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Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence

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Physical assault on a partner in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabiting, or dating, may be the most prevalent type of violent crime. Among students in Canada and the USA, numerous studies of dating couples found annual prevalence rates of about 30% (Sugarman and Hotaling 1989). Studies of Canadian and US married and cohabiting couple household show that intimate partner violence (IPV from here on) occurs in about 16% of such households a year (Straus and Gelles 1990a). The higher rate among university students is probably because they are in the prime ages for violent crime. Over the course of a marital or cohabiting relationship, the figure is about 30% (Gelles and Straus 1988; Straus and Gelles 1986; Straus and Gelles 1990a). Moreover, the true rate of IPV may be twice as high (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980, 34-36). If so, the majority of American couples have experienced at least one violent incident. The annual rate of 16% is about six times higher than the rate of assaults by non-family members reported in the US National Crime Victimization Survey (Rennison 2001). The situation is similar in many other countries (Archer 2000; Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottemoeller 1999, December).

Most of the assaults are minor, such as slapping and throwing something at a partner. Legal intervention in the form of arrest of a perpetrator occurs in less than one in a hundred marital assaults in the USA (Kaufman Kantor and Straus 1990). However, if those minor assaults were between non-family members, legal intervention would be much more likely. Even for more serious and injurious assaults against a partner, arrests occur in less than one in ten cases of more severe assaults (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). If the police were to intervene in a much larger percent of incidents, they would be overwhelmed because the prevalence rates mentioned above would call for millions of arrests of offenders. Moreover, there would be millions of victims in need of shelters and other services and millions of offenders in need of treatment. It is unlikely that there will ever be enough police, prisons or treatment programs for more than a fraction of offenders, or enough shelters for more than a fraction of victims. Thus, as with many other crime and mental health problems, IPV will continue unless there is a substantial investment in preventing it from occurring in the first place.

Given these statistics, the objective of this chapter is to identify what is currently being done to prevent IPV and to suggest new approaches. Part A defines the concept of "primary prevention." Part B identifies existing prevention programs. Part C

reviews criminological theories and deduces the prevention steps they imply. For an analysis of prevention steps organized somewhat differently than this chapter, see Straus, 1980 and (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980)

1. The Concepts of Intimate Partner Violence and Primary Prevention

1.1. Definition of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

The concept of "IPV" is used in both a narrow and a broad sense. The narrow usage refers to acts of physical assault on a partner in a dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship. The broad usage refers to any behavior that demeans or controls the partner, including sexual coercion and psychological attacks. This chapter focuses exclusively on acts of physical assault and therefore uses a narrow definition of IPV.

The focus on physical assault is not based on a belief that other modes of attacking a partner are unimportant. Psychological attacks are equally painful psychologically and be more harmful psychologically. A partner can be driven to suicide without ever lifting a finger. We focus exclusively on physical assaults because they are most clearly criminal acts, and because we believe that, although physical and non-physical attacks on a partner have some things in common, they also differ in important ways. Thus, prevention steps for each of the phenomena covered by a broad definition of IPV needs to be analyzed separately. Doing that for all modes of demeaning and controlling a partner with sufficient specificity to be useful would exceed the length of this chapter.

Even restricting IPV to physical assaults requires differentiating between types of IPV. Johnson, for example, identifies "common couple violence" and "patriarchal terrorism" (Johnson 1995; Johnson and Ferraro 2000); Straus distinguishes between "ordinary" or "minor" violence and "chronic severe violence" (Straus 1990); and Holtzworth-Munroe and Stewart identify "family only," "generally violent-antisocial," and "dysphoric-borderline" types (Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart 1994). These types are almost certain to have a different etiology (see for example (Macmillan and Gartner 1999) and to require a different approach to prevention. For example, chronic severe assaults on a partner tends to be associated with mental health problems. Consequently, efforts to prevent or reduce mental health problems need to be a major part of the prevention strategy. On the other hand, the ordinary violence of intimate partner relationships tends to be mutual and is rarely associated with mental health problems. However, it is associated with dominance of one partner (who can be either the male or female partner) in a relationship and with attitudes accepting violence as a means of correcting behavior that the violent partner perceives as un-

acceptable. Consequently prevention efforts for minor violence need to be directed toward women as well as men, and need to focus on conflict resolution

1.2. Primary Prevention

The concept of primary prevention originated in the fields of public health and mental health. To apply the definition of primary prevention (Cowen 1978, 8) to IPV, it consists of actions to lower the incidence of IPV by counteracting harmful circumstances before they have had a chance to produce violence. It does not seek to prevent a specific person from committing a violent act; instead, primary prevention seeks to reduce the risk for a whole population. The outcome envisioned as a result of primary prevention is that, although some individuals may continue to be violent, their number will be reduced.

Primary prevention can be achieved in a number of ways. Two of the classic methods are altering the environment and education. For example, cholera has been prevented by environmental changes such as modern water and sewage treatment, and by education on drinking only from safe sources and personal hygiene. Another environmental change is to provide resources that will block a disease, for example, access to adequate housing to prevent overcrowding and tuberculosis. The following sections describe environmental changes and educational approaches to preventing IPV at the societal, familial, and individual levels. Some of these approaches, such as the criminalization of IPV, were undertaken with IPV as the target. Others, such as the efforts of parent educators to provide alternatives to corporal punishment were not undertaken with IPV in mind. For still other changes, such as the movement for gender equality and the growth in family counseling and therapy, ending IPV was a secondary consideration.

Primary prevention has been inherent in the feminist approach to IPV because feminists believe that male dominance in the family and in society is the cause of IPV. The feminist campaign to change society in ways that will bring about equality between men and women is therefore a primary prevention effort. Criminologists, however, have seldom addressed primary prevention of IPV, despite the fact that calls to police reporting IPV are more frequent than calls about any other type of crime (Sherman, Schmidt, and Rogan 1992).

Almost all books and articles with the goal of "stopping," "preventing" or "ending" IPV in their title, (National advisory council on violence against women. 2001) focus on how to stop offenders from repeating the crime rather than on steps to prevent the occurrence of IPV in the first place. They address secondary rather than primary prevention. Because this chapter is on primary prevention, programs and policies to prevent re-offending such as arrest and prosecution (Sherman, Schmidt, and Rogan 1992) and batterer treatment programs (Gondolf 2002) will not be reviewed. How-

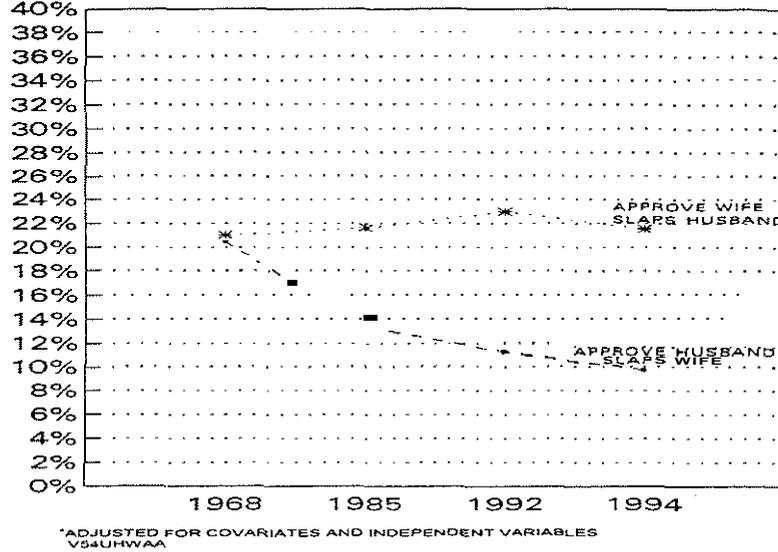
ever, primary and secondary prevention are not mutually exclusive categories. Some policies and programs serve both purposes. For example, shelters for battered women, in addition to aiding victims, make an important contribution to primary prevention through community education programs and through empowering women. The "shelter" or "safe house" movement has contributed to changing the social norms that have categorized a certain level of IPV as "a family matter" and therefore implicitly tolerate it. The presence of a shelter in a community lets potential victims know that they do not have to tolerate being assaulted because there is a place to go. Having this alternative may increase the likelihood of clearly indicating to a partner that violence will not be tolerated. Research on steps partners have taken to stop IPV shows that, although it is not always effective, a clear signal that violence will not be tolerated is the single most effective step (Gelles and Straus 1988).

