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Document Title: In, Out, and In Again? A Life Course Understanding of Women's Violent Relationships

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Document No.: 240918

Date Received: January 2013

Award Number: 2005-WG-BX-0002

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In, Out, and In Again?
A Life Course Understanding of Women's Violent Relationships

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Candace Kruttschnitt and Ross Macmillan

July 2006

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CHAPTER 1 – Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence and Patterns

1.1 Introduction

*Vanessa*¹ is a 49 year old American Indian woman who completed high school. She was raised in a foster home and characterizes her childhood as “very unhappy.” While she describes her foster parents as controlling and “verbally abusive”, she nevertheless reports no experiences of physical violence or of witnessing domestic violence in childhood. Vanessa has never been married but recently got out of an abusive relationship. She describes the last three years of her life as “really horrible” with a “lot” of abuse from that partner; she attributes much of the violence within the relationship to her problems with alcohol. When she and her partner were together, she admits to having called the police and obtaining restraining orders against him. At other times, she sought help from friends and family members after violent incidents. They all agreed that it was a bad relationship and encouraged her to leave him. Vanessa finally did so and when recently asked about her experiences, she says that she does not understand why she stayed with her partner despite the abuse. She also firmly states that she does not plan on reuniting with him.

In contrast, *Rita* is a 45 year old woman of mixed race background who reports an extensive history of abuse in childhood.² Growing up, she was raised by her mother and stepfather and never finished high school. She had been conceived by rape and her mother treated her very differently from her other children. As a child, her mother would burn her hands in scalding water or hold them over the stove as punishment, would

¹ All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the individuals.

² She defined her race as “Black, Hispanic, French, Creole, and Indian.”

submerge her head in the bathtub until she nearly passed out if the laundry was not done right, would choke her until she nearly passed out and would dig her nails into the flesh under her arms. She still bears those scars today. Even though her stepfather sexually molested her when she was a child, she considers him to be the “nice parent.” These encounters with her stepfather led to her involvement with older men; when she was 15 years old she got involved with a man who was in his thirties. That man subsequently became the father of her children and physically abused her for years. After leaving him, she became involved in her current relationship. This relationship is also violent. But in this relationship, unlike in her marriage, she frequently fights back against her partner.

When asked about domestic violence, Rita said that being able to leave a violent relationship has a lot to do with a woman’s self-esteem. During her previous marriage to a violent man, she said that she had no self-esteem and violence was all she knew. It seemed normative to her and thus, she said that she would let “anybody do anything to her.” Now she feels that she understands that people have to treat her better. But, despite this self-awareness, she is currently involved in another violent relationship.

While these women each describe their experiences with intimate partner violence, the stories they tell are very different. The first woman, Vanessa, was romantically involved with a violent partner, but eventually left the relationship, perhaps through the support of her family and friends. She did not immediately enter another relationship but rather remained single and resolved not to reunite with her former partner. In contrast, Rita not only describes severe abuse that she experienced as a child but then goes on to talk about her violent marriage in early adulthood to an older man. After leaving her violent ex-husband, however, she subsequently became involved in

another violent relationship. Thus, while the first woman was able to leave her violent relationship, the second woman describes multiple experiences of violence as a child and involvement in at least two violent relationships as an adult.

For many years, stories of women such as these have been used to illustrate the nature of intimate partner violence. In some cases, the stories have been used to justify, or at least explain, why a woman killed an abusive husband or partner (e.g. Browne 1987). In other cases, they are used to describe the various types of violence women may experience in their homes. For example, a distinction is often made in these illustrations between women who experience only physical assault within an intimate relationship and women whose physical violence is combined with sexual or psychological violence (e.g. Pagelow 1981). Comparatively less attention has been paid to the way in which violence affects women's relationships, both with the violent partner and with other potential mates. However, the stories outlined above present very diverse images of victims of intimate violence and suggest that all women do not experience, or respond to, intimate partner violence in the same way. Intimate partner violence may lead some women to leave a partner whether for another relationship or to remain single.

Cherlin and colleagues (2004) suggest that the timing and types of abuse may have distinct consequences on women's union formation. They use survey and ethnographic data from low-income families in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio to understand the relationship between women's patterns of union formation and their lifetime experiences with physical and sexual abuse. Significantly, they discover that childhood victimization, particularly sexual abuse, may decrease women's likelihood of being in stable relationships as adults and increase the probability they will experience

multiple and transitory unions. In other words, early experiences with violence may lead women to a series of fleeting cohabiting relationships. Physical abuse in adulthood also decreases the probability that a woman will be in a current stable relationship and may lead some to completely withdraw, at least for a period of time, from having relationships with men (Cherlin, Burton, Hurt, and Purvin 2004).

These results highlight the fact that violent victimization often has devastating consequences for its victims. More importantly, they argue that these consequences of intimate partner violence (IPV) can also apply to later relationships. In other words, women's experiences within one relationship may greatly influence both their likelihood of entering another relationship and their experiences within the subsequent relationship. Indeed, Cherlin et al. (2004) suggest that the abuse of women may contribute to the decline of marriage in the United States because these women are less likely to be involved in stable, long-term relationships. While they focus on the institution of marriage, their findings do suggest that there are important effects of violence on relationships, both those a woman is currently involved in as well as her future relationships.

Although research has begun to examine the effects of intimate partner violence on women's relationships, and in particular, their formation, more systematic attention is needed. In particular, women's responses to intimate partner violence need to be examined more thoroughly. Research should consider what happens to women if (and when) they leave violent relationships. Do they move into another violent relationship, as some might assume? Or do they find a new relationship that is non-violent, thus fully escaping domestic violence? Or do they eschew intimate relationships altogether rather

than risk more violence? If so, is this abatement temporary or permanent? Answers to such questions have both academic and practical applications; they simultaneously point to the mechanisms that link violent experiences over time and may suggest intervention techniques that assist women in leaving violent relationships. In the following sections, I provide more information on the nature of intimate partner violence, including prevalence estimates for the United States. Consistent with the previous discussion, I also offer an alternative way of thinking about this topic.

1.2 Intimate partner violence

Research has re-conceptualized the way in which social scientists (and, to some extent, society) think about intimate partner violence. With the “discovery” of this problem in the early 1970’s, second-wave feminists created powerful images of battered women to advocate social change (Dunn 2005). As these early calls to action influenced researchers, evidence began to build that contradicted some of the prevailing myths about domestic violence. First, battered women were once perceived as masochistic where women stayed in violent relationships because they liked to be hurt (Kirkwood 1993). Later images presented battered women as victims of structural or psychological constraints that prevented them from leaving their violent partner. However, there is considerable evidence that women do, in fact, leave violent relationships. The evidence lies both in research that suggests that women are at much greater risk of violence when leaving or trying to leave violent relationships (e.g. Wilson and Daly 1993; Bachman and Saltzman 1995) and in research predicting women’s decisions whether to leave these violent relationships (e.g. Anderson and Saunders 2003). Second, there has been a public misperception that women are involved in multiple violent relationships or that some

women “attract” violent men (Pardue and Rector 2004; Sniechowski and Sherven 2004). Again, available evidence does not support this and, as noted above, some have found that women may even eschew intimate relationships altogether after leaving an abusive partner (Cherlin et al. 2004).

Along with these myths, the images of domestic violence have led to various explanations for intimate partner violence. Most of the traditional theories provide a static explanation for violence between intimate partners, typically describing violence as the result of individual pathology, through a learning process, or because of a patriarchal social structure. However, existing theories are unable to account for some of the agreed-upon characteristics of intimate partner violence. For example, as detailed in the following sections, violence that occurs between partners is seldom a one-time occurrence. At the same time, traditional theories of IPV do not consider the fact that the nature or frequency of violence that women experience may change over time. In some cases, a relationship may remain intact and the violence itself dissipates as individuals age or find alternative ways to express themselves. There is also evidence that women leave violent relationships but existing theories do not explain why some women move out of relationships altogether while others become involved with another violent relationship. Further, explanations for intimate partner violence have developed relatively independently of the literatures on violent victimization more generally and on the life course. Specifically, there have been no empirical examinations of the stability or change of violence *across* relationships. A review of the life course literature provides evidence for both stability and change in behavior, particularly maladaptive and criminal behavior.

Whether these theories and findings can be applied to the study of intimate partner violence is the topic of this research.

1.3 Prevalence estimates

National data sources such as the National Crime Victimization Survey draw attention to the proportion of women in this country who experience violent victimization, both at one point in time and over time. Efforts over the past few decades have yielded considerable knowledge about the phenomenon of violence against women in this country. Focusing on woman “battering” or intimate partner violence,³ scholars generally agree on several of the characteristics of this phenomenon. For example, while women overall are less likely to be victims of violent crime, the violence they do experience is much more likely to be intimate partner violence and the majority of all partner violence is committed by men against women (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Thus, while exact prevalence estimates of intimate partner violence vary and different research strategies provide different estimates, there is general consensus concerning the seriousness and impact of the problem (Cattaneo and Goodman 2005). Moreover, there is

³ Researchers have used many different terms to describe the phenomenon of violence against women from intimate partners. Originally, “wife abuse” or “wife battering” was brought to the attention of both the academic and the larger community as a serious problem affecting marital relationships in this country (Gelles 1974; Martin 1976; Dobash and Dobash 1978). This left out women involved in intimate, but not marital, relationships and so others invoked the term “battered woman” to include women who were abused by adult men with whom they had an intimate relationship (Pagelow 1981). Further controversies arose when some researchers wanted to extend the notion of intimate partner violence to include husbands. Gender-neutral terms such as “domestic violence,” “family violence,” “mutual combat,” and “spouse abuse” became associated with such extensions (Gelles 1974). Here I choose to use the term ‘intimate partner violence.’ While the term itself is literally gender-neutral, I argue that the phenomenon of importance – and that examined within this research – is that of intimate partner violence *against women*.

consensus on the point that this problem disproportionately affects women (Bachman and Saltzman 1995). Second, seldom is violence that occurs within an intimate relationship a one-time occurrence. Typically women experience repeat incidents with a single partner. Finally, violence can also be repeated across relationships. In other words, women may experience violence at the hands of more than one offender.

There is also variation in what types of abusive behaviors are included in the prevalence literature on violence against women. Some research considers only *physical* violence, particularly the most severe types of violence, including kicking, stomping, choking, punching, shaking, and the use of weapons. Others broaden definitions by including verbal and psychological abuse, particularly behaviors such as overwhelming jealousy, unusual sexual acts, family threats, and psychological abuse (e.g. Walker 1979). Some research defines “battering” as violence coupled with coercive and overall control of a woman by her intimate partner (Crowell and Burgess 1996); this would include economic exploitation, confinement, stalking, property destruction, burglary, theft, and even homicide (Mahoney, Williams, and West 2001). Russell (1990), on the other hand, argues that “battering” connotes extreme violence and thus, should only be used in cases when violence is extreme. Finally, rape or sexual assault can also be considered intimate partner violence (Finkelhor and Yllö 1985; Russell 1990). Thus, research has not been consistent in the types of behaviors or perpetrators included in the rubric of “abuse.” While some have only considered physical violence, others include a wide range of controlling behaviors men use over their partners. Not surprisingly, prevalence estimates vary widely. For clarification, then, I indicate the type of violence involved when discussing prevalence estimates in the following.

National data sources indicate that a large proportion of individuals involved in relationships in the United States experience some type of violence (e.g. Straus and Gelles 1990; Bachman and Saltzman 1995; Crowell and Burgess 1996; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Findings from three nationally representative victimization surveys, the National Family Violence Survey (NFVS), the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), and the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), provide a foundation for a discussion of the scope of intimate partner violence. Much of the research in this area also relies upon community surveys (e.g. Russell 1990) and small convenience samples of women from emergency rooms or battered women's shelters (e.g. Walker 1979).

The majority of data sources measure physical violence with the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus 1979) or some modified version of this instrument. This scale examines the tactics individuals use in response to family conflict and includes items that comprise the "Verbal Reasoning" scale, the "Verbal Aggression" scale, and the "Physical Aggression" or "Violence" scale. Respondents are also asked whether their spouse or partner has ever used the same tactics on them and, if so, how frequently. Table 1.1 lists the questions from the original verbal reasoning and verbal and physical aggression scales. Experiences with any of these acts of physical aggression by a partner constitute intimate partner violence; the latter six acts have generally been considered to be evidence of "serious" intimate partner violence (e.g. Kalmuss and Straus 1982).

With respect to physical violence, data from the 1985 National Family Violence Study (NFVS) indicate a prevalence rate of 11.6% for any act of physical violence and 3.4% for "severe violence" (according to the CTS) involving an intimate partner that

Table 1.1 Conflict Tactics Scale as used in 1979 National Survey (from Straus 1979)

CTS scale as used in 1979 National Survey (from Straus 1979)

Scale	Items
	No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something the other person does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read a list of some things that you and your (husband/partner) might have done when you had a dispute, and would first like you to tell me for each one how often you did it in the past year.
Verbal reasoning:	discussed issue calmly got information to back up (your/his) side of things brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things
Verbal aggression:	insulted or swore at the other one sulked and/or refused to talk about it stomped out of the room or house (or yard) cried * did or said something to spite the other one threatened to hit or throw something at the other one threw or smashed or hit or kicked something
Physical violence:	threw something at the other one pushed, grabbed, or shoved the other one slapped the other one kicked, bit, or hit with a fist hit or tried to hit with something beat up the other one threatened with a knife or gun used a knife or gun

* not used

occurred within the *previous year* (Straus and Gelles 1990). Data from the 1995-96 National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS)⁴, indicate that 22.1% of the surveyed women reported they were physically assaulted by an intimate partner in their *lifetime* (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). The majority of the assaults reported by women in the NVAWS sample consisted of pushing, grabbing, or shoving and slapping or hitting. Further, 1.3% of women reported experiencing such violence within their intimate relationships in the previous 12 months. Their figures suggest that approximately 1.3 million women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Both the NVAWS and the NFVS used behaviorally specific questions from the CTS, and thus, the discrepancy in prevalence rates is surprising.

Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) explain this discrepancy in the way the two surveys framed and introduced screening questions. In the NFVS, screening questions were asked about intimate partner violence *perpetration* and experiences using an “exculpatory statement that acknowledges the pervasiveness of marital/partner conflict.” As well, the NFVS framed its screening questions in terms of “how many times in the past 12 months” respondents committed or experienced these violent acts rather than “whether” they had. By contrast, the NVAWS asks only about experiences of victimization and does not ask respondents about their perpetration. It also does not use an exculpatory statement to introduce the questions. Finally, the NVAWS asks whether respondents have ever sustained violent acts at the hands of any perpetrator (and if so, whether the perpetrator

⁴ The NVAWS used a modified Conflict Tactics Scale which included essentially the same behaviors as did the original CTS.

was an intimate partner), rather than how many times the acts occurred. Straus (1999) disagrees, however, and suggests that the discrepancy arose because the NVAWS was presented to respondents as a survey on “personal safety” and because of this, led respondents to perceive the survey as a crime survey and limit their reports to “real crimes.”

In contrast to findings from both the NFVS and the NVAWS, Rennison (2001), using the 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), finds a considerably smaller percent of women experiencing intimate partner violence. Only 3.8 per 1000 women experienced simple assault, meaning they were victimized without a weapon and without serious injury, by an intimate partner within the previous year. This considerably smaller number may be partially due to the nature of the data used. Because the survey is described as a “crime” survey, women who do not feel that their experiences constitute a crime may not report their victimization (Straus 1990b; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000).

Despite variations in the *proportion* of women believed to experience physical violence each year, most researchers agree that intimate partner violence includes not only physical but also sexual violence (for a review see Mahoney and Williams 1998). Data from the NVAWS indicate that 7.7% of the women sampled had been raped or sexually assaulted by a current or former intimate partner in their lifetime. In the previous year, less than one percent of the women indicated they had been raped by an intimate partner (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). The 1999 NCVS has similar prevalence rates for intimate partner rape within the past year; less than 1% of surveyed women reported experiencing sexual assault (Rennison 2001). However, other researchers, using data from community samples, find somewhat higher proportions of women experiencing

marital or partner rape within their lifetime. Russell (1990), for example, found that 14% of the ever-married women from her sample had experienced marital rape. Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) show that 10% of their sample of “ever-married” women reported being sexually assaulted by their husbands at some point in the marriage.⁵

1.4 Repeat victims

The statistics reported above suggest that a substantial number of women experience violence within their intimate relationships. At the same time, there is evidence from both national surveys and community studies that these violent experiences are not isolated. Women often suffer repeat incidents of violence within their intimate relationships. The nature of an intimate relationship allows a perpetrator continued access to his victim (Gelles 1993).⁶ In the same way that crime generally is concentrated geographically, empirical evidence from community studies suggests that a small number of households account for a disproportionate amount of intimate partner violence. For example, Pease and Laycock (1996) found that nearly half (43%) of 172 domestic violence incidents occurring over a two year period involved only a small percent (7%) of households.

⁵ Violence in intimate relationships can also be lethal to women. Homicide data collected by the FBI indicate that women were 74% of the 1687 murder victims attributable to intimate partners in 2000 (Fox and Zawitz 2002). This suggests that women are much more likely to be killed by their partner or spouse than by anyone else. Both national and community data sources suggest the pervasiveness of intimate violence within the United States, as well as its lethal potential (Kaufman Kantor and Jasinski 1998). However, the present research examines *living* women involved in relationships in an attempt to understand continuity and change in violence across the life course.

⁶ The fact that intimate relationships typically involve cohabitation suggests that repeat violence would be highly likely. In no other types of offender relationship patterns are victim and perpetrator so intimately connected. In addition, some have argued that the “private” nature of intimate relationships also facilitates repeat violence due to the decreased likelihood that others will intervene (Gelles and Straus 1979).

Surveys of victims also indicate that violence, both physical and sexual assault, within intimate relationships is repeated. Data from the NVAWS indicate that the women physically assaulted by an intimate partner had, on average, 7.1 such experiences over their lifetime; in the 12 months prior to the survey, women averaged 3.4 physical attacks by an intimate partner (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Among those sexually assaulted or raped in the previous year, women reported an average of 1.6 sexual assaults by an intimate partner (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Similarly, data from the NFVS survey suggest that women who report assaults by their husbands in the previous year report an average of 6 incidents (n=622). And for the small number of women (n=13) in the same sample who had used the services of a women's shelter, the average was 15.3 incidents in the previous year (Straus 1990b). Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that nearly a third of female victims of intimate violence had been victimized at least twice in the previous six months – and more than one-third of those repeat victims had experienced six or more attacks during that time (Greenfeld et al. 1998).

Community data show analogous results concerning the repeated nature of intimate partner violence. For example, Bowker and Maurer (1987) found that nearly half of a self-selected sample of 1000 battered women reported at least twenty instances of battering or assaultive behavior (as defined by the Conflict Tactics Scale) from a partner within the duration of the relationship. Data from community studies further suggest that more than two-thirds of women who reported sexual assault by their husband reported more than one rape throughout the relationship (Finkelhor and Yllö 1985; Russell 1990; Bergen 1996).

At the same time, research also demonstrates that, within some relationships, the amount of violence remains relatively stable across time. Recent evidence from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) suggests that nearly one-third of the couples who reported aggression (verbal, physical and/or injurious) at the first interview reported the same level of violence at the second interview (Salari and Baldwin 2002). Similar research using data from a community sample suggested that the majority (59%) of married men show stability in their aggression and use of aggressive tactics, measured with the CTS, from pre-marriage to 30 months (O’Leary, Barling, Arias, Rosenbaum, Malone, and Tyree 1989).

There is additional evidence that women may experience multiple forms of violence within a particular intimate relationship. Of women in the NVAWS who reported being stalked by an intimate partner, 81% reported physical assaults and 31% reported sexual assaults by the same partner (Tjaden 1997). Community studies suggest that more than half of the women identified as “battered” experience both physical and sexual abuse perpetrated by their intimate partner (Hanneke, Shields, and McCall 1986; Kurz 1996; Mahoney and Williams 1998). Other research (Finkelhor and Yllö 1985; Russell 1990) also finds that partner rape frequently occurs in relationships that are also physically or emotionally abusive.

1.5 Violence across the life course

Violent experiences may also transcend individual relationships and time. In other words, women may experience violence at the hands of more than one offender and at different times throughout their life courses. Research on the continuity of victimization suggests links between early victimization and later victimization experiences.

Specifically, evidence suggests that childhood sexual victimization increases the likelihood of adulthood sexual victimization (Gidycz, Coble, Latham, and Layman 1993; Urquiza and Goodlin-Jones 1994; Collins 1998; Krahe, Scheinberger-Olwig, Waizenhöfer, and Kolpin 1999; Humphrey and White 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Stermac, Reist, Addison, and Millar 2002). For example, data from the 1992 national survey of sexual activity indicated that women who had been sexually molested by adults as children were more likely, as adults, to experience forced sex (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels 1994).

There is also considerable evidence that domestic violence within the family of origin increases the likelihood of later intimate partner violence. Some suggest that *witnessing* physical violence in the home – typically between parents or caregivers – is an important predictor in both later *perpetrating* violence against an intimate partner (e.g. Egeland, Jacobitz, and Sroufe 1988; O’Keefe 1997) and being a *victim* of IPV in adulthood. For example, Hotaling and Sugarman (1986), in their review, concluded that the one risk factor that consistently was related to women’s victimization within intimate relationships was having witnessed parental violence as a child. In addition, *experiencing* physical victimization in childhood increases the likelihood of later experiences of violent victimization in adulthood; Kaufman Kantor and Straus (1989) found that women assaulted by partners were at least two times more likely to have grown up in a violent home. Richie (1996), in her sample of incarcerated battered women, found that early childhood victimization – both sexual and physical abuse – and witnessing their mother’s abuse as children were significant factors in adult battering experiences. And data from the NVAWS also suggest an association between childhood physical assault and

adulthood physical and sexual assault (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Finally, Messman-Moore and Long (2000) found that college women who had been sexually assaulted as children were more likely to report physical violence by an intimate partner in adulthood, suggesting that the violence women experience may take different forms at different points in time.

While many of these studies suggest that the transmission of violence from one generation to another occurs through a learning process (e.g. Straus and Yodanis 1996), there is also some evidence that there may be an indirect link through antisocial and criminal behavior. Early victimization, both physical and sexual, may influence a variety of “risky” behaviors (including running away, prostitution, and other forms of delinquency) that, in turn, increase one’s risk of further victimization (e.g. McCormick, Burgess, and Gaccione 1986; McCormick, Janus, and Burgess 1986; Whitbeck and Simons 1990; Hagan and McCarthy 1997).

Together, these findings suggest that women who are victimized in one relationship may have an increased risk to be re-victimized within another. Unfortunately, there is little empirical research that directly focuses on the continuity of violence across *intimate* relationships. Rather, much of the work in this area focuses instead on estimating the prevalence of intimate partner violence in this country or on describing a woman’s experiences with one particular batterer and her attempts to leave him or her (e.g. Strube and Barbour 1984; Herbert, Silver, and Ellard 1991; Bowker 1993). Thus, social scientists ultimately know little about the broader patterning of victimization women experience in intimate and family relationships (Crowell and Burgess 1996).

1.6 The present study

Despite advances, there is much we still do not know about intimate partner violence, particularly the way in which violence is implicated in relationship dynamics over time. We know virtually nothing about patterns of violent relationships and, more importantly, we lack a comprehensive understanding of the stability and change in women's involvement in violent relationships over time. While research suggests that violence in a relationship is seldom a one-time occurrence, we know less about whether violence eventually ceases and the relationship continues, or whether, if women leave violent relationships, they enter into subsequent relationships (violent or not). Most research on intimate partner violence seems to assume stability within these relationships; typically only intact relationships are examined and often at discrete points in time. Moreover, women are often asked only about violence within current relationships. Relationships in which there is violence are compared against those in which no violence occurs, regardless of whether such a relationship was previously violent. Only a small body of research is concerned with women's exits from abusive relationships and these studies provide evidence of change for a particular relationship (e.g. Wilson and Daly 1993; Bachman and Saltzman 1995; Campbell, Rose, Kub and Nedd 1998; Anderson and Saunders 2003). Or, more precisely, they provide evidence that women leave relationships that are violent. But, what do we know about stability and change *across* violent and non-violent relationships? What are the consequences of violent relationships on women's subsequent relationships? In other words, what happens to women who exit violent (or non-violent) relationships? Do they enter into new relationships? Are those

relationships violent (or non-violent) as well? Finally, how does violence between intimate partners influence relationship dynamics?

This dissertation aims to develop a life course understanding of women's experiences of intimate partner victimization. To do so, my first objective is to examine the patterns of intimate partner victimization among adult females. These potential patterns of violence may include: women who report violence in prior intimate relationships but are not experiencing violence within a current relationship, women who report violence within a previous relationship but who are not currently in a relationship, women who report no violence in previous relationships but who are currently in a violent relationship, and women who report violence in both past and current relationships. The objective is to determine whether women who experience different patterns of violence differ from one another on certain characteristics. Currently, little is known about what might link violent experiences within and across relationships (i.e. whether there are common causal factors). Existing work, on offending patterns, in developmental psychology and criminology, suggests that there is both stability and change in criminal and antisocial behavior across the life course and a number of factors have been cited as linking behavior across time. Further while there may be evidence that documents some degree of stability and change in violent relationships, the possibility of stability (or change) in victimization across relationships has not been examined in any detail.

This research also examines the nature of the intimate violence women report, specifically the situational and interactional characteristics of such violence, using women's reports of how and why a violent episode occurred and whether the proximal

antecedents of violence are similar across incidents and across partners. The information from these situational accounts will provide an important first step in understanding commonalities across violent situations and violent partners, as well as explaining violence that may continue across intimate relationships.

1.7 Description of chapters

This examination of the patterning of violence within and across intimate relationships unfolds over the following five chapters. This chapter situates the study in its historical and social context. Importantly, prevalence estimates of the extent of intimate partner violence in the United States were provided, using results from three large national surveys. In addition, other evidence was introduced suggesting that IPV often occurs multiple times during a relationship. Similarly, physical violence within a relationship is often coupled with other forms of violence, including sexual violence and emotional or psychological violence. Finally, the link between childhood experiences with violence and adult victimization was introduced. Consistently, research in this area finds that individuals who witness or experience domestic violence as children are more likely to be involved in partner violence either as perpetrators or victims in adulthood. However, the impact of violence within an intimate relationship on a woman's likelihood of future romantic involvement has been largely overlooked (but see Cherlin et al. 2004). Overall, this chapter suggests that a focus on the consequences of IPV for women's intimate relationships is necessary for a broader understanding of this phenomenon.

In the second chapter, I discuss the major theories of intimate partner violence. These can be described as offender-based theories, (which comprise the vast majority of them) including intra-individual, social-psychological, and socio-cultural explanations, as

well as victim-based theories. Much of the literature in this area has developed independently of the larger body of research on violence and victimization. Subsequently, specific theories of intimate partner violence have been hypothesized without considering the empirical evidence that suggests that perpetrators of violence against women are also perpetrators of violence more generally (National Research Council 2004). In contrast, the main theory of victimization within the larger criminological literature is that of lifestyle or opportunity theory which argues that risk of victimization is largely based on individual characteristics or interactions. Such a theory lends itself well to a discussion of repeat victimization both within and across relationships. Because of this, I argue that a discussion of IPV, particularly one of repeat or serial IPV, must be consistent with theories of general victimization.

At the same time, such a theory must also be informed by life course research on stability and change. Drawing on life course theories of stability and change in behavior, the second chapter suggests a new framework for thinking about violence across intimate relationships. I first review evidence both for stability and for change in antisocial and criminal behavior. The principle theories explaining stability – namely persistent heterogeneity and cumulative continuity – and change – maturational reform and age-graded social control – are outlined. In some cases, these theories have been extended to explain victimization patterns, but I further suggest how they can apply to an examination of violence across relationships. This chapter concludes with an overview of my research questions.

The third chapter provides detailed information on the two data sets that will be used in this research. The first is the National Violence Against Women Survey

(NVAWS), a nationally representative sample of U.S. women. The original focus of this survey was primarily to uncover the prevalence and nature of violent victimization, including intimate partner violence, in the United States. Because these data include information on a range of different types of violence within women's current relationships, including sexual assault, physical and emotional violence, they provide a unique opportunity to empirically assess whether women's experiences of violence are patterned within their current intimate relationships. This is done using a technique called latent class analysis. Furthermore, the data also provide information on violence that may have occurred within previous relationships and thus permit an assessment of patterning of violence across relationships as well. To understand the way in which women move into and out of violent relationships, I use latent transition analysis. This technique is useful for determining the probability that a woman in a particular pattern of violence within a previous relationship would move into a different pattern in their current relationship. As well, using multinomial logistic regression, I am able to examine the role of women's demographic characteristics and histories of childhood victimization in their transitions into and out of intimate partner violence.

The third chapter also outlines a second source of data that was collected from women incarcerated at the Women's Workhouse, located in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Part of a larger study on women's experiences with violence, both as victims and offenders, these data focus primarily on the three years prior to a woman's incarceration and provide very detailed information about violent encounters women may have experienced. Importantly, they also include situational characteristics of violence incidents that national samples like the NVAWS do not. These data allow me first to

categorize women into various patterns of violence within and across relationships, much like the analyses with the NVAWS. Further, using women's narratives of violent events, I am able to examine the antecedents and causal mechanisms in intimate partner violence using a technique called event structure analysis. This allows for an examination of the causal structures of violence within women's relationships and whether they differ depending on the pattern of victimization.

In the fourth chapter, I present results from the quantitative analyses of the NVAWS. These begin with an overall description of the data, including the number of women in the sample that report experiencing various types of violence within intimate relationships. I distinguish these results based on whether the intimate relationship is a woman's current or previous relationship. Next, I present the results from the latent transition analyses. These models, also called hidden Markov models, measure dynamic latent variables that involve movement through a series of latent classes over time; in this case, the latent variables are the patterns or *classes* of violence within an intimate relationship and the results indicate various trajectories of intimate partner violence women may experience. Additionally, the analyses also test for a number of potential effects of demographic characteristics of women and these results are presented and discussed. These characteristics – including age, race, education, household income, and a history of childhood victimization – may influence women's trajectories of intimate partner violence.

