship (i.e. common couple violence or Patriarchal Terrorism respectively) (Johnson, 1995); b) to test a theory that IPV can be predicted by narcissism (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996); and then c) to test whether variations in narcissism (i.e. overt and covert narcissism) can distinguish the typologies

This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Family Psychology*.

of IPV. Batterers may be more responsive to different types of treatment based on a match between their type of violence and their personality. Such treatment specific approaches should further reduce violent assaults toward women (Babcock, 1998).

The different types of narcissism as related to different types of domestic violence will provide clinicians with an understanding of their populations. A greater understanding of the typical batterer's personality and typical aggressive/violent actions should help the clinician create pertinent examples and scenarios for all of the batterers, thereby guiding group members toward self-understanding with increased personal investment in the group process and outcome.

Preventative educational curricula for High schools and Universities should also be created in order to reduce, *a priori*, IPV. Knowledge that narcissism leads to aggression, that narcissism takes different forms, and that the different forms of narcissism relate to different types of IPV may be most beneficial for educating students who have just begun dating and who are at a developmental age when finding an intimate partner is most salient. The information can educate both women and men in these settings that even situation specific violence can be an unhealthy form of narcissism that may worsen into more severe violence over time. Educational intervention could initiate a larger systemic shift of power if these institutions inform women and men about the presentation of abnormal personality within different types of violent relationships. With education, men may be more proactive in changing their prototypes of desirable partner behaviors, and women certainly will be more informed in identifying unhealthy relationship patterns. Such a systemic shift can formalize equality in relationships and

de-legitimize the historically patriarchal ideas toward mate selection and male ownership of their partners.

Hypotheses

- A) Intimate Partner Violence can be classified into Common Couple Violence and Patriarchal Terrorism based on the controlling behaviors, violent conflicts with partner, and psychological abuse.
- B) Controlling behaviors, violent conflict with partner, and psychological abuse are mediated by two types of narcissistic presentation.
 - i. Overt Narcissism
 - ii. Covert Narcissism
- C) Covert Narcissism mediates Common Couple Violence.
- D) Overt Narcissism mediates Patriarchal Terrorism.

By understanding intrapersonal dynamics within the categories of IPV and highlighting the functional quality (i.e. intrapersonal motivation) of narcissism, therapists will have a vantage point for working individually, in groups, or with couples suffering from Intimate Partner Violence. Mindfulness-based behavioral treatments might be more transferable to community-based treatment than other approaches. At a social intervention level, an increased understanding of IPV will provide IPV victims' advocates (i.e. police, legal and judicial processes, community advocates, friends and relatives) another marker for predicting violence.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intimate Partner Violence

Studies on violence against women started in the 1970's following the Feminist movement (Gelles & Straus, 1988). The Feminist perspective on social issues, as simply as it can be stated, centers on "the powerful" engaging in behaviors or policies that aim at maintaining control over "the less powerful." Feminist thought proposes that violence against women in a society is the result of the powerful (male) subjugating those deemed less powerful (female) by exerting force to maintain the established power structure. As Hooks (1984) stated, that "The western notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority [is] the root cause of violence against women" (p. 118).

Coercive authority can be maintained through the economy, access to resources, or the sheer physical force of violence. On average, men are physically stronger than women. Men can, and often do, cause severe harm to women. There is no other readily available opportunity like that of an intimate relationship for one to exert control over another and gain power or feelings of power. But why do people (in this case men) feel the need to exert power and control over others? Interestingly, Dutton, Starzomski, and Ryan (1996) argues that the use of controlling behaviors and verbal abuse seems to be bidirectional in intimate relationships. He cited a study by Kasian & Painter (as cited in Dutton, Starzomski, & Ryan 1996) showing that in a sample of 1625 undergraduate students, women tended to be more controlling & more verbally abusive. Although there is evidence for gender symmetry in intimate violence, the violence perpetrated by women

may be retaliatory. Violence against women could also be extended to physical aggression against women.

Violence is defined as an “act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention, of causing physical pain or injury to another person” (Gelles & Straus, 1988). Additionally, there is a component to violence of physical and/or psychological aggression. Arias, Samois, & O’Leary (1987) also found that a substantial number of women (26%) experienced some type of physical aggression from their dating partners, and that previous partner aggression is a strong predictor of later partner aggression. In IPV the target of the violence is a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, boyfriend / girlfriend, or date. IPV is a horrendous social problem that has been linked to intergenerational transmission of acts of violence (Gelles & Straus, 1988), not to mention the obvious impact on the targets themselves.

The physical outcomes of IPV are obvious, from black eyes and bruises to broken bones. The psychological pain, however, is less obvious (Gelles & Straus, 1988) and oftentimes more insidious. The volume of research on the health outcomes of battered women has increased over the years. Physical IPV was found to be associated with increased risk of current poor health, including depressive symptoms, substance use, chronic disease or mental illness, and injury (Coker, Davis, Arias, Desai, Sanderson, et al., 2002). Psychological IPV, however, has proven to be a stronger predictor than physical IPV for those outcomes. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) have also been associated with victims of IPV (Cascardi, O’Leary, & Schlee, 1999). In a sample of 92 women, 29.8% met criteria for PTSD and 32% for MDD.

A recent study measured the prevalence of violence in the United States through telephonic surveys of 8000 U.S. women and men. Results indicated that violence against women is primarily IPV, or violence perpetrated by someone intimately familiar with the victim (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999). Twenty-two percent of women reported they had been physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabitating partner, boyfriend, or date in their lifetimes. Most physical assaults involved pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, and hitting, while a smaller number reported having something thrown at them, or that a knife or a gun was used (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1999).

In a separate study, 28% of women reported some form of physical, sexual, or psychological IPV in their lifetime (Coker et al., 2002). Although men reported similar rates of violence, it was less intense than the violence experienced by women and unlikely to come from only an intimate partner. Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz (1980) reported that men were just as likely to be the victims of IPV. Debate on the need for a battered men's movement followed the report but has since gained little support, primarily because violence against women by men commonly results in much more severe and destructive injuries than violence perpetrated by women toward men.

Tjaden & Thoennes (1999) found that differences between women and men existed as the seriousness of the assault increased. Women were 2-3 times more likely than men to report that an intimate partner threw something at them or pushed, shoved, or grabbed them. Their study found that women were 7-14 times more likely than men to report that an intimate partner beat them up, choked or tried to drown them, or threatened them with a gun. The need to understand violence against women is important. The