Criminal justice interventions are another example of overlap between primary and secondary prevention. The concepts of "general deterrence" and "specific deterrence" partly overlap with the concepts of primary and secondary prevention. Arrest and prosecution of IPV offenders and other legal sanctions can result in deterring an offender from re-offending (secondary prevention), and it can "serve as a warning" and deter potential offenders (primary prevention).

2. Existing Prevention Activities and Programs

Like other crime, IPV has multiple causes. The positive aspect of the multiple causes is that each of them provides an opportunity for a preventative intervention. However, it also means that even a program that is highly successful in removing one of the causes of IPV, will have only a small impact on the overall prevalence of IPV. Many prevention steps are needed to deal with the many causes. This section of the chapter will demonstrate that many steps have been taken. Moreover, there has been a substantial decline in the prevalence of IPV during the last 30 years. Results from the National Family Violence Surveys (Straus and Gelles 1990b) show a decrease in public acceptance of men slapping their wives (Figure 1) and a decrease in the rate of severe assaults on women by male partners (Figure 2). A completely different data source, the National Crime Victimization Surveys, shows a similar pattern of decline in rates of IPV (Figure 3). Finally, still another distinct source of data, the Uniform Crime Reports compiled by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, shows that homicide of intimate partners has also decreased (Figure 4). It is likely that the prevention steps described in this section have had a substantial cumulative effect and that this has contributed to the decades long-decline in rates of IPV in the USA shown in Figures 1 through 4. However, there is no direct evidence linking these programs to the decrease.

Figure 1. Trends in Percent Who Agreed That "There are situation in which it is ok to slap [a wife's] [a husband's] face" (Four US national samples as reported in Straus, Kaufman Kantor, & Moore, 1997)



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Figure 2. Trends in Minor And Severe Assaults By Male And Female Partners (Three US national samples and reported in Straus & Kaufman Kantor, 1994)

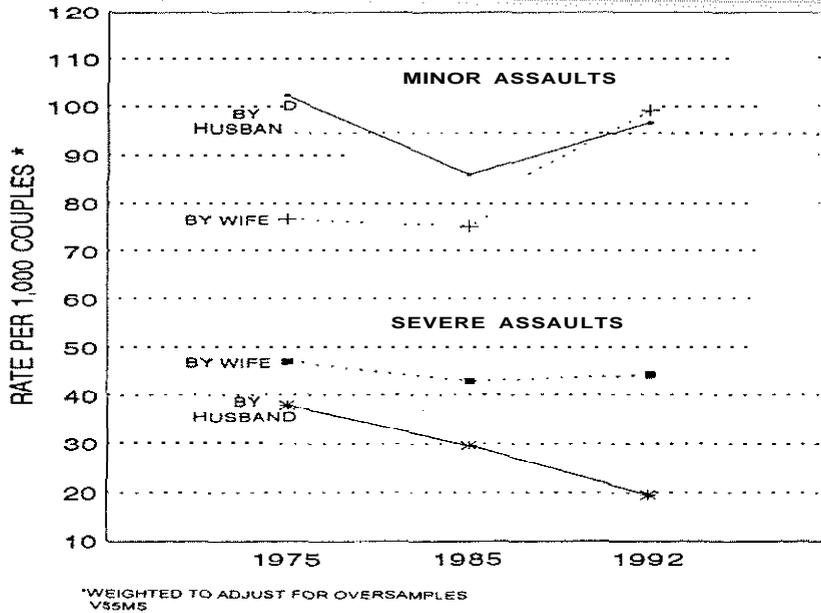


Figure 3. Trends In Perpetration Of Violence Against An Intimate Partner By Males And Females. Reported In The US National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993 to 1998 (Rates per 1.000 persons of each gender. Rates were converted from victimization rates given in Rennison and Welchans, 2000 Figure 1).

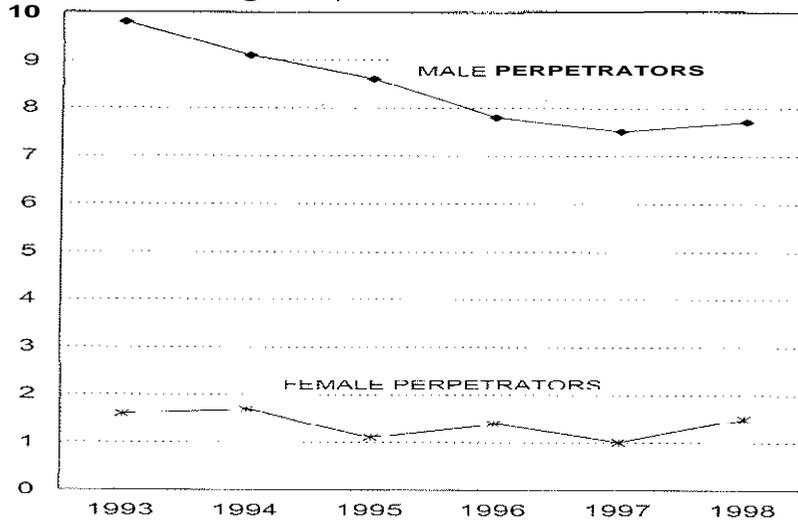
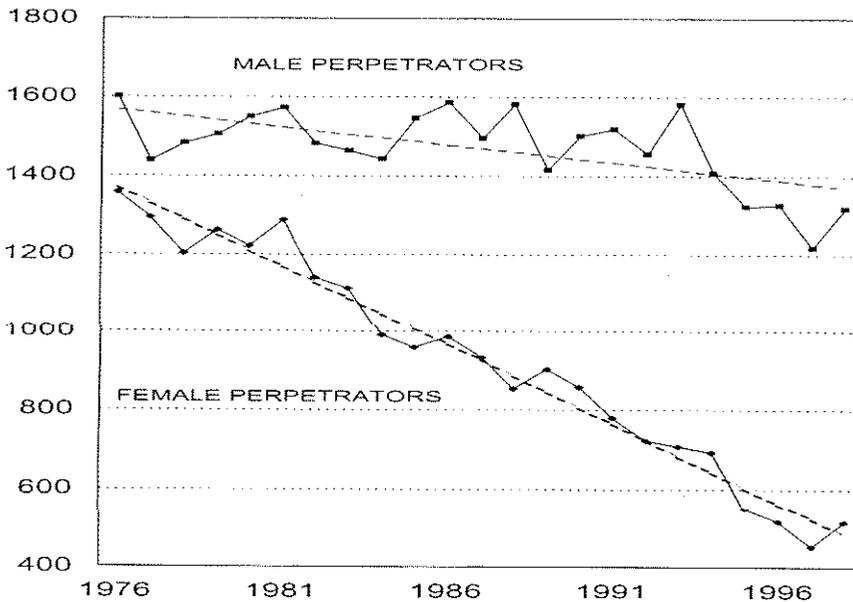


Figure 4. Trends In Intimate Partner Homicide Victimization, USA, 1976 to 1998, data from Rennison & Welchans, 2000, Appendix Table 2.



2.1 Societal Level Primary Prevention

2.1.1 Criminal Justice System

A major cause of the high rate of IPV in many societies is the carry-over of legal and cultural norms that previously gave husbands the right to use corporal punishment to correct misbehavior by their wives. In Western societies these laws were terminated by the end of the 19th century (Calvert 1974). However they continued in the informal norms of most Western societies. The marriage license was a kind of implicit hitting license provided there was no serious injury (Stets and Straus 1989; Straus and Hotaling 1980). A century later, a new round of legal reforms occurred in the form of "domestic violence" legislation. From the point of view of primary prevention, the importance of this legislation was in strengthening the presumed "general deterrence" effect of criminal sanctions by explicitly stating that hitting a partner is a criminal assault and specifying penalties for such assaults. For example, prior to the mid 1970's police were trained to avoid intervening in such "family matters." Legal and moral pressure from feminists forced a change in 1976 (International Association of Chiefs of Police 1976). Even then, it took new "domestic violence" legislation to help make sure that the police treated IPV in the same way as other assaults (Buzawa and Buzawa 1992; Hilton 1993; Roberts 2002).

