Intrasexual competition and Intimate partner violence

Vincent Egan
University of Nottingham
ESRC 2015
Introduction

• Stable relationships facilitate offender rehabilitation.
• But an individual’s violent behaviour outside their home indicates potential violence within a relationship.
• Intimate partner violence (IPV) often part of the profile of anti-social activity committed by an offender.
• Taking a violent man as an intimate partner greatly increases a woman’s risk of IPV victimisation.
• Dutton & Corvo (2006) – need more research into partner selection within relationships marked by IPV.
• Case example ...
Case example

- 21 y.o. “ring girl” met 33-year-old martial arts enthusiast in a club.
  - "I really sort of quite fancied him, and the whole image he portrayed to me I really liked."
  - "It was an intense relationship in that he was very affectionate, and...whenever I wasn't with him...he was calling me or texting me or e-mailing me and wanted to see me"
- BF: jealous streak, possessiveness, anger problem, “little things didn't add up”.
- He rapes her and makes her promise to keep what had happened secret.
  - "I genuinely didn't think I would live... he was just unhinged, unstable, and extremely violent."
  - "He was very Jekyll-and-Hyde. He was so emotionally unstable"
  - "He would be, 'I love you,' and this is how strange he was, you know, 'have -- have I ruined things between us?'"
- After three days of harassment, she was tricked into leaving her home.
- Woman badly injured and disfigured when attacked on way to café.
- BF - involved in gang crime and drug distribution at a significant level.
- In prison he had further affairs – with woman prison officers.
Risky partner choices can be rational

- Diversity of potential partners/ ecological niches
- Varied sexual strategies, gender influences, population
- Mate choice
  - Physical “masculinity” denotes health (= biological ‘fitness’)
  - “Cads versus dads”, assortative mating
  - More vulnerable perceive threat, which shapes choices
  - Also modelling, habituation, low expectancies...
- Mating strategies – slow/fast life strategies, adaptation to unpredictable environments.
- Mating effort – display seen in intra-sexual competition.
- Male and female intra-sexual competition – direct/ indirect
  - Defeat competitors by excluding/ sabotaging
  - Explains victim-blaming by people who should know better
Mating effort

- Mating effort – the competition between persons of the same gender for the acquisition and retention of sexual partners (Rowe, Vazsonyi, & Figueredo, 1997).
- Much work examining mating effort in baboons, macaques, chimpanzees.
- Higher mating effort associated with
  - More partners
  - Delinquency
  - Infidelity
  - Alcohol-related violence
  - Narcissism and vanity
  - short-term sexual strategies
So...

• A number of concurrent evolutionary constructs potentially linked to IPV...
  – Sabotaging same-sex rivals by derogating their suffering
  – Valuing hyper-masculine qualities
  – Individual competitiveness and risk
  – And the relationships between all of these constructs.

• Previous studies examined aspects of these questions separately, but never simultaneously.

• Current study does so.
Research questions

• Does mating effort predict victim-blaming attitudes?

• To what degree is the amount of conflict in a relationship predicted by:
  – Mate valuing criteria
  – Mating effort
  – Victim blaming?

• *Do not exclude social and environmental influences on IPV, simply examining influence of constructs that are explanatory in other aspects of human and primate behaviour.*
Design and method

• Regression-type study design.
• Data gathered from an on-line survey (FaceBook, BackPages, On-line research portal, snowballing strategy).
• **Predictor** measures:
  – Modest demographics (age, relationship status, ethnicity)
  – Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Parent & Moradi, 2009)
  – Mating Effort Scale (Rowe, Vazsonyi, & Figueredo, 1997)
  – Domestic Violence Blame Scale (Petretic-Jackson, Sandberg & Jackson, 1994).
  – (CMNI/ DVBS new instruments, so data provides validation info.)
  – **Outcome** - IPV victimisation and perpetration measured by short Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus & Douglas, 2004).
Sample

• 311 female heterosexual participants aged 18 to 72 years old ($\bar{x} = 26.66 \pm 9.75$ years).
  – 48.6% (151) in relationship
  – 29.6% (92) single
  – 19.3% (60) married
  – 2.3% (7) divorced
  – 0.3% (1) widowed.

