



Perpetrator programmes for partner violence: Are they based on ideology or evidence?

Louise Dixon^{1*}, John Archer² and Nicola Graham-Kevan²

¹Centre for Forensic and Criminological Psychology, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

²School of Psychology, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, United Kingdom

Purpose. The ideologically based view of intimate partner violence has traditionally influenced policy and practice in modern western nations and dominated cross-national research and practice. This review considers the validity of the position statement of a British organization responsible for accrediting many male perpetrator programmes in the statutory, voluntary, and private sector as an example of this ideological influence.

Method. The position statement, informed by the patriarchal view of partner violence, is evaluated using empirical evidence from various branches of the social sciences, including psychology, that have not been guided by the patriarchal view.

Results. Overwhelming empirical evidence is presented, which refutes ideologically driven assumptions that have been put forward to guide current practice and evaluation of it.

Conclusions. This review highlights the need to investigate intimate partner violence from a scientific and gender-inclusive perspective. The implications for psychological practice are discussed.

Science progresses by testing and modifying theories against new evidence. The social sciences concern the application of the scientific method to areas where people may hold preconceived views. Social scientists are often motivated by an ideologically based view of their subject that makes it hard for them to think beyond a narrow range of acceptable theoretical stances. This is particularly apparent in research on violence between intimate partners. Influential researchers have adhered to a central dogma that it is necessarily motivated by patriarchy and this has led to a number of core beliefs that are defended against findings that do not fit this framework (see Dutton, 2006; Hamel & Nicholls, 2007). The ideologically based view of violence between partners has been particularly successful in influencing policy and practice in modern western nations,

*Correspondence should be addressed to Louise Dixon, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK (e-mail: l.dixon.l@bham.ac.uk).

such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, and has also dominated cross-national research and practice.

In this article, we first set out the general assumptions of the patriarchal view of intimate partner violence (IPV), and then consider how these are manifest in the statements of Respect, the organization responsible for setting the accreditation standards of many male perpetrator programmes in the United Kingdom. It is acknowledged that male perpetrator programmes run by prison and probation services are not accredited by Respect at the time of writing this paper, and as such it does not aim to reflect a comprehensive overview of the standards adhered to by all UK services. However, while such services may not be Respect accredited, they adopt a similar approach by excluding male IPV perpetrators from general violence treatment programmes, and therefore critical examination of the evidence used to underlay an organization such as Respect has a wider significance. In doing so, we evaluate Respect's statements using findings from various branches of the social sciences, in particular psychology, that have not been guided by the patriarchal view. We briefly outline the implications of these findings for evidence-based psychological practice.

Overview of theoretical perspectives on intimate partner violence

Throughout the last 40 years, the patriarchal view of IPV has exerted a large influence on how professionals understand and respond to the social problem (White & Gondolf, 2000). This perspective views IPV as a common event, frequently acted out by men towards their female partners, caused by wider societal rules and patriarchal beliefs that encourage male dominance and female subordination (Dasgupta, 1999). Patriarchy is considered to be a direct cause of the problem, and therefore the issue is one of changing the root causes of male aggression, that is patriarchal social structures, to respond to violence against women (Yllö, 2005).

A number of other beliefs follow from this core assumption in feminist writings on partner violence (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1977–1978, 1979; Pagelow, 1984; Pence & Paymar, 1983; Walker, 1989). The first is that most violence between partners is from man to women, and that male sex is the biggest risk indicator for aggression towards a partner. This is captured in the ethos of various works and organizations, typified by the following quote: '... violence against women ... is a part of male control ... It is not gender neutral any more than the economic division of labor or the institution of marriage is gender neutral' (Yllö, 2005, p. 22). In the United Kingdom, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, 2010) stated in their definition of domestic violence: 'It is usually men being abusive to women ... But men can experience it too'. This belief has influenced research and policy. Women Against Violence Europe Network (WAVE, 2010) state that one of their core aims is 'to promote feminist analyses of violence against women', and 'to develop and promote criteria and guidelines at the European level in relation to legislation, services, and prevention strategies'.

A second belief that follows is that whilst some women may be violent to their male partner, they do so out of self-defence or retaliation for his aggression. For example, Henning, Jones, and Holdford (2003, p. 841) stated that 'the available research suggests many if not most of the women arrested for intimate partner violence are victims of abuse who may have been acting in self-defense'. Dobash and Dobash (2004, p. 328) asserted that 'Professionals who work with male abusers ... find that violence women direct at male partners usually, though not always, occurs in a context of ongoing violence

and aggression by men directed at women'. Consequently, it is proposed that violence against women should always be studied within the wider context of patriarchy and intentions associated with the violent event. However, this same principle is not viewed as being relevant for understanding female perpetration. Thus, violence towards women is viewed as a special case, unrelated to other forms of violence and other forms of crime.