The effort to make wife-beating a "real crime" is one of the major achievements of the women's movement in many countries. In the United States, for example, public attitudes and the practices of the criminal justice system tolerating male violence toward women partners have changed drastically. Three independent sets of data show that in the USA, the rate of violence against women by male partners has also decreased (see Figures 1-4) (Rennison 2000; Rosenfeld 1997; Straus 1995; Straus and Gelles 1986).

Many nations have enacted legal reform to establish or emphasize the criminal nature of IPV. An example is the Swedish Violence Against Women Act which expanded prosecutorial powers to pursue assailants (Elman 2001). In the United States, the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 (LaViolette and Barnett 2000) accelerated many changes in the way the criminal justice system deals with IPV, including creation of specialized courts and domestic violence telephone hotlines. It can also be presumed to have contributed to primary prevention by framing violence against women as an especially serious form of violence and by efforts to make it a major focus of the criminal justice system.

The United Nations made violence against women a priority issue. In 1985, the UN adopted the Domestic Violence Resolution as a human rights issue. Member states are urged to consider laws proscribing IPV and to provide remedies (Wolfgang 1989). Nations that have not criminalized IPV are classified as violating internationally recognized norms relating to human rights. A document published by the United Nations

Development Fund for Women (2000) declares that "Violence against women and girls constitutes the single most prevalent and universal violation of human rights." The UN Committee on Crime Prevention and Control has taken a leading role in this effort. The UN continues to expand its role in the creation of human rights standards in the area of criminal justice and in assisting and monitoring implementation of those standards.

2.1.2. Workplace

Equality between partners in intimate relationships requires equality between men and women in all spheres of society because non-family economic and symbolic resources provide a basis for exerting power in the family. Consequently, one of the most fundamental steps toward primary prevention of IPV is the movement to end male dominance in society (Straus 1976), including economic, legal, and political inequality (Sugarman and Straus 1988).

Although tremendous progress has been made toward gender equality in many countries, the process has hardly begun in some and has reversed in others. The United Nations has undertaken many initiatives to promote gender equality. It has established a Division For the Advancement Of Women, which acts as a focal point for coordination and mainstreaming the many UN activities, including the UN Commission on the Status of Women and regional commissions on women. At the UN sponsored World Conference on Women, in Beijing in 1995, representatives of 186 nations adopted the Beijing Platform of Action. Countries that follow this platform became obligated under international law to eliminate discrimination and violence against women in all its forms (Jejeebhoy and Cook 1997).

2.1.3. Educational System

Education programs in conflict resolution and interpersonal skills as preventive measures have been implemented in a number of countries and the need for such programs has become widely recognized. For example, the Volga Division of the All-Russian Research Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a survey to determine possibilities for improving the prevention of conflicts in the home and family. This study recommended preventing IPV by educating the youth in peaceful conflict resolution skills, family relations skills, and mutual rights of family members (Kochetkova 2000).

In the United States, school-based violence prevention programs became popular during the 1980s and can be found at all levels of the educational system. Breen, Daro, and Romano (1991) found that 85% of elementary school districts surveyed offered intimate violence prevention programs, with 65% of these districts making

such programs mandatory. Results from the 1995 National Youth Survey, (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1995) showed that 67% of students surveyed had been exposed to victimization prevention programs. Evaluation studies have found that youth who are exposed to school-based programs are less accepting of IPV (Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, and Killip 1992; O'Neal and Wenzler Dorn 1998; Wolfe, Werklerle, Gough, Reitzel-Jaffee, Grasley, Pittman, Lefebvre, and Stumpf 1996), and are more knowledgeable of characteristics and consequences of intimate violence and protection skills (Daro and McCurdy 1994; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1995; Wurtele and Miller-Perrin 1992). Thus, a large proportion of American youth have received violence prevention education and there is evidence that the message has been communicated.

Prevention programs in colleges include workshops, conferences, guest-lecturers, posters, brochures, newspaper articles, and campus activities such as "Take Back the Night" etc., (Roscoe and Benaske 1985). These programs and activities focus on violence against women as unacceptable in intimate relationships, the use of non-violent conflict resolution skills, and, in the case of date rape, self-defense. These programs tend to focus on altering the attitudes and behavior of men (e.g. see Lenihan, Rawlins, Eberly, Buckley, and Masters 1992) and ignore IPV by women. If these programs contribute to preventing IPV, the same message needs to be delivered for all IPV, not just IPV by men.

2.1.4 Technology and Mass Media

Public attention to the mass media has focused almost exclusively on the degree to which the media has provided models for and incentives for violence, including IPV. There is a strong element in popular music which is both misogynist and violent. Films, TV, videotapes and electronic games have a huge violence component. Although research on media violence has produced inconsistent results studies and meta-analyses of previous research clearly indicate a violence enhancing effect. These studies concluded that reducing the amount of exposure will reduce aggressive behavior (Robinson 2001). A meta-analytic review of research on exposure to violent video games concluded that they increase aggressive behavior, thoughts, and feelings and also reduces pro-social behavior (Anderson and Bushman 2001). Recent technological advances, such as V-chips in television, allow parents to block violent programming. In 2001, 40% of parents in the USA owned a TV with a "V-Chip" that in principle can block violent programming (Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation 1999). However, only about 7% of parents actually use it to block undesirable programs. This is partly because V-chips and blocking programs do not work well and often block material that parents want children to view. Perhaps with improvement in the technology, blocking programs will be able to make a larger contribution to this aspect of violence prevention.

Although the violence-promoting aspect of the media is widely recognized, it is also likely that the media has made, and continues to make, a major contribution to primary prevention of violence, including IPV. Part of this is the result of public-service advertisements and programs explicitly intended to raise awareness and consciousness of IPV and to educate the public about the norms, characteristics, and services available for family violence. In Iztacalco, Mexico, a mass media public awareness campaign was used to compel a change in legislation and raised public awareness of wife abuse (Fawcett, Heise, Isita-Espejel, and Pick 1999).

An even more powerful prevention effect may occur through themes that enter the media as a result of writers and directors efforts to tap into current public concerns. When child abuse became a national concern in the United States, almost every television serial and prime-time drama included many episodes depicting and condemning physical and sexual abuse of children. Similarly, when wife-beating became a national concern, these television programs included episodes that implicitly or explicitly identified and condemned physical and psychological attacks on women. The film and TV show based on *The Burning Bed* (McNulty 1980) is only the most famous of a large genre.

2.1.5. Community Programs

Community programs may prevent IPV through altering the social environment and through education. One aspect of change in the social environment is efforts to facilitate informal social and familial networks to intervene in domestic disputes and act as informal social control. For example, in Ecuador close friends or relatives (*compadres*) are assigned to monitor newlyweds and intervene in serious conflict. In the Marshall Islanders of Oceania, village elders confront and chastise spousal abuse (Counts, Brown, and Campbell 1992). The General-secretary of Social Affairs in Spain created a national network to identify and support female victims of violence (Bosch 1998). The educational aspect is illustrated by community programs in the United States that use music, plays and magazines to teach teen-agers nonviolent, gender-respectful interaction and self-esteem building (National advisory council on violence against women and the violence against women office 2001, p. 3, ch 10).