In chapter five, I present results from a qualitative analysis of the jail sample. Again, I begin the chapter by describing the sample of incarcerated women and comparing the women who reported intimate partner violence to the larger sample. Using

the results from the analyses with the NVAWS data, I am able to categorize women in the jailed sample according to their patterns of intimate partner violence. And, using the narratives women provided to describe experiences of intimate partner violence, I am able to model the causal structure of episodes of violence between intimates. These structures are then examined to look for common sequences and themes across incidents and across patterns that suggest “necessary and sufficient” conditions for violence within and across relationships.

Finally, in the sixth chapter, I provide a discussion and conclusion of the central research issues, the main findings, and their implications for both research and policy. I first review the theoretical framework that guides the present research; this includes a description of the various traditions that inform an understanding of the relationship between violent victimization at one point in time and subsequent re-victimization. Next, I describe the main findings of this research, including the results from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses. I then describe the theoretical implications of these findings, particularly as they relate to theorizing intimate partner violence and development across the life course. Additionally, I discuss the methodological implications of this research as well as offer suggestions for future research. The chapter concludes with an examination of the immediate policy implications of these findings.

CHAPTER 2 – Theories of Intimate Partner Violence

2.1 Introduction

While intimate partner victimization (IPV) is considered violence by the criminal justice system, researchers have tended to treat it as a distinct category of violence. This bifurcation of partner violence and violent crime appears to be due, in part, to the considerably late interest in this type of violent victimization (because it was long considered private and historically women had no separate legal status from their husbands). At the same time, some of this bifurcation between IPV and victimization of other types has been more carefully cultivated. Among researchers in this area, some have decidedly argued that IPV and family violence are “special cases” of violence that require their own theoretical explanations (Gelles and Straus 1979; Gelles 1987). Because of this, most research in the area tends to be unconnected to criminologists’ work on victimization, particularly research on victim “proneness” and the phenomenon of repeat victimization.

In the following, I present the existing and “specialized” theories of IPV that characterize much of the research to date on this topic. Such specialized theories tend to focus on only one member of the relationship – either the offender or victim – and, importantly, provide a static explanation for violence between intimates. The key focus is why a given relationship involves a fixed level of violence and assumes that, once initiated, it does not change over time; violence that ends while a relationship continues or violence that transcends a particular relationship is seldom explained or even considered. Thus, it seems that social scientists must re-consider existing conceptualizations and theories of intimate partner violence and question whether they

are sufficient given empirical evidence of the nature of violent relationships. Specifically, theory should be amended to account for the repeat nature of intimate partner violence, while simultaneously locating that violence within one's biography.

2.2 Traditional theories of intimate partner violence

In the mid-1970's, as feminists and advocates drew attention to spousal violence, social scientists became interested in this "newly discovered" social problem (Pagelow 1997). Early research suggested new ideas about women's experiences of, and risks for, violence. In general, as documented in the previous chapter, women are less likely to be victims of violent crime, but are more vulnerable to attacks by intimates. As well, their probability of injury in such attacks is greater relative to men (NRC 2004). Thus, theories of violence against women have been developed to specifically account for such findings.

Gelles and Straus (1979) identified three broad categories of theory in the literature on violence against women: intra-individual theory and social psychological theory, both of which are micro-oriented, and socio-cultural theory which is macro-oriented. Regardless of tradition, the majority of these explanations focus on why *perpetrators* – typically male partners – commit partner violence (Hotaling and Sugarman 1986). Thus, characteristics are identified that influence the behavior of offenders who are violent in their intimate relationships. Offender-based theories such as these may be useful for explaining violence occurring within a single relationship and indeed, these approaches have been the focus of much of the research in this area. An alternative, and lesser utilized, approach involves victim-based theories, including both macro and micro-level explanations, to understand why women are victims of intimate partner violence. In contrast to offender-based theories, these theories focus on victims'

individual dispositions and suggest reasons why an individual is a victim of violence. In the following sections and for each of the categories – intra-individual, social psychological, and socio-cultural – I review existing theory and research for both offender and victim-based approaches.

A. Intra-individual theories

Intra-individual theories were among the first models put forth to explain IPV (Gelles 1987). With their roots in psychiatry, such early theories viewed partner violence as a function of individual pathology (Faulk 1974; Dutton 1995; Jasinski 2001). Today, studies in this tradition continue to look to personal characteristics – biologically based and acquired – to explain why certain individuals are perpetrators of violence (Gelles and Straus 1979). However, as Dutton (1995) points out, such studies focus more on the associations between violence and diagnostic categories rather than on the development of etiological models to explain intimate partner violence.

In terms of biological or physiological explanations of violence, neurological factors, such as childhood attention deficit disorders or head injuries, are often cited as predisposing factors of violence (Elliott 1988; Warnken, Rosenbaum, Fletcher, Hoge, and Adelman 1994). Additionally, biochemical factors, including abnormal glucose metabolism, the suppression of activity of serotonin and other neurotransmitters, as well as overactivity of dopamine systems in the brain, are cited as risk factors for perpetrating partner violence (H.C. Johnson 1996). Research has paid particular attention to the role of alcohol and drugs in domestic violence; alcohol is the most common drug associated with violent behavior (Fagan 1990; Barnett and Fagan 1993; Schafer, Caetano, and Cunradi 2004). Many profiles of abusive men show alcohol use (Jasinski 2001), and alcohol is

significantly associated with more severe injuries and greater chronicity of violence in intimate relationships (Schafer et al. 2004). Substances may contribute to the perpetration of violence in many ways. First, they may change brain chemistry in a way that provokes violence among individuals who are not otherwise violent. In other cases, substance use may precipitate violence due to the irritability that is associated with withdrawal from certain substances. Finally, alcohol and drugs may act as dis-inhibitors that release violent tendencies in individuals (Gelles and Straus 1979; H.C. Johnson 1996).

Intra-individual theories also look to characteristics such as inadequate self-control, sadism, psychopathic personality, and mental illness as well as psychological traits such as self-esteem and anti-social personality disorder (Gelles and Straus 1979). Variations in psychological pathology among batterers have been documented (Gondolf 1988; Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, and Bartholemew 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart, 1994) and some profiles of male perpetrators of intimate partner violence further emphasize low self-esteem (Pagelow 1984; Gondolf 1988) and elevated levels of depressive symptoms (Julian and McKenry 1993; Vivian and Malone 1997). Bowker (1983) found that jealousy was the most common theme in the violent incidents that occurred between spouses in her sample. The men were frequently jealous of other men, women, and sometimes even their own children and their jealousy led first to uncontrollable rage and then to physical violence against their wives. Recent research by Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, and Fagan (2000) also suggests that male perpetrators of partner violence are high on “negative emotionality” meaning they have a low threshold for the experience of negative emotions, including anxiety and anger, tend to break down under stress, and perceive the outside world as threatening. As these authors describe it, people

with “chronically high levels of Negative Emotionality are emotionally brittle; they live in a world darkened by a rapid, excessive response to minor stressors, a sense that others are malicious, and a propensity to react to even slight provocation with rage” (pg. 222). This low tolerance for negative emotions leads to their use of violence against others.

Additionally, attention has also been given to understanding characteristics of women that increase their likelihood of intimate partner violence. Prior to the 1970’s, Freudian theories of spousal abuse were prevalent and women in violent relationships were thought to be masochistic. Some scholars believed that battered women harbored a conscious or unconscious need for pain and punishment (Kirkwood 1993). More recent research suggests that certain characteristics of women’s lives may increase or decrease the likelihood they will experience certain types of victimization. Individual factors such as passivity, hostility, low self-esteem, alcohol and drug use, having more education or a greater income than one’s intimate partner, and the use of violence towards children may increase a woman’s risk of experiencing violence within an intimate relationship (Crowell and Burgess 1996; but see Mahoney et al. 2001). Aside from demonstrating that there are certain correlates of being a victim of intimate partner violence, however, there has been little systematic effort to understand why these correlations exist. Furthermore, a framework that focuses exclusively on individual level factors tends to overlook the contributions of one’s environment and the larger social structure.

B. Social-psychological theories

Social-psychological explanations are also used to understand intimate partner violence. Unlike intra-individual theories, which focus on individual traits, social-psychological theories focus on the interaction of the individual with his or her social

environment. They suggest that the use of violence is the result of interpersonal frustrations or learning processes (Gelles and Straus 1979). Of these, social learning is one of the most widely used theories. Based on Bandura's (1971) concept of modeling behavior, the basic premise is that witnessing violence in the family of origin increases the likelihood that one will be a perpetrator of intimate partner violence. Also called the *intergenerational transmission of violence* or the *cycle of violence*, it suggests that violence and violent behavior are learned in the context of the family through socialization (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980).

A learning model suggests that a particular reaction results from a successful learning situation which provides one with knowledge about the preferred response and what stimuli require such a response. More simply, violence is shown to be an effective strategy of control and thus is learned to be the preferred response to particular stimuli. Other ways of learning violence have also been suggested, including exposure and imitation (Bandura 1973). Exposure to violence, particularly involving a role model, conveys norms which accept violence as an appropriate response. Equally important, imitating the use of violence may lead to an acceptance of violent behavior (Gelles and Straus 1979). In sum, social learning theory describes how individuals learn to engage in intimate partner violence within their own families of origin.

Research from community samples demonstrates a relationship between violence within the family of origin and later violent behavior. Results suggest that children who either experience parent-child victimization or witness violence between family members have an increased risk of abusing others in adolescence and adulthood, including dating or intimate partners (Hotelling and Sugarman 1986; Egeland, Jacobitz, and Sroufe 1988;

O’Keefe 1997). Other research also generally finds that early abuse and neglect within the family of origin are associated with subsequent violent behavior (MacEwen and Barling 1988; Widom 1989; Demaris 1990; Hotaling, Straus, and Lincoln 1990; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Wu 1991; Foshee, Bauman, and Linder 1999). In an extension of social learning theory, Dutton (1999) focused on individual reactions to trauma stressors including witnessing violence directed toward the self or mother, shaming, and insecure attachment. He argues that the combination of these three experiences constitutes a “dramatic and powerful trauma source” (pg. 437) and provides a basis for the internally driven violent behavior and problems with controlling arousal and anger seen in populations of abuse perpetrators.

In some cases, social learning has also been used to explain why certain women *experience* violence, particularly within intimate relationships. The argument is that, as girls grow up, they begin to develop ideas about gender-appropriate behaviors as well as the roles and responsibilities of individual family members (Browne 1987). When the behavior that girls witness includes violence, they “learn” that violence is appropriate within relationships and may model these relationships later in life. Women who experienced violence in childhood may be less able to protect themselves, less sure of their own worth and – importantly – their personal boundaries, and more likely to “accept victimization” as part of being female (Browne 1987, pg. 28). Still, empirical evidence is mixed; some find a positive relationship between childhood victimization and later experiences of intimate partner victimization (Coleman, Weinman, and Hsi 1980; Peterson 1980; Kalmuss 1984; Walker 1984) while others do not (Star 1978; Dobash and Dobash 1979; Rosenbaum and O’Leary 1981; Bowker 1983).

C. Socio-cultural theories

A third class of theories, *socio-cultural theories*, are more macro-oriented and examine social structures like norms, values, and institutional organizations (Gelles and Straus 1979). These theories suggest that certain social institutions, including marriage and the family, encourage the use of force for socially constructed purposes (Dobash and Dobash 1979, pg. 14). These theories also look at the influence of social location (including social class, educational level, and income) and integrate social-structural and family processes to explain partner violence (Kaufman Kantor, Jasinski, and Aldarondo 1994; Jasinski 2001). Both feminist perspectives and the theory of family violence fall under this rubric. While these explanations both rely on social and cultural conditions that promote or increase the likelihood of violence, they tend to be in opposition with one another.

Family violence theorists argue that violence is a “pattern of behavior woven into the fabric of family structures” (Gelles 1987, pg. 14). This perspective, typically associated with the New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory, argues that violence affects all family relations and that the origin of the problem is in the nature of the family structure itself (Jasinski 2001). Both Gelles (1987) and Straus (1979) identify characteristics of the family that enhance the likelihood of violent interactions. These include: 1) inequality – the normative power structure in society and family results in sexual and generational inequality between members; 2) privacy – families, as institutions, are private in nature and are not regulated by other institutions; and 3) time at risk – more time is spent interacting with family members and this interaction seems to involve more commitment on the part of members. Thus, family violence theorists justify

the development of a special body of theory based on the distinctive nature of the family as a small group and as a social institution as well as because of the high incidence of violence in the home (Gelles 1987).

Straus (1990a) further argues that families legitimate violence through the use of corporal punishment and the acceptance of violence as a means of solving family conflict. In other words, a marriage license becomes a license to hit (Straus 1980; Jasinski 2001). As well, Straus argues, punishment provides basic training in violence. Punishment teaches one to do or not to do something but may also have unintended consequences. These include the evincing association between love and violence, the establishment of the ‘moral rightness’ of hitting family members, and the justification of force when something is important or when one is under stress or is angry. Because family membership is only semi-voluntary – and not all individuals are equally able to leave easily – it necessitates a means of conflict resolution, which may or may not include the use of violence (Straus 1990a).

The family violence perspective is generally interested in the use of violence between all the members of a family, including spouses, children, and siblings. However, theorists working in this tradition planned the first national surveys of violence in the American family and, with these surveys and their results, directed a great deal of attention toward violence between spouses. The main objective of this research was to estimate the incidence of various forms of spousal and family violence; in other words, to “explode the myth that violence in the home is rare” (Gelles 1987, pg. 36) and identify the factors associated with such violence. Recall from the first chapter that the results from the first and second National Family Violence Surveys suggested a considerable

proportion of spousal violence involved both husband and wife. These findings prompted arguments that some women may be as violent as their partners in intimate relationships (e.g. Stets and Straus 1990; Straus and Gelles 1990). Continued research on this topic, however, largely agrees that the vast majority of victims of spouse abuse are women and the vast majority of abusers are male (e.g. Pagelow 1997).

While family violence theorists and researchers are interested in the family as a unit because of its unique characteristics, a feminist perspective on domestic violence is largely concerned with the role of patriarchy in men's use of violence to control their female partners. Such a focus on gender differences in power and control gives the feminist perspective insight into how and why these differentials are likely to occur (Payne and Gainey 2005). Feminists argue for a specific focus on violence against women and suggest the explanation for intimate partner violence lies in the legitimization of control (including violence) that stems from a patriarchal system.⁷ Dobash and Dobash (1979) conclude that patriarchy and the societal institutions that maintain it are to blame for violence against women. The historically and socially constructed control husbands maintain over their wives can lead to violence. Further, they argue, violence is "endemic to Western societies" and men who assault their wives are "actually living up to cultural prescriptives that are cherished in Western society – aggressiveness, male dominance,

⁷ Dobash and Dobash (1979) argue against subsuming violence against women under the family violence rubric and suggest that the move to eliminate inequality in our language, which coined terms like 'marital violence' and 'spouse assault,' obscures inequalities that remain today. By implying, as they argue family violence scholars do, that women are equally as likely to use force, the centuries of oppression of women are masked. Equally, they feel that this contributes to women's further oppression by "neutralizing the very word that describes the continued practice of wife beating" (Dobash and Dobash 1979; pg. 12).

and female subordination – and they are using physical force as a means to enforce [their] dominance” (pg. 23-24).

Research in this perspective suggests that, at the aggregate level, patriarchal norms and structural inequality are related to male violence against spouses (Dobash and Dobash 1979). At the individual level, as well, there seems to be some support for the role of patriarchy; a meta-analysis by Sugarman and Frankel (1996) suggests that males who hold patriarchal values may be more likely to use violence against women.

Additional research has focused on the relationship between broader social factors, including not only gender but race as well, and women’s experiences of violence. For example, Richie (1996) proposes an explanation for intimate partner violence that takes account of women’s early family experiences and their racial position. She argues that the “dialectic of the dominant ideology about intimate heterosexual relationships in contemporary society and the social conditions in African American communities converge to create a *particular* dilemma for African American battered women” (pg. 132). The women, according to Richie, were trapped between their culturally expected gender roles, their social position in broader society, and the violence in their intimate relationships. The African American women in her sample who experienced battering grew up in households that were not organized around hegemonic gender roles but they still aspired to traditional family and gender roles. They held privileged positions within their family and had relatively high self-esteem, but their lives were focused on pleasing others. The loyalty to their families also extended to African American men; this socially constructed loyalty to these men and their “disappointing experiences in the public sphere” (particularly their difficulties in gaining employment) created a circumstantial

and emotional vulnerability to abuse for women (pg. 70). Thus, because of these women's gender identity and their frame of reference about African American community norms, Richie argues they were trapped within violent relationships.

Thus, while both the feminist and family violence perspective focus on explaining the phenomenon of intimate partner violence, each attributes the violence to different social factors; for feminists it is patriarchy while family violence scholars highlight the nature of the family as a social institution. This opposition between feminist and family violence scholars is not easily resolvable. There is empirical evidence suggesting both cases. As detailed in the first chapter, those in the family violence tradition argue, using self-report data from the National Family Violence Survey, that women are at least as violent as men within intimate relationships, if not more so (Stets and Straus 1990; Straus and Gelles 1990). Conversely, feminists argue that part of the seeming convergence of rates of perpetration between men and women is the result of mis-measurement. The Conflict Tactics Scale (discussed earlier), which produced evidence of equality, has been widely criticized on its simplicity, lack of context, and "norming" of violence (e.g. Dobash and Dobash 1979; Kurz 1997). Feminist researchers, in contrast, argue that evidence from emergency rooms and hospitals and women's shelters show women to be the victims in the great majority of the cases of partner violence (Kurz 1997).

In an attempt to resolve this issue, Johnson (1995) suggests two different levels of partner violence. On the one hand, "common couple violence" characterizes much of the violence picked up by the CTS and in national surveys. It includes the kind of low-level violence (e.g. slapping, hitting, and object throwing) that many relationships experience when conflict occasionally gets "out of hand" (Johnson 1995). Both men and women are

equally as likely to be involved in these behaviors and frequently the physical violence is mutual and minor. On the other hand, what Johnson calls “patriarchal terrorism” is typically seen in clinical or shelter samples and is characterized by extreme violence and control of women by their partners. It frequently involves the “systematic” use of violence, along with economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics by the male (see Macmillan and Gartner 1999 for an empirical demonstration of this). Importantly, if there are actually two types of intimate partner violence, Johnson argues that theory development would have to follow and either proceed along different lines for each or generate “synergistic theories that explicate the conditions under which particular combinations of the same causal factors might produce qualitatively different patterns of violence behavior” (Johnson 1995, pg. 292). At this time, however, most theory in this area has not followed Johnson’s advice.

2.3 Limitations of IPV theories

Above I have outlined some of the major theories developed specifically to explain intimate partner violence. One limitation of these theories, particularly within the literature on intimate partner victimization, is an overwhelming tendency to focus on the behavior of the *perpetrator* of violence. Importantly, theories of IPV may, in fact, over-predict violence. This is the case with both a social learning and socio-cultural theory of partner violence. In the former, theory would predict many more individuals to become perpetrators of violence and, in the latter, *all* men living within a patriarchal culture are expected to hit their wives or partners.

The greater limitation, however, is that these theories fall short in explaining the phenomenon of intimate partner violence. They fail to address some well-established

findings of earlier research. For example, a social learning theory of IPV may explain the initiation of violence within a particular relationship or why a particular individual would use violence against a partner, but it has no ability to account for violence that, once initiated, changes over time. Traditional theories of intimate partner violence are not able to explain why the nature or frequency of violent interactions might change at some point within an intimate relationship. And no prediction is offered by these theories as to whether violence within a relationship will decrease over time or even end altogether.

Also missing within these traditional theories is an explanation for violence that women may experience in more than one relationship over their lifetime. Here, limited evidence suggests a link between childhood sexual violence and later sexual violence as well as a link between early exposure to violence and later experiences (as both perpetrators and victims) with intimate partner violence. While theories of social learning have been used to some extent to explain this continuity of violence between family and intimate relationships, little has been done to further this area of inquiry. And virtually nothing has been written on the existence (or possibility) of a link between one violent intimate relationship and another. Indeed, theoretical explanations for the continuity of violence across relationships are non-existent. At the same time, there is very little thought given to the possibility that violence is not always stable over time; women may may not experience violence in every intimate relationship across their life course. Traditional theories of intimate partner violence thus are unable to fill the gap pertaining to IPV *across* relationships.

Finally, despite the fact that by its very definition, intimate partner violence occurs within an intimate relationship, theoretical explanations of IPV tend to focus less

on how relationship processes influence the probability of violence. Rather, as I suggested above, the theories tend to explain violence in terms of individual propensities. Importantly, the fact that early relationships play a role in subsequent interpersonal relationships throughout the life course has been widely overlooked. However, there is overwhelming evidence of the important impact early relationships may have on subsequent relationships; while new relationships are never carbon copies of previous relationships, the experiences in prior relationships may provide a template for action in the construction of new relationships (Hartup 1985, 1986). Further, the interactions within relationships are influenced by individual characteristics and preferences and, because relationships can actually change individual properties, past and present relationships both may influence an individual's behavior in their current and later relationships (Reis, Collins, and Berscheid 2000).

Taken together, traditional theories of intimate partner violence do not consider the factors that shape one's probabilistic exposure to crime. However, the notion that some individuals may be more prone to crime has a great deal of support within the criminological literature. For example, Gottfredson (1981) argues that the amount and kind of victimization depends on one's *exposure* to crime and some individuals (or property items) are simply more exposed to crime than are others. Very little theoretical attention is paid to understanding whether and why some women may be more prone to intimate partner violence than others. Moreover, existing theory has not addressed whether this "proneness" extends across multiple relationships. Considering victimization theory more generally, however, may provide an understanding of why some individuals are more prone to victimization, including IPV, than others.

2.4 Lifestyle theories of victimization

One theory of victimization that focuses on exposure to potential offenders and situations conducive of the commission of victimization has been called “lifestyle,” “exposure,” “routine activities,” or “opportunity structure” theory (Hindelang, Gottfredson and Garafalo 1978; Cohen and Felson 1979; Cohen, Kluegel, and Land 1981). Hindelang et al. (1978) define *lifestyle* as one’s routine daily activities, including both vocational and leisure activities. Individual adaptations to the constraints that are imposed by role expectations and social structure, they argue, result in regularities in behavioral patterns or daily routines. Lifestyle differences result from differences in these role expectations, structural constraints, and individual and sub-cultural adaptations to these constraints; these differences are further associated with differential exposure to situations that have a greater risk for victimization (Hindelang et al. 1978). In other words, an individual’s particular lifestyle or daily activities affects whether they will have a greater or lesser risk of victimization.

There are two basic assumptions of lifestyle and related theories (Miethe and Meier 1990). The first is that particular patterns of daily (or routine) activities and lifestyle choices operate to increase contact between potential offenders and potential victims. This includes not only where people spend their time, but also with whom. One’s associations or personal relationships evolve because of similar lifestyles and interests and frequently these associations can contribute to victimization risk (Hindelang et al. 1978). Second, these theories suggest that it is the subjective value of a victim (person or property) as well as its level of guardianship that seem to guide offenders in their choice

of victim. Thus, victims who appear to have little protection from others are seen as attractive targets.

One's lifestyle is influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics, which provides some explanation as to why certain demographic characteristics are so consistently correlated with victimization risk (Hindelang et al. 1978). Females are generally at lesser risk of victimization because their social and family roles lead them to spend more time in the home and less time in the proximity of potential offenders. Likewise, married persons (especially with children) spend more time at home. Those with higher incomes are better able to avoid public places (such as public transportation) and spend more time in private domains. Similarly, Cohen et al. (1981) argued that age influences one's exposure and proximity to potential offenders, guardianship, and "attractiveness" as a target. As children age, they spend more time away from home, thus increasing their risk for victimization (except for victimization by family members), not only because of reduced supervision, but also because of activities and relationships in which they are involved. However, the relationship between age and victimization may be curvilinear; at some point, an individual's risk for violence begins to decrease with age.

At the same time, evidence from victimization surveys suggests that a small group of individuals report multiple victimization experiences (e.g. Outlaw, Ruback, and Britt 2002). Moreover, these individuals are often re-victimized by the same perpetrator (Farrell, Phillips and Pease 1995), frequently an intimate partner (e.g. Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Rennison and Welchans 2000). However, while well-established,

researchers have less understanding of why some individuals are more “prone” to victimization than others.

Sparks (1981) suggests that there are multiple components of a “prone” to victimization, including social, psychological, economic, cultural, and spatio-temporal properties. First, he argues that individuals may heighten their risk of multiple victimizations through their own precipitation of the events. As Wolfgang (1958) suggested, a victim’s words or actions may arouse the offender’s emotions, causing him to act under the influence of those emotions. Similarly, individuals may also facilitate violence, whether deliberately or not, by placing themselves at special risk for victimization. Some individuals also may be more vulnerable; because of their attributes, usual behavior or routines, or place in the social system, they are unable to prevent crimes against themselves. In other cases, victims may present ample opportunity for multiple offenses; extending traditional applications of routine activities theory, if one’s behavior and routine activities place him/her in danger of victimization, their probability of repeat victimization is increased. Finally, an individual’s attractiveness as a victim and their impunity, (because of limited access to the “usual machinery of social control” the crime is easy to get away with), also place them at risk for multiple victimizations. Rational choice theory would suggest that a perpetrator offends repeatedly against a particular victim especially after escaping arrest or punishment for the first offense (Farrell et al. 1995). In other words, once an offender knows a victim is both vulnerable to victimization and will not report the crime, the benefits of repeat offenses against that individual certainly outweigh the costs.

While traditionally a theory of exposure assumes that an individual has little risk for victimization at home, the unique characteristics of the family – highlighted by family violence scholars – may heighten the likelihood of violence. As described above, family violence theorists argue that family members typically spend more time interacting with each other than with others and that these interactions may tend to be more emotionally intense (Gelles 1987). More time spent together means more time at risk for violence. And families bring together motivated offenders, potential victims, and the “halo effect” of privacy separating families from capable guardians that comes with family in today’s society (Kelley 1993). Thus, a modified version of exposure or lifestyle theory may have application to violence among intimate partners and can specifically address the repeat nature of violence within intimate relationships.

At the same time though, violence may also occur across relationships. Because my intention is to broaden the understanding of women’s experiences of intimate partner violence, I also consider violence in terms of an individual’s life course or biography. A life course approach can provide a link between violence at one point in time and later victimization and also “draws attention to the ways in which victimization experiences may unfold over time and across relationships” (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006, pg. 140). Such theories are explicitly concerned with within-individual stability and change over the life course and are useful for explaining how women move into and out of violent intimate relationships. Theories of the life course, while typically used to explain criminal and antisocial behavior, may provide a new framework for understanding intimate partner violence. Moreover, a sociometric perspective emphasizes the patterning

of relationships within individual life courses and the ways in which this influences risk at different points of time (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006).

2.5 Theories of stability across the life course

Elder's (1985) important work on the life course suggested an alternative way of thinking about human development. He defined the life course as "pathways through the age differentiated life span" (1985, pg. 17). Individual trajectories or pathways develop over time and are marked by transitions or life events; in some cases, transitions may generate a turning point within a life trajectory (Elder 1985). As the name implies, turning points can modify an existing life trajectory; in other words, they alter one's life path (Sampson and Laub 1993; Clausen 1995). Thus, life course theory generally examines how an individual life unfolds over time. In particular, this involves an understanding of the social forces that influence the life course as well as its developmental consequences (Elder 1995).

One of the central concerns of research on the life course is patterns of change and continuity between earlier and later life stages. Sampson and Laub (1993) argue that one of the most important (and complex) themes discussed within life course research is stability and change in behavior and personality attributes over time. Criticizing the traditional "ontogenetic" focus, Dannefer (1984) argues that not only early life but social structure and social interaction influence human development and life chances throughout the life course as well. Thus a long-term view of behavior would imply a strong connection between childhood events and adulthood, but simultaneously, a shorter-term view (like Dannefer's) would imply that social institutions and other triggering life events may modify life trajectories (Sampson and Laub 1993).

Developmental psychologists cite increasing evidence for continuity in behavior over time. Major reviews of research on aggressive, criminal, and deviant behavior show substantial stability over time (for reviews see Loeber 1982 and Caspi and Moffitt 1992; also Glueck and Glueck 1930; Robins 1966, 1978; West and Farrington 1977; Olweus 1979; Elliott, Huizinga and Ageton 1985; Wolfgang, Thornberry and Figlio 1987; Shannon 1988; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Jessor, Donovan and Costa 1991). And although criminological research typically focuses on homotypic continuity, the continuity of similar behaviors over time (Caspi and Bem 1990, pg. 553), there is also evidence of heterotypic continuity in the literature. Research suggests that there are links between childhood misbehavior and adult outcomes other than criminal acts, including such behaviors as excessive drinking, marital conflict, job instability, and harsh discipline of children (Sampson and Laub 1993).

There are two major theoretical traditions that have been used to explain stability over the life course. Generally, these emphasize *persistent heterogeneity* or cumulative continuity, also called *state dependence* (Nagin and Paternoster 1991; Nagin and Farrington 1992; Sampson and Laub 1993). The first attributes stability in behavior over time to across-person differences in characteristics or traits that are reasonably stable over time. In contrast, the second is concerned with the causal impact of a particular behavior or experience on later life chances. While both of these theories are typically used to explain within-person stability in criminal and antisocial behaviors, the theories can also be applied to interactions and relationships, both positive and negative, between people. Thus, these theories may provide frameworks for understanding the continuity (and

change) of violence within and across women's relationships. Each will be explained in more detail and applied to a new theory of intimate partner violence below.