A third assumption is that one consequence of women's gender roles is that they are trapped in relationships, including abusive ones, so that they cannot escape from these: Engaged in this is the wider society's response to men's violence to women, including the primary response of the legal system. For example, Wistrich (2004) argued that gender discrimination in the English and Welsh criminal justice system negatively impacts on women in cases of partner violence.

A fourth assumption is that programmes designed to prevent or alleviate partner violence can only be effective if they re-educate men about patriarchal gender roles. General violence programmes are unavailable to IPV offenders. For example, the probation-run programmes, ART (for instrumentally aggressive offenders), CALM (for expressively aggressive offenders), and even thinking skills programmes such as 'Think First', explicitly exclude IPV offenders (National Offender Management Service, 2007). Organizations such as Respect, whose writings are examined in detail in this article (Respect, 2008 a,b), discourage interventions based on a couple's relationship dynamics, as this is seen as preventing the man from taking responsibility for his actions. Thus, state provision for male partner violence offenders is dominated by a feminist-informed intervention.

The feminist view that men's violence to women is a direct result of patriarchal belief systems acts as a filter or 'lens' (Yllö, 2005) for the choice of research samples, the way investigations are framed (e.g., as a 'gender' issue), and how findings are interpreted. In contrast, psychological research has largely approached the study of IPV from outside this narrow framework, from the perspectives of social psychology (Archer, 2000a; Berkowitz, 1993), criminological or forensic psychology (Dixon, Browne, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Ostapuk, 2010; Felson, 2002, 2006, 2010; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005), or clinical psychology (Dutton, 2006). Similarly, writings from the perspectives of neuroscience (Rosenbaum, Abend, & Gearan, 1997), family sociology (e.g., Straus & Gelles, 1988), and social work (Hamel & Nicholls, 2007) have also adopted what has been termed a 'gender-inclusive' approach to IPV (Hamel & Nicholls, 2007). These diverse research approaches have one common thread that they clearly show men's violence to women to be part of a series of wider patterns understandable from the multiple perspectives of personal relations, aggression, personality, and crime. These gender-inclusive perspectives do not begin with preconceptions about the direction the abuse will take, leaving open the possibility that both sexes can be perpetrators and/or victims of partner violence.

One of the problems with reconciling these largely psychological approaches to IPV with that found in feminist writings is that the feminist viewpoint is mainly a way of framing the problem, rather than a source of generating hypotheses to be tested against alternatives. It has therefore restricted the type of research that can be carried out, and has adopted the defensive position of countering findings from the multiple psychological and social science sources cited above. It is with this background in mind that we assess statements emanating from a contemporary version of the feminist position that has dominated the treatment programmes for male perpetrators in the United Kingdom. To date, most criticisms of the feminist perspective have centred on its impact upon US and Canadian policy and practice (e.g., Dutton, 2005, 2006; Felson, 2010). Feminist ideology

has also guided British organizations and their codes of practice (Eadie & Knight, 2002; Respect, 2008a,b). Intimate partner violence is common, affecting the lives of women, men, and children in the United Kingdom (Dixon *et al.*, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2010). It is therefore particularly important to scrutinize the standards of a major organization responsible for addressing the problem in this country.

In the remainder of this article, we describe the position statement of an organization that is responsible for setting the accreditation standards of many male perpetrator programmes in the United Kingdom ('Respect'), and compare each statement with the evidence base gathered from various branches of the social sciences, that has not been biased by a gender analysis in the design or interpretation of results. We also consider the implications of this comparison for psychological intervention with perpetrators of partner violence in the United Kingdom.

Examining the position statement of Respect

Respect is the UK National Association for Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes and Associated Support Services. It is a government-funded charity whose primary aim is 'increasing the safety and well being of victims by promoting . . . effective interventions with perpetrators' (Respect, 2010a). Respect lobbies the UK government and other statutory agencies to inform policy regarding work with partner violence perpetration. In particular, it is responsible for the accreditation of male perpetrator programmes in the United Kingdom. The stated purpose of accreditation is to assure the 'public, funders, commissioning agencies, and other professionals of a high quality, safety-focused service from organizations accredited by Respect' and to provide 'a recognized framework for delivering programmes in many different ways, allowing skilled practitioners and effective projects to gain recognition for their work, to support safe practice and to assist with fundraising' (Respect, 2010b). Services eligible for accreditation are those offering a 'combination of a Domestic Violence Prevention Programme (DVPP), working with perpetrators of domestic violence and an Integrated Support Service (ISS), working with their partners and ex-partners. This may include services operating entirely in the voluntary, statutory, or private sectors, or those operating as a joint project or other arrangement between sectors' (Respect, 2008a, p. 2). Organizations must meet all the requirements set out in the Respect Accreditation Standard (2008a). The standard is reviewed every 3 years. Section B of their document provides details of the service structure and the process that must be met by organizations to ensure successful accreditation.