2.1.6. Medical and Public Health Programs

Most of the effort of medical service providers and institutions has been in providing guidelines for diagnosing and treating victims of abuse (Schorstein 1997) and domestic violence and is now a part of medical school curricula (Alpert and Cohen 1997; Smith, Danis, and Helmick 1998). These programs are secondary prevention but some public health efforts have been directed toward IPV. The former U.S. Surgeon General, Jocelyn Elders, advocated community support, realistic role models,

education and training, and job opportunities as prevention strategies for family violence (Elders 1994). The US Public Health Service has supported a large amount of research on all aspects of IPV, with emphasis on studies of etiology that could suggest primary prevention steps, and research on school programs teaching youth conflict resolution skills (Wolfe and Jaffe 1999); reducing use of violent language (Sidel and Wesley 1995), educating and empowering women (Beatty 2000; Stark and Flitcraft 1988), recognizing cultural variation in causes of abuse (Barnes 2001), community and interagency collaboration, including healthcare agencies (Public Health Reports 1998; Wielichowski, Knuteson, Ambuel, and Lahti 1999), and home visitation to assist families (Eckenrode, Ganzel, Henderson, Smith, Olds, Powers, Cole, Kitzman, and Sidora 2000; Gomby 2000).

2.1.7. Religious Institutions

In the USA, some religious groups have contributed to primary prevention through participating in changes in family structure and roles and through education. In respect to family structure, most denominations have accepted divorce and therefore made escape from violent marriages more feasible. "Mainline" Christian denominations have largely abandoned the "obey" part of the marriage vows and the duty of wives to acknowledge the superior power of husbands. To the extent that fundamentalist Christians reject this change, it contributes to maintaining gender inequality as a risk factor for IPV. In some Muslim nations the fundamentalist movement has mandated increased gender inequality and also mandated the most severe form of IPV, so-called "honor killing" (Jehl 1999; United Nations Development Fund 2000). Despite the efforts of the United Nations and indigenous women's movements, the attempts to repeal legislation permitting honor killings failed to gain approval by parliaments in Pakistan in 1999 and in Jordan in 2001. However, the very fact that repeal legislation was introduced reflects the underlying forces for change. There are also reputable scholars who believe that national dominance by Muslim fundamentalists is an aberration that is destined to end (Kepel 2002)

In respect to educational contributions, the advice of churches on corporal punishment by parents is crucial. Corporal punishment is the primordial violence experienced by children because it typically begins at age two or younger and because it is experienced by close to 100% of children in the USA and many other countries (Straus 2001; Straus In Press 2004). Because it is presumed to be done for the child's own good, corporal punishment is a primary basis for the moral justification of all violence, including IPV. In the USA, Quakers seem to be the only denomination that has explicitly advised parents to never use corporal punishment. However, except for Christian fundamentalists, other denominations no longer actively promote corporal punishment.

Another educational contribution could be preaching non-violence in interpersonal and family relations. The Catholic Church and some other religious groups conduct preparation for marriage courses and retreats. However, IPV is rarely addressed. We were unable to locate research on the extent this is being done or its effectiveness in reducing intimate violence.

2.1.8. Military

After years of denying and ignoring IPV, all branches of the US military have major programs to counter IPV. The main focus is secondary prevention such as batterer treatment programs and intimate violence protocols for military police, and provisions to expel abusers from the military while also assuring economic support for victims, and family counseling. There are also primary prevention programs focused on understanding the causes and dynamics of intimate violence, prevalence rates, and impact on victims (National advisory council on violence against women and the violence against women office 2001, p.4, Chapter 15), but the personnel to whom they are addressed is limited. A recent report recommended making such training mandatory for commanding officers, military police, health care workers and chaplains, but not for military personnel in general, suggesting that the focus remains on treatment. However, each of the US armed forces has a Family Advocacy Program that is responsible for providing preventative services to high-risk families. The Air Force is making wide use of a Family Needs Screener (Kaufman Kantor and Straus 1999) to identify such families and provide prevention services and education.

2.1.9. Social Stress

Studies of social stress in the sense of "stressful events" (Holmes and Rahe 1967; Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, and Mullan 1981) show that the more such events are experienced, the higher the rate of IPV (Straus 1980). Moreover, residents of societies in which stressful events are frequent have higher rates of many types of crime, including homicides of family members (Linsky, Bachman, and Straus 1995). Within a society, an increase in stressful events over time is associated with an increase in physical abuse of children (Catalano and Dooley 1977; Landau and Raveh 1987). Modern societies have done a great deal to reduce, eliminate, or alleviate many types of stressful events such as death of a child and unemployment and the research shows that these steps are associated with less crime (Linsky and Straus 1986, chapter 4).

Another type of stress results from social expectations that are incommensurate with economic and social resources experienced by individuals and families. This type of stress is discussed in Part C under Strain Theory.

2.2. Family Level Primary Prevention

Family level prevention is based on the assumption that some of the causes of IPV are to be found in the nature of the family system and some of these are inherent in the way the family is organized in the Western world. For example, the family household consists of a male and female partner. For both biological and social reasons, men and women, have a different perspective and a different agenda in respect to many aspects of life. For these and other reasons, a high level of conflict is inherent in the nature of the family (Straus and Hotaling 1980) and some of this conflict leads to IPV. These inherent conflict producing characteristics of the family are exacerbated by differences in the power of men and women.

2.2.1. Gender Inequality

Inequality between the partners is associated with an increased risk of IPV (Straus 1994;1976; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980, chart 23; Tang, 1999) because dominance by one partner must ultimately be backed by force (Goode 1974; Straus 1976). Even when partners agree that the male partner should have the final word in decisions, male-dominant couples are more likely to experience violence (Coleman and Straus 1990). When social norms do not support equality between husbands and wives, and the occupational/ economic system does not provide resources to women, they can do little to resist or leave violent relationships. Figure 5 shows that the more equality between men and women in the USA (on a scale measuring state-to-state differences in economic, legal, and political equality) the lower the rate of assaults on women by male partners (Straus 1994).

Figure 5. PROBABILITY OF HIGH RATE OF WIFE ASSAULT BY STATE SCORE ON GENDER EQUALITY INDEX



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It is likely that one of the most fundamental steps toward primary prevention of IPV has been the reduction in male-dominance in the family. This has been occurring world-wide (United Nations Development Fund 2000), although there are exceptions and some reversals. The progress women have made in moving closer to equality with men can be regarded as a reduction in one of the major risk factors for IPV.

2.2.2. Family Counseling, Therapy, and Mediation

Even when complete equality between men and women is achieved, the family will continue to be a group characterized by a high level of conflict (Straus and Hotaling 1980). Therefore, non-violent methods of dealing with these conflicts are an important aspect of primary prevention. Education in anger management and conflict-resolution (discussed previously) is one approach. Another approach is family counseling, therapy, and mediation. These services have grown tremendously and may be the fastest growing type of human service since IPV came into public consciousness in the mid 1970's. During this period, membership in the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists increased from about three thousand to 20,000 and is probably still growing. The increased use of family counseling and mediation may have prevented many high conflict families from becoming violent families.

2.2.3. Physical Abuse of Children

The national effort to stop the child abuse that swept across every state in the USA began in the 1960s and has continued as a major social change. There are now thousands of "child protection workers" whereas such positions were virtually absent in 1960. During the twenty years from 1965 to 1995 there was a huge annual increase in the number of child maltreatment cases in the US (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1997) and other countries such as Ireland (Ferguson 2001, Table 5.1). However, this represents a growth in the rate of interventions, i.e., in steps to stop maltreatment, not a growth in the incidence of child maltreatment. Contrary to public opinion, physical abuse of children declined substantially during this period (Straus and Gelles 1986; Straus and Kaufman Kantor 1986). The decline stems from many changes in American society, one of which was probably the tremendous growth in child protective services as well as educational programs focused on ending child abuse. The fact that physical abuse as a child is a risk factor for IPV later in life (Widom and Maxfield 2001), makes it likely that the major effort in the USA to decrease physical abuse has contributed to preventing IPV.

2.2.4. Corporal Punishment by Parents

Physical attacks on children who misbehave are legal and expected in most of the world's societies. There are usually euphemisms such as "spanking" which divert attention from the fact that a child is being physically attacked. Parents are exempt from prosecution for assault if they hit a child for purposes of correction or control. This includes the right to hit the child with traditional implements of corporal punishment such as a belt, hairbrush, or paddle, as did 28% of parents of children age 5 to 12 in the US in 1995 (Straus and Stewart 1999).