A. Persistent heterogeneity

The idea of persistent heterogeneity is frequently used to explain the continuity of behavior. Persistent heterogeneity generally refers to a latent trait that is characteristic of an individual. Here there is an inferred genotypic (latent) attribute that underlies diverse phenotypic (manifest) behaviors (Sampson and Laub 1993). These traits are consistent within individuals and thus reflect stable characteristics that can influence interactions, preferences, and choices across their life course. At the same time, these traits are not evenly distributed across the population. For example, some argue that personality or “temperament” influences behavior and evidence suggests that it can, in both negative and positive ways (Caspi and Moffitt 1993). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) attribute the stability of behavior over time to persistent heterogeneity, or individual differences, in self-control. They argue that low self-control is established early in life, due primarily to a lack of effective parenting, and affects behavior throughout the life course. Low self-control is indicated by the confluence of impulsivity, insensitivity, physicality, risk-taking behavior, short-sightedness, and nonverbal communication and increases the likelihood of delinquent and other antisocial or “analogous” behaviors such as drinking, smoking, using drugs, gambling, having children out of wedlock, engaging in illicit sex and involvement in car accidents (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990, pg. 90). A meta-analysis by Pratt and Cullen (2000, pg. 953) concludes that low self-control can be considered an “important predictor” of antisocial and criminal behavior.

Moreover, individual characteristics in childhood (for example, ill-tempered behavior) not only appear across time but also can be manifested in diverse situations (Sampson and Laub 1993). These stable traits may affect one's relations and interactions with others in two ways. First, a latent trait could influence an individual's choice (or not) of friends and partners. Consistently, research has found that antisocial persons are likely to form friendships with antisocial peers (e.g. Bjerregaard and Smith 1993; Dishion, Andrews, and Crosby 1995; Simons, Stewart, Gordon, Conger and Elder 2002; Piquero, Gover, MacDonald, and Piquero 2005). In terms of romantic partners, Moffitt and colleagues (2001) found that an adolescent history of antisocial behavior significantly increased the likelihood of forming a union with a partner who was also involved in criminal behavior. Secondly, individual characteristics can also influence interactions between peers and partners once a relationship has been established and thus one's temperament may determine the nature of their social interactions (Stevenson-Hinde 1988). For example, affiliation with deviant peers contributes to continued antisocial behavior over time (Cairns and Cairns 1994).

The theory of persistent heterogeneity may also be extended as an explanation of repeat victimization. In this case, an individual trait, exogenous to both victimization events, would link early and later victimization. In other words, the theory would suggest that individual characteristics may translate into a "persistent propensity" for victimization (Lauritsen and Quinet 1995). Those characteristics may include biological factors such as individual size or physical vulnerability or psychological traits such as submissive or aggressive temperaments if these temperaments have been established prior to the first victimization experience. Importantly, the propensity for criminal

activity may also be related to a propensity for victimization. In this case, an individual's social environment, including their proximity to offenders and capable guardians, may be what is persistent within individuals (Lauritsen and Quinet 1995). Finally, other traits such as low self-control may influence one's risk of repeat victimization (e.g. Schreck 1999).

B. Assortative mating

Following from this, one way to explain one's propensity for intimate partner violence is using the concept of assortative mating. This theory explains mechanisms of mate selection and suggests that there is a nonrandom pairing of mates with regard to personal characteristics (Vanyukov, Neale, Moss, and Tarter 1996). Individual preferences (based on one's characteristics) lead to nonrandom pairing of partners and ultimately result in resemblance between both partners. Research on this phenomenon has provided substantial evidence of homogamy among married couples in this country with respect to race (e.g. Spanier and Glick 1980; Schoen and Wooldredge 1989; Schoen, Wooldredge, and Thomas 1989; Kalmijn 1994), education (e.g. Blackwell 1998; Mare 1991), and age (e.g. Jepsen and Jepsen 2002). In addition, researchers have more recently begun to include cohabiting couples in their analyses and have concluded that cohabitators also form unions with similar others (e.g. Blackwell and Lichter 2000). This homogeneity, with respect to sociodemographic, behavioral, and intrapersonal characteristics, is known as 'homophily' (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). In other words, those individuals with similar traits pair together.

Although research is much more limited in scope, there is also evidence that people are matched on other, more deviant characteristics. Several studies highlight

matching based on substance abuse (e.g. Yamaguchi and Kandel 1993; Vanyukov et al. 1996; Olmsted, Crowell, and Waters 2003). Specifically, alcoholics tend to become engaged to, and marry, other alcoholics or drug users. More generally, this finding suggests that assortative mating may not be confined to personal or demographic characteristics but can also be based on a propensity for disorders or antisocial behavior. Indeed, mate matching has also been found for levels of sensation-seeking which is associated with antisocial behavior (Caspi and Herbener 1990; Moffitt et al. 2001) and psychopathological tendencies, including neuroses, affective disorder, phobia, hysteria, and antisocial personality (Merinkangas 1982).

Engfer, Walper, and Rutter (1994) suggest three explanations for the assortative mating patterns of antisocial individuals. First, they argue that individuals may be more likely to meet one another because they share similar class backgrounds (but see Krueger, Moffitt, Caspi, Bleske, and Silva 1998). Secondly, some antisocial individuals may make an active choice of a similar partner who exhibits their same values and thus, will not disapprove of their antisocial lifestyle. Finally, conventional pro-social individuals may avoid social contact with antisocial personalities. Subsequently, an individual's field of potential partners is constrained and dominated by persons like themselves.

While the theory of assortative mating may be helpful in an attempt to understand women's involvement in violent relationships, there are two caveats. First, existing research on assortative mating over-emphasizes the role of choice and selection in pairing. Perhaps it is less about *selection* of one's ideal partner and more about *matching* into relationships. Despite a "minimum acceptance level" individuals may set in their search for a mate (Oppenheimer 1988), they may not be able to attract their preferred

match and actually end up with someone who is outside their acceptability range but who resembles them in personality and characteristics. Secondly, in order to pair, two partners must meet. While the theory of assortative mating generally assumes equal access to a large pool of potential mates, this may not be the case. Individuals living in certain environments are only exposed to potential mates in the *same environments*. Growing up, a person's networks or interactions may be limited to their environment, and their ability to form relationships with others outside of those immediately at hand may be constrained. Thus, one's environment may severely limit the availability of their choices. Nevertheless, assortative mating may offer an explanation for women's experiences of intimate partner violence (or non-violence) and further provides a theory to understand violence occurring across multiple intimate relationships.

C. Cumulative continuity

In contrast, *cumulative continuity* or state dependence suggests that an individual's behavior patterns are sustained across the life course not by individual propensities, but rather by the "progressive accumulation of their own consequences" (Caspi, Bem, and Elder 1989). The "constraints, preferences, or prices (or any combination of the three) that govern future outcomes are altered by past events" (Heckman 1981). In other words, individuals are altered by past events and these alterations have implications for their future experiences. This theory has frequently been used to explain continuity in criminal behavior; for example, Nagin and Paternoster (2000) argue that criminal behavior has a genuine causal effect on subsequent delinquency by eroding one's constraints to criminal activity while simultaneously strengthening the incentives of crime. Thus, adverse experiences can have lasting effects

on an individual because they produce an “accentuation effect” that then perpetuates further adverse experiences (Caspi and Moffitt 1993).

Importantly, proponents of this theory argue that behavioral stability occurs because of a person’s interaction with their environment. With cumulative continuity, an individual’s interactional style channels him/her into particular environments that reinforce that style, sustaining their behavior. More simply, individuals seek out – whether consciously or not – particular environments that are compatible with their dispositions and these environments serve to reinforce those dispositions. A related concept, *interactional continuity*, focuses on the contemporary, evocative consequences occurring within the realm of reciprocal social interaction (Caspi et al. 1989). This suggests that an individual’s style evokes reciprocal, sustaining responses from others with whom they interact (Caspi et al. 1989). For example, antisocial children replicate their antisocial behavior as adults, in part, because of the reactions that their antisocial behavior brings forth (Caspi 1987). On the other hand, continuity can come through self-confirming expectations; individuals who expect others to be hostile may actually behave in ways that elicit that hostility (Caspi et al. 1989). Finally, individuals “seek out, elicit, and attend to information that confirms rather than disconfirms their self-concepts” (Caspi et al. 1989). This then promotes the continuity of behavior that is congruent with one’s self-concept.

The theory of state dependence has been used in some cases to understand the continuity of victimization over time. In other words, victimization itself may increase the likelihood of further victimization (Farrell, Phillips, and Pease 1995). Lauritsen and Quinet (1995), for example, argue that victims of crime may experience a labeling

process. Others may perceive them, following victimization, as vulnerable or even attractive as a victim. This makes them more likely to be re-victimized. Alternatively, victims may self-label and behave in ways that elicit more aggressive responses from others (Schwartz, Dodge, and Coie 1993). Even though Sparks (1981) dismisses the idea, what he suggests may indeed be true: “Perhaps a man who has been assaulted may become paranoid and belligerent, take lessons in self-defense and so on, thereby increasing his probability of being assaulted in the future” (pg. 767).

Further, in line with Caspi and colleagues (1989), victimization may also be explained using a cumulative continuity approach that focuses on the interactions between two partners. In this case, the important component would be the cognition and behavior surrounding past and future interactions. Relationship interactions and experiences influence both individual perceptions of the relationship (and self) as well as later interaction between partners. Potentially, an individual’s perceptions of an earlier relationship might also impact how they interact with a later partner. In the case at hand, experiences of violence would affect the victim’s perceptions of her role and responsibility within the relationship and, perhaps, within later relationships as well.

D. Learned Helplessness

Consistent with a cumulative continuity approach, intimate partner violence has been explained using a theory of “learned helplessness.” This phenomenon was first described by animal learning researchers and has since been applied to humans (Peterson and Seligman 1983). Learned helplessness suggests that negative reinforcement, despite one’s actions, leads to a belief that a person has no control over their situation. Thus, when an individual experiences a situation that cannot be controlled, their motivation to

respond to such events will diminish. When an individual expects that their response is likely to produce a particular outcome, and their expectations are met, they feel as though they had control over that situation. In contrast, if an individual's expectations are not met (their response does not produce the outcome they expected), they may search for an explanation. In the absence of a logical explanation, they may assume they do not have control over that aspect of their life. Thus, there are three necessary components for learned helplessness: 1) non-contingency, or the random relationship between a person's actions and eventual outcomes (meaning that one's actions do not influence a particular outcome); 2) cognition about the independence and expectations about the future; and 3) passive behavior (Peterson, Maier, and Seligman 1993).

Walker (1979; Walker and Browne 1985), in her work on intimate partner violence, uses learned helplessness to explain women's coping responses to their partner's abusive behavior.⁸ Because of sex-role socialization, she argues, women are trained to be passive and dependent, leading to a tendency toward helplessness. A woman in a violent intimate relationship may learn that *no matter what her response*, she cannot prevent the violence. Her perception of helplessness becomes reality and she becomes passive and submissive. The repeated violence diminishes her motivation to respond and eventually her cognitive ability to perceive any kind of success is changed. "Like [the]

⁸ Peterson et al. (1993) caution the use of the theory of learned helplessness to explain victimization because they argue that: 1) passivity is typically only inferred in these examples; 2) women's cognitions about the contingency of the abuse are typically not measured; and 3) the contingency of the abuse is typically not known, in other words, researchers do not examine whether the woman is beaten irrespective of her actions or whether she does something to "set off the beatings" (pg. 10). However, in an earlier piece (Peterson and Seligman 1983), they actually "suggest how the [theory of] learned helplessness...might aid in understanding reactions to victimization that involve emotional numbing and maladaptive passivity" (pg. 103).

animals or human subjects in Seligman's experiments, a physically, sexually, or psychologically abused woman who has experienced a series of painful, noncontingent attacks begins to perceive fewer and fewer options for dealing with or escaping the violence; her focus is on minimizing injury and coping with pain and fear" (Walker and Browne 1985, pg. 187). Having generalized her helplessness, she does not believe anything she does will alter the outcome, and therefore she "submits to the abuse" (Walker 1979; Walker and Browne 1985).

This theory, when used to explain intimate partner violence, has typically been posited as a factor to explain violence in one particular relationship. In Walker's work, she uses learned helplessness to explain why women stay with a single abusive partner (1979; Walker and Browne 1985). The logic is that women feel helpless based on their experiences with an individual attacker, and thus, do not leave the relationship. An extension of this might suggest that learned helplessness can also operate across relationships. In other words, helplessness may be learned in one relationship and, if they leave and enter another relationship and violence also occurs in that relationship, a woman may continue to feel trapped and helpless. There is some empirical evidence to support this preposition. For example, Richie (1996) found that the women in her sample who had been physically abused as children "physically internalized the effects of childhood victimization, the feelings of worthlessness and betrayal, and the anxiety that resulted from living in constant fear." Further, "most of the women who were abused as children and who witnessed maternal abuse believed that it significantly affected the nature of their self-definition and their attempts to create and maintain intimacy in their adult relationships" (pg. 47).

E. Attachment theory

Another theory that is consistent with the tenets of cumulative continuity is attachment theory. While this theory was not initially developed to explain relationship violence, it does address relationship quality and relationship patterns. Specifically, attachment theory is posited as a learned response to early interactions with caregivers. Generally, poor attachment styles are the result of poor parenting in infancy. These early caregiver-child relationships, along with peer relationships during childhood and adolescence, may influence one's capacity for intimacy and subsequently, their experiences within intimate relationships (Collins and Sroufe 1999).

Attachment theory, as outlined by Bowlby (1969/1982), is concerned with the association between an individual's early experiences with parents and their later capacity for affectional bonds. The basic premise of the theory is that individuals as children develop a set of cognitive and affective expectations of a relationship and representations of self, other, and the relationship between the two. Bowlby (1969/1982) calls these the "internal working model." These working representations are filters through which one interprets their experiences within relationships (Sroufe and Fleeson 1986). They provide information on: 1) how responsive and available social partners are likely to be; 2) how conflicts are resolved within the relationship; 3) how to cope with negative emotions; and 4) expectations on how much the other can be trusted (Kerns 1994). Further, working models can be carried along to new relationships such that positive (or negative) ideals of partners may be related to earlier experiences within close relationships (Sroufe and Fleeson 1986).

Attachment theory is used most frequently to explain the relationship between a mother (or caregiver) and her infant in terms of quality of interaction. Researchers in this tradition classify infants into one of three major attachment styles; 'secure', 'anxious-ambivalent', and 'avoidant' based on their reactions to the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al. 1978). A fourth category, 'disorganized/disoriented' was also later added to the typology (Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy 1985). Infants in each of the four typologies differ in their behaviors and in the positive and negative interactions they have with their caregivers (Koski and Shaver 1997). *Secure* infants show distress during separation but recover relatively quickly upon reunion. In contrast, *anxious-ambivalent* infants are extremely distressed upon separation and exhibit conflicted responses during reunion with their caregiver. *Avoidant* infants show little distress upon separation from their caregiver and are avoidant and do not seek contact upon reunion (Shaver, Collins, and Clark 1996). Finally, *disorganized* or *fearful* infants are characterized by odd behavior during separation which is thought to be the result of their attachment figure's helpless, frightened, or frightening behavior (Main et al. 1985; Main and Hesse 1990). A disorganized attachment style is most common in maltreated and high-risk samples (Koski and Shaver 1997).

This typology is important for understanding patterns of infant-parent attachment. However, research in this area has also been interested in the sequelae of these attachment styles in later childhood and adulthood. Research indicates fairly high stability of attachment classifications within relationships. There is evidence of stability over six month intervals (Waters 1978; Vaughn, Egeland, Sroufe, and Waters 1979; Main and Weston 1981) and between infancy and age six (Main and Cassidy 1988; Wartner,

Grossman, Fremmer-Bombik, and Suess 1994). Recent work using an impoverished sample also demonstrates stability between infancy and young adulthood. The findings suggest that, although attachment representations have previously been found to be stable in middle-class samples, these representations are not “invulnerable to difficult and chaotic life experiences” (Weinfield 1996). Experiences with child maltreatment, maternal depression, and family functioning may mediate continuity in attachment from infancy to early adulthood such that individuals who are securely attached as infants may be later characterized as anxious-ambivalent or avoidant due to intervening factors.

Research also suggests a similar typology for attachment in adult relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991; see Shaver et al. 1996 for an overview). Interviews with adults concerning their attachment to parents, peers, and partners indicate that *securely* attached adults appear to be highly invested and involved in long and close relationships characterized by trust. Overall, they seem to have mastered the complexities of involvement in close relationships. In contrast, those who are *anxious-ambivalent* are often obsessed with their romantic partners, are extremely jealous, and have a high break-up rate. They may also have low or unstable self-esteem and worry about rejection. Their attempts to hold on to their relationships may backfire and produce hurt feelings, anger, and insecurity. *Avoidant* individuals tend to be self-reliant accompanied by somewhat distant representations of close relationship partners and cool relations with peers. Finally, *disorganized* adults frequently desperately attempt (though ineffectively) to control the behavior of their romantic partners.

From this, internal working representations developed in childhood impact one's later relationships (Sroufe and Fleeson 1986). Not surprisingly, then, attachment styles

also tend to be stable *across* relationships. Interpersonal relationships in early life affect future relationship success or failure and the security of attachment to one's mother (or caregiver) is important for later personal relationships (Sroufe and Fleeson 1986; Markiewicz, Doyle, and Brendgen 2001). Children's relationships with parents influence their future relations with peers as well as romantic partners (see Cassidy 2001 for an overview). Research indicates that attachment classifications of infancy are relevant for understanding interactions between late adolescents in close (romantic or dating) relationships (Shaver, Collins, and Clark 1996). Hazan and Shaver (1987) suggest that secure attachment patterns may be more stable across relationships than insecure attachment patterns. Overall, though, individuals with insecure models will expect future attachment figures to similarly not meet their attachment needs while individuals with secure models will anticipate their attachment figures to meet their needs. Stability over relationships exists, Sroufe and Fleeson (1986) argue, because the working representations one forms can lead individuals to recreate past patterns of interaction by causing them to seek out relationships that confirm their expectations.

With few exceptions, research in the area of intimate partner violence has not considered attachment theory. Kesner, Julian, and McKenry (1997) found that the males who perceived low support in their current relationship and recollection of deficiency in maternal relationships were significantly more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence. While this study was problematic in part because it recruited respondents from a group program for male batterers, it demonstrates the applicability of the theory of attachment to intimate partner violence. Importantly, the theory provides an explanation for stability and change in how one interacts with, and relates to, others (particularly

within close relationships) over time. At the same time, attachment theory demonstrates the important influence that early relationships in childhood have on later adult intimate relationships. And the theory may also suggest a mechanism by which violence can occur across multiple intimate relationships.

F. Indirect effects through criminal offending

Finally, early experiences of victimization, both physical and sexual, are also thought to influence a variety of “risky” behaviors (including running away, prostitution, and other forms of delinquency) that, in turn, may increase one’s risk of further victimization in other arenas. Early experiences with violence may lead to involvement in criminal activities, which may lead to subsequent re-victimization. Research finds a link between violence within the family of origin, delinquent behavior, and subsequent re-victimization. Samples of runaway youth suggest that the majority report physical or sexual assault in their family of origin (McCormick, Burgess and Gaccione 1986; McCormick, Janus and Burgess 1986; Hagan and McCarthy 1997). Further evidence suggests that runaway and homeless youths, who likely left home because of violence in their family of origin, are at increased risk for re-victimization on the streets (Whitbeck and Simons 1990). Overall then, street life and participation in high-risk subsistence strategies may increase the probability of sexual and physical victimization on the street.

2.6 Theories of change

While there is considerable evidence for stability in behavior across the life course, there is also evidence for change (Knight, Osborn, and West 1977, 1979; Vaillant 1977; Robins 1978; McCord 1980; Cline 1980; Osborn 1980; West 1982; Gibbens 1984; Long and Vaillant 1984; Gove 1985; Farrington, Ohlin and Wilson 1986; Caspi 1987;

Rand 1987; Loeber and LeBlanc 1990). Overall, less sociological attention has been paid to evidence of change in behaviors over the life course. However, one major work in this area is Sampson and Laub's (1993) re-examination of the Glueck's data on juvenile delinquents. Their analyses suggest some degree of change in criminal behavior (desistance) over time. Emphasizing the importance of informal social ties and bonds to society, Sampson and Laub argue that social bonds to key institutions change during the transition to adulthood. Role demands from higher education, employment, military service, and marriage increase and act to inhibit antisocial and criminal behavior. Essentially, as individuals assume more responsibility (or social capital), they are less likely to commit crime because of the significant costs associated. Sampson and Laub (1993) describe these transitions into adult roles as "turning points" in a criminal career. And there are other examples of turning points in the life course literature as well (for example Clausen 1990; Caspi and Elder 1988; Rutter 1989).

Wheaton and Gotlib (1997, pg. 5) define a turning point as a "change in direction in the life course, with respect to a previously established trajectory, that has the long-term impact of altering the probability of life destinations." While the alternative pathways may seem to differ only slightly from one another at the time of the choice, what are often small or naïve decisions may have a large impact on future outcomes (Wheaton and Gotlib 1997). Moreover, change is possible because the chain of stability relies on "multiple links, each one dependent on the presence of some particular set of features, there [are] many opportunities for the chain of adversity to be broken" (Rutter, Quinton and Hill 1990, pg. 137).

The notion of *turning points* can also be applied to intimate partner violence. In fact, there is evidence that women can and do leave violent relationships (Anderson and Saunders 2003). What exactly influences women's choice and ability to leave though? Wright (1998) considers the phenomenon of "homeless exiting" and argues that the formation of plans to exit (or *planned behavior*) is a key factor in an individual's ability to leave the streets. Perhaps this motivation or conscious plan is also found in women who leave violent relationships. In other words, women may make the decision to leave a relationship. Equally plausible is that women find new partners, prompting (or enabling) them to leave a violent partner. Overall, contrary to structural constraints or to developmental theories that would predict stability because of learned responses or inherent traits, women are able to leave violent relationships. While this provides evidence for change, the mechanisms that enable the change are somewhat less clear.

2.7 Conclusions and research objectives of present study

In sum, theories of relationships and their stability and change over time and across partners have not been applied to intimate partner violence (IPV). Because of this, "biographies" of violence are not known for victims (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006). Research on IPV should address the continuity, or patterning, of violence women may experience over the life course. Further, it must question whether there are turning points into or out of violent relationships; in other words, if one relationship is violent, what is the likelihood that subsequent ones will be as well? An understanding of the influence of violence at one stage on violence in later life stages has important theoretical and policy implications. First, this understanding may promote a re-conceptualization of intimate partner violence which imbeds violence in a single relationship within the context of

one's entire life course. Additionally, if there is evidence that, for some women, violence is linked over time and across relationships, it suggests alternative interventions to address intimate violence. Specifically, women who experience violence across multiple relationships may have different service needs than do women who escape violence from a single relationship.

With this in mind, I propose the following research issues: First, I examine the patterning of adult intimate partner victimization among women. Based on existing literature, I hypothesize that there are four unique patterns of intimate violence women may experience, though I acknowledge the possibility that there may be more or different patterns than these four. Using information collected on lifetime experiences of violence from a national probability sample, this would include: 1) women who report no violence in any intimate relationship; 2) women who report violence only within a past relationship but not in a current relationship; 3) women who report violence only within a past relationship and are not currently involved in an intimate relationship; and 4) women who report violence in both past and current relationships.

An empirical examination of the classes of intimate partner violence directly tests theories of stability and change in victimization experiences within and across relationships. Stability of two types is feasible; women may experience stability of violence (or non-violence) within relationships as well as stability across intimate relationships. In the first case, violence within a single relationship would continue throughout the duration of the relationship; in the second case, women would experience violence in multiple intimate relationships. On the other hand, change is also possible within relationships. A violent partner may cease his attacks while the relationship

continues or, alternatively, a previously non-violent relationship may become violent. Finally, change may occur across relationships as women move from an earlier non-violent relationship into a violent relationship. Alternatively, women may escape a violent relationship and either enter a non-violent relationship or, as Cherlin et al. (2004) suggest, eschew romantic relationships altogether, at least for a time.

Second, I look for common demographic characteristics and risk factors in women who exhibit each pattern of intimate partner violence. Analyses that predict membership in each class of violence will be useful in understanding which factors are most crucial in creating patterned violence. For example, what are the characteristics of women who are “serial victims,” or who are involved with more than one abusive partner over their life course, and how do they differ from women who exit violent relationships or never experience violence? In particular, what is the role of early childhood victimization in creating cumulative patterns of violence throughout the life course? Do women who report multiple violent relationships also tend to have higher rates of childhood abuse, both physical and sexual, as compared to women who report violence within only one relationship?

Little is known about what might link violent experiences within and across relationships. Thus, using information from women on their recent violent experiences, I examine the nature of the violence women report, specifically the situational and interactional characteristics of such violence. I am interested in women’s reports of how and why a violent episode begins and whether these proximal “causes” of violence are similar across various patterns of violence. For example, perhaps there is something qualitatively different about the violent encounters of women who are involved in

multiple violent relationships as opposed to the women who are involved in only one violent relationship. Additionally, I am interested in whether specific violent behaviors (i.e. choking, hitting, and sexual assault) and reactions (i.e. law enforcement involvement, fighting back) are repeated both within and across women's relationships. Answers to such questions should provide situational information about violence, whether there are commonalities across situations and partners, and will suggest new ways of explaining intimate partner violence using a framework of stability and change in behavior.

CHAPTER 3 – Data and Methods

3.1 Introduction

Change and continuity in relationships is frequently studied between persons. Gable and Reis (1999) argue, however, that, a within-persons approach is “ideal for examining variations in relationship phenomena manifested across different relationships, contexts, and time” (pg. 417). For the purposes of this study, they would propose tracking a woman’s relationships, and the occurrence of violence within these relationships, with different partners, over time. Because this type of research is interested in changes over time, prospective longitudinal data are typically utilized. However, these data are incredibly expensive and time-consuming to collect and, in the context of studies of intimate violence, introduce problematic ethical issues. An alternative would be using what Gable and Reis (1999) define as reconstructed experience – research using one’s “general, global, or recollected accounts of behavior” (pg. 421). In other words, rather than begin with child respondents and tracking changes with respect to relationships over time, an alternative strategy is to ask respondents about their *previous* experiences within relationships. Much research of this sort relies on the use of life-history calendars to facilitate recall of events and their chronology. Most researchers agree that this type of research strategy allows one to examine changes in attitudes and behaviors over time without the time and money associated with longitudinal data. Furthermore, tests of such retrospective methods have shown remarkable validity when compared with reports about current activities (Freedman, Thornton, Camburn, Alwin, and Young-DeMarco 1988).

The following analyses use two such sources of data. The first is a nationally representative survey, the National Violence Against Women Survey, that includes

questions about women's lifetime experiences with intimate partner violence. These data are used primarily to explore the patterns of violent victimization within intimate relationships that women may experience. In addition, the characteristics of women in each pattern and the risk factors for membership in each group are examined. A second source of data was collected from a sample of incarcerated women in Minnesota and provides information on the dynamics of violence within intimate relationships, including the situational and interactional characteristics of intimate partner violence. In the following sections, I provide descriptions of the NVAWS data, detail the relevant variables, and outline the techniques I use for the quantitative analysis. Next, I present information on the nature and collection of the Minneapolis data and discuss the approach I use in the qualitative analysis.

3.2 National Violence Against Women Survey data

The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) was completed between the years 1995-96⁹ and was co-sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Participants included 8000 women and 8005 men years 18 and older residing in households located within the United States. The participation rate was 72 percent, consistent with other surveys of crime and violence (H. Johnson 1996). The sample was stratified by U.S. Census region and within each region a simple random sample of working, residential "hundreds banks" phone numbers was drawn. Then a randomly generated two-digit number was attached to the "hundreds

⁹ The female version of the survey was administered from November 1995 to May 1996, the male version from February to May 1995, and the Spanish versions for both males and females from April to May 1996.

banks” phone numbers to produce a full 10-digit telephone number. Those phone numbers that did not work or were not residential were screened out. In households with multiple eligible respondents, the person with the most recent birthday was selected for the interview. Respondents were interviewed over the telephone. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, females interviewed female respondents. Approximately half of the men were interviewed by males and the other half by female interviewers to test for a possible bias due to interviewer gender (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000).

The objective of this survey was to further understanding on violence against women and so many of the questions specifically dealt with women’s victimization experiences. One of the unique features of this survey was the breadth of its measurement. Women were asked about lifetime experiences of physical and sexual assault in childhood, emotional abuse and controlling behavior by partners, and physical, sexual, and stalking violence in adulthood. They were also asked whether anyone had ever threatened to harm or kill them. In eliciting this information, respondents were first asked a series of behavior-specific screening questions. They were then asked a series of more detailed questions pertaining to the incident, including their relationship to their attacker. If the perpetrator was a spouse or partner, respondents were asked to identify whether it was a current or ex-partner (and if an ex-partner, whether it was the first, second, third, etc. partner). This information is presented in an offender grid that linked specific acts with perpetrators. Questions were asked about the characteristics and consequences of the victimization, including whether they were injured or received medical services. Finally, demographic characteristics of the respondent and household (and, if applicable, their current spouse or partner) were obtained.

Because this investigation is interested in partner violence, I restrict the analyses to those women reporting at least one current or prior intimate relationship (N=6,911). In constructing the sample, I aggregate information across a number of questions about women's current and previous marital status. I create a variable that indicates whether women reported each type of relationship (i.e. current partner or ex-partner). To indicate a current partner, I use the question: "What is your current relationship status?" Those who answered that they were married or living as common-law were included, as well as women who indicated they were "currently living as a couple with a man." To elicit previous marital or relationship status, the survey asked women how many (other) men they had been married to and whether they had *ever* lived as a couple with a man. For the ex-spouse/partner indicator, women are also included if they reported having a previous partner or spouse. This includes women who responded that they were divorced, separated, or widowed in response to the question about their current status. It also includes women who reported that they had been married or lived as a cohabiting couple previously. Thus, there are women in the sample who report only a previous partner but who are not currently involved in an intimate relationship. Other women report involvement in a current intimate relationship, but do not report any previous relationships. Finally, some women report both current relationships and previous relationships.

A. Dependent variables

My focal outcome is violent victimization within intimate partner relationships. The NVAWS asked women about their experiences with physical violence in both their current and former intimate relationships. Using a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)

(Straus 1979; 1990), respondents indicated whether they had experienced any of the following behaviors as an adult: something thrown at them that could hurt them; pushed, grabbed, or shoved; their hair pulled; slapped or hit; kicked or bit; choked or attempted drowning; hit with an object; beat up; threatened with a gun, knife, or other weapon; or a gun, knife, or other weapon used against them.¹⁰ These questions measure specific behaviors allowing researchers to determine whether women have experienced certain acts regardless of whether women describe their experience as “abuse.” A full description of all dependent variables, as well as univariate statistics for the sample, is provided in Table 3.1.