The ethos of Respect's work is encapsulated in eight assumptions outlined in their position statement (Respect, 2008b), which is clearly driven by a feminist perspective of IPV. The eight statements are also accompanied by an appendix detailing supporting research. They state: 'Respect believes that practice experience and analysis of rigorous research demonstrates that a thorough understanding of the complex dynamics of gender is vital to responding effectively to domestic violence' (p. 1). We should therefore expect the research base to be empirically sound.

The eight statements are set out in the following sections. They are a reworking of the core ideologically based belief that men's violence to women is a product of patriarchal values, found in the earlier writings of feminist psychologists and sociologists (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1977-78, 1979; Pagelow, 1984; Pence & Paymar, 1983; Walker, 1989). We now consider the statements and accompanying evidence in relation to peer-reviewed research.

Evaluation of Respect position statements in relation to the evidence base

The majority of violence in general is committed by men

In order to support the case that it is men who commit most acts of violence against their female partners, the argument is often generalized to men being more violent than women in general. For example, in criticizing research showing a high proportion of male IPV victims among general population samples from modern western nations, White, Smith, Koss, and Figueredo (2000) applied findings from studies of general or same-sex aggression. Similarly, Respect's (2008b) first statement claims that most violence is committed by men.

The problem with this is not that it is wrong, but that it does not address the issue of partner violence. Most violence, from the individual to the collective level, is indeed enacted by men. But the major victims of such violence are also men. The purpose in making this point in the Respect (2008b) position statement seems to be the assumption that male violence will carry over into every context and against every protagonist. This conflates violence towards members of the same sex, which is typically much greater in males than females at all ages (Archer, 2004; Archer & Côté, 2005; Daly & Wilson, 1990), and violence towards the opposite sex, principally (but not only) partners, which is typically less male biased in contemporary western nations (Archer, 2000a, 2002, 2006). Surveys of all forms of physical aggression to partners typically find more equal prevalence and frequency rates for the two sexes, whereas similar surveys of same-sex physical aggression find large sex differences in the male direction (Archer, 2000a, 2004, 2009).

Examination of the rates of physical aggression and violence for men and women in contemporary western societies has led to the conclusion that men are more likely to be violent outside the home than to a partner, whereas women are more likely to be violent to a partner than outside the home (e.g., Frieze, 2000). Two questionnaire studies that measured physical aggression to the same- and opposite-sex opponents in the same samples confirmed this contrasting pattern (Gergen, 1990; Harris, 1992; see Archer, 2000b). A later meta-analysis of studies measuring physical aggression to same- and opposite-sex opponents in the same samples came to an identical conclusion (Archer, 2004). Comparing these findings with those for sex differences in physical aggression between partners (Archer, 2000a) suggested that the different pattern depended on the sex of the opponent rather than the relationship (Archer, 2004).

In an analysis of different forms of aggression to partners and to strangers, Felson, Ackerman, and Yeon (2003) found that men (but not women) were more inhibited about using violence to their partners than they were to strangers. This and three other recent studies (Archer, Parveen, & Webb, 2011; Bates, 2011; Cross, Tee, & Campbell, 2011) show that we cannot generalize from men's levels of violence outside the home to their levels within it, where it is typically likely to be at a lower level.

The view that men's violence to women is a spill over from their generally greater violence is in any case difficult to reconcile with the feminist position, since this assumes that men's violence to women stems from patriarchal control. Most feminist writers do in fact argue that men's violence to women is separate from their violence to men, and has to be treated differently. If this were the case, we would expect it to be unconnected with men's violence to other men, which could not be attributed to patriarchal values. It is therefore illogical for Respect (2008b) to argue in this case from men's greater aggression generally, and subsequently to seek to make the case for partner violence having a separate aetiology.

Gender is the most significant factor for being a perpetrator or victim of domestic violence in particular

This is an assumption that is found in all writings that concentrate on violence against women in isolation from the wider study of violent crime or aggression. It is especially to be found in the writings of feminist academic researchers whose theorizing is bound up with political activism on behalf of women victims. It is still the dominant view both among activists (Harwin, 2006) and researchers associated with them (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Nicolson & Wilson, 2004); it underlies research funding and policy in the United Kingdom, other European states, and in Canada, and the United States. In making it the second statement, Respect (2008b) seeks to justify concentrating on women victims, both in ideology and in social policy.

Most of Respect's (2008b) justification for this statement does not concern gender as a risk factor at all. A risk factor is any factor that increases the likelihood of a particular event occurring, in this case violence to an intimate partner. Quantitative studies examining the strength of the relationship between particular variables and IPV are typically used to determine whether a variable constitutes a risk factor (Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). To assess the statement that gender is the most significant risk factor, studies are required that compare the relationship of a variety of factors with IPV, including gender (e.g., O'Leary, Smith Slep, & O'Leary, 2007; Stith *et al.*, 2004). Only if gender is shown to have the strongest relationship with IPV could this statement be accepted. The Respect statement confuses this with a related issue, which is whether men or women form the majority of the victims. Initially, feminist writers argued that male victims could be ignored because they were so rare (e.g., Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992). However, research supporting feminist theory typically results from work with selected samples, usually women from shelters or accident and emergency departments (Dutton, 2006). Samples of this nature unsurprisingly find high rates of male to female violence. Straus and Gelles (1999) refer to this as the 'clinical fallacy, whereby findings from research with clinical samples may not be representative of the general population who experience this problem, just as findings from representative samples may not be applicable to clinical or selected samples.

