Re-Examining 'Battering':

Are All Acts of Violence Against Intimate Partners the Same?

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INTRODUCTION

Putting 'name' to an event, action, experience, or idea is a powerful act. "Naming" is an act of defining and authenticating that provides the person or group, which has successfully conducted the naming, with the authority to say what something is and what it is not. The capacity to name allows the person or group to categorically link the concept, which has been named, with the reality it is to represent. The leaders of the anti-domestic violence movement in the U.S. understood this power of naming and endorsed the term "battering" to represent women's realities of abuse by intimate partners. The word, battering, was to signify a pattern of coercive control, intimidation, and oppression that women often experienced at the hands of their male lovers and spouses (Levinson, 1989; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Stark, 1996). Battering could include physical and sexual abuses, but was definitely not limited only to such brutalities. However, over time, the term battering has come to be used more or less synonymously with physical violence by an individual against an intimate partner. This restriction of the term has, to a certain degree, obscured the complexity of its original meaning and its connection to the real experiences of survivors of ongoing intimate abuse.

Similarly, the phrase "domestic violence" was coined to emphasize the space where this violence occurred: home, supposedly a safe haven for its members. While many activists initially argued against its use, it highlighted the context of intimate abuse, the every day familial realm of women. The label, domestic violence, challenged the image of safety and tranquility of the household and family. It was a term that helped to reveal that women who lived with abusive men were thoroughly vulnerable to their violence because it was perpetrated in their own homes. Later, as laws were enacted in the U.S. to protect women and hold batterers accountable, "domestic violence" took on the gender-neutral meaning of any violence between partners occurring in the context of the home. As a result, every act of violence by one partner against another is now legally considered to be an act of domestic violence.

Yet, confusion occurs when we begin to equate "battering" to all acts of "domestic violence." The comparison is erroneous, as not all violence by intimate partners follows the systematic pattern of control, intimidation, and domination that is typical of battering. Grasping

that there are important differences in partner violence is crucial for researchers, practitioners, and advocates since this understanding would guide the forging of effective interventions for victims and perpetrators. Research suggests that not all batterers respond similarly to treatment programs and batterers' personalities might determine their sensitivity to Batterer's Intervention Programs (BIP).[1] Thus, to design appropriate intervention programs, we need to distinguish who is doing what to whom and with what impact.

Researchers have often tried to understand the personalities of individuals who assault their intimate partners. Amy Holtzworth-Munroe and her colleagues categorized male batterers based on the frequency and severity of their violence, who they predominantly targeted, and the existence of psychopathology (see, footnote # 1). They listed four types of batterers, who: (1) targeted only family (least severe violence); (2) engaged in moderate to severe wife abuse and some extra-family violence (diagnosed as Borderline-dysphoric); and (3) manifested violent behavior in familial and extra-family settings (moderate to severe violence). This group was labeled violent-antisocials; and (4) expressed moderate to severe violence that fell between the first and the third categories. Suzanne Swan and her colleague have developed a typology of women who use abuse against their intimate partners.[2] They have divided the assaultive women into four groups according to the coercive tactic they use: (1) victims; (2) aggressors; (3) both partners use violence but the male uses more than the female; and (4) both partners use violence but the female uses more than the male. Both typologies endeavor to explain behavioral and psychological dimensions of men and women distinctly.

Based on interviews conducted over a fifteen-year period with men and women arrested for domestic abuse in Duluth, Minnesota as well as a number of East and West Coast cities and a review of hundreds of police and court documents, we have attempted to differentiate the various types of violence that occur between intimate partners. We are not so much focused on deriving the personality characteristics of individuals who engage in intimate partner violence, but are interested in tracking the nature of the violence and its contexts. We believe that an understanding of violence that occurs in intimate relationships is essential in providing safety to women and children and deciding upon appropriate intervention with batterers. Five distinct categories of domestic violence emerged in our analysis.

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[1] See, Dutton et al., (1997) and Holtzworth-Munroe (2000, 2003).
[2] See, Swan et al., (2002, 2003).

A Note of Caution

One might erroneously believe that the Duluth advocates have decided to discard the notion of power and control from their theory of male violence against women. That is certainly not the case. This document is not meant to undercut the centrality of the concept of power and control from our work. We are simply addressing the fact that not every act of domestic violence, violence that is perpetrated within the home, is battering.