Violent child rearing in the form of corporal punishment is a risk factor for IPV. Four studies, including one longitudinal study, have found that the more corporal punishment experienced as a child, the more likely, later in life, for a man or woman is to hit their partner (Simons, Lin, and Gordon 1998; Straus and Yodanis 1996). Ironically, the fact that parents use corporal punishment to correct misbehavior is one of the reasons corporal punishment is associated with an increased probability of IPV. This is because children are not the only ones to misbehave. Sooner or later just about all intimate partners misbehave and persist in some misbehavior, at least as the other partner sees it. Consequently, learning from corporal punishment by parents that hitting is a permissible way to correct persistent misbehavior is associated with following the parental example when dealing with a misbehaving partner. Corporal punishment by parents has declined world-wide (Straus 2001; Straus In Press 2004).

In a small but growing number of countries it is now illegal (Straus 2001). The reduction in corporal punishment could be contributing to the decrease in IPV shown in Figures 1 to 4.

2.2.5. Individual Level Prevention

Individual level prevention focuses on causes of IPV which lie within the characteristics of individual offenders. A large number of psychological problems have been associated with IPV. The range of problems is illustrated by the variables measured by the Personal And Relationships Profile (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman 1999; Straus and Mouradian 1999). This instrument is designed to measure risk factors for IPV. The 22 variables measured by the PRP include Antisocial Personality, Borderline Personality, Depressive Symptoms, Gender Hostility To Men, Gender Hostility To Women, Substance Abuse, Anger Management, Communication Problems, Jealousy, and Negative Attribution. All of these have been shown to be related to IPV (See also the review by Schumacher, Feldbau-Kohn, Slep Smith, and Heyman 2001).

Many of these risk factors have been the focus of treatment programs. For example, treatment to reduce and control anger (Novaco 1975) and cognitive restructuring have shown some promise in changing a wife assaulter's belief that the victim is the

cause of the violence (Shields, McCall, and Hanneke 1983; Sonkin, Martin, and Walker 1985). Treatment groups where wife assaulters learn conflict-resolutions skills, tension reduction, and gender role perceptions (Ganley 1981), keep anger diaries (Sonkin, Martin, and Walker 1985), receive motivation to change therapy (Prochaska, DiClemente, and Norcross 1992), and expand the range of socially acceptable expressions of emotion for men and instilling empathy for victims (Edelson and Tolman 1992) have all shown promise in treating individual-level causes of IPV. Although these are treatment programs, they speak indirectly to the promise of primary prevention because the problems treated could be a focus of primary prevention.

Early childhood development programs such as the Head Start program in the USA, have probably contributed to primary prevention of IPV. The more recent Early Head Start can make a much greater contribution if it is broadly implemented. A seven year evaluation of the Early Head Start program found that 3-year old children who completed the program not only had better linguistic and cognitive skills than the comparison group, but also had a better relationship with parents, lower rates of misbehavior, and less aggression (Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children Youth and families: Head Start Bureau 2002). These are all characteristics associated with a low probability of later juvenile delinquency and adult IPV.

There is a growing amount of research on primary prevention of crime (see for example, Chapter 1 and (Bell 2001). The emerging field of developmental criminology (Moffitt and Caspi 1999; Tonry and Farrington 1991) can be considered basic research intended to provide a scientific basis for primary prevention of crime. There is also a growing attention to primary prevention a wide range of mental health and social functioning constructs (Godenzr 2001), including at least eight randomized field trials (Papworth 2001). To the extent that such programs are successful in preventing mental health problems, they are likely to also make a major contribution to preventing IPV because many mental health problems are associated with IPV, as is non-family criminal behavior (Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, and Fagan 2000; Straus and Ramirez In Press).

2.2.6. Gendered Orientation of Prevention Limits Effectiveness

A limitation of the primary prevention efforts that are explicitly directed to IPV is that almost all are based on the assumption that IPV is perpetrated almost exclusively by men. This assumption arises from the fact that programs to end IPV were initiated by and continue to be a major effort of the women's movement. The assumption of primarily male perpetrators also arises from the fact that women are the predominant victims of IPV because women are much more likely to be physically, psychologically, and economically injured (Stets and Straus 1990). In addition, studies of assaults and murders outside the family show that males are perpetrators in 90% of the cases and

it is easy to assume that this must also apply to IPV. However, the results from more than 100 studies in the Great Britain, Canada, and the USA show that within the family, women assault male partners as often as men assault female partners. Women also initiate physical assaults as often as men (Archer 2000; Straus 1999).

The failure of IPV prevention and treatment programs to address IPV by women may be part of the explanation for the fact that, although Figure 1 shows a decreasing percentage of the public condones assaults by men against female partners, there has been no decrease in the percentage of the population that believes that there are circumstances when it is acceptable for women to hit a male partner. Figures 2 and 3 show that there has also been no decrease in the rate of actual assaults by women on male partners. However, the trends are different for homicides of intimate partners. Partner homicides by women have decreased more than partner homicides by men (Figure 4). Perhaps this is because intimate partner homicides by women have often been a means of escaping from an enslaving marriage (Browne 1987). The increases in economic resources available to women, particularly full-time paid employment at wages that are increasingly close to the wages of men, and changed attitudes and legislation concerning divorce, may mean that fewer women resort to homicide as method of ending a violent marriage (Browne and Williams 1993).

Rather than ignoring assaults by female partners, primary prevention of IPV requires strong efforts to end assaults by women. A fundamental reason is the intrinsic moral wrong of assaulting a spouse, as expressed in the fact that such assaults are criminal acts, even when no injury occurs. A second reason is the unintended validation by women of the traditional cultural norms tolerating a certain level of violence between spouses. A third reason is the danger of escalation when wives engage in "harmless" minor violence. Feld and Straus (1989) found that if both partners were violent, it increased the probability that assaults are likely to persist or escalate in severity over the two year period of their study; whereas if only one partner engaged in physical attacks, the probability of a subsequent violence decreased. Finally, when a woman assaults her partner, it "models" violence for the children and therefore contributes to IPV in the next generation. The modeling effect is as strong for assaults by women as is assaults by men (Jaffe, Wolfe, and Wilson 1990; Straus 1983; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980; Straus and Yodanis 1996).

It is essential for primary prevention of IPV to include a major focus on violence by women as well as men. However, the needed change must be made with extreme care for a number of reasons. First, it must be done in ways that simultaneously refute the idea that violence by women justifies or excuses violence by their partners. Second, although women may assault partners at approximately the same rate as men, assaults by men usually inflict greater physical, financial, and emotional injury. This means that male violence against women is typically the more serious crime. Thus, "major focus on violence by women" does not necessarily mean equal focus. Finally, in many societies women lack full economic, social, political, and human

rights. In such cultural contexts, equality for women needs to be given priority as an even more fundamental aspect of primary prevention. Otherwise focusing on IPV by women can further exacerbate the oppression of women.

2.2.7. Effectiveness Has Not Been Evaluated

This section demonstrates that many primary prevention steps have been implemented. However, as pointed out earlier, although IPV has declined substantially, there is no research that provides direct evidence that these programs have been responsible for the decrease. There have been some evaluation studies showing that high school and university violence prevention programs can change attitudes about hitting a partner and dispel date rape myths (see the review in (Chalk and King 1998), but these studies did not investigate whether behavior also changed. We could locate only one study that used a randomized control group design to evaluate the effect of a primary prevention program on actual rates of IPV. Unfortunately, it found no difference in the frequency or severity of IPV subsequent to the program (Davis and Taylor 1997).