Nowadays, most feminist writings do admit that a significant minority of victims are men. For example, the Director of Women's Aid, UK, Harwin (2006) stated that 15–19% of those who are victims of IPV are male. These figures are used to justify all the research and practical resources being devoted to female victims. Even accepting such figures at face value (see below), this amounts to justifying no provision for one in five to one in seven victims of this type of violence, solely on the basis of their sex. Similar conclusions based on ethnicity, where Home Office Research finds less than one in 10 victims of IPV to be non-white, are of course not endorsed. On the contrary, we find that Home Office reports on ethnicity and IPV emphasize that 'the specific issues that affect Black and other minority ethnic group (BME) women should be integrated into the delivery of all support services' (Parmar & Sampson, 2005). Whilst laudable, this position is inconsistent with the UK Government's position on this other minority category of victims, that is men.

Respect (2008b) provides elaboration of the second statement, asserting that 'women experience the majority of incidents of physical violence which take place in intimate relationships' (p. 1). This is correct if physical violence is defined in terms of causing injury or death, but not necessarily if all forms of physical aggression are included (Archer, 2000a; Laroche, 2007; Mirrlees-Black, Budd, Partridge, & Mayhew, 1998; Povey,

Coleman, Kaizi, & Roe, 2009). However, whether women are the majority is not the same as gender being a major risk factor.

In the appendix, Respect (2008b) relies heavily on well-rehearsed criticisms of the main instrument used by family violence researchers, the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979). Such criticisms are again irrelevant to the issues of gender as a risk factor or for justifying different treatment for women victims. The criticisms, which have been countered in a number of articles (e.g., Archer, 1999, 2000a,b, 2002; Straus, 1990, 1999; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), seek to discredit evidence derived from the CTS and similar measures. Yet, there are parallel findings from National Crime Surveys: whenever these are carried out without bias, for example by using anonymous reporting, and not being presented as 'violence against women' surveys (e.g., Laroche, 2007; Mirrlees-Black *et al.*, 1998; Povey *et al.*, 2009). Measures either identical to or very similar to the CTS have also been used by feminist researchers to investigate female victimization, using highly selected samples of couples where the male partner has received a conviction for physical aggression against the woman (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004), restricting its use to male-against-female perpetration (e.g., Mooney, 2000; Römkins, 1997; Russo, 2004), or reporting only the data for male-against-female perpetration while collecting that for both sexes (e.g., Woffordt, Mihalic, & Menard, 1994).

Associated with the second Respect (2008b) statement is the assertion that 'women make up the majority of victims of sexual violence' (p. 1), implying that this undermines the evidence on physical violence from the CTS. Sexual violence is typically much less common than physical violence, and therefore adding it into the overall category does not make a substantial difference to rates. If we widen this to sexual coercion, there is evidence for a considerable degree of perpetration by women as well as men (Frieze, 2000; Straus *et al.*, 1996).

Another assertion is that women are 'far more likely to be injured . . . and to fear the abuser' (p. 1). The meta-analysis of Archer (2000a) covering 20 studies totalling 1,113 reports of injuries found that 62% of those who were reportedly injured were women. Whether 62 versus 38% represents 'far more' is a matter of opinion, but even if it does, it does not support the statement that it is 'strongly related to gender' (p. 1). A similar proportion of men and women among those injured by a spouse can be found in British Crime Survey data (Mirrlees-Black *et al.*, 1998). Variation in injury between the sexes has been explained by physical differences. Felson (1996) showed that sex differences were reduced when physical size and strength were controlled for, but not for incidents involving weapons, guns, or knives. Regarding fear of the abuser, it is often stated that physical aggression is viewed as more serious when the victim is a woman than man: indeed, we would expect this to be the case in view of their average size and strength difference. Marshall (1992a,b) assessed the impact of the same acts of physical (and other forms of) aggression on men and women from two samples, and while women's severity ratings were slightly higher than those of men, they were not appreciably so, and for both sexes they were near to the highest end of the 10-point scale. More recently, Capaldi and Owen (2001) found that in their cohort sample of couples, rates of injury and fear were not significantly higher for women than for men, contrary to their hypothesis.