• No SES, education information acquired.
Results

IPV events defined by the short Conflict Tactics Scale; n =311.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As perpetrator</th>
<th>As victim/ survivor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults, shouting, swearing</td>
<td>236 (78.9)</td>
<td>223 (71.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened/ destroyed property</td>
<td>47 (15.1)</td>
<td>57 (18.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor injury</td>
<td>37 (11.9)</td>
<td>50 (16.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor assault (push/ shove/ slap)</td>
<td>62 (19.9)</td>
<td>59 (19.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault (punch/ kick/ beat up)</td>
<td>27 (8.7)</td>
<td>25 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical consequence to conflict</td>
<td>10 (3.2)</td>
<td>15 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced partner to have sex</td>
<td>10 (3.2)</td>
<td>17 (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insisted on unsafe sex with partner</td>
<td>44 (14.1)</td>
<td>66 (21.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results/ 2

• All scales internally reliable (0.70 to 0.87).
• Skewed scales transformed to harmonise them.
• Measures correlate well with each other.
• CMNI’s 9 dimensions of masculinity reduce to:
  – independence (Playboy, emotional control, and self-reliance);
  – competitive (work orientation, desire to win);
  – malign (violence, power over women, risk-taking, hyper-heterosexual presentation).
• As many measures and calculations, adopt a conservative criterion for significance: P<.001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blame victim</th>
<th>Blame perpetrator</th>
<th>Blame situation</th>
<th>Blame society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mating effort</td>
<td>0.36 ***</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS victimised</td>
<td>0.32 ***</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS perpetrated</td>
<td>0.34 ***</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMNI total</td>
<td>0.42 ***</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1: independence</td>
<td>0.23 ***</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2: competitive</td>
<td>0.25 ***</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3: malign</td>
<td>0.42 ***</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson’s $r$; *** = $P<.001$
Multiple linear regression analysis - IPV as outcome; MVI, Blaming, MES predictors.

Malign masculinity significantly predicts victim/perpetration / total IPV outcome (P<.01 in all models), but drops out in block 3, when blame entered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standardised β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>F (9, 301)</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Adj R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Total IPV</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame victim</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>4.09 ***</td>
<td>8.157 ***</td>
<td>.443</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mating effort</td>
<td>.234</td>
<td>3.93 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. IPV - Victim</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame victim</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>4.248 ***</td>
<td>7.378 ***</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mating effort</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>3.500 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. IPV – Perpetrator</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame victim</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>3.759 ***</td>
<td>8.743 ***</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mating effort</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>3.807 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Results an artefact of mediation (indirect) effects (independent variable affects an outcome through effect on mediator)?

• Tested lots of these: No!

• No moderation effects.

• Does general IPV wrongly conflate perpetrator and victim/survivor? No, when models tested separately, still similar!
What does this mean?

• Greater self-reported mating effort predicts greater valuing of stereotypical masculine traits, greater victim-blaming, and a greater adversarial climate to the woman’s relationships.

• Valuing malign masculine qualities falls out of relationship when mating effort entered into regression model.

• No other blame attribution associated with mate value, IPV, or mating effort.
How does this study help us?

• Need to understand/accept the mechanism by which victim-blaming may occur, alongside preferences for more stereotyped masculine mate valuing.

• All: Express disagreement without violence, learn conflict evasion, stress tolerance, anger management.

• All: Protect self by anticipating risks (situational awareness)
  – Avoid macho / controlling (‘toxic’) partners
  – Recognise warning signs and avoid the risk.
  – What underlies culture of seeing toxic partners as attractive?
Where to go next

- Measure same qualities in couples
- Same-sex couples and IPV – same effects?
- Assess environmental cues to IPV.
- Different measure of IPV?
- Concurrent personality assessment
- Interventions with young people to challenge atavistic influences: we are not passive creatures of our instincts unless we fail to think about our behaviour.
Questions?

Bogart: “It’s only human nature”
Hepburn: “Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above.”