This is not news to divorce attorneys, police officers, therapists, or other practitioners who intervene in the private lives of men and women. Police officers, for example, have long recognized that not every assault they are called to attend involves a man who is asserting his historic right to chastise and physically control his wife. Nevertheless, the new laws as well as procedures and public policies that were crafted to confront such abuse, lumped all acts of domestic violence into a unitary category. For example, the phrase 'zero tolerance' was coined to emphasize the struggle to end intimate partner battering. However, over the years, its target has been extended to include all violence and any potential violence. That is, the single focus of stopping the ongoing use of violence and coercion against women by their partners became a diffused goal of confronting all acts of violence between couples under the rubric of "zero tolerance."

We differ with this over-generalization and believe that it would lead to a "one-size-fits-all" intervention approach, which would meet neither the goals of fairness nor public safety.

As long standing anti-violence activists, we are definitely not excusing or advocating for the tolerance of some forms of violence by some people. This article is not about that. Our work has always focused on analyzing the dynamics, nuances, and components of intimate partner violence with the idea that this critical comprehension is vital in creating intervention and prevention models that befit the behavior.

BACKGROUND

This differentiation of domestic violence in our conception emerges out of women and men's actual experiences of intimate abuse. Based on our interviews and our findings from court records, we attempted to test the theory of intimate violence against living practice and action

(Herman, 1990). This fine-tuning of the theory of domestic violence is important because it would ultimately enhance the effectiveness of our interventions with victims and perpetrators. It has become increasingly apparent to advocates and practitioners in the domestic violence field that to treat everyone exactly alike can ultimately do more harm than good. Thus, to devise successful intervention and prevention models, we need to understand the nature of the violence that has taken place between individual intimate partners.

At the same time, we are concerned that our elaboration of classes of domestic violence may be used inappropriately to exonerate individuals who pose a serious danger to their victims. Too many practitioners are willing to accept a defense attorney's argument that her/his client had one too many drinks or momentarily lost control in an uncharacteristic outburst of anger (e.g., "in the heat of passion"), therefore, her/his client is not a batterer and should not be treated as one. In such cases, making the correct determination may mean the difference between life and death.[3]

Nonetheless, we would like to put forth the empirical findings of our work by identifying five categories of domestic violence.[4] These categories were not set a-priori but emerged through our analyses of information from the interviews with perpetrators and victims, court records, and police reports on domestic violence cases. We have also classified some specialized interventions for each category of intimate partner violence. We contend that since each category of violence has different social and historical roots, it requires distinct interventions. (See Table 1)

FIVE CATEGORIES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. Battering

Battering may be defined as an ongoing patterned use of intimidation, coercion, and violence as well as other tactics of control to establish and maintain a relationship of dominance over an intimate partner. (See, Attachment 1, Power and Control Wheel, developed by Pence and McDonnell 1984)

Often, an individual hitting or striking another individual is just that – a violent act committed by an individual against another in a particular circumstance. However, when a person

[3] We recommend A Guide for Conducting Domestic Violence Assessments as an excellent tool to assist in making these distinctions. It is available from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN (218-722-2781 or www.duluth-model.org).

[4] We first proposed these categories in 1996 in our work with the U.S. Marine Corps. As part of that work we developed a matrix for Family Advocacy Counselors to use in determining what type of intervention to propose to commanders responsible for disciplining Marines who had assaulted their spouses.

systematically utilizes various tactics of restricting an intimate partner's autonomy and uses force or the threat of force as a coercive tactic, it is much more than a simple attack. Such systematic use of force and violent tactics of domination can be traced to group identities and the historic use of similar behaviors to achieve power over others. That is, such violence has historical precedence and involves widespread use of superior strength and coercion.

By analyzing strategies of maintaining authority and tactics of suppression used, for instance, by racial groups that have established supremacy and ethnic and economic groups that have dominated, we can comprehend the complexities of relationships between the subjugated and the one who dominates.