The Respect (2008b) statement next asserts that 'The majority of chronic long-term victims are women, and female victims are more likely to be abused post-separation than male victims' (p. 1). Both parts of this statement are likely to be correct, but again they

do not address the general claim they are intended to support. Regarding chronicity, Walby and Allen (2004) analysed the BCS and found that women reported a median of three assaults and men two, since the age of 16. Most men (90%) and women (68%) reported less than three assaults. Of those reporting more than three, a third were men and similar results have been found with criminal justice samples (Melton & Belkap, 2003). Regarding separation, the risk of being abused or killed by the former partner is considerably greater after separation for women but not for men (Brownridge *et al.*, 2008; Gaquin, 1977-1978; Sev'er, 1997; Wallace, 1986; Wilson & Daly, 1993). This may be because women more commonly initiate the separation (e.g., Amato & Previti, 2003), and anticipate different custodial and financial outcomes after divorce (Poortman & Seltzer, 2005). The most recent figures from the UK's Office for National Statistics indicate that 69% of all divorces are initiated by the wife, and that 80% of children reside with their mothers upon relationship dissolution, and that over three-quarters of applicants for child contact are men (Hunt, 2003). Smart, May, Wade, and Furniss (2003) found that the resident parent can cutoff all child contact with the non-resident parent, who would then have to apply through the courts. The increased risk for women may then be an unintended consequence of societal bias towards women's perceived superiority to parent children.

The final Respect assertion to back the claim that gender is a major risk factor is 'Men are the abusers in most incidents of domestic violence against women and in many against men' (p. 1). What this statement is meant to convey is not at all clear; however, returning to the earlier discussion of the first statement, it is evident that male same-sex aggression is not representative of male aggression to opposite-sex partners.

Leaving aside the consideration that the stated issue (gender as a risk factor) was not addressed, there is a major problem with the view that men form most of the perpetrators; even if it were correct, it cannot be used to argue against researching or providing aid for male victims, without engaging in a form of discrimination that would not be acceptable, or even considered, in any other context. As it is, the numbers of male victims are much higher than the sources cited by Respect (2008b) indicate.

Women's violence is frequently defensive, retaliatory or self-defence, or resistance

Another common argument from the feminist viewpoint is that if there are a significant number of women perpetrators of IPV, this must have arisen from self-defence. This view is advanced particularly to explain female-to-male homicides (e.g., Dobash *et al.*, 1992). In terms of the third Respect (2008b) statement, having argued that women's violence is infrequent, the authors now seek to identify it as justifiable when it does occur. The implications of this are that when Respect and similar organizations recognize the needs of victims of both sexes, the needs of male victims will be different from those of female victims. This is because, according to this statement, male victimization is the result of men's own aggression. However, published research contradicts this conclusion and shows that the best predictor of female victimization is perpetration towards a male partner (Stith *et al.*, 2004).

The Respect statement is not restricted to self-defence but also includes 'retaliation' and 'resistance'. In other contexts, retaliation is regarded as revenge, and is not equivalent to self-defence, which is to prevent injury from an attacker. Resistance is a term used by Johnson (1995, 2001) to describe partners of severe and persistent abusers ('patriarchal terrorists') who also show physical aggression to the partner. This is presumably why the term was used. Although Respect do not mention Johnson's typology, it has been

influential in research and theory in this area. We have reservations about Johnson's distinction between two forms of IPV, one severe repeated controlling abuse by one partner, and the other mutual low-level physical aggression not motivated by control. These reservations are articulated elsewhere (Archer, 2009, p. 295) and principally concern the selective nature of the samples on which Johnson based his distinction, and subsequent findings that the pattern initially labeled as 'patriarchal terrorism' contains a large proportion of women perpetrators (e.g., Bates, 2011; Bates & Graham-Kevan, in press; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2011; LaRoche, 2007).

Most surveys of unselected samples show that a large proportion of the perpetrators are also victims and this extends to those incarcerated for high levels of partner violence. It is generally difficult to tell from the figures who the initiator was, or indeed whether the physical aggression was genuinely mutual, or largely one sided. Where researchers have asked who initiated the aggression, women are often found to initiate IPV more frequently than men (e.g., Capaldi, Kim, & Shortt, 2004; Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005; LeJeune & Follette, 1994; Milardo, 1998; O'Leary & Slep, 2006). Capaldi, Kim, and Shortt (2007) found that female initiation appears to be most common in late adolescence to mid-20s. Young women's rates of initiation of physical violence were found to be twice as high as that of their partners: By mid-20s the rates of initiation became more equal. Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, and Saltzman (2007) examined the prevalence of reciprocal and non-reciprocal IPV in 11,370 US young adults aged 18–28 years. Half (49.7%) of the reported violent relationships were reciprocal. Women were the perpetrators in more than 70% of non-reciprocal violent relationships. In addition, reciprocity was associated with more frequent violence among women, but not among men, and it resulted in greater injury than non-reciprocal intimate partner violence, regardless of the perpetrator's sex.