3. Prevention Programs Suggested by Criminological Theories

Although IPV has become a major responsibility of the criminal justice system, relatively little research on IPV has been based on criminological theory. By criminological theories we mean theories that were developed to explain crime per se such as those outlined by Akers (2000) or Williams and McShane (1994). As indicated in Part B, the early work on IPV was primarily based on feminist theory and on what is sometimes called the family violence perspective (Straus 1992). In recent years, psychology has become the discipline of the majority of those publishing research on IPV. These three approaches have provided a rich body of empirical data on which to base prevention programs. However, the few studies based on criminological theories, such as the research on deterrence theory by Williams and colleagues, indicates that much of value for primary prevention of IPV can be inferred from criminological theories (Carmody and Williams 1987; Lackey and Williams 1995; Williams and Hawkins 1989a; Williams and Hawkins 1989b). The following sections therefore identify aspects of selected criminological theories that suggest primary prevention steps.

3.1.1. Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory identifies two crime-reduction processes: specific and general deterrence. The principle of specific deterrence is that offenders who have experi-

enced punishment, learn to fear the punishment and therefore do not reoffend in order to avoid suffering that "cost" again. Specific deterrence is therefore a form of secondary prevention. The principle of general deterrence is that the knowledge of a punishment for a criminal behavior will lead potential offenders to avoid that behavior in order to avoid experiencing the punishment. General deterrence is therefore a form of primary prevention.

Deterrence can only take place if a potential perpetrator is aware of the sanction, considers it likely to happen, and regards the sanction as costly. Research by Gibbs (1975), Zimring and Hawkins (1968) and others has broadened the range of sanctions beyond those imposed by the criminal justice system to include informal social sanctions such as loss of respect from significant others and psychological costs such as loss of self-esteem. Research by Akers et al. (1979); Grasmick and Green (1980); Grasmick and Bursik (1990) found that perceptions of informal sanctions, such as the disapproval of family and friends or one's own conscience and moral commitments, are more powerful deterrents than criminal justice system sanctions.

Williams and Hawkins (1989a; 1992) compared informal social costs of IPV with criminal justice sanctions for IPV. They found that potential loss of friends and family disapproval were perceived as more costly than arrest or incarceration. The greatest deterrent effect was from self-stigma and personal humiliation. However, Williams and Hawkins analyzed only the data for males in their sample. Because women initiate half of IPV (Straus 1997; Straus 1999), it is important to determine if these results also apply to women offenders. These deterrent effects might be even stronger for women because bonds to networks of kin and friends are more salient for women than for men. On the other hand, as long as there is acceptance of women hitting male partners (see Figure 1) the deterrent effects of informal social sanctions might be weaker for women.

Research on deterrence theory suggests that primary prevention focused on informal sanctions, i.e., increasing the extent to which IPV is scorned and disapproved by peers, may be more effective than the current focus on increasing perception of criminal penalties for IPV. However, arrest and prosecution of IPV offenders needs to continue. First, the research comparing formal criminal sanctions and informal sanctions is far from definitive because it measured the perceived hypothetical effects of sanctions. Second, the stigma attached to formal and informal sanctions are intertwined aspects of public perception. Criminal justice intervention is a means of expressing collective scorn and disapproval. Third, secondary prevention in the form of specific deterrence has been shown to be effective, at least for some types of IPV offenders. Although the initial results from the experiments testing the effectiveness of arrest of IPV offenders in Minneapolis and five other US cities cast doubt on whether arresting IPV offenders is effective in reducing recidivism, a sophisticated reanalysis of the data from these experiments shows a greater reduction in repeat

offenses by men who were arrested compared to the comparison groups (Maxwell, Garner, and Fagan 2001).

3.1.2. Strain Theory

Strain theory (Merton 1957) focuses on the tension that occurs when society socializes members into desiring and aspiring to achieve cultural values which it does not provide the means to achieve, such as high paying, stable employment. Two responses to the resulting tension or "strain" are to use criminal means to achieve the culturally "mandated" goals and values and to internalize new goals and values. Agnew (1992) expanded Merton's concept of unattainable goals to include Durkheim's conception of insatiability (Durkheim 1951). Insatiable desires result in unattainable goals and exhausts resources, leading to frustration and sometimes to violence.

A major source of strain is inadequate economic resources to achieve culturally valued upward mobility, or even to sustain a family at a culturally specified standard of living. Additional strain results from the persistence for many men of the old cultural ideal of a family in which the husband is the "head of the household with the final say when there are disagreements. If society does not provide the means to achieve this in the form of superior economic and symbolic resources for men, and female partners who also value this family structure, violence can be used to achieve dominance. Moreover, these aspects of strain theory can help explain the high rate of IPV among the lowest income and education sector of society. Underclass men tend to be more highly committed to male dominance in the family than higher status men, but their life circumstances does not provide them with the resources to achieve this goal. They are employed at low wages in low prestige and sometimes stigmatized jobs and are frequently unemployed and therefore lack the economic and prestige resources needed to exercise power.

Strain also occurs when one or both of the partners find themselves unable to fulfill other social norms concerning marriage, such as being a loving, faithful, and supportive spouse, and an ever-loving and patient parent. Taken literally, these may be inherently unachievable cultural expectations. Inability to adequately fulfill these expectations creates a socially constructed strain that often accompanies intimate commitment. Moreover, marital partners are constrained to stay in and succeed at the marriage. Women especially have fewer options for escaping the stress. This socially constructed strain is exacerbated by cultural barriers to escape by ending the relationship.

Inability to assuage a partner of unhappiness with the relationship is another strain that may lead to IPV. Strains of this type apply to both men and women, and perhaps even more to women, and this may be part of the explanation for the equal or higher

rates of IPV perpetrated by female partners. The implications for primary prevention is a need for more realistic social norms concerning marriage and more broadly available marriage and family counseling. This can help more husbands and wives adopt realistic goals for marriage and come closer to fulfilling these goals.

3.1.3. Social Learning Theory

The term Social Learning Theory was introduced by Bandura to describe the results of his research on the psychology of aggression (Bandura 1971; Bandura and Walters 1959). It also has much earlier roots in criminology in the work of Sutherland (1939; 1947). Sutherland coined the concept of "differential association" to explain who engages in criminal behavior. He showed that individuals learn definitions, techniques, motives, justifications, and rationalizations for crime through association with persons engaged in crime. Akers (2000; Akers et. al. 1979) expanded the concept of differential association into a version of social learning theory by adding the concepts of differential reinforcement and imitation to further explain motivation toward criminal behavior.

The aspect of IPV that has most frequently been attributed to the operation of social learning processes is the intergenerational "cycle of violence." There is a great deal of evidence showing that persons who grew up in a violent family tend to repeat the pattern in the families they establish through marriage (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980; Widom 1989). These results have usually been attributed to learning violent modes of behavior through being a victim or witnesses of violence.

Social learning applies even more to the legal and socially approved form of family violence known as corporal punishment, spanking, or smacking. It applies even more because, unlike physical abuse, it is experienced by almost all children in most of the world. In addition, the legitimacy of this form of violence teaches that hitting a family member who misbehaves can be morally correct behavior. The research shows that the more parents use corporal punishment as a mode of discipline, the greater the probability of the child engaging in many kinds of antisocial and violent behavior, including delinquency as a child and IPV as an adult (Simons, Lin, and Gordon 1998, Straus 2001; Straus In Press 2004; Straus and Yodanis 1996). As pointed out earlier, corporal punishment has been decreasing in many countries. Sweden ended parents' rights to use corporal punishment in 1979 (Durrant 2000). Since then, nine countries have enacted legal prohibitions of some type¹. However, in many other countries, including the USA and the UK, such an effort is considered an outrageous intrusion and a threat to families. Thus for most of the world, the implication for primary prevention is that ending corporal punishment will have to be an educational

¹ (see the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/frame.html>))

effort by non-governmental organizations and professionals who advise parents. Parents can be informed of the harmful side effects of corporal punishment and the research showing that corporal punishment is not more effective than non-violent modes of correcting and controlling a child. A reduction in this form of violent child rearing could serve to reduce all types of violence, not just IPV, and also to create a generation of children who are better behaved at home, less delinquent, and have fewer mental health problems (Straus 2001; Straus In Press, 2004).