Historically, groups of people have established and sustained supremacy over other groups of people by the use of violence that includes ongoing and systematic patterns of intimidation, coercion, as well as other tactics of control to physically, morally, spiritually, and economically devastate them. This is the same kind of violence that has been used by whites over people of color; traffickers over prostituted women; the economically powerful over the poor; slave owners over slaves; and feudal landlords over subjects. At its extreme, it is manifested as witch hunt, ethnic cleansing, genocide, slave trading, and holocaust. The analogy is easily extended to the battering of women in marriage (Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen, & Werlhof, 1988) and intimate relationships. It is manifested as the murder of thousands of women and their children every year in the U.S. But systems of domination are usually normalized in ways that allow those people who participate in acts of domination, coercion, intimidation and even violence to do so without questioning the ethics of what they are doing. Frequently members of the dominant groups even experience themselves as the victims of tyranny of those who are dominated.

Violence used by men against women who are their intimate partners has its historic roots in centuries of institutionally sanctioned dominance of one gender over the other in key spheres of heterosexual relationships such as economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and emotional. This use of global and methodical violence by men to rule over women in intimate relationships is called "battering." While it is not unusual for a woman to use violence in her intimate relationship, it is exceptional for her to achieve the kind of dominance over her male partner that characterizes battering. Social conditions, which do not condone women's use of violence, patterns of socialization, as well as the typical physical disparities between the male and female of the species, make the woman "batterer" an anomaly. However, in rare instances, a woman may be able to

effectively establish a relationship of dominance through a pattern of power and control over her male partner.[5]

We can take the analogy between group dominance and domestic violence further. There are a number of social and historic conditions that promote the sense of entitlement of a dominant group or its members, which generally accompanies their use of violence to control a dominated group or its individual members (e.g., gays, wives, romantic partners, racial groups, religious minorities, etc.). Four of these social conditions are highlighted below along with their connections to battering:

1) *Belief in Natural Superiority and Hierarchy*

- Most societies subscribe strongly to the belief that hierarchical relationships among people are natural. For example, the majority of cultures, including this one, accept historical, religious, scholarly, and folk opinions that men as a group are more rational, logical, intellectual, and competent than women (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1972). Thus, it follows that a man should hold moral authority in the family.
- Furthermore, many perceive hierarchy as a positive principle of social organization. Hierarchy and authority, supposedly, maintains order in our social relations so that we do not descend into chaos. Accordingly, men, being "natural" superiors to women, are entitled to the position of authority in the family. Sentiments such as "You can't have two captains in the same ship," and "Someone has to wear the pants in the family," echo this conviction.
- Since men are entitled to authority within the family, their attempt to maintain the position by any means necessary is also given social approval. Men who have dared to share power with their female partners have often been targets of social ridicule. They are considered "whipped," "unable to keep a woman in line," or "tied to their wives apron strings," etc. Until the past decade, the masculinity of these men as well as their abilities to handle authority and responsibility were routinely questioned.

2) *Lack of Consequences for Using Violence*

- Men's superior physical strength allows them to use aggression without the fear of meaningful retaliation from their victims.

[5] Some women in lesbian relationships may be able to batter their partners because of the equality of their physical strengths and their partners' vulnerable social status, which allows them to use it as a tactic of control.

- Due to the persistent belief in a man's authority to rule over his family and the social contract between the state and the individual regarding privacy of the home, the state, community, and extended family have a propensity not to intervene successfully to stop male violence; thereby, creating an atmosphere without significant consequences to perpetrators.
- It is this social condition that supports battering that the anti-violence movement has been the most successful at challenging.

3) *Social Conditioning*

- In relations of hierarchy and dominance, those at the bottom are often forced to economically and psychologically depend on those at the top (Freire, 1970). In contrast, those at the top are able to impose serious penalty for resistance to their authority, control, and violence. This phenomenon is evident when we analyze separation injuries of battered women; that is, injuries battered women receive when they leave or are in the process of leaving their batterers. Research shows that 65% of battered women who are killed are separated from the perpetrator before the fatal incident.[6] Other studies also indicate that battered women's risk of serious injury goes up significantly in the process of leaving or taking legal action against their abusers (Allen, 1983; Barnard, Vera, Vera, & Newman, 1982; Wilson & Daly, 1993).
- Since masculine authority is considered the preferred condition in society, resistance by women is seen as unnatural, wrong, unfeminine, and a serious transgression of social and moral codes. Society believes that women's misbehavior, expressed in their opposition to male authority, in relationship to their roles in the family should be thwarted and corrected. Consequently, male violence to put down women's resistance to their partners' oppression is frequently viewed as justified and necessary, or at least understandable.
- Since masculine authority is regarded as natural and desirable, women are socialized to accept male power. The gender socialization patterns in almost every society reflect the two sides of the same coin: boys are taught to dominate and girls are trained to accept this domination.