Research suggests that there are different levels of severity of intimate partner violence (Johnson 1995; Macmillan and Gartner 1999; Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006; Carbone-Lopez, Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006). For example, research using the CTS typically differentiates between “minor” and “more” severe violence (Kalmuss and Straus 1982; Feld and Straus 1989). For this reason, I differentiate between “low,” “moderate,” and “severe” levels of physical violence. The first category of physical violence includes women who reported experiences of pushing, grabbing, or shoving, pulling hair, or slapping or hitting. The second category of violence includes experiences of having something thrown at them that could hurt, kicking or biting, or having been hit with an object. Finally, the third category of violence includes choking or attempted drowning, beating up, or threatening with or using a gun, knife, or other weapon on them. Using information from the perpetrator grid completed by the interviewer, I create three

¹⁰ While there is disagreement over the use of the CTS and its modifications (see Archer 2000 for an overview), it remains one of the most widely used tools to measure intimate partner violence and was used for the collection of the NVAWS data.

Table 3.1 Dependent variables, NVAWS data (1995-96)

		Current Partner (n = 5285)	Ex-partner (n = 2350)
VARIABLE	BEHAVIORALLY SPECIFIC QUESTION		
Physical violence			
Low violence	Push, grab, or shove you?	3.9%	10.6%
	Pull your hair?	1.3%	11.0%
	Slap or hit you?	3.1%	18.0%
Moderate violence	Throw something at you that could hurt you?	1.1%	0.8%
	Kick or bite you?	0.8%	7.1%
	Hit you with some object?	0.5%	7.0%
Severe violence	Choke or attempt to drown you?	0.8%	8.1%
	Beat you up?	0.9%	12.1%
	Threaten you with a gun, knife or other weapon? Or use a gun, knife or other weapon on you?	5.3%	6.7%
Emotional violence "Would you say your partner..."			
Verbal aggression	Has/had a hard time seeing things from your point of view?	25.7%	9.6%
	Tries/tried to provoke arguments?	5.9%	6.8%
	Calls/called you names and puts/put you down in front of others?	3.7%	6.0%
	Makes/made you feel inadequate?	5.8%	7.4%
	Shouts/shouted or swears/swore at you?	9.3%	8.4%
Power and control	Is/was jealous or possessive?	11.3%	8.7%
	Tries/tried to limit your contact with family and friends?	3.5%	4.6%
	Insists/insisted on knowing who you were with or where you were at all times, even when you didn't want her (him) to know?	7.9%	6.2%
	Prevents/prevented you from knowing about or having access to the family income?	2.4%	3.6%
	Prevents/prevented you from working outside the home?	1.6%	2.6%
Stalking violence	"Yes" to any of the following:	0.2%	4.9%
	Followed you or spied on you?		
	Sent you unsolicited letters or written correspondence?		
	Made unsolicited phone calls to you?		
	Stood outside your home, school or workplace?		
	Showed up at places you were even though he or she had no business being there?		
	Left unwanted items for you to find?		
	will?		
	Vandalized your property or destroyed something you loved?"		
	Other		

Table 3.1, continued

VARIABLE	BEHAVIORALLY SPECIFIC QUESTION	Current Partner (n = 5285)	Ex-partner (n = 2350)
Sexual violence	<p>"Yes" to any of the following:</p> <p>"Regardless of how long ago it happened, has a man or boy ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina."</p> <p>"Has anyone, male or female, ever made you have oral sex by using force or threat of harm? Just so there is no mistake, by oral sex we mean that a man or boy put his penis in your mouth or someone, male or female, penetrated your vagina or anus with their mouth or tongue."</p> <p>"Has anyone ever made you have anal sex by using force or threat of harm? Just so there is no mistake, by anal sex we mean that a man or boy put his penis in your anus."</p> <p>"Has anyone, male or female, ever put fingers or objects in your vagina or anus against your will by using force or</p> <p>"Has anyone, male or female, ever attempted to make you have vaginal, oral or anal sex against your will, but intercourse or penetration did not occur?"</p>	0.2%	4.5%

variables indicating each level of violence for both current spouse/partner and ex-spouse/partner. Each of these six physical violence variables is dichotomous, where “0” indicates no experiences of that type of physical violence and ‘1’ indicates at least one previous experience of that type of physical violence in an intimate relationship.

I also include sexual assault as a dependent dichotomous variable. Women were asked in the NVAWS whether a man or boy ever made or tried to make them have sex, including oral and anal sex, or sexually assaulted them by using force or threats.¹¹ Using the perpetrator grid assigned to the sexual assault questions, I create two sexual assault variables, one for each intimate relationship (current and ex-partner). Respondents were coded as having been sexually assaulted if they answered “yes” to any of the sexual assault questions.

To measure stalking, women were asked during the NVAWS survey whether they

¹¹ Two different sets of rape screening questions were fielded during Wave A and Wave B of the survey. Version A consists of two questions: 1) “Has a man or boy ever made or tried to make you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina, anus, or mouth?” and 2) “Has anyone, male or female, ever put or tried to put their fingers, tongue or objects in your vagina or anus against your will by using force or threats?” Version B consists of four questions: 1) “Has a man or boy every made or tried to make you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina.” 2) “Has anyone, male or female, ever made or tried to make you have oral sex by using force or threat of harm? Just so there is no mistake, by oral sex we mean that a man or boy put his penis in your mouth, or someone, male or female, penetrated your vagina or anus with their mouth or tongue.” 3) “Has anyone ever made or tried to make you have anal sex by using force or threat of harm? Just so there is no mistake, by anal sex we mean that a man or boy put his penis in your anus.” and 4) “Has anyone, male or female, ever put fingers or objects in your vagina or anus against your will by using force or threats?” Results from Wave A and Wave B were analyzed to determine which set of rape screening questions was more useable. Ultimately, a Version C was used, which consists of all four of the questions in Version B, plus one question pertaining to attempted rape: “Has anyone, male or female, ever attempted to make you have vaginal, oral or anal sex against your will, but intercourse or penetration did not occur?”

had experienced any of a number of behaviors. These behaviors included: following or spying on her, sending her unsolicited letters or written correspondence, making unsolicited phone calls to her, standing outside her home, school, or workplace, showing up at places she was even though he had no business being there, leaving unwanted items for her to find, trying to communicate with her in other ways against her will, and vandalizing her property or destroying something she loved. In the following analysis, women were coded as “stalked” if they reported that 1) the behavior had occurred on more than one occasion; 2) the perpetrator was a current or ex-spouse or partner; and 3) they were either “very frightened” by these behaviors or believed that they or someone close to them would be seriously harmed or killed during the harassment (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). I create two dichotomous stalking variables, one for each intimate relationship (current and ex-partner), where ‘1’ indicates experiences of some type of stalking behavior.¹²

Finally, a section in the NVAWS dealt exclusively with power, control, and emotional abuse. Each woman was asked whether she had experienced any of a number of controlling or emotionally abusive behaviors from a current or previous spouse or live-in partner. I create two dichotomous variables for each measure, one for each intimate relationship (current and ex-partner).¹³ The first is “verbal aggression” and includes

¹² Although some may disagree on the inclusion of stalking in analyses that examine intimate partner violence, stalking is a crime by law in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government. Further, previous research indicates a high correlation between physical assault and stalking (Tjaden and Thoennes 1998).

¹³ Exploratory factor analysis of these items provided some evidence, among current partners, in favor of a two-factor model with one factor measuring “verbal aggression” and another measuring “power and control.” The results pertaining to previous partners

experiences of having a hard time seeing things from her viewpoint, trying to provoke arguments, calling her names in front of others, making her feel inadequate, and shouting or swearing at her. The second is “coercive control” and includes being jealous or possessive, trying to limit her contacts with others, having to know who she is with at all times, preventing her access to family income, and preventing her from working outside the home.¹⁴

B. Exogenous covariates

Various social factors that are correlated with risk of violent victimization (e.g. Hindelang et al. 1978) are also related to intimate partner victimization. These risk factors include age, race, and education. At the same time, research finds a strong relationship between childhood victimization and later experiences of violence (Hotelling and Sugarman 1986; Kaufman Kantor and Straus 1989; Gidycz, Coble, Latham, and Layman 1993; Urquiza and Goodlin-Jones 1994; Humphrey and White 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Stermac, Reist, Addison, and Millar 2002). In the analyses of the NVAWS that focus on predicting women’s patterns of intimate partner violence, I include each of these as exogenous covariates. Finally, because violent victimization has important socioeconomic consequences (Macmillan 2001), I also include household income to test for a potential moderating effect. In other words, the relationship between experiences of intimate partner violence with a previous partner and those with a current partner may be due to deprivation of socioeconomic resources. Research suggests that

were less convincing, however I used the same indicators for each relationship for consistency.

¹⁴ Additional items, including whether a spouse or partner frightened or was frightened of her, were not included in these analyses.

economic vulnerability is tied to marriage dissolution (Smock, Manning, and Gupta 1999).

Age is considered an important factor in victimization risk because one's age suggests to what and whom they will be exposed. Data from both national crime and victimization surveys and official statistics provide evidence of a strong relationship between age and violent victimization (Macmillan 2001). While the violence measures in the NVAWS are all lifetime prevalence indicators, age can be viewed as an indicator of one's cohort. Thus age effects would reveal cohort variation in the patterns of violence that women experience. In other words, they would suggest whether women born in the earlier decades of the twentieth century were at greater risk of partner violence than those born later. Age is included as a continuous covariate in these analyses.

Research has also demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between race and risk of victimization. Findings from the Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) report, using data from the NVAWS, indicate that proportionally more American Indian or Alaska Native women report rape or stalking incidents. These data show no significant difference between white women and African-American women (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). In contrast, data from the NCVS, as well as homicide data, suggest that African-American women have greater risk for experiencing intimate partner violence (Campbell 1992; Rennison and Welchans 2000). Because my analyses examine patterns of intimate partner violence, and because previous findings with respect to race have been ambiguous, I include race as an exogenous covariate. Women were asked to self-identify their racial and ethnic backgrounds during the NVAWS survey. In order to simplify the

models, I include a dummy variable for “white” which contrasts the effect of being white versus being of another race.

I also include education in these analyses. Empirical evidence suggests that education has a negative relationship with intimate partner violence. The less education a woman has, the more likely she is to experience violence (Chen and White 2004; Seedat, Stein, and Forde 2005). Further, level of education is also related to violent victimization in general (Gabor and Mata 2004). In these analyses, education is a categorical variable that ranges from ‘no schooling’ to ‘post-graduate degree.’

A common theme in existing literature is that there is a relationship between childhood victimization (both physical and sexual) and adult victimization (e.g. Hotelling and Sugarman 1986; Kaufman Kantor and Straus 1989; Collins 1998; Krahé et al. 1999). To test whether intimate partner violence is related to childhood experiences of violence, I include a variable measuring childhood physical victimization. Previous research with the NVAWS (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006) suggests that there are three forms of childhood physical violence including no violence, parental aggression, and physical abuse.¹⁵ A corresponding measure of experiences of childhood violence will be included in this manner.

Finally, evidence suggests that there is a negative relationship between socioeconomic status and violent victimization. Persons in the 2001 NCVS with a

¹⁵ Women were asked about physical violence they may have experienced as a child before the age of eighteen. Using the same modified CTS, they were asked to identify whether a parent or guardian had ever thrown something that could hurt them, pushed, grabbed, or shoved them, pulled their hair, slapped or hit them, kicked or bit them, choked or attempted to drown them, hit them with an object, beat them up, or threatened them with or used a gun, knife, or other weapon against them.

household income under \$7,500 had a greater risk of experiencing assault overall than did persons with higher household incomes (Rennison 2002). These same data also suggest that women living in households with lower annual incomes are at greater risk for experiencing intimate partner violence (Rennison and Welchans 2000). And women living in households with incomes under \$7,500 had the highest rate of intimate partner violence. Based on these findings, I include measures of socioeconomic status, specifically information on women's household income, in my analyses. Household income is a continuous categorical variable ranging from 'less than \$5,000' to 'more than \$100,000.' Women who were not part of a household (i.e. they lived alone) were asked their personal income which is coded in the same way. In cases where women did not report either household and personal income, I used mean substitution.

3.3 Latent class analysis

I use the seven variables (low, moderate, and severe physical violence, sexual assault, stalking, verbal aggression, and coercive control) as indicators of intimate partner violence to empirically assess whether violent victimization experiences of women with both current and previous partners cohere in distinct patterns. To do so, I use latent class analysis (LCA). LCA refers to statistical models that use categorical latent variables; for these latent variables, which represent subpopulations, population membership is not known, but rather is inferred from the data (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006). This technique allows social scientists to analyze the relationships between observed indicators in order to understand an underlying latent variable or concept. Its premise is that the covariation observed among the observed variables is due to the manifest variables' relationship to the latent variable; in other words, the latent variable "explains"

the relationships seen between the observed variables (McCutcheon 1987). Basically, LCA, also called mixture modeling, allows classification of individuals into categories of a latent variable based on their responses to actual variables (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006). One important function of this technique is to analyze typologies, either through an empirical categorization of a set of latent classes or as a test of proposed classes. While similar to factor analysis, it is distinct from other latent variable approaches, such as “LISREL” models, because it specifies a multidimensional discrete *latent* variable using a cross-classification of two or more *observed* discrete variables and is specifically designed for use with nominal or categorical level variables.

LCA produces two parameters of particular interest: latent class probabilities and conditional probabilities. Latent class probabilities describe the distribution of classes of the latent variable; this includes information both on the number of classes (T) and the relative sizes of these classes (π). The sum of the latent class probabilities (π_t^X) over all T latent classes equals one (McCutcheon 1987). The distribution of the latent classes is particularly important when comparing two or more populations with similar latent structures. Conditional probabilities represent the probabilities of an individual in class t being at a particular level of the observed variables. Within each of the T latent classes, the conditional probabilities of each manifest variable sum to one. This can be expressed as:

$$\pi_{ij...mt}^{AB...EX} = \pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X} \times \pi_{jt}^{\bar{B}X} \times \dots \times \pi_{mt}^{\bar{E}X} \times \pi_t^X,$$

where $\pi_{ij...mt}^{AB...EX}$ is the probability that a randomly selected case will be located in the i, j, m, t cell, $\pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X}$ is the conditional probability that a case in class t of the latent variable X will

be located at level i of variable A, $\pi_{ji}^{\bar{B}X}$ is the conditional probability of being at level j of variable B, $\pi_{mt}^{\bar{E}X}$ is the conditional probability of being at level m of variable E, and π_t^X is the probability of a randomly selected case being at level t of the latent variable X.

These conditional probabilities apply to each of the types of violence examined and indicate cumulative risk within a particular relationship. A class that has high probabilities on more than one type of violence indicates multifaceted risk. For example, if a particular class involved high probabilities of sexual assault, moderate and severe physical violence, and coercive control, it would suggest that women in the class are at high risk of many different types of violence within their intimate relationship. I am also interested in the latent class probabilities that are associated with each class. These indicate the expected probability of membership in that particular class within the sampled population. In other words, they indicate the proportion of the population that could be expected to experience each type or pattern of intimate partner violence.

The measurement model for LCA is a multivariate regression equation. It describes the relationship between a set of observed, or manifest, dependent variables and a set of categorical latent variables (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006). The observed (manifest) variables are referred to as *latent class indicators*. The relationships are expressed by a set of multinomial logistic regression equations for unordered categorical latent class indicators.

Because I am interested in whether there are differences in the types, or classes, of violence women experience in various relationships, I model classes of violence for both previous partners and for current partners. As it may be that there are fewer (or more)

latent classes of violence for women's current relationships as compared to their previous relationships, latent class modeling does not require *a priori* assumptions about the number of classes for one model based on results from the other.

However, not all women in the sample have both a previous and current partner. To ensure that all respondents had the same probability of experiencing violence from current or ex-spouses or partners, I include variables that indicate whether women reported a previous or a current relationship (or both). These variables, along with the violence indicators, make up the latent class indicators or manifest variables in the model. In estimating the latent class models, I fix one class for both current and previous partners to include women who do *not* report that type of relationship. Thus, for example, the first class of violence for a current relationship actually includes only women who did not report a current relationship; any remaining classes, based on the best-fitting model, would then describe various classes of violence for current partners. All models are analyzed using Mplus, version 4.0 (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006).

3.4 Model fit and parameter estimates

In these analyses, I use goodness-of-fit statistics to determine the model that best represents the data. They indicate whether a set of variables has a significant association and how many classes are needed in order to best summarize the data. Specifically, I use the BIC (Bayesian Information Criteria) statistic; $BIC = -2 \log L + r \ln n$, where r is the number of free model parameters (Schwartz 1978). Generally, the smallest BIC statistic indicates a good fit to the data. Raftery (1995) argues that the BIC statistic overcomes many of the difficulties that arise, particularly with large samples, with model selection based on P-values. With latent class analysis, the researcher often considers many models

and so the BIC statistic provides a means of model selection when several models fit the data almost equally or when different model selection techniques disagree in their choice of model. However, there is a tendency for the BIC statistic to favor simpler models and null hypotheses in large data sets as compared to P-values (Raftery 1995). In other words, the BIC selection rules are more conservative than the traditional P-values (Hauser 1995).

3.5 Latent transition models¹⁶

I further use a type of mixture model – latent transition analysis – to empirically examine the *transitions* between patterns of violence and the influence of various background characteristics on those transitions. Conventional latent class models can use cross-sectional or longitudinal data. However, cases in which latent class indicators are measured over time and individuals are allowed to transition between latent classes are called latent transition or hidden Markov models (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006; Reboussin et al. 1998; Collins and Wugalter 1992). LTA models measure dynamic latent variables that involve movement through a series of latent classes over time; this movement among latent classes can be summed up in the transition probability matrix (Graham, Collins, Wugalter, Chung, and Hansen 1991). This matrix represents transitions between latent statuses from one occasion (or time t) to another; τ_{bla} represents the probability of membership in latent class b at time 2, conditional on membership in latent class a at time 1.

Suppose a sample of n women is asked a series of p questions regarding their experiences of intimate partner violence at T equally-spaced discrete points in time. Then

¹⁶ The following equations are based on similar models found in Reboussin, Reboussin, Liang, and Anthony (1998).

let $y_{it} = (y_{it1}, \dots, y_{itp})$ be a vector of p dichotomous responses for respondent i at time t and let $x_{it} = (x_{it1}, \dots, x_{itq})$ denote the corresponding vector of q predictors of victimization. Assume that y_{it} takes the value of 1 if individual i reports an experience of victimization type j at time t and 0 if they report no such experience. The group of p violence variables is assumed to be indicators of a latent IPV variable at time t ; for consistency call it η_{it} , having C classes.

The interest here is on transitions between IPV classes over time and the effects of various predictors on these transitions. Using a first-order stationary transition model (in which the present state depends only upon the immediately preceding state), the transition probability for respondent i is given by $\tau_{ikm} = P(\eta_{it} = m | \eta_{i,t-1} = k, x_{it})$ where $t = 2, \dots, T$ and $k, m = 1, \dots, C$. This provides the probability that an individual (i) is in IPV latent class m at the present time given that they were in IPV latent class k at the preceding time period and have covariates x_{it} . If latent class 1 is the reference class, $\tau_{ikm} = P(\eta_{it} = 1 | \eta_{i,t-1} = k, x_{it})$ is the probability that individual (i) is in the reference state at the present time period, given latent class k at the preceding time period and covariates x_{it} . Modeling the transition probabilities τ_{ikm} , gives the following transition model:

$$\log \frac{\tau_{ikm}}{\tau_{ik1}} = \alpha_m + \beta_{km} + \gamma_m x_{it}, \text{ where } t = 2, \dots, T; m = 2, \dots, C; k = 1, \dots, C; \text{ and } \beta_{1m} = 0.$$

In this case, $\theta = (\alpha, \beta, \gamma)$ are the parameters characterizing change in the latent classes over time. The parameter α_m is the log odds that an individual is in latent class m at the present time period given that she was in the reference state at the preceding time period with covariates $x_{it} = 0$. Parameter β_{km} is a log odds ratio; in other words the log of

the ratio of the odds to be in class m at the present time period among women who were in latent class k at the preceding time period, adjusted for covariates x_{it} . The effect of covariates on the relative odds that an individual is in latent class m at the present time period adjusting for their prior state is given by γ_m . Based on the model above, the transition probabilities would be:

$$\tau_{ikm}(\theta) = \frac{\exp(\alpha_m + \beta_{km} + \gamma_m x_{it})}{1 + \exp(\alpha_2 + \beta_{k2} + \gamma_2 x_{it}) + \dots + \exp(\alpha_c + \beta_{kc} + \gamma_c x_{it})}.$$

While the NVAWS data are not longitudinal, I still use the preceding models for my analysis. Because the two sets of dependent variables – for current partner and for an ex-partner – are situated in time, I consider the transition from time 1 (a previous relationship) to time 2 (current relationship). The actual length of time between t_1 and t_2 will vary across women (for example, one woman's previous relationship may have ended ten years prior to her current relationship while another may move directly from one relationship to another). However, I am interested in the probabilities that a woman moves from a particular class in one relationship to another class in her subsequent relationship. As such, I do not include a specific measure of the time that lapses between relationships in the model.

Finally, using the transition probabilities (described previously), I am able to estimate the likelihood that a woman beginning in a particular class of violence with an ex-partner will move into each class of violence within a current relationship. Most importantly, as indicated by my research questions, I am looking for the likelihood that women who experience violence within a previous relationship will then: 1) move into a non-violent relationship with their current partner; 2) move out of relationships and report

no current partner; and 3) move into a violent relationship with their current partner. I also consider the impact of various background characteristics – such as age, race, education, child victimization, and household income – on women’s transitions across relationships.

3.6 Women’s Experiences of Violence data

The analyses of the NVAWS provide information about the existence and characteristics of patterns of intimate partner violence. Importantly, because the data were collected from a nationally representative sample of women, they approximate the number of women in the population who experience each pattern of violence. However, identification of a group of women that likely experience repeat violent victimizations requires a relatively high prevalence rate of intimate and family violence. Further, these results provide little contextual information on the violence women experience; in other words, survey methods provide prevalence estimates but no insight into women’s lived experiences.

In contrast, qualitative analysis of narrative accounts can provide an understanding of the situational context of violent incidents. Moreover this type of analysis is helpful in determining the “necessary and sufficient” conditions for violence to occur between intimate partners. To examine these issues, I use information that women from a jail sample provided about violent experiences they may have had during a particular reference period.

The use of an incarcerated population is beneficial in two ways. First, there is a high correlation between offending and victimization (Jensen and Brownfield 1986; Sampson and Lauritsen 1990; Esbensen and Huizinga 1991; Hagan and McCarthy 1997;

Whitbeck and Simons 1990; Miller 1998). Thus, an incarcerated population is more likely to have experienced violence than women who are not offenders. Secondly, national surveys, such as the NVAWS, exclude women who are institutionalized and who do not have telephones. Therefore, the Minneapolis Women's Experiences of Violence (WEV) sample is comprised of women who might not have been included in a national sample, although they are the women who are at highest risk of repeat victimization.

The women included in this research were part of a racially diverse sample of 205 women drawn from the female population incarcerated in the Hennepin County Adult Detention Facility (Minneapolis, Minnesota).¹⁷ This facility is a short-term jail (post-sentencing) that houses both males and females in separate buildings. The narrative sample (N=96) is distinguished from the larger sample (N=205) on the basis of reports of experiencing at least one incident of intimate partner violence. Women serving straight sentences¹⁸ were invited to participate in the study based on their release date. Interviews were conducted in private rooms, away from correctional staff and other inmates. Trained interviewers¹⁹ discussed the research objectives of the study with the women and assured them that in using the data collected from them, and other women, they would be

¹⁷ These interviews are part of a larger multi-site research project on women's experiences of violence and avoided violence as both victims and offenders. Four principal investigators (Rosemary Gartner, Julie Horney, Candace Kruttschnitt, and Sally Simpson), along with representatives from the National Consortium on Violence Research (NCOVR), originally developed an instrument designed to gain understanding of the individual, situational, and community factors in women's involvement of violent activities. This computerized interview instrument was utilized in data collection at three sites (Baltimore, MD, Toronto, Canada, and Minneapolis, MN).

¹⁸ The decision was made at the Minneapolis site to only include women who were doing "straight" time. This is as opposed to those on home monitoring systems or serving their sentences only on weekends.

¹⁹ I interviewed 79 women personally and another sociology graduate student did the majority (100) of the remaining interviews.

guaranteed anonymity. After going over all procedures of the research project, women willing to participate in this study signed a consent form. For their participation, women were given a small incentive (candy bar and juice). Prior to beginning any interview, the women were assured that they could refuse to answer any questions or terminate the interview at any time.

Each interview took between one and one-half to six hours to complete; the average interview lasted approximately three hours. The interview centered on a life events calendar that included information on women's incarceration and treatment experiences, living arrangements, routine and criminal activities and intimate relationships in the 36 months before their current incarceration.²⁰ Demographic and criminal justice history information, including lifetime arrests and jail and prison terms, was also collected. Much of the focus of the interview, however, was on women's experiences with violence – physical, psychological, and sexual – both within the reference period and in childhood.

For each partner women reported during the prior 36 months (up to three), they were asked questions regarding the quality of their intimate relationships. This included a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus 1979; 1990) to ascertain whether the relationship involved acts of physical, emotional, and sexual violence within the past 36 months.²¹ In addition, women were asked to provide narrative accounts of violent incidents with

²⁰ The reference period, in this case 36 months, is artificially truncated and does not provide an evaluation of violence – or of women's entrances and exits into relationships – across the entire life course. However, these data offer very detailed information about violent encounters as well as situational characteristics that national samples like the NVAWS do not. Thus, they are useful for a preliminary examination of the antecedents and causal mechanisms in intimate partner violence, the purpose of this research.

²¹ Similar information on violent incidents involving non-partners was also collected.

partners occurring in the previous 36 months.²² A series of questions were designed to specifically describe what was meant by a violent incident, as defined by the overall research plan. They were asked whether, in the last 36 months, they had been “involved in a physical confrontation with a partner or an ex-partner in which they did or attempted to do any of these kinds of things: use a weapon, throw something that could hurt, punch or slap, choke, kick, or throw to the ground or against a wall” and also whether they were ever physically attacked when they did not fight back. These screening questions about violent incidents allowed for the possibility of incidents in which women were themselves perpetrators, even if it was in self-defense. A distinction was also made between whether the violence was an isolated incident or part of a broader series of violence and victimization.

Women were asked to provide a description of each violent incident and the interviewers attempted to capture women’s responses verbatim. It is these narratives that I use for the second part of my analyses. Only the women who provide narratives of violent incidents with an intimate partner are included; this includes all of the narratives women provided about *any* violent incident in which they were either the primary victim of the attack or used violence themselves in self-defense and the perpetrator was an intimate partner.²³ This yielded 265 narratives from 96 women.²⁴

²² Women in the sample could describe up to 19 partner incidents they may have experienced in the three years before incarceration. These 19 incidents included up to 8 incidents of actual violence, 8 incidents of “avoided” violence, and 3 “series” of violent or avoided incidents (events that were similar in nature or that could not be individually distinguished).

²³ Equally interesting are the narratives women provided about incidents in which they were the primary perpetrators, however these are beyond the scope of this research. Analysis of these can be found elsewhere (Kruttschnitt and Carbone-López 2006).

3.7 Event structure analysis

Because the narrative data are intended to supplement the analyses from the NVAWS, I first categorize women from the WEV sample into four major patterns of intimate partner violence. The first pattern includes women who move from either a non-violent intimate relationship or from no relationship into a relationship with a violent partner during the calendar period. Thus, this pattern captures “entry” into a violent relationship. The second and third patterns, in contrast, describe women who move out of a violent relationship. In the first, women may leave a violent relationship for a non-violent intimate partner. In the latter, women may exit violent relationships but remain without an intimate partner for the remainder of the study period. Finally, the fourth pattern includes women who move from one violent relationship to another; this pattern captures “violence across relationships.”

To further understand the nature of intimate partner violence within and across relationships, I use “event structure analysis” (Griffin 1993). Event structure analysis systematically allows a causal interpretation of how and why an event unfolds as it does by using information about the sequentiality of actions, the context of the situation, and any other related incidents. In most cases, the only information on the nature of reported events is a narrative itself (Labov 1997). Thus, event structure analysis is a qualitative method for understanding sequential events in a narrative account of an event or incident. It provides a means of assessing whether the logical structure explains the actual sequencing of events that take place. Causal connections between actions are then represented as a causal diagram of the logical structure of action underlying the narrative

²⁴ In deriving the total number of narratives, “series” were counted as two incidents.

of the event (Griffin 1993).

The program ETHNO (Heise 1988) conducts efficient analyses of event structures. Most importantly, the program asks all required questions concerning relationships between events and avoids asking needless questions; for example, the program does not ask if the last entered event is a prerequisite for any earlier event because it assumes that events are entered in chronological order. It elicits event structures by first asking what the next event is and then questioning how that event relates to any events entered previously. In other words, it asks whether there is a specific prior event that is *essential* for the current event. The expert entering data answers “yes” or “no” depending on whether the prior event can act as a prerequisite even if another event could serve as the prerequisite. This process continues until all events from a narrative have been entered and incorporated into the model.²⁵

In the second phase, the analyst returns to the event sequence to extract more information from the data. During what is called the “series analysis”, ETHNO determines which events, because they are events which have no specified prerequisites, can initiate a series of other events. The events that can act as “initiators” are then highlighted on the logical graph that is displayed on the computer. The program works through each recorded event by “implementing” it, revising the set of other events that are then possible, and depleting any prerequisite of the current event. In many cases, the

²⁵ Event Structure Analysis (ETHNO) has three assumptions. The first is that an event cannot occur until all of its prerequisites have occurred. Second, an event depletes its prerequisites. In other words, an event uses up the conditions which the prerequisites created. Finally, ESA assumes that an event is not repeated until the conditions that it created are used up by some other event. These assumptions guide the way in which ETHNO “draws” the logical structure of the event.

program will encounter an event that is recorded by the analyst as having happened, but which could not have happened according to the event grammar because its prerequisites have not been fulfilled or because it was accomplished previously and has not been used up by another event. ETHNO presents this problem to the analyst and offers a variety of solutions.

