INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: FROM PATRIARCHAL
THEORY TO HEALTH EDUCATION PRACTICE

by

Jacqueline Rose Barco

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Health Promotion and Education

The University of Utah

August 2010
The thesis of Jacqueline Rose Barco has been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

- Justine J. Reel, Chair 04/20/10
- Karol L. [redacted], Member 04/20/10
- Moisés Prospero Jr., Member 04/20/10

and by [redacted] the Department of Health Promotion and Education

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.
ABSTRACT

Field researchers continue to document Intimate partner violence (IPV) as a public health concern in the United States. Initial efforts to bring public awareness to IPV began in response to the Women’s Rights movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Studies of IPV supported the contention that “wife abuse” was a manifestation of “male dominance,” such that male spouses of women were the perpetrators of IPV. However, the 1970s and 1980s brought about nationally representative samples that failed to support that IPV was perpetrated only by males; females were also found to report IPV perpetration at equal, or greater, rates than men. Today, IPV research reflects various theories, including family violence theories, conflict and control theories, theories of psychopathology, and gender and feminist theory applications.

This manuscript represents a feminist theoretical approach to the study of IPV. Chapter 2 draws upon criticisms of the use of patriarchal theories to explain IPV by presenting a theoretical framework that incorporates the theory of self-efficacy, triadic reciprocal causation model, and patriarchy to explain attitudes accepting female perpetrated IPV in the literature. Data collection methods and findings will be provided to support that attitudes are more accepting of female perpetrated IPV than male perpetrated IPV. Practical applications and recommendations for future research in IPV research will be discussed in Chapter 3.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.................................................................................................................................................. iii

LIST OF TABLES.......................................................................................................................................... v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS............................................................................................................................. vi

Chapters

I  INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW...........................................................1

Intimate Partner Violence: Background, Perspectives, and Theory..................................................2
Shifting Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence.............................................................................3
Conclusion...................................................................................................................................................8
Purpose of the Research.........................................................................................................................9
References..................................................................................................................................................10

II  PATRIARCHAL EFFECTS OF THE FEMALE BODY: A FEMINIST RESEARCH APPROACH TO ATTITUDES INFLUENCING FEMALE PERPETRATED INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE.................................................12

Abstract...................................................................................................................................................13
Introduction................................................................................................................................................13
Patriarchal Subordination of the Female Body......................................................................................17
Patriarchy, Self-Efficacy, and the Triadic Reciprocal Causation Model..............................................23
Literature of Attitudes Accepting Female Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence............................27
Purpose of the Study..............................................................................................................................31
Methods....................................................................................................................................................32
Results.......................................................................................................................................................37
Discussion...............................................................................................................................................40
Conclusion...............................................................................................................................................42
References...............................................................................................................................................43

III  DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.........................................................................................46
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Respondent Characteristics</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Correlations of Age, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Victimization, and Gender to Attitudes Accepting Female-to-Male Perpetrated IPV</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Justine Reel for her mentorship in research, body image and physicality, and assistance in reviewing and editing of this manuscript, including her encouragement and support for my future research prospects; to Dr. Moisés Próspero for mentoring me in intimate partner violence research and working with me through the statistical analyses process; to Dr. Karol Kumpfer for her mentorship in family violence, research methods, and support during the research process; and to Dr. Gerda Saunders for introducing me to gender studies and mentoring me throughout my graduate career and manuscript process.

Thank you for making this manuscript possible.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW
Intimate Partner Violence: Background, Perspectives, and Theory

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a topic that warrants further public attention and comprehensive analyses from field researchers to appropriately assess its causes and impact. Like other topics under investigation, the definition of IPV depends upon investigator perspectives and thus, can vary in specificity and breadth of classification, depending on the purposes of the researcher and the target audience. Historically, IPV has been commonly referred to as domestic violence to researchers, professionals, and in other nonacademic contexts. Although IPV can fall within the broader issue of domestic violence, in this paper, IPV is distinguished from domestic violence as domestic violence often includes other forms of family violence within the home, such as child abuse, elderly abuse, and sibling violence (Dutton, 2006; Jackson, 2007; Straus & Gelles, 1990). By contrast, intimate partner violence is defined as violence that occurs within intimate relationships and has included any violent act (e.g., psychological, emotional, sexual, physical, threats of violence, stalking, and harassment) from a current or former partner or spouse (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).

Although IPV includes a wide range of acts, this manuscript focuses on acts of physical violence within the heterosexual intimate relationship context. Saltzman and colleagues (1999) defined physical violence as “intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm” by current or former spouses, partners, or dates (p. 11) and includes minor acts such as “threw something at, pushed, grabbed or shoved, and slapped,” or severe acts such as “kicked, bit, punched, hit or tried to hit with an object, beat up, choked, threatened with a knife or gun, and used a knife or
gun” (Straus, 1990, p. 6). I will discuss the historical debate regarding “wife victimization” and “husband perpetration” and introduce a new perspective on the widely criticized concept of patriarchy to explain the contention that women are also violent against their male partners.

**Shifting Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence**

*Historical Perspectives on Gender Discrimination*

Researchers have studied intimate partner violence (IPV) prevalence and etiology through various lenses. Differing views of IPV can largely be attributed to the historical context of male power, in which social laws and policies discriminated against women and subjected them to the legal acceptance of use of violence against them. For example, some earlier laws, such as the Decretum (c.1140) of the Middle Ages, explicitly stated that women were “subject to their men” and that “punishment” was a necessary means for correction (Dutton, 2006, p. 6). Progress of European laws merely restricted the *level* of assault that a man could place on his wife; for example, the 1700s Napoleonic Civil code which gave the right to men for domination in the family, allowing them to use violence to the degree that it did not constitute attempted murder and the 1800s British Common Law of the “rule of thumb” gave a man the right to “beat his wife with a rod no bigger than his thumb” (Dutton, 2006, pp. 6-7). Such laws were suggested to have improved the “advantages” of the family wife, who were previously subjected to violence from their husbands “with any reasonable instrument” (Dutton, 2006, p. 7).

Although social policy in the 18th and 19th centuries has demonstrated acceptance of varying degrees of violence within the family, especially by use of the husband towards the wife, outward social resistance of these policies has been
documented. For example, Dutton (2006) notes that, following the Civil War Era, increased attention was brought to punish men who assaulted their wives by attempting to legalize flogging of abusive husbands (pp. 9-10). In addition to the increased attention of sanctioning “wife beaters” in the early 20th century, highly respected fields, such as medicine and psychology, distributed discourse and knowledge that theorized causal models of IPV abuse. Gelles (1974), Gelles and Straus (1979) discuss that these developments of explanatory discourse in psychology led to the theories of “individual pathology” (as cited in Straus, 1990, p. 3) of the offender.