Media portrayals of the family are another channel for social learning. As pointed out in the section on Technology And Mass Media, IPV *by* men against women is now almost always presented as reprehensible and criminal. However, the opposite is often the case with media depictions of IPV *by* women. It is almost impossible to watch TV dramas without seeing an indignant woman slap, kick, or punch a partner who has been unfaithful or insulting. This glorification of female IPV may be part of the reason opinion surveys show that approval of women hitting and intimate partner has remained constant, whereas the rate of approval of men hitting a partner has declined precipitously (Straus 1995; Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore 1997). The obvious implication for primary prevention of IPV is the need to condemn violence by women partners as vigorously and totally as we have come to condemn IPV by men.

3.1.4. Control Theories of Crime

Control theories of crime start from the assumption that the natural state of individuals is to commit crime. Therefore, crime is likely unless there are controls to prevent it. Control theories have a long history in criminology. The currently prevalent versions are the social bond theory of control (Hirschi 1969) and self-control theory (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

3.1.5. Social Bond

The social bond version of control theory asserts that being bonded to conventional society is the primary constraint compelling individuals to conform to social norms. A weak or absent bond results in criminal behavior. Studies by Avakame, Fife, and McCoy (1999), Lackey and Williams (1995) and Ramirez (2002) found that the stronger the social bond the lower the probability of IPV. Thus, the applicability of the social bond aspect of control theory to explaining IPV has strong empirical support. Williams and Hawkins (1989a) found that, of the various aspects of social bond, the bond to others is the most effective deterrent for crime in general and spousal assault in particular because it is a prerequisite for informal social control.

3.1.6. Self-control

The self-control version of control theory maintains that strong self-control is necessary to avoid criminal behavior. Ineffective parenting is held to be the principal cause of low self-control. A study Avakame (1998a; 1998b) confirmed the relationship between ineffective parenting and low self-control. This study also found that self-control mediated the relationship between IPV in the family of origin and IPV in the current relationship.

Both versions of control theory attribute weak bonds to ineffective parenting. The self-control version emphasizes even more strongly that low self-control has its origins in ineffective parenting. It follows that a major implication of control theories for primary prevention of IPV is a need for steps to aid parents interpersonally and economically to become more effective.

3.1.7. Moral Justification Theory

Most violence is undertaken for what the aggressor believes are morally justified ends (Katz 1988; Luckenbill 1977). The offender believes there is a need to correct the misbehavior of the victim. Outside observers are more likely to perceive it as coercion or cruelty, but offenders perceive themselves as defending the "good." Offenders tend to see themselves as correcting or stopping moral violations by the target of their attack, or as morally justified retribution for misbehavior. A man one of us interviewed epitomized this when, sensing some disapproval of his behavior, said indignantly: "Well, what would you do if you were married to a bitch like that?"

In the case of IPV, it is more difficult for both victims and offenders to "escape" an escalating conflict than in conflicts between strangers or acquaintances (Straus and Hotaling 1980). The constraints on escaping the situation are physical, economical, and moral. The offender must stay and defend the moral standards in which he believes, such as that the husband should be the "head of the household." The extreme of this scenario of righteously inspired IPV are "honor killings" i.e., the obligation in some societies of a husband or his family to kill a wife for sexual infidelity. This is a moral obligation which if not fulfilled results in ostracism (Jehl 1999; United Nations Development Fund 2000).

The implications for preventing IPV require identifying the source of the belief that it is morally correct to use violence to stop misbehavior. We suggest that the most fundamental reason that this principle is a deeply embedded part of many cultures can be traced to the almost universal experience of having been hit by parents "for your own good." In the USA, a third of parents of infants have already begun to spank and slap. By age 5, close to 100% of children have been hit at least once by their parents, and for most it has been two or three times a week (Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugar-

man 1995; Straus and Stewart 1999). Ironically, parents are more likely to spank a child for hitting another child or for hitting the parent than for most other misbehaviors. So children learn that hitting is a serious misbehavior. But they also learn from the parental example that if one encounters truly serious misbehavior, violence is a morally correct means of ending it. A study of a large and nationally representative sample of American couples found that the more corporal punishment experienced as a child, the more likely the respondent was to approve slapping a misbehaving partner, and in turn, the more likely to actually have done that in the preceding 12 months (Straus and Yodanis 1996). Thus, a major implication for primary prevention of all types of violence, and perhaps especially IPV, is to end use of corporal punishment because it is a pattern of violent socialization that endows violence with moral virtue.

3.1.8. Control-Balance Theory

Control Balance Theory (Tittle 1994) emphasizes the criminogenic effects of individual desire for autonomy, control, and freedom from constraint. In intimate relationships partners are often referred to as "controlling" or imposing their will on the other. The sheer coordination of activities between partners requires a certain amount of accounting of each partner's time thereby reducing freedom and increasing feelings of being controlled. Household and economic responsibilities additionally increases the perception of loss of freedom. These responsibilities are typically not evenly distributed, nor is the degree of control that each partner can exercise over his or her own activities. Violence may be used to alter the balance of control and activities. This possibility is present in other social groups but is normally constrained by formal and informal social controls which stigmatize and penalize use violence. However, in the privacy of the household the risk of discovery is low. Moreover, if discovered, the consequences have historically been minimal. One prevention implication is that egalitarian relationships would reduce the imbalance in control. Another is that reducing social isolation might increase the informal social controls condemning use of force to gain control.

3.1.9. Conflict Theory

A conflict theory of crime describes the criminogenic influence of cultural and group conflict, such as race, gender, and social class groups. There are several versions of conflict theory. The Marxist version, and radical criminology in general, focus on the use of law and the criminal justice system to maintain the position of the dominant classes (Quinney 1970; Turk 1977), and to maintain the family as an institution which further supports the interests of dominant classes and dominant gender. At both the family and the societal level, informal and legal norms support male dominance by emphasizing the value of property rights and money, which are typically higher for

males. Acceptance of their dominant position of males in the family is furthered by emphasizing the protection and emotional support provided to women by the family, thus obstructing perception by women of their oppression. Although Marx and Engel's' treatment of crime gives the most attention to economic motives for crime, they also depict crime as an expression of hostility and political rebellion by the proletariat (Engels 1993). The political rebellion aspect of the theory may help explain the high rate of IPV by women. Studies showing that equalitarian families have the lowest rates of IPV by women as well as men are consistent with this theory (Goode 1974; Straus 1976; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980, chart 23). Also consistent with this version of conflict theory is the much greater decrease in homicides of partners by women than by men during a time-period when women gained greater economic equality with men (Browne and Williams 1993). The implication of Conflict theory for primary prevention of IPV is parallel to the prevention implications of Strain Theory, Control-Balance Theory, Conflict Theory, and Feminist Theories in suggesting that equality between men and women is needed for primary prevention of IPV.

A functionalist version of conflict theory assumes that conflict is an inherent, necessary, and positive characteristic of society. It is seen as a social process that contributes to avoiding social stagnation by bringing about needed social change (Cosser, 1967; Dahrendorf, 1958). Dahrendorf argued that the foundation of conflict is not economic conflict, but any human interest. Consequently, the eradication of any dimension of inequality, such as economic, will not resolve the new conflicts that will arise due to differentiation in human interests. However, although Dahrendorf did not directly address criminal behavior, he assumes that dominant individuals and groups impose their definitions and resolutions and may use violence to do so. Subordinate individuals and groups may also use violence to overcome the institutionalized power of the dominant group and resolve the conflict in their favor. Consequently, for conflict to contribute to the functioning of society, there must be institutionalized and equitable processes for resolving the conflict such as collective bargaining between workers and employers. An implication for primary prevention of IPV is the need to de-emphasize cultural norms and values that depict the ideal family as group without conflict to norms and values which recognizes that there are inevitable conflict of interests inherent in the family (Straus and Hotaling 1980). Along with this can be increased availability of family counseling and mediation services and destigmatizing the use of these services to resolve family conflicts. (See also the section on Family, Counseling, and Mediation in Part B.) Finally, non-authoritarian and non-violent methods of children rearing (i.e., no corporal punishment) can provide models from which children can learn the value of resolving conflicts by reasoning and negotiation and acquire those skills.