In using ETHNO, I first focus on the sequencing of events leading up to, during, and following the violence. These are entered into the program in chronological order to develop a logical structure of an incident. I also am interested in commonalities around a set of themes including: when and where the violence occurred, what types of physical and sexual behavior were involved, whether anyone else was present or involved, whether either victim or offender was using drugs or alcohol, what the incident was “mainly about” or what triggered it, the presence and nature of injuries, and whether law enforcement was involved. The logical structures of incidents are then compared across the various patterns of violence to look for common sequences and themes across incidents and across patterns that suggest “necessary and sufficient” conditions for intimate partner violence. If the analyses indicate that particular patterns of violence can be distinguished based upon the behaviors involved or the motivations for violence, it will further support the diversity of women’s experiences of IPV. Moreover, it may suggest that interventions and victim service agencies must adapt their strategies depending on the pattern of violence.

3.8 Concluding remarks

In the previous sections, I have outlined the two sources from which I derive the data used in these analyses. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, my objective is

to determine whether there are specific patterns of violence both within and across women's intimate relationships. Importantly, the identification of such patterns will provide information on differential risk factors for experiencing violence within a single relationship or across multiple intimate relationships. Furthermore, these analyses uncover the extent to which various patterns of IPV may have different "causal" structures and "necessary and sufficient conditions." While there is some evidence that violence is patterned within relationships (Macmillan and Gartner 1999; Carbone-Lopez, Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006; Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006), the present analyses extend this research by examining transitions between intimate relationships. Moreover, they investigate the structures of individual violent incidents and compare them within and across relationships.

In the following chapters, I present results from both sets of analyses; in the fourth chapter I provide a description of the women who comprise the national sample (NVAWS) as well as the results from the latent transition analysis. In the fifth chapter, I describe the women who comprise the jail sample and their experiences of violence as they recounted them during the interview.

CHAPTER 4 – Patterns of Intimate Partner Violence within a National Sample

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research results from analyses of the 1995-96 NVAWS. I begin with a general description of the data. Next, I determine the probability of various types of violent victimization among women in intimate relationships. The chapter then proceeds by specifying latent class assignments for two relationships (current and ex-partner) as well as the transition probabilities for patterns across those relationships. These latent trajectory assignments specify the proportion of women in the national probability sample who transition between various patterns of intimate partner violence. Importantly, they also allow an examination of the extent to which there is continuity and change in particular behaviors, or experiences, across time. Further, the analyses also indicate a variety of exogenous risk factors for the transition patterns of violence women experience.

4.2 Description of sample

As described in the first part of the previous chapter, the data used in the quantitative analyses are drawn from the 1995-96 National Violence Against Women Survey. Of the 8000 women surveyed, eighty-six percent were currently involved in a romantic relationship, either marital or cohabiting, or indicated that they had previously been involved in such a relationship; these 6,911 women comprise the sample used here (see table 4.1). These women ranged in age from 18 to 97 years old; the average age was 45.5 years old. The majority (56%) of the women were between the ages of 18 and 45. The majority (84%) of women in the sample were white, nine percent were Black or African-American, and eight percent were Asian, American Indian, or mixed races. Eight

Table 4.1 Sample descriptive statistics by relationship, NVAWS data (1995-96)

	Full sample (n=6911)	Current relationship (n=5285)		Previous relationship (n=2350)	
Personal characteristics					
Age					
18 - 20 years	0.016	0.015		0.013	
21 - 25 years	0.067	0.073		0.053	
26 - 35 years	0.226	0.251		0.195	
36 - 45 years	0.250	0.269		0.233	
46 - 55 years	0.189	0.193		0.178	
56 - 65 years	0.114	0.112		0.107	
over 65	0.138	0.087		0.222	
Mean age	45.50 (15.68)	43.36 (14.09)	*	48.90 (17.38)	*
Race					
Black	0.086	0.064	*	0.134	*
White	0.838	0.858	*	0.796	*
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.015	0.017		0.008	*
American Indian	0.011	0.011		0.012	
Mixed race	0.050	0.050		0.050	
Hispanic/Latina	0.075	0.079		0.067	*
Employment					
Employed full-time	0.461	0.472		0.469	
Employed part-time	0.128	0.143	*	0.094	*
Student	0.026	0.025		0.034	*
Other employment	0.355	0.335	*	0.361	
Unemployed	0.026	0.025	*	0.043	*
Years of education					
No schooling	0.001	0.001		0.002	
1st - 8th grades	0.032	0.024		0.045	
Some high school	0.076	0.065		0.097	
High school graduate	0.356	0.360		0.343	
Some college	0.288	0.287		0.309	
4-year college graduate	0.167	0.179		0.133	
Post-graduate study	0.079	0.084		0.071	
Mean education	4.72 (1.17)	4.78 (1.15)	*	4.60 (1.19)	*

* indicates significant differences (using 2-tailed t-tests) between relationship samples and larger analytic sample (N=6911)

Table 4.1, continued

	Total (n=6911)	Current (n=5285)		Ex-partner 1 (n=2350)	
Household income					
Less than \$5,000	0.030	0.032		0.027	
\$5 - \$10,000	0.032	0.031		0.040	
\$10 - \$15,000	0.045	0.051		0.034	
\$15 - \$20,000	0.048	0.052		0.041	
\$20 - \$25,000	0.052	0.058		0.041	
\$25 - \$35,000	0.090	0.106		0.060	
\$35 - \$50,000	0.143	0.173		0.090	
\$50 - \$80,000	0.132	0.163		0.071	
\$80 - \$100,000	0.035	0.044		0.018	
Over \$100,000	0.036	0.047		0.021	
Missing	0.358	0.244		0.556	
Mean household income	5.98 (2.28)	6.12 (2.24)	*	5.51 (2.39)	*
Poverty proxy					
Lost phone service	0.036	0.032		0.050	*
Marital status					
Married	0.692	0.904	*	0.215	*
Common-law	0.005	0.006		0.004	
Divorced	0.116	0.032	*	0.342	*
Separated	0.025	0.003	*	0.074	*
Widowed	0.093	0.004	*	0.274	*
Single, never married	0.069	0.050	*	0.092	*
Parenthood	0.818	0.824		0.808	*
Mean number children	2.54 (1.38)	2.50 (1.31)	*	2.58 (1.49)	*
Childhood victimization					
No victimization	0.755	0.760		0.703	*
Physical assault	0.187	0.185		0.215	*
Child abuse	0.041	0.040		0.062	*

* indicates significant differences (using 2-tailed t-tests) between relationship samples and larger analytic sample (N=6911)

percent self-identified as Hispanic or Latina. In comparison to the overall United States population, the NVAWS sample is slightly more likely to be white (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000).

Nearly half (46%) were employed full-time and another 13% were part-time employed. The majority (89%) of women in the sample were graduates of high school, 29% had some college, 17% were college graduates, and 8% reported post-graduate study. Nearly one quarter (21%) of the women in the sample reported household incomes of less than \$25,000. Four percent of women had been without telephone service for more than one week during the previous year, a proxy for poverty. Nearly three quarters (70%) of the women in the entire sample were currently married or reported a common-law marriage; 12% were divorced, 3% were separated, 9% were widowed, and 7% reported that they were single and never married. The majority (82%) of the women indicated that they were parents; they reported an average of 2.5 children. Again, in comparison to U.S. population characteristics, women from the NVAWS sample are somewhat wealthier and also more likely to be currently married (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000) but overall provide a fairly representative sample.²⁶

Previous work with the NVAWS suggests three categories of physical violence for parent-child relationships (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006). These include a category that has no probability of experiencing any form of physical violence, a category

²⁶ The United States Census indicates only whether respondents are legally married and does not account for those living in cohabiting relationships. Thus, while a direct comparison of marital status between the NVAWS and the U.S. Census suggests that women in the NVAWS are much more likely to be married and much less likely to be single and never married, it may be due, at least in part, to differences in how cohabiting relationships were coded by the two agencies.

of what they describe as “physical aggression” that is characterized by relatively less severe physical violence, and a final category of “abuse” that involved more severe, systematic and multi-faceted types of violence. Among the women in the sample, the majority (76%) reported essentially no violence by their parents or caregivers and 19% experienced physical aggression as children. A small proportion of the sample (4%) reported abuse in their family of origin; these women experienced high probabilities of multiple types of violence in childhood as well as a higher likelihood of the more serious forms of violence including the use of weapons.

A. Current relationships

Three quarters of the sample (N=5,285) were currently involved in an intimate relationship, either marital or cohabiting. I conducted t-tests to determine whether there were significant differences between the full sample (N=6,911) and women who were currently involved in relationships. In some cases there were differences and these are also shown in table 4.1. They were, on average, slightly younger than the larger sample (mean age 43 years). Again the majority of women in current relationships were white (83%), eight percent were Asian, American Indian, or mixed races, and eight percent self-identified as Hispanic or Latina. They were significantly less likely to be Black or African American (6%). Nearly half (47%) were employed full-time and 14% reported part-time employment. They were significantly more educated than the larger sample; the majority (91%) had graduated high school, 18% had 4-year college degrees and 8% reported that they had completed a post-graduate degree. Not surprisingly, women who were currently in relationships reported higher household incomes; one-quarter reported

annual household incomes greater than \$50,000. Nearly half (47%) of them were employed full-time and significantly more (14%) were employed part-time.

Significantly more women (91%) in current relationships were married or in a common-law marriage; 3% were divorced, less than 1% were separated or widowed, and 5% reported their marital status as single, never married. Again the majority (82%) of women reported being a parent with an average of 2.5 children. Women involved in current relationships did not report significantly more violence in their families of origin. Again, the majority (76%) reported essentially no violence by their parents or caregivers, while 19% indicated they had experienced physical aggression. A small percent of women (4%) had experienced abuse in childhood.

B. Previous relationships

One third (N=2,350) of the sample reported that they had been involved in a previous intimate relationship. They were, on average, significantly older than the larger sample (mean age 48.9 years). Women who reported ex-partners were also significantly less likely to be white than the larger sample (80%) and were more likely to be Black or African American (13%) than the entire sample. As with women in current intimate relationships, seven percent of this sub-sample were Asian, American Indian, or of mixed races, and seven percent self-identified as Hispanic or Latina. In terms of employment, nearly half (47%) of women who had ex-partners were employed full-time; significantly fewer women (9%) with previous partners reported part-time employment compared to the full sample. Women involved in previous intimate relationships reported significantly lower household incomes; 18% reported annual household incomes of \$25,000 or less.

Significantly fewer women with previous partners were currently married (22% versus 69%). In contrast, women with ex-relationships were significantly more likely to be divorced (34%), separated (7%), and widowed (27%). Yet these women were also more likely to report their relationship status as “single, never married” (9%). In terms of parenthood, women with previous relationships were slightly less likely to report having children; however, those women who had children reported slightly larger families (an average of 2.6 children).

Interestingly, women with a previous intimate relationship experienced significantly more violence in childhood; there is also evidence of this in the work of Cherlin and colleagues (2004). While the majority (70%) reported no violence by their parents or caretakers, more than one-fifth of women (22%) experienced physical aggression in childhood and six percent reported that they had been victims of abuse in childhood. Overall, women with previous intimate relationships are differentiated from the analytic sample in terms of their current relationship status – they are less likely to be married at the time of data collection– and their experiences with childhood physical violence.

4.3 Violence by relationship type

The proportion of women experiencing violence in a current relationship was relatively low (see table 4.2). Recall that estimates of women’s *lifetime* experiences of intimate partner violence using the same data were reported to be 22.1% (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). In comparison, the number of women reporting violence in *current* relationships was much lower and decreased as the severity of such violence increased. Just over five and a half percent of women reported low level physical violence by a

Table 4.2 Violence indicators by relationship, NVAWS data (1995-96)

	Current relationship (n=5285)	Previous relationship (n=2350)
Verbal aggression	1622 30.69%	347 14.77%
Power and control	927 17.54%	288 12.26%
Low-level physical violence	298 5.64%	692 29.47%
Moderate physical violence	107 2.02%	353 15.02%
Severe physical violence	340 6.43%	556 23.66%
Rape/sexual assault	12 0.23%	149 6.34%
Stalking	19 0.36%	170 7.23%

current intimate partner – including pushing, hair pulling, and slapping. Only two percent of women reported moderate level physical violence and six percent reported more severe physical violence in current relationships, including choking or attempted drowning, being beat up, or the use of weapons.²⁷ Sexual assault and stalking were also rarely reported. Less than one percent of women reported either by a current partner. In contrast, women were moderately likely to report non-physical violence in their current relationships; nearly one-third (31%) of women experienced verbal aggression – such as swearing or name-calling – and one-fifth (18%) reported the use of coercive control tactics by their current partner such as preventing access to family income or trying to limit their contact with others.

In general, previous relationships were more violent than those women were in currently. Thirty percent of women who had a previous relationship reported low-level physical violence, fifteen percent of women reported moderate physical violence, and nearly one-quarter (24%) of those women who had been involved in previous relationships reported that their first ex-partner choked or attempted to drown them, beat them up, or threatened them with or used a knife, gun or other weapon on them. Sexual assault and stalking were also more common among previous relationships, relative to current relationships. Six percent of women with a previous relationship were sexually assaulted by their ex-partner and seven percent of women who had a previous relationship reported stalking. Interestingly, the same results do not apply to the

²⁷ The fact that greater proportions of women reported “severe” as opposed to “moderate” physical violence is likely accounted for almost entirely by the number of women who reported that their partner had “beat them up.” (See Table 3.1). Of all the behaviors included in the survey, this is likely the most subjective and ultimately women’s responses depended on their interpretation of being “beaten up.”

indicators of verbal aggression and coercive control. Fifteen percent of women who had been in previous intimate relationships reported verbal aggression and twelve percent reported coercive control by their most recent previous partner. Because the previous relationship could be any number of years prior to the time of data collection, perhaps the physical violence items were more salient and women remembered them in more detail.

4.4 Results from the latent class analysis

For both latent class models – current partner and ex-partner – one class was assigned. This class is comprised of women who did not report a particular type of relationship. The assignment of this first class allowed me to include my entire sample in the analyses rather than select based on whether women had experienced a particular type of relationship. I also specified the models such that the subsequent classes included only women who reported a particular relationship.

To determine the optimal number of latent classes for each relationship, I used the BIC statistic, discussed in the previous chapter. Table 4.3 provides a comparison of the BIC statistics for various models beginning with a model in which there are two categories (or classes) of current partner violence and two classes of ex-partner violence. These goodness of fit statistics are computed for models with varying thresholds; the larger threshold values approach infinity. In general, lower BIC statistics and larger threshold values indicate a better fit for the data. These goodness of fit tests suggested that the best-fitting model was one that included four unique categories of violence within current relationships and four unique categories of violence with previous intimate partners (BIC = 44087.81).

Table 4.3 Comparison of BIC statistics from LC analysis

Number of Latent Classes		Threshold Values			
Ex-partner	Current partner	+7	+8	+9	+10
2	2	43624.41	44192.80	44787.12	45378.80
2	3	44301.04	44977.17	45660.88	46342.42
2	4	43608.21	44258.42	44930.01	45586.41
2	5	43546.80	44192.07	44855.23	*
3	2	45279.09	45934.28	46605.13	47278.64
3	3	42317.92	42923.16	43584.40	44254.37
3	4	42179.70	42928.24	43411.49	44207.95
3	5	42348.67	42973.41	*	44297.96
4	2	44473.07	45128.84	45803.29	46486.90
4	3	42195.17	42825.32	43583.43	44254.12
4	4	42311.19	42789.60	43446.58	44087.81
4	5	42462.77	43079.63	43736.99	44418.04
5	2	44301.39	44992.87	45597.36	46281.08
5	3	42254.41	42897.06	43595.26	44266.23
5	4	*	43062.93	43710.31	44376.83
5	5	42942.16	43570.57	*	*

* indicates models that did not converge

A. Ex-partner relationships

Conditional probabilities of experiencing particular types of violence within a relationship can be found in Table 4.4. Beginning with the latent class categories of violence for a previous relationship, recall that the first class was assigned. This class is the largest class, comprising the majority of the sample (.6335), and describes women in the sample who did not report a previous partner.

The second largest class (class II) describes just under one-quarter of the sample (.2425). Women in this class have overall low probabilities of experiencing various forms of violence. The risk of experiencing low-level physical violence (including being slapped, pushed, grabbed or shoved, or of having hair pulled) among these women is highest comparatively (.1911); the likelihoods for both moderate-level and more severe physical violence are lower (.1069 and .1535, respectively). The likelihoods of sexual assault and stalking were also lower (.0451 and .0596) as were the risks of both verbal aggression and coercive control (.0756 and .0573). Overall, then it seems that this class is characteristic of very *low-level physical violence* within previous relationships.

In contrast, a third class of violence involves elevated likelihoods of physical violence, but lower risks of non-physical violence, including verbal aggression and coercive control. Among women in this class, the risks of physical violence range from (.1849) for moderate-level physical assault to (.3379) for low-level physical assault. The likelihood of either sexual assault (.0667) or stalking (.0650) is lower, as are the risks of verbal aggression (.1289) and coercive control (.0907). This pattern characterizes just over nine percent of the sample (.0919) and, because the violence is generally confined to physical violence, I define it as *physical assault* within previous relationships.

Table 4.4 Conditional probabilities of membership in classes of violence

	Class I No previous relationship	Class II Very low-level physical violence	Class III Physical assault	Class IV Systematic abuse
	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>
Ex-partner	0.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Verbal aggression	0.0000	0.0756	0.1289	0.6106
Coercive control	0.0000	0.0573	0.0907	0.6062
Low physical violence	0.0000	0.1911	0.3379	0.4582
Moderate physical violence	0.0000	0.1069	0.1849	0.2376
Severe physical violence	0.0000	0.1535	0.2943	0.4231
Sexual assault	0.0000	0.0451	0.0667	0.0986
Stalking	0.0000	0.0596	0.0650	0.0916
<i>LC probabilities</i>	0.6335	0.2425	0.0919	0.0321

	Class I No current relationship	Class II No violence	Class III Non-physical violence	Class IV Systematic abuse
	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>	<i>Cprob</i>
Current partner	0.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Verbal aggression	0.0000	0.0556	0.7859	0.6404
Coercive control	0.0000	0.1210	0.2261	0.4390
Low physical violence	0.0000	0.0096	0.0288	0.5846
Moderate physical violence	0.0000	0.0042	0.0105	0.2011
Severe physical violence	0.0000	0.0135	0.0288	0.6383
Sexual assault	0.0000	0.0003	0.0007	0.0217
Stalking	0.0000	0.0000	0.0053	0.0240
<i>LC probabilities</i>	0.2281	0.4979	0.2191	0.0549

A final class of violence (class IV) includes a much smaller proportion of the sample (.0321) and they report more multifaceted experiences of violence. Women in this class report elevated likelihoods of physical assault; the risks of low-level physical violence (including being slapped, pushed, grabbed or shoved, or of having hair pulled) and more severe physical violence are high (.4582 and .4231, respectively) and the risk of moderately severe physical violence is also comparatively high (.2376). Importantly, these women also have elevated risks of sexual assault (.0986) and stalking (.0916) as well as verbal aggression (.6106) and coercive control (.6062) within a previous intimate relationship. The combined probabilities for multiple types of violence suggest a combination of different violent acts and make this group distinct. However, only a small proportion of the NVAWS sample can be categorized into this pattern, what I refer to as *systematic abuse* within previous relationships.

B. Current partner relationships

Current relationships are also characterized by four patterns of violence. Again, women in the sample who were not currently involved in an intimate relationship were assigned to the first class. This describes less than one-quarter of the sample (.2281). A second larger class involves a relatively low probability of experiencing any form of violence within a current relationship. All of the probabilities are less than .13 and all but one are less than .06. These women have very low probabilities of physical violence; there is very little risk of low-level physical violence (.0096), moderate-level physical violence (.0042), or more severe physical violence (.0135). The risk of sexual assault or stalking are negligible and even for verbal aggression and coercive control, the likelihoods are low (.0556 and .1210, respectively). Characterizing nearly one-half

(.4979) of the sample, I call this pattern essentially *no violence* within current relationships.

A third class of violence within current relationships involves elevated risks of non-physical violence and much lower risks of physical violence. The likelihoods of physical violence range from .01 to .03 and are even lower for sexual assault (.0007) and stalking (.0053). In contrast, the likelihood of verbal aggression is quite high (.7859) as is, to a lesser extent, the risk of coercive control (.2261). This pattern characterizes nearly one-quarter of the sample (.2191) and is defined mainly by its high likelihood of verbal aggression. Thus, I call this pattern *non-physical violence* within current relationships.

The last pattern of violence (class IV) for current partners is more multifaceted and characterizes just over five percent of the sample (.0549). These women have high likelihoods of physical violence; the risk of low level (including being slapped, pushed, grabbed or shoved, or of having hair pulled), moderate (thrown objects, hitting with an object and kicking or biting), and severe violence (threatened or attacked with a weapon or being beaten up) are high (.5846, .2011, and .6383). Women in this class also have higher likelihoods of verbal aggression (.6404) and coercive control (.4390), but lower risks of sexual assault (.0217) and stalking (.0240). The nature of these probabilities suggests that this pattern, while involving both physical violence and the emotional forms of violence (verbal aggression and coercive control), does not involve much risk of sexual assault or stalking. Nevertheless, because women in this category experience multifaceted violence, this pattern typifies *systematic abuse* within current relationships.

4.5 Latent transition analyses

The next stage of the analysis was to identify unique transitions of violence (as described in the previous chapter) between intimate relationships using finite mixture regression models. First, I examined unconditional latent transition models to determine the effect of membership in a particular category of violence with previous partners on membership in categories of violence within current relationships. Thus, I obtained an estimate of the transitions between previous and current intimate relationships. Next, I examined the influence of various background characteristics. Analysis of these models was carried out using maximum-likelihood estimation with the EM (Expectation Maximization) algorithm (Muthen and Muthen 1998-2006).

A. Unconditional model

In the following, I present the results of the multinomial logistic regression models that estimate the likelihood of transitioning into and out of violent intimate relationships in a series of steps. In the unconditional model, without covariates, the omitted category for previous relationships is *low-level violence* (class II, ex-partners) and the omitted category for current relationships is *no violence* (class II, current partners). A number of significant effects can be seen in Table 4.5. First, however, there is no significant effect for women moving from a previous relationship involving physical assault either to no current relationship ($\beta_3 = -0.621$, NS) or to a relationship involving systematic abuse ($\beta_6 = -0.440$, NS). And, because of the way in which the sample was selected (women included must have reported either a previous or current relationship), the effect on moving from no previous to no current partner is constrained to zero ($\beta_1 = -34.019$).

Table 4.5 Unconditional model, predicting transitions from previous to current partners

		Model A		
		b	SE	
<i>Intercepts</i>				
<i>Previous relationships</i>				
No previous partner		0.960	0.031	
Systematic abuse		-2.023	0.077	
Physical assault		-0.970	0.059	
[omitted category = Low-level violence]				
<i>Current relationships</i>				
No current partner		1.566	0.070	
Systematic abuse		-1.339	0.217	
Non-physical violence		-2.291	0.387	
[omitted category = No violence]				
<i>Transitions</i>				
No previous to no current partner	$\beta 1$	-34.019	0.000	
Systematic abuse (ex) to no current partner	$\beta 2$	-0.788	0.228	*
Physical assault (ex) to no current partner	$\beta 3$	-0.621	0.238	
No previous to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 4$	-1.256	0.228	*
Systematic abuse (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 5$	1.986	0.317	*
Physical assault (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 6$	-0.440	0.375	
No previous to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 7$	1.262	0.388	*
Systematic abuse (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 8$	2.504	0.459	*
Physical assault (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 9$	3.818	0.450	*

* indicates significant effect

In contrast, there is a significant effect of membership in the systematic abuse category of previous partner violence on transitioning out of relationships altogether; systematic abuse in a previous relationship reduces the odds of transitioning out of relationships by 54% ($\beta_2 = -0.788$; $\exp(\beta_2) = 0.455$). Having no previous relationship also decreases the odds of experiencing systematic abuse within a current relationship by 71% ($\beta_4 = -1.256$; $\exp(\beta_4) = 0.285$). In contrast, there is a large positive effect of experiencing systemic abuse in a previous relationship on transitioning into systematic abuse within a current relationship; systematic abuse in a former relationship increases the odds of experiencing systematic abuse in a current relationship by 629% ($\beta_5 = 1.986$; $\exp(\beta_5) = 7.286$).

Relative to membership in the excluded category of no violence in the previous relationship, the effect of having no previous partner and as experiencing physical assault or systematic abuse by an ex-partner all increase the odds of experiencing non-physical violence within current relationships. Compared with women who experienced low-level violence within their past relationship, those women who did not have a previous relationship were 253% more likely to report non-physical violence with their current partner ($\beta_7 = 1.262$; $\exp(\beta_7) = 3.532$). Women who experienced systematic abuse within a previous relationship were 1123% more likely to transition into a current relationship involving non-physical violence ($\beta_8 = 2.504$; $\exp(\beta_8) = 12.231$). Finally, women moving out of previous relationships involving physical assault were 4451% more likely to report non-physical violence within their current relationship ($\beta_9 = 3.818$; $\exp(\beta_9) = 45.513$).

B. Transition probabilities

Table 4.6 presents probabilities that describe the likelihood of transitioning into each category of current partner violence based on the unconditional model. The probabilities are calculated such that each row sums to one; in other words, they express the proportion of women within a particular category of violence in a previous relationship who move into each class of violence for current partners. Women who report no previous relationship have the greatest likelihood of being involved in a relationship that is non-violent (.6983). They are less likely to be involved in either a current relationship that involves non-physical violence (.2496) or one that involves systematic abuse (.0521). In contrast, women who move from a previous intimate relationship that involved low-level physical violence are most likely to report no current relationship (.7784); in other words, these women are leaving relationships that involve some degree of violence and then are remaining single, at least for a period of time. At the same time, women leaving relationships involving low levels of violence are less likely to move into non-violent relationships (.1626) or relationships involving systematic abuse (.0426) or non-physical assault (.0164). Thus, the transition probabilities suggest that women who experience only one relationship are largely in non-violent relationships and women who experienced low-level violence in a previous relationship move out of relationships altogether.

Women who report more extensive or multifaceted physical violence within their previous relationships have somewhat different transition probabilities. Those who move from relationships that involve physical assault have the greatest likelihood of becoming involved in a subsequent relationship that involves non-physical violence (.5517). They

Table 4.6 Transition probabilities, movement from previous to current relationships

Previous relationships	Current relationships			
	No relationship	Systematic abuse	Non-physical	No violence
No relationship	0.0000	0.0521	0.2496	0.6983
Systematic abuse	0.3442	0.3020	0.1957	0.1581
Physical assault	0.3083	0.0202	0.5517	0.1198
Low-level physical violence	0.7784	0.0426	0.0164	0.1626

are less likely to move out of relationships altogether (.3083) or to move into relationships that do not involve violence (.1198) and have a very low probability of moving into a relationship that is characterized by systematic violence (.0202). On the other hand, women who report systematic violence in a previous relationship have nearly equal probabilities of moving out of relationships (.3442) or of experiencing systematic abuse by their current partner as well (.3020). And they are somewhat less likely to move from relationships with systematic violence to relationships characterized by non-physical violence (.1957) or by no violence (.1581).

Thus, there is some evidence for what might be considered a “normative” progression of events in the life course; individuals are expected to move from being single into a relationship that is, by definition, non-violent. Women in this sample who do not have previous partners are more likely to be involved in non-violent relationships. In contrast, women who experience violence in a previous relationship, whether physical assault or systematic abuse, are somewhat more likely to report some degree of violence within a current intimate relationship. This provides some evidence for stability in violence across relationships in that women move from violence into violence. Finally, there is also evidence for change in that women who experience low-level physical violence within a previous relationship (and to some degree, women who experience systematic abuse) are more likely to report no current relationship. In other words, they move from a violent relationship out of relationships. Whether these women have “withdrawn from having relationships with men” and are thus eschewing relationships altogether or whether they have simply not entered into another relationship since leaving their previous partner, they are leaving one violent relationship behind. However, while

these transition probabilities describe various patterns of violence across relationships, they provide no information on what characteristics influence women's likelihood of transitioning into or out of violence or relationships.

C. Regression models including covariates

To determine the risk factors for experiencing various patterns of violence, I also examined the way in which women's personal characteristics influenced their transitions across relationships. Thus, a second multinomial logistic regression model includes the effects of age, years of education, and being white on group membership for current partner. A third model includes childhood physical abuse to determine whether early experiences with violence have any significant effect on women's transitions into and out of violent relationships as adults; equally important is whether the effect of early violence diminishes the effect of any other covariate. The final model includes all of the covariates and main effects from group membership for previous partner as well as household income. I include household income to test for a potential moderating effect between experiences of intimate partner violence with a previous partner and those with a current partner. As with the results from the unconditional model, in all cases, I highlight the significant effects and provide the calculated effect on odds for transitions from specific categories of violence within previous relationships to categories within current relationships.