The Development of Patriarchy in Intimate Partner Violence

Considering the historical underpinnings of discriminatory laws against women and policies condoning male use of violence to control his family, women’s rights advocacy groups identified patriarchy as the cause of “battered wives.” These perspectives developed in the public view through dominant discourse as a result of the second wave feminism emerging in the late 1960s. This second wave feminism extended beyond equal rights for women to vote and own property by bringing public attention to the continued marginalization of women’s position within patriarchal culture (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

“Patriarchy” has been defined as “rule by the male head of a social unit” in which the “patriarch, typically a societal elder, has legitimate power over others in the social unit, including other (especially younger) men, all women and children” (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004, p. 93). Advocates of gender and feminist theories expanded upon this specific definition of patriarchy to theorize the ways in which broad societal structures are influenced under the concept of patriarchy. When researchers resurfaced family
violence issues in the 1970s, such as C.H. Kempe’s “battered child syndrome” (Dutton, 2006, p. 15), women’s rights advocates concurrently brought attention to the violation of women’s rights in forms of “wife assault.” Both trends in activist movements advocated for legal sanctioning of offenders for violating human rights, which successfully brought about impositions of criminal sanctions, including mandated reporting on child abuse and shelters for “battered women” (Dutton, 2006, p. 15).

Initial studies of IPV were conducted using men who were incarcerated for wife beating (Dutton, 2006) and women who had come from battered women’s shelters (Straus, 1990). However, researchers argued that pulling secondary data from police reports and shelters only represented approximately one percent of total proposed IPV cases in which a woman is victimized by serious physical violence by her male partner; therefore, these cases may possibly misrepresent the dynamics occurring in marital relationships in which women experience severe physical violence but her male partner has not been criminally sanctioned or she has never been to a battered women’s shelter (Straus, 1990). Additionally, Straus (1990) concluded from the 1975 National Family Violence Survey that violence between married and cohabiting couples were “common” incidents deemed necessary to solve family problems and that, contrary to previously held beliefs, women were just as likely to commit violence against their male partners. Therefore, only using criminal databases based upon information obtained by law enforcement reports and shelters is limited. Additionally, family researchers (e.g., Straus & Gelles, 1990) argued that patriarchy is an insufficient explanation for a more representative sample of the U.S., which should include women as violent offenders.
Other Perspectives in Intimate Partner Violence

As studies between 1970s and 1980s on IPV were conducted to include nationally representative samples, conclusions were drawn that contradicted studies about “battered women” (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). These studies contributed to the debate that “women were just as violent as men” in IPV and a split in differing perspectives on causal models developed, many of which do not utilize patriarchy nor contended against it. By the 1990s, Johnson and Ferraro (2000) suggested that IPV literature represented two distinct, but related, concepts: (a) that IPV cases represented different “types” and (b) that “control” is evident in influencing IPV in heterosexual relationships.

Johnson (2005) postulated the first theme as “types” of IPV to understand the motives behind the use of violence and patterns that they have typically showed within intimate relationships. Johnson (2005) coined the term “common couple violence” to represent the majority of the general population samples. According to earlier publications by Johnson, common couple violence is less likely to escalate over time, lead to severe violence, is more likely to be “mutual” (i.e., both partners inflict violence upon each other), and may lead to serious injury in some instances (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Kelley and Johnson (2008) reported that the term “common couple violence” was later changed to “situational couple violence,” as critics argued that “common couple violence” minimized the seriousness of this form of violence. The new category, “situation couple violence,” did not typically follow the power and control wheel, as was postulated to typify common couple violence and may increase or escalate during the separation phase of intimate relationships (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).
Johnson (2005) termed the second form of violence as “intimate terrorism,” which referred to violence within intimate relationships in which the offender is motivated to control their partner through a general pattern of abusive behaviors, and is less likely to be mutual. However, intimate terrorism types were not necessarily defined by severe physical violence, or even less physical but more emotional violence. Intimate terrorism was derived from earlier findings (i.e., Johnson, 1995), referred to as “patriarchal terrorism,” but was changed due to Johnson’s postulation that this type of violence was not a sole product of patriarchy, nor was this type of violence limited to the perpetration of men (Kelley & Johnson, 2008). This pattern was later identified as “coercive controlling violence” by Jaffe et al. (2008), as the term “intimate terrorism” was strongly rejected, especially by the court systems (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Johnson and Ferraro (2000) preferred “the term ‘violent resistance’ over ‘self-defense’” in describing women who commit violence against their male partners (p. 949). The label violent acts as self-defense created much debate within the literature of “battered wives” over IPV “gender symmetry” (i.e., both women and men are perpetrators of IPV in relationships). Johnson and Ferraro (2000), however, argued that the findings of this debated issue were not under the legal definition of “self-defense,” and therefore, referred to it as “violent resistance”; the authors of this article provided no description of characteristics of violent resistance at the time of publication. Kelly and Johnson (2008), however, later referenced violent resistance to describe partners, particularly women, who would use violence in reaction to their coercive-controlling-violence-perpetrating partners. Yet, studies on motives related to self-defense demonstrated that approximately 18% of the violence is accounted for by self-defense (at
comparable rates for both men and women), and that, if violence within relationships escalated, women reported the use violence for self-defense more than men (Straus, 2009).

Finally, Johnson posited that the last violence type within intimate relationships represents what he termed “mutual violent control,” in which both partners are “controlling and violent” (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 950). He noted that this type of violence should be distinguished from self-defense, which it was misrepresented as (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Mutual violent control is often referred to in the current literature as gender symmetry; however, researchers who use the term “gender symmetry” to describe IPV have argued that women engage in violence at the same rate and in the same types as men (Straus, 2009).

**Conclusion**

The development of intimate partner violence (IPV) was initially brought about in light of promoting the human rights of women in the 1960s and 1970s. It is evident that social policies that condoned violence against women had a connection with what the community could see as male perpetrators who were committing severe violence against their female partners. The next steps deemed necessary that (a) IPV was brought public to awareness as a social issue, (b) women who were victimized by their male partners were protected, and (c) changes and enforcement of social policies occurred. Additionally, quantitative data collection methods on IPV have made it possible to assess the prevalence of IPV in larger samples across the U.S. with the potential for greater generalizability. National data has demonstrated that women were also engaging in violence against their male partners. The findings have led to several approaches for
conceptualizing the cause of violence by males and females who report that they are “perpetrators.” Debates continue regarding which theoretical perspective can be supported by evidence and has “measurement value.”

**Purpose of the Research**

In the current research, I argue that patriarchy is still a relevant explanatory theory of intimate partner violence (IPV). Instead of applying the concept to the victimization of women as it has traditionally been used, I propose that patriarchy can explain the use of violence by women against their male partners in heterosexual intimate relationships. Using the feminist empiricism approach to research, I apply patriarchy to the model of triadic reciprocal determinism within the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) to theorize that patriarchy manifests in societal attitudes that accept female-to-male perpetrated IPV which is largely caused by the perceptions of the female body as being “less” physically efficacious than the male body.
References


CHAPTER II

PATRIARCHAL EFFECTS OF THE FEMALE BODY: A
FEMINIST RESEARCH APPROACH TO
ATTITUDES INFLUENCING
FEMALE PERPETRATED
INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE
Abstract

Using the feminist empiricism research approach, this article postulates that attitudes accepting female perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV) is influenced by patriarchal effects of the female body. This theory integrates the concept of patriarchy within the triadic reciprocal model of the theory of self-efficacy to delineate the interactive pathways of patriarchy, the female body, and attitudes of female perpetrated IPV. Using a university sample, research analyses supported that female perpetrated IPV is more acceptable than male perpetrated IPV. Multiple regressions were conducted on demographic variables to explore their effects on attitudes of IPV. Limitations and future research recommendations are discussed.

Introduction

The use of patriarchal theories to explain intimate partner violence (IPV) has been a topic of debate between researchers for over three decades. Patriarchy as a theory initially developed greatly due to the “second wave” feminist movement in the late 1960s (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). During this time, the women’s liberation movement brought attention to social systems that were theorized to continue the oppression and marginalization of women. As such, patriarchy, and other gender-centered theories, was argued by many feminist activists to be primarily accountable for violence against women (VAW) (Hunnicut, 2009; Herzog, 2007). Intimate partner violence was viewed as one form of VAW and was recognized as domestic violence, domestic abuse, or battering, and women were stated to be the primary victims of this violence by their male spouses as a manifestation of patriarchy (Herzog, 2007).
The concept of patriarchy gained increased support with studies on “battered wives” and “wife abuse,” which resulted in increased resources and public awareness to the issue of the domestic abuse of women. Much of the research and case studies of women who were victimized by IPV by their male spouses came from women’s shelters or law enforcement reports, which supported the case that men were committing severe acts of violence against their female spouses for control and consequently, resulted in serious physical and mental health consequences for the women who were victimized by this violence. However, newer studies during the 1970s on family violence brought controversial attention to patriarchal theories in IPV. The 1975 National Family Violence Survey findings concluded that violence between married and cohabiting intimate partners was commonly reported across nationally representative samples and that women were “just as likely” to commit violence against their male partners (Straus, 1990). These research findings, in conjunction with other researchers postulating on “battered husbands” (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000), gave rise to the “split” in perspectives and beliefs on causes and typologies of IPV.

The Controversial Debate on Patriarchal Theories of Intimate Partner Violence

The differing perspectives among causal models of intimate partner violence generated criticism of patriarchy in its proposition that male dominance is associated with violent battering against their female intimate partners. Hunnicut (2009) described these criticisms in a recent study of patriarchy and violence against women (VAW):

Prior attempts at theorizing the link between patriarchy and violence against women have been criticized for at least five reasons: (a) The concept simplifies power relations; (b) the term patriarchy implies a “false universalism”; (c) the
ways in which the concept of patriarchy has been employed have ignored
differences among men, casting men instead as a singular group; (d) a theory of
patriarchy cannot account for violence by women or men against men; and
finally, (e) this concept cannot help us understand why only a few men use
violence against women in societies characterized as patriarchal. (p. 554)

Although under scrutiny for validation, patriarchy continued to be a widely used theory
among some feminist researchers and practitioners to explain forms of VAW; they may,
however, have been referred to by terminology other than patriarchy (Hunnicut, 2009),
yet continue to maintain an emphasis on a gender-centered focus to research.

Among some researchers of family violence (e.g., Straus & Gelles, 1990; in
Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004; as cited in George, 2007), the concept of “male dominance”
in patriarchy has relevance in some contexts of IPV and is purported to be one of the
contributing factors to IPV. However, researchers, using a feminist approach, have
contended that this is also a major limitation in the development of feminist research
(Hunnicut, 2009). That is because advocates and practitioners of feminist research
believe that gender-centered theories should be the overarching theory, the main lens, in
which its explanations should be derived from, rather than merely one contributing factor
(Letherby, 2006). Because the central concept of patriarchy refers gender hierarchies that
result in women’s subordinate and disadvantaged positions in social institutions
(Belknap, 2007), using patriarchy to develop a theory to interpret IPV would involve
analyzing how gender creates hierarchies in social systems that “reinforce domination”
over women (Hunnicut, 2009). Thus, for patriarchy to exist, it would not be necessary to
focus on theory in which patriarchy suggests that individual men are motivated to
dominate individual women.
It has been argued that gender, in itself, has not been well theorized or measured (Anderson, 2005). Such researchers argue that the measurement, meaning, and study of gender vary across researchers as a function of the researcher’s own definition and view of gender (Anderson, 2005). Studies that have attempted to correlate gender to IPV have typically focused on measurements of traditional gender “ideology” that are argued to have predictive value to the extent that the prescribed social constructs of these gender measurements reflect a respondent’s identity (e.g., in Jenkins & Aubé, 2002; e.g. Herzog, 2007; e.g. Nabors & Jasinski, 2009). Within IPV, these demonstrated relationships have led to the perception that aggression is factored within male gender roles and hence, predicts male aggression against females in IPV. However, by limiting male aggression to represent an act of patriarchy to individually dominate “his woman,” the affects of patriarchy at a systematic level are ignored. In addition, Hunnicut (2009) argued that, within patriarchy, it is not necessary for men to act aggressively to have systematic dominance over women. Thus, studies investigating variables and interpreting results on individual, or “familial” levels, are failing to measure whether effects of patriarchy exist on a broader, social level.

While there are numerous studies and interventions that target IPV, many of these studies neglect to recognize female perpetration and male victimization (George, 2007; Parker & Reckdenwald, 2008; Straus, 2006). The current study reverses this approach, by drawing theoretical links to understand both women and men’s experiences within patriarchy, with a focus on elucidating etiological links to female perpetrated violence within IPV.
Patriarchal Subordination of the Female Body

The female body has also been a subject of inquiry in which to theorize the subordination of women’s position in society. Various positions of theory have been used in the analysis of the female body, including “the body as nature, the body as socially constructed, and embodiment” (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004, p. 6). “The body as nature” reflects the argument that men and women are predispositioned to be different, which is reinforced by our inherent genetic characteristics of our biological sex differences since birth. Feminist theories use this notion of “biological determinism” to postulate that the inequalities between men and women arose mainly out of reproductive differences, in which woman holds the capacity to conceive a child (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004).

Theorists have also used this to reference that patriarchal manifestation has developed and changed over time; that is, historically, biological differences between men and women served as a function of survival to prehistoric “hunting/gathering societies,” in which both men and women actively constructed the sexual division of labor to sustain the life of their society (Lerner, 1986). In this argument, women (and children) were decidedly not to hunt “big game” or partake in “warfare” for purposes of reducing the risk of injury to the units (i.e., women and children) that were necessary for the continuation of life, and that, although women were presumed to be physically capable of hunting “big game,” they typically chose to opt out of labor that would negatively affect pregnancy, child-bearing, nursing, or that was not convenient when caring for infants and children (Lerner, 1986).

Although this initiation of sexual division of labor during prehistoric times was a reflection of the recognition of reproductive biological differences between men and
women, Lerner (1986) contends that, as society developed and evolved over time, these practices/roles were no longer “necessary” to ensure the survival of a society. Instead, these practices/roles became culturally symbolic, accepted, and reinforced in social institutions (Lerner, 1986) throughout history, thus contributing to the subordination of women’s position by placing restrictions on women’s roles and capabilities. This notion of “culturally symbolic and accepted” also signifies the feminist theory of “the body as socially constructed.” That is, although men and women are recognized to have biological sex differences, it is the way in which these differences have developed cultural and social meanings and interpretations that reflect gendered hierarchies of the male and female body, resulting in male dominance and female subordination.

_Masculinity as a Point of Reference to the Female Body_

First, I briefly delineate female subordinate bodies by utilizing the masculine body as a point of reference. Masculinity and femininity are binary concepts that represent the cultural and social manifestations and perceptions of gender (Jackson, & Scott, 2001) and thus, must be under investigation in the analysis of the female body. Within the system of patriarchy, masculinity represents “power” and thus, has been adhered to the gender of the male. Pronger (1990) states:

Power is the distinguishing feature of masculinity, whereas lack of power is the distinguishing feature of femininity. The _Oxford English Dictionary_ (OED) defines masculinity as “having the appropriate excellences of the male sex; manly, virile, vigorous, powerful.” Interestingly, whereas _masculine_ is defined in terms of “excellences,” the OED offers a depreciative use of _feminine_, which is “womanish, effeminate.” In this depreciative use, the powerlessness that is associated with femininity is borne out. The OED defines _effeminate_ as “to make unmanly; to enervate. To grow weak, languish.” (p. 117)
Thus, under this definition, masculinity is synonymous with maleness, while femininity is synonymous with “womanish,” “unmanly,” and hence, “weak.”

Because I address how masculinity and femininity structures affect the relations within IPV in heterosexual relationships, such that these relations represent the subordinate status of the female body, I focus on the physical forms that distinguish masculinity and femininity with reference to the symbolic bodily form of power and dominance that has often been a part of cultural production and reproduction of gendered representations. With relevance to my contention that female perpetrated IPV can be examined within this theory, I discuss two ways in which power and dominance is represented through binary structures of male and female gendered bodies. According to these theories of the female body, (a) the masculine body is dominant to the feminine body in terms of size and strength, and (b) physical violence is a masculine trait whereby expression of this trait in men signify normal and accepted behavior, whereas women are excluded from having this trait and thus, violence is always defined in a different lens when expressed by this gender.

The first theoretical binary structure of the male and female body I discuss represents the hierarchy in which men are greater in size than women. Gieske’s (trans. 2000) analysis of “the ideal couple” points to the historical depiction of the culturally “normal” body size of men and women which is depicted in images of heterosexual couples and, that which was reinforced and socially distributed “truths” within the dominant discourses of medical and media forms. She contends that, in an era where the physical body was scrutinized and symbols of cultural value were placed, men, in the expression of the male body, were necessarily, and normally, dominant over women
through gendered height. In images of heterosexual couples, men were notably and consistently taller than women, even in cases where male actors (in the case of Humphrey Bogart of Casablanca who “was required to stand on a stool” during the production of the film) were shorter than their female counterparts within an intentionally manipulated media image (Gieske, trans. 2000, p. 376).

Images of men were also depicted to constitute the masculine figure of “tall, broad-shouldered, and strong” while women were “shorter, thinner, and weaker” who often was shown looking upward towards the man and to be in his “protective embrace” (Gieske, trans. 2000, p. 378). This “naturalness” was evidenced when dissonance of social gender roles was depicted in the “unnatural couple,” where the man is short and the woman is tall:

> While the woman seems to demand something that is not hers by right…the man seems to let himself be dominated, to relinquish power to a woman. The man appears to be a weakling and a loser….In this couple, the woman appears as a man and the man as a woman. (Gieske, trans. 2000, p. 377)

In this example, physical height, thus, represents power and dominance in terms of the “depictions of or acts where one elevates himself, or the other ‘dis’elevates himself to the other” as an expression of power relations in “social rank” (Gieske, trans. 2000, p. 375).

Each gender (i.e., man, woman) is thus, identified, expressed, and analyzed, according to the “normal” attributes in which it should constitute. It is these symbolizations, I argue, that impact societal perceptions of conceptualizing the physical attributions of the female body which thus, impacts perceptions of female perpetrated violence.

The second example of male-female body binary that I propose to impact perceptions of the female body, which is inherently connected to physical height and male tallness, is the masculine expression of power through “the development and
display of physical strength” (Pronger, 1990, p. 117). Historical constructions of masculine strength was depicted in “the broad, bare-chested, heavily muscled figure of the ‘manly worker,’” which was argued to have been brought about to influence an era of heightened “male unemployment” where skilled positions “were being replaced by semi-skilled operatives and manual workers” (Wolkowitz, 2001, pp. 96-97), and eras of “world wars” where “masculinity and toughness” were argued to have been used to influence recruitment into the U.S. military (Connell, 1995, p. 127; Glassner, p. 252). Glassner (1995) discusses masculinity in the World War II period by featured comic book ads as, “‘I manufacture weaklings into MEN,’ read the headline on the back page of a 1952 issue of The Fighting Leathernecks” (p. 252).

Although these examples of physical strength to symbol masculinity and maleness were shown during times when recruitment into the manual labor workforce and military combative soldiers were needed, apart from these contexts, masculinity and maleness still held value “to be overtly strong” in order to symbolize health and attractiveness (Glassner, 1995, p. 255; Galli & Reel, 2009; as cited in Petrie, & McHarland, 2009). Pronger (1995) argued that cultural symbols of male strength can be expressed through athleticism, such that:

Athletic, muscular bodies are masculine bodies….The well-defined muscular body is a sign of strength, an indication of power that has historically been given to men….The truly masculine man with his muscular body asserts his authority over women and inhibits other men; his muscular appearance is meant to deter other men. (p. 122)

Thus, the social symbol of physical strength was created to fit the masculine cultural values of a man in power relations over other men and women. According to this argument, then, female physical traits represent the absence of strength which thus,
contributes to the attitudes of female perpetrated violence, especially against male counterparts.

Thirdly, violence is held within the culture of masculinity and thus, according to feminist theories of the female body, is strictly a prescribed male trait. The concept of violence that I discuss is not individual violence that some have argued to be a manifestation of individual expression of one person against another, or a mere reflection of violence against women, but instead, that violence is institutional (Kaufman, 1995; Connell, 1995). It is represented as a trait in which men have the physical capacity to violence by “naturalness” whereas women, under the absence of masculinity and thus, a trait of femininity, do not have this physical capacity of violence. Kaufman (1995) highlights:

While this violence can be discussed in terms of male aggression, it operates within the dualism of activity and passivity, masculinity and femininity. Neither can exist without the other…an indication that various forms of men’s violence against women are a dynamic affirmation of a masculinity that can only exist as distinguished from femininity. (p. 18)

Because this argument deems that violence is a masculine-only trait, it suggests that, although institutional, violent acts between men are encouraged and thus, accepted. However, violence between women and the cross-over of violence between gendered men and gendered women are not encouraged and looked down upon, under the contention that women do not hold the physical capacity to compete with men in such a physical act (i.e., violence) that is biologically and socially advantaged for men. It would be perceived as and argued to be an “unfair fight.”

The evidence above demonstrates that the female body is constituted within a patriarchal structure which subordinates her position in relation to man and his capacity
for the masculine body. Thus, by nature, men can emulate, and often already do by virtue of being born male, “the powerful body,” yet continuously undergo negotiation of this biologically prescribed trait of power by society, friends, family, greater social institutions, and gendered beings, who challenge his power by questioning his maleness through the expression of masculine physical strength (e.g., in Galli & Reel, 2009); he can always strive to achieve what he is being challenged of not expressing naturally. Women, however, do not represent masculinity but instead the absence of masculinity, which has been deemed the concept of femininity. Thus, femininity is ascribed to the woman’s body which is inherently prescribed in being born a biological female. Since males and females represent biological sex differences that are constant throughout life, women cannot achieve the masculine body that represents physical strength and power.

**Patriarchy, Self-Efficacy, and the Triadic Reciprocal Causation Model**

In this study, I apply the feminist empiricism research approach (Letherby, 2006) by modifying the theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) to incorporate patriarchy as it acts on the macro systems level to socially construct the female body. The theory of self-efficacy utilizes the model of triadic reciprocal causation to describe how individual persons are not sole receptors or reactors to their environment. That is, self-efficacy emphasizes individual agency, such that persons act on their environment with varying degrees as much as their environment acts upon them (Bandura, 1997). This process of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1997) is structured within a triadic model in which three main units act upon and influences the other. This phenomenon of triadic reciprocal causation can explain how individual perceptions of men and women act collectively
through patriarchal institutions which reinforce the belief that woman’s body is weak, or in terms of self-efficacy and patriarchal masculinity, “less” physically efficacious than the male body (see Figure 1). This reciprocal interaction of environment (E), individual (P), and expression (B), I argue, result in the collective societal attitudes (B) that accept female-to-male perpetrated IPV that is demonstrated in the social science literature. This continuously interacts with, and is interacted upon, the perceptions of “less” physically efficacious female bodies in comparison to male bodies.

Hypothesis 1: Supported by the triadic reciprocal causation model, patriarchy manifests on the macro level of masculinity to influence perceptions of female body as “less” physically efficacious than male bodies. Individual perceptions act to influence collective perceptions of the female body, which influence the acceptance of female perpetrated intimate partner violence.

By employing this theoretical model, I draw on the following major criticisms of patriarchy and gender to explain IPV. I list each criticism, followed by an explanation for how this theoretical model addresses them:

- **Patriarchy ignores the complexities of power and its workings (Hunnicut, 2009).**

  The triadic reciprocal causation model (see Figure 1) acknowledges that power is not a simple process of “oppressor” and “oppressed” (Hunnicut, 2009). In terms of attitudes accepting female perpetrated IPV, women are oppressed by this belief as much as they oppress themselves by believing it. These components within the model, attitudes (B), individual self-perceptions...
P = Individual Agency  
Self-perceptions of Gendered Bodies; “Less” than Physically Efficacious Female Body  
B = Behavior  
Expression of Attitudes Accepting Female Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence  
E = Environment  
Unidentified

Figure 1 Patriarchal effects of the female body within the triadic reciprocal causation model

- (P), and environment (E), interact with each other to reinforce a woman’s oppressed status in the patriarchal system of the socially constructed gendered bodies. The strength of influence of oppressed/oppressor varies in degree upon multiple components.

- Patriarchy fails to explain violence by women (Hunnicut, 2009).

- The triadic reciprocal causation model explains violence by women as an influence of the patriarchal system that perpetuates acceptance of female perpetrated IPV.
• **Patriarchy is an abstract concept that fails to recognize “the role individual agency plays, both in the ongoing creation of gender inequality and in resistance to it”** (Hunnicut, 2009; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004, p. 95).
  
  o The triadic reciprocal causation model holds human agency as a foundational component of itself.

• **Gender as a concept to explain IPV has focused on individual levels (Anderson, 2005).**
  
  o The triadic reciprocal causation model integrates the role of individual within the greater societal system of patriarchy and its effects on the female body, but emphasizes the importance of the societal system to play a role on individual perceptions that impact acceptance of female perpetrated IPV.

• **Gender to explain IPV has been neglected in the development of its own theoretical concept (Anderson, 2005).**
  
  o The integration of the triadic reciprocal causation model, the theory of self-efficacy, and patriarchy is a unique way in which gender is theorized to influence women’s use of violence against male partners within heterosexual intimate relationships, such that the emphasis is on the social institutions that produce and sustain dominant discourses (E) that act on individual perceptions and collective attitudes.
Literature of Attitudes Accepting Female Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence

In this section, I present several areas of research that demonstrate that societal attitudes accept female-to-male perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV) and that, in research analyses that have compared attitudes of IPV by gender, female-to-male perpetrated violence is accepted at a significantly higher rate than male-to-female perpetrated IPV. I argue in support of the view that, because violence is postulated to be a masculine trait (Connell, 1995; Kaufman, 1995), it thus is a trait in which women do not hold the capacity to have. Using the theory of self-efficacy and patriarchy, I argue that dominant discourse, which gives cultural meaning to “gendered bodies” (i.e., male body, female body) (Cohn, 1995, p. 132), influence how we experience and understand violence. The ways in which we experience and understand violence differently impact our perceptions of male violence and female violence within heterosexual relationships, which explain the differences in attitudes of female perpetrated IPV from male perpetrated IPV. Within the literature of IPV, this has often been demonstrated through conclusions of studies that show that women continue to be “victims” of violence and that violence exhibited by women are not acts of “violence”; rather they are acts of “self-defense.”

The view that women are victims of IPV impacts how community members view and interpret gender violence. Specifically, Nabors and colleagues (2006) found that 87% of respondents defined “slapping” as IPV when the offender was a man and the victim was his wife, while 61% defined “slapping” as IPV in the reverse context. However, these differences in definition of IPV decreased when violence was presented as physical
punching, overt stalking, and forced sex; suggesting that violence interpreted as “severe” or increasing the probability of harm to the victim were defined equally as violent, regardless of the gender of the offender. A study by Simon, Anderson, Thompson, Crosby, and Shelley et al. (2001) found that a 1994 U.S. nationally representative sample accepted female-to-male “slapping” (22% of respondents) in marital relationships more than male-to-female “slapping” (20% of respondents) and that studies on bystander behavior indicate a greater likelihood of bystander intervention occurs if the perpetrator is male than if the perpetrator is female. Simon et al. (2001) replicated these findings with a U.S. nationally representative sample of adults and found that “both male and female respondents were more likely to report that it is okay for a woman to hit a man than they were to report that it is okay for a man to hit a woman” (Simon et al., 2001, p. 118). Sub-group analysis indicated that males were more likely to accept IPV if the partner was hit first, regardless of gender, and that participants who were older than 35 were less likely to accept female retaliatory-IPV in the same scenario (Simon et al., 2001).

Even intimate partners among themselves have reported discrepancies between defining violence within their own intimate relationship. Perry and Fromuth (2005) found that heterosexual intimate partners agreed on male-perpetrated IPV by rating “presence” or “absence” of violence 74% of the time, while agreeing on the “presence” or “absence” of female-perpetrated violence only 66% of the time. These findings indicate that one partner within the couple rated female-to-male physical violence as absent while the other rated it as present and that, with regards to female-accepted IPV, intimate partners tended to identify male-to-female IPV more easily than female-to-male physical IPV. This suggests that violent acts committed by females against males are disagreed with more on
its definition of violence than males use of violence against females, and thus, same acts may not be defined as violence for females. With regards to reports of perceived intent, women “reported inflicting more playfully motivated aggression than men” and that “women reported inflicting more aggression with a playful intent than they reported receiving.” No significant differences within “men’s reports of receiving, or inflicting vs. receiving playful aggression” were observed (Perry & Fromuth, 2005, p. 1089). Violence within this study tended to be mild, as defined by the Conflict Tactic Scales–2 instrument used in the study, such as “pushing, grabbing, twisting arm or hair, slapping.”

The second set of IPV research demonstrates structural observations and meanings which demonstrate that in IPV, women are victims. These interpretations have typically concluded that female-perpetrated IPV is explained by either self-defense (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; George, 2007; Straus, 2009) or an individual resistance to familial institutional oppression (Sarantakos, 2004). However, a qualitative investigation (Sarantakos, 2004) of a clinical sample of IPV cases demonstrated that 64% of female perpetrated IPV were perpetrated without male violence initiation, 24% perpetrated by male initiation of minor violence, and 12% were perpetrated by male initiation of serious violence. Of the female perpetrated violence in which their partners did not initiate violence, women justified their violence by many familial reasons, such as past infidelity or suspected infidelity. Family members reported that the women also justified their acts by minimizing their violence or masculinizing their husband’s reaction to the violence, “Don’t worry, he’ll get over it soon,” “I was strict but I did not hurt anyone.” (Sarantakos, 2004, pp. 281-282). In addition, male children within the family who responded to perceived reasons for the violence, stated that “He was a pussycat; that’s
how his friends used to call him! He never stood up for himself, and he had to take it the hard way” (Sarantakos, 2004, p. 285). This demonstrates that in at least clinical samples of IPV, most female-perpetrated IPV did not occur by self-defense, nor did their response indicate outward resistance to oppression – although we might be able to argue through future development of interventions that many of these interactions stem from institutional oppressive structures, as I do now. Even so, within this study, the researcher does not investigate the perceptions of defined violence. It is evident that one female participant did not view her act as violence or harmful.

Debates about women as victims continue with IPV and women’s reported perpetration. This is also evidenced in the debate with regards to “who is more likely to be injured” as a result of IPV. Overall, a consensus has been built upon women being more likely to incur injury than men (Straus, 2009). Explanations of these findings draw upon arguments such as, “greater male strength and size results in greater physical injury for female than male victims” (as cited in Jenkins & Aubé, 2002, p. 1107), “from the fact that men are physically larger and stronger than women (as cited in Anderson, 2005, p. 860) or injuries incurred through self-defense “because of the woman’s smaller size and weight” (as cited in Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). George (2007) cited a study in which women were imaged under the notion of self-defense methods of violence against their male partners, but the women of this study opposed these contentions, identifying that they had been the dominant and violent partners within their relationships and that, upon law enforcement contact, their male partners were treated as perpetrators while the females were treated as victims. In the criminal justice system, perhaps this is why studies argue that in the context of IPV injuries to males, female perpetrators are less
likely to be arrested than male perpetrators of violence and female injuries (as cited in Dutton & Nicholas, 2005).

I present the studies outlined above, not for the purposes of emphasizing interpretation of these on an individual systems level, but to draw attention to greater systems in which individual selves are structured within. I argue that these greater structures of dominant discourse (E) have influence on our attitudes/beliefs (B) which in turn influence our self-perceptions (P), such that similar acts between men and women often reflect different culturally ascribed meanings and values (Connell, 1995). With reference to the societal attitudes accepting female perpetrated IPV as a result of patriarchal effects on the female body, the perpetuation of these attitudes are influenced, created, and reinforced as “natural” through dominant discourse (as cited in Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). The specification of type of dominant discourse is not discussed in this article but is left for interpretation among those who wish to empirically test this theory.

Hypothesis 2: Dominant discourse acts to influence societal attitudes that accept female perpetrated IPV which thus influence perceptions of the female body that define violence differently if expressed than by males. These expressions of interpretation of societal attitudes and dominant discourse also act upon and influence them. They continue as a cycle within the triadic reciprocal causation model.

**Purpose of the Study**

In this study, I have proposed several theoretical models that hypothesize the reason for attitudes accepting female perpetrated intimate partner violence. For the capacity of this study, however, I test only one component within this theory of the
triadic reciprocal causation model: attitudes accepting female perpetrated violence against their male partners. Exploratory analyses were conducted to explore demographic variables in relation to attitudes accepting female perpetrated violence and attitudes accepting male perpetrated violence.

**Methods**

**Participants, Procedure, and Research Design**

Survey data collection was obtained through a cross-sectional research design using a convenience sample of 159 university undergraduate (89.4%) and graduate (10%) students, with a mean age 22.75. Participants consisted of 31.3% males ($N = 50$) and 68.8% females ($N = 110$) with the majority being Utah state residence 91.9%. Race and ethnicity characteristics consisted of 78.8% Caucasian/White, 8.1% Asian, 5.6% Latino/Latina, 2.5% African American, 1.9% Pacific Islander, 0.6% Native American, and 1.9% “Other.” Four respondents reported more than one race/ethnicity (1 Pacific Islander and White, 1 Asian and White, 1 Native American and White, and 1 African American and White) and were merged with ethnic minority status (see Table 1). Ninety-four percent self-reported as heterosexual, 1.3% and 1.9% gay and lesbian, respectively, and 1.9% bisexual. Eighty-five percent of participants were currently in, or reported to have been in a past relationship for at least 1 month or more. See Table 1.

Participants were recruited from graduate and undergraduate courses from the College of Health within a university from the state of Utah. The primary investigator distributed the surveys at the beginning or end of each course and explained the purpose and procedures of the study. Participants were informed that their study participation was voluntary and anonymous. When all participants were observed to have completed the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian and White</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/African American</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American and White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Native American</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American and White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Other”</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah State Resident Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Relationship Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in or was in a relationship in the past for at least 1 month</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never been in a relationship</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
survey, the researchers collected the surveys with the attached consent forms to ensure privacy of responses. Surveys included informed consent document sheets to provide detailed information about contacting counseling services and institutional review board administration in case of questions, interest in counseling after completing the survey, and emergency contact information. Two courses in which students were recruited were invited to participate by completing questionnaires outside of class and returning them to the primary investigator.

Demographics

The questionnaire provided items to assess 11 demographic variables, including: gender (male or female), age (open), race/ethnicity (Asian, African American, Hispanic, Native American, White, Pacific Islander, or “Other”), Utah state resident status (Currently a Utah resident or not currently a Utah resident), student status (college freshman, college sophomore, college junior, college senior, graduate student, or “other”), sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or “other”), intimate relationship status (currently, or have been in the past, in an intimate relationship that lasted at least 1 month or never been in an intimate relationship), partner’s gender (male, female), the relationship with intimate partner (dating, and sex is [was] not a part of our relationship or dating, and sex [was] a part of our relationship), marital status (married, married and living separately, divorced, widowed, single/never married, remarried, or “other”), and number of children (open).
Gender Role Myths and Beliefs About Media

This scale of the questionnaire assessed gender role myths and beliefs about the media’s influence on gendered behaviors, violence, and violence in intimate relationships. The items were developed through local research within the state of Utah by a research professor (M. Próspero, personal communication, March 28, 2010) in the field of IPV. Respondents were instructed to rate their response for each item on a 4-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree). No alpha coefficients were reported for this measure.

Intimate Partner Violence and Controlling Behaviors

This scale of the questionnaire assessed perpetration instrumental aggression and controlling behaviors. The items were also developed through local research by M. Próspero (personal communication, March 28, 2010). Respondents were instructed to rate their response on each item on a 4-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree). The alpha coefficient for past studies for this scale was $\alpha = .93$.

Justification of Dating Violence Scales

These scales were developed by Chiu (2008) based on previous studies by O’Keefe (1998), Pflieger & Vazsonyi (2006), and Yick and Agbayani-Siewert (2000) (as cited in Chiu, 2008). Each scale assessed agreement upon the use of violence within dating partners in specific situations (e.g., infidelity, separation, or disobedience) for female-to-male perpetrated IPV and male-to-female perpetrated IPV. Respondents were instructed to rate their agreement on each item for each scale, “It is ok for a girl to hit her
boyfriend if” and “It is ok for a boy to hit his girlfriend if,” on a 4-point scale (1 =
Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree), respectively. Each scale
consisted of 9 items in which participants’ possible scores ranged from 9-36. Higher
scores for each scale indicated higher levels of agreement for the use of violence in IPV
situational contexts. Alpha coefficients for the present study were .92 and .97 for female-
to-male IPV and male-to-female IPV, respectively.

*Dating Violence Scale – Victimization*

This scale was developed by Chiu (2008) to assess experiences of dating violence
victimization based on previous studies by Huang and Wang (2005), O’Keefe (1998),
Straus (1979), Wolfe, Scott, Reitzel-Jaffe, Wekerle, Grasley, & Straatman (2001) (as
cited in Chiu, 2008). The scale consisted of 17 items to assess psychological, physical,
and sexual aggression, as well as coercive control and stalking (Chiu, 2008). Respondents
were instructed to rate this scale if they were in a current intimate relationship on a 7-
point scale (0 = Never, 6 = Always) and were prompted by “When we have conflicts…”
for self-reported ratings. Higher scores indicated higher levels of IPV victimization
experience. The alpha coefficient for the current study was .97.

*Statistical Analysis*

Paired t-tests were conducted to evaluate whether participants scored higher on
attitudes accepting female-to-male partner violence than attitudes accepting male-to-
female partner violence. Participants scores were evaluated on the total possible score
(range: 9-36) for each attitudes scale. The total scale of female-to-male violence attitudes
was then subtracted from the total subscale of male-to-female violence attitudes of all participants to calculate the difference.

Multiple linear regression analyses were then conducted to explore the predictive value of demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation) and IPV victimization experience on participant responses to attitudes accepting female-to-male perpetrated violence and attitudes accepting male-to-female perpetrated violence, to determine which demographic variables predicted attitudes in each model. Both models entered one set of independent variables to predict each dependent variable on attitudes accepting IPV perpetration. Independent variables for each model included age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, victimization and gender. Variables recoded for analysis included ethnicity (1 = ethnic minority, 2 = non-ethnic minority) and sexual orientation (1 = heterosexual, 2 = not heterosexual); non-recoded variables included age (range: 18-45, \( M = 22.89 \)), victimization (range = 0-102, \( M = 4.5 \)), and gender (1 = male, 2 = female).

Dependent variables for attitudes accepting female-to-male IPV and for attitudes accepting male-to-female IPV ranged from 9-36 on each scale.

Additional analyses using an independent samples t-test were also conducted to determine whether males or females tended to report higher victimization.

**Results**

*Descriptive Statistics*

All participants (\( N = 160 \)) completed both the attitudes scale of female-to-male perpetrated IPV and male-to-female perpetrated IPV. The mean score accepting female-to-
to-male perpetrated IPV and male-to-female perpetrated IPV was 31.77 ($SD = 134.22$) and 28.89 ($SD = 134.56$), respectively. The standardized effect size index, $d$, was 0.71.

**Results of Paired t-tests**

The results showed that the mean of attitudes accepting female-to-male IPV ($M = 31.77$) was significantly greater than the mean of attitudes accepting male-to-female IPV ($M = 28.89$), $t(159) = 8.960$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that, overall, participants accepted female use of violence toward male intimate partners as more accepting than male use of violence toward female partners, supporting the hypothesis that female perpetrated IPV is more acceptable than male perpetrated IPV.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Multiple regression analysis included 85% ($N = 136$) of the total participants in each tested model. The average age of participants in each model was 22.89 ($SD = 4.11$). The mean score on the victimization scale was 4.5 ($SD = 13.53$). Independent t-tests on victimization included 45 males and 94 females who completed the victimization scale. The mean score for males on IPV victimization was 7.11 ($SD = 18$) and the mean scores for females was 3.47 ($SD = 10.42$). The standardized effect size index, $d$, was 0.39 for males and 0.33 for females.

**Multiple Linear Regression Results**

Table 2 presents the five independent variables and correlations to the dependent variable, attitudes. Multiple linear regression analyses of overall participants’ attitudes on model one, variables that predict attitudes accepting female-to-male perpetrated IPV,
Table 2 Correlations of Age, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Victimization, and Gender to Attitudes Accepting Female-to-Male Perpetrated IPV

*\(p < 0.05\)
**\(p < 0.01\)
***\(p < 0.001\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Attitudes of female-to-male IPV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.204**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>.347**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.172*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

were significant, \(F(5,130) = 4.68, p < 0.05\), suggesting that 15% of the variance in attitudes accepting of female-to-male perpetrated IPV can be attributed to the variable of victimization \((t = 3.44, p < 0.05)\). Age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender were not found to significantly predict attitudes accepting female perpetrated IPV.

The second multiple linear regression analysis revealed that the five variable model did not significantly predict attitudes accepting male-to-female perpetrated IPV, \(F(5,130) = 1.60, p = .164\). Therefore, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, victimization, and gender were not valid predictors of participants’ attitudes accepting male perpetrated IPV towards females.

**Independent t-test**

The independent samples t-test revealed that there were no significant difference between males \((M = 7.11, SD = 18.17)\) and females \((M = 3.47, SD = 10.42)\) in reporting
IPV victimization, \( t(137) = 1.50, p = .054 \). This supports research that has suggested that males are also victimized by their partners in intimate partner violence.

**Discussion**

Findings of this study supported the hypothesis that female-to-male perpetrated intimate partner violence (IPV) was more acceptable than male-to-female perpetrated IPV, supporting component “B” within the model of triadic reciprocal determinism and patriarchal effects of the female body. However, because no other components (e.g., self-perceptions of physical strength and environment) were tested, these findings can only be interpreted independent of this model. Future research should seek to test the proposed model on attitudes and other factors of IPV.

Further analyses of demographic categories (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and victimization experience to attitudes accepting IPV indicated that males and females past victimization from their current partner predicted the acceptance of female perpetrated IPV and that age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation did not predict these attitudes. However, past experience with victimization did not predict the acceptance of male perpetrated IPV. Thus, self-identifying as male or female (by age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation) does not predict acceptance of female perpetrated IPV, supporting the hypothesis that both men and women would agree to the acceptability of female perpetrated IPV at similar levels. In addition, interpreting findings based on the predominant (i.e., 94%) self-report as heterosexual, male partners who are victimized by their female partners tend to view the violence they are experiencing from their female partners as “OK,” while female partners who were experiencing IPV victimization also
viewed their own use of violence against their partners as “OK.” This suggests that both partners are engaging in violence towards each other and these real life experiences predict the greater acceptance of female’s use of violence more than male use of violence, or in more situations. It is unclear as to what variables predict the acceptability of male perpetrated IPV, yet personal experience with victimization was not replicated to predict the acceptance thereof.

Interpretation of the findings of this study should be considered with its limitations. First, the measures of this study neglect to include self-reported perpetration. Therefore, it is uncertain as to the interacting affects of self-reported perpetration with attitudes accepting IPV, in addition to the effects of other variables. Second, participants in this study were asked to complete the victimization scale only if they were currently in a relationship. Therefore, victimization experiences within the past year or month could not be accounted for in this study. In addition, understanding attitudes accepting IPV and the effects of gender in these contexts are limited by using one measure, especially as similar measures have been found to have a question-order effect, in which participants were more likely to accept IPV if the survey asked about a woman hitting her male partner before rating a man hitting his female partner (Simon et al., 2001) and interaction effects determined this was stronger in female participants than in male participants in the scenario of “hitting her first.” Concurrently, the analyses conducted did not differentiate between types (e.g., physical, sexual, psychological) IPV. More research is needed to understand the complex dynamics between attitudes accepting female-perpetrated IPV, gender interactions of the respondent and perceived offender/victim, and instrumentation.
Conclusion

Although this study contributes to replicating the findings of attitudes accepting female perpetrated IPV that has been done in prior research, it proposes promising hypotheses utilizing feminist empiricism to assess the effects of patriarchy on female perpetrated IPV, a limitation of most studies that was suggested by Parker & Reckdenwald (2008). More studies should seek to understand how patriarchy related to perceptions of the female body manifests differently across cultures and social systems more generally, and to understand how this theory can be applied in practice.

The empirical data of the present study emphasize individual systems levels, suggesting that past experience of victimization should be at focus in practice. Thus, research and practitioners should seek to understand and draw attention to these experiences as they relate to greater social systems levels that provide important links to prevention intervention programs with an empowerment focus for both men and women. Feminist empirical approaches to research can assist progressive change and movement toward social action in this respect.
References


CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
This thesis presented a unique approach to understanding IPV on a broader systems level that have been argued to impact perpetration and victimization of IPV by theorizing root causes using the concept of patriarchy, the female body, and triadic reciprocal determinism. This theory drew on several relevant criticisms to the use of patriarchal theory in IPV research. However, the study could not empirically test the three component model proposed in the study due to methodological limitations. Further research should apply this model to empirically test the effects proposed in the theory and evaluate the effects of dominant discourse on attitudes accepting intimate partner violence by macro-level gender theories, including qualitative as well as quantitative approaches.

Findings of the study indicated that female perpetrated IPV was more acceptable than male perpetrated IPV and that this was further predicted by male and female partners experience with victimization. These findings indicated that men and women generally accepted female perpetrated IPV in response to situational contexts of retaliation and/or demonstrating the use of control in specific contexts which was determined by their own IPV victimization experience. Further research is needed to understand the situational contexts in which IPV is accepted, in addition to other related variables apart from “experience” variables.

Although female perpetrated IPV was demonstrated to be significantly more acceptable than male perpetrated IPV, male perpetrated IPV was not predicted by victimization. Thus, males and females who did not report IPV victimization experiences shared similar levels of agreement on the acceptability of male perpetrated IPV with those who were not victimized in their relationships. These findings demonstrate that
other variables, unrelated to victimization, age, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, predicted the acceptance of male perpetrated IPV. In addition, it is possible that the difference between accepting female and male perpetrated IPV was attributed by males and females experience with victimization. Perhaps perceptions in these contexts are impacted by real life experiences that give justification to the use of female perpetrated IPV over male perpetrated IPV in which the methods approach could not detect.

Thus, the findings of this study reflect empirical data that emphasize individual systems of experience with victimization, a factor that should be at focus in practice. Furthermore, research is needed to understand what other factors contribute to the acceptance of IPV for female perpetrators and male perpetrators in situational contexts beyond factors of victimization, as this study was limited in the measurement of variables.

As much of the emphasis in the current literature suggests that “less theory” and “more practice” is needed, progressive attempts at retesting and reconceptualizing proposed etiological causes of IPV should be further explored by the use of practical applications in understanding the proposed etiological pathways that have been theorized and supported. As the field has advanced tremendously since the initial development of intimate partner violence over three decades ago, it now encompasses various viewpoints, approaches, and assessments as a result of the field’s efforts to bringing about awareness and elucidating etiological pathways. In the current era of the 21st century, prevention is the new trend and it is my belief that the multidisciplinary fields in which society represent will contribute greatly to the prevention of intimate partner violence.