It is also possible to examine those individuals who reported being only a perpetrator or only a victim in a number of surveys. The evidence shows that women form the largest category for the perpetration of non-reciprocated physical aggression (e.g., Anderson, 2002; Gray & Foshee, 1997; Morse, 1995; O'Leary, Barling, Arias, & Rosenbaum, 1989; Riggs, 1993; Roscoe & Callahan, 1985; Stets & Straus, 1989; Straus & Ramirez, 2007). In these cases, their physical aggression cannot be either defensive, retaliatory, or a form of resistance, since they report no physical aggression from the partner, either as provocation for their aggression or as a response to it. Felson and Lane (2010) reported a similar finding among a large US sample of those incarcerated for severe partner violence, concluding that: 'female offenders are much less likely to have been abused by a partner than male offenders' (p. 212).

In contrast to the aforementioned peer reviewed and published evidence, the citations offered in the appendix to support Respect's (2008b) third statement consist of two unpublished reports, a study of homicide that involved same-sex rather than spousal homicide (Daly & Wilson, 1990), and two sources that were not listed in the bibliography.

Gender is a risk factor for domestic homicide

This is a restatement of the second statement, with respect to homicide. Homicides are a very small proportion of incidents of IPV, and to generalize from the sex ratio for homicides to 'domestic violence' (as in the second sentence of this statement) does not follow. It is clear that women are more likely to be killed by an intimate partner than are men (approximately two-thirds of partner homicides in the United Kingdom involve

female victims), with the exception of a number of years in the United States at the end of the 20th century (Wilson & Daly, 1992).

In support of the assertion that 'Victims of domestic homicide are overwhelmingly women' (Respect, 2008b, p. 2), it is stated that women are more likely to be killed by a partner than any other category of person. This is not supported by the analysis of Felson (2002, p. 37), showing that 31% of homicides and 21% of violence against women are perpetrated by a partner. Another assertion in support of this statement, that men form the majority of perpetrators for all forms of homicide, is correct, although it does not also state that men are the majority of victims, and therefore is of questionable relevance to partner violence. Here, the statement seems to be again conflating the much larger category of male-to-male violence with male-to-female violence, and conveniently ignoring the fact that most victims are also male.

The claim – often made in relation to partner homicides by women – that a significant proportion of male victims had previously abused their female partners, is repeated in this section. This is connected with the assertion that when women kill a male partner, it is from motives of self-protection (see section on self-defence). As Felson (2002) pointed out, there is a double standard here: male partner homicide victims are readily blamed for provoking their demise, whereas female partner victims are immune from such attributions. In most cases of partner (and other forms of adult) homicide, it is possible to find precipitating behaviour from the other party. Those who base their analysis on the preconception of male dominance and control selectively use male, but not female, victim precipitation in their analysis of partner homicide. It is such selective weighing of the evidence that leads to retaliation and resistance being conflated with self-defence, and as morally excusable, providing of course they are not used by men.

Most of the citations provided in support of this Respect statement are from a single source, a book chapter, despite there being many analyses of homicide resulting from IPV that are published in refereed journal articles. The treatment in the appendix confirms the limited evidence base, ignoring the detailed analysis of gender and homicide in the work of Felson (Felson, 2002, 2010).

There are some female primary aggressors and male primary victims

Respect's (2008b) position statement appears to backtrack at this point, stating that there are some male victims and female perpetrators, having previously set out to say either that they are very infrequent or that they are motivated by self-defence (or retaliation). On the basis of the first four statements, it is unclear how male victims could be incorporated within this framework, despite the claim that 'Our specific service for male victims demonstrates that we are committed to developing our understanding of the needs of male victims and meeting their needs' (p. 2). It is difficult to understand how this could be the case if it is believed that partner violence arises from patriarchy, since it would be mainly male-to-female or when women are violent, it would be justifiable as self-defence (or retaliation or resistance). Clearly, if the needs of male victims are to be met, a gender-inclusive theoretical framework is required (Hamel & Nicholls, 2007).

It appears that Respect is uneasy about acknowledging the needs of male victims, since this part is followed by another twist in their argument, with a repetition of the assertion that women are 'a small minority of primary aggressors' (Respect, 2008b, p. 2). The word 'primary' again seeks to raise the issue of women's violence being mainly self-defence, which was considered above, and is not supported by the evidence. Using another unpublished citation, missing from the bibliography, it is then claimed that

female perpetrators and male victims are very different from female victims and male perpetrators. However, Babcock, Miller, and Siard (2003) found that female perpetrators are not so different from male perpetrators of IPV and can be classified using a similar typology to that applied to men. Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, and Silva, (2001) reported that male and female conduct problems at age 15 independently predicted their partner's violence at age 21 and that pre-existing characteristics predicted whether they would engage in violence towards their partners 3 years later, again for both sexes. These characteristics were approval of the use of aggression, excessive jealousy, suspiciousness, a tendency to experience intense and rapid emotions, and poor self-control.