In the second regression model, I control for a set of exogenous factors including age, level of education, and race (Table 4.7). I begin the description of results by reporting the transition effects and how they differ from the unconditional model. Controlling for background characteristics, there is no longer a significant effect of

Table 4.7 Multinomial logistic regression model with covariates (Model B)*Intercepts**Previous relationships*

	b	SE
No previous partner	1.476	0.170
Systematic abuse	0.888	0.268
Physical assault	-0.343	0.383
[omitted category = Low-level violence]		

Current relationships

No current partner	0.778	0.296
Systematic abuse	1.049	0.284
Non-physical violence	0.516	0.351
[omitted category = No violence]		

Transitions

No previous to no current partner	β_1	-32.536	0.000	
Systematic abuse (ex) to no current partner	β_2	-1.606	0.145	*
Physical assault (ex) to no current partner	β_3	-0.529	0.214	
No previous to systematic abuse (current)	β_4	0.045	0.244	
Systematic abuse (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	β_5	-1.102	0.295	*
Physical assault (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	β_6	-0.030	0.394	
No previous to non-physical violence (current)	β_7	-0.971	0.292	*
Systematic abuse (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	β_8	-1.189	0.367	*
Physical assault (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	β_9	1.454	0.353	*

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

Table 4.7, continued

<i>Covariates</i>		b	SE	
No previous partner on white	$\gamma 1$	0.615	0.078	*
No previous partner on education	$\gamma 2$	0.050	0.026	
No previous partner on age	$\gamma 3$	-0.028	0.002	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on white	$\gamma 4$	0.368	0.143	
Systematic abuse (ex) on education	$\gamma 5$	-0.155	0.044	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on age	$\gamma 6$	0.368	0.143	
Physical assault (ex) on white	$\gamma 7$	-0.169	0.183	
Physical assault (ex) on education	$\gamma 8$	-0.161	0.061	
Physical assault (ex) on age	$\gamma 9$	-0.020	0.005	*
No current partner on white	$\gamma 10$	-0.920	0.134	*
No current partner on education	$\gamma 11$	-0.140	0.042	*
No current partner on age	$\gamma 12$	0.039	0.003	*
Systematic abuse (current) on white	$\gamma 13$	-0.918	0.114	*
Systematic abuse (current) on education	$\gamma 14$	-0.295	0.042	*
Systematic abuse (current) on age	$\gamma 15$	-0.013	0.003	*
Non-physical violence (current) on white	$\gamma 16$	-0.784	0.154	*
Non-physical violence (current) on education	$\gamma 17$	-0.165	0.056	
Non-physical violence (current) on age	$\gamma 18$	-0.019	0.004	*

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

having no previous partner on experiencing systematic abuse in a current relationship ($\beta_4 = 0.045$, NS). At the same time, there is no significant effect on women moving from a previous relationship involving physical assault to either no current relationship ($\beta_3 = -0.529$, NS) or a relationship that involves systematic abuse ($\beta_6 = -0.030$, NS). The other significant effects from the unconditional model remain significant; however three of these effects are in the opposite direction.

As in the previous model, experiencing systematic abuse with an ex-partner significantly decreases the odds of having no current relationship by 80% ($\beta_2 = -1.606$; $\exp(\beta_2) = 0.201$). In contrast, controlling for background characteristics, experiencing systematic abuse in a previous relationship unexpectedly decreases the odds of systematic abuse in a current relationship by 67% ($\beta_5 = -1.102$; $\exp(\beta_5) = 0.332$). Women who have no previous relationship are 62% less likely to experience non-physical violence within a current relationship ($\beta_7 = -0.971$; $\exp(\beta_7) = 0.379$). And, unlike the unconditional model, women who experience systematic violence within a previous relationship are 69% *less* likely to move into a current relationship involving non-physical violence ($\beta_8 = -1.189$; $\exp(\beta_8) = 0.305$). Finally, women with previous relationships that involved physical assault are 380% more likely to report non-physical violence within a current relationship ($\beta_9 = 1.454$; $\exp(\beta_9) = 4.280$).

Examining the effects of the covariates on class membership for both previous and current partners, being white has a significant effect only on having no previous relationship; white women are 85% more likely to report no previous partner ($\gamma_1 = 0.615$; $\exp(\gamma_1) = 1.850$). White women are not significantly more likely to have experienced either systematic abuse ($\gamma_4 = 0.368$, NS) or physical assault within a previous relationship

($\gamma_7 = -0.169$, NS). In contrast, being white has significant negative effects on membership in all categories of violence for current relationships, relative to experiencing no violence within a current relationship. White women are less likely to have no current partner or to experience violence within their current relationship. Being white decreases the odds of having no current partner by 60% ($\gamma_{10} = -0.920$; $\exp(\gamma_{10}) = 0.399$), decreases the odds of systematic abuse by a current partner by 60% ($\gamma_{13} = -0.918$; $\exp(\gamma_{13}) = 0.399$) and decreases the odds of non-physical abuse in a current relationship by 54% ($\gamma_{16} = -0.784$; $\exp(\gamma_{16}) = 0.457$).

Education also has a significant negative effect on experiencing systematic abuse within an earlier relationship as each progressive level of schooling reduces the odds of this by 14% ($\gamma_5 = -0.155$; $\exp(\gamma_5) = 0.856$). Education does not have a significant effect on having no previous relationship ($\gamma_2 = 0.050$, NS) or on experiencing physical assault within a previous relationship ($\gamma_8 = -0.161$, NS). Education has significant effects for current relationships as well. It has a negative effect on both having no current partner and on experiencing systematic abuse within a current relationship; each increase in level of education decreases the likelihood of having no current partner by 13% ($\gamma_{11} = -0.140$; $\exp(\gamma_{11}) = 0.869$) and the likelihood of systematic abuse by a current partner by 25% ($\gamma_{14} = -0.295$; $\exp(\gamma_{14}) = 0.745$). In contrast, education does not significantly influence a woman's likelihood of non-physical violence within a current relationship ($\gamma_{17} = -0.165$, NS).

Finally, age has significant effects on membership for both previous and current relationships. For each year of age, the odds of having no previous partner are reduced by 3% ($\gamma_3 = -0.028$; $\exp(\gamma_3) = 0.972$). In other words, older women are significantly more

likely to have had previous relationships. Likewise, age has a significant negative effect on experiencing physical assault within a previous relationship ($\gamma_9 = -0.020$; $\exp(\gamma_9) = 0.980$); each year of age decreases the odds of physical assault by a previous partner by 2%. Age has no significant effect on women's likelihood of systematic abuse within a previous relationship ($\gamma_6 = 0.368$, NS). In terms of current relationships, age has a significant positive effect on having no current partner but significant negative effects on experiencing either emotional or systematic abuse within a current relationship. For each year of age, the odds of having no current partner increase by 4% ($\gamma_{12} = 0.039$; $\exp(\gamma_{12}) = 1.040$), but decrease by 1% for systematic abuse ($\gamma_{15} = -0.013$; $\exp(\gamma_{15}) = 0.987$) and by 2% for non-physical violence ($\gamma_{18} = -0.019$; $\exp(\gamma_{18}) = 0.981$) by a current partner.

The next model in Table 4.8 describes transitions between previous and current relationships when childhood victimization is also included as a covariate. As in the previous model, there are a number of non-significant main effects. Controlling for age, race, education, and childhood violence, women are not significantly likely to transition from a previous relationship involving physical assault out of intimate relationships ($\beta_3 = -0.736$, NS). At the same time, there is no significant effect on moving from no previous relationship into a current relationship involving systematic abuse ($\beta_4 = 0.467$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\beta_7 = -1.172$, NS). Nor are there any significant effects on transitions from previous relationships involving systematic abuse to subsequent relationships involving either systematic abuse ($\beta_5 = -0.541$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\beta_8 = -2.155$, NS) or from previous relationships characterized by physical assault to current relationships involving systematic abuse ($\beta_6 = 0.353$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\beta_9 = -1.264$, NS). The only significant effect, controlling for these covariates, is

Table 4.8 Multinomial logistic regression model with covariates (Model C)

<i>Intercepts</i>			
<i>Previous relationships</i>			
	b	SE	
No previous partner	1.926	0.192	
Systematic abuse	0.217	0.316	
Physical assault	-2.079	0.469	
[omitted category = Low-level violence]			
<i>Current relationships</i>			
No current partner	0.939	0.344	
Systematic abuse	0.278	0.835	
Non-physical violence	-0.554	0.599	
[omitted category = No violence]			
<i>Transitions</i>			
No previous to no current partner	$\beta 1$	-32.542	0.000
Systematic abuse (ex) to no current partner	$\beta 2$	-1.673	0.168 *
Physical assault (ex) to no current partner	$\beta 3$	-0.736	0.293
No previous to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 4$	0.467	0.999
Systematic abuse (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 5$	-0.541	1.026
Physical assault (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	$\beta 6$	0.353	0.905
No previous to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 7$	-1.172	1.134
Systematic abuse (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 8$	-2.155	1.168
Physical assault (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	$\beta 9$	-1.264	1.332

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

Table 4.8, continued

<i>Covariates</i>		b	SE	
No previous partner on white	γ_1	0.638	0.079	*
No previous partner on education	γ_2	0.046	0.026	
No previous partner on age	γ_3	-0.030	0.002	*
No previous partner on CH victimization	γ_4	-0.312	0.060	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on white	γ_5	0.218	0.139	
Systematic abuse (ex) on education	γ_6	-0.145	0.044	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on age	γ_7	-0.035	0.004	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on CH victimization	γ_8	0.479	0.091	*
Physical assault (ex) on white	γ_9	0.037	0.205	
Physical assault (ex) on education	γ_{10}	-0.232	0.069	*
Physical assault (ex) on age	γ_{11}	-0.011	0.005	
Physical assault (ex) on CH victimization	γ_{12}	0.972	0.116	*
No current partner on white	γ_{13}	-1.030	0.142	*
No current partner on education	γ_{14}	-0.136	0.044	
No current partner on age	γ_{15}	0.038	0.003	*
No current partner on CH victimization	γ_{16}	0.012	0.146	
Systematic abuse (current) on white	γ_{17}	-0.976	0.165	*
Systematic abuse (current) on education	γ_{18}	-0.295	0.045	*
Systematic abuse (current) on age	γ_{19}	-0.013	0.006	
Systematic abuse (current) on CH victimization	γ_{20}	0.619	0.111	*
Non-physical violence (current) on white	γ_{21}	-0.908	0.264	*
Non-physical violence (current) on education	γ_{22}	-0.252	0.097	
Non-physical violence (current) on age	γ_{23}	-0.012	0.011	
Non-physical violence (current) on CH victimization	γ_{24}	1.176	0.113	*

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

that systematic abuse in a previous relationship reduces the odds of a woman being involved in no intimate relationship (in other words, being single) at the time of data collection by 81% ($\beta_2 = -1.673$; $\exp(\beta_2) = 0.188$). Thus, even controlling for race, education, age, and childhood experiences of abuse, women who experience systematic abuse with a previous partner are much more likely to become involved in another relationship.

In this model, being white significantly increases women's likelihood of having no previous partner by 89% ($\gamma_1 = 0.638$; $\exp(\gamma_1) = 1.893$) but reduces the odds of having no current intimate relationship by 64% ($\gamma_{13} = -1.030$; $\exp(\gamma_{13}) = 0.357$). There are no significant effects for white women in terms of their membership in previous relationships involving either systematic abuse ($\gamma_5 = 0.218$, NS) or physical assault ($\gamma_9 = 0.037$, NS). In contrast, white women are significantly less likely to be involved in current relationships involving systematic abuse or non-physical violence; relative to those relationships involving no violence, white women are 62% less likely to report systematic abuse ($\gamma_{17} = -0.976$; $\exp(\gamma_{17}) = 0.377$) and 60% less likely to report non-physical violence ($\gamma_{21} = -0.908$; $\exp(\gamma_{21}) = 0.403$) in their current relationships.

Education does not significantly influence women's likelihood of having no previous relationship ($\gamma_2 = 0.046$, NS) nor does it influence their likelihood of having no current relationship ($\gamma_{14} = -0.136$, NS). Additionally, level of education does not influence a woman's likelihood of experiencing non-physical violence within a current relationship ($\gamma_{22} = -0.252$, NS). In contrast, education does influence the likelihood of involvement in violent previous relationships. Each level of education reduces the likelihood of experiencing systematic abuse by 13% ($\gamma_6 = -0.145$; $\exp(\gamma_6) = 0.865$) and of physical

assault by 21% ($\gamma_{10} = -0.232$; $\exp(\gamma_{10}) = 0.793$) within a previous relationship. Education also significantly decreases a woman's likelihood of experiencing systematic abuse within her current relationship by 25% ($\gamma_{18} = -0.295$; $\exp(\gamma_{18}) = 0.745$).

Age significantly decreases a woman's likelihood of having no previous partner; each year of age reduces a woman's odds of having no earlier relationships by 3% ($\gamma_3 = -0.030$; $\exp(\gamma_3) = 0.970$). And each year of age increases a woman's likelihood of having no current partner by 4% ($\gamma_{15} = 0.038$; $\exp(\gamma_{15}) = 1.039$). At the same time, a woman's age has a significant negative effect on her likelihood of having experienced systematic abuse within a previous relationship; each year reduces a woman's odds of systematic abuse by 3% ($\gamma_7 = -0.035$; $\exp(\gamma_7) = 0.966$). However, age has no significant influence on a woman's likelihood of physical assault within a previous relationship ($\gamma_{11} = -0.011$, NS), or on her likelihood of either systematic abuse ($\gamma_{19} = -0.013$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\gamma_{23} = -0.012$, NS) within a current relationship.

Finally, relative to experiencing low-level violence within a previous relationship, childhood victimization has a significant effect on membership in all other categories of ex-partner violence. Increasing levels of physical violence in childhood reduce the odds of having no previous relationship by 27% ($\gamma_4 = -0.312$; $\exp(\gamma_4) = 0.732$) but increase the odds of experiencing systematic abuse by 61% ($\gamma_8 = 0.479$; $\exp(\gamma_8) = 1.614$) and of physical assault by 164% ($\gamma_{12} = 0.972$; $\exp(\gamma_{12}) = 2.643$) within previous intimate relationships. Childhood victimization also has significant effects on violence within current relationships; increasing levels of physical violence experienced as a child increase the odds of systematic abuse by 86% ($\gamma_{20} = 0.619$; $\exp(\gamma_{20}) = 1.857$) and the odds of non-physical violence within current relationships by 224% ($\gamma_{24} = 1.176$; $\exp(\gamma_{24}) =$

3.241). However, childhood experiences have no significant influence on whether a woman has a current relationship ($\gamma_{16} = 0.012$, NS).

Finally, the full model (shown in Table 4.9) includes household income as a possible moderator between the background characteristics and experiences of intimate partner violence. Controlling for these covariates, there are two significant main transition effects. Systematic abuse within a previous relationship significantly decreases the odds of having no current partner by 89% ($\beta_2 = -2.251$; $\exp(\beta_2) = 0.105$) and also decreases the odds of experiencing systematic abuse within a current relationship by 69% ($\beta_5 = -1.161$; $\exp(\beta_5) = 0.313$). In contrast, there is no significant effect on the transition between systematic abuse in a previous relationship and non-physical violence in a current relationship ($\beta_8 = -0.852$, NS). The results also show no significant transitions from no previous relationship into a relationship characterized by either systematic abuse ($\beta_4 = 0.481$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\beta_7 = -1.081$, NS). At the same time, women are not significantly likely to move from a previous relationship involving physical assault into a relationship involving systematic abuse ($\beta_6 = 0.116$, NS) or non-physical violence ($\beta_9 = -1.934$, NS); neither are they significantly likely to move out of relationships altogether ($\beta_3 = -0.058$, NS).

In terms of the effects of the covariates, relative to experiencing low-level physical violence within a previous relationship, white women are 85% more likely to have no previous relationship ($\gamma_1 = 0.613$; $\exp(\gamma_1) = 1.846$). On the other hand, being white has no significant effect on experiencing either systematic abuse ($\gamma_6 = 0.268$, NS) or physical assault ($\gamma_{11} = -0.001$, NS) within a previous relationship. However, race does have a consistent negative effect on membership in any category of current partner

Table 4.9 Multinomial logistic regression model with covariates (Model D)

<i>Intercepts</i>				
<i>Previous relationships</i>				
		b	SE	
No previous partner		1.721	0.198	
Systematic abuse		-0.230	0.336	
Physical assault		-0.993	0.398	
[omitted category = Low-level violence]				
<i>Current relationships</i>				
No current partner		1.603	0.372	
Systematic abuse		0.495	0.336	
Non-physical violence		-0.214	0.447	
[omitted category = No violence]				
<i>Transitions</i>				
No previous to no current partner	β_1	-32.582	0.000	
Systematic abuse (ex) to no current partner	β_2	-2.251	0.161	*
Physical assault (ex) to no current partner	β_3	-0.058	0.219	
No previous to systematic abuse (current)	β_4	0.481	0.272	
Systematic abuse (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	β_5	-1.161	0.294	*
Physical assault (ex) to systematic abuse (current)	β_6	0.116	0.325	
No previous to non-physical violence (current)	β_7	-1.081	0.365	
Systematic abuse (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	β_8	-0.852	0.390	
Physical assault (ex) to non-physical violence (current)	β_9	-1.934	0.625	

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

Table 4.9, continued*Covariates*

No previous partner on white	γ_1	0.613	0.079	*
No previous partner on education	γ_2	0.014	0.028	
No previous partner on age	γ_3	-0.030	0.002	*
No previous partner on CH victimization	γ_4	-0.312	0.059	*
No previous partner on household income	γ_5	0.060	0.017	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on white	γ_6	0.268	0.144	
Systematic abuse (ex) on education	γ_7	-0.143	0.048	
Systematic abuse (ex) on age	γ_8	-0.030	0.004	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on CH victimization	γ_9	0.481	0.092	*
Systematic abuse (ex) on HH income	γ_{10}	0.013	0.030	
Physical assault (ex) on white	γ_{11}	-0.001	0.180	
Physical assault (ex) on education	γ_{12}	-0.203	0.063	*
Physical assault (ex) on age	γ_{13}	-0.023	0.004	*
Physical assault (ex) on CH victimization	γ_{14}	0.862	0.105	*
Physical assault (ex) on HH income	γ_{15}	-0.035	0.031	
No current partner on white	γ_{16}	-1.001	0.147	*
No current partner on education	γ_{17}	-0.029	0.045	
No current partner on age	γ_{18}	0.042	0.003	*
No current partner on CH victimization	γ_{19}	-0.064	0.099	
No current partner on HH income	γ_{20}	-0.209	0.037	*
Systematic abuse (current) on white	γ_{21}	-0.907	0.136	*
Systematic abuse (current) on education	γ_{22}	-0.240	0.045	*
Systematic abuse (current) on age	γ_{23}	-0.011	0.004	
Systematic abuse (current) on CH victimization	γ_{24}	0.707	0.102	*
Systematic abuse (current) on HH income	γ_{25}	-0.123	0.026	*
Non-physical violence (current) on white	γ_{26}	-0.934	0.164	*
Non-physical violence (current) on education	γ_{27}	-0.192	0.060	*
Non-physical violence (current) on age	γ_{28}	-0.015	0.004	*
Non-physical violence (current) on CH victimization	γ_{29}	1.010	0.106	*
Non-physical violence (current) on HH income	γ_{30}	-0.050	0.036	

* indicates significant effect, $p < .001$

violence relative to experiencing no violence within a current relationship. White women have a 61% lower likelihood of having no current partner ($\gamma_{16} = -1.001$; $\exp(\gamma_{16}) = 0.368$); being white also reduces the likelihood of experiencing systematic abuse by 60% ($\gamma_{21} = -0.907$; $\exp(\gamma_{21}) = 0.404$) and non-physical violence in current relationships by 61% ($\gamma_{26} = -0.934$; $\exp(\gamma_{26}) = 0.393$).

For previous partners, level of education has only one significant effect. With each level of education, women were 18% less likely to be in a prior relationship involving physical assault ($\gamma_{12} = -0.203$; $\exp(\gamma_{12}) = 0.816$). Education does not influence women's likelihood of having no previous partner ($\gamma_2 = 0.014$, NS) or of being in a previous relationship involving systematic abuse ($\gamma_7 = -0.143$, NS). In contrast, education has a significant effect on women's experiences of violence within their current relationship. Each level of education reduces the odds of systematic abuse by 21% ($\gamma_{22} = -0.240$; $\exp(\gamma_{22}) = 0.787$) and of non-physical violence by 17% ($\gamma_{27} = -0.192$; $\exp(\gamma_{27}) = 0.825$) within a current relationship. Education does not influence whether a woman is involved in a current relationship ($\gamma_{17} = -0.029$, NS).

Relative to experiencing low-level violence within a prior relationship, age decreases the odds of membership in all other categories of previous partner violence. Each year of age reduces a woman's likelihood of having no previous partner by 3% ($\gamma_3 = -0.030$; $\exp(\gamma_3) = 0.970$), the likelihood of systematic abuse by 3% ($\gamma_8 = -0.030$; $\exp(\gamma_8) = 0.970$) and the likelihood of physical assault by 2% ($\gamma_{13} = -0.023$; $\exp(\gamma_{13}) = 0.977$) within a previous relationship. Age also influences women's current relationships. Age increases a woman's likelihood of having no current partner by 4% ($\gamma_{18} = 0.042$; $\exp(\gamma_{18}) = 1.043$) but decreases the likelihood of non-physical violence by 1% within a current relationship

($\gamma_{28} = -0.015$; $\exp(\gamma_{28}) = 0.985$). Age has no significant influence a woman's likelihood of experiencing systematic abuse within a current relationship ($\gamma_{23} = -0.011$, NS).

Childhood victimization significantly reduces the odds of having no previous relationship by 27% ($\gamma_4 = -0.312$; $\exp(\gamma_4) = 0.732$) but increases the odds of systematic abuse by 62% ($\gamma_9 = 0.481$; $\exp(\gamma_9) = 1.618$) and the odds of physical assault by 137% ($\gamma_{14} = 0.862$; $\exp(\gamma_{14}) = 2.368$) by an ex-partner. There is also a significant positive effect of childhood victimization on women's experiences of both systematic abuse and non-physical assault within current relationships; increasing levels of childhood violence increase the odds of systematic abuse by 103% ($\gamma_{24} = 0.707$; $\exp(\gamma_{24}) = 2.028$) and non-physical violence by 175% ($\gamma_{29} = 1.010$; $\exp(\gamma_{29}) = 2.746$). However, experiences of childhood victimization do not have a significant effect for women on having no current partner ($\gamma_{19} = -0.064$, NS).

Finally, household income has relatively little effect on women's experiences of violence within either previous or current relationships. In terms of previous partners, as the level of a woman's household income increased, the odds that she had no prior intimate relationships increased by 6% ($\gamma_5 = 0.060$; $\exp(\gamma_5) = 1.062$). Household income did not influence whether women experienced either systematic abuse ($\gamma_{10} = 0.013$, NS) or physical assault ($\gamma_{15} = -0.035$, NS) within previous relationships. In contrast, increasing levels of household income significantly decrease the odds of having no current partner by 19% ($\gamma_{20} = -0.209$; $\exp(\gamma_{20}) = 0.811$) and the odds of experiencing systematic abuse by 12% within a current relationship ($\gamma_{25} = -0.123$; $\exp(\gamma_{25}) = 0.884$), but have no significant effect on non-physical assault by a current partner ($\gamma_{30} = -0.050$, NS).

4.6 Conclusion

In sum, controlling for background characteristics, there are two significant main effects of previous relationship experiences on membership in categories of current partner violence. Women who experience systematic abuse within their previous relationship are less likely to move out of relationships altogether and also less likely to be in a current relationship involving systematic abuse.

Overall, it seems that race, age, education, and – to some extent – household income all have significant effects on women’s likelihood of membership in categories of violence for both previous and current relationships. White women are more likely to have no previous partners but less likely to have no current relationship or to have violence (either systematic or non-physical) in that relationship. Education has a negative effect on a woman’s likelihood of physical assault in a previous relationship and on the likelihood of either systematic or non-physical violence in a current relationship. Age decreases the likelihood that a woman has no previous relationship but increases the likelihood that she has no current relationship. At the same time, older women are less likely to have experienced systematic or physical assault within a previous relationship or to experience non-physical violence in their current relationships. And household income both has a positive influence on a woman’s likelihood of having no previous relationship and a negative effect on her likelihood of having no current partner. Income also has a significant negative influence on a woman’s likelihood of systematic abuse in a current relationship.

However, it seems that the factor with the most influence is childhood victimization; when it is included in the models, it consistently decreases the likelihood

that women will have no previous partner but increases their likelihood of various forms of violence by both ex and current partners. Specifically, childhood experiences of violence increase a woman's likelihood for systematic abuse or physical assault within a previous and a current relationship. Thus there is support for the idea that childhood victimization influences women's experiences within intimate relationships; in particular, it increases the likelihood of intimate partner violence in those relationships. At the same time, the negative effects of child victimization seem to continue across life stages as well such that it is associated with experiences of violence in both previous and current relationships.

CHAPTER 5 – Women’s Narratives of Violent Incidents

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the results from the analysis of the Minneapolis Women’s Experiences of Violence (WEV) data. I begin with a brief description of the data and the incarcerated women who were interviewed. Next, I use the results from the previous chapter to categorize women into each pattern of violence, including women who exit violent relationships as well as women who experience violence across multiple relationships. For each pattern of violence, I examine the causal structures of incidents to consider whether and how violence is patterned within and across relationships.

5.2 Description of sample

A total of 205 women were interviewed at the Hennepin County Adult Detention Facility; descriptive statistics can be found in table 5.1. They have much in common with other populations of incarcerated women (e.g. Kruttschnitt & Gartner 2005). Overall, the sample was relatively young; the average age of women was 34.5 years. One-third of the women were between the ages of 18 and 30 and more than half were 40 years of age or younger. Minority members are substantially overrepresented; thirty-two percent of the sample was Black, 20% were American Indian, 41% were white, 2% were Hispanic or Latina, and 4% self-identified as mixed race or “other.” In general, women had low educational attainment. One-third reported schooling only up to 10-11th grade and 34% completed high school or a GED. During the interview, women were also asked about

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics of jailed sample, WEV data

	Total (n=205)	Sample (n=96)
Personal characteristics		
Age		
18 - 20 years	2.5	3.1
21 - 25 years	20.1	22.9
26 - 30 years	11.3	9.4
31 - 35 years	19.6	19.8
36 - 40 years	19.6	18.8
41 - 45 years	15.7	14.6
46 - 50 years	8.8	9.4
51 and older	2.5	2.1
<i>Mean age</i>	34.5	34.0
Race		
Black	31.7	30.2
White	41.5	39.6
American Indian	20.0	19.8
Mixed race/other race	4.4	5.2
Hispanic/Latina	2.4	5.2
Years of education		
Less than high school	37.1	32.3
High school or GED	34.1	41.7
More than high school	28.8	26.0
Childhood trauma		
Childhood sexual assault	26.8	33.3
Childhood physical abuse	47.3	46.9

experiences of violence in childhood. In the sample, nearly half of women (47%) reported experiences of physical abuse²⁸ by a caretaker during childhood and one-quarter (26.8%) reported that they had been sexually abused.²⁹ In comparison to the women who comprised the NVAWS, women in the jail sample, on average, were younger, slightly more likely to be non-white, and reported lower levels of education.

Women were also asked about any intimate relationships they may have had in the previous 36 months. Data were collected on up to three relationships although a handful of women reported more than three. The majority (77%) of the sample reported at least one intimate relationship. Given the 3-year time frame, a surprising number of women reported multiple intimate relationships. Of 158 women who reported relationships, approximately one-third (30%) reported two relationships and seven percent reported three or more. For each intimate relationship women reported, they were asked a series of questions about their interactions with partners. Women were asked not only about their experiences as victims of IPV, but also about their own actions. They could report up to eight unique incidents of partner violence and eight incidents of “avoided” violence,³⁰ as well as three series of violent and/or avoided incidents.

²⁸ I considered physical abuse to involve any of the following: threw objects at, twisted arm or hair, caused a bruise, pushed or shoved, used a knife or gun on, caused to pass out, caused to go to the doctor, beat up, burned or scalded, threatened to hit or throw something at, kicked, or choked.

²⁹ Sexual abuse included reports of: another person showing their sex organs, another person touching their sex organs, touching another person’s sex organs, attempted intercourse and intercourse before a woman had finished elementary school. Women must also have said that they considered the experience to have been “abuse.”

³⁰ Women were asked to report whether there had been incidents that “had a high risk for violence” but in which neither partner actually used violence. The purpose was to try to understand how women are able to avoid violence. For purposes of these analyses, however, I only analyze cases of completed violence.

Ninety-six women (47%) provided information on at least one incident of intimate partner violence in the preceding 36 months. The average age of these women was 34 years and women of color are again overrepresented. Thirty percent of the women who reported an incident of IPV were Black, 20% were American Indian, 40% were white, 5% were Hispanic or Latina, and 5% were mixed races or “other.” They also reported low educational attainment; 32% had less than a high school education while 42% had a high school diploma or GED. Thus, in terms of their demographic characteristics, these women differed little from the entire sample. However, there were some differences between the entire sample and victims of IPV in terms of their previous experiences of violence. Again, nearly half of the victims of intimate partner violence reported physical abuse by a caretaker during childhood (47%) but one-third of them (33%) were victims of childhood sexual assault.

In collecting information on the violent incidents, the interviewers used the life events calendars to record when, during the prior 36 months, they had occurred. After the incidents had been placed on the calendar, interviewers prompted the women to “describe what happened.” Women were candid and overall willing to discuss even felonious incidents of violence with interviewers, both as victims and offenders. Most of the time women described the events leading up to the violence (the “precursors”) as well as what specifically happened during the violent “transaction” and in the “aftermath” (Sacco and Kennedy 2002). In general, the women were very articulate in their descriptions of the events and needed little prompting from the interviewers. Occasionally women would provide a very short description of the event and interviewers would usually ask further questions such as “Where did this occur?” “What did you do?” or “What did he do?”

There were times when women could not remember the full details of a particular incident, perhaps because it was one of many similar incidents or because drugs or alcohol were involved. For example, in one case, a woman did not remember details about a particular incident but the severity of her injuries was what differentiated the event from others; she said, “I can’t remember what happened, but I know I ended up in the hospital,” (case #146).

One of the key points of these analyses is to develop an understanding of what it is that victims of violence feel is important, or significant, in a sequence of events that results in violence. As Griffin (1993) argues, “if the actions identified as significant had been very different in content and meaning, both intended and understood, the event would likely not have happened as such.” Thus, their narratives are important because they provide insight into the way in which the actors understood the event; a different understanding of a situation may have produced a different outcome. It is these narrative accounts that I use in the following to describe the nature of women’s experiences of IPV.

5.3 Event structure analysis

The purpose of event structure analysis is to uncover a causal interpretation of an event by using information about the sequentiality of actions, the context of the situation, and any other related incidents. Specifically, as outlined in an earlier chapter, it provides a test for whether the logical structure explains the actual sequencing of events that take place. Thus, in using the narratives women provide, event structure analysis is able to create a causal diagram of the logical structure underlying each event using the program ETHNO. For example, I simplified the following narrative into two key elements:

I said no to sex and told him “you can’t make me.” He pulled a knife out and held it to my throat and said “I will just have to take it then. You are my wife and you have to have sex with me.” I told him that “if you take it, that’s rape because I am not willingly giving it to you.”