4) *Historical and Social Objectification of the Marginalized*

- Objectification creates an illusory difference and separation between those at the top from those at the bottom. Members of the dominant group tend to view the vanquished as a distinct "species," with not quite the same needs, emotions, and desires as them.

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[6] See, Florida Governor's Task Force on Domestic and Sexual Violence's report on domestic fatalities, Table 17, p. 47; and Bureau of Justice Statistics' special report on violence against women (NCJ-154348), p. 4.

- Similarly, batterers are socialized in cultures that promote and support objectification of women. They learn to disrespect women by internalizing the misogyny that is latent in our society. Men who are exposed to multiple forms of hostility toward women (e.g., watching their fathers abuse their mothers, participating in gang and fraternity rapes, extensive exposure to violent pornography, misogynist religious views about women, etc.) are primed to think and act with disrespect and loathing toward women (Paymar, 1993). Batterers objectify their victims by labeling them as "fat," "ugly," "whore," "bitch," "stupid," and "someone whom nobody else would ever want." Rarely do men assault their partners while calling them by their given names. In addition, rarely does a man who batters see himself as "in control." He often experiences himself as the victim of both the woman he beats and the community that intervenes to protect her. To understand these men as simply "choosing" to batter may be too simplistic. To see them as victims is a distortion.

Effective Interventions

For battering, the following interventions have been designed in anti-violence work:

- Change beliefs (e.g., batterer's education programs, public education campaigns, empowerment work with victims, etc.);
- Create consequences, legal and social (e.g., arrest policies, consequences at the job, families and religious leaders openly confronting the abuser, etc.);
- Provide external monitoring (e.g., court probation, community leaders checking up);
- Create equality in gender roles (e.g., education in gender egalitarianism, equivalent public policies regarding work, parenthood, etc.); and
- Organize communities to end violence against women and understand interconnections of oppression such as racism, homophobia, and xenophobia.

2. <u>Resistive/Reactive Violence</u>

Victims of violence often retaliate and resist domination and battering by using force themselves. The major goals of such violence are to: (1) escape and/or stop violence that is being perpetrated against them, and (2) establish a semblance of parity in the relationship as a method of protecting themselves and their children against escalating abuse. Such reactive violence on victims' part is in larger part resistance to ongoing battering (<u>Violence Against Women</u>, 2002, 2003). We have used the terms resistive and reactive violence synonymously in this discussion.

Characteristics of Resistive/Reactive Violence

- The target of resistive violence is specific: the violator or abuser;
- Reactive violence is used to stop and/or escape ongoing battering. It may be considered by the victim as a form of self protection;
- Reactive violence is often used by victims to reclaim and restore dignity and integrity that is destroyed by the batterer by his systematic abuse;
- The motivation behind the use of such force is to retaliate and/or resist battering. Such violence may also be used with the intention of stopping future violence;
- Targets of resistive violence generally hold the key to their own protection. That is, by stopping their own violence against their victims, they would also end their partners' use of violence towards them;
- Violence is rarely the first or only tactic used by victims of ongoing battering. They often use a variety of other methods to stop or reduce abuse, such as:
    - Negotiation;
    - Appeasement;
    - Threats to withdraw from the relationship or actually leave the perpetrator;
    - Solicit help from others such as family, friends, clergy, and police;
    - Threats to expose the offender to others and shame him to end abuse; and
    - Threats to hurt the offender emotionally, economically, or damage his property.