A study of 246 callers to a domestic violence helpline for men in the United States found that men were similar to women in the primary set of features that they reported in relation to their abuse (Hines, Brown, & Dunning, 2007). A similar link with control motives, previously found in female victims, such as economic restriction, isolation, using the children, and emotional abuse, occurred in 95% of the men contacting the helpline. The pattern of behaviour fits the widely used Duluth Model of Power and Control (Pence & Paymar, 1983), which has been applied to men's abusive behaviour in many treatment programmes, and is the philosophy behind the Respect statements (see above). Where both sexes are studied, it is clear that control motives are linked with committing partner violence by both sexes (Felson & Outlaw, 2007; Graham-Kevan & Archer 2008, 2009; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990). The control motive cannot therefore be attributed to patriarchal values.

Men and women have different environmental and social limits and opportunities

This statement moves away from partner violence to the societal backgrounds of men and women, making the large conceptual leap from men's overall societal power to the assumption that this directly translates into the behaviour of men and women in relationships. Respect (2008b) stated that 'women who abuse do not have the same or equivalent means to justify or support that abuse' (p. 3). Yet, all the evidence is that women's abuse is viewed as less serious and less blameworthy (i.e., more justifiable) than men's is. There is greater acceptance of women hitting their male partners than vice versa (Harris & Cook, 1994; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005; Taylor & Sorenson, 2005), and greater general acceptance of women hitting men (Basow, Cahill, Phelan, Longshore, & McGillicuddy-DeLisa, 2007). Third parties are more likely to call the police when a man hits a woman (Felson, Messner, & Hoskin, 1999). These findings are not what we would expect if physical aggression between partners is legitimized as part of patriarchal control, as stated by ideologically based researchers (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 2004), and repeated in the Respect position statement. The evidence supports the view that men learn from a relatively early age that it is socially unacceptable to hit women (Archer, 2009; Felson, 2002, 2010). This reluctance to hit women is not inconsistent with there being overall greater male than female societal power. Social psychologists have identified two sets of sexist attitudes towards women, one termed 'hostile sexism', and the other termed 'benevolent sexism' (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The first is more associated with hostility and aggression towards women whereas the second includes protection of women, although it also includes restricting their behaviour.

The comment that women's options for ending an abusive relationship are limited, in terms of the choices available to them afterwards, does not take account of the greater likelihood that a woman will end a relationship than a man will (Amato & Previti, 2003). It also shows no recognition of the imbalance in facilities available to male and female

victims of IPV, something that the Respect statements seek to maintain. While there is an organized network of facilities for abused women, those for men are rudimentary. This does not mean that the facilities for women meet the needs of all, or even most, abused women, but they are in place.

Assumptions about roles and expectations in intimate relationships are gendered and related to justifications for domestic violence

This statement is a further attempt to generalize from gender roles to partner violence being predominately male-to-female. The first paragraph does little more than reiterate the general statements about gender roles outlined previously. This again leads to a supposed link between gender roles (specifically masculinity) and 'the choice to use violence in intimate relationships' (Respect, 2008b, p. 3). As indicated above, men's physical aggression is generally inhibited when a partner is concerned, compared to their level to a same-sex other. It makes no sense to explain such a finding by supposing that traditional masculinity somehow enables men to hit women. This is again a case of statements being driven by ideology rather than being evidence based. It leads to the claim that effective interventions for IPV need to change men's underlying belief systems, which has been the basis of intervention programmes since the Duluth model of Pence and Paymar (1983). A recent meta-analytic review of perpetrator programme efficacy found that Duluth-based treatment programmes have, at best, a minimal impact on post-treatment recidivism, in contrast to more psychologically driven programmes (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004). An evaluation by Shepard (1992) concluded that '[T]he extent to which men participated in the DAIP did not determine whether or not they would recidivate' (p. 2). Indeed, despite UK Probation's long-running use of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), a Duluth-informed programme, there is no published evidence that it works. The UK government has committed itself to evidence-based practice, yet, data from the IDAP are routinely collected and could have been analysed prior to deciding upon the type of programme the UK should adopt to treat IPV.

In this section, Respect (2008b) also reiterate the belief that the problem with male perpetrators is that they have 'an incomplete conscious understanding of their own motivations and actions' (p. 3). Yet, all the evidence suggests their problem is not one of false ideology that enables them to use violence 'when an expectation is not met' (p. 3) by their partner, but a combination of personality variables that generally lead to violence: these include the need to control, lack of inhibition, and a sense of entitlement. They facilitate violence by men to women, but also by women to men, men to men, and women to women.

Gender understanding is therefore critical for work to prevent domestic violence

This statement is again a reworking of the theme that gender roles are on the basis of partner violence. As indicated above, this is ideologically based rather than evidence based. It is clear that Respect, such as their predecessors in the feminist tradition, have one core belief that men's violence to their partners stems from gender roles. Both Respect's interpretation of the evidence and their advocacy of specific 'educational' programmes for male perpetrators stems from this belief. Unfortunately, the evidence is contrary to it, and therefore the underpinnings of practice based on it are unsound. Andrews and Bonta (1995) wrote that sociological theories within the criminal justice

system had been used to orchestrate ‘... outrageous knowledge destruction exercises aimed at both the prediction and treatment literature’ (p. 47). Reviewing the Respect (2008b) statements, it is apparent that this outrage continues, in the form of using non-peer reviewed, low-quality, research and rejecting peer-reviewed, high-quality, research to support an ideological position.