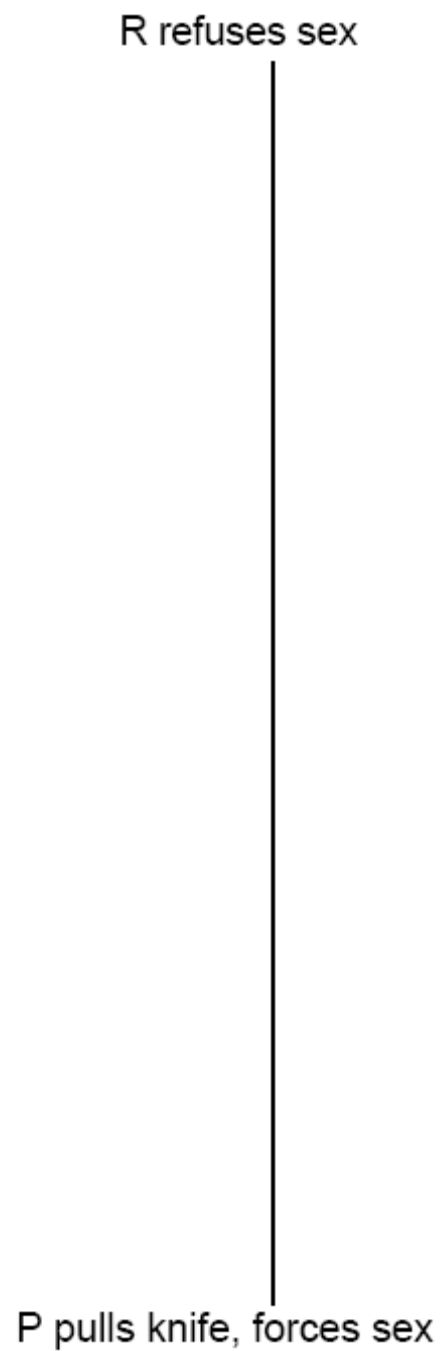
These two elements include; “R refuses sex” and “P pulls knife, forces sex.” ETHNO then asked me whether “P pulls knife, forces sex” required “R refuses sex” or some similar action. Because, according to the woman’s narrative, the sexual assault by her partner occurred after she expressed unwillingness to have sexual intercourse, I answered “yes.” The program then created a diagram in which the woman’s refusal leads to, or “causes,” the violence. See Figure 5.1 for an example of a structural diagram produced by ETHNO.

In examining all of the causal diagrams, the majority of the violent events conformed to a general structure. In most cases, there seemed to be four key elements in an event. These include: background information or the context of a particular situation, what the women felt were the precipitating factors for the violence, the actual violence, and the “aftermath” or what happened after the violence was over (Sacco and Kennedy 2002).

First, in many of the events described, women provided a general *context* for what was to happen next in their narrative. In some cases, this context indicated an activity that they and their partner were engaged in. For example, women often prefaced the violent incident with the fact that they or their partner were drinking, either at home or at a bar. In fact, the most common first element involved the use of alcohol and/or drugs by one or both of the partners in the relationship. For example, one woman began her narrative with the following statement:

He was drunk, we was both drunk. (case #137)

Figure 5.1 ETHNO logical structure (case #138)



Another woman began her description of the violent incident with this:

We were both tired and up for more than a week on drugs - doing crack. (case #536)

While of course these narratives may not be representative of all violent interactions between partners, they certainly suggest that substance use may heighten the likelihood that violence will ensue either because arguments may tend to get out of hand or because something that a person does or says is misconstrued.

Less often, the context involved an illegal activity. For example, one woman described how she and her boyfriend were “out on a lick” that day meaning that they were hustling and stealing prior to the violence that occurred. They subsequently argued over what was to be done with the money they made and this argument escalated into violence. In other cases, the context of the situation involved not a shared activity, but information on one partner’s infidelity as in the following:

My best friend came over to tell me she was pregnant and didn’t know what to do. And it came out in the conversation that it was my husband’s kid. So when he came home, I freaked out and kicked her out of the house, told her I never wanted her to come around again. He got mad, telling me he never slept with her. I knew that was a lie. I just started hitting him and yelling at him. He grabbed a hold of me and started slamming me against the wall. He leaned back to hit me and I put my wrist up. It broke my wrist in the joint and I had to have surgery... (case #120)

Other times, women reported that they had left, either temporarily (they went out) or they left the relationship. One woman described how her partner hit her because she didn’t go home or call him for a week (case #176). Finally, in a few cases, the context of the situation suggested that one or the other partner (usually the female, however) had done something the other perceived as disrespectful. For example, one woman introduced an incident by suggesting that she had invited people over to the house without asking her boyfriend first. Not all narratives, however, included this first element.

Second, women described what they believed was the *precipitating event* or initiating factor of the ensuing violence. This often was an argument between partners. In other situations, one or the other partner demanded something of the other. When these demands were refused, violence was often the result. For example, the following woman described what happened when she refused her boyfriend's sexual advances:

He was wanting to have sex in this parking lot and I said no. I started getting out and he started going off. He just started hitting me, holding me down...
(case #154)

Another woman's story began when her boyfriend asked her to take off her sweater:

We were getting ready to go to bed and I got into bed and I had a sweater on and he asked me why I had a sweater and he thought that it was because I did not want him to touch me. He told me to take the sweater off and I didn't and he told me to take it off again. I thought he was joking. He then said "if you don't have that sweater off by the time I count to three" and I did not take the sweater off. (case #421)

In contrast, some women spoke of confronting their partners, often over his infidelity, or of their partners finding out something they had done. And, in a small number of cases, what seemed to provoke violence was one partner calling the other a name or saying something else deemed inappropriate. The following case details what happened when a woman told her boyfriend that she planned on getting an abortion:

He was drunk, we was both drunk. And I really don't know how the whole argument started. I said something to him, we started arguing. I told him I didn't love him anymore and he got mad. I told him I was going to get an abortion and that's when he put his hands on me... (case #137)

The third element in the structure of a violent event was the *violence* itself. By definition, this element existed for each event. The violent actions themselves can be differentiated based on whether they describe more mundane acts of violence (such as slapping) or more severe violence including the use of weapons or sexual assault. However women differed in the amount of detail with which they told their stories. To

some degree, though, the detail (or lack thereof) may be indicative of the manner in which women see themselves in the incident. For example, one woman merely indicated that she and her partner “got to tearing it up,” suggesting that both parties were, for the most part, equally involved in the physical fight. In fact, a few of the women’s narratives were somewhat unclear over who actually initiated violence; in analysis of those cases, I considered the violence to be mutual. Other women gave very detailed accounts of their victimization. In one case, a woman detailed how her partner accused her of using heroin and then to demonstrate his control over her, held her down and cut her leg:

He tied me down, hands and legs. He cut that spot with a straight razor about two inches deep - lifted a chunk of skin up so that he could see the muscle. He poured Pine Sol, bleach and a little gin on it. He said the alcohol would help it. Then he put the skin back and rubbed it with a hot light bulb... (case #106)

In most of the narratives, women reported that their male partners used violence first. And in some cases women retaliated with violence as well. A sizeable number of incidents, however, involved women instigating the violence. In just under half of the cases in which women used violence first, men responded with violence.

The final structural element in these violent incidents is the *aftermath* (Sacco and Kennedy 2002). In other words, what ended the violence or what occurred as a result of the violence? The most frequent reason women gave for why a particular incident ended was that either they or their partner left the scene. In some cases this leaving suggested part of a controlled response to attempt to de-escalate the situation. However, some women described escaping an incident or “getting away,” thus effectively putting an end to the violence as in the following case:

...He grabbed me and pushed me. He kept me at his house acting like he was kidnapping me and sexually assaulted me and was trying to force me to

do drugs. He left to go to the bathroom and I gathered my stuff and I left out the window and ran and called a friend to come pick me up. (case #413)

Similarly, a few women described incidents that just dissipated; in these cases, either both partners talked the issue out or they “cooled off” and subsequently, the violence ended. One woman said:

And I guess I just calmed down after that realizing that nothing was going on and seeing how out of control I was. And we just all ended up getting high together. (case #559)

Also, a number of women indicated that the police became involved in the incident. For example, the following woman called the police to end the fight:

I didn’t want the fight to go on so I called the cops. Cops came and he got arrested and went to jail for two nights. (case #508)

Finally, some cases ended when someone was seriously injured or sought medical treatment and a small number of incidents were stopped because a bystander intervened in some way.

5.4 Patterns of violence within categories of violence

The first step in understanding whether violent incidents are patterned within and across relationships was to categorize women into the patterns seen in the previous chapter as best as possible. Women were distinguished based on their responses to the questions regarding their intimate relationships; once I had determined whether a woman had a relationship for a particular time period, I could then establish whether she reported any violent incidents with that partner at any point during the calendar. Thus, I was able to capture violence that occurred while the relationship was intact as well as incidents that may have occurred after a relationship had ended. To simplify the analyses (and because it was nearly impossible to determine whether the violence within a relationship was systematic abuse or non-physical assault due to the fact that the indicators were

individual incidents rather than *total experiences* within a relationship) I used four categories of relationship violence for the remaining analyses.

The first category includes women who left a violent relationship at some point during the reference period and did not report any subsequent intimate relationships. I call this “exiting relationships.” A second category includes women who also left a violent relationship during the calendar period, however these women subsequently entered another relationship that was *non-violent*. I refer to this pattern as “escaping violence.” Third, a small group of women actually entered into a violent relationship during the calendar period, either from a previous non-violent relationship or from no relationship at all. At the time of the interviews, these women remained involved in the violent relationship; I refer to this pattern as “entering violence.” Finally, the fourth category includes women who report violence in multiple intimate relationships during the reference period. I refer to these women as experiencing violence “across relationships.”

A. Exiting relationships

The most common pattern among women was that of exiting a violent relationship and then not entering another relationship (n=21). Women who leave violent relationships and do not (right away) become involved in another intimate relationship describe incidents that bear some similarity to those of women in the other patterns of violence. For example, across the categories, many women described incidents that involved alcohol and arguments that escalated into violence. Accounts of cheating partners seemed to be slightly overrepresented among the narratives of women who exited relationships as the context for violence, however. Perhaps these women, after

leaving the cheating (and violent) partner, preemptively eliminated their future risk of similar experiences, at least for the time, by eschewing subsequent intimate relationships. For example, one woman actually catches her partner “in the act” of cheating on her which then precipitates the ensuing violence. And the following woman left when her partner came home after cheating on her with another woman. As she described the context of the situation, she packed her bags and left. The following morning she went to obtain a restraining order on him:

He came home with a hickey on his neck. I threw an open beer at him and then we fought physically, punches, throwing things, and I told him to get all his stuff and leave my house. I packed my stuff and left too and walking down the street, I was in all-black neighborhood and he was yelling “fucking white bitch” and “blue eyed devil.” I just kept walking and that was it. I went to my mom’s house. I went to Social Services the next day and eventually had a restraining order placed against him. He is the father of my youngest child. (case #404)

Another woman also described an incident contextualized by her partner’s infidelity. In this case, however, her partner had returned to her while his other girlfriend was in jail. Apparently thinking he had given up the affair, she then finds out that he is still cheating on her, confronts him, and makes *him* leave:

It started out that I packed all his shit and put it in the car. His little girlfriend he was seeing had came in here [to jail] for a few weeks and he came back to me. I fell for it but then I found out about his girlfriend. I went out and smacked him in the face. And then he hit me back and we fought physically for a couple of minutes. We broke a couple of things in the house. He wouldn’t leave, but then after we fought for a couple hours more, he just left. (case #171).

Along with the infidelity women in this pattern experienced, some of their narratives also describe attempts by their partners to control them or their behavior. In most cases, this controlling behavior was the precipitating factor for violence. One woman, describing a series of incidents that occurred with her previous boyfriend, suggested that the violence frequently stemmed from his inability to control her:

The typical fight was about control - he wanted to control me and wanted me to choose between him and my family and friends and wanted me to depend on him. Basically it would be arguing and nagging about it. He would hit me first, push me around or slamming me on the bed. (case #135)

She further described a specific incident that was related to her partner's attempts to make her choose between her family and friends and their relationship. At the end of the situation, her uncle comes to pick her up and, rather than give her uncle the motive to retaliate against her boyfriend, she simply left with all of her belongings:

We were in a motel room and he was kind of in a bad mood that day. He was still giving me the "leave your family and friends," make me choose between my family and him. We were arguing about that. He brought up my drug dealing and that he didn't like it. He just started throwing me around the room, wrestling around and fighting. Not really hitting me, but he was pinning me down and I was trying to get him off of me. I was trying to get his arms off me and I accidentally slapped him. Then he started choking me. My leg got up around and knocked him off me. I had called my uncle before that and by that time my uncle was on the door. I didn't want to tell him that we were fighting because he would have gone in there and wiped him out. I had my stuff all packed and I told my uncle, "let's go." (case #135)

The following woman also attributed a number of incidents that occurred with her live-in partner (who was also the father of her baby) to his attempts to control her. Again, as in the previous case, she specifically suggests that her partner wanted to control her. In this case, she describes the context of these violent incidents as a very controlling relationship. When describing the series of incidents, she said:

He was just very controlling. If I would spend money, he was always concerned about my money, wants to see my paycheck stubs. I tell him it's none of his business, I ask him if he shows me his. He needs to spend my money first, and then his own money. Then he has control over me. If I ask him for money he tells me no even if he spent all my money. Sometimes if he wanted sex, he would follow me around the house and bother me until I gave it to him. (case #119)

After the last violent incident that occurred, she left the house with her baby and went to stay at a neighbor's. The next day, she tried to return home to get her belongings but he

was there. So she left with only the clothes on her back. At the time of the interview, she had not yet become involved in another intimate relationship.

In another case, a woman's partner controlled her not only through his use of violence, but also through her dependence on him for alcohol. Drinking with him led her to her dependence on alcohol and, because he controlled the money, he was able to control her as well. Again, this control and dependence contextualized the following incident:

I got out of jail and went upstairs and I heard him downstairs and he was eating and I was hungry and I said "you ain't taking that" 'cause he was all drunk, drunk and we exchanged words back and forth, back and forth, and he pulled a knife out of his bag and stabbed me in the throat. And I just put the Kleenex up to my throat and went upstairs and that was it. He came up there later and he was just too intoxicated to do anything...I never drank that much before I got with him. I always drank beer and stuff but never vodka. He had the need to control someone with vodka you know. Like that's how he got me. I would wake up shaking if I didn't eat and he had all the money so I needed him you know for food and money and drinking all the time. That was a way of controlling too you know. He was a very superior man, and he knew what the fuck he was doing. Because the drinking got me into worse and worse situations and got me mentally hurt and totally abused you know because with the drugs, it was just going to jail and that's it, but the physical pain is something you never forget and it was all from drinking and the mental pain was horrible too. He was no dummy. (case #556)

Overall, what characterized women in this category is their reaction to such attempts by their partners to control them. Rather than remain in the relationship, they chose to leave their partner, for example recall the case detailed above where the woman went so far as to get a restraining order against the father of her child to ensure that the relationship was over. Further, these women who exited violence did not become involved in subsequent relationships for the remainder of the calendar. Perhaps after experiencing such stifling relationships, women are somewhat less likely to become involved in a relationship right away. In some cases, women were actively trying to stay

away from their ex-partner and perhaps did not have the time or energy to pursue a new relationship, as in the following case:

He would just get crazy all the time, like I said, especially in the last year; I was always tryin' to avoid him. I don't know why I was ever with him [laugh] 'cause he was just nuts. I guess that's my fault for even stayin' with him but I didn't even see him that much really 'cause I was doin' my thing and he was doin' his, but he always tried to find me and hunt me down through friends or whatever. It was weird, like I wouldn't see him forever and then all of a sudden he would be there and he would just hit me for no reason. (case #595)

Or, perhaps as in the next case, some women just simply did not want to put up with violence or the hassle of a relationship any longer:

...it was a very abusive relationship, you know. He would get pissed all the time, I guess, over who knows what but everything and I would get pissed off too. I don't want to take shit from no one, so I wasn't gonna take shit from him either... (case #556)

B. Escaping violent relationships

A smaller number of women (n=17) reported escaping a violent relationship and then moving into a non-violent relationship. What seems to characterize these incidents among women who ultimately escape violence is their tendency to involve injuries as well as law enforcement or bystander intervention. In other words, there is similarity in what women describe as the “aftermath.” As the following woman describes, she attempted to get away from her partner when an argument began, hoping to escape the violence. When that did not work, she called the police:

He was starting to be verbally abusive in the car. When we got to a red-light, I got out. He tried to hit me with our SUV. I ran up into a snow-bank and called the police. By the time the police had gotten there, he had beat me up with my face on the tar. I had road rash all over my face. He punched me in the face and kneed me in the face. Then I got down and he was kicking me in the head repeatedly. (case #123)

In another case, a woman described how an incident with her partner ended because of interventions by two different people as well as the police. One of the bystanders was a

friend of hers who physically tried to force the boyfriend to stop hitting her. Another was a stranger who called the police and then acted as a witness when they arrived:

He acted like he was going to take my money. We started fighting; it was right on the highway, we really started scrapping. My friend was there and he seen us fighting, and it's on the highway. He came across the street and said "don't be hitting on her." He had hit me and I was bleeding there. Somebody on the highway had seen it and they called the police on the cell phone...I said "I am getting out of here." [My friend] gave [him] a few good licks, I seen his fist was already cut. So I started walking real fast to the next bus stop. A man in a little gray car was escorting me and he told me he called the police. He gave me some tissues and I walked to the bus stop. [My partner] came running up to me. Two policeman cars came. And the guy in the gray car said "right there." They were quick about it. They came out of their car and said "he did this to you?" He told [my partner] to come on – they knew him for some reason or another. They handcuffed him and put him in the car. They told me I didn't have any choice to press charges, because once they see blood, the state takes over. [My partner] was banging his head on the window and the police officer got into the car and asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital. I said no. They told me to thank the guy right there. And then [my friend] came up and said "she's okay, she's my friend." The police were calling him hero... (case #141)

The issue of children seldom came up in women's narratives, but in two cases in which women escaped violent relationships they suggested that their children were their motive to leave. One woman, who was with her partner for ten years, became concerned when her children began to see what he was doing to her. She described violence that seemed to come out of nowhere:

It was all because he lost his glove. He had a set of black gloves, for bike riding. He couldn't find it. He beat the hell out of me and my kids saw everything. He punched me, kicked me, broomstick, pulled my hair. (case #161)

Describing their relationship, she suggested that she was her partner's "punching bag." After putting up with it for many years, she finally left because she was concerned about what witnessing the violence was doing to them:

Anything that went wrong was always my fault. No matter if I did it or not. I was his punching bag, so to speak. I put up with it for ten years for my kids. But then they started seeing this stuff. (case #161)

Another woman described one of the few times in which children were directly involved in the violence between their parents. Her boyfriend at the time hit her child and, when she intervened on her child's behalf, he turned the violence toward her. Her children then ran to get help:

He [ex-boyfriend] was drinking and he slapped my son across the face, and I told him not to do that and he started to beat me really bad and my sons run out the door to the neighbors and called the cops. Cops came and he went to jail. They took my statement, took pictures of me and left and that was about it. (case #572)

After that incident her partner did not hit the children again but, nevertheless, she changed the way she responded to his violence. She began to hit back or leave the situation before he had the chance to hit her. She finally described how she left the relationship for good and suggested that her new boyfriend (who was non-violent to that point) tries to help her avoid the violent ex-partner by intercepting his phone calls:

I just got tired of him being violent and beating me up and watching my kids go through it and them watching me go through it, so I started hitting back after a while of taking it you know, or just leave before he got the chance to hit me. I think I was just done and I wanted to get out of there and finally just did it instead of being afraid all the time and not getting my kids out of there in time. Near the end there he started buying those knives and swords and shit on [shopping channel] like those big swords and I thought to myself, I better get out of here before he gets those and starts using those too. He already had the guns and rifles in the house but then he was all weird buying crazy swords and huge knives. I was just scared, so I was hitting him or getting out of there whenever I could, but he kept getting out of jail. I called the cops all the time and that was fine 'cause they always arrested him, but he always came back 'cause they would just let him out in a few days and I don't know why, so it was hard to leave in the time. The time I did leave, I just threw my kids in the van and left everything else there and took off and called the cops and never went back 'cause who knows? I think he's out of state now but he was, right after I left, callin' me like 50 times a day when he got out of jail. I even called the cops about that, and of course soon as the cops left, he would start callin' again. I was with my boyfriend right now, and he would answer and just say she ain't here. (case #572)

Other woman also found an ally in their new partner. One woman described multiple violent attacks by her ex-husband after their relationship had "officially" ended.

At the time of the interview, despite recently becoming involved in a new (and non-violent) relationship, this ex-husband continued to stalk her and would attack her when she was vulnerable. However, when she told her current boyfriend about one attack, he became furious and threatened to kill the ex-husband:

I was in the hospital. He [ex-husband] found out that I was getting out of the hospital. He met my [new] partner and told me that he “didn’t mind me being with somebody else as long as you have sex with me.” I told him no and he punched me in the liver. And I told my partner and he flipped out. He [current partner] told him to leave me alone or he’d kill him. (case #138)

Interestingly, very few of the incidents that these women described involved illegal activities; perhaps women who are not involved in illegal activities with a romantic partner have an easier time moving out of a violent relationship because they are not “tied in” by their illegal activity. Further, these women may then also be better able to enter into relationships with non-violent partners.

C. Entering violent relationships

There were also a small number of women (n=9) who entered a relationship during the reference period in which they experienced violence. If these nine women reported previous relationships within the calendar, those relationships were non-violent. Because these women maintained the relationships, despite the violence, it would make sense if the violence they experienced was less severe. However, very few of these women described relatively minor, situational violence such as in the following:

I was fit to go out and he didn’t want me to go so he pushed me. So I grabbed a lamp and threw it at him. The room went dark so I don’t know if I hit him. Then I left and went to my mom’s house. (case #127)

Rather, in the remaining cases, women described somewhat more severe acts of violence. What characterizes this group is that they remained in these relationships, some even after they had been seriously injured.

One characteristic of the incidents experienced by women in this pattern that perhaps contributed to the women staying in the relationship was their own use of violence. This has been greatly debated among researchers of intimate partner violence. While some feel that women only use violence in response to an attack or to protect themselves, others (e.g. Steinmetz 1978) argue that there is also a phenomenon of “husband battering.” Johnson (1995) suggested that some couples use violence when conflict occasionally gets out of hand and that this violence is somewhat more equivocal. He referred to it as “common-couple violence.” In approximately one-third of the violent incidents experienced by this group, the women themselves also used violence. For example, one woman described a fight in which she responded blow-by-blow to her partner’s violence:

He threw me against the bed because I threatened to leave and he didn’t want me to leave the house. I tried to kick him in the groin when I was on the bed, I did kick him and then I got up and he threw me again. I got up again and he pushed me against the wall, he cornered me. He put his hands around my neck, he wasn’t choking me though... I left, just walked out the door. (case #108)

And in a separate incident, she said:

I think I had something of his that he wanted and I refused to give it to him so we got in a yelling match at a bus stop and he slammed my head against the bus shelter. So I punched him in the face and he slammed my body against the bus stop again. Then he took off walking up the street and I chased him and was still yelling at him. And then I hit him again. Then he hit me in the face and pushed me on the ground. And I got up again and then I hit him again and then he just grabbed my body so I couldn’t move until I calmed down. And that was it. (case #108)

Compared to the other women in the jail sample, this group of women also more often described in their narrative how they (the woman, the partner, or both) managed or dealt with the incident. In the previous incident, for example, the woman’s partner held her body until she “calmed down” and the fight was over. Other women indicated that

they and their partner either talked through the incident right after it happened or described other ways in which they were “working on” their relationship. Thus, even when the violence may have been serious, women indicated that the situation was dealt with and talked about. For example, after she threw the telephone at her partner and made him bleed, a woman described how she and her partner dealt in the aftermath with the incident and his injury:

...The guy kept calling and we started fighting over the phone and my boyfriend said “get the fuck out of here” and I said okay and started packing my things and got mad and threw the phone at his head and it cracked his head and I just started going after him hitting him. And he had blood you know on his head and I sat on the couch and started crying and he went in the bathroom to wipe his head and he said “I’m dropping you off at your mom’s after we buy a new phone.” So we went to K-mart to get a phone. I didn’t go to my moms because we talked about it and stuff and just got drunk after that and tried to forget about it, you know. He might have should have gone to the hospital I guess, but he didn’t want to go and get me in trouble. (case #547)

In another case, a woman left her partner for a period of time after a number of similar violent incidents that occurred when they were using crack cocaine. Moving to a woman’s shelter, and waiting to return until he promised to stop using crack, was how she dealt with the violence but continued the relationship:

Basically, we were getting high on crack and he just can’t take that stuff - he starts hearing voices and gets all paranoid and flips out. He does that kind where you shoot it and it’s just bad shit. He just started beating me up. I got a black eye and he was punching me in the stomach. I was on the floor and he was kickin’ me and saying that I shouldn’t go anywhere. I had it so when I got up I was like – that’s it - I’m done with this if he’s gonna keep doing crack like that and I went to a shelter in [city] - I just left the house and went there for about a month until he promised he wouldn’t do crack anymore. Coke is fine, he’s fine on that, just not crack. The shelter in [city] was pretty nice actually... I went back after about a month because he said he wasn’t doing it no more. (case #501)

Another woman described a series of incidents in her relationship that she attributed to her and her partner’s problems with money, as well as their mutual use of alcohol. As was typical with series cases, she could not pinpoint a single incident but

acknowledged the fact that the fights seemed to stem from disagreements when they were drinking. She also described their strategy of resolving such fights and how it had recently evolved so that they were calling the police more frequently:

From November back, I guess, violence issues have occurred in my relationship maybe sometimes, nothing really sticks out in my mind but fights usually [were] over money. General disagreements, usually fights, mostly started when alcohol is involved for sure, like starting with a disagreement and then fighting back and forth loudly and escalating into screaming back and forth. So there was no communication really, just madness, ending up in me pushing him or him pushing me and it can get very verbal and probably that's the worst of it. I think the verbal can be just as bad. And then we would usually resolve them by him leaving or something. Even back then we never called the police. We would usually separate and figure it out the next day when we were sober. We never argue when we're not using alcohol. Lately we started calling police more just because of the neighborhood and other people calling over our disputes. (case #568)

However, even when law enforcement officials were involved in the incidents that these women described, they seldom took any action. This may have been because the situations had diffused by the time the police got to the scene. In the following incident, both the woman and her partner cooled down and talked to the police who did not make an arrest:

...I got scared and then I told him I was going to call the police. I actually called a friend of mine, who is a cop, but I called him as a friend. I talked to him. I told him I didn't want [my partner] to go to jail, just to stop. But the police did come and nothing happened. By then everything was calm. I had cleaned up and changed my shirt. And after we cooled down a bit we talked. (case #144)

In the next case, however, the woman's partner left the scene and the police were not able to (or did not want to) do anything further with the case, including interviewing any potential witnesses:

He started hittin' me again...and I said I was callin' the cops this time 'cause I figured I'm out in public and they can get to downtown fast so I called from my cell phone. He grabbed me but I got the call in and he just left. I talked to the cops but that was about it, 'cause I think they thought I was

crazy and probably don't care that I have some domestic on the street, but they didn't even talk with no one around either. (case #501)

This desire to work things out, or to minimize the potential risks for violence by involving law enforcement, may be why these women ultimately stayed with their partners – at least until the time of the interview – despite what may have happened. Also, perhaps because these women were not afraid to use violence or to defend themselves when their partners did so, they felt more secure in their relationships. Combined with the tendency to try and work together to sort the situation out, women who entered violent relationships and remained in them may have felt more in control of their own lives and relationships.

D. Violence across relationships

Finally, there were eighteen women who experienced violence across more than one intimate relationship within the calendar period. These women averaged slightly over two partners within the 36 month time frame; this meant that for the majority of these women, their only experiences with intimate relationships during the time period were with violent partners. Overall, these women also experienced the most violent incidents with an average of nearly five incidents within the calendar.