In brief, women's reactions to battering fall into three classes: a) coping (e.g., placating the abuser, enduring, etc.), b) managing (e.g., anticipate abusers' moods, modify own behavior so as not to arouse anger in abuser, attempt to control situations that lead to violence, divert attention from the abuse through religion or other activities, etc.), and c) resisting (e.g., create consequences for abuser such as arrest, seek outside help, hit back or strike preemptively, take other overt and covert actions to end or escape the abuse, etc.). Although all three classes of behavior are independent of each other, often these emerge as subsequent stages of conduct. Victims' decisions about which method would be most effective depend upon a number of factors including:

- The consequence of using violence in the past;
- Perceptions of what might be effective with the abuser;
- Understanding of what would constitute legitimate responses to violence;
- The magnitude of danger the victim believes she is in;

- Victims' personal levels of frustration, fear, desperation, and/or anger; and
- Access to alternative resources and recourses. A woman who believes that there is no recourse or one who cannot access any resource, may use violence as a method of self protection more readily than those who can access alternative recourses or resources (Moss, Pitula, Campbell, & Halstead, 1997; West & Rose, 2000).

Effective Interventions

- Create new options for victim;
- End battering against the victim; and
- Make viable resources and recourses accessible to victim.

3. <u>Situational Violence</u>

Intimate partners often use violence against each other to express anger, disapproval, or reach an objective. For instance, one partner might want the other to quit drinking, end an affair, or stop being obnoxious in public, so s/he uses violence. Battering is perhaps most frequently misdiagnosed as a form of situational violence because, a) practitioners typically intervene in a specific incident of abuse and tend not to investigate whether there is any pattern of abuse in the relationship; b) batterers frequently claim that their use of violence is caused by a specific situation, although an investigator might discover that these "situations" seem to occur quite routinely in their victims' lives; c) victims of battering are generally not free to describe the totality of the abuse they endure. They are exhorted by practitioners to stick to the immediate incident that prompted them to seek help and led to intervention. Furthermore, victims might keep silent from their own concerns about what further problems such extra information might lead to; and d) victims of battering themselves often do not recognize the pattern in the ongoing violence and view each incident as separate and distinct.

Characteristics of Situational Violence

Even though there may be violence in an intimate relationship, the victim may not necessarily be imbued with a generalized fear of her partner. Furthermore, the position of the victim and perpetrator may shift and change continuously. For example, a man may hit his wife because she gambled away all their money, but he does not use a pattern of intimidation and violence to establish control or dominance over her. She tends not to express any substantial fear of him, nor does he set limits to what she can do, whom she can see, how she should look, etc. This

individual's wife may, in a different occasion, use violence against him to control his flirting with another woman. Both partners may use violence against each other but not instill any permanent fear in any one victim.

Effective Interventions

- Create new behavioral options;
- Resolve circumstances leading to the use of violence; and
- Provide counseling programs such as anger management.
- We are reluctant to suggest couples counseling here because, while it may not be dangerous as it often is when working with couples where battering and corresponding resistant violence occurs, there is a very real danger of misreading the situation. Nor is there any evidence that couples counseling is more effective than individual counseling in confronting such violence.

4. <u>Pathological Violence</u>

Individuals who abuse alcohol or drugs, suffer from mental illness or physical disorders, or have neurological damage, may use physical violence against others, including their intimate partners. Sometimes there is a causal link between their use of violence and the pathology from which they suffer. In those cases, when the pathology ends so does the violence. Unfortunately, it is difficult to know when the violence is caused by such pathologies. Many, perhaps even most, batterers drink and get violent while drinking, but stopping the drinking does not stop the abuse. At times, the pathology actually is the key to the violence and its cure the key to ending the violence. For years defense attorneys, abusers, and friends have insisted that these pathologies are at the source of the violence when they are not. As awareness of pathology as an excuse has increased, it leaves those who truly use violence because of the pathology less likely to be identified and appropriately treated.

Characteristics of Pathological Violence

- A pathologically violent individual may target a specific person such as his/her spouse in one situation, but such violence is not typically focused on any particular person or gender. For instance, some alcoholics may become belligerent and abusive towards whoever is nearby in the throes of their addiction. Certain neurological disorders may also induce aggression and violence in an individual.