Implications of the evidence base for current interventions with perpetrators

Respect’s position is that if a man uses aggression towards his female partner, the causes – and hence the treatments – are known. This is an example of topography: knowing who sometimes hits does not tell us why they chose to hit them. There is recognition in the psychological literature that in order to understand a form of behaviour, it is necessary to understand the function it serves for the individual (e.g., Ireland, 2008). For example, a man who is very controlling and aggressive may be using such behaviour to manage his fear of abandonment, to resolve conflict, to manage difficult emotions, or to bully a partner into acceding to his wishes. Without a functional assessment of the behaviour, it is not possible to know why he behaves in this way, and hence impossible to effectively intervene. It is therefore necessary to explore what function IPV serves for an individual in order to satisfy the ‘need principal’ of rehabilitation – that in order to reduce recidivism, the criminogenic need (i.e., directly related to the offending behaviour) of the offender must be targeted in interventions (Andrews & Bonta, 1998; Ward, Mann, & Gannon, 2007). The same behaviour (e.g., IPV) will have different determinants in different individuals, and often within the same individual on different occasions (McMurran & Hodge, 1994). Like other forms of complex human behaviour, IPV is aetiologically heterogeneous. In order to assess potential criminogenic needs, it is necessary to explore a wide range of potential risk factors found in both the IPV and non-IPV aggression literature. These are likely to include impulsivity, poor emotional regulation, hostile attributional bias, beliefs about aggression, conflict resolution skills, interpersonal skills, and coping styles.

The ‘what works’ literature is based upon the systematic, statistical analysis of the efficacy of treatment programmes for criminal behaviour. This process has allowed elements of more successful programmes to be identified. These elements should then be used to guide practice. Interventions utilizing a cognitive behavioural approach have been found to be effective: however, in order to use such an approach, it is necessary to understand the process through which behaviour is manifested. To do so, it is necessary to draw upon empirically supported theory. Men’s aggression towards men and towards women is related, and the two share many of the same developmental antecedents (e.g., Capaldi & Owen, 2001; Kim & Capaldi, 2004; Moffitt *et al.*, 2001). Research on aggression should therefore be used as a foundation for theoretical approaches to understanding IPV. This research has developed without the constraints of a guiding political ideology, allowing the understanding of the causes and triggers for aggressive behaviour to be explored using scientific principles, whereby theories are continually tested against diverse types of empirical evidence. This has led to a greater understanding of aggression from the molecular through to the societal level. Indeed, some of the most rigorous research on IPV has come from longitudinal cohort studies initially designed to explore the development of antisocial and/or violent behaviour (e.g., Moffitt *et al.*, 2001).

In the assessment and treatment of IPV, the behaviour of both partners needs to be addressed. Assumptions cannot be made regarding the motivations for IPV or the impact it has, on the basis of the biological sex of those concerned. Research consistently finds that mutual violence is not only the most common form of IPV but also that it is likely to be the most severe. It is therefore imperative that this important risk factor is acknowledged and explored during assessment and treatment. The predominance of mutual IPV also highlights the need for IPV treatment for both men and women, and also couples therapy for those wishing to remain together. As there is little evidence for any substantial sex differences in risk factors for IPV (e.g., Moffitt *et al.*, 2001; O'Leary *et al.*, 2007; Straus, 2009), there is no reason why men and women need separate programmes. As there is currently no agreed-upon model for IPV programmes that has a proven efficacy, it would be appropriate for service providers instead to seek good practice from intervention programmes not specially designed for IPV.

Conclusion

It is clear that feminist-driven perspectives about the nature and aetiology of IPV are still very influential in informing the treatment of perpetrators at the present time in the United Kingdom. Indeed, Respect's (2008b) position statement clearly outlines the ethos that informs their practice, which overall is unsupported by the evidence, and is ideologically based. The government-backed Respect (2008a), which accredits and deems programmes that meet their standards to be 'high quality' and 'effective' should therefore be abandoned. Instead, attention should be paid to the methodologically sound evidence base that provides scientific understanding about the causes of IPV that can be translated into effective practice. Only then can professionals work towards the common goal of reducing and eliminating this form of family violence. Finally, although beyond the scope of this paper, it is acknowledged that not all UK male IPV perpetrator programmes are accredited by Respect, and as such a comprehensive overview of the standards adhered to by all UK services delivering male perpetrator programmes would be beneficial to promote transparency and future investigation into the efficacy of different British programmes.

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Received 6 February 2011; revised version received 14 July 2011