The incidents described by the women who experienced violence in more than one intimate relationship are somewhat different from those of the other women. As suggested earlier, narratives including alcohol and drug use and incidents that began with verbal arguments between partners and subsequently escalated into violence were relatively common across all four categories. However, in this category, while women were much less likely to initiate violence during an incident, drug addictions and the constant searching for drugs are somewhat more prevalent in terms of the way in which

women contextualize the violence. For example, in the following, a woman and her partner are out looking for drugs. When she tries to leave the car, he reacts violently:

We were drinking and high and trying to go find more drugs. We were arguing about something and I went to get out of the car and he didn't want me to get out in that area because there were too many black guys around, too many drug dealers. I got out of the car and was screaming at him through the window. He ran me over with the car and he brought me to the hospital. He felt bad or something. (case #139)

And another woman describes what happened when she did not go along with her partner's search for drugs, and instead, went somewhere to sleep:

I spent the night at a trick's house and I needed sleep, and this fool was not done chasing crack and so I was at this trick's house. I had some money and crack when I got back to his house in the morning. He runs into me in the dope house that evening. He was in a Jeep and he has a ho in there. He had that girl get in the back seat and told me to get in the Jeep. He said "don't you go anywhere bitch because I'll kill you." He got the dope and gives it to the girl. And he takes me for a ride in the Jeep; I don't even know where we were going but he was pissed 'cause I was at the trick's house. He was screaming and acting crazy. I decided that as soon as he was done acting crazy, I would get out of the Jeep and run. He runs after me and chases me and starts hitting me with the cane over and over... (case #511)

Additionally, it is the women who experienced violence with more than one partner that are more likely to discuss *demands* their partners made of them (and, often, their subsequent refusal of those demands) or of *confrontations* over some issue by one or the other. For example, in the following incident, a woman recalls how her partner wanted her to con a woman he had met out of her money. The precipitating factor in this case was her refusal; when she refused to do what he asked, he beat her up:

I was going over to his house but then I saw him driving around in a white truck with a girl and he came to pick me up on the street. I guess the lady liked me and he wanted me to con her into giving us all her money. I wouldn't do it and he reached back and slapped me. He locked the doors in the truck and windows and wouldn't let me out. I started going crazy in the back of the truck. The lady couldn't hear anything because she was deaf. She started getting scared. I ran out of the truck but then he got me again...He started beating me up again because I refused to get in the truck... (case #504)

Similarly, another woman described how her boyfriend demanded the money she just earned from turning tricks. When she refused, he broke her finger and punched her in the face:

I wouldn't turn over some money [\$150] from working. One trick, I wouldn't turn it over. He got pissed. He had bought me a diamond. He pulled it off my finger. He broke my finger, I lost the joint. It was \$16,000 worth of damage to my finger. He told me he broke my ring finger so I could never wear another ring. Then he hit me so many times in the cheekbone that I have a hairline fracture there. (case #125)

And, even when women did what their partner requested – including illegal activity – they were not necessarily safe from violence as in the following case:

He sends in his dealer and he said give him a blowjob for the crack. Anyway, I got the dope. It ends up that he wants to fuck and so I fucked him. And that was the first time that [my partner] slapped me open-handed in the bathroom because he was like “did you get off on it” and getting all jealous and shit. (case #511)

At the same time, there were also similarities in the types of violence women experienced in this category. Women seemed to be at greatest risk of sexual assault in this pattern of violence. Two women described a series of sexual assaults by their partners. One of these women told the interviewer how her boyfriend would force her to have sex with him:

He [would] hold me down and take off my panties and make me do it. He would hold my neck, make me suck him. I couldn't believe that. After he hit me, I didn't want to be touched. He would make me do it anyways. (case #173)

In another case, a woman also described how her boyfriend forced her to have sex with him after he had attacked her:

...he came in, I had got mad at him and I guess I was harassing him about messing around. He was extremely high. I was in the basement watching a movie. I guess he was having a flashback to his old girlfriend - she used to turn tricks on him and burned him [gave him a venereal disease]. He came at me and I was trying to get out from under him. He choked me. Then he

came back and forced me to have sex with him. Then he fell asleep and I went upstairs... (case #160)

One woman also told of multiple incidents of sexual assault with her partner. In the first incident, he forces her to have sex when she refuses to engage in deviant sexual activity:

He just wanted me to go to this party (a swinger party) and I didn't want to go because I wasn't into that. He pushed me down on the bed and took what he wanted. I didn't try to fight back because he would intimidate you into feeling like you owed him or it was your duty. He would talk to you like he was your lawyer, not your boyfriend. So I just let him do what he wanted to do. (case #120)

At the same time, she also described a series of sexual assaults that continued throughout their relationship:

Even if I didn't want to have sex, and I was at his house, he would keep pushing and pushing. Until I felt like I owed him something and he would take it. It was kind of a preventive thing, you felt like if you didn't, he was going to force you to anyway. You had to know him, the way he was, the way he would talk to people and make them feel they owed him. I always thought he was enjoying it because he knew he was hurting you because he was well-endowed. And it would hurt. That's why I never wanted to have sex with him. (case #120)

Finally, another similarity in the violence women experienced was that women who reported violence across relationships were somewhat more likely to describe incidents that involved the use of weapons by their partners. One example is the incident described previously in which the woman's partner cut her leg open and poured cleaning fluid into the wound. In another example, a woman described how her partner went looking for her after his car got stolen. When he found her, he held a knife to her throat:

I had his vehicle and I got carjacked. I called him and told him and he told me, "don't let me find you." That was Friday, I saw him Tuesday. He was looking for me. Before he had hair down to his shoulders in braids, but he shaved it all off before he went looking for me. Wednesday, somebody came up behind me and put his arm around my throat. He threw me down on the ground and held a knife to my throat and said he was going to slit my throat. Somebody talked him out of it... (case #125)

Along with the weapons, a substantial number of incidents described by women in multiple violent relationships also involved injury, some of which were quite severe.

When the following woman confronted her boyfriend about talking to another woman, he attacked her to the point where she ended up in the hospital in a coma:

...I went down there to see who he was talking to on the cell phone. I found out that he was talking to the girl from the bar. I confronted him about it and he attacked me. He knocked me out cold - he grabbed me and slammed me into the cement floor - and that's the last thing I remember. I was in a coma for three months. My left elbow was shattered, my right arm was broken, my right leg was broken, and I had bleeding on my brain. When I was in the hospital, I had two guards outside my door that I didn't know about. He came to see me and told me that if I told anybody about what he did, he would kill me. The guards heard him say that and they arrested him. He got 15 years, he was charged with 2nd degree domestic assault and 2nd degree aggravated domestic assault. (case #133)

Finally, when examining other biographical information about these women, I found that women who described multiple violent relationships were also more likely to report that they had been abused – either physically or sexually – in childhood. This finding is similar to the results presented in the previous chapter that experiences of childhood victimization influence one's likelihood of violence in adulthood. More importantly, this suggests that there is a link between childhood experiences and *multiple* violent relationships. The fact that women who experience violence in childhood are at heightened risks for experiencing violence with multiple partners speaks to the deleterious effect that early experiences of violence can have.

5.5 Similarities of violent incidents across relationships

In previous sections, I presented evidence that suggested that, to some degree, violence is patterned within an intimate relationship. In some cases, couples may argue over the same issue and the arguments tend to escalate into violence. In other cases, women's narratives suggested that their partners' behavior was similar across incidents;

for example, some women described a pattern of sexual assaults by their partners. The narratives from women who have multiple violent relationships, however, provide a unique opportunity to determine whether violence is patterned *across* relationships as well as patterned within a particular relationship. In other words, do women provide similar descriptions of violence they experience from multiple partners?

There seem to be two main similarities in the violence women experience across relationships. First is a context of substance use. Women's own use of drugs – regardless of whether her partner also uses drugs or alcohol – seems to link violent experiences with more than one partner. One woman described a number of violent incidents with two separate men. She told the interviewer that she attributed most of the violence within the relationships to the drugs, not only as the reason why her boyfriends were violent, but also as the reason why she would put up with and stay with them. Another woman described incidents, including one in which it was she who instigated the violence, with two partners that seemed to be associated with her use of alcohol and drugs. With one man, she said:

I wanted to go do drugs and he didn't want me to. I was drinking. I got into his face and started cussing at him, pushing him, and spitting at him. I was trying to kick him and throw shit at him. He held me to the ground trying to calm me down. I called the police on myself. (case #139).

And in another relationship, she suggested that the drugs were the main reason for the violence and described the incident reported earlier in which she and her partner were out looking for drugs and when she got out of the car, he ran her over.

Second, women's own illegal activity not only contributed to their likelihood of experiencing similar incidents within a particular relationship, but also was related to violence they experienced across relationships as well. One woman described how two of

her boyfriends used violence when she refused to prostitute to give them money or to support their drug habits. With one partner she said:

We were getting high. We ran out. I wanted to go home and he didn't. I refused and started walking home; he took my coat and said he wouldn't give it back until I went out on the street. So he hit me a couple times to give me some momentum. I walked home in the cold because I wouldn't do it cause I was too tired, so tired I was seeing things, been up for three days. He wanted me to get money. (case #504)

She reported a similar incident with her next partner as well:

A prostitute was [meant] going to go get money - walk the streets - and I didn't want to walk the streets. I didn't feel like I had to if I didn't want to and he got mad and threw me down the stairs of the apartment building. (case #504)

And, while another woman was able to leave her abusive boyfriend (who actually acted a lot like he was her "pimp"), her own drug addiction ultimately played a role in the violence that occurred within her next intimate relationship. It was while she was involved with this partner that she discovered that she was pregnant:

He had watched my body because I had gained a lot of weight. He bought me a pregnancy test and I took it and found out that I was pregnant. I wanted to leave and he wouldn't let me leave. I was on the computer looking up some kind of domestic violence and treatment stuff and he came down and asked me what was wrong. I said "I'm sitting here smoking and being pregnant." He pulled me off the computer and started hitting me and punched me in the stomach. This was about the most he had ever hit me. He claims that he gets frustrated when I don't talk to him or wait to talk to him while I collect my thoughts. (case #106)

A second incident occurred shortly after she gave birth. Despite the seriousness of her injuries, she did not seek medical attention because child protective services had already begun investigating her situation. She also did not leave the relationship:

I had just came home, two days after having my son. I was sitting at the end of the bed, I was reaching for my cell phone. I said that I was gonna get some dope if he wouldn't give me any. So I called my friend. [My partner] got mad and tried to push me away from my phone and pushed me onto the bed. As I pushed up to try to not lay down and to keep my phone in my hand, then at least 10 out of 150 stitches ripped, I started to bleed. I never went into the hospital because child protective services already were

watching me because they knew I was in an unhealthy relationship and because my son tested positive for cocaine. And I didn't have anyplace else to live.

5.6 Discussion and conclusions

Above, I have presented evidence from the qualitative analysis of data taken from a sample of incarcerated women. Women were asked to provide narrative descriptions of violent incidents that may have occurred within their intimate relationships during the last three years. Because of the truncated reference period (I do not have relationship information for women across their entire life courses), the conclusions I draw are necessarily tentative. Using the information women provided about each of their intimate partners, I was able to categorize them into patterns of violence across relationships that corresponded to the patterns from the quantitative analyses of the NVAWS data. Then, using event structure analysis, I discovered a number of similarities in the structural nature of the violent incidents women described, both within a particular relationship as well as across multiple intimate relationships. For example, some women who described multiple incidents with one partner suggested that arguments about certain “hot button” issues often escalated into violence. Other women described multiple narratives that were similar because of their partners’ behavior in each; in one case, a woman described being choked a number of times by her boyfriend.

I also found similarities within each pattern of violence women experienced. Among those women who “entered” – and remained in – a violent relationship, many of their narratives described the ways in which they and their partner worked things out after a violent incident or worked together to try and prevent future violence. Their narratives also often highlighted their own use of violence, either as the instigator or in fighting

back. I suggested that the fact that they and their partners discussed the relationship coupled with their own willingness to fight back might explain why women remained in these relationships. In contrast, the narratives of women who “exited” violence by leaving the relationship and not becoming involved in another tended to focus on their partners’ attempts to control them and their behavior. In addition, women in this category often described incidents that stemmed from infidelity or jealousy on the part of either partner. Perhaps women who were leaving relationships such as these (involving violence, cheating, and control) were simply not looking to get into another relationship anytime soon.

To some extent, the violence experienced by women who “escaped” violence may have been somewhat more severe. These women, who subsequently become involved in non-violent relationships, described incidents that tended to involve injuries as well as intervention by law enforcement or bystanders. Additionally, it was in these women’s stories that concern arose about their children and the effects of the violence on them. Because their narratives were much less likely to involve their own illegal activity, perhaps these women were better able to find a relationship that did not involve violence once they left the abusive partner.

I also found similarities among the incidents of women who experienced violence across multiple relationships both within relationships as well as across relationships. First, these incidents were more likely to involve sexual assault. Their narratives also more often involved the use of a weapon by their partner and frequently indicated that violence began when they refused to do something that their partner demanded. When comparing incidents across partners, I found that when women were addicted to drugs or

alcohol or when they were involved in illegal activity, they tended to describe similar violent attacks regardless of which partner was involved.

CHAPTER 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter discusses the theoretical, empirical, and policy implications of this research. I first briefly review the central theoretical issues at hand that prompted my specific research questions. Next, I summarize the main findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses. I then provide an overview of the theoretical and methodological implications that stem from this research. Finally, I describe the main policy implications of these findings as well offer future recommendations for research.

6.2 Intimate partner violence within and across intimate relationships

In the first chapter, I described the phenomenon of intimate partner violence and provided various estimates of its prevalence in the United States. Results from three nationally representative surveys suggest that violence between intimate partners is not uncommon. Moreover, there is general consensus that such violence is often repeated more than once within a relationship. And while much research has conceived of IPV as only involving physical violence, there is evidence that other types of violence, including sexual violence, emotional or psychological violence and stalking, may also occur within intimate relationships. Finally, the first chapter briefly reviewed the association between experiences of violence in childhood and later experiences with violence. Specifically, women who are sexually abused in childhood have greater risks of sexual assault in adulthood (Gidycz, Coble, Latham, and Layman 1993; Laumann et al. 1994; Urquiza and Goodlin-Jones 1994; Collins 1998; Krahe et al. 1999; Humphrey and White 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000; Stermac, Reist, Addison, and Millar 2002) and witnessing or experiencing domestic violence within the family of origin also increases a woman's

likelihood for similar experiences within her adult relationships (e.g. Hotaling and Sugarman 1986; Kaufman Kantor and Straus 1989; Richie 1996).

In the second chapter, I drew attention to the relative isolation of IPV from other criminological work on victimization and violence in general. Three categories of specialized theories of family violence exist: intra-individual theory, social psychological theory, and sociocultural theory (Gelles and Straus 1979). While these theories have been widely used to explain women's experiences of intimate partner violence, I argued that they are seriously limited by their inability to account for some of the agreed-upon findings of earlier research. Most importantly, they provide only a static interpretation of violence and do not address violence that women may experience across intimate relationships. Traditional theories of intimate partner violence are not able to explain why the nature or frequency of violent interactions might change at some point within an intimate relationship. And no prediction is offered by these theories as to whether violence within a relationship will decrease over time or even end altogether. Also missing within these traditional theories is an explanation for violence that women may experience in more than one relationship over their lifetime. Drawing on life course theories of stability and change in behavior, I then suggested a new framework for thinking about violence across intimate relationships.

6.3 Description of main findings

This examination of intimate partner violence has been driven by three primary research questions. First, I was interested in the patterning of adult intimate partner victimization among women. Considering women's lifetime experiences of violence, I suggested that these patterns might include no violence in any relationship, violence only

within a previous relationship, and violence that occurs across both previous and current intimate relationships. Moreover, I suggested that women's exits from a violent relationship may entail moving into a non-violent relationship or removing oneself from relationships altogether, at least for a period of time. Using a technique called latent class analysis I empirically tested whether violent victimization experiences of women with both current and previous partners cohere in distinct patterns. I also examined the probabilities of transitions between these patterns as women move from one relationship to another using latent transition analysis. These transition probabilities describe, for example, for a woman moving out of a violent relationship, the likelihood that she would move into another violent relationship, into a non-violent relationship, or out of relationships altogether.

Next, I assessed the degree to which certain known correlates of victimization risk, including age, race, education, and household income, impacted women's patterns of violence within and across relationships. I also assessed the degree to which there may be cumulative effects of early victimization on women's patterns of violence by including a measure of physical victimization in childhood. Whether various patterns of intimate partner violence have differential risk factors is an important empirical question; it also has important implications for policy which I address in another section.

Finally, using information about specific incidents of IPV, I addressed the characteristics that may link violent experiences within and across relationships. In particular, I was interested in the situational and interactional characteristics of a violent episode and the degree to which violent episodes may be patterned within a relationship. For example, is it the case that individuals experience similar violent behaviors (i.e.

choking, hitting, and sexual assault) in multiple episodes? At the same time, I assessed whether certain characteristics of violence also were patterned across relationships; specifically, whether there was something qualitatively different about the violent encounters of women who are involved in multiple violent relationships as opposed to the women who are involved in only one violent relationship. Thus, to empirically examine the patterning of intimate partner violence both within and across women's relationships, this research has used data from a large-scale, nationally representative survey as well as narratives taken from a jail sample describing incidents of violence. Overall, these results suggest at least four general conclusions.

First, results from the NVAWS suggest that women report experiencing more violence within their previous relationships as opposed to with their current partners. The numbers of women reporting physical violence in current relationships were relatively low and, in general, decreased as the severity of such violence increased. In contrast, between fifteen and thirty percent of women who reported a previous relationship also experienced physical violence in that relationship. Sexual assault and stalking were also more common among previous relationships. There are two different ways to interpret these findings. On the one hand, these results might suggest that women report less violence with a current partner because when they do experience violence (as with previous partners) they do not remain in the relationship. In contrast, such findings may suggest that women tend to describe a past relationship more negatively than a current relationship; perhaps this is to provide a justification for leaving the relationship. In either case, that women report more extensive (and diverse) experiences with violence within previous relationships suggests that an approach that focuses only on violence

experienced with a current partner, or within a marital relationship if that marriage is still intact, may actually under-estimate the prevalence of intimate partner violence.

Second, the results emphasize the diversity of women's experiences with intimate partner violence. These analyses build on previous work (Macmillan and Gartner 1999; Carbone-López, Macmillan, and Kruttschnitt 2006; Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006) that also examines the patterning of intimate partner violence. Results from the latent class analyses with the NVAWS data suggest that women's experiences with violence within their current intimate relationship can be classified into four distinct categories; most women experience essentially no violence with their current partner, a smaller group experiences non-physical rather than physical violence, and a very small proportion reports multifaceted experiences of violence, including sexual assault and stalking, or what I refer to as systematic abuse. The fourth category characterizes women who did not report a current intimate relationship. Similarly, the latent class results also suggest that women's experiences with a *previous* intimate partner also fall into four distinct classes. The majority of women were not involved in a previous relationship, but of those who were, most reported low-level physical violence with their ex-partner. A smaller group of women reported experiences of physical abuse within their previous relationship and even fewer women reported multifaceted experiences of violence.

In chapter four, I also presented probabilities that described the likelihood of transitioning from a particular class of violence with a previous partner to a class of violence within a current relationship. These transition probabilities suggest that women who begin in the category of very low-level physical violence with a previous partner tend to exit relationships altogether and are much less likely to enter a subsequent

relationship and, if they do, it is most likely a non-violent relationship. In contrast, women who experience physical assault in their previous intimate relationships are more likely to transition into a current relationship that involves non-physical violence and much less likely to enter a relationship that involves physical assault or a relationship that is non-violent. This suggests that there is some stability across relationships in women's experiences of violence, but the violence may come in different forms depending on the partner. In contrast, beginning in a relationship that involves systematic abuse is equally likely to result in women transitioning into a subsequent relationship that also involves systematic abuse or out of relationships altogether. Finally, women who are not involved with an ex-partner are more likely to be involved in a current non-violent relationship. Together, these transition probabilities suggest that the tendency for most women is what might be considered a "normative" progression of events in the life course; individuals move from being single into a non-violent relationship. And, there is evidence for both continuity and change when examining the experience of intimate partner violence across relationships.

The results from the multinomial logistic regression analyses indicate that there are two significant main effects that violence within a previous relationship has on movement into various categories within their current relationship. Women who experienced systematic violence within a previous relationship are less likely to be involved in a current relationship characterized by systematic violence. At the same time, women moving out of systematic violence are less likely to report no current partner; in other words, they are significantly less likely to remain single after moving out of violence.

Race, age, education, and household income all have significant effects on women's likelihood of membership in categories of violence for both previous and current relationships. Specifically, for previous relationships, age and education level both decrease the odds that women will report previous partner violence. White women are significantly less likely to report multiple intimate relationships. And as household income increases, the likelihood of having a previous partner is reduced. In terms of current relationships, age increases the likelihood of having no current partner – perhaps because it increases the likelihood a woman has experienced divorce, separation, or death of a partner – but decreases the likelihood that women experience non-physical abuse within a relationship. White women are less likely to report that they are single (not in a current relationship); being white also decreases a woman's probability of systematic or non-physical abuse within a current relationship. Household income has a significant negative effect as well; women who report higher household incomes are less likely to report experiencing systematic abuse from a current partner and less likely to report that that they have no current partner.

Moreover, controlling for the same demographic factors, a history of childhood victimization also has a significant impact on women's transition patterns of violence. Specifically, early experiences with violence decrease the likelihood that women will have no ex-partner but increase their likelihood of various forms of violence by both previous and current partners. Consistently, evidence suggests that childhood victimization also heightens the risk of other types of victimization later in the life course. So the fact that it has a strong and significant effect in these analyses is not surprising. However, the fact that a history of violence also increases the likelihood that

women will report multiple intimate partners suggests that the effects of victimization have broader implications across life stages as well as across relationships.

Taken together, the existence of these distinct classes and transitions of violence pushes the study of intimate partner violence forward. Traditionally, scholars in this area have conceptualized intimate partner violence in terms of discrete forms of violence, for example, mainly differentiating between physical violence and sexual assault (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006). But these results suggest that all violent relationships are not equal. Furthermore, they suggest a conceptualization of intimate partner violence that looks beyond one particular relationship and, instead, emphasizes the movement into and out of relationships. The results also suggest that childhood victimization heightens a woman's later vulnerability to intimate partner violence and, importantly, her risk of experiencing multiple violent relationships.

While these quantitative analyses are informative and offer an initial understanding of the patterns of violence within and across women's intimate relationships, they still provide only an epidemiological overview of the problem of intimate partner violence. To learn more about the nature of the violence that women may experience within a particular relationship, and whether violence is similar across relationships, I also analyzed individual violent incidents reported by women in a jail sample.

The analyses with the incarcerated sample also addressed the patterning of intimate partner violence within and across relationships. While the NVAWS data were used to provide an overall estimate of the proportion of women who transition into and out of violent relationships, the data from the incarcerated sample of women served to

examine the details of specific violent episodes between partners. Using event structure analysis, I found that the structures of violent incidents were similar within transition patterns of violence. For example, among those who “entered” – and remained in – a violent relationship, women’s narratives often included their own use of violence during an incident or their strategies of “working things out” after the violence was done. Both of these factors may assist in understanding why these women remained in their relationships; such women may have realized that they had less to lose and more to gain by remaining with their partner. In contrast, the narratives of women who “exited” violence by leaving the relationship and not becoming involved in another relationship focused more frequently on infidelity as the reason for violence or on their partners’ attempts to control them. In such cases, women may have been hesitant to enter another relationship immediately after leaving their violent partner.

There may be fewer differences between women who exit relationships altogether and those who escape violence and become involved with another non-violent relationship. However, to some extent, the violence experienced by women who “escaped” violence may have been somewhat more severe compared to women in other patterns. The incidents these women described tended to involve injuries as well as intervention by law enforcement or bystanders. At the same time, it was only in their narratives that women’s concerns about their children, and the effects of violence on them, were apparent. While one cannot know for sure, perhaps it is because of their concern over their children that these women were willing to enter new relationships; rather than be a single parent, they opted to continue to look for a suitable partner. And because the narratives of these women rarely involved their own illegal activity, perhaps

these women were better able to find a relationship that did not involve violence once they left the abusive partner.

It is the experiences of women who report violence in multiple relationships, however, that are most important in providing a “biographical” image of victimization. First, their life histories are somewhat more likely to include physical or sexual victimization in childhood. This again highlights the cumulative effect that early victimization may have over the life span. In describing incidents within a single relationship, the narratives of these women were more likely to include sexual assault and weapon use. Additionally, women were more likely to describe incidents that began when they refused to do what their partner demanded of them. Further, women’s drug or alcohol use as well as their involvement in illegal activity (particularly prostitution) are the common denominator when comparing incidents *across* partners. This may mean that some women, because of their lifestyle, may be more prone to experiencing violence across relationships. An alternative explanation might be that the effect of early victimization is mediated by women’s involvement in illegal activity and substance use.

In sum, quantitative analyses of a national sample of women demonstrate the existence of various transition patterns of violence across intimate relationships. More simply, women’s experiences of intimate partner violence are not static; they move into and out of violent relationships at various points in their lives. Data from a sample of incarcerated women in Minnesota also support the patterns of violence within and across relationships found in the national sample. The primary difference was that the proportion of women who transitioned from one violent relationship to another within the jailed sample was much higher. And, importantly, when more closely examining the

nature of the violence women experience in multiple relationships, it seems that their own substance use and illegal activity may link their experiences over time.

6.4 Theoretical significance and methodological implications of this research

A number of large scale surveys have been undertaken in the last two decades to estimate the prevalence of violence between intimates in this country and internationally. While specific estimates may differ across surveys, the results certainly do not suggest that intimate partner violence is a rare occurrence. Overall, there is general agreement across datasets that a sizeable proportion of women, at least in the United States, experiences some form of violence within their intimate relationship every year and the estimates for lifetime experiences are even higher. Thus, rather than continue to fund (multi-million dollar) research efforts to collect data to ascertain the prevalence of this phenomenon, it seems that research in this field should consider changing its scope (and budget) somewhat. Specifically, researchers need to expand their thinking of intimate partner violence away from the idea that it is confined within a particular relationship. Many existing surveys and interviews on the subject only ask women about a current relationship and whether it is violent; in other cases, the focus may be more on the multiple *types* of violence women may experience within their current relationship. However, there is now evidence to suggest that women report more violence within a *previous* relationship and thus it may ultimately provide a more accurate “biographical” image (Kruttschnitt and Macmillan 2006) if researchers questioned women about all of their previous relationships and whether they were violent. And focusing on women’s *movement* into and out of various intimate relationships, particularly on their explanations for leaving specific relationships, will be useful for understanding IPV as well as

relationship processes more generally. Bottom line, the focus should be on information depth, as opposed to breadth.

Second, the qualitative results suggesting that women who are, to some degree, embedded in crime or drugs, may be at greater risks for intimate partner violence should not be dismissed. For too long, researchers in this field have been unwilling to make claims that some might call “blaming the victim” but the reality seems to be that these women *are* more vulnerable to victimization. In this case, one is reminded of the original arguments of Hindelang and colleagues (1978); lifestyle, however conceived, seems to play a large role in determining victimization risk and does so for both “street” violence as well as violence in the home. Regardless of the political correctness of such results, they have implications both for advancement of the field as well as for policy.

Finally, these results also suggest new theories that situate intimate partner violence within the life course. Drawing on theories of stability and change allows for the possibility of understanding women’s movements into and out of violent relationships and directly addresses key empirical evidence about the phenomenon of intimate partner violence. In contrast, existing (specialized) theories of IPV seem to miss the mark. Overwhelmingly, they explain offender behavior rather than victimization experiences and, while there is ample research that documents this correlation between earlier and later victimization experiences, serious attempts to explain this phenomenon have not yet been made. The ultimate task should be to explain *why* there is continuity in violence and victimization across the life span.

6.5 Limitations of these findings and suggestions for future research

While the research discussed here has provided empirical evidence for patterns of

intimate violence within and across relationships, the results are limited in that they only examine the transition between two relationships. Including additional information on earlier relationships may suggest different transition patterns. For example, women may move from a violent relationship to one that is non-violent and finally move back into a violent relationship again. At the same time, only women's *adult* intimate relationships were considered within these analyses. However, dating or courtship relationships in adolescence are linked to attachment history (Collins and Sroufe 1999) and may also influence subsequent intimate relationships. Thus, future research should also consider experiences of violence within early dating relationships.

The analyses with the WEV data were further limited by the fact that the reference period was only 36 months. As these results have suggested, women's lives and their intimate relationships are incredibly dynamic, thus including data from such a short period of time may influence the particular patterns, and their distribution, found here. Some of the women, when interviewed, suggested that they had exited violent relationships many years earlier. Thus, the violent incidents included in these analyses may be a conservative estimate of the total violence in lives of these women. Nevertheless, these findings should be replicated using information from other high-risk samples, including samples taken from battered women's shelters.

Further research is also needed in order to understand the mechanisms through which childhood experiences operate to produce various patterns of intimate partner violence in adulthood. While these results suggest that childhood victimization is associated with women's patterns and trajectories of IPV in adulthood, they do not really provide any information on *how* these experiences are linked. Perhaps other early life

factors mediate the relationship between child and adult experiences of violence. For example, earlier research finds a link between violence within the family of origin, delinquent behavior, and subsequent re-victimization (e.g. McCormick, Burgess and Gaccione 1986; McCormick, Janus and Burgess 1986; Whitbeck and Simons 1990; Hagan and McCarthy 1997). Thus, one's own delinquent behavior, which is influenced by early experiences with victimization, may contribute to intimate partner violence in adulthood. The qualitative analyses provide some support for this and suggest that not only does one's deviant behavior influence their likelihood of IPV, but it also is associated with violence women experience across relationships.

Finally, other factors that were not able to be fully tested in these models should be examined to determine their role in women's relationship formation. First, the role of environment and its effect on "marriage markets" should be investigated. In other words, to what extent does a person's social location influence with whom they partner? This may be a way of explaining how violence may continue across relationships; if women's choices for a partner are constrained because of where they live or due to other social factors, they may have fewer opportunities to escape violence and move into non-violent relationships. Further, with the perception that there is a limited supply of eligible Black men due to the massive growth in incarceration over the past two decades (Pattillo, Weiman and Western 2004), women may be more inclined to tolerate violence in their relationships with Black men and thus, a partner's race and social location may also be important to consider. And, because only a handful of women in the jail sample described their children as their motivation for leaving violent relationships, no definite conclusions can be drawn about the role of children in women's transitions into and out of violent

relationships. Future research should specifically address these shortcomings.

6.6 Policy issues and implications

Overall, this research points to two main policy implications. First, and perhaps most importantly, the existence of various patterns of violence suggests that those who work with victims of violence should adopt different strategies depending on whether a woman is leaving a violent relationship or experiences violence across relationships. In addition, given the focus within the medical community on screening for intimate partner violence, it seems appropriate that the screening address the patterning of violence as well. Again, the focus in screening is largely on a woman's current situation. But it is useful to know whether a woman has left a violent partner or if she has experienced multiple violent relationships. This will help researchers identify various strategies that are successful and can assist women in escaping violence as well as develop specific interventions and treatments to help women cope with their violent relationships.

Moreover, given that substance use and embeddedness in crime appear to make women particularly vulnerable to intimate partner violence, intervention and treatment efforts may need to be more coordinated. For example, drug dependency intervention should include coinciding assessments for intimate partner violence as well as strategies for escaping violence. And programs for incarcerated women should address IPV as well.

Second, given the potentially disastrous effect of childhood victimization, it seems important to focus on identifying victims of child abuse and addressing it while they are still young and before they enter their own intimate relationships. In these cases, efforts should be made to both prevent child abuse and to preemptively address the lifetime consequences of such abuse. Specifically, understanding the mechanisms by

which child victimization may lead to experiences of violence in adulthood will offer alternative points for such interventions and may reduce the disastrous effect of these experiences both in the short and long term.

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