- At the root of pathological violence are physical conditions related to mental illness or altered mental states due to neurological damage and/or drug or alcohol abuse. In such situations, generally, when the cause is removed, the resultant violence also ends.
- Practitioners need to be astute in discriminating pathological violence from other forms of domestic violence. For instance, research with women who have been arrested for domestic violence indicates that many of these women have serious drug or alcohol abuse problems. At the same time, most of these women are also victims of ongoing battering (Dasgupta, 1999). The findings do not support the notion that sobering up would stop these women's violence, but suggest that ending the battering they routinely experience, might. In fact, trauma due to battering is often a pre-condition of drug and alcohol addiction in victims (Herman, 1990).
- On the other hand, a batterer who is an alcoholic and uses violence against his partner when he drinks, will not typically stop his violence by getting sober. His need for domination is probably not tied to his belligerent behavior while drunk. In contrast, a non-battering alcoholic, who uses random violence against his partner when in the throes of his addiction, would benefit by giving up his alcohol use.

Effective Interventions

- Provide treatment for pathology, illness, or drug addiction;
- Create alternative behavioral options; and
- Create consequences.

5. <u>Anti-social Violence</u>

Anti-social violence is not restricted to a particular partner or gender. A person may have certain antecedents such as childhood abuse and lack of moral maturity that have led to the development of anti-social personality. As a result, s/he may be abusive in a number of social settings: bars, work, home, sports field, etc. Such an individual may have little understanding of the consequences of his/her behavior and no feeling of shame or remorse regarding his/her violence. The anti-social individual is generally not amenable to change through self-reflection or therapy.

However, it is important to keep in mind that dominant groups in society have often used the label, "anti-social," to criminalize oppressed groups and 'legitimately' police them through prison, psychiatry, re-education, and other institutional systems. The description of anti-social allows the more powerful in society to justifiably marginalize "undesirable" minorities and perpetuate their

oppression. We need to carefully discriminate anti-social conduct from violence that erupts from the rage created by systematic oppression and domination, as well as instrumental violence that the oppressed often use to survive under the conditions of their subjugation.

Characteristics of Anti-social Violence

- Research indicates that nearly 25% of men who are court ordered to batterer's programs could be classified as anti-social (Gondolf, 1999; Gondolf & White, 2001).
- Men who use anti-social violence may be similar to batterers as they use violence to establish relationships of dominance, but they are singularly resistant to change. These are individuals who might not benefit by attending existing batterers programs.

Effective Interventions

- Create consequences;
- Provide external monitoring; and
- Provide highly structured treatment or therapy.

SOME QUALIFIERS

In this paper, although we have made distinctions among different forms of domestic violence, the categories are not always mutually exclusive. An individual may be a batterer in addition to being anti-social, alcoholic, and mentally ill. His behavior is distinguished by the fact that he acts from a sense of entitlement and the consequent notion of establishing power and control over his victim. His violence allows him to reach the goal of subjugating his intimate partner.

Furthermore, the classification we offer may not satisfactorily explain all types of violence in every circumstance. In some situations, the reality of violence might be so excessive that to sort it into a box of this set of five would seem paltry. Advocates working in certain communities have informed us that violence there is so acutely pervasive and apparently random that it is impossible to rationally catalog it.[7] Not only are women subjected to horrendous violence but also anyone weak and dependent is victimized by the powerful. Sociologists believe that such uncontrolled violence often characterize communities where social relations have become damaged to the point of being haphazard and chaotic; a consequence of society without norms.[8] Norms or social rules of conduct not only tell us how to behave, they also forbid us from behaving in other ways. Once

[7] We thank Amy Thurber for bringing this issue to our attention.
[8] In 1893, sociologist Emile Durkheim wrote about breakdown of society under such conditions; a state he called 'anomie'.

internalized, norms become encouragement for certain actions and prohibition for others. However, a community might descend or be pushed into normlessness and deregulate its social organization in various areas such as laws, rules, regulations, customs, taboos, rites, rituals, conventions, and etiquette. Without norms, a society can have no order or predictability of behavior and might even become dangerous. It is possible that we are witnessing this phenomenon in communities where violence against women seems to be extreme, arbitrary, and everywhere.

We would also like to highlight that any type of violence, whether it is battering, resistive, situational, pathological, or anti-social could inflict serious injuries on the victim and carry the potential of being lethal. A single incidence of violence can escalate into repetitive abuse and over time, increase in risks for the victim. To evaluate safety of victims, all violence should be assessed on a continuum of dangerousness and particularities of context.

Over a ten-year period, the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota assessed men and women, who had been involved in criminal and civil courtroom proceedings that involved domestic violence. Ninety-five percent of the men in their assessment were classified as batterers, with a significant number being alcohol addicted and/or behaviorally anti-social. Overwhelmingly the women offenders were using resistive violence, often simultaneously linked to pathological violence connected to drug and alcohol addiction. Four percent of the offenders appeared to be abusing exclusively because of substance addiction (e.g., alcohol, drug, etc.) or mental illness. That is, this only 4% of male offenders was considered to be using pathological violence. We noted that almost all of the offenders in this group were arrested or respondents to a protection order. One would likely find a lower percentage of "batterers" in a sample of "any adult using violence against an adult partner."

The purpose of this analysis of domestic violence is to suggest that as communities across the country continue to grapple with complexities of intimate partner abuse, we revisit the

fundamental question, "who is doing what to whom and with what impact?" The answer to this query should inform our responses as well as our continued refinement of social and legal public policies regarding domestic violence. For those of us who have worked to coordinate a community response that leads to the protection of victims of ongoing abuse, our current challenge is to address these differences and incorporate them in our interventions. An example of this may be seen in the city of Duluth's efforts to deal with battered women who use violence against their abusive partners.

Over the past twenty-one years, the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program (DAIP) has conducted court-ordered groups for women arrested under Duluth's mandatory arrest policy. In 1999, the City Attorney's Office adopted a new policy that does not automatically lead to prosecution of offenders, who have used minor resistive violence. The policy included provisions for a first-time arrest of victims of ongoing abuse (battering) to be deferred to a special education and advocacy program (McMahon & Pence, 2003). Simultaneously, the Duluth police department, under a 'predominant aggressor policy', agreed to avoid arresting victims of ongoing abuse, who have retaliated against their abusers with minor violence. These combined policies have reduced the level of repeat attacks on women, who resist battering with force. Furthermore, these policies have reduced the number of women who continue to use violence as a form of resistance.

By not treating victims of battering as batterers the Duluth community has not found women's use of violence to rise, but rather to fall. Only 2 of the first 35 women arrested under new policies re-offended and all but 3 completed an educational group for battered women who use force against their partners.

Despite the efforts of many activists and well-meaning community members, battering or ongoing abuse of an intimate partner is still pervasive in society. As we also know, seeking help is not an easy task for victims, who at times, have to overcome insurmountable personal, institutional, and cultural obstacles to escape their situations. Practitioners and advocates may get only one chance to successfully intervene in a victim's bid to end violence and hold the batterer accountable for his behavior. Misjudging battering for the other kinds of violence described in this article and intervening incorrectly might make the difference between life and death for a victim. Thus, until we can create highly sensitive, valid, and reliable diagnostic tools and techniques to identify batterers, we can hardly risk any error in our assessments. This article is an early step in refining our understanding of battering, which we hope, would lead to intervention and prevention models

that are more appropriate and effective. However, before such a time arrives, we would rather err on the side of caution.[9]

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[9] You may send your comments or write to us at Praxis International, 5402 North Shore Drive, Duluth MN 55804 or go to our website, www.praxisinternational.org.

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

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Table 1

Summary of Categories of Violence Perpetrated Against Intimate Partners

Category	Definition	Possible Intervention	Possibility of Confusion
Battering	An ongoing patterned use of intimidation, coercion, and violence to establish and maintain dominance over an intimate partner.	a) Change beliefs b) Create legal and social consequences c) Provide external monitoring d) Create equality of gender roles e) Organize communities to intervene and end violence against women	Can often be confused with situational violence and treated as less dangerous than it is. In any incidence of violence, therefore, it is important to investigate the pattern of ongoing violence.
Resistive/ reactive violence	Violence used by victims to resist domination, end battering, retaliate against abuse, and establish some parity in relationships.	a) Create new options b) End battering c) Provide resources and recourses	Often mistaken as battering and/or anti-social violence.
Situational violence	Violence used to achieve goals without any pattern of control, intimidation, and domination.	a) Create behavioral options b) Resolve issues instigating conflict c) Provide counseling	
Pathological violence	Violence arising from mental illness, neurological damage, physical disorder, substance abuse, etc.	a) Provide treatment b) Create alternative behavior c) Create consequences	
Anti-social violence	Violence arising out of personality disorder. It is usually generalized across situations.	a) Create consequences b) Provide external monitoring c) Provide structured treatment and therapy	