3.2. Feminist Theories of Criminal Justice and Crime

Feminist theories of criminal justice and crime are closely related to conflict theory in the sense that they see the operation of the criminal justice system and the causes of crime as reflections of a social system that is characterized by male power. Social institutions are structured to operate to maintain the power and privilege of the dominant gender.

3.2.1. Feminist Theories of Criminal Justice

Feminist scholars concerned with IPV have focused on the failure of the criminal justice system to protect women from IPV by men. The historic pattern in many countries has been one in which women victims were ignored and male offenders were excused except in the most egregious and extreme cases. In the United States and a number of other countries, the women's movement has brought about drastic change in the way IPV is dealt with by the criminal justice system. If criminal sanctions deter potential offenders and if there is differential treatment in the form of failing to sanction male offenders, primary prevention is undermined. As pointed out in the section on Society Level Primary Prevention, the feminists have brought about a major change in this aspect of the criminal justice system in some countries. Most jurisdictions in the US now have a policy of preferred or mandatory arrest and prosecution (Buzawa 1996; Sherman, Schmidt, and Rogan 1992).

Despite this major change, some aspects of the old system remain. The courts have lagged behind police in uniformly and unequivocally acting against IPV offenders. While arrest rates are high, conviction rates are low. Using data from a national victim survey (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000) we estimated that of over one million reports to the police of male offenders, only 13% culminated in a conviction. Thus, to the extent that fear of arrest and conviction deter, primary prevention of IPV can be strengthened by continued and more vigorous enforcement.

3.2.2. Feminist Theories of Crime

Feminist theories of crime seek to explain the commission of crime by women. Power control theory (Hagan 1989) attributes gender differences in criminality to an occupational system characterized by gender differences in social control. The theory argues that the male-dominant occupational structure spills over into the home. The amount of power at work influences the amount of control and freedom at home. The deviant behavior of male children is more often overlooked giving them more freedom to take risk than female children. Female children are given less freedom to deviate and girls engage in less serious forms of delinquency. This is more pronounced in

patriarchic families, where the male head of household has a "command position both at home and in his occupation. The mother holds an "obey" position at home and may also hold this position at work. These power differentials can easily become physically, emotionally, verbally, and sexually abusive.

Survival strategy theory (Chesney-Lind 1989; Chesney-Lind and Sheldon 1992, 23) attributes female criminality to the effects of experiencing sexual and physical abuse by male members of the immediate family. While these processes are similar for abused boys, "unlike boys, girls' victimization and their response to that victimization is specifically shaped by their status as young women", i.e. boys and girls live in very different worlds with different options.

"Convergence theory" (Adler 1975; Simon 1975) argues that as women gain equality, there will also be a convergence in male and female crime rates. The increase in gender equality in the past century may be part of the explanation of the roughly equal rates of male and female perpetrated IPV. However, there is evidence as far back as medieval England of a high rate of IPV by women (George 1994) and there are many other aspects of the family and of gender roles that also lead to a high rate of IPV by women (Straus 1999).

There is a seeming contradiction in the implications for primary prevention of these three feminist theories. It follows from both power-control theory and survival strategy theory that equality between men and women will help prevent IPV. But according to convergence theory further growth in equality will produce further growth in crime by women. However, this is unlikely because there is already gender equality in perpetration of IPV. The real implication of convergence theory is the need to change aspects of the society that give rise to crime by both men and women, including the stress and competitiveness of the economic system, economic inequality, and cultural norms that accept and sometimes encourage physically aggressive behavior.

The implications for primary prevention of IPV from criminological theory are summarized in Table 1 (see in Appendix).

4. Conclusions

Although there are relatively few programs or activities that were explicitly designed for primary prevention of IPV, there are many that, at least in principle, contribute by changing the nature of society and the life circumstances of individuals in ways that can lower the rate of IPV. Early in this chapter we presented data showing that IPV is decreasing. In addition, the decline has been greatest for the aspects of IPV that have been the focus of the greatest prevention effort (Straus 1995; Straus and Gelles 1986; Straus, Kaufman Kantor, and Moore 1997). This suggests that these programs are effective.

Caution is needed, however because one of the trend series is based on self-report surveys. The IPV prevention education programs may have resulted only in a greater reluctance by respondents to tell interviewers about instances of IPV rather than in a decrease in the number of assaults. However, two other independent sources of trend data also show decreases. Moreover, in respect to the self-report data, even if the reduction was entirely due to a greater reluctance to report violence, that is also important. It suggests that the effort to change public attitudes and standards concerning family violence have achieved a certain measure of success. A change in attitudes and cultural norms is an important part of the process leading to change in behavior. If all that has been accomplished is to instill new standards about the acceptability of IPV, that is a key step in the process of reducing the rate of actual IPV.

Perhaps the most important basis for caution, as pointed out earlier, is the absence of direct evidence showing that any of the prevention steps described in this chapter have been responsible for the decrease in IPV since the mid 1970's. IPV may have declined due to changes in society during the period 1975 to 2000 and which are independent of purposive social change. In the USA, age at marriage increased by an average of three years from 1990 to 2000 (from 20 to 23 for women and from 24 to 27 for men). This could have affected the overall IPV rate that because the National Crime Victimization survey (Rennison 2001, Appendix Tables 3 and 4) indicates 28% less IPV victims in the 25-35 age group than the 20-24 age group. Similarly unpublished results from the National Family Violence Survey (Straus and Gelles 1990) shows a 30% lower IPV rate for partners age 25-29 than for age 20-24. It is possible, but unlikely, that the decrease in marriage during the high-risk ages could account for the entire decrease in IPV shown in Figures 1 to 4.

These speculations highlight the need for outcome evaluation research to determine if a program has actually served to reduce IPV. Also needed is basic research to empirically test the inferences we drew from criminological theories, and program-process research to help determine the best way to implement each type of prevention program. This is a research agenda that will take many years. It can be argued that prevention programs should not be implemented or continued until they are supported by solid research evidence. However, we suggest that it is ethical and sound social policy to proceed with prevention a step that lacks incontrovertible proof that it will lower the rate of IPV provided there is consensus that it contributes to making society more humane. For example, further efforts to achieve equality between men and women is an important humanitarian end in itself, regardless of its relation to IPV. The underlying principle is that the more humane the society, the more humane will be the treatment of intimate partners by each other.

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6. Appendix

Table 1: Implications for Primary Prevention of Intimate Partner Violence Based on Criminological Theories

Theory	Implication for Prevention
Deterrence Theory	Increased formal and informal sanctions for IPV, including sanctions by family, friends, co-workers.
Strain Theory	Bring cultural goals for economic achievement into balance with opportunities to achieve goals by changing goals to be more realistic and by providing greater educational and economic opportunity. End gender inequality in the family. Reduce socially constructed contradictions of intimate relations by adopting realistic goals for marriage and cohabitation.
Social Learning Theory	Reduce the cycle of violence by ending corporal punishment by parents. Reduce glorification of violence via technology and the media.
Control Theories	Increase social bond and self-control by aiding and educating parents in childcare and management.
Moral Justification Theory	End socially approved use of violence as a means of upholding moral standards ranging from corporal punishment by parents to capital punishment by governments.
Control-Balance Theory	Promote gender equality in the family. Reduce social isolation in order to increase social controls condemning use of violence to achieve control.
Conflict Theory	Economic, social, and political equality. Availability and legitimization of marriage counseling and mediation.
Feminist Theories of Criminal Justice	Treat all victim stories as credible. Increase criminal justice system sanctions for IPV.
Feminist Theories of Crime Power Control Theory <i>Survival</i> Strategy Theory Convergence Theory	End male dominance in the home and in society generally. Increase escape options for female victims of abuse End differential treatment by criminal justice system to victim stories and by gender of offender; reduce cultural norms that